



Evil Wisdom



Deadly thoughts
Not to be forgotten
By any heart

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FOREWORD

I am releasing this collection of writings because they deserve wider appreciation. Many people have heard of the Bhagavad Gita and the Dhammapada, but who has seriously read them? And who has even remotely understood them?

In bringing you these works I have exercised my trademark "thinker's license". As you make your way through these writings it will become clear what a thinker's license enables one to do.

The two major works, the Bhagavad Gita and the Dhammapada, are very similar. Both explode with truth in the aphoristic style I love so much. Both are brave words for warriors in an age of peace. Yet some of what they teach is false, and some of the teachings are exceedingly weak, which makes them false also. I may have left some of this material in by mistake, but my sporadic commentary should make up for any sin of inclusion.

Shortcomings aside, all these writings are of the very highest quality. If you care for your own health then you will read this work frequently and contemplate it deeply.

YOU WILL FIND NO GREATER TREASURE!

Kevin Solway, 1994

THE BHAGAVAD GITA

- With commentary by Kevin Solway -

1.

This copy begins with the battle proper . . .

Sanjaya

The flight of arrows was now to begin and Arjuna, on whose banner was the symbol of an ape, saw Duryodhana and his warriors drawn up in their lines of battle. He thereupon took up his bow.

And spoke these words to Krishna:

Arjuna

Drive my chariot, Krishna immortal, and place it between the two armies.

That I may see those warriors who stand there eager for battle, with whom I must now fight at the beginning of this war.

That I may see those who have come here eager and ready to fight, in their desire to do the will of the evil son of Dhritarashtra.

Sanjaya

When Krishna heard the words of Arjuna he drove their glorious chariot and placed it between the two armies.

Then Arjuna saw in both armies fathers, grandfathers, sons, grandsons; fathers of wives, uncles, masters; brothers companions and friends.

When Arjuna thus saw his kinsmen face to face in both lines of battle, he was overcome by grief and despair and thus he spoke with a sinking heart.

Arjuna

When I see all my kinsmen, Krishna, who have come here on this field of battle, life goes from my limbs and they sink, and my mouth is sear and dry; a trembling overcomes my body, and my hair shudders in horror.

My great bow Gandiva falls from my hands, and the skin of my flesh is burning; I am no longer able to stand, because my mind is whirling and wandering.

And I see forebodings of evil, Krishna. I cannot foresee any glory if I kill my own kinsmen in the sacrifice of battle.

Because I have no wish for victory, Krishna, nor for a kingdom, nor for its pleasures. How can we want a kingdom, Govinda, or its pleasures or even life, when those for whom we want a kingdom, and its pleasures, and the joys of life, are here in this field of battle about to give up their wealth and their life?

Facing us in the field of battle are teachers, fathers and sons; grandsons, grandfathers, wives' brothers; mothers' brothers and fathers of wives.

These I do not wish to slay, even if I myself am slain. Not even for the kingdom of the three worlds: how much less for a kingdom of the earth!

If we kill these evil men, evil shall fall upon us: what joy in their death could we have, O Janardana, mover of souls.

I cannot therefore kill my own kinsmen, the sons of king Dhritarashtra, the brother of my own father. What happiness could we ever enjoy, if we killed our own kinsmen in battle?

Even if they, with minds overcome by greed, see no evil in the destruction of a family, see no sin in the treachery to friends;

Shall we not, who see the evil of destruction, shall we not refrain from this terrible deed?

O day of darkness! What evil spirit moved our minds when for the sake of an earthly kingdom we came to this field of battle ready to kill our own people?

Better for me indeed if the sons of Dhritarashtra, with arms in hand, found me unarmed, unresisting, and killed me in the struggle of war.

Sanjaya

Thus spoke Arjuna in the field of battle, and letting fall his bow and arrows he sank down in his chariot, his soul overcome by despair and grief.

2

Sanjaya

Then arose the Spirit of Krishna and spoke to Arjuna, his friend, who with eyes filled with tears, thus had sunk into despair and grief.

Krishna

Whence this lifeless dejection, Arjuna, in this hour, the hour of trial? Strong men know not despair, Arjuna, for this wins neither heaven nor earth.

Fall not into degrading weakness, for this becomes not a man who is a man. Throw off this ignoble discouragement, and arise like a fire that burns all before it.

Arjuna

Shall my arrows in battle slay Drona, my teacher? Shall I kill my own masters who, though greedy of my kingdom, are yet my sacred teachers? I would rather eat in this life the food of a beggar than eat royal food tasting of their blood.

And we know not whether their victory or ours be better for us. The sons of my uncle and king, Dhrita-rashtra, are here before us: after their death, should we wish to live?

In the dark night of my soul I feel desolation. In my self-pity I see not the way of righteousness. I am thy disciple, come to thee in supplication: be a light unto me on the path of my duty.

For neither the kingdom of the earth, nor the kingdom of the gods in heaven, could give me peace from the fire of sorrow which thus burns my life.

Sanjaya

When Arjuna the great warrior had thus unburdened his heart, "I will not fight, Krishna," he said, and then fell silent.

Krishna smiled and spoke to Arjuna - there between the two armies the voice of God spoke these words:

Krishna

Thy tears are for those beyond tears; and are thy words of wisdom? The wise grieve not for those who live; and they grieve not for those who die - for life and death shall pass away.

Because we all have been for all time: I, and thou, and those kings of men. And we all shall be for all time, we all for ever and ever.

As the Spirit of our mortal body wanders on in childhood, and youth and old age, the Spirit wanders on to a new body: of this the sage has no doubts.

This very last statement is of doubtful origin, with its blind faith and its shameful appeal to the authority of "the sage". In fact, the Spirit is not an entity, so is not able to travel from one body to another in a linear fashion, as is implied above. Rather, the Spirit is the *totality* of what you are, so it wanders infinitely into the world around you, into other bodies, into other things, and necessarily does so at all times. It wanders with the infinite meanderings of cause and effect. I can only think that some cowardly monk felt the need to insert more than a few words of his own into this text to make it palatable to his taste. Now, when innocent enquirers read this scripture they naturally gravitate towards these few corrupt passages, finding support for their own mistaken ideas. And because these corrupt passages are totally incompatible with the rest of the text the rest of the text is conveniently ignored - convenient to cowardly monks!

From the world of the senses, Arjuna, comes heat and comes cold, and pleasure and pain. They come and they go: they are transient. Arise above them, strong soul.

The man whom these cannot move, whose soul is one, beyond pleasure and pain, is worthy of life in Eternity.

The unreal never is: the Real never is not. This truth indeed has been seen by those who can see the true.

Interwoven in his creation, the Spirit is beyond destruction. No one can bring to an end the Spirit which is everlasting.

For beyond time he dwells in these bodies, though these bodies have an end in their time; but he remains immeasurable, immortal. Therefore, great warrior, carry on thy fight.

If any man thinks he slays, and if another thinks he is slain, neither knows the ways of truth. The eternal in man cannot kill: the Eternal in man cannot die.

He is never born, and he never dies. He is in Eternity: he is for evermore.

Never-born and eternal, beyond times gone or to come, he does not die when the body dies.

When a man knows him as never-born, everlasting, never-changing, beyond all destruction, how can that man kill a man, or cause another to kill?

As a man leaves an old garment and puts on one that is new, the Spirit leaves his mortal body and then puts on one that is new.

Don't believe a word of it! That cowardly monk has been at work again. I would have written this passage thus: As a candle is able to light many other candles before it is exhausted, and burns no longer, the Spirit goes on its way.

Weapons cannot hurt the Spirit and fire can never burn him. Untouched is he by drenching waters, untouched is he by parching winds.

Beyond the power of sword and fire, beyond the power of waters and winds, the Spirit is everlasting, omnipresent, never-changing, never moving, ever One.

Invisible is he to mortal eyes, beyond thought and beyond change. Know that he is, and cease from sorrow.

For all things born in truth must die, and out of death in truth comes life. Face to face with what must be, cease thou from sorrow.

Invisible before birth are all beings and after death invisible again. They are seen between two unseens. Why in this truth find sorrow?

The Spirit that is in all beings is immortal in them all: for the death of what cannot die, cease thou to sorrow.

Think thou also of thy duty and do not waver. There is no greater good for a warrior than to fight in a righteous war.

There is a war that opens the doors of heaven, Arjuna! Happy the warriors whose fate is to fight such a war.

But to forgo this fight for righteousness is to forgo thy duty and honour: is to fall into transgression.

Men will tell of thy dishonour both now and in times to come. And to a man who is in honour, dishonour is more than death.

The great warriors will say that thou hast run from the battle through fear; and those who thought great things of thee will speak of thee in scorn.

And thine enemies will speak of thee in contemptuous words of ill-will and derision, pouring scorn upon thy courage. Can there be for a warrior a more shameful fate?

In death thy glory in heaven, in victory thy glory on earth. Arise therefore, Arjuna, with thy soul ready to fight.

Prepare for war with peace in thy soul. Be in peace in pleasure and pain, in gain and in loss, in victory or in the loss of a battle. In this peace there is no sin.

This is the wisdom of Sankhya - the vision of the Eternal. Hear now the wisdom of Yoga, path of the Eternal and freedom from bondage.

No step is lost on this path, and no dangers are found. And even a little progress is freedom from fear.

The follower of this path has one thought, and this is the End of his determination. But many-branched and endless are the thoughts of the man who lacks determination.

There are men who have no vision, yet they speak many words. They follow the letter of the Vedas, and they say: "there is nothing but this."

Their soul is warped with selfish desires, and their heaven is a selfish desire. They have prayers for pleasures and power, the reward of which is earthly rebirth.

Those who love pleasure and power hear and follow their words: they have not the determination ever to be one with the One.

The three Gunas of Nature are the world of the Vedas. Arise beyond the three Gunas, Arjuna! Be in Truth eternal, beyond earthly opposites. Beyond gains and possessions, possess thine own soul.

It is extremely important to understand here that true wisdom lies *beyond* the three Gunas; that is, beyond peacefulness, restlessness, and darkness. The peacefulness, clarity, and bliss of Sattva, the first Guna, is attained through skillfully satisfying the ego and has terrible consequences.

As is the use of a well of water where water everywhere overflows, such is the use of all the Vedas to the seer of the Supreme.

Set thy heart upon thy work, but never on its reward. Work not for a reward; but never cease to do thy work.

"Work" here means activity towards a goal. It doesn't mean mowing the lawn.

Do thy work in the peace of Yoga and, free from selfish desires, be not moved in success or in failure. Yoga is evenness of mind - a peace that is ever the same.

Work done for a reward is much lower than work done in the Yoga of wisdom. Seek salvation in the wisdom of reason. How poor those who work for a reward!

In this wisdom a man goes beyond what is well done and what is not well done. Go thou therefore to wisdom: Yoga is wisdom in work.

Seers in union with wisdom forsake the rewards of their work, and free from the bonds of birth they go to the abode of salvation.

When thy mind leaves behind its dark forest of delusion, thou shalt go beyond the scriptures of times past and still to come.

When thy mind, that may be wavering in the contradictions of many scriptures, shall rest unshaken in divine contemplation, then the goal of Yoga is thine.

Arjuna

How is the man of tranquil wisdom, who abides in divine contemplation? What are his words? What is his silence? What is his work?

Krishna

When a man surrenders all desires that come to the heart and by the grace of God finds the joy of God, then his soul has indeed found peace.

He whose mind is untroubled by sorrows, and for pleasures he has no longings, beyond passion, and fear and anger, he is the sage of unwavering mind.

Who everywhere is free from all ties, who neither rejoices nor sorrows if fortune is good or ill, his is a serene wisdom.

When in recollection he withdraws all his senses from the attractions of the pleasures of sense, even as a tortoise withdraws all its limbs, then his is a serene wisdom.

Pleasures of sense, but not desires, disappear from the austere soul. Even desires disappear when the soul has seen the Supreme.

The restless violence of the senses impetuously carries away the mind of even a

wise man striving towards perfection.

Bringing them all into the harmony of recollection, let him sit in devotion and union, his soul finding rest in me. For when his senses are in harmony, then his is a serene wisdom.

When a man dwells on the pleasures of sense, attraction for them arises in him. From attraction arises desire, the lust of possession, and this leads to passion, to anger.

From passion comes confusion of mind, then loss of remembrance, the forgetting of duty. From this loss comes the ruin of reason, and the ruin of reason leads man to destruction.

But the soul that moves the world of the senses and yet keeps the senses in harmony, free from attraction and aversion, finds rest in quietness.

In this quietness falls down the burden of all sorrows, for when the heart has found quietness, wisdom has also found peace.

The "quietness" spoken of here comes from having perfectly understood Ultimate Reality and having completely sacrificed oneself to it. It is *absolutely not* the quietness of being "well-balanced" and "centred".

There is no wisdom for a man without harmony, and without harmony there is no contemplation. Without contemplation there can be no peace, and without peace can there be joy?

For when the mind becomes bound to a passion of the wandering senses, this passion carries away man's wisdom, even as the wind drives a vessel on the waves.

The man who therefore in recollection withdraws his senses from the pleasures of sense, his is a serene wisdom.

In the dark night of all beings awakes to Light the tranquil man. But what is day to other beings is night for the sage who sees all.

The harmony and peace of ordinary people is seen by the sage to be disharmony and violence.

Even as all waters flow into the ocean, but the ocean never overflows, even so the sage feels desires, but he is ever one in his infinite peace.

For the man who forsakes all desires and abandons all pride of possession and of self reaches the goal of peace supreme.

This is the Eternal in man, O Arjuna. Reaching him all delusion is gone. Even in the last hour of his life upon earth, man can reach the Nirvana of Brahman - man can find peace in the peace of his God.

3

Arjuna

If thy thought is that vision is greater than action, why dost thou enjoin upon me the terrible action of war?

My mind is in confusion because in thy words I find contradictions. Tell me in truth therefore by what path may I attain the Supreme.

Krishna

In this world there are two roads of perfection, as I told thee before, O prince without sin: Jnana Yoga, the path of wisdom of the Sankhyas, and Karma Yoga, the path of action of the Yogis.

Not by refraining from action does man attain freedom from action. Not by mere renunciation does he attain supreme perfection.

For not even for a moment can a man be without action. Helplessly are all driven to action by the forces born of Nature.

He who withdraws himself from actions, but ponders on their pleasures in his heart, he is under a delusion and is a false follower of the Path.

But great is the man who, free from attachments, and with a mind ruling its powers in harmony, works on the path of Karma Yoga, the path of consecrated action.

Action is greater than inaction: perform therefore thy task in life. Even the life of the body could not be if there were no action.

Action is greater than inaction because inaction is unreal.

The world is in the bonds of action, unless the action is consecration. Let thy actions then be pure, free from the bonds of desire.

Thus spoke the Lord of Creation when he made both man and sacrifice: "By sacrifice thou shalt multiply and obtain all thy desires.

By sacrifice shalt thou honour the gods and the gods will then love thee. And thus in harmony with them shalt thou attain the supreme good.

For pleased with thy sacrifice, the gods will grant thee the joy of all thy desires. Only a thief would enjoy their gifts and not offer them in sacrifice.”

One sacrifices the pleasures of delusion, the bliss of ignorance, and the joy of possession, in return for which one gains All - the Infinite.

Holy men who take as food the remains of sacrifice become free from all their sins; but the unholy who have feasts for themselves eat food that is in truth sin.

Food is the life of all beings, and all food comes from rain above. Sacrifice brings rain from heaven, and sacrifice is sacred action.

Food comes from God, the Infinite. Sacrifice, if it is sacrifice of all, brings God.

Sacred action is described in the Vedas as these come from the Eternal, and therefore is the Eternal everpresent in sacrifice.

Thus was the Wheel of the Law set in motion, and that man lives indeed in vain who in a sinful life of pleasures helps not in its revolutions.

But the man who has found the joy of the Spirit and in the Spirit has satisfaction, who in the Spirit has found his peace, that man is beyond the law of action.

He is beyond what is done and beyond what is not done, and in all his works he is beyond the help of mortal beings.

In liberty from the bonds of attachment, do thou therefore the work to be done: for the man whose work is pure attains indeed the Supreme.

King Janaka and other warriors reached perfection by the path of action: let thy aim be the good of all, and then carry on thy task in life.

In the actions of the best men others find their rule of action. The path that a great man follows becomes a guide to the world.

I have no work to do in all the worlds, Arjuna - for these are mine. I have nothing to obtain, because I have all. And yet I work.

If I was not bound to action, never-tiring, everlastingly, men that follow many paths would follow my path of inaction.

If ever my work had an end, these worlds would end in destruction, confusion

would reign within all: this would be the death of all beings.

Even as the unwise work selfishly in the bondage of selfish works, let the wise man work unselfishly for the good of all the world.

Let not the wise disturb the mind of the unwise in their selfish work. Let him, working with devotion, show them the joy of good work.

The only problem with this piece of advice is that everything the wise man does will disturb the mind of the unwise. The unwise never agree with anything the wise man says or does. If he speaks truth they will be disturbed, and if he remains silent they will likewise be disturbed, because silence speaks. The important thing to understand here is that the wise never disturb fools unnecessarily. They never do so out of malice for example, because the wise never feel malice.

All actions take place in time by the interweaving of the forces of Nature; but the man lost in selfish delusion thinks that he himself is the actor.

But the man who knows the relation between the forces of Nature and actions, sees how some forces of Nature work upon other forces of Nature, and becomes not their slave.

Those who are under the delusion of the forces of Nature bind themselves to the work of these forces. Let not the wise man who sees the All disturb the unwise who sees not the All.

Offer to me all thy works and rest thy mind on the Supreme. Be free from vain hopes and selfish thoughts, and with inner peace fight thou thy fight.

Those who ever follow my doctrine and who have faith, and have a good will, find through pure work their freedom.

But those who follow not my doctrine, and who have ill-will, are men blind to all wisdom, confused in mind: they are lost.

"Even a wise man acts under the impulse of his nature: all beings follow nature. Of what use is restraint?"

Hate and lust for things of nature have their roots in man's lower nature. Let him not fall under their power: they are the two enemies in his path.

And do thy duty, even if it be humble, rather than another's, even if it be great. To die in one's duty is life: to live in another's is death.

Arjuna

What power is it, Krishna, that drives man to act sinfully, even unwillingly, as if powerlessly?

Krishna

It is greedy desire and wrath, born of passion, the great evil, the sum of destruction: this is the enemy of the soul.

All is clouded by desire: as fire by smoke, as a mirror by dust, as an unborn babe by its covering.

Wisdom is clouded by desire, the everpresent enemy of the wise, desire in its innumerable forms, which like a fire cannot find satisfaction.

Desire has found a place in man's senses and mind and reason. Through these it blinds the soul, after having over-clouded wisdom.

Set thou, therefore, thy senses in harmony, and then slay thou sinful desire, the destroyer of vision and wisdom.

They say that the power of the senses is great. But greater than the senses is the mind. Greater than the mind is Buddhi, reason; and greater than reason is He - the Spirit in man and in all.

This is not to say that reason is inferior in any way, for reason leads to God.

Know Him therefore who is above reason; and let his peace give thee peace. Be a warrior and kill desire, the powerful enemy of the soul.

4

Krishna

I revealed this everlasting Yoga to Vivasyan, the sun, the father of light. He in turn revealed it to Manu, his son, the father of man. And Manu taught his son, king Ikshvaku, the saint.

Then it was taught from father to son in the line of kings who were saints; but in the revolutions of times immemorial this doctrine was forgotten by men.

Today I am revealing to thee this Yoga eternal, this secret supreme: because of thy love for me, and because I am thy friend.

Arjuna

Thy birth was after the birth of the sun: the birth of the sun was before thine.
What is the meaning of thy words: "I revealed this Yoga to Vivasvan"?

Krishna

I have been born many times, Arjuna, and many times hast thou been born.
But I remember my past lives, and thou hast forgotten thine.

Again, this is speaking of cause and effect, rather than literal rebirth. The point is that the wise know where they come from (infinite causation) while fools are lost because of their failure to understand cause and effect.

Although I am unborn, everlasting, and I am the Lord of all, I come to my realm of nature and through my wondrous power I am born.

When righteousness is weak and faints and unrighteousness exults in pride, then my Spirit arises on earth.

For the salvation of those who are good, for the destruction of evil in men, for the fulfilment of the kingdom of righteousness, I come to this world in the ages that pass.

He who knows my birth as God and who knows my sacrifice, when he leaves his mortal body, he goes no more from death to death, for he in truth comes to me.

He who knows that the finite is a manifestation of the infinite transcends the finite and arrives at the infinite.

How many have come to me, trusting in me, filled with my Spirit, in peace from passions and fears and anger, made pure by the fire of wisdom!

In any way that men love me in that same way they find my love: for many are the paths of men, but they all in the end come to me.

Love of Truth always leads to Truth, and there are many ways to love Truth because there are countless manifestations of Truth to inspire such love. But there are also countless ways to love untruth, and the love of untruth never leads to Truth.

Those who lust for earthly power offer sacrifice to the gods of the earth; for soon in this world of men success and power come from work.

The four orders of men arose from me, in justice to their natures and their works. Know that this work was mine, though I am beyond work, in Eternity.

In the bonds of works I am free, because in them I am free from desires. The

man who can see this truth, in his work he finds his freedom.

This was known by men of old times, and thus in their work they found liberation. Do thou therefore thy work in life in the spirit that their work was done.

What is work? What is beyond work? Even some seers see this not aright. I will teach thee the truth of pure work, and this truth shall make thee free.

It shall be seen that pure work is as different from ordinary work as are the clouds from mud. And that the harder ordinary people work, the less work is done.

Know therefore what is work, and also know what is wrong work. And know also of a work that is silence: mysterious is the path of work.

The man who in his work finds silence, and who sees that silence is work, this man in truth sees the Light and in all his works finds peace.

He whose undertakings are free from anxious desire and fanciful thought, whose work is made pure in the fire of wisdom: he is called wise by those who see.

In whatever work he does such a man in truth has peace: he expects nothing, he relies on nothing, and ever has fullness of joy.

He has no vain hopes, he is the master of his soul, he surrenders all he has, only his body works: he is free from sin.

He is glad with whatever God gives him, and he has risen beyond the two contraries here below; he is without jealousy, and in success or in failure he is one: his works bind him not.

He has attained liberation: he is free from all bonds, his mind has found peace in wisdom, and his work is a holy sacrifice. The work of such a man is pure.

Who in all his work sees God, he in truth goes unto God: God is his worship, God is his offering, offered by God in the fire of God.

There are Yogis whose sacrifice is an offering to the gods; but others offer as a sacrifice their own soul in the fire of God.

In the fire of an inner harmony some surrender their senses in darkness; and in the fire of the senses some surrender their outer light.

Others sacrifice their breath of life and also the powers of life in the fire of an inner union lighted by a flash of vision.

And others, faithful to austere vows, offer their wealth as a sacrifice, or their penance, or their practice of Yoga, or their sacred studies, or their knowledge.

Some offer their out-flowing breath into the breath that flows in; and the in-flowing breath into the breath that flows out: they aim at Pranayama, breath-harmony, and the flow of their breath is in peace.

Others, through practice of abstinence, offer their life into Life. All those know what is sacrifice, and through sacrifice purify their sins.

Unfortunately only a person who abandons false thoughts can achieve wisdom. It is possible to perform all the above practices for a thousand years without abandoning a single false notion.

Neither this world nor the world to come is for him who does not sacrifice; and those who enjoy what remains of the sacrifice go unto Brahman.

Indeed, but it must be made clear that the sacrifice is of all one's false thoughts, all of one's self. He is blessed who loves what is left.

Thus in many ways men sacrifice, and in many ways they go to Brahman. Know that all sacrifice is holy work, and knowing this thou shalt be free.

But greater than any earthly sacrifice is the sacrifice of sacred wisdom. For wisdom is in truth the end of all holy work.

Wisdom itself is the sacrifice in which ignorance is sacrificed.

Those who themselves have seen the Truth can be thy teachers of wisdom. Ask from them, bow unto them, be thou unto them a servant.

When wisdom is thine, Arjuna, never more shalt thou be in confusion; for thou shalt see all things in thy heart, and thou shalt see thy heart in me.

And even if thou wert the greatest of sinners, with the help of the boat of wisdom thou shalt cross the sea of evil.

Even as a burning fire burns all fuel into ashes, the fire of eternal wisdom burns into ashes all works.

There is nothing like wisdom to make us pure on this earth. The man who lives in self-harmony finds this truth in his soul.

He who has faith has wisdom, who lives in self-harmony, whose faith is his life; and he who finds wisdom, soon finds the peace supreme.

But he who has no faith and no wisdom, and whose soul is in doubt, is lost. For neither this world, nor the world to come, nor joy is ever for the man who doubts.

He who makes pure his works by Yoga, who watches over his soul, and who by wisdom destroys his doubts, is free from the bondage of selfish work.

Kill therefore with the sword of wisdom the doubt born of ignorance that lies in thy heart. Be one in self-harmony, in Yoga, and arise, great warrior, arise.

5

Arjuna

Renunciation is praised by thee, Krishna, and then the Yoga of holy work. Of these two, tell me in truth, which is the higher path?

Krishna

Both renunciation and holy work are a path to the Supreme; but better than surrender of work is the Yoga of holy work.

There can be no holy work without true, complete renunciation because holy work is the outcome of such renunciation. The Yoga of holy work is better than renunciation because it is the perfection of renunciation. Any "surrender of work" is a mistaken renunciation, being an attachment to non-action.

Know that a man of true renunciation is he who craves not nor hates; for he who is above the two contraries soon finds his freedom.

Ignorant men, but not the wise, say that Sankhya and Yoga are different paths; but he who gives all his soul to one reaches the end of the two.

Because the victory won by the man of wisdom is also won by the man of good work. That man sees indeed the truth who sees that vision and creation are one.

The man of wisdom has achieved holy work and the man of holy work has achieved wisdom. These truths are by definition.

But renunciation, Arjuna, is difficult to attain without Yoga of work. When a sage is one in Yoga he soon is one in God.

Without holy action, that is, without going beyond both action and inaction, renunciation is incomplete. Holy action does not precede renunciation; they are the same.

No one stains a man who is pure, who is in harmony, who is master of his life, whose soul is one with the soul of all.

"I am not doing any work", thinks the man who is in harmony, who sees the truth. For in seeing or hearing, smelling or touching, in eating or walking, or sleeping, or breathing, in talking or grasping or relaxing, and even in opening or closing his eyes, he remembers: "It is the servants of my soul that are working."

Nature serves itself.

Offer all thy works to God, throw off selfish bonds, and do thy work. No sin can then stain thee, even as waters do not stain the leaf of the lotus.

The Yogi works for the purification of the soul: he throws off selfish attachment, and thus it is only his body or his senses or his mind or his reason that works.

This man of harmony surrenders the reward of his work and thus attains final peace: the man of disharmony, urged by desire, is attached to reward and remains in bondage.

The reward may be emotional as well as monetary.

The ruler of his soul surrenders in mind all work, and rests in the joy of quietness in the castle of nine gates of his body: he neither does selfish work nor causes others to do it.

The Lord of the world is beyond the works of the world and their working, and beyond the results of these works; but the work of Nature rolls on.

The evil works or the good works of men are not his work. Wisdom is darkened by unwisdom, and this leads them astray.

But those whose unwisdom is made pure by the wisdom of their inner Spirit, their wisdom is unto them a sun and in its radiance they see the Supreme.

Their thoughts on Him and one with Him, they abide in Him, and He is the end of their journey. And they reach the land of never-returning, because their wisdom has made them pure of sin.

With the same evenness of love they behold a Brahmin who is learned and holy, or a cow, or an elephant, or a dog, and even the man who eats a dog.

Those whose minds are ever serene win the victory of life on this earth. God is pure and ever one, and ever one they are in God.

The man who sees Brahman abides in Brahman: his reason is steady, gone is his delusion. When pleasure comes he is not shaken, and when pain comes he trembles not.

He is not bound by things without, and within he finds inner gladness. His soul is one in Brahman and he attains everlasting joy.

For the pleasures that come from the world bear in them sorrows to come. They come and they go, they are transient: not in them do the wise find joy.

But he who on this earth, before his departure, can endure the storms of desire and wrath, this man is a Yogi, this man has joy.

Only the strength of the "joy" of wisdom is enough to keep the mind free of all desire. This holy joy is neither joy nor pain nor anywhere between joy and pain, but is the elimination of joy and pain.

He has inner joy, he has inner gladness, and he has found inner Light. This Yogi attains the Nirvana of Brahman: he is one with God and goes unto God.

Holy men reach the Nirvana of Brahman: their sins are no more, their doubts are gone, their soul is in harmony, their joy is in the good of all.

Because the peace of God is with them whose mind and soul are in harmony, who are free from desire and wrath, who know their own soul.

When the sage of silence, the Muni, closes the doors of his soul and, resting his inner gaze between the eyebrows, keeps peaceful even the ebbing and flowing of breath; and with life and mind and reason in harmony, and with desire and fear and wrath gone, keeps silent his soul before final freedom, he in truth has attained final freedom.

He knows me, the God of the worlds who accepts the offerings of men, the God who is the friend of all. He knows me and he attains peace.

6

Krishna

He who works not for an earthly reward, but does the work to be done, he is a Sanyasi, he is a Yogi: not he who lights not the sacred fire or offers not the holy sacrifice.

To speak the Truth at all times is the only holy sacrifice. He is a Yogi who speaks truly.

Because the Sanyasi of renunciation is also a Yogi of holy work; and no man can be a Yogi who surrenders not his earthly will.

When the sage climbs the heights of Yoga, he follows the path of work; but when he reaches the heights of Yoga, he is in the land of peace.

And he reaches the heights of Yoga when he surrenders his earthly will: when he is not bound by the work of his senses, and he is not bound by his earthly works.

Arise therefore! And with the help of thy Spirit lift up thy soul: allow not thy soul to fall. For thy soul can be thy friend, and thy soul can be thine enemy.

The soul of man is his friend when by the Spirit he has conquered his soul; but when a man is not lord of his soul then this becomes his own enemy.

When his soul is in peace he is in peace, and then his soul is in God. In cold or in heat, in pleasure or pain, in glory or disgrace, he is ever in Him.

When, happy with vision and wisdom, he is master of his own inner life, his soul sublime set on high, then he is called a Yogi in harmony. To him gold or stones or earth are one.

He has risen on the heights of his soul. And in peace he beholds relatives, companions and friends, those impartial or indifferent or who hate him: he sees them all with the same inner peace.

Day after day, let the Yogi practise the harmony of soul: in a secret place, in deep solitude, master of his mind, hoping for nothing, desiring nothing.

Let him find a place that is pure and a seat that is restful. On that seat let him rest and practise Yoga for the purification of the soul: with the life of his body and mind in peace; his soul in silence before the One.

With soul in peace, and all fear gone, and strong in the vow of holiness, let him rest with mind in harmony, his soul on me, his God supreme.

The Yogi who, lord of his mind, ever prays in this harmony of soul, attains the peace of Nirvana, the peace supreme that is in me.

Yoga is harmony. Not for him who eats too much, or for him who eats too little; not for him who sleeps too little, or for him who sleeps too much.

A harmony in eating and resting, in sleeping and keeping awake: a perfection in whatever one does. This is the Yoga that gives peace from all pain.

When the mind of the Yogi is in harmony and finds rest in the Spirit within, all restless desires gone, then he is a Yukta, one in God.

Then his soul is a lamp whose light is steady, for it burns in a shelter where no winds come.

When the mind is resting in the stillness of the prayer of Yoga, and by the grace of the Spirit sees the Spirit and therein finds fulfilment; then seeker knows the joy of Eternity: a vision seen by reason far beyond what senses can see. He abides therein and moves not from Truth.

He has found joy and Truth, a vision for him supreme. He is therein steady: the greatest pain moves him not.

In this union of Yoga there is liberty: a deliverance from the oppression of pain. This Yoga must be followed with faith, with a strong and courageous heart.

When all desires are in peace and the mind, withdrawing within, gathers the multitudinous straying senses into the harmony of recollection, then, with reason armed with resolution, let the seeker quietly lead the mind into the Spirit, and let all his thoughts be silenced.

And whenever the mind unsteady and restless strays away from the Spirit, let him ever and for ever lead it again to the Spirit.

Thus the joy supreme comes to the Yogi whose heart is still, whose passions are peace, who is pure from sin, who is one with Brahman, with God.

The Yogi who pure from sin ever prays in this harmony of soul soon feels the joy of Eternity, the infinite joy of union with God.

He sees himself in the heart of all beings and he sees all beings in his heart. This is the vision of the Yogi of harmony, a vision which is ever one.

And when he sees me in all and he sees all in me, then I never leave him and he never leaves me.

He who in this oneness of love, loves me in whatever he sees, wherever this man may live, in truth this man lives in me.

And he is the greatest Yogi he whose vision is ever one: when the pleasures and pain of others is his own pleasure and pain.

Arjuna

Thou hast told me of a Yoga of constant oneness. O Krishna, of a communion

which is ever one. But, Krishna, the mind is inconstant: in its restlessness I cannot find rest.

The mind is restless, Krishna, impetuous, self-willed, hard to train: to master the mind seems as difficult as to master the mighty winds.

Krishna

The mind is indeed restless, Arjuna: it is indeed hard to train. But by constant practice and by freedom from passions the mind in truth can be trained.

When the mind is not in harmony, this divine communion is hard to attain; but the man whose mind is in harmony attains it, if he knows and if he strives.

Arjuna

And if a man strives and fails and reaches not the End of Yoga, for his mind is not in Yoga; and yet this man has faith, what is his end, O Krishna?

Far from earth and far from heaven, wandering in the pathless winds, does he vanish like a cloud into air, not having found the path of God?

Be a light in my darkness, Krishna: be thou unto me a Light. Who can solve this doubt but thee?

Krishna

Neither in this world nor in the world to come does ever this man pass away; for the man who does the good, my son, never treads the path of death.

He dwells for innumerable years in the heaven of those who did good; and then this man who failed in Yoga is born again in the house of the good and the great.

He may even be born into a family of Yogis, where the wisdom of Yoga shines; but to be born in such a family is a rare event in this world.

And he begins his new life with the wisdom of a former life; and he begins to strive again, ever onwards towards perfection.

During his life he sows the seeds for a crop which he himself cannot grow.
If a man knows of God, but is too weak to live intimately with God, then he will rear his children and his friends to be stronger than himself.

Because his former yearning and struggle irresistibly carries him onwards, and even he who merely yearns for Yoga goes beyond the words of books.

And thus the Yogi ever-striving, and with soul pure from sin, attains perfection through many lives and reaches the End Supreme.

Be thou a Yogi, Arjuna! Because the Yogi goes beyond those who only follow the path of the austere, or of wisdom, or of work.

And the greatest of all Yogis is he who with all his soul has faith, and he who with all his soul loves me.

7

Krishna

Hear now, Arjuna, how thou shalt have the full vision of me, if thy heart is set on me and if, striving for Yoga, I am thy refuge supreme.

And I will speak to thee of that wisdom and vision which, when known, there is nothing else for thee to know.

Among thousands of men perhaps one strives for perfection; and among thousands of those who strive perhaps one knows me in truth.

The visible forms of my nature are eight: earth, water, fire, air, ether; the mind, reason, and the sense of "I".

But beyond my visible nature is my invisible Spirit. This is the fountain of life whereby this universe has its being.

All things have their life in this Life, and I am their beginning and end.

In this whole vast universe there is nothing higher than I. All the worlds have their rest in me, as many pearls upon a string.

I am the taste of living waters and the light of the sun and the moon. I am OM, the sacred word of the Vedas, sound in silence, heroism in men.

I am the pure fragrance that comes from the earth and the brightness of fire I am. I am the life of all living beings, and the austere life of those who train their souls.

And I am from everlasting the seed of eternal life. I am the intelligence of the intelligent. I am the beauty of the beautiful.

When this is beauty of soul and therefore of wisdom.

I am the power of those who are strong, when this power is free from passions and selfish desires. I am desire when this is pure, when this desire is not against righteousness.

And know that the three Gunas, the three states of the soul, come from me: peaceful light, restless life, and lifeless darkness. But I am not in them: they are in me.

How the whole world is under the delusion of these shadows of the soul, and knows not me though for ever I am!

My mysterious cloud of appearance is hard to pass beyond; but those who in truth come to me go beyond the world of shadows.

But men who do evil seek not me: their soul is darkened by delusion. Their vision is veiled by the cloud of appearance; their heart has chosen the path of evil.

There are four kinds of men who are good, and the four love me, Arjuna: the man of sorrows, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of something he treasures, and the man of vision.

The greatest of these is the man of vision, who is ever one, who loves the One. For I love the man of vision, and the man of vision loves me.

These four kinds of men are good; but the man of vision and I are one. His whole soul is one in me, and I am his Path Supreme.

At the end of many lives the man of vision comes to me. "God is all" this great man says. Such a spirit sublime how rarely is he found!

Men whose desires have clouded their vision, give their love to other gods, and led by their selfish nature, follow many other paths.

For if a man desires with faith to adore this or that god, I give faith unto that man, a faith that is firm and moves not.

And, when this man, full of faith, goes and adores that god, from him he attains his desires; but whatever is good comes from me.

But these are men of little wisdom, and the good they want has an end. Those who love the gods go to the gods; but those who love me come unto me.

The unwise think that I am that form of my lower nature which is seen by mortal eyes: they know not my higher nature, imperishable and supreme.

For my glory is not seen by all: I am hidden by my veil of mystery; and in its delusion the world knows me not, who was never born and for ever I am.

I know all that was and is and is to come, Arjuna; but no one in truth knows me.

All beings are born in delusion, the delusion of division which comes from desire and hate.

But there are men who do what is good, and whose sins have come to an end. They are free from the delusion of division, and they worship me with all their soul.

For those are men who take refuge in me and strive to be free from age and death, they know Brahman, they know Atman, and they know what Karma is.

They know me in earth and in heaven, and in the fire of sacrifice. Their souls are pure, in harmony, and even when their time to go comes they see me.

8

Arjuna

Who is Brahman? Who is Atman? And what is Karma, Spirit Supreme? What is the kingdom of earth? And what is the kingdom of Light.

Who offers the sacrifice in the body? How is the offering made? And when the time to go comes, how do those whose soul is in harmony know thee?

Krishna

Brahman is the Supreme, the Eternal. Atman is his Spirit in man. Karma is the force of creation, wherefrom all things have their life.

Matter is the kingdom of the earth, which in time passes away; but the Spirit is the kingdom of Light. In this body I offer sacrifice, and my body is a sacrifice.

And he who at the end of his time leaves his body thinking of me, he in truth comes to my being: he in truth comes unto me.

For on whomsoever one thinks at the last moment of life, unto him in truth he goes, through sympathy with his nature.

Think of me therefore at all times; remember thou me and fight. And with

mind and reason on me, thou shalt in truth come to me.

Remember that in fact you are dying and being reborn each and every moment. You are not the same person for two consecutive moments, nor is it the same world. So think of God each moment, and you will find yourself with God.

For if a man thinks of the Spirit Supreme with a mind that wanders not, because it has been trained in Yoga, he goes to that Spirit of Light.

He who remembers the Poet, the Creator, who rules all things from all time, smaller than the smallest atom, but upholding this vast universe, who shines like the sun beyond darkness, far far beyond human thought; and at the time of his departure is in union of love and the power of Yoga and, with a mind that wanders not, keeps the power of his life between his eye-brows, he goes to that Spirit Supreme, the Supreme Spirit of Light.

Hear now of that Path which the seers of the Veda call the Eternal, and which is reached by those who, in peace from earthly passions, live a life of holiness and strive for perfection.

If when a man leaves his earthly body he is in the silence of Yoga and, closing the doors of the soul, he keeps the mind in his heart, and places in the head the breath of life.

And remembering me he utters OM, the eternal WORD of Brahman, he goes to the Path Supreme.

Those who in the devotion of Yoga rest all their soul ever on me, very soon come unto me.

And when those great spirits are in me, the Abode of joy supreme, they never return again to this world of human sorrow.

For all the worlds pass away, even the world of Brahma, the Creator: they pass away and return. But he who comes unto me goes no more from death to death.

They who know that the vast day of Brahma, the god of creation, ever lasts a thousand ages; and that his night lasts also a thousand ages - they know in truth day and night.

When that day comes, all the visible creation arises from the Invisible; and all creation disappears into the invisible when the night of darkness comes.

Thus the infinity of beings which live again and again all powerlessly disappear when the night and darkness comes; and they all return again at the rising of the

day.

But beyond this creation, visible and invisible, there is an Invisible, higher, Eternal; and when all things pass away this remains for ever and ever.

This Invisible is called the Everlasting and is the highest End supreme. Those who reach him never return. This is my supreme abode.

This Supreme Spirit, Arjuna, is attained by an ever-living love. In him all things have their life, and from him all things have come.

Hear now of a time of light when Yogis go to eternal Life; and hear of a time of darkness when they return to death on earth.

If they depart in the flame, the light, the day, the bright weeks of the moon and the months of increasing light of the sun, those who know Brahman go unto Brahman.

But if they depart in the smoke, the night, the dark weeks of the moon and the months of decreasing days of the sun, they enter the lunar light, and return to the world of death.

These are the two paths that are for ever: the path of light and the path of darkness. The one leads to the land of never- returning: the other returns to sorrow.

The Yogi who knows these two paths lives never more in delusion. Therefore ever and for ever be thou one in Yoga, Arjuna.

There is a reward that comes from the Vedas, or from sacrifice, from an austere life or from holy gifts. But a far greater reward is attained by the Yogi who knows the truth of Light and darkness: he attains his Everlasting Home.

9

Krishna

I will tell thee a supreme mystery, because thy soul has faith. It is vision and wisdom and when known thou shalt be free from sin.

It is the supreme mystery and wisdom and the purification supreme. Seen in a wonder of vision, it is a path of righteousness very easy to follow, leading to the highest End.

But those who have no faith in this Truth, come not unto me: they return to the cycles of life and death.

All this visible universe comes from my invisible Being. All beings have their rest in me, but I have not my rest in them.

And in truth they rest not in me: consider my sacred mystery. I am the source of all beings, I support them all, but I rest not in them.

Even as the mighty winds rest in the vastness of the ethereal space, all beings have their rest in me. Know thou this truth.

At the end of the night of time all things return to my nature; and when the new day of time begins I bring them again into light.

Thus through my nature I bring forth all creation, and this rolls round in the circles of time.

But I am not bound by this vast work of creation. I am and I watch the drama of works.

I watch and in its work of creation nature brings forth all that moves and moves not: and thus the revolutions of the world go round.

But the fools of the world know not me when they see me in my own human body. They know not my Spirit supreme, the infinite God of this all.

Their hope is in vain, their works are in vain, their learning is vain, their thoughts are vain. They fall down to the nature of demons, towards the darkness of delusion of hell.

But there are some great souls who know me: their refuge is my own divine nature. They love me with a oneness of love: they know that I am the source of all.

They praise me with devotion, they praise me for ever and ever. Their vows are strong; their harmony is ever one; and they worship me with their love.

Others worship me, and work for me, with the sacrifice of spiritual vision. They worship me as One and as many, because they see that all is in me.

For I am the sacrifice and the offering, the sacred gift and the sacred plant. I am the holy words, the holy food, the holy fire, and the offering that is made in the fire.

I am the Father of this universe, and even the Source of the Father. I am the

Mother of this universe, and the Creator of all. I am the Highest to be known, the Path of purification, the holy OM, the Three Vedas.

I am the Way, and the Master who watches in silence; thy friend and thy shelter and thy abode of peace. I am the beginning and the middle and the end of all things: their seed of Eternity, their Treasure supreme.

The heat of the sun comes from me, and I send and withhold the rain. I am life immortal and death; I am what is and I am what is not.

There are men who know the Three Vedas, who drink the Soma, who are pure from sin. They worship and pray for heaven. They reach indeed the heaven of Indra, the king of the gods, and there they enjoy royal pleasures.

They enjoy that vast world of heaven, but the reward of their work comes to an end: they return to the world of death. They follow the words of the Three Vedas, they lust for pleasures that pass away: in truth they attain pleasures that pass away.

But to those who adore me with a pure oneness of soul, to those who are ever in harmony, I increase what they have and I give them what they have not.

Even those who in faith worship other gods, because of their love they worship me, although not in the right way.

For I accept every sacrifice, and I am their Lord supreme. But they know not my pure Being, and because of this they fall.

For those who worship the gods go to the gods, and those who worship the fathers go to the fathers. Those who worship the lower spirits go to the lower spirits; but those who worship me come unto me.

He who offers to me with devotion only a leaf, or a flower, or a fruit, or even a little water, this I accept from that yearning soul, because with a pure heart it was offered with love.

Whatever you do, or eat, or give, or offer in adoration, let it be an offering to me; and whatever you suffer, suffer it for me.

Thus thou shalt be free from the bonds of Karma which yield fruits that are evil and good; and with thy soul one in renunciation thou shalt be free and come to me.

I am the same to all beings, and my love is ever the same; but those who worship me with devotion, they are in me and I am in them.

For even if the greatest sinner worships me with all his soul, he must be considered righteous, because of his righteous will.

And he shall soon become pure and reach everlasting peace. For this is my word of promise, that he who loves me shall not perish.

For all those who come to me for shelter, however weak or humble or sinful they may be - women or Vaisyas or Sudras - they all reach the Path supreme.

How much more the holy Brahmins and the royal saints who love me! Having come to this world of sorrow, which is transient, love thou me.

Give me thy mind and give me thy heart, give me thy offerings and thy adoration; and thus with thy soul in harmony, and making me thy goal supreme, thou shalt in truth come to me.

10

Krishna

Hear again mighty Arjuna, hear the glory of my Word again. I speak for thy true good, because thy heart finds joy in me.

The hosts of the gods know not my birth, nor the great seers on earth, for all the gods come from me, and all the great seers, all.

He who knows I am beginningless, unborn, the Lord of all the worlds, this mortal is free from delusion, and from all evils he is free.

Intelligence, spiritual vision, victory over delusion, patient forgiveness, truth, self-harmony, peacefulness, joys and sorrows, to be and not to be, fear and freedom from fear, harmlessness and non-violence, an ever-quietness, satisfaction, simple austerity, generosity, honour and dishonour: these are the conditions of mortals and they all arise from me.

The seven seers of times immemorial, and the four founders of the human race, being in me, came from my mind; and from them came this world of men.

He who knows my glory and power, he has the oneness of unwavering harmony. This is my truth.

I am the One source of all: the evolution of all comes from me. The wise think this and they worship me in adoration of love.

Their thoughts are on me, their life is in me, and they give light to each other.

For ever they speak of my glory; and they find peace and joy.

To those who are ever in harmony, and who worship me with their love, I give the Yoga of vision and with this they come to me.

In my mercy I dwell in their hearts and I dispel their darkness of ignorance by the light of the lamp of wisdom.

Arjuna

Supreme Brahman, Light supreme, and supreme purification, Spirit divine eternal, unborn God from the beginning, omnipresent Lord of all.

Thus all the seers praised thee: the seer divine Narada; Asita, Devala and Vyasa. And this is now thy revelation.

I have faith in all thy words, because these words are words of truth, and neither the gods in heaven nor the demons in hell can grasp thy infinite vastness.

Only thy Spirit knows thy Spirit: only thou knowest thyself. Source of Being in all beings, God of gods, ruler of all.

Tell me in thy mercy of thy divine glory wherein thou art ever, and all the worlds are.

For ever in meditation, how shall I ever know thee? And in what manifestations shall I think of thee, my Lord?

Speak to me again in full of thy power and of thy glory, for I am never tired, never, of hearing thy words of life.

Krishna

Listen and I shall reveal to thee some manifestations of my divine glory. Only the greatest, Arjuna, for there is no end to my infinite greatness.

I am the soul, prince victorious, which dwells in the heart of all things. I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all that lives.

Among the sons of light I am Vishnu, and of luminaries the radiant sun. I am the lord of the winds and storms, and of the lights in the night I am the moon.

Of the Vedas I am the Veda of songs, and I am Indra, the chief of the gods.

Above man's senses I am the mind, and in all living beings I am the light of consciousness.

Among the terrible powers I am the god of destruction; and among monsters Vitesa, the lord of wealth. Of radiant spirits I am fire; and among high mountains the mountain of the gods.

Of priests I am the divine priest Brihaspati, and among warriors Skanda, the god of war. Of lakes I am the vast ocean.

Among great seers I am Bhrigu; and of words I am OM, the Word of Eternity. Of prayers I am the prayer of silence; and of things that move not I am the Himalayas.

Of trees I am the tree of life, and of heavenly seers Narada. Among celestial musicians, Chitra-ratha; and among seers on earth, Kapila.

Of horses I am the horse of Indra, and of elephants his elephant Airavata. Among me I am king of men.

Of weapons I am the thunderbolt, and of cows the cow of wonder. Among creators I am the creator of love; and among serpents the serpent of Eternity.

Among the snakes of mystery I am Ananta, and of those born in the waters I am Varuna, their lord. Of the spirits of the fathers I am Aryaman, and of rulers Yama, the ruler of death.

Of demons I am Prahlada their prince, and of all things that measure I am time. Of beasts I am the king of beasts, and of birds Vainateya who carries a god.

Among things of purification I am the wind, and among warriors I am Rama, the hero supreme. Of fishes in the sea I am Makara the wonderful, and among all rivers the holy Ganges.

I am the beginning and the middle and the end of all that is. Of all knowledge I am the knowledge of the Soul. Of the many paths of reason I am the one that leads to Truth.

Note here that many paths of reason do not lead to Truth, but one does.

Of sounds I am the first sound; of compounds I am coordination. I am time, never-ending time. I am the Creator who sees all.

I am death that carries off all things, and I am the source of things to come. Of feminine nouns I am Fame and Prosperity; Speech, Memory and Intelligence; Constancy and patient Forgiveness.

I am the Brihat songs of all songs in the Vedas. I am the Gayatri of all measures in verse. Of months I am the first of the year, and of the seasons the season of flowers.

I am the cleverness in the gambler's dice. I am the beauty of all things beautiful. I am victory and the struggle for victory. I am the goodness of those who are good.

Of the children of Vrishni I am Krishna; and of the sons of Pandu I am Arjuna. Among seers in silence I am Vyasa; and among poets the poet Usana.

I am the sceptre of the rulers of men; and I am the wise policy of those who seek victory. I am the silence of hidden mysteries; and I am the knowledge of those who know.

And know, Arjuna, that I am the seed of all things that are; and that no being that moves or moves not can ever be without me.

There is no end of my divine greatness, Arjuna. What I have spoken here to thee shows only a small part of my Infinity.

Know thou that whatever is beautiful and good, whatever has glory and power is only a portion of my own radiance.

But of what help is it to thee to know this diversity? Know that with one single fraction of my Being I pervade and support the Universe, and know that I AM.

11

Arjuna

In thy mercy thou hast told me the secret supreme of thy Spirit, and thy words have dispelled my delusion.

I have heard in full from thee of the coming and going of beings, and also of thy infinite greatness.

I have heard thy words of truth, but my soul is yearning to see: to see thy form as God of this all.

If thou thinkest, O my Lord, that it can be seen by me, show me, O God of Yoga, the glory of thine own Supreme Being.

Krishna

By hundreds and then by thousands, behold, Arjuna, my manifold celestial forms of innumerable shapes and colours.

Behold the gods of the sun, and those of fire and light; the gods of storm and lightning, and the two luminous charioteers of heaven. Behold, descendant Bharata, marvels never seen before.

See now the whole universe with all things that move and move not, and whatever thy soul may yearn to see. See it all as One in me.

But thou never canst see me with these thy mortal eyes: I will give thee divine sight. Behold my wonder and glory.

Sanjaya

When Krishna, the God of Yoga, had thus spoken, O king, he appeared then to Arjuna in his supreme divine form.

And Arjuna saw in that form countless visions of wonder: eyes from innumerable faces, numerous celestial ornaments, numberless heavenly weapons;

Celestial garlands and vestures, forms anointed with heavenly perfumes. The Infinite Divinity was facing all sides, all marvels contained in him.

If the light of a thousand suns suddenly arose in the sky, that splendour might be compared to the radiance of the Supreme Spirit.

And Arjuna saw in that radiance the whole universe in its variety, standing in a vast unity in the body of the God of gods.

Trembling with awe and wonder, Arjuna bowed his head, and joining his hands in adoration he thus spoke to his God.

Arjuna

I see in thee all the gods, O my God; and the infinity of the beings of thy creation. I see god Brahma on his throne of lotus, and all the seers and serpents of light.

All around I behold thy Infinity: the power of thy innumerable arms, the visions from thy innumerable eyes, the words from thy innumerable mouths, and the fire of life of thy innumerable bodies. Nowhere I see a beginning or middle or end of thee, O God of all, Form Infinite!

I see the splendour of an infinite beauty which illumines the whole universe. It is thee! with thy crown and sceptre and circle. How difficult thou art to see! But I see thee: as fire, as the sun, blinding, incomprehensible.

Thou art the Imperishable, the highest End of knowledge, the support of this vast universe. Thou, the everlasting ruler of the law of righteousness, the Spirit who is and who was at the beginning.

I see thee without beginning, middle, or end; I behold thy infinite power, the power of thy innumerable arms. I see thine eyes as the sun and the moon. And I see thy face as a sacred fire that gives light and life to the whole universe in the splendour of a vast offering.

Heaven and earth and all the infinite spaces are filled with thy Spirit; and before the wonder of thy fearful majesty the three worlds tremble.

The hosts of the gods come to thee and, joining palms in awe and wonder, they praise and adore. Sages and saints come to thee, and praise thee with songs of glory.

The Rudras of destruction, the Vasus of fire, the Sadhyas of prayers, the Adityas of the sun; the lesser gods Visve-Devas, the two Asvins charioteers of heaven, the Maruts of winds and storms, the Ushmapas spirits of ancestors; the celestial choirs of Gandharvas, the Yakshas keepers of wealth, the demons of hell and the Siddhas who on earth reached perfection: they all behold thee with awe and wonder.

But the worlds also behold thy fearful mighty form, with many mouths and eyes, with many bellies, thighs and feet, frightening with terrible teeth: they tremble in fear, and I also tremble.

When I see thy vast form, reaching the sky, burning with many colours, with wide open mouths, with vast flaming eyes, my heart shakes in terror: my power is gone and gone is my peace. O Vishnu!

Like the fire at the end of Time which burns all in the last day, I see thy vast mouths and thy terrible teeth. Where am I? Where is my shelter? Have mercy on me, God of gods, Refuge Supreme of the world!

The realization of Truth is not *like* the fire at the end of Time, it *is* the fire at the end of Time which burns all in the last day.

The sons of Dhrita-rashtra, all of them, with other princes of this earth, and Bhishma and Drona and great Karma, and also the greatest warriors of our host, all enter rushing into thy mouths, terror-inspiring with their fearful fangs. Some are caught between them, and their heads crushed into powder.

As roaring torrents of water rush forward into the ocean, so do these heroes of our mortal world rush into thy flaming mouths.

And as moths swiftly rushing enter a burning flame and die, so all these men rush to thy fire, rush fast to their own destruction.

The flames of thy mouths devour all the worlds. Thy glory fills the whole universe. But how terrible thy splendours burn!

Reveal thyself to me! Who art thou in this form of terror? I adore thee, O god supreme: be gracious unto me. I yearn to know thee, who art from the beginning: for I understand not thy mysterious works.

Krishna

I am all-powerful Time which destroys all things, and I have come here to slay these men. Even if thou dost not fight, all the warriors facing thee shall die.

Arise therefore! Win thy glory, conquer thine enemies, and enjoy thy kingdom. Through the fate of their Karma I have doomed them to die: be thou merely the means of my work.

Drona, Bhishma, Jayad-ratha and Karma, and other heroic warriors of this great war have already been slain by me: tremble not, fight and slay them. Thou shalt conquer thine enemies in battle.

Sanjaya

When Arjuna heard the words of Krishna he folded his hands trembling; and with a faltering voice, and bowing in adoration, he spoke.

Arjuna

It is right, O God, that peoples sing thy praises, and that they are glad and rejoice in thee. All evil spirits fly away in fear; but the hosts of the saints bow down before thee.

How could they not bow down in love and adoration, before thee, God of gods, Spirit Supreme? Thou creator of Brahma, the god of creation, thou infinite, eternal, refuge of the world! Thou who art all that is, and all that is not, and all that is Beyond.

Thou God from the beginning, God in man since man was. Thou Treasure supreme of this vast universe. Thou the One to be known and the Knower, the final resting place. Thou infinite Presence in whom all things are.

God of the winds and the waters, of fire and death! Lord of the solitary moon, the Creator, the Ancestor of all! Adoration unto thee, a thousand adorations; and again and again unto thee adoration.

Adoration unto thee who art before me and behind me: adoration unto thee who art on all sides. God of all. All-powerful God of immeasurable might. Thou art the consummation of all: thou art all.

If in careless presumption, or even in friendliness, I said "Krishna! Son of Yadu! My friend!", this I did unconscious of thy greatness.

And if in irreverence I was disrespectful - when alone or with others - and made a jest of thee at games, or resting, or at a feast, forgive me in thy mercy, O thou Immeasurable!

Father of all. Master supreme. Power supreme in all the worlds. Who is like thee? Who is beyond thee?

I bow before thee, I prostrate in adoration; and I beg thy grace, O glorious Lord! As a father to his son, as a friend to his friend, as a lover to his beloved, be gracious unto me, O God.

In a vision I have seen what no man has seen before: I rejoice in exultation, and yet my heart trembles with fear. Have mercy upon me, Lord of gods, Refuge of the whole universe: show me again thine own human form.

I yearn to see thee again with thy crown and sceptre and circle. Show thyself to me again in thine own four-armed form, thou of arms infinite, Infinite Form.

Krishna

By my grace and my wondrous power I have shown to thee, Arjuna, this form supreme made of light, which is the Infinite, the All: mine own form from the beginning, never seen by man before.

Neither Vedas, nor sacrifices, nor studies, nor benefactions, nor rituals, nor fearful austerities can give the vision of my Form Supreme. Thou alone hast seen this Form, thou the greatest of the Kurus.

Thou hast seen the tremendous form of my greatness, but fear not, and be not bewildered. Free from fear and with a glad heart see my friendly form again.

Sanjaya

Thus spoke Vasudeva to Arjuna, and revealed himself in his human form. The God of all gave peace to his fears and showed himself in his peaceful beauty.

Arjuna

When I see thy gentle human face, Krishna, I return to my own nature, and my heart has peace.

Krishna

Thou hast seen now face to face my form divine so hard to see: for even the gods in heaven ever long to see what thou hast seen.

Not by the Vedas, or an austere life, or gifts to the poor, or ritual offerings can I be seen as thou hast seen me.

Only by love can men see me, and know me, and come unto me.

He who works for me, who loves me, whose End Supreme I am, free from attachment to all things, and with love for all creation, he in truth comes unto me.

12

Arjuna

Those who in oneness worship thee as God immanent in all; and those who worship the Transcendent, the Imperishable - Of these, who are the best Yogis?

Krishna

Those who set their hearts on me and ever in love worship me, and who have unshakable faith, these I hold as the best Yogis.

But those who worship the Imperishable, the Infinite, the Transcendent unmanifested; the Omnipresent, the Beyond all thought, the Immutable, the Neverchanging, the Ever One;

Who have all the powers of their soul in harmony, and the same loving mind for all; who find joy in the good of all beings - they reach in truth my very self.

Yet greater is the toil of those whose minds are set on the Transcendent, for the path of the Transcendent is hard for mortals to attain.

But they for whom I am the End Supreme, who surrender all their works to me,

and who with pure love meditate on me and adore me - these I very soon deliver from the ocean of death and life-in-death, because they have set their heart on me.

Set thy heart on me alone, and give to me thy understanding: thou shalt in truth live in me hereafter.

But if thou art unable to rest thy mind on me, then seek to reach me by the practice of Yoga concentration.

If thou art not able to practise concentration, consecrate all thy work to me. By merely doing actions in my service thou shalt attain perfection.

And if even this thou art not able to do, then take refuge in devotion to me and surrender to me the fruit of all thy work - with the selfless devotion of a humble heart.

For concentration is better than mere practice, and meditation is better than concentration; but higher than meditation is surrender in love of the fruit of one's actions, for on surrender follows peace.

In other words, if you are unable to fill your heart with love of the Infinite for every moment of every day, then do the best you can, and strive to improve. In truth, there can be no real concentration, or meditation, or work, or surrender, or peace, without love of the Infinite.

The man who has a good will for all, who is friendly and has compassion; who has no thoughts of "I" or "mine", whose peace is the same in pleasures and sorrows, and who is forgiving;

This Yogi of union, ever full of my joy, whose soul is in harmony and whose determination is strong; whose mind and inner vision are set on me - this man loves me, and he is dear to me.

He whose peace is not shaken by others, and before whom other people find peace, beyond excitement and anger and fear - he is dear to me.

He who is free from vain expectations, who is pure, who is wise and knows what to do, who in inner peace watches both sides, who shakes not, who works for God and not for himself - this man loves me, and he is dear to me.

He who feels neither excitement nor repulsion, who complains not and lusts not for things; who is beyond good and evil, and who has love - he is dear to me.

The man whose love is the same for his enemies or his friends, whose soul is the same in honour or disgrace, who is beyond heat or cold or pleasure or pain, who is free from the chains of attachments;

Who is balanced in blame and in praise, whose soul is silent, who is happy with whatever he has, whose home is not in this world, and who has love - this man is dear to me.

But even dearer to me are those who have faith and love, and who have me as their End Supreme: those who hear my words of Truth, and who come to the waters of Everlasting Life.

13

Krishna

This body, Arjuna, is called the field. He who knows this is called the knower of the field.

Know that I am the knower in all the fields of my creation; and that the wisdom which sees the field and the knower of the field is true wisdom.

Hear from me briefly what the field is and how it is, what its changes are and whence each one comes; who is the knower and what is his power.

This has been sung by seers of the Vedas in many musical measures of verse; and in great words about Brahman, words of faith and full of truth.

The five elements, the thought "I", consciousness, sub-consciousness, the five powers of feeling and the five of action, the one mind over them, the five fields of sense- perception;

Desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, the power of mental unification, intelligence, and courage: this is the field and its modifications.

Humbleness, sincerity, harmlessness, forgiveness, uprightness, devotion to the spiritual master, purity, steadiness, self- harmony;

Freedom from the lust of the senses, absence of the thought of "I", perception of the sorrows of birth, death, old age, disease, and suffering;

Freedom from the chains of attachments, even from a selfish attachment to one's children, wife, or home; an ever-present evenness of mind in pleasant or unpleasant events;

A single oneness of pure love, of never-straying love for me; retiring to solitary places, and avoiding the noisy multitudes;

A constant yearning to know the inner Spirit, and a vision of Truth which gives liberation: this is true wisdom leading to vision. All against this is ignorance.

Now I shall tell thee of the End of wisdom. When a man knows this he goes beyond death. It is Brahman, beginningless, supreme: beyond what is and beyond what is not.

His hands and feet are everywhere, he has heads and mouths everywhere: he sees all, he hears all. He is in all, and he is.

The Light of consciousness comes to him through infinite powers of perception, and yet he is above all these powers. He is beyond all, and yet he supports all. He is beyond the world of matter, and yet he has joy in this world.

He is invisible: he cannot be seen. He is far and he is near, he moves and he moves not, he is within all and he is outside all.

He is ONE in all, but it seems as if he were many. He supports all beings: from him comes destruction, and from him comes creation.

He is the Light of all lights which shines beyond all darkness. It is vision, the end of vision, to be reached by vision, dwelling in the heart of all.

I have told thee briefly what is the field, what is wisdom, and what is the End of man's vision. When a man knows this he enters into my Being.

Know that Prakriti, Nature, and Purusha, Spirit, are both without beginning, and that temporal changes and Gunas, conditions, come all from nature.

Nature is the source of all material things: the maker, the means of making, and the thing made. Spirit is the source of all consciousness which feels pleasure and feels pain.

The spirit of man when in nature feels the ever-changing conditions of nature. When he binds himself to things everchanging, a good or evil fate whirls him round through life-in- death.

But the Spirit Supreme in man is beyond fate. He watches, gives blessing, bears all, feels all. He is called the Lord Supreme and the Supreme Soul.

He who knows in truth this Spirit and knows nature with its changing conditions, wherever this man may be he is no more whirled round by fate.

Some by the Yoga of meditation, and by the grace of the Spirit, see the Spirit in themselves; some by the Yoga of the vision of Truth; and others by the Yoga of work.

And yet there are others who do not know, but they hear from others and adore. They also cross beyond death, because of their devotion to words of Truth.

Whatever is born, Arjuna, whether it moves or it moves not, know that it comes from the union of the field and the knower of the field.

He who sees that the Lord of all is ever the same in all that is, immortal in the field of mortality - he sees the truth.

And when a man sees that the God in himself is the same God in all that is, he hurts not himself by hurting others: then he goes indeed to the highest Path.

He who sees that all work, everywhere, is only the work of nature; and that the Spirit watches this work - he sees the truth.

When a man sees that the infinity of various beings is abiding in the ONE, and is an evolution from the ONE, then he becomes one with Brahman.

Beginningless and free from changing conditions, imperishable is the Spirit Supreme. Though he is in the body, not his is the work of the body, and he is pure from the imperfections of all work.

Just as the omnipresent ether is pure because intangible, so the Spirit dwelling in matter is pure from the touch of matter.

And even as one sun gives light to all things in this world, so the Lord of the field gives light to all his field.

Those who with the eye of inner vision see the distinction between the field and the knower of the field, and see the liberation of spirit from matter, they go into the Supreme.

14

Krishna

I will reveal again a supreme wisdom, of all wisdom the highest: sages who have known it have gone hence to supreme perfection.

Taking refuge in this wisdom they have become part of me: they are not reborn at the time of creation, and they are not destroyed at the time of dissolution.

In the vastness of my Nature I place the seed of things to come; and from this union comes the birth of all beings.

Wherever a being may be born, Arjuna, know that my Nature is his mother and that I am the Father who gave him life.

SATTVA, RAJAS, TAMAS - light, fire, and darkness - are the three constituents of nature. They appear to limit in finite bodies the liberty of their infinite Spirit.

The three "Gunas", or the "strands" are, intertwined, both the constituents and the changing conditions of nature. They are the light and harmony of practiced intelligence and skillful behaviour; the fire and desire of impure mental energy and restless passion; and the darkness of dullness and inertia. Until true wisdom is attained, they are clouds of matter darkening the Sun of the Spirit.

Of these Sattva because it is pure, and it gives light and is the health of life, binds to earthly happiness and to lower knowledge.

The "purity" of Sattva is not purity in wisdom, but in ignorance. It is the perfection of ignorance, the practice of ignorance in such a way that immediate suffering is avoided.

Rajas is the nature of passion, the source of thirst and attachment. It binds the soul of man to action.

Tamas, which is born of ignorance, darkens the soul of all men. It binds them to sleepy dullness, and then they do not watch and then they do not work.

Sattva binds to happiness; Rajas to action; Tamas, overclouding wisdom, binds to lack of vigilance.

Sometimes Sattva may prevail over Rajas and Tamas, at others Rajas over Tamas and Sattva, and at others Tamas over Sattva and Rajas.

When light shines from the portals of the body's dwelling, then we know that Sattva is in power.

Greed, busy activity, many undertakings, unrest, the lust of desire - these arise when Rajas increases.

Darkness, inertia, negligence, delusion - these appear when Tamas prevails.

If the soul meets death when Sattva prevails, then it goes to the pure regions of those who are seeking Truth.

Not so! A vital qualification is necessary here. The consequences of Sattva are determined by the quality of that Sattva. The confidence and clarity of Sattva are necessary for the successful pursuit of truth, but are

rarely used to such noble ends. Someone who experiences Sattva but who is not on a willful journey to Truth will certainly not go to "the pure regions of those who are seeking Truth", as those regions are reserved for those who are seeking Truth.

If a man meets death in a state of Rajas, he is reborn amongst those who are bound by their restless activity; and if he dies in Tamas he is reborn in the wombs of the irrational.

Any work when it is done bears the pure harmony of Sattva; but when done in Rajas it brings pain, and when done in Tamas it brings ignorance.

From Sattva arises wisdom, from Rajas greed, from Tamas negligence, delusion and ignorance.

Those who are in Sattva climb the path that leads on high, those who are in Rajas follow the level path, those who are in Tamas sink downwards on the lower path.

When the man of vision sees that the powers of nature are the only actors of this vast drama, and he beholds THAT which is beyond the powers of nature then he comes into my Being.

And when he goes beyond the three conditions of nature which constitute his mortal body then, free from birth, old age, and death, and sorrow, he enters into immortality.

Arjuna

How is the man known who has gone beyond the three powers of nature?
What is his path; and how does he transcend the three?

Krishna

He who hates not light, nor busy activity, nor even darkness, when they are near, neither longs for them when they are far;

Who unperturbed by changing conditions sits apart and watches and says "the powers of nature go round", and remains firm and shakes not;

Who dwells in his inner self, and is the same in pleasure and pain; to whom gold or stones or earth are one, and what is pleasing or displeasing leave him in peace; who is beyond both praise and blame, and whose mind is steady and quiet;

Who is the same in honour or disgrace, and has the same love for enemies or friends, who surrenders all selfish undertakings - this man has gone beyond the

three.

And he who with never-failing love adores me and works for me, he passes beyond the three powers and can be one with Brahman, the ONE.

For I am the abode of Brahman, the never-failing fountain of everlasting life. The law of righteousness is my law; and my joy is infinite joy.

15

Krishna

There is a tree, the tree is Transmigration, the Asvattha tree everlasting. Its roots are above in the Highest, and its branches are here below, its leaves are sacred songs, and he who knows them knows the Vedas.

Its branches spread from earth to heaven, and the powers of nature give them life. Its buds are the pleasures of the senses. Far down below, its roots stretch into the world of men, binding a mortal through selfish actions.

Men do not see the changing form of that tree, nor its beginning, nor its end, nor where its roots are. But let the wise see, and with the strong sword of dispassion let him cut this strong-rooted tree, and seek that path wherefrom those who go never return. Such a man can say: "I go for refuge to that Eternal Spirit from whom the stream of creation came at the beginning."

Because the man of pure vision, without pride or delusion, in liberty from the chains of attachments, with his soul ever in his inner Spirit, all selfish desires gone, and free from the two contraries known as pleasure and pain, goes to the abode of Eternity.

There the sun shines not, nor the moon gives light, nor fire burns, for the Light of my glory is there. Those who reach that abode return no more.

A spark of my eternal Spirit becomes in this world a living soul; and this draws around its centre the five senses and the mind resting in nature.

When the Lord of the body arrives, and when he departs and wanders on, he takes them over with him, as the wind takes perfumes from their place of sleep.

And he watches over the mind and its senses - ear, eyes, touch, and taste, and smell - and his consciousness enjoys their world.

When he departs, or when he stays, and with the powers of his nature enjoys life, those in delusion see him not, but he who has the eye of wisdom sees.

Seekers of union, ever striving, see him dwelling in their own hearts; but those who are not pure and have not wisdom, though they strive, never see him.

That splendour of light that comes from the sun and which illumines the whole universe, the soft light of the moon, the brightness of fire - know that they all come from me.

I come into the earth and with life-giving love I support all things on earth. And I become the scent and taste of the sacred plant Soma, which is the wandering moon.

I become the fire of life which is in all things that breathe; and in union with the breath that flows in and flows out I burn the four kinds of food.

And I am in the heart of all. With me come memory and wisdom, and without me they depart. I am the knower and the knowledge of the Vedas, and the creator of their end, the Vedanta.

There are two spirits in this universe, the perishable and the imperishable. The perishable is all things in creation. The imperishable is that which moves not.

But the highest spirit is another: it is called the Spirit Supreme. He is the God of Eternity who pervading all sustains all.

Because I am beyond the perishable, and even beyond the imperishable, in this world and in the Vedas I am known as the Spirit Supreme.

He who with a clear vision sees me as the Spirit Supreme he knows all there is to be known, and he adores me with all his soul.

I have revealed to thee the most secret doctrine, Arjuna. He who sees it has seen light, and his task in this world is done.

16

Krishna

Freedom from fear, purity of heart, constancy in sacred learning and contemplation, generosity, self-harmony, adoration, study of the scriptures, austerity, righteousness;

Non-violence, truth, freedom from anger, renunciation, serenity, aversion to fault-finding, sympathy for all beings, peace from greedy cravings, gentleness, modesty, steadiness;

Energy, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, a good will, freedom from pride - these are the treasures of the man who is born for heaven.

Deceitfulness, insolence and self-conceit, anger and harshness and ignorance - these belong to a man who is born for hell.

The virtues of heaven are for liberation but the sins of hell are the chains of the soul. Grieve not, Arjuna, for heaven is thy final end.

There are two natures in this world: the one is of heaven, the other of hell. The heavenly nature has been explained: hear now of the evil of hell.

Evil men know not what should be done or what should not be done. Purity is not in their hearts, nor good conduct, nor truth.

They say: "This world has no truth, no moral foundation, no God. There is no law of creation: what is the cause of birth but lust?"

Firm in this belief, these men of dead souls, of truly little intelligence, undertake their work of evil: they are the enemies of this fair world, working for its destruction.

They torture their soul with insatiable desires and full of deceit, insolence, and pride, they hold fast their dark ideas, and they carry on their impure work.

Thus they are beset with innumerable cares which last long, all their life, until death. Their highest aim is sensual enjoyment, and they firmly think that this is all.

They are bound by hundreds of vain hopes. Anger and lust is their refuge; and they strive by unjust means to amass wealth for their own cravings.

"I have gained this today, and I shall attain this desire. This wealth is mine, and that shall also be mine."

"I have slain that enemy, and others also shall I slay. I am a lord, I enjoy life, I am successful, powerful and happy."

"I am wealthy and of noble birth: who else is there like me? I shall pay for religious rituals, I shall make benefactions, I shall enjoy myself," Thus they say in their darkness of delusion.

Led astray by many wrong thoughts, entangled in the net of delusion, enchained to the pleasures of their cravings, they fall down into a foul hell.

In their haughtiness of vainglory, drunk with the pride of their wealth, they offer their wrong sacrifices for ostentation, against divine law.

In their chains of selfishness and arrogance, of violence and anger and lust, these malignant men hate me: they hate me in themselves and in others.

In the vast cycles of life and death I inexorably hurl them down to destruction: these the lowest of men, cruel and evil, whose soul is hate.

Reborn in a lower life, in darkness birth after birth, they come not to me, Arjuna; but they go down the path of hell.

Three are the gates to this hell, the death of the soul: the gate of lust, the gate of wrath, and the gate of greed. Let a man shun the three.

When a man is free from these three doors of darkness, he does what is good for his soul, and then he enters the Path Supreme.

But the man who rejects the words of the Scripture and follows the impulse of desire attains neither his perfection, nor joy, nor the Path Supreme.

Let the Scriptures be therefore thy authority as to what is right and what is not right. Know the words of Scriptures, and do in this life the work to be done.

Do this only if you know the Scriptures to be correct, in which case the Scriptures will be a reflection of your own pure knowledge, and will have you as their authority.

17

Arjuna

Those who forsake the law of the Scriptures and yet offer sacrifice full of faith - What is their condition, Krishna? Is it of Sattva, Rajas, or Tamas - of light, of fire, or of darkness?

Krishna

The faith of men, born of their nature, is of three kinds: of light, of fire and of darkness. Hear now of these.

Men of light worship the gods of Light; men of fire worship the gods of power and wealth; men of darkness worship ghosts and spirits of night.

There are men selfish and false who moved by their lusts and passions perform

terrible austerities not ordained by sacred books: fools who torture the powers of life in their bodies and me who dwells in them. Know that their mind is darkness.

Remember though, that not all those who perform terrible austerities are complete fools. The Buddha went through many austerities on his journey to wisdom. Austerity can sharpen the mind as well as dull it.

Hear now of three kinds of food, the three kinds of sacrifice, the three kinds of harmony, and the three kinds of gifts.

Men who are pure like food which is pure: which gives health, mental power, strength and long life; which has taste, is soothing and nourishing, and which makes glad the heart of man.

Men of Rajas like food of Rajas: acid and sharp, and salty and dry, and which brings heaviness and sickness and pain.

Men of darkness eat food which is stale and tasteless, which is rotten and left over night, impure, unfit for holy offerings.

A sacrifice is pure when it is an offering of adoration in harmony with the holy law, with no expectation of a reward, and with the heart saying "it is my duty".

Please be reminded here that such a pure sacrifice, while being in the mode of Sattva, is not necessarily wise - it can be a sacrifice pure in ignorance. That is, if there is no deep love of Truth then there is no wisdom and thus the purity is only pure of immediate pain. All such ignorant sacrifice is in fact done for a reward, for happiness, but through power of mind the mind remains unconscious of itself and thus is able to delay the onset of pain.

But a sacrifice that is done for the sake of a reward, or for the sake of vainglory is an impure sacrifice of Rajas.

And a sacrifice done against the holy law, without faith, is a sacrifice of darkness.

See here that even the light of Sattva can actually be darkness, though it appears to be light. Finding wisdom with Sattva is as rare as finding the stars in the sky at midday.

Reverence for the gods of Light, for the twice-born, for the teachers of the Spirit and for the wise; and also purity, righteousness, chastity and non-violence: this is the harmony of the body.

Words which give peace, words which are good and beautiful and true, and also the reading of sacred books: this is the harmony of words.

Quietness of mind, silence, self-harmony, loving-kindness, and a pure heart:
this is the harmony of the mind.

This threefold harmony is called pure when it is practised with supreme faith
with no desire for a reward and with oneness of soul.

But false austerity, for the sake of reputation, honour and reverence, is impure:
it belongs to Rajas and is unstable and uncertain.

When self-control is self-torture, due to dullness of the mind, or when it aims at
hurting another, then self-control is of darkness.

A gift is pure when it is given from the heart to the right person at the right
time and at the right place, and when we expect nothing in return.

But when it is given expecting something in return, or for the sake of a future
reward, or when it is given unwillingly, the gift is of Rajas, impure.

And a gift given to the wrong person, at the wrong time and the wrong place, or
a gift which comes not from the heart, and is given with proud contempt, is a
gift of darkness.

OM, TAT, SAT. Each one of these three words is one word for Brahman, from
whom came in the beginning the Brahmins, the Vedas and the Sacrifice.

Therefore with the word OM the lovers of Brahman begin all work of sacrifice,
gift or self-harmony, done according to the Scriptures.

And with the word TAT, and with renunciation of all reward, this same work of
sacrifice, gift or self-harmony is being done by those seekers of Infinite
Liberty.

SAT is what is good and what is true: when therefore a work is well done the
end of that work is SAT.

Constant faithfulness in sacrifice, gift, or self-harmony is SAT; and also all
work consecrated to Brahman.

But work done without faith is ASAT, is nothing: sacrifice, gift, or self-
harmony done without faith are nothing, both in this world and in the world to
come.

Arjuna

Speak to me, Krishna, of the essence of renunciation, and of the essence of surrender.

Krishna

The renunciation of selfish works is called renunciation; but the surrender of the reward of all work is called surrender.

Some say that there should be renunciation of action - since action disturbs contemplation; but others say that works of sacrifice, gift and self-harmony should not be renounced.

Hear my truth about the surrender of works, Arjuna. Surrender, O best of men, is of three kinds.

Works of sacrifice, gift, and self-harmony should not be abandoned, but should indeed be performed; for these are works of purification.

These are simply the works of living.

But even these works, Arjuna, should be done in the freedom of a pure offering, and without expectation of a reward. This is my final word.

It is not right to leave undone the holy work which ought to be done. Such a surrender of action would be a delusion of darkness.

And he who abandons his duty because he has fear of pain, his surrender is of Rajas, impure, and in truth he has no reward.

But he who does holy work, Arjuna, because it ought to be done, and surrenders selfishness and thought of reward, his work is pure, and is peace.

This man sees and has no doubts: he surrenders, he is pure and has peace. Work, pleasant or painful, is for him joy.

For there is no man on earth who can fully renounce living work, but he who renounces the reward of his work is in truth a man of renunciation.

When work is done for a reward, the work brings pleasure, or pain, or both, in its time; but when a man does work in Eternity, then Eternity is his reward.

Know now from me, Arjuna, the five causes of all actions as given in the Sankhya wisdom, wherein is found the end of all works.

The body, the lower "I am", the means of perception, the means of action, and Fate. These are the five.

Whatever a man does, good or bad, in thought, word or deed, has these five sources of action.

If one thinks that his infinite Spirit does the finite work which nature does, he is a man of clouded vision and he does not see the truth.

He who is free from the chains of selfishness, and whose mind is free from any ill-will, even if he kills all these warriors he kills them not and he is free.

In the idea of a work there is the knower, the knowing and the known. When the idea is work there is the doer, the doing and the thing done.

The knowing, the doer and the thing done are said in the science of the "Gunas" to be of three kinds, according to their qualities. Hear of these three.

When one sees Eternity in things that pass away and Infinity infinite things, then one has pure knowledge.

But if one merely sees the diversity of things, with their divisions and limitations, then one has impure knowledge.

And if one selfishly sees a thing as if it were everything, independent of the ONE and the many, then one is in the darkness of ignorance.

When work is done as sacred work, unselfishly, with a peaceful mind, without lust or hate, with no desire for reward, then the work is pure.

But when work is done with selfish desire, or feeling it is an effort, or thinking it is a sacrifice, then the work is impure.

And that work which is done with a confused mind, without considering what may follow, or one's own powers, or the harm done to others, or one's own loss, is work of darkness.

A man is free from the chains of selfish attachments, free from his lower "I am", who has determination and perseverance, and whose inner peace is beyond victory or defeat - such a man has pure Sattva.

But a man who is a slave of his passions, who works for selfish ends, who is greedy, violent and impure, and who is moved by pleasure and pain, is a man of impure Rajas.

And a man without self-harmony, vulgar, arrogant and deceitful; malicious,

indolent and despondent, and also procrastinating, is a man of the darkness of Tamas.

Hear now fully and in detail the threefold division of wisdom and steadiness, according to the three Gunas.

There is wisdom which knows when to go and when to return, what is to be done and what is not to be done, what is fear and what is courage, what is bondage and what is liberation - that is pure wisdom.

Impure wisdom has no clear vision of what is right and what is wrong, what should be done and what should not be done.

And there is a wisdom obscured in darkness when wrong is thought to be right, and when things are thought to be that which they are not.

When in Yoga of holy contemplation the movements of the mind and of the breath of life are in harmony of peace, there is steadiness, and that steadiness is pure.

But that steadiness which, with a desire for rewards, attaches itself to wealth, pleasure, and even religious ritual, is a steadiness of passion, impure.

And that steadiness whereby a fool does not surrender laziness, fear, self-pity, depression and lust, is indeed a steadiness of darkness.

Hear now, great Arjuna, of the three kinds of pleasure. There is the pleasure of following that right path which leads to the end of all pain.

What seems at first a cup of sorrow is found in the end immortal wine. That pleasure is pure: it is the joy which arises from a clear vision of the Spirit.

But the pleasure which comes from the craving of the senses with the objects of their desire, which seems at first a drink of sweetness but is found in the end a cup of poison, is the pleasure of passion, impure.

And that pleasure which both in the beginning and in the end is only a delusion of the soul, which comes from the dullness of sleep, laziness or carelessness, is the pleasure of darkness.

There is nothing on earth or in heaven which is free from these three powers of Nature.

The works of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras are different, in harmony with the three powers of their born nature.

The works of a Brahmin are peace; self-harmony, austerity and purity; loving-forgiveness and righteousness; vision and wisdom and faith.

These are the works of a Kshatriya: a heroic mind, inner fire, constancy, resourcefulness, courage in battle, generosity and noble leadership.

Trade, agriculture and the rearing of cattle is the work of a Vaisya. And the work of the Sudra is service.

They all attain perfection when they find joy in their work. Hear how a man attains perfection and finds joy in his work.

A man attains perfection when his work is worship of God, from whom all things come and who is in all.

When his work is worship of God, he becomes a Brahmin no matter what he does.

Greater is thine own work, even if this be humble, than the work of another, even if this be great. When a man does the work God gives him, no sin can touch this man.

And a man should not abandon his work, even if he cannot achieve it in full perfection; because in all work there may be imperfection, even as in all fire there is smoke.

When a man has his reason in freedom from bondage, and his soul is in harmony, beyond desires, then renunciation leads him to a region supreme which is beyond earthly action.

Hear now how he then reaches Brahman, the highest vision of Light.

When the vision of reason is clear, and in steadiness the soul is in harmony; when the world of sound and other senses is gone, and the spirit has risen above passion and hate;

When a man dwells in the solitude of silence, and meditation and contemplation are ever with him; when too much food does not disturb his health, and his thoughts and words and body are in peace; when freedom from passion is his constant will;

And his selfishness and violence and pride are gone; when lust and anger and greediness are no more, and he is free from the thought "this is mine"; then this man has risen on the mountain of the Highest: he is worthy to be one with Brahman, with God.

He is one with Brahman, with God, and beyond grief and desire his soul is in

peace. His love is one for all creation, and he has supreme love for me.

By love he knows me in truth, who I am and what I am. And when he knows me in truth he enters into my Being.

In whatever work he does he can take refuge in me, and he attains then by my grace the imperishable home of Eternity.

Offer in thy heart all thy works to me, and see me as the End of thy love, take refuge in the Yoga of reason, and ever rest thy soul in me.

If thy soul finds rest in me, thou shalt overcome all dangers by my grace; but if thy thoughts are on thyself, and thou wilt not listen, thou shalt perish.

If thou wilt not fight thy battle of life because in selfishness thou art afraid of the battle, thy resolution is in vain: nature will compel thee.

Because thou art in the bondage of Karma, of the forces of thine own past life; and that which thou, in thy delusion, with a good will dost not want to do, unwillingly thou shalt have to do.

God dwells in the heart of all beings, Arjuna: thy God dwells in thy heart. And his power of wonder moves all things - puppets in a play of shadows - whirling them onwards on the stream of time.

Go to him for thy salvation with all thy soul, victorious man. By his grace thou shalt obtain the peace supreme, thy home of Eternity.

I have given thee words of vision and wisdom more secret than hidden mysteries. Ponder them in the silence of thy soul, and then in freedom do thy will.

Hear again my Word supreme, the deepest secret of silence. Because I love thee well, I will speak to thee words of salvation.

Give thy mind to me, and give me thy heart, and thy sacrifice, and thy adoration. This is my Word of promise: thou shalt in truth come to me, for thou art dear to me.

Leave all things behind, and come to me for thy salvation. I will make thee free from the bondage of sins. Fear no more.

These things must never be spoken to one who lacks self-discipline, or who has no love, or who does not want to hear or who argues against me.

But he who will teach this secret doctrine to those who have love for me, and

who himself has supreme love, he in truth shall come unto me.

For there can be no man among men who does greater work for me, nor can there be a man on earth who is dearer to me than he is.

He who learns in contemplation the holy words of our discourse, the light of his vision is his adoration. This is my truth.

And he who only hears but has faith, and in his heart he has no doubts, he also attains liberation and the worlds of joy of righteous men.

Advanced minds contemplate rapidly.

Hast thou heard these words, Arjuna, in the silent communion of thy soul? Has the darkness of thy delusion been dispelled by thine inner Light?

Arjuna

By thy grace I remembered my Light, and now gone is my delusion. My doubts are no more, my faith is firm; and now I can say "Thy will be done".

Sanjaya

Thus I heard these words of glory between Arjuna and the God of all, and they fill my soul with awe and wonder.

By the grace of the poet Vyasa I heard these words of secret silence. I heard the mystery of Yoga, taught by Krishna the Master himself.

I remember, O king, I remember the words of holy wonder between Krishna and Arjuna, and again and again my soul feels joy.

And I remember, I ever remember, that vision of glory of the God of all, and again and again joy fills my soul.

Wherever is Krishna, the End of Yoga, wherever is Arjuna who masters the bow, there is beauty and victory, and joy and all righteousness. This is my faith.

THE DHAMMAPADA

- With commentary by Kevin Solway -

Contrary Ways

- What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow: our life is the creation of our mind.

If a man speaks or acts with an impure mind, suffering follows him as the wheel of the cart follows the beast that draws the cart.

- What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow: our life is the creation of our mind.

If a man speaks or acts with a pure mind, joy follows him as his own shadow.

"He insulted me, he hurt me, he defeated me, he robbed me." Those who think not such thoughts will be free from hate.

For hate is not conquered by hate: hate is conquered by love. This is a law eternal.

Yes, hate is conquered by love, but only by love of Truth. Know fully that ordinary love, in all its manifestations, is the sole cause of hatred.

Many do not know that we are here in this world to live in harmony. Those who know this do not fight against each other.

Harmony is false if there is not intelligence and Truth. Have no illusions!

He who lives only for pleasures, and whose soul is not in harmony, who considers not the food he eats, is idle and has not the power of virtue - such a man is moved by MARA, is moved by selfish temptations, even as a weak tree

is shaken by the wind.

But he who lives not for pleasures, and whose soul is in self-harmony, who eats or fasts with moderation, and has faith and the power of virtue - this man is not moved by temptations, as a great rock is not shaken by the wind.

If a man puts on the pure yellow robe with a soul which is impure, without self-harmony and truth, he is not worthy of the holy robe.

But he who is pure from sin and whose soul is strong in virtue, who has self-harmony and truth, he is worthy of the holy robe.

Those who think the unreal is, and think the Real is not, they shall never reach the Truth, lost in the path of wrong thought.

But those who know the Real is, and know the unreal is not, they shall indeed reach the Truth, safe on the path of right thought.

Even as rain breaks through an ill-thatched house, passion will break through an unreflecting mind.

But even as rain breaks not through a well-thatched house, passion breaks not through a reflecting mind.

He suffers in this world, and he suffers in the next world: the man who does evil suffers in both worlds. He suffers, he suffers and mourns when he sees the wrong he has done.

He is happy in this world and he is happy in the next world: the man who does good is happy in both worlds. He is glad, he feels great gladness when he sees the good he has done.

He sorrows in this world, and he sorrows in the next world: the man who does evil sorrows in both worlds. "I have done evil", thus he laments, and more he laments on the path of sorrow.

He rejoices in this world, and he rejoices in the next world: the man who does good rejoices in both worlds. "I have done good", thus he rejoices, and more he rejoices on the path of joy.

If a man speaks many holy words but he speaks and does not, this thoughtless man cannot enjoy the life of holiness: he is like a cowherd who counts the cows of his master.

Whereas if a man speaks but a few holy words and yet he lives the life of those words, free from passion and hate and illusion - with right vision and a mind free, craving for nothing both now and hereafter - the life of this man is a life of holiness.

Watchfulness

Watchfulness is the path of immortality: unwatchfulness is the path of death. Those who are watchful never die: those who do not watch are already as dead.

Those who with a clear mind have seen this truth, those who are wise and ever-watchful, they feel the joy of watchfulness, the joy of the path of the Great.

And those who in high thought and in deep contemplation with ever-living power advance on the path, they in the end reach NIRVANA, the peace supreme and infinite joy.

The man who arises in faith, who ever remembers his high purpose, whose work is pure, and who carefully considers his work, who in self-possession lives the life of perfection, and who ever, for ever, is watchful, that man shall arise in glory.

By arising in faith and watchfulness, by self-possession and self-harmony, the

wise man makes an island for his soul which many waters cannot overflow.

Men who are foolish and ignorant are careless and never watchful; but the man who lives in watchfulness considers it his greatest treasure.

Never surrender to carelessness; never sink into weak pleasures and lust. Those who are watchful, in deep contemplation, reach in the end the joy supreme.

The wise man who by watchfulness conquers thoughtlessness is as one who free from sorrows ascends the palace of wisdom and there, from its high terrace, sees those in sorrow below; even as a wise strong man on the holy mountain might behold the many unwise far down below on the plain.

Watchful amongst the unwatchful, awake amongst those who sleep, the wise man like a swift horse runs his race, outrunning those who are slow.

It was by watchfulness that Indra became the chief of the gods, and thus the gods praise the watchful, and thoughtlessness is ever despised.

The monk who has the joy of watchfulness and who looks with fear on thoughtlessness, he goes on his path like a fire, burning all obstacles both great and small.

The monk who has the joy of watchfulness, and who looks with fear on thoughtlessness, he can never be deprived of his victory and he is near NIRVANA.

The Mind

The mind is wavering and restless, difficult to guard and restrain: let the wise man straighten his mind as a maker of arrows makes his arrows straight.

Like a fish which is thrown on dry land, taken from his home in the waters, the mind strives and struggles to get free from the power of Death.

The mind is fickle and flighty, it flies after fancies wherever it likes: it is difficult indeed to restrain. But it is a great good to control the mind; a mind self-controlled is a source of great joy.

Invisible and subtle is the mind, and it flies after fancies wherever it likes; but let the wise man guard well his mind, for a mind well guarded is a source of great joy.

Hidden in the mystery of consciousness, the mind, incorporeal, flies alone far away. Those who set their mind in harmony become free from the bonds of death.

He whose mind is unsteady, who knows not the path of Truth, whose faith and peace are ever wavering, he shall never reach fullness of wisdom.

But he whose mind in calm self-control is free from the lust of desires, who has risen above good and evil, he is awake and has no fear.

Considering that this body is frail like a jar, make your mind strong like a fortress and fight the great fight against MARA, all evil temptations. After victory guard well your conquests, and ever for ever watch.

For before long, how sad! this body will lifeless lie on the earth, cast aside like a useless log.

An enemy can hurt an enemy, and a man who hates can harm another man; but a man's own mind, if wrongly directed, can do him a far greater harm.

A father or a mother, or a relative, can indeed do good to a man; but his own right-directed mind can do to him a far greater good.

The followers of life

Who shall conquer this world and the world of the gods, and also the world of Yama, of death and of pain? Who shall find the DHAMMAPADA, the clear Path of Perfection, even as a man who seeks flowers finds the most beautiful flower?

The wise student shall conquer this world, and the world of the gods, and also the world of Yama, of death and of pain. The wise student shall find the DHAMMAPADA, the clear Path of Perfection, even as a man who seeks flowers finds the most beautiful flower.

He who knows that this body is the foam of a wave, the shadow of a mirage, he breaks the sharp arrows of MARA, concealed in the flowers of sensuous passions and, unseen by the King of death, he goes on and follows his path.

But death carries away the man who gathers the flowers of sensuous passions, even as a torrent of rushing waters overflows a sleeping village, and then runs forward on its way.

And death, the end of all, makes an end of the man who, ever thirsty for desires, gathers the flowers of sensuous passions.

As the bee takes the essence of a flower and flies away without destroying its beauty and perfume, so let the sage wander in this life.

Think not of the faults of others, of what they have done or not done. Think rather of your own sins, of the things you have done or not done.

Just as a flower which seems beautiful and has colour but has no perfume, so are the fruitless words of the man who speaks them but does them not.

And just like a beautiful flower which has colour and also has perfume are the beautiful fruitful words of the man who speaks and does what he says.

As from a large heap of flowers many garlands and wreaths can be made, so by a mortal in this life there is much good work to be done.

The perfume of flowers goes not against the wind, not even the perfume of sandalwood, of rose-bay, or of jasmine; but the perfume of virtue travels against the wind and reaches unto the ends of the world.

There is the perfume of sandalwood, of rose-bay, of the blue lotus and jasmine; but far above the perfume of those flowers the perfume of virtue is supreme.

Not very far goes the perfume of flowers, even that of rose-bay or of sandalwood; but the perfume of the good reaches heaven, and it is the perfume supreme amongst the gods.

The path of those who are rich in virtue, who are ever watchful, whose true light makes them free, cannot be crossed by MARA, by death.

Even as on a heap of rubbish thrown away by the side of the road a lotus flower may grow and blossom with its pure perfume giving joy to the soul, in the same way among the blind multitudes shines pure the light of wisdom of the student who follows the Buddha, the ONE who is truly awake.

The fool

How long is the night to the watchman; how long is the road to the weary; how long is the wandering of lives ending in death for the fool who cannot find the path!

If on the great journey of life a man cannot find one who is better or at least as good as himself, let him joyfully travel alone: a fool cannot help him on his journey.

Should even a hint of virtue arise within you, you will be alone in this world. Be prepared!

"These are my sons. This is my wealth." In this way the fool troubles himself. He is not even the owner of himself: how much less of his sons and of his wealth!

If a fool can see his own folly, he in this at least is wise; but the fool who thinks he is wise, he indeed is the real fool.

If a fool lives with a wise man, even all his life, he will perceive the truth as little as a spoon perceives the taste of soup.

But if a man who watches and sees is only a moment with a wise man he soon knows the path of wisdom, as the tongue knows the taste of the soup.

A fool who thinks he is wise goes through life with himself as his enemy, and he ever does wrong deeds which in the end bear bitter fruit.

For that deed is not well done when being done one has to repent; and when one must reap with tears the bitter fruits of the wrong deed.

But the deed is indeed well done when being done one has not to repent; and when one can reap with joy the sweet fruits of the right deed.

The wrong action seems sweet to the fool until the reaction comes and brings pain, and bitter fruits of wrong deeds have then to be eaten by the fool.

A fool may fast month after month eating his food with the sharp point of a blade of *kusa* grass, and his worth be not a sixteenth part of that of the wise man whose thoughts feed on truth.

A wrong action may not bring its reaction at once, even as fresh milk turns not sour at once: like a smouldering fire concealed under ashes it consumes the wrong-doer, the fool.

And if ever to his own harm the fool increases in cleverness, this only destroys his own mind and his fate is worse than before.

For he will wish for reputation, for precedence among the monks, for authority in the monasteries and for veneration amongst the people.

"Let householders and hermits, both, think it was I who did that work; and let them ever ask me what they should do or not do." These are the thoughts of the fool, puffed up with desire and pride.

But one is the path of earthly wealth, and another is the path of NIRVANA. Let the follower of Buddha think of this and, without striving for reputation, let him ever strive after freedom.

The wise man

Look upon the man who tells thee thy faults as if he told thee of a hidden treasure, the wise man who shows thee the dangers of life. Follow that man: he who follows him will see good and not evil.

Let him admonish and let him instruct, and let him restrain what is wrong. He will be loved by those who are good and hated by those who are not.

Have not for friends those whose soul is ugly; go not with men who have an evil soul. Have for friends those whose soul is beautiful; go with men whose soul is good.

He who drinks of the waters of Truth, he rests in joy with mind serene. The wise find their delight in the DHAMMA, in the Truth revealed by the great.

Those who make channels for water control the waters; makers of arrows make the arrows straight; carpenters control their timber; and the wise control their own minds.

Even as a great rock is not shaken by the wind, the wise man is not shaken by praise or by blame.

Even as a lake that is pure and peaceful and deep, so becomes the soul of the wise man when he hears the words of DHAMMA.

Good men, at all times, surrender in truth all attachments. The holy spend not idle words on things of desire. When pleasure or pain comes to them, the wise feel above pleasure and pain.

He who for himself or others craves not for sons or power or wealth, who puts not his own success before the success of righteousness, he is virtuous, and righteous, and wise.

Few cross the river of time and are able to reach NIRVANA. Most of them run up and down only on this side of the river.

But those who when they know the law follow the path of the law, they shall reach the other shore and go beyond the realm of death.

Leaving behind the path of darkness and following the path of light, let the wise man leave his home life and go into a life of freedom. In solitude that few enjoy, let him find his joy supreme: free from possessions, free from desires, and free from whatever may darken his mind.

For he whose mind is well trained in the ways that lead to light, who surrenders the bondage of attachments and finds joy in his freedom from bondage, who free from the darkness of passions shines pure in a radiance of light, even in this mortal life he enjoys the immortal NIRVANA.

Infinite freedom

The traveller has reached the end of the journey! In the freedom of the Infinite he is free from all sorrows, the fetters that bound him are thrown away, and the burning fever of life is no more.

Those who have high thoughts are ever striving: they are not happy to remain in the same place. Like swans that leave their lake and rise into the air, they leave their home for a higher home.

Who can trace the invisible path of the man who soars in the sky of liberation, the infinite Void without beginning, whose passions are peace, and over whom pleasures have no power? His path is as difficult to trace as that of the birds in the air.

The man who wisely controls his senses as a good driver controls his horses, and who is free from lower passions and pride, is admired even by the gods.

He is calm like the earth that endures; he is steady like a column that is firm; he is pure like a lake that is clear; he is free from *Samsara*, the ever-returning life-in-death.

In the light of his vision he has found his freedom: his thoughts are peace, his words are peace and his work is peace.

And he who is free from credulous beliefs since he has seen the eternal NIRVANA, who has thrown off the bondage of the lower life and, far beyond temptations, has surrendered all his desires, he is indeed great amongst men.

Wherever holy men dwell, that is indeed a place of joy - be it in the village, or in a forest, or in a valley or on the hills.

They make delightful the forests where other people could not dwell. Because they have not the burden of desires, they have that joy which others find not.

Better than a thousand

Better than a thousand useless words is one single word that gives wisdom.

Better than a thousand useless verses is one single verse that gives wisdom.

Better than a hundred useless poems is one single poem that gives wisdom.

If a man should conquer in battle a thousand and a thousand more, and another man should conquer himself, his would be the greater victory, because the greatest of victories is the victory over oneself; and neither the gods in heaven above nor the demons down below can turn into defeat the victory of such a man.

If month after month with a thousand offerings for a hundred years one should sacrifice; and another only for a moment paid reverence to a self-conquering man, this moment would have greater value than a hundred years of offerings.

If a man for a hundred years should worship the sacred fire in the forest; and if another only for a moment paid reverence to a self-conquering man, this reverence alone would be greater than a hundred years of worship.

Whatever a man for a year may offer in worship or in gifts to earn merit is not worth a fraction of the merit earned by one's reverence to a righteous man.

And whosoever honours in reverence those who are old in virtue and holiness, he indeed conquers four treasures: long life, and health, and power and joy.

But the greatest of these four is wisdom, or the knowledge of All.

Better than a hundred years lived in vice, without contemplation, is one single day of life lived in virtue and in deep contemplation.

Better than a hundred years lived in ignorance, without contemplation, is one single day of life lived in wisdom and in deep contemplation.

Better than a hundred years lived in idleness and in weakness is a single day of life lived with courage and powerful striving.

Better than a hundred years not considering how all things arise and pass away is one single day of life if one considers how all things arise and pass away.

Better than a hundred years not seeing one's own immortality is one single day of life if one sees one's own immortality.

Better than a hundred years not seeing the Path supreme is one single day of life if one sees the Path supreme.

Good and Evil

Make haste and do what is good; keep your mind away from evil. If a man is slow in doing what is good, his mind finds pleasure in evil.

If a man does something wrong, let him not do it again and again. Let him not find pleasure in his sin. Painful is the accumulation of wrongdoings.

If a man does something good, let him do it again and again. Let him find joy in his good work. Joyful is the accumulation of good work.

A man may find pleasure in evil as long as his evil has not given fruit; but when the fruit of evil comes then that man finds evil indeed.

A man may find pain in doing good as long as his good has not given fruit; but when the fruit of good comes then that man finds good indeed.

Hold not a sin of little worth, thinking "this is little to me". The falling of drops of water will in time fill a water-jar. Even so the foolish man becomes full of evil, although he gather it little by little.

Hold not a deed of little worth, thinking "this is little to me". The falling of drops of water will in time fill a water-jar. Even so the wise man becomes full of good, although he gather it little by little.

Let a man avoid the dangers of evil even as a merchant carrying much wealth, but with a small escort, avoids the dangers of the road, or as a man who loves his life avoids the drinking of poison.

As a man who has no wound on his hand cannot be hurt by the poison he may carry in his hand, since poison hurts not where there is no wound, the man who has no evil cannot be hurt by evil.

The fool who does evil to a man who is good, to a man who is pure and free from sin, the evil returns to him like the dust thrown against the wind.

Some people are born on this earth; those who do evil are reborn in hell; the righteous go to heaven; but those who are pure reach NIRVANA.

Unfortunately, of the almost 6 billion people alive today only a handful are born on "this earth"; the rest are firmly entrenched in hells of various kinds.

Neither in the sky, nor deep in the ocean, nor in a mountain- cave, nor anywhere, can a man be free from the evil he has done.

Neither in the sky, nor deep in the ocean, nor in a mountain- cave, nor anywhere, can a man be free from the power of death.

Life

All beings tremble before danger, all fear death. When a man considers this, he does not kill or cause to kill.

All beings fear before danger, life is dear to all. When a man considers this, he does not kill or cause to kill.

Fear is of pain rather than death. If you do not wish to cause pain in vain, then do not cause or encourage wrong thoughts.

He who for the sake of happiness hurts others who also want happiness, shall not hereafter find happiness.

He who for the sake of happiness does not hurt others who also want happiness, shall hereafter find happiness.

Never speak harsh words, for once spoken they may return to you. Angry words are painful and there may be blows for blows.

If you can be in silent quietness like a broken gong that is silent, you have reached the peace of NIRVANA and your anger is peace.

Just as a keeper of cows drives his cows into the fields, old age and death drive living beings far into the fields of death.

The fields of death represent the ripening of one's past selfish actions.

When a fool does evil work, he forgets that he is lighting a fire wherein he must burn one day.

He who hurts with his weapons those who are harmless and pure shall soon fall into one of these ten evils: fearful pain or infirmity; loss of limbs or terrible disease; or even madness, the loss of the mind; the king's persecution; a fearful indictment; the loss of possessions or the loss of relations; or fire from heaven that may burn his house. And when the evil-doer is no more, then he is reborn in hell.

Meaning that he has created hell on earth, so he and those who come after, who are extensions of himself, are forced to occupy it.

Neither nakedness, nor entangled hair, nor uncleanness, nor fasting, nor sleeping on the ground, nor covering the body with ashes, nor ever-squatting, can purify a man who is not pure from doubts and desires.

But although a man may wear fine clothing, if he lives peacefully; and is good, self-possessed, has faith and is pure; and if he does not hurt any living being, he is a holy Brahmin, a hermit of seclusion, a monk called a Bhikkhu.

"Fine clothing" here refers to clean rags rather than dirty rags and nakedness. The wise have no interest in physical beauty or in pandering to those who do have such an interest, so they have no cause to wear more than rags.

Is there in this world a man so noble that he ever avoids all wrongdoing, even as a noble horse avoids the touch of the whip?

Have fire like a noble horse touched by the whip. By faith, by virtue and energy, by deep contemplation and vision, by wisdom and by right action, you shall overcome the sorrows of life.

Those who make channels for water control the waters: makers of arrows make the arrows straight; carpenters control their timber; and the holy control their soul.

Beyond life

How can there be laughter, how can there be pleasure, when the whole world is burning? When you are in deep darkness, will you not ask for a lamp?

Consider this body! A painted puppet with jointed limbs, sometimes suffering and covered with ulcers, full of imaginings, never permanent, for ever changing.

This body is decaying! A nest of diseases, a heap of corruption, bound to destruction, to dissolution. All life ends in death.

Look at these grey-white dried bones, like dried empty gourds thrown away at

the end of the summer. Who will feel joy in looking at them?

A house of bones is this body, bones covered with flesh and with blood. Pride and hypocrisy dwell in this house and also old age and death.

The glorious chariots of kings wear out, and the body wears out and grows old; but the virtue of the good never grows old, and thus they can teach the good to those who are good.

If a man tries not to learn he grows old just like an ox! His body indeed grows old but his wisdom does not grow.

I have gone round in vain the cycles of many lives ever striving to find the builder of the house of life and death. How great is the sorrow of life that must die!

But now I have seen thee, housebuilder: never more shalt thou build this house. The rafters of sins are broken, the ridge-pole of ignorance is destroyed. The fever of craving is past: for my mortal mind is gone to the joy of the immortal NIRVANA.

Those who in their youth did not live in self-harmony, and who did not gain the true treasures of life, are later like long-legged old herons standing sad by a lake without fish.

Those who in their youth did not live in self-harmony, and who did not gain the true treasures of life, are later like broken bows, ever deploring old things past and gone.

Self-possession

If a man holds himself dear, let him guard himself well. Of the three watches of his time, let him at least watch over one.

Let him find first what is right and then he can teach it to others, avoiding thus

useless pain.

If he makes himself as good as he tells others to be, then he in truth can teach others. Difficult indeed is self-control.

Only a man himself can be the master of himself: who else from outside could be his master? When the Master and servant are one, then there is true help and self-possession.

Any wrong or evil a man does, is born in himself and is caused by himself; and this crushes the foolish man as a hard stone grinds the weaker stone.

And the evil that grows in a man is like the *malava* creeper which entangles the *sala* tree; and the man is brought down to that condition in which his own enemy would wish him to be.

It is easy to do what is wrong, to do what is bad for oneself; but very difficult to do what is right, to do what is good for oneself.

The fool who because of his views scorns the teachings of the holy, those whose soul is great and righteous, gathers fruits for his destruction, like the *kashta* reed whose fruits mean its death.

By oneself the evil is done, and it is oneself who suffers: by oneself the evil is not done, and by one's Self one becomes pure. The pure and the impure come from oneself: no man can purify another.

Let no man endanger his duty, the good of his soul, for the good of another, however great. When he has seen the good of his soul, let him follow it with earnestness.

Arise! Watch

Live not a low life; remember and forget not; follow not wrong ideas; sink not into the world.

Arise! Watch. Walk on the right path. He who follows the right path has joy in this world and in the world beyond.

Follow the right path: follow not the wrong path. He who follows the right path has joy in this world and in the world beyond.

When a man considers this world as a bubble of froth, and as the illusion of an appearance, then the king of death has no power over him.

Come and look at this world. It is like a royal painted chariot wherein fools sink. The wise are not imprisoned in the chariot.

He who in early days was unwise but later found wisdom, he sheds a light over the world like that of the moon when free from clouds.

He who overcomes the evil he has done with the good he afterwards does, he sheds a light over the world like that of the moon when free from clouds.

This world is indeed in darkness, and how few can see the light! Just as few birds can escape from a net, few souls can fly into the freedom of heaven.

Swans follow the path of the sun by the miracle of flying through the air. Men who are strong conquer evil and its armies; and then they arise far above the world.

A man whose words are lies, who transgresses the Great Law, and who scorns the higher world - there is no evil this man may not do.

Misers certainly do not go to the heaven of the gods, and fools do not praise liberality; but noble men find joy in generosity, and this gives them joy in higher worlds.

Better than power over all the earth, better than going to heaven and better than dominion over the worlds is the joy of the man who enters the river of life that leads to NIRVANA.

The Buddha

By what earthly path could you entice the Buddha who, enjoying all, can wander through the pathless ways of the Infinite? - the Buddha who is awake, whose victory cannot be turned into defeat, and whom no one can conquer?

By what earthly path could you entice the Buddha who, enjoying all, can wander through the pathless ways of the Infinite? - the Buddha who is awake, whom the net of poisonous desire cannot allure?

Even the gods long to be like the Buddhas who are awake and watch, who find peace in contemplation and who, calm and steady, find joy in renunciation.

It is a great event to be born a man; and his life is an ever- striving. It is not often he hears the doctrine of Truth; and a rare event is the arising of a Buddha.

Do not what is evil. Do what is good. Keep your mind pure. This is the teaching of Buddha.

Forbearance is the highest sacrifice. NIRVANA is the highest good. This say the Buddhas who are awake. If a man hurts another, he is not a hermit; if he offends another, he is not an ascetic.

If people are hurt by a wise man's words then they are not truly hurt. For a wise man's words can bring nothing but good, even if people suicide upon hearing them.

Not to hurt by deeds or words, self-control as taught in the Rules, moderation in food, the solitude of one's room and one's bed, and the practice of the highest consciousness: this is the teaching of the Buddhas who are awake.

Since a shower of golden coins could not satisfy craving desires and the end

of all pleasure is pain, how could a wise man find satisfaction even in the pleasures of the gods? When desires go, joy comes: the follower of the Buddha finds this truth.

Men in their fear fly for refuge to mountains or forests, groves, sacred trees or shrines. But those are not a safe refuge, they are not the refuge that frees a man from sorrow.

He who goes for refuge to Buddha, to Truth and to those whom he taught, he goes indeed to a great refuge. Then he sees the four great truths:

Unfortunately there are only a handful of followers of the Buddha alive today, despite the hundreds of millions who claim to be followers. Interestingly, not a single one of these handful has anything to do with the Buddhist religion.

Sorrow, the cause of sorrow, the end of sorrow, and the path of eight stages which leads to the end of sorrow.

That is the safe refuge, that is the refuge supreme. If a man goes to that refuge, he is free from sorrow.

A man of true vision is not easy to find, a Buddha who is awake is not born everywhere. Happy are the people where such a man is born.

Happy is the birth of a Buddha, happy is the teaching of DHAMMA, happy is the harmony of his followers, happy is the life of those who live in harmony.

Who could measure the excellence of the man who pays reverence to those worthy of reverence, a Buddha or his disciples, who have left evil behind and have crossed the river of sorrow, who, free from all fear, are in the glory of NIRVANA?

Joy

O let us live in joy, in love amongst those who hate! Among men who hate,

let us live in love.

O let us live in joy, in health amongst those who are ill! Among men who are ill, let us live in health.

O let us live in joy, in peace amongst those who struggle! Among men who struggle, let us live in peace.

O let us live in joy, although having nothing! In joy let us live like spirits of light!

Victory brings hate, because the defeated man is unhappy. He who surrenders victory and defeat, this man finds joy.

There is no fire like lust. There is no evil like hate. There is no pain like disharmony. There is no joy like NIRVANA.

The hunger of passions is the greatest disease. Disharmony is the greatest sorrow. When you know this well, then you know that NIRVANA is the greatest joy.

Health is the greatest possession. Contentment is the greatest treasure. Confidence is the greatest friend. NIRVANA is the greatest joy.

When a man knows the solitude of silence, and feels the joy of quietness, he is then free from fear and sin and he feels the joy of the DHAMMA.

It is a joy to see the noble and good, and to be with them makes one happy. If one were able never to see fools, then one could be for ever happy!

He who has to walk with fools has a long journey of sorrow, because to be with a fool is as painful as to be with an enemy; but the joy of being with the wise is like the joy of meeting a beloved kinsman.

If you find a man who is constant, awake to the inner light, learned, long-

suffering, endowed with devotion, a noble man - follow this good and great man even as the moon follows the path of the stars.

Transient pleasures

He who does what should not be done and fails to do what should be done, who forgets the true aim of life and sinks into transient pleasures - he will one day envy the man who lives in high contemplation.

Let a man be free from pleasure and let a man be free from pain; for not to have pleasure is sorrow and to have pain is also sorrow.

Be therefore not bound to pleasure for the loss of pleasure is pain. There are no fetters for the man who is beyond pleasure and pain.

From pleasure arises sorrow and from pleasure arises fear. If a man is free from passion, he is free from fear and sorrow.

From passion arises sorrow and from passion arises fear. If a man is free from passion, he is free from fear and sorrow.

From sensuousness arises sorrow and from sensuousness arises fear. If a man is free from sensuousness, he is free from fear and sorrow.

From lust arises sorrow and from lust arises fear. If a man is free from lust, he is free from fear and sorrow.

From craving arises sorrow and from craving arises fear. If a man is free from craving, he is free from fear and sorrow.

He who has virtue and vision, who follows the DHAMMA, the Path of Perfection, whose words are truth, and does the work to be done - the world loves such a man.

The world loves such a man, even though the people of the world hate him.

And the man whose mind, filled with determination, is longing for the infinite NIRVANA, and who is free from sensuous pleasures, is called *uddham-soto*, "he who goes upstream", for against the current of passions and worldly life he is bound for the joy of the infinite.

Just as a man who has long been far away is welcomed with joy on his safe return by his relatives, well-wishers and friends; in the same way the good works of a man in his life welcome him in another life, with the joy of a friend meeting a friend on his return.

Just as these words will be welcomed by the wise reader.

Forsake anger

Forsake anger, give up pride. Sorrow cannot touch the man who is not in the bondage of anything, who owns nothing.

He who can control his rising anger as a coachman controls his carriage at full speed, this man I call a good driver: others merely hold the reins.

Overcome anger by peacefulness: overcome evil by good. Overcome the mean by generosity; and the man who lies by truth.

Speak the truth, yield not to anger, give what you can to him who asks: these three steps lead you to the gods.

Give what you can of truth at least! Material goods are of little benefit to a fool.

The wise who hurt no living being, and who keep their body under self-control, they go to the immortal NIRVANA, where once gone they sorrow no more.

Those who are for ever watchful, who study themselves day and night, and who wholly strive for NIRVANA, all their passions pass away.

This is an old saying, Atula, it is not a saying of today: "They blame the man who is silent, they blame the man who speaks too much, and they blame the man who speaks too little". No man can escape blame in this world.

There never was, there never will be, nor is there now, a man whom men always blame, or a man whom they always praise.

But who would dare to blame the man whom the wise praise day after day, whose life is pure and full of light, in whom there is virtue and wisdom, who is pure as a pure coin of gold of the Jambu river? Even the gods praise that man, even Brahma the Creator praises him.

Watch for anger of the body: let the body be self-controlled. Hurt not with the body, but use your body well.

Watch for anger of words: let your words be self-controlled. Hurt not with words, but use your words well.

Watch for anger of the mind: let your mind be self-controlled. Hurt not with the mind, but use your mind well.

Ignorance is anger of the mind. If there is desire and fear there is ignorance and anger.

There are men steady and wise whose body, words and mind are self-controlled. They are the men of supreme self-control.

Hasten and strive

Yellow leaves hang on your tree of life. The messengers of death are waiting. You are going to travel far away. Have you any provision for the journey?

Make an island for yourself. Hasten and strive. Be wise. With the dust of impurities blown off, and free from sinful passions, you will come unto the glorious land of the great.

You are at the end of your life. You are going to meet Death. There is no resting-place on your way, and you have no provision for the journey.

Make therefore an island for yourself. Hasten and strive. Be wise. With the dust of impurities blown off, and free from sinful passions, you will be free from birth that must die, you will be free from old age that ends in death.

Let a wise man remove impurities from himself even as a silversmith removes impurities from the silver: one after one, little by little, again and again.

Even as rust on iron destroys in the end the iron, a man's own impure transgressions lead that man to the evil path.

Dull repetition is the rust of sacred verses; lack of repair is the rust of houses; want of healthy exercise is the rust of beauty; unwatchfulness is the rust of the watcher.

Misconduct is sin in woman; meanness is sin in a benefactor; evil actions are indeed sins both in this world and in the next.

But the greatest of all sins is indeed the sin of ignorance. Throw this sin away, O man, and become pure from sin.

Life seems easy for those who shamelessly are bold and self-assertive, crafty and cunning, sensuously selfish, wanton and impure, arrogant and insulting, rotting with corruption.

But life seems difficult for those who peacefully strive for perfection, who free from self-seeking are not self-assertive, whose life is pure, who see the light.

He who destroys life, who utters lies, who takes what is not given to him, who goes to the wife of another, who gets drunk with strong drinks - he digs up the very roots of his life.

Know this therefore, O man: that lack of self-control means wrongdoing. Watch that greediness and vice bring thee not unto long suffering.

People in this world give their gifts because of inner light or selfish pleasure. If a man's thoughts are disturbed by what others give or give not, how can he by day or night achieve supreme contemplation?

There is no fire like lust, and no chains like those of hate. There is no net like illusion, and no rushing torrent like desire.

It is easy to see the faults of others, but difficult to see one's own faults. One shows the faults of others like chaff winnowed in the wind, but one conceals one's own faults as a cunning gambler conceals his dice.

If a man sees the sins of others and for ever thinks of their faults, his own sins increase for ever and far off is he from the end of his faults.

There is no path in the sky and a monk must find the inner path. The world likes pleasures that are obstacles on the path; but the *Tatha-gatas*, the "Thus-gone", have crossed the river of time and they have overcome the world.

There is no path in the sky and the monk must find the inner path. All things indeed pass away, but the Buddhas are for ever in Eternity.

Righteousness

A man is not on the path of righteousness if he settles matters in a violent haste. A wise man calmly considers what is right and what is wrong, and faces different opinions with truth, non-violence and peace. This man is guarded by truth and is a guardian of truth. He is righteous and he is wise.

A man is not called wise because he talks and talks again; but if he is peaceful, loving and fearless then he is in truth called wise.

Being fearless the wise do not hesitate to speak the pure, unrefined truth at all times, no matter what the danger. Being fearless, the wise speak the truths that people hate the most.

A man is not a follower of righteousness because he talks much learned talk; but although a man be not learned, if he forgets not the right path, if his work is rightly done, then he is a follower of righteousness.

A man is not old and venerable because grey hairs are on his head. If a man is old only in years then he is old in vain.

But a man is a venerable “elder” if he is in truth free from sin, and if in him there is truth and righteousness, non- violence, moderation and self-control.

Not by mere fine words and appearance can a man be a man of honour, if envy, greed and deceit are in him. But he in whom these three sins are uprooted and who is wise and has love, he is in truth a man of honour.

Not by the tonsure, a shaven head, does a man become a *samana*, a monk. How can a man be a *samana* if he forgets his religious vows, if he speaks what is not true, if he still has desire and greed?

But he who turns into peace all evil, whether this be great or small, he in truth is a *samana*, because all his evil is peace.

He is not called a mendicant Bhikkhu because he leads a mendicant life. A man cannot be a true Bhikkhu unless he accepts the law of righteousness and rejects the law of the flesh.

But he who is above good and evil, who lives in chastity and goes through life in meditation, he in truth is called a Bhikkhu.

If a man is only silent because he is ignorant or a fool, he is not a silent thinker, a MUNI who considers and thinks. But as one who taking a pair of scales, puts in what is good and rejects what is bad, if a man considers the two worlds, then he is called a MUNI of silence, a man who considers and thinks.

A man is not a great man because he is a warrior and kills other men; but because he hurts not any living being he in truth is called a great man.

Not by mere morals or rituals, by much learning or high concentration, or by a bed of solitude, can I reach that joy of freedom which is not reached by those of the world. Mendicant! Have not self-satisfaction, the victory has not yet been won.

The Path

The best of the paths is the path of eight. The best of truths, the four sayings. The best of states, freedom from passions. The best of men, the one who sees.

This is the path. There is no other that leads to vision. Go on this path, and you will confuse MARA, the devil of confusion.

Whoever goes on this path travels to the end of his sorrow. I showed this path to the world when I found the roots of sorrow.

It is you who must make the effort. The Great of the past only show the way. Those who think and follow the path become free from the bondage of MARA.

“All is transient.” When one sees this, he is above sorrow. This is the clear path.

“All is sorrow.” When one sees this, he is above sorrow. This is the clear path.

“All is unreal.” When one sees this, he is above sorrow. This is the clear path.

If a man when young and strong does not arise and strive when he should

arise and strive, and thus sinks into laziness and lack of determination, he will never find the path of wisdom.

A man should control his words and mind and should not do any harm with his body. If these ways of action are pure he can make progress on the path of the wise.

Spiritual Yoga leads to light: lack of Yoga to darkness. Considering the two paths, let the wise man walk on the path that leads to light.

Cut down the forest of desires, not only a tree; for danger is in the forest. If you cut down the forest and its undergrowth, then, Bhikkhus, you will be free on the path of freedom.

So long as lustful desire of a man for a woman, however small, is not destroyed, so long is that man in bondage, like a calf that drinks milk is to its mother.

Pluck out your self-love as you would pull off a faded lotus in autumn. Strive on the path of peace, the path of NIRVANA shown by Buddha.

"Here shall I dwell in the season of rains, and here in winter and summer"; thus thinks the fool, but he does not think of death.

For death carries away the man whose mind is self-satisfied with his children and his flocks, even as a torrent carries away a sleeping village.

Neither father, sons nor one's relations can stop the King of Death. When he comes with all his power, a man's relations cannot save him.

A man who is virtuous and wise understands the meaning of this, and swiftly strives with all his might to clear a path to NIRVANA.

Wakefulness

If by forsaking a small pleasure one finds a great joy, he who is wise will look to the greater and leave what is less.

He who seeks happiness for himself by making others unhappy is bound in the chains of hate and from those he cannot be free.

By not doing what should be done, and by doing what should not be done, the sinful desires of proud and thoughtless men increase.

But those who are ever careful of their actions, who do not what should not be done, are those who are watchful and wise, their sinful desires come to an end.

And a saint, a Brahmin, is pure from past sins; even if he had killed his father and mother, had murdered two noble kings, and had ravaged a whole kingdom and its people.

A saint, a Brahmin, is pure from past sins; even if he had killed his father and mother, had murdered two holy kings, and had also murdered the best of men.

The followers of Buddha Gotama are awake and for ever watch; and ever by night and by day they remember Buddha, their Master.

The followers of Buddha Gotama are awake and for ever watch; and ever by night and by day they remember the Truth of the Law.

The followers of Buddha Gotama are awake and for ever watch; and ever by night and by day they remember the holy brotherhood.

The followers of Buddha Gotama are awake and for ever watch; and ever by night and by day they remember the mystery of the body.

The followers of Buddha Gotama are awake and for ever watch; and ever by night and by day they find joy in love for all beings.

The followers of Buddha Gotama are awake and for ever watch; and ever by night and by day they find joy in supreme contemplation.

It is painful to leave the world; it is painful to be in the world; and it is painful to be alone amongst the many. The long road of transmigration is a road of pain for the traveller: let him rest by the road and be free.

If a man has faith and has virtue, then he has true glory and treasure. Wherever that man may go, there he will be held in honour.

He will be held in honour by the wise, if wise persons there are, for he will be truly despised by everyone else.

The good shine from far away, like the Himalaya mountains; but the wicked are in darkness, like arrows thrown in the night.

He who can be alone and rest alone and is never weary of his great work, he can live in joy, when master of himself, by the edge of the forest of desires.

In darkness

He who says what is not goes down the path of hell; and he who says he has not done what he knows well he has done. Both in the end have to suffer, because both sinned against truth.

Many wear the yellow robe whose life is not pure, who have not self-control. Those evil men through their evil deeds are reborn in a hell of evil.

For it were better for an evil man to swallow a ball of red-hot iron rather than he should eat offerings of food given to him by good people.

Yet it must be said that the kind of people who support monks nowadays are very far indeed from being good. Good people do not support false monks, and which monks nowadays are not false?

Four things happen to the thoughtless man who takes another man's wife: he lowers himself, his pleasure is restless, he is blamed by others, he goes to hell.

Yes. The degradation of the soul, a frightened pleasure, the danger of the law, the path of hell. Considering these four, let not a man go after another man's wife.

Just as a hand of *kusa* grass if badly grasped will cut one's hand, the life of a monk, if imperfectly followed, will only lead him to hell.

For when acts of devotion are carelessly performed, when sacred vows are broken, and when the holy life is not pure, no great fruit can come from such a life.

When a man has something to do, let him do it with all his might. A thoughtless pilgrim only raises dust on the road - the dust of dangerous desires.

Better to do nothing than to do what is wrong, for wrongdoing brings burning sorrow. Do therefore what is right, for good deeds never bring pain.

Like a border town that is well guarded both within and without, so let a man guard himself, and let not a moment pass by in carelessness. Those who carelessly allow their life to pass by, in the end have to suffer in hell.

Those who are ashamed when they should not be ashamed, and who are not ashamed when they should be, are men of very wrong views and they go the downward path.

Those who fear what they should not fear, and who do not fear what they should fear, are men of very wrong views and they go the downward path.

Those who think that right is wrong, and who think that wrong is right, they are the men of wrong views and they go the downward path.

But those who think that wrong is wrong, and who think that right is right, they are the men of right views and they go on the upward path.

Endurance

I will endure words that hurt in silent peace as the strong elephant endures in battle arrows sent by the bow, for many people lack self-control.

They take trained elephants to battle, and kings ride on royal trained elephants. The best of men are self-trained men, those who can endure abuse in peace.

Mules when trained are good, and so are noble horses of Sindh. Strong elephants when trained are good; but the best is the man who trains himself.

For it is not with those riding animals that a man will reach the land unknown. NIRVANA is reached by that man who wisely, heroically, trains himself.

The great elephant called Dhana-palaka is hard to control when in a rut, and he will not eat his food when captive, for he remembers the elephant grove.

The man who is lazy and a glutton, who eats large meals and rolls in sleep, who is like a pig which is fed in the sty, this fool is reborn to a life of death.

In days gone by this mind of mine used to stray wherever selfish desire or lust or pleasure would lead it. To-day this mind does not stray and is under the harmony of control, even as a wild elephant is controlled by the trainer.

Find joy in watchfulness; guard well your mind. Uplift yourself from your lower self, even as an elephant draws himself out of a muddy swamp.

If on the journey of life a man can find a wise and intelligent friend who is good and self-controlled, let him go with that traveller; and in joy and recollection let them overcome the dangers of the journey.

But if on the journey of life a man cannot find a wise and intelligent friend who is good and self-controlled, let him then travel alone, like a king who has left his country, or like a great elephant alone in the forest.

For it is better to go alone on the path of life rather than to have a fool for a companion. With few wishes and few cares, and leaving all sins behind, let a man travel alone, like a great elephant alone in the forest.

It is sweet to have friends in need; and to share enjoyment is sweet. It is sweet to have done good before death; and to surrender all pain is sweet.

It is far sweeter to be without the need of friends and enjoyments, that is, to have done good before death, and to surrender all pain.

It is sweet in this world to be a mother; and to be a father is sweet. It is sweet in this world to be a monk; and to be a saintly Brahmin is sweet.

It is far sweeter to be alone with truth.

It is sweet to enjoy a lifelong virtue; and a pure firm faith is sweet. It is sweet to attain wisdom; and to be free from sin is sweet.

Cravings

If a man watches not for NIRVANA, his cravings grow like a creeper and he jumps from death to death like a monkey in the forest from one tree without fruit to another.

And when his cravings overcome him, his sorrows increase more and more, like the entangling creeper called *birana*.

But whoever in this world overcomes his selfish cravings, his sorrows fall away from him, like drops of water from a lotus flower.

Therefore in love I tell you, to you all who have come here: Cut off the bonds of desires, as the surface grass creeper *birana* is cut for its fragrant root called *usira*. Be not like a reed by a stream which MARA, the devil of temptation, crushes again and again.

Just as a tree, though cut down, can grow again and again if its roots are undamaged and strong, in the same way if the roots of craving are not wholly uprooted sorrows will come again and again.

When the thirty-six streams of desire that run towards pleasures are strong, their powerful waves carry away that man without vision whose imaginings are lustful desires.

Everywhere flow the streams. The creeper of craving grows everywhere. If you see the creeper grow, cut off its roots by the power of wisdom.

The sensuous pleasures of men flow everywhere. Bound for pleasures and seeking pleasures men suffer life and old age.

Men who are pursued by lust run around like a hunted hare. Held in fetters and in bonds they suffer and suffer again.

Men who are pursued by lust run round like a hunted hare. For a monk to conquer lust he must first conquer desires.

The man who free from desires finds joy in solitude, but when free he then returns to his life of old desires, people can say of that man: "He was free and he ran back to his prison!"

The wise do not call a strong fetter that which is made of iron, of wood or of rope; much stronger is the fetter of passion for gold and for jewels, for sons or for wives.

This is indeed a strong fetter, say the wise. It seems soft but it drags a man down, and it is hard to undo. Therefore some men cut their fetters, renounce the life of the world and start to walk on the path, leaving pleasures behind.

Those who are slaves of desires run into the stream of desires, even as a spider runs into the web that it made. Therefore some men cut their fetters and start to walk on the path, leaving sorrows behind.

Leave the past behind; leave the future behind; leave the present behind. Thou art then ready to go to the other shore. Never more shalt thou return to a life that ends in death.

The man who is disturbed by wrong thoughts, whose selfish passions are strong and who only seeks sensuous pleasures, increases his craving desires and makes stronger the chains he forges for himself.

But he who enjoys peaceful thoughts, who considers the sorrows of pleasure, and who ever remembers the light of his life - he will see the end of his cravings, he will break the chains of death.

He has reached the end of his journey, he trembles not, his cravings are gone, he is free from sin, he has burnt the thorns of life: this is his last mortal body.

He is free from lust, he is free from greed, he knows the meaning of words, and the meaning of their combinations, he is a great man, a great man who sees the Light: this is his last mortal body.

”He knows the meaning of words” is very significant. It does not mean that he knows the dictionary meaning of words, or even the common meaning, but that he knows what relationship words have to reality. This comes only with the highest wisdom. One knows the meaning of words when one can abandon all attachments.

I have conquered all; I know all, and my life is pure; I have left all, and I am free from craving. I myself found the way. Whom shall I call Teacher? Whom shall I teach?

The gift of Truth conquers all gifts. The taste of Truth conquers all sweetness. The Joy of Truth conquers all pleasures. The loss of desires conquers all sorrows.

Wealth destroys the fool who seeks not the Beyond. Because of greed for

wealth the fool destroys himself as if he were his own enemy.

Weeds harm the fields, passions harm human nature: offerings given to those free from passions bring a great reward.

Weeds harm the fields, hate harms human nature: offerings given to those free from hate bring a great reward.

Weeds harm the fields, illusion harms human nature: offerings given to those free from illusion bring a great reward.

Weeds harm the fields, desire harms human nature: offerings given to those free from desire bring a great reward.

The monk

Good is the control of the eye, and good is the control of the ear; good is the control of smell, and good is the control of taste.

Good is the control of the body, and good is the control of words; good is the control of the mind, and good is the control of our whole inner life. When a monk has achieved perfect self-control, he leaves all sorrows behind.

A monk is anyone who has devoted themselves to Truth.

The man whose hands are controlled, whose feet are controlled, whose words are controlled, who is self-controlled in all things, who finds the inner joy, whose mind is self-possessed, who is one and has found perfect peace - this man I call a monk.

The monk whose words are controlled, peaceful and wise, who is humble, who throws light on the letter and the spirit of the sacred verses - sweet are his words.

Who abides in the truth of DHAMMA, whose joy is in the truth of DHAMMA, who ponders on DHAMMA, and remembers the truth of DHAMMA - this monk shall never fall from DHAMMA, from Truth.

Let him not despise the offerings given to him, and let him not be jealous of others, because the monk who feels envy cannot achieve deep contemplation.

However little a monk may receive, if he despises not what he receives, even the gods praise that monk, whose life is pure and full of endeavour.

For whom "name and form" are not real, who never feels "this is mine", and who sorrows not for things that are not, he in truth can be called a monk.

The monk who is full of love and who fully lives in the law of Buddha, he follows the path of NIRVANA, the path of the end of all sorrow, the path of infinite joy.

Empty the boat of your life, O man; when empty it will swiftly sail. When empty of passions and harmful desires you are bound for the land of NIRVANA.

Cut off the five - selfishness, doubt, wrong austerities and rites, lust, hate; throw off the five - desire to be born with a body, or without a body, self-will, restlessness, ignorance; but cherish five - faith, watchfulness, energy, contemplation, vision. He who has broken the five fetters - lust, hate, delusion, pride, false views - is one who has crossed to the other shore.

Watch, Bhikkhu. Be in high contemplation, and think not of pleasure, so that you have not to think of pain, like those who in the fire of hell have to swallow a ball of red-hot iron.

He who has not wisdom has not contemplation, and he who has not contemplation has not wisdom; but he who has wisdom and contemplation, he is very near NIRVANA.

When with a mind in silent peace a monk enters his empty house, then he feels the unearthly joy of beholding the light of Truth.

And when he sees in a clear vision the coming and going of inner events, then he feels the infinite joy of those who see the immortal THAT; the NIRVANA immortal.

This is the beginning of the life of a wise monk; self-control of the senses, happiness, living under the moral law, and the association with good friends whose life is pure and who are ever striving.

Let him live in love. Let his work be well done. Then in a fullness of joy he will see the end of sorrow.

Even as the *vasika* jasmine lets its withered flowers fall, do you let fall from you, O monks, all ill passions and all ill-will.

The monk is said to be a Bhikkhu of peace when his body, words and mind are peaceful, when he is master of himself and when he has left behind the lower attractions of the world.

And more importantly, he is a Bhikkhu of peace when he speaks the truths that people hate the most, at all times, and no matter what the danger to himself.

Arise! Rouse thyself by thy Self; train thyself by thy Self. Under the shelter of thy Self, and ever watchful, thou shalt live in supreme joy.

For thy Self is the master of thyself, and thy Self is thy refuge. Train therefore thyself well, even as a merchant trains a fine horse.

In a fullness of delight and of faith in the teaching of Buddha, the mendicant monk finds peace supreme and, beyond the transience of time, he will find the joy of Eternity, the joy supreme of NIRVANA.

When a mendicant monk, though young, follows with faith the path of Buddha, his light shines bright over the world, like the brightness of a moon free from clouds.

The Brahmin

Go beyond the stream, Brahmin, go with all your soul: leave desires behind. When you have crossed the stream of *Samsara*, you will reach the land of NIRVANA.

When beyond meditation and contemplation a Brahmin has reached the other shore, then he attains the supreme vision and all his fetters are broken.

He for whom there is neither this nor the further shore, nor both, who, beyond all fear, is free - him I call a Brahmin.

He who lives in contemplation, who is pure and is in peace, who has done what was to be done, who is free from passions, who has reached the Supreme end - him I call a Brahmin.

By day the sun shines, and by night shines the moon. The warrior shines in his armour, and the Brahmin priest in his meditation. But the Buddha shines by day and by night - in the brightness of his glory shines the man who is awake.

Because he has put away evil, he is called a Brahmin; because he lives in peace, he is called a *Samana*; because he leaves all sins behind, he is called a *Pabbajita*, a pilgrim.

One should never hurt a Brahmin; and a Brahmin should never return evil for evil. Alas for the man who hurts a Brahmin! Alas for the Brahmin who returns evil for evil!

It is not a little good that a Brahmin gains if he hold back his mind from the pleasures of life. Every time the desire to hurt stops, every time a pain disappears.

He who hurts not with his thoughts, or words or deeds, who keeps these three under control - him I call a Brahmin.

To either cause or encourage ignorance is to cause the most hurt.

He who learns the law of righteousness from one who teaches what Buddha taught, let him revere his teacher, as a Brahmin reveres the fire of sacrifice.

A man becomes not a Brahmin by long hair or family or birth. The man in whom there is truth and holiness, he is in joy and he is a Brahmin.

Of what use is your tangled hair, foolish man, of what use your antelope garment, if within you have tangled cravings, and without ascetic ornaments?

The man who is clothed in worn-out garments, thin, whose veins stand out, who in the forest is alone in contemplation - him I call a Brahmin.

I call not a man a Brahmin because he was born from a certain family or mother, for he may be proud, and he may be wealthy. The man who is free from possessions and free from desires - him I call a Brahmin.

He who has cut all fetters and whose mind trembles not, who in infinite freedom is free from all bonds - him I call a Brahmin.

Who has cut off the strap, the thong and the rope, with all their fastenings, who has raised the bar that closes the door, who is awake - him I call a Brahmin.

Who, though innocent, suffers insults, stripes and chains, whose weapons are endurance and soul-force - him I call a Brahmin.

Who is free from anger, faithful to his vows, virtuous, free from lusts, self-trained, whose mortal body is his last - him I call a Brahmin.

Who clings not to sensuous pleasures, even as water clings not to the leaf of the lotus, or a grain of mustard seed to the point of a needle - him I call a Brahmin.

He who even in this life knows the end of sorrow, who has laid down his burden and is free - him I call a Brahmin.

He whose vision is deep, who is wise, who knows the path and what is outside the path, who has attained the highest end - him I call a Brahmin.

Who keeps away from those who have a home and from those who have not a home, who wanders alone, and who has few desires - him I call a Brahmin.

Who hurts not any living being, whether feeble or strong, who neither kills nor causes to kill - him I call a Brahmin.

. . . who neither spreads ignorance nor causes others to spread ignorance
– him I call a Brahmin.

Who is tolerant to the intolerant, peaceful to the violent, free from greed with the greedy - him I call a Brahmin.

He from whom lust and hate, and pride and insincerity fall down like a mustard seed from the point of a needle - him I call a Brahmin.

He who speaks words that are peaceful and useful and true, words that offend no one - him I call a Brahmin.

At least, his words will not offend God.

Who in this world does not take anything not given to him: be it long or short, large or small, good or bad - him I call a Brahmin.

He who has no craving desires, either for this world or for another world, who free from desires is in infinite freedom - him I call a Brahmin.

He who in his vision is free from doubts and, having all, longs for nothing, for he has reached the immortal NIRVANA - him I call a Brahmin.

He who in this world has gone beyond good and evil and both, who free from

sorrows is free from passions and is pure - him I call a Brahmin.

He who like the moon is pure, bright, clear and serene; whose pleasure for things that pass away is gone - him I call a Brahmin.

He who has gone beyond the illusion of *Samsara*, the muddy road of transmigration so difficult to pass; who has crossed to the other shore and, free from doubts and temporal desires, has reached in his deep contemplation the joy of NIRVANA - him I call a Brahmin.

He who wanders without a home in this world, leaving behind the desires of the world, and the desires never return - him I call a Brahmin.

He who wanders without a home in this world, leaving behind the feverish thirst for the world, and the fever never returns - him I call a Brahmin.

He who is free from the bondage of men and also from the bondage of the gods: who is free from all things in creation - him I call a Brahmin.

He is free from the small pleasures of common people and also the great pleasures of uncommon people.

He who is free from pleasure and pain, who is calm, and whose seeds of death-in-life are burnt, whose heroism has conquered all the inner worlds - him I call a Brahmin.

He who knows the going and returning of beings - the birth and rebirth of life - and in joy has arrived at the end of his journey, and now he is awake and can see - him I call a Brahmin.

He whose path is not known by men, nor by spirits or gods, who is pure from all imperfections, who is a saint, an Arahat - him I call a Brahmin.

He for whom things future or past or present are nothing, who has nothing and desires nothing - him I call a Brahmin.

He who is powerful, noble, who lives a life of inner heroism, the all-seer, the

all-conqueror, the ever-pure, who has reached the end of the journey, who like Buddha is awake - him I call a Brahmin.

He who knows the river of his past lives and is free from life that ends in death, who knows the joys of heaven and the sorrows of hell, for he is a seer whose vision is pure, who in perfection is one with the Supreme Perfection - him I call a Brahmin.

SOME TEACHINGS OF
MEISTER ECKHART

- God cannot know himself without me.

- When the man in the soul, the intellect, is dead, unchecked evil prevails.

- I would sooner have the man who sins a thousand mortal sins and knows it, than him who sins but once in ignorance: that man is lost.

- In none of Christ's sufferings did his Godhead come to the help of his manhood.

- I say that next to God there is no nobler thing than suffering. Right suffering is the mother of all virtues, for right suffering so subdues the heart, it cannot rise to pride but perforce is lowly.

- Harkee, all rational souls! The swiftest steed to bear you to your goal is suffering; none shall ever taste eternal bliss but those who stand with Christ in depths of bitterness. Nothing is more gall-bitter than suffering, nothing so honey-sweet as to have suffered. The most sure foundation for this perfection is humility, for he whose nature here creeps in deepest depths shall soar in spirit to highest height of Deity.

- For you must know I have found more of God in the least despisery than ever I did in the sweetness of creatures.

- Someone complained to Meister Eckhart that no one could understand his sermons. He said. To understand my sermons a man requires three things. He must have conquered strife and be in contemplation of his highest good and be satisfied to do God's bidding and be a beginner with beginners and naught himself and be so master of himself as to be incapable of anger.

- Were I full of God I should care nothing whatever for the world. To respect the world shows want of self-respect. Self-respect betokens despisery of things.

- Whoso has three things is beloved of God. The first is riddance of goods; the second, of friends, and the third is riddance of self.

- Know that no man in this life ever gave up so much that he could not find something else to let go. Few people, knowing what this means, can stand it long, and yet it is an honest requital, a just exchange. To the extent that as you eliminate self from your activities, God comes into them - but not more and no less. Begin with that, and let it cost you your uttermost. In this way, and no other, is true peace to be found.

- He who would be serene and pure needs but one thing, detachment. Detachment abideth in itself.

- What is the freedom of a godly man? Being absolutely nothing to and wanting absolutely nothing for himself but only the glory of God in all his works.

- The kingdom of God is for none but the thoroughly dead.

- Man's best chance of finding God is where he left him.

- How does God enter the soul? . . . First in his grace whereby a man being gratified is filled with the desire of perfecting virtue as a whole, mingled with alarm lest any creature ever filch it from him.

- All things are simply God to thee who seest only God in all things. Like one who looks long at the sun, he encounters the sun in whatever he afterwards looks at. If this is lacking, this looking for and seeing God in all and sundry, then thou lackest this birth.

- What a man loves, he is. If he loves a stone he is that stone, if he loves a person he is that person, if he loves God - nay, I durst not say more; were I to

say, he is God, he might stone me. I do but teach you the scriptures.

- Form is a revelation of essence.

- As the drop becomes the ocean, so the soul is deified, losing her name and work, but not her essence.

- You must break the outside to let out the inside: to get at the kernel means breaking the shell. Even so to find nature herself all her likenesses have to be shattered.

- We must learn to act without attachment. But it is rare for anyone untrained to reach the stage at which he is proof against disturbance by any act or anybody. This needs prodigiously hard work: and for God to be as present and to show as plainly to him at all times and in all company, that is for the expert and demands especially two things. One is that the man be closeted within himself where his mind is safe from images of outside things which remain external to him and, alien as they are, cannot traffic or forgather with him or find any room in him at all. Secondly, inventions of the mind itself, ideas, spontaneous notions or images of things outside or whatever comes into his head, he must give no quarter to on pain of scattering himself and being sold into multiplicity. His powers must all be trained to turn and face his inner self. Thou dost object. "But one must turn outwards to do outward works : no work is wrought except in its own mode." - True. But to the expert soul outward modes are not merely outward things: to the interior soul all things are modes of the Deity within.

- Virgin is . . . a person void of alien images, free as he was when he existed not.

- We can counterfeit silver with iron and with copper gold; the more like the more false, without riddance. It is the same with the soul. Virtues are easy to talk of, easy to feign, but to have them really is extremely rare.

- All superfluity, anything unnecessary in word or deed, is unchastity.

- The eye by which I see God is the same as the eye by which God sees me. My eye and God's eye are one and the same.

- When thou art rid of self, then art thou self-controlled, and self-controlled art self-possessed, and self-possessed possessed of God and all that he has ever made.

- According to the scriptures, "No man knoweth the Father but the Son," and hence, if ye desire to know God, ye have to be not merely like the Son, ye have to be the very Son himself.

- The holy man is known by five signs. First, he never complains. Next, he never makes excuses: when accused, he leaves the facts to vindicate him. Thirdly, there is nothing he wants in earth or heaven but what God wills himself. Fourthly, he is not moved in time. Fifthly, he is never rejoiced: he is joy itself.

- God is the Word which pronounces itself. Where God exists he is saying this Word: where he does not exist he says nothing. God is spoken and unspoken.

- Aught that a man could or would think of God. God is not at all.

THE HEART OF PERFECT WISDOM

(The Heart Sutra)

- With a selection from Hakuin's commentary -

Avalokita, the Holy Lord and Bodhisattva, was moving in the deep course of the wisdom which has gone beyond. He looked down from on high, and he saw that the five categories of things are all empty of their own-being.

Here, O Sariputra, form is emptiness, and the very emptiness is form, emptiness does not differ from form, nor does form differ from emptiness; whatever is form, that is emptiness, whatever is emptiness, that is form. The same is true of feelings, perceptions, impulses and consciousness.

Here, O Sariputra, all things are empty appearances. They are unborn, undying, neither stained nor immaculate, neither deficient nor complete.

Therefore, O Sariputra, in emptiness there is neither form, nor reception, nor perception, nor conception, nor consciousness, no eye, or ear, nor nose, or tongue, or body, or mind, no form, nor sound, nor smell, nor taste, nor touchable, nor object of mind, no realm of sight, till we come to no realm of consciousness; there is no ignorance, no extinction of ignorance, till we come to, there is no decay and death, nor extinction of decay and death; there is no suffering, nor causation, nor cessation, nor path; there is no wisdom, no attainment and no non-attainment.

Therefore, O Sariputra, owing to a Bodhisattva's indifference to any kind of personal attainment, and through his having relied on the perfection of wisdom, he dwells without thought-coverings.

In the absence of thought-coverings he is clear-minded and fearless, he has overcome what can upset, and in the end is sustained by Nirvana.

Through reliance on perfect wisdom all Buddhas of the past, present, and future became fully awake to the utmost, right and perfect enlightenment. Therefore one should know the perfection of wisdom as the great spell, the spell of great

knowledge, the utmost spell, the unequalled spell, allayer of all suffering, in truth - for how could it not be so? By the perfection of wisdom has this spell been delivered.

It runs like this: GONE, GONE, GONE BEYOND, GONE ALTOGETHER BEYOND, O WHAT AN AWAKENING, ALL HAIL!

A Selection from Hakuin's Commentary

(The)

Heart (Mind)

For untold ages this didn't have a name. Then they blundered and gave it one. When it flies into your eyes, even gold dust will blind you.

Sutra

*This is one sutra they didn't compile
Inside their cave at Pippali.
Kumarajiva had no words to translate it,
Ananda himself couldn't get wind of it.
At the north window, icy drafts whistle through cracks.
At the south pond, wild geese sport in snowy reeds.
Above, the mountain moon seems pinched thin with cold;
Freezing clouds threaten to plunge from the sky.
Buddhas might descend to this world by the thousands,
They couldn't add or subtract one thing.*

Avalokita (, the Holy Lord and . . .)

He's the Great Fellow supplied one to every person. Nowhere on earth can you find a single unfree man! You cough. You spit. You move your arms. You don't get others to help you. Who clapped chains on you? Who's holding you back? Lift your left hand up; you just may scratch a Buddha's neck. Raise your right hand; when will you be able to avoid feeling a dog's head?

*Fingers clasp and feet walk on without the help of others,
While thoughts and emotions pile up great stocks of Wrong;
But cast out pro and con, and all likes and dislikes,
And I'll call you an Avalokita right there where you stand!*

Bodhisattva (, was . . .)

To show his difference from the Shravakas and Private Buddhas, and to set him apart from full-fledged Buddhas as well, he is given the (provisional) name of Bodhisattva. He's on the road but hasn't budged from home; he's away from home constantly, but he's not on the road. I'll snatch from you the practice of the Four Universal Vows - that's the very thing will make you Superior Men, able in both directions.

Moving (in . . .)

What's he saying! He's just making waves. Stirring up trouble. It's sleeping at night and moving around in the daytime. Urinating and passing excrement. Clouds moving and streams flowing. Leaves falling and flowers scattering. But hesitate or stop to think, and Hell rears up in all its hellish forms.

Yes, practice is like that all right, but unless you once penetrate by the cold sweat of your own brow and see it for yourself, there is trouble in store for you and plenty of it!

The Deep Course of Wisdom (which has gone beyond. He looked down from on high, and he saw . . .)

Bah! Gouging out healthy flesh and creating an open wound. How strange, this "prajna" of his. Just what is it like? "Deep"? "Shallow"? Like river water? Can you tell me, what kind of prajna has deeps and shallows? I'm afraid it's a case of mistaken identity, confusing the pheasant with the phoenix.

*Annulling Form in the quest for Emptiness, is shallow,
Seeing Emptiness in the fullness of Form, is called deep.
He prattles about wisdom with Form and Emptiness in his clutches
Like a lame tortoise in a glass jug clumping after a flying bird.*

That the five categories of things are empty of their own being. (Here, O . . .)

The sacred turtle's tail sweeps away all his tracks. But how can the tail help leaving traces of its own?

*You see another's Five and you think that's you,
Then you cling to them, with personal pride or shame,
It's like a bubble that forms on the surface of waves.
Like the lightning that snaps across the sky.*

Sariputra,

Phuh! What could that puny-fruited Arhat possibly have to offer? Around here, even Buddhas and Patriarchs have to beg for their lives. Where is *he* going to hide, with this "Hinayana face and Mahayana heart"?

Form is emptiness, and the very emptiness is form (, emptiness does not differ from form, nor does form differ from emptiness; . . .)

A nice hot kettle of stew, and he plops a couple of rat turds in and ruins it. It's no good pushing delicacies at a man with a full belly. Striking aside waves to look for water when the waves *are* water!

*Forms don't hinder emptiness, emptiness is the tissue of form;
Emptiness is not dissolution of form, form is the flesh of emptiness.
Inside the Dharma Gates where form and emptiness are-not-two.
A lame turtle with painted eyebrows stands in the evening breeze.*

Whatever is form, that is emptiness, whatever is emptiness, that is form.

Trash! What a useless collection of junk! Don't be trying to teach apes how to climb trees! These are goods that have been gathering dust on the shelves for two thousand years.

The same is true of feelings, perceptions, impulses and consciousness.

Just look at him now wallowing in the sow-grass! When you encounter strange phantoms without alarm, they self-destruct!

*Earth wind fire water are tracks left when a bird takes flight;
Forms reception perception conception are sparks in a man's eye;
A stone woman works a shuttle, skinny elbows flying,
A mud cow barrels through the surf, baring her bicuspid.*

Here, O Sariputra, all things are empty appearances.

Like rubbing your eyes to make yourself see flowers in the air. If all things don't exist to begin with, then what do we want with "empty appearances"? He is defecating and spraying pee all over the clean yard.

*The earth, its rivers and hills, are castles in the air,
Heavens and hells, a bogy bazaar atop the ocean waves;
The "Pure" land and "unpure" World are brushes of turtle hair,
Nirvana and Samsara are hare-horn riding whips.*

They are unborn, undying, not stained nor immaculate, neither deficient nor complete.

Real front-page stuff! But is that really the way it is? How did you hit on that part about everything being "unborn and undying"? You'd better not swindle us! An elbow doesn't bend outwards.

Therefore, O Sariputra, in emptiness

A regular jackal's den. A cave of shadowy ghosts. How many pilgrims have fallen in here! A deep black pit. The unutterable darkness of the grave. What a terrifying place!

There is neither form, nor reception, nor perception, nor conception, nor consciousness,

"Dreams, Delusions, Blossoms of air. Why bother to get hold of *them*? Profit and loss and right and wrong must all be chucked out." This scrupulousness of his only stirs up trouble. What's the good of making everything an empty void?

*A boundless unencumbered place, perfect, open, still;
Earth and hills and rivers, are but names, nothing more.
The Mind may be quartered, and Forms lumped into one,
But they're both still just echoes in empty ravines.*

No eye, or ear, nor nose, or tongue, or body, or mind, no form, nor sound, nor smell, nor taste, nor touchable, nor object of mind, no realm of sight, till we come to no realm of consciousness;

Well I have eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind! And forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, and things do exist!

*When the Six Senses slightly stir, Six Fields appear;
When the Mind-Root rests, the Six Dusts as well.
The Roots and Fields and Senses, all Eighteen Realms -
Just a bubble of foam on a great shoreless sea.*

There is no ignorance, no extinction of ignorance, till we come to, there is no decay and death, nor extinction of decay and death;

Pearls scattered inside fine purple curtains. Pearls packed inside filthy begger-bags; it takes a wise man to know that those are jewels. The water that a cow drinks turns to cream; the water that a snake drinks turns to poison. The twelve-storied mansions where sages dwell are wrapped in perpetual five-coloured clouds far beyond man's reach.

There is no suffering, nor causation, nor cessation, nor path;

Shining gems in the dawn light beyond the bamboo blind. The fool goes at them with an upraised sword. The salt in the seawater, the size in the paint. Egrets settling in a field a thousand flakes of snow. A warbler alighting on a bough, a treebranch all in flower.

There is no wisdom, no attainment (, and no non-attainment.)

Setting up house in a grave again! So many misunderstand these words! A dead man peeping bug-eyed from a coffin.

*A black fire burning with a dark, gem-like brilliance,
Draining vast heaven and earth of their yellows and blacks;
Mountains and rivers are not seen in the mirror of Mind,
A hundred million worlds agonize, all for nothing.*

Owing to a Bodhisattva's indifference to any kind of personal attainment,

Get him out of here! A thief pleading innocence with the stolen goods in his hands.

Acting by circumstances, in response to sentient beings wherever they may be, but still never leaving the Bodhisattva Seat. Unless you're clear about three and eight and nine, you'll have a lot to think about as you confront the world.

*Bodhisattva, Great Being!
In Chinese, "Sentient Hero with Great Heart."
He enters the Three Ways, taking men's sufferings on himself;
Unbidden, he proceeds joyfully through every realm;
He vows never to accept the meager fruits of partial truth;
While pursuing higher enlightenment himself, he works to save others.
The vast void of boundless space could cease to be, still he'd
Urge his Vow-Wheel on forever to save the ignorant multitudes.*

And through his having relied on the perfection of wisdom, (he dwells without thought-coverings.)

What a choke-pear! He's gagging on it! If you catch sight of any thing at all to depend on, spit it out at once! I'm able to endure the northern wastes of Yuchou, but the mildness of Chiangnan is sheer agony.

*Tell us you've discovered greed and anger in Saints, but don't
Give us that about Bodhisattvas depending on Wisdom.
If you see a single thing around to depend on,
That's not "unhindered" - he's tied in chains.*

*Bodhisattva and Prajna are essentially the same,
Like beads rolling on a tray, sudden, ready, uninhibited.*

*He's neither worldly nor saintly, stupid nor wise -
What a shame, when you draw a snake, to add a leg.*

In the absence of thought-coverings he is clear-minded and fearless, he has overcome what can upset,

Nothing extraordinary about that. Supernatural powers and wondrous activity are just drawing water and carrying fuel. Lifting my head, I see the sun setting over my old home in the west.

And in the end is sustained by Nirvana.

This is the hole pilgrims walk into; they fill it up year after year. He's gone off again to flit with the ghosts. It's worse than stinking socks! The upright men of our tribe are not like this; the father conceals for the sake of the son, the son for the sake of the father.

*The Mind of Birth-and-Death of all beings
Is as such the Buddhas' Great Nirvana.
A Wooden hen sits upon a coffin brooding on an egg;
An earthen mare follows the wind back home to the barn.*

Through reliance on perfect wisdom all Buddhas of the past, present, and future

(became fully awake to the utmost, right and perfect enlightenment.)

By holding a good man down he cheapens him. The bare skin and bones are fine as they are, with a natural elegance and grace, without larding them with paint and powder. There's no cold water in a boiling cauldron.

Therefore one should know the perfection of wisdom as the great spell,

Carrying water to sell by a river. Don't drag that old chipped lacquerware out here!
Transcribe a word three times, and a crow becomes a how, and then ends up a horse. He's trying to palm off shoddy goods again, like some little shopkeeper. When walking at night, don't tread on anything white; if it's not water, it's usually stone.

*Cherish the Great Charm of your own nature,
That turns a hot iron ball into finest sweetest manna;
Heaven, Hell, and the floating World of Man -
A snowflake disappearing down a glowing furnace.*

The spell of great knowledge,

Don't say "spell of great knowledge"! Break apart the staff that comes rough-formed and unshapen, and the great earth's Indigenous Black stretches out on every side. Heaven and earth lose all their shapes and colours. The sun and moon swallows all their light. Black ink pouring into a black-lacquer tub.

*Spell of great knowledge, round and perfect in every man.
Casts a calm illumination over mountains and rivers of the world;
The vast, barrier-like ocean of our age-long sins vanishes.
Like foam-bubbles atop waves, like sparks within the eyes.*

The utmost spell,

And what about down around your toes? Bring me the lowest spell! One feels tender affinity for the autumn leaves falling amidst pattering drops of rain. Yet how can that compare to the intimate richness of sunset clouds glowing over bearded fields of grain?

*The Finest, the Noblest, the First,
Enthralling even Sakya and Maitreya,
What we all have with us at birth,
But we each have to die, and be reborn.*

The unequalled spell,

Talk! He talks and two stakes appear. What ever happened to that single Stake? Where is it now? Who said, "there is no equal anywhere, above, below, or in the four quarters?" He has broken it all up into little bits, there are pieces strewn all over. That idle old gimlet Teyun, how many times is he going to come down from the Summit of Wonder Peak? He hires a foolish old saint to help him fill up a well with snow.

*Last winter the plum was bitter cold;
A dash of rain, a burst of bloom!
Its shadow is cast by the moon's pale light,
Its secret fragrance carried on the spring breeze.
Yesterday, you were only a snow-covered tree,
Today, your boughs are starred with blossom!
What cold and suffering have you weathered,
Venerable queen of the flower rain!*

Allayer of all suffering,

Picking a lily bulb apart to find the center. Shaving a staff of square bamboo to make it round. Ripping the threads from a Persian carpet. Nine times nine is, now and always, eighty-one. Nineteen and twenty-nine meet, but neither offers its hand.

*When you pass the test of Mind and Emptiness
Your parts are instant ash;
Heavens and Hells are old broken-down furniture,
Buddha-worlds and Demon-worlds smashed into oblivion.
A yellow bird chortles ecstatic strains of "White Snow,"
A black turtle clambers up a lighthouse, sword in belt;
And anyone who wishes to enter their samadhi,
Must once pour down rivers of white-beaded sweat.*

In truth - for how could it not be so? (By the perfection of wisdom has this spell been delivered.)

Liar! He's lying in his teeth right there! We rub elbows with him all day long - How do we resemble him?

It runs like this:

He's at it again! Over and over! What about woodcutters' songs and fishermen's chanteys? Where do they come in? And what about warbling thrushes and twittering swallows? Don't enter the waves and pick bubbles from the surf!

*These weed-choked fields with their seven-word furrows
And the castles of verbiage in lines of five*

*Weren't meant for the eyes of flinty old priests, I wrote only
To help you brothers, cold and hungry in your huts;
For unless you find the Way, and transform your self,
You stay trapped and entangled down a bottomless pit.
And don't try to tell me my poems are too hard -
Face it, the problem is your own Eyeless state.
When you come to a word you don't understand, quick
Bite it at once! Chew it right to the pith!
Once you're soaked to the bone with death's cold sweat,
All the koan Zen has are yanked up, root and stem.
With toil and trouble, I too once glimpsed the Edge -
Smashed the Scale that works with a blind arm;
When that Tool of Unknowing is shattered for good,
You fill with the fierceness and courage of lions.
Zen is blessed with the power to bring this about,
Why not use it to bore through to Perfect Integrity?
People these days turn away as if it were dirt,
Who is there to carry on the life-thread of Wisdom?
Don't think I'm an old man who just likes to make poems,
My motive is one: to rouse men of talent wherever they are.
The superior will know at a glance where the arrow flies.
The mediocre will just prattle about the rhythm and rhyme.*

*Ssu-ma of the Sung was a true prince among men,
What a shame that eyes of such worth remained unopened!
Whenever he read difficult "hard-to-pass" koan,
He said they were riddles made to vex young monks;
For the gravest crimes man is sure to feel repentance -
Slander of the Dharma is no minor offense!
Crowds of these miscreants are at large in the world,
The Zen landscape is barren beyond belief.
If you have grasped the Mind of the Buddha-patriarchs
How could you possibly be blind to their words?*

**GONE, GONE, GONE BEYOND, GONE ALTOGETHER BEYOND, O WHAT AN
AWAKENING, ALL HAIL!**

To serve a Superior Man is easy, to please him an impossible task. A falling shred of mist flies together with a lone white gull; the autumn waters are a single colour with the far autumn sky. A rain squall sweeps the sky from the hamlet in the south to the hamlet in the north. A new wife carries boxes of lunch to her mother-in-law in the fields; grandchild is fed with morsels from grandfather's mouth.

THE AVADHUTA GITA

Song of the Free
of
Dattatreya

- With Commentary by Kevin Solway -

CHAPTER 1

Through the grace of God alone, the desire for nonduality arises in wise men to save them from great fear.

Fear of untruth, fear of being in error regarding one's very life, leads the wise to desire Reality, which is nonduality. One is wise who has been made so by all that has caused him to be. This is called "grace of God" because one is unable to generate any of the causes of one's becoming wise. Even the conscious effort to become wise ultimately stems from the environment, the All.

How shall I salute the formless Being, indivisible, auspicious, and immutable, who fills all this with His Self and also fills the self with His Self?

The universe composed of the five elements is like water in a mirage. Oh, to whom shall I make obeisance - I who am one and taintless?

All is verily the absolute Self. Distinction and nondistinction do not exist. How can I say, "It exists; it does not exist"? I am filled with wonder!

All worldly difficulties fall away in the light of this supreme knowledge. The wonder is that we had difficulties.

The essence and the whole of Vedanta is this Knowledge, this supreme Knowledge: that I am by nature the formless, all- pervasive Self.

There is no doubt that I am that God who is the Self of all, pure, indivisible, like the sky, naturally stainless.

I indeed am immutable and infinite and the form of pure Intelligence. I do not know how or in relation to whom joy and sorrow exist.

I have no mental activity, good or bad; I have no bodily function, good or bad; I have no verbal action, good or bad. I am the nectar of Knowledge, beyond the senses, pure.

The mind indeed is of the form of space. The mind indeed is omnifaced. The mind is the past. The mind is all. But in reality there is no mind.

I, the One only, am all this, beyond space and continuous. How can I see the Self as visible or hidden?

Thus you are One. Why then do you not understand that you are the unchangeable One, equally perceived in all? O mighty One, how can you, who are ever-shining, unrestricted, think of day and night?

Know the Self always to be everywhere, one and unintercepted. I am the meditator and the highest object of meditation. Why do you divide the Indivisible?

You are not born nor do you die. At no time do you have a body. The scripture declares in many different ways the well-known dictum: "All is Brahman."

You are He who is exterior and interior. You are the auspicious One existing everywhere at all times. Why are you running hither and thither deluded, like an unclean spirit?

Union and separation exist in regard neither to you nor to me. There is no you, no me, nor is there this universe. All is verily the Self alone.

You do not belong to that which is composed of the five objects of sense, such as sound; nor does that belong to you. You indeed are the supreme Reality. Why then do you suffer?

For you there is no birth or death, for you there is no mind, for you there is no bondage or liberation, no good or evil. Why do you shed tears, my child? Neither you nor I have name and form.

O mind, why do you wander about deluded, like an unclean spirit? Behold the Self indivisible. Be happy through renunciation of attachment.

You verily are Truth, devoid of change, motionless, one, of the nature of freedom. You have neither attachment nor aversion. Why do you suffer, seeking the objects of desires?

All the scriptures say that the Truth is without attributes, pure, immutable,

bodiless, and existing equally everywhere. Know me to be That. There is not the least doubt about it.

Know that which has form to be false, that which is formless to be eternal. Through the instruction of this truth there is no longer rebirth into this world.

Sages say that Reality is one only and the same. And through renunciation of attachment, the mind, which is one and many, ceases to exist.

If it is the nature of the not-Self, how can there be samadhi (superconscious realization)? If it is of the nature of the Self, how can there be samadhi? If it is both "is" and "is not", how can there be samadhi? If all is one and of the nature of freedom, how can there be samadhi?

If Truth is other than my mind then how can I know it? If Truth is in fact my mind then how can I know it? How can there be consciousness of Truth if all is Truth?

You are pure homogeneous Reality, disembodied, unborn, and immutable. Why do you think of yourself as "I know it here" or "I do not know"?

By such sentences as "That thou art," your own Self is affirmed. Of that which is untrue and composed of the five elements the Sruti says, "Not this, not this."

As the self is filled by the Self, so is all filled continuously by you. There is no meditator or meditation. Why does your mind meditate shamelessly?

What on earth are you meditating upon you fool? And what on earth do you think you are meditating with?

I do not know the Supreme; how shall I speak of Him? I do not know the Supreme; how shall I worship Him? If I am the supreme One, who is the highest Truth, who is homogeneous Being and like unto space, how then shall I speak of Him and worship Him?

The principle of ego is not the Truth, which is homogeneous, which is free from the cause of superimposition and distinctions of perceived and perceiver. How can the ego be That which is aware of Itself?

There is no substance whatever which is by nature unlimited. There is no substance whatever which is of the nature of Reality. The very Self is the supreme Truth. There is neither injury nor noninjury in It.

You are the homogeneous Reality; you are pure, bodiless, birthless, and imperishable. Why then do you have any delusion about the Self? Again, why

am I myself deluded?

When the pot is broken; the space within it is absorbed in the infinite space and becomes undifferentiated. When the mind becomes pure, I do not perceive any difference between the mind and the supreme Being.

There is no pot; there is no pot's interior space. Neither is there an individual soul nor the form of an individual soul. Know the absolute Brahman, devoid of knowable and knower.

Know me to be that Self who is everything and everywhere at all times, who is eternal, steady, the All, the nonexistent, and the Existent. Have no doubt.

There are no Vedas, no worlds, no gods, no sacrifices. There is certainly no caste, no stage in life, no family, no birth. There is neither the path of smoke nor the path of light. There is only the highest Truth, the homogeneous Brahman.

If you are free of the pervaded and the pervader, if you are one and fulfilled, how can you think of yourself as directly perceptible by the senses or beyond the range of the senses?

Some seek nonduality, others duality. They do not know the Truth, which is the same at all times and everywhere, which is devoid of both duality and nonduality.

How can they describe the Truth, which is beyond mind and words, which is devoid of white and other colours, of sound and other qualities?

It is devoid of colour and also the lack of colour.

When all these appear to you as false, when the body and so on appear to you like space, then you know Brahman truly, then for you there is no dual series.

That is, there is no confusion.

Even my natural self appears to me as non-distinct from the supreme Self; it appears to be one and like space. How can there be meditator and meditation?

Similarly, when the everyday self appears to be the same as the world, how can there be death?

What I do, what I eat, what I sacrifice, what I give - all this is not mine in the least. I am pure, unborn, undecaying.

Know all this universe to be formless. Know all this universe to be without change. Know all this universe to be of purified body. Know all this universe to be of the nature of the Absolute.

You are verily the Truth. There is no doubt about it - otherwise, what do I know? Why do you consider the Self, which is perceptible to Itself, as imperceptible?

My child, how can there be illusion and nonillusion, shadow and lack of shadow? All this is one Truth, all this is of the nature of space and without taint.

I am free in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end. I am never bound. This is my sure knowledge - that I am naturally spotless and pure.

The whole universe, beginning with the principle of cosmic intelligence, is not in the least manifest to me. All is indeed Brahman alone. How can there be any existence in caste or stage of life for me?

I know that all, in every way, is the one indivisible "I" which is self-sustained and full, while the five elements, beginning with ether, are empty.

The Self is neither eunuch, man, nor woman: it is neither idea nor imagination. How can you think the Self to be full of joy or joyless?

The Self certainly does not become pure through the practice of six-limbed yoga. It certainly is not purified by the destruction of the mind. It certainly is not made pure by the instructions of the teacher. It is Itself the Truth, It is Itself the illumined One.

There is no body made up of five elements; nor is there anyone who is disembodied. All is verily the Self alone. How can there be the three states and the fourth?

I am not bound, I am not, indeed, liberated, and I am not different from Brahman. Neither doer nor enjoyer, I am devoid of the distinctions of the pervaded and the pervader.

As water, when water has been poured into water, has no distinctions, so purusa and prakrti appear nondifferent to me.

Nature and soul.

If indeed you are never bound or liberated, how then can you think yourself

with form or formless?

I know your supreme Form to be directly perceivable, like the sky. I know your lower form to be as water in a mirage.

I have neither teacher nor instruction, limiting adjunct nor activity. Know that I am by nature pure, bodiless, like the sky.

You are pure, you are without a body, your mind is not higher than the highest. You need not be ashamed to say, "I am the Self, the supreme Truth."

Why are you weeping, O mind? Do you, the Self, be the Self by means of the Self. Drink, my child, the supreme nectar of Nonduality, transcending all divisions.

There is neither knowledge nor ignorance nor knowledge combined with ignorance. He who has always such knowledge is himself Knowledge. It is never otherwise.

There is no need of knowledge, reasoning, time, space, instruction from a teacher, or attainment of samadhi. I am naturally the perfect Consciousness, the Real, like the sky, spontaneous and steady.

I was not born nor have I death. I have no action, good or evil. I am Brahman, stainless, without qualities. How can there be bondage or liberation for me?

If God pervades all, if God is immovable, full, undivided, then I see no division. How can He have exterior or interior?

The whole universe shines undivided and unbroken. Oh, the maya, the great delusion - the imagination of duality and nonduality!

Always "not this, not this" to both the formless and the formed. Only the Absolute exists, transcending difference and nondifference.

You have no mother, no father, no wife, no son, no relative, no friend. You have no likes or dislikes. Why is this anguish in your mind?

O, mind, for you there is no day or night, rising or setting. How can the wise imagine an embodied state for the bodiless?

The Self is neither divided nor undivided, nor has It sadness, happiness, and the like, nor is It all or less than all. Know the Self to be immutable.

I am not the doer or enjoyer. Work have I none, now or formerly. I have no body, nor am I bodiless. How can I have or not have a sense of "my-ness"?

I have no fault such as passion and the like, nor have I any sorrow arising from the body. Know me to be the one Self, vast and like the sky.

Friend mind, of what use is much vain talk? Friend mind, all this is mere conjecture. I have told you that which is the essence: you indeed are the Truth, like the sky.

In whatever place yogis die, in whatever state, there they dissolve, as the space of a jar dissolves into the sky.

Giving up the body in a holy place or in the house of a candala, the yogi, even if he has lost consciousness, becomes identified with the Absolute as soon as he is free of the body.

Candala - one of the lowest castes.

The yogis consider duty in life, pursuit of wealth, enjoyment of love, liberation, and everything movable or immovable such as man and so on to be a mirage.

This is my certain perception: I neither perform nor enjoy past action, future action, or present action.

The avadhuta, alone, pure in evenness of feeling, abides happy in an empty dwelling place. Having renounced all, he moves about naked. He perceives the Absolute, the All, within himself.

Where there are neither the three states of consciousness nor the fourth, there one attains the Absolute in the Self. How is it possible to be bound or free where there is neither virtue nor vice?

There is no consciousness, and there can be no states of that which does not exist.

The avadhuta never knows any mantra in Vedic metre nor any tantra. This is the supreme utterance of the avadhuta, purified by meditation and merged in the sameness of infinite Being.

There exists neither complete void nor voidlessness, neither truth nor untruth. The avadhuta, having realized the truths of the scriptures, has uttered this spontaneously from his own nature.

CHAPTER 2

Of the teacher - even if he be young, illiterate, or addicted to the enjoyment of sense objects, even if he be a servant or a householder - none of these should be considered. Does anyone shun a gem fallen in an impure place?

In such a case one should not consider even the quality of scholarship. A worthy person should recognize only the essence. Does not a boat, though devoid of beauty and vermilion paint, nevertheless ferry passengers?

The unmoving One, who without effort possesses all that is movable and immovable, is Consciousness, naturally calm, like the sky.

How can He, the One and All-pervading, who moves effortlessly all that is movable and immovable, be differentiated! To me He is nondual.

I am verily supreme since I am the Absolute, more essential than all essences, since I am free from birth and death, calm and undifferentiated.

Thus I, free from all components, am worshipped by the gods, but being full and perfect, I do not recognize any distinctions such as gods and the like.

The most exceptional human beings, the "gods", perceive enough of the avaduta to be in awe of him.

Ignorance does not create any doubt. What shall I do, being endowed with modifications of the mind? They arise and dissolve like bubbles in water.

Thus am I ever pervading all existence beginning with cosmic intelligence - pervading soft, hard, sweet, and pungent substances.

As pungency, coldness, or softness is nondifferent from water, so prakrti is nondifferent from purusa - thus it appears to me.

The Lord of the universe is devoid of all names. He is subtler than the subtlest, supreme. He is spotless, beyond the senses, mind and intellect.

Where there is such a natural Being, how can there be "I", how can there be even "you", how can there be the world?

That which has been described as being like ether is indeed like ether. That is Consciousness - blameless, omniscient, and perfect.

It does not move about on the earth or dwell in fire. It is not blown by the wind or covered by water.

Space is pervaded by It, but It is not pervaded by anything. It is existing within

and without. It is undivided and continuous.

One should successively take recourse to the objects of concentration, as mentioned by the yogis, in accordance with their subtlety, invisibility, and attributelessness.

When through constant practice one's concentration becomes objectless, then, being divested of merits and demerits, one attains the state of complete dissolution in the Absolute through the dissolution of the object of concentration, but not before then.

For the destruction of the terrible, poisonous universe, which produces the unconsciousness of delusion, there is but one infallible remedy - the nectar of naturalness.

That which has form is visible to the eye, while the formless is perceived mentally. That (the Self) being beyond existence and non-existence, is called beyond.

The external existence is the universe, the inner existence is called prakrti. One should try to know That which is more interior than the inner existence, That which is like water within the kernel of the coconut.

Illusory knowledge relates to what is outside, correct knowledge to what is inside. Try to know That which is more interior than the inside. That which is like water within the kernel of the coconut.

There is only one very clear moon on the full moon night. One should perceive That (the Self) like the moon; seeing duality is perversion.

It is indeed in this way that intelligence becomes divided and ceases to be all-comprehending. A giver attains to wisdom and is sung with millions of names.

Whoever, whether he be ignorant or learned, attains to the full awareness of Truth through the grace of a teacher's wisdom, becomes detached from the ocean of worldliness.

Likewise if he attains to the full awareness of Truth without a teacher!

He who is free from attachment and hatred, devoted to the good of all beings, fixed in knowledge and steady shall attain to the supreme state.

As the space within a pot dissolves in the universal space when the pot is broken, so a yogi, in the absence of the body, dissolves into the supreme Self, which is his true being.

It has been said that the destiny of those devoted to action is the same as their thought at the end, but it has not been said that the destiny of those established in yoga is the same as their thought at the end.

"The end" is happening every single moment. In this moment our destiny is determined.

One may express the destiny of those devoted to action with the organ of speech, but the destiny of the yogis can never be expressed, because it is transcendental.

Knowing this, one never says that the yogis have any particular path. For them it is the giving up of all duality. The supreme attainment comes of itself.

The yogi, having died anywhere, in a holy place or in the house of an untouchable, does not see the mother's womb again - he is dissolved in the supreme Brahman.

He never experiences gain, so he never experiences loss.

He who has seen his true Self, which is innate, unborn, and incomprehensible, does not, if anything desired happens to him, become tainted. Being free from taint, he never performs any action. The man of self-restraint or the ascetic, therefore, is never bound.

He attains to the supreme Self, who is eternal, pure fearless, formless, and supportless, who is without body, without desire, beyond the pairs of opposites, free from illusion, and of undiminished power.

He attains to the supreme, eternal Self, in whom exists no Veda, no initiation, no tonsure, no teacher, no disciple, no perfection of symbolic figures, no hand-posture or anything else.

He attains to the supreme, eternal Self, in whom is neither sambhavi, nor sakti, nor anavi initiation; neither a sphere, nor an image, nor a foot, nor anything else; neither beginning, nor ending, nor a jar, etc.

He attains to the supreme, eternal Self, from whose essence the universe of movable and immovable objects is born, in whom it rests, and into whom it dissolves, even as foam and bubbles are born of the transformation of water.

He attains to the supreme, eternal Self, in whom is no closing of nostril nor gazing nor posture, and in whom is neither knowledge nor ignorance nor any nerve-current.

He attains to the supreme, eternal Self, who is devoid of manifoldness, oneness, many-and-oneness, and otherness; who is devoid of minuteness, length, largeness, and nothingness; who is devoid of knowledge, knowableness, and sameness.

He attains the supreme, eternal Self whether he has perfect self-control or not, whether he has withdrawn his senses well or not, whether he has gone beyond activity or is active.

He attains the supreme, eternal Self who is not mind, intelligence, body, senses, or egoism; who is neither the subtle elements nor the five gross elements nor of the nature of space.

When the injunctions cease and the yogi attains to the supreme Self, his mind being void of differentiations, he has neither purity nor impurity; his contemplation is without distinguishing attributes; and even what is usually prohibited is permissible to him.

Where mind and speech can utter nothing, how can there be instruction by a teacher? To the teacher - ever united with Brahman - who has said these words, the homogeneous Truth shines out.

CHAPTER 3

The distinctions of quality and absence of quality does not exist in the least. How shall I worship Siva (the Absolute) who is devoid of quality and absence of quality, who is devoid of attachment and detachment, who is of the form of ether, omniform, beyond illusion, and all-pervading.

Siva (the Absolute) is ever without white and other colours. This effect and cause are also the supreme Siva. I am thus the pure Siva, devoid of all doubt. O beloved friend, how shall I bow to my own Self in my Self?

I am devoid of root and rootlessness and am ever manifest. I am devoid of smoke and smokelessness and am ever manifest. I am devoid of light and absence of light and am ever manifest. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

How shall I speak of desirelessness and desire? How shall I speak of nonattachment and attachment? How shall I speak of Him as devoid of substance and insubstantiality? I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

How shall I speak of the Whole, which is nondual? How shall I speak of the Whole, which is of the nature of duality? How shall I speak of the Whole, which is eternal and non-eternal? I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

It is neither gross nor subtle. It has neither come nor gone. It is without beginning, middle, and end. It is neither high nor low. I am truly declaring the highest Truth and Reality - I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

Know all instruments of perception to be like ethereal space. Know all objects of perception to be like ethereal space. Know this pure One as neither bound nor free. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

My child, I am not difficult to comprehend, nor am I hidden in consciousness. My child, I am not difficult to perceive, nor am I hidden in the perceptible. My child, I am not hidden in the forms immediately near me. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

I am the fire that burns the karma of the one who is beyond all karma. I am the fire that burns the sorrow of one beyond all sorrow. I am the fire that burns the body of one who is devoid of body. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

I am the fire that burns the sin of one who is sinless. I am the fire that burns the attributes of one who is without attributes. I am the fire that burns the bondage of one who is without bondage. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

My child, I am not devoid of nonexistence and existence. My child, I am not devoid of unity and absence of unity. My child, I am not devoid of mind and absence of mind. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

It is not my ignorance that the One beyond illusion seems to be posited in illusion. It is not my ignorance that the griefless One appears to be posited in grief. It is not my ignorance that the greedless One appears to be posited in greed. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

The creeperlike growth of worldly existence is never mine. The joy of extended contentment is never mine. This bondage of ignorance is never mine. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

The activity involved in the extension of relative existence is not a modification of myself. The gloom which is the expansion of grief is not a modification of

myself. The tranquility which produces one's religious merit is not a modification of mine. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

I have never any action which is the cause of regret and misery. Mine is never a mind which is the product of the experience of misery. Since this egoism never is mine, I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

I am the death of the movement of the unmoving One. I am neither decision nor indecision. I am the death of sleep and wakefulness. I am neither good nor evil, neither the moving nor the unmoving. I am the death of the substance of the insubstantial. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

This (Self) is neither knowable nor the instrument of knowing. It is neither reason nor the one to be reasoned about. It is beyond the reach of words. It is neither mind nor intelligence. How then can I speak this Truth to you? I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

The supreme Reality is devoid of the undivided and the divided. The supreme Truth is in no way within or without. It is beyond causation. It is not attached, nor is It any substance. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

I am verily the Reality, free from such blemishes as attachment. I am verily the Reality, free of such blemishes as destiny. I am verily the Reality, free of grief caused by transmigratory existence. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

If there are no three planes (of existence), how can there be the fourth? If there are no three times, how can there be quarters? The supreme Reality is the state of the highest serenity. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

I have no such divisions as long or short. I have no such divisions as wide or narrow. I have no such divisions as angular or circular. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

I never had a mother, father, son, or the like. I was never born and never did I die. I never had a mind. The supreme Reality is undistracted and calm. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

I am pure, very pure - beyond reason and of infinite form. I am nonattachment and attachment - beyond reason and of infinite form. I am undivided and divided - beyond reason and of infinite form. I am the nectar of Knowledge,

homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

If the supreme Reality is only one and stainless, how can there be here the hosts of gods beginning with Brahma, and how can there be here the worlds of habitation, such as heaven? I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

How shall I, the pure One, the "not this" and yet the "not this" speak? How shall I, the pure One, the endless and the end, speak? How shall I, the pure One, attributeless and attribute, speak? I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

I ever perform the supreme action which is nonaction. I am the supreme Joy, devoid of attachment and detachment. I am the everlasting Joy, devoid of body and absence of body. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

The creation of the illusory universe is not my modification. The creation of deceit and arrogance is not my modification. The creation of truth and falsehood is not my modification. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

I am devoid of time, such as twilight - I have no disjunction. I am devoid of interiority and awakening. I am neither deaf nor mute. I am thus devoid of illusion. I am not made pure by moods of mind. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

I am without a master and the absence of a master - I am unperturbed. I have transcended mind and absence of mind - I am unperturbed. Know me as unperturbed and transcendent of all. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

How shall I say that this is a forest or a temple? How shall I say that this is proved or doubtful? It is thus one uninterrupted, homogeneous, calm Existence. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

(The Self), devoid of life and lifelessness, shines forever. Devoid of seed and seedlessness, of liberation and bondage, It shines forever. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

It shines forever, devoid of birth, mundane existence, and death. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

Thou hast no name and form even to the extent of allusion, nor any substance differentiated or undifferentiated. Why dost thou grieve, O thou of shameless mind? I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

Why weepst thou, friend? Thou hast no old age or death. Why weepst thou, friend? Thou hast no misery of birth. Why weepst thou, friend? There is no change for thee. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

Why dost thou weep, friend? Thou hast no natural form. Why dost thou weep, friend? Thou hast no deformity. Why dost thou weep, friend? Thou hast no age. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

Why dost thou weep, friend? Thou hast no age. Why dost thou weep, friend? Thou hast no senses. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

Why dost thou weep, friend? Thou hast no lust. Why dost thou weep, friend? Thou hast no greed. Why dost thou weep, friend? Thou hast no delusion. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

Why dost thou desire affluence? Thou hast no wealth. Why dost thou desire affluence? Thou hast no wife. Why dost thou desire affluence? Thou hast none who is thine own. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

Birth in this universe of false appearances is neither thine nor mine. This shameless mind appears as differentiated. This, devoid of difference and nondifference, is neither mine nor thine. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

Thou hast not the nature of nonattachment in the slightest, nor hast thou in the slightest the nature of attachment. Thou hast not even the slightest of the nature of desire. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

In thy mind there is neither the meditator, meditation, nor the object of meditation. Thou hast no samadhi. There is no region outside thee, nor is there any substance or time. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

I have told thee all that is essential. There is neither thou, nor anything for me or for a great one; nor is there any teacher or disciple. The supreme Reality is natural and exists in Its own way. I am the nectar of Knowledge, homogeneous Existence, like the sky.

If I, the Supreme, of the nature of sky, alone exist, how can there be here the supreme Truth which is blissful Reality, how can there be here the supreme Truth which is not of the nature of bliss, and how can there be here the supreme Truth of the nature of knowledge and intuition?

Know the One who is Consciousness and devoid of fire and air. Know the One of nature of the Consciousness, who is devoid of earth and water. Know the One of the nature of Consciousness, who is devoid of coming and going.

I am neither of the nature of the void nor of the nature of the nonvoid. I am neither of pure nature nor of impure nature. I am neither form nor formlessness. I am the supreme Reality of the form of Its own nature.

Renounce the world in every way. Renounce renunciation in every way. Renounce the poison of renunciation and nonrenunciation. The Self is pure, immortal, natural, and immutable.

CHAPTER 4

There is neither invitation nor casting off; how can there be flowers, leaves, meditations, and recitation of sacred texts, and how can there be worship of Siva, which is identity and difference?

The Absolute is not liberated from bondage and obstruction. The Absolute is not purified, cleansed, and released. The Absolute is not liberated by union or separation. I am, indeed, the free One, like the sky.

I have developed no false notion that all this reality comes into existence or that all this unreality comes into existence. I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

Stained, stainless, divided, undivided, differentiated - none of these appear to me. I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

It has not happened that I, the ignorant one, have attained to Knowledge, nor has it happened that I have become of the nature of Knowledge. And how can I say that I have both ignorance and knowledge? I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

It (the Self) does not appear to me as virtuous or sinful, as bound or liberated, nor does It appear to me as united or separated. I am free from disease - my

form has been extinguished.

I never have the high, low, or middle state. I have no friend or foe. How shall I speak of good and evil? I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

I am not the worshipper or the form of the worshipped. I have neither instruction nor practice. How shall I speak of myself who am of the nature of Consciousness? I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

There is nothing here which pervades or is pervaded. There is no abode nor is there the abodeless. How shall I speak of void and non-void? I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

There is no one to understand and nothing, indeed, to be understood. I have no cause and no effect. How shall I say that I am conceivable or inconceivable? I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

There is nothing dividing, nothing to be divided. I have nothing to know with and nothing to be known. How shall I then speak of coming and going, my child? I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

I have no body or bodilessness, nor have I intelligence, mind, and senses. How shall I speak of attachment and detachment? I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

(The Self) is not separate or high and It has not disappeared even to the extent of illusion. Friend, how can I speak of It as identical or different? I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

Neither have I conquered the senses nor have I not conquered them. Self-restraint or discipline never occurred to me. Friend, how shall I speak of victory and defeat? I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

Never have I form or absence of form, never any beginning, middle, or end. Friend, how shall I speak of strength and weakness? I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

Never, my child, did I have death or deathlessness, poison or poisonlessness. How shall I speak of the pure and impure? I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

Never have I sleep or awakening. Never do I practise concentration or hand-posture. For me there is neither day nor night. How shall I speak of the transcendental and relative states? I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

Know me as free from the all and from the details composing the all. I have neither illusion nor freedom from illusion. How shall I speak of such rituals as morning and evening devotions? I am free from disease - form has been extinguished.

Know me as endowed with all concentration. Know me as free from any relative or ultimate aim. How shall I speak of union and separation? I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

I am neither ignorant nor learned, I observe neither silence nor absence of silence. How shall I speak of argument and counter-argument? I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

Never do I have father, mother, family, caste, birth and death. How shall I speak of affection and infatuation? I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

Never do I disappear - I am ever manifest. Never do I have effulgence or absence of effulgence. How shall I speak of such rituals as morning and evening devotions? I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

Know me beyond all doubt to be boundless. Know me beyond all doubt to be undivided. Know me beyond all doubt to be stainless. I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

The wise, my child, give up all meditations; they give up all good and evil deeds and drink the nectar of renunciation. I am free from disease - my form has been extinguished.

There is verily no versification where one knows nothing. The supreme and free One, absorbed in the consciousness of the homogeneous Being and pure of thought, prattles about Truth.

CHAPTER 5

The word Om is like the sky, it is not the discernment of the essence of high and low. How can there be enunciation of the point of the word (Om) which annuls the manifestation of the Unmanifest?

The srutis - such as "That thou art" - prove to thee thou art indeed That, devoid of adjuncts and the same in all. Why dost thou who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

If thou art the identity in all, if thou art devoid of above and below, within and without, and of even the sense of unity, then why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

There is no discrimination of rules and precepts, there is no cause or effect. That which is the identity in all is without words and the collocation of words. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

There is no knowledge or ignorance and no practice of concentration. There is no space or absence of space and no practice of concentration. There is no time or absence of time and no practice of concentration. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

There is no pot-space or pot, no individual body or individual. There is no distinction of cause and effect. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

There is only the state of freedom which is the All and undifferentiated, which is devoid of the distinction of short and long, of round and angular. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

Here is the One without void and absence of void, without purity and impurity, without the whole and the part. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

There is no distinction of the different and the non-different. There is no distinction of within, without, or junction of the two. It is the same in all, devoid of friend and foe. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

It is not of the nature of disciple or non-disciple; nor is it the discernment of the difference between the living and the nonliving. There is only the state of freedom - the All, the Undifferentiated. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

It is without form and formlessness. It is without difference and nondifference. It is without manifestation and evolution. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

There is no bondage due to fetters of good and evil qualities. How shall I perform the actions related to death and life? There is only the pure, stainless Being - the same in all. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

Here is the Being devoid of existence and nonexistence, of desire and

desirelessness. Here verily is the highest Consciousness, identical with freedom. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

Here is the Truth undifferentiated by truths, devoid of junction and disjunction. Since it is the same in all and devoid of all, why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart.

Here is the Supreme, devoid of association and dissociation, unlike a house, cottage, or sheath. Here is the Supreme devoid of knowledge and ignorance. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

Change and changelessness, the definable and the indefinable are untrue. If the truth is in the Self alone, why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

Here verily is the conscious Being who is completely the All. Here is the conscious Being who is all-comprehensive and undivided. Here is the conscious Being, alone and immutable. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

It is ignorance to see difference in the Undifferentiated. Doubt in what is beyond doubt is ignorance. If there is only the one undivided Consciousness, then why dost thou who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

There is no state of liberation, no state of bondage, no state of virtue, no state of vice. There is no state of perfection and no state of destitution. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

If the homogeneous Being is devoid of cause and effect, division and subdivision, colour and lack of colour, then why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

The Self is here in the universal Consciousness which is the All and undivided. It is here in the universal Consciousness which is absolute and immovable. It is here in the universal Consciousness which is devoid of men and other beings. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

The Self transcends all, is indivisible and all-pervading. It is free from stain of attachment, immovable and all-pervading. It is without day and night and all-pervading. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

There is no coming of bondage and freedom from bondage. There is no coming of union and separation. There is coming of reasoning and disputation. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

Pure, vast and homogeneous like the sky, the Self is the same in all and devoid

of all. It is the homogeneous Being divested of essence, nonessence, and change. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

Here is the Self, which is more than dispassionate to virtue and vice, to substance and nonsubstance, to desire and desirelessness. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

Here is the Self, the same in all, which is without grief and grieflessness. Here is the Supreme, without happiness and sorrow. The supreme Truth is devoid of teacher and disciple. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

Verily there is no offshoot, essence, or absence of essence. Neither is there the movable nor the immovable, sameness nor variety. The Self is devoid of reason and unreason. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

Here is the Essence, the concentration of all essences, which is said to be different from one's individual consciousness. To be the instrument of the perception of objects is unreal. Why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

Since the Vedas have declared variously that this (universe) made of ether and the like is like a mirage, and since the Self is one, indivisible, and the same in all, why dost thou, who art the identity in all, grieve in thy heart?

Where one knows nothing, there is verily no versification. The supreme and free One, pure of thought, absorbed in the consciousness of the homogeneous Being, prattles about the Truth.

CHAPTER 6

The srutis declare in various ways that all this, the ether and its like, and we ourselves, are like a mirage. If there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can there be the comparable and the comparison?

The Supreme is without divisibility and indivisibility. The Supreme is without activity and changeability. If there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can there be worship, how can there be austerity?

The Mind is verily supreme, undivided, all-pervasive, and devoid of largeness and smallness. The Mind is indeed the indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute. How can we do anything with the mind and speech?

The Self is the negation of the distinction between day and night. The Self is the negation of the risen and not-risen. If there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can there be the sun, the moon, and fire?

The Self is that from which the distinctions of desire and desirelessness, of action and inaction are gone. If there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can there be consciousness differentiated by exterior and interior?-

If the Self is devoid of essence and lack of essence, if it is without void and nonvoid, if there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can there be a first, how can there be a last?

If the Self is a negation of difference and nondifference, if it is the negation of knower and knowable, if there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can there be the third, how can there be the fourth?

The spoken and the unspoken are not the Truth, the known and the unknown are not the Truth. If there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can there be objects, senses, mind, and intellect?

Ether and air are not the Truth; earth and fire are not the Truth. If there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can there be cloud, how can there be water?

If the Self is the negation of imagined worlds, if It is the negation of imagined gods, if there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can there be discriminating consciousness of good and evil?

The Self is the negation of death and deathlessness. It is the negation of action and inaction. If there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can one speak of coming and going?

No such distinctions exist as prakrti and purusa. There is no difference between cause and effect. If there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can one speak of self and not-self?

There is no coming of the third kind of misery or of the second kind of misery, due to the gunas. If there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can there be an old man, a young man, or an infant?

The Supreme is without caste and stage of life, without cause and agent. If there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can there be consciousness of the destroyed and the undestroyed?

The destroyed and the undestroyed are both false. The born and the unborn are both false. If there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can there be the perishable and the imperishable?

The Self is the annihilation of the masculine and nonmasculine. It is the annihilation of the feminine and the nonfeminine. If there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can there be consciousness of joy and lack of joy?

If the Supreme is free of delusion and sorrow, doubt and grief, if there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can there be "I" and "mine"?

The Supreme is the destruction of virtue and vice. It is the destruction of bondage and freedom from bondage. If there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can there be here any consciousness of sorrow and absence of sorrow?

No distinction of sacrificer and sacrifice exists. No distinction of fire and ingredients exists. If there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, say how there can be any fruits of work.

The Self is verily free from sorrow and absence of sorrow. The Self is free from pride and absence of pride. If there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can there be consciousness of attachment and nonattachment.

No such change as illusion and freedom from illusion exists. No such change as greed and freedom from greed exists. If there is only one indivisible, all-comprehensive Absolute, how can there be consciousness of discrimination and lack of discrimination?

There is never any "you" and "I". The discrimination of family and race is false. I am indeed the Absolute and the supreme Truth. In that case how can I make any salutation?

The Self is that in which the distinction of teacher and disciple disappears and in which the consideration of instruction also disappears. I am indeed the Absolute and the supreme Truth. How can I, in that case, make any salutation?

There is no imagined division of bodies. There is no imagined divisions of worlds. I am indeed the Absolute and the supreme Truth. In that case how can I make any salutation?

The Self, never endowed with passion or devoid of it, is verily spotless, immovable and pure. I am indeed the Absolute and the supreme Truth. In that case how can I make any salutation?

No distinction such as body and bodilessness exists, nor is it true that there is false action. I am indeed the Absolute and the supreme Truth. In that case how can I make any salutation?

Where one knows nothing, there is verily no versification. The supreme and free One, pure of thought, absorbed in the consciousness of the homogeneous Being, prattles about the Truth.

CHAPTER 7

The enlightened one, nude or clad in a patched garment made of rags gathered from roads, follows the path which is devoid of virtue and vice and stays in an empty abode, absorbed in the pure, stainless, homogeneous Being.

The enlightened one aims at that which is without any mark or marklessness. He is skilful, being devoid of right and wrong. He is the absolute Truth, stainless and pure. How can the liberated one engage in discussion and disputation?

Free from entrapment in the snares of hope and devoid of purificatory ceremonies, the enlightened one is ever absorbed in the Absolute. Thus, having renounced all, he is the Truth, pure and stainless.

How can there be any discussion here of body and disembodiment, of attachment and detachment? Here is the Truth Itself in Its spontaneous natural form - pure, immovable like the sky!

Where the Truth is known, how can there be form or formlessness? Where there is the Supreme, whose form is like the sky, how is perception of any object possible?

The supreme Self is indivisible, of the form of the sky. It is the Truth, pure and stainless. Thus, how can there be here difference and nondifference, bondage and freedom from bondage, transformation and division?

Here is only the absolute Truth, indivisible and the All. How can there be here union, disunion, or pride? If thus there is here only the Supreme, indivisible and the All, how can there be here any substance or absence of substance?

Here is the absolute Truth, indivisible and pure, stainless and the All, of the form of the sky. Thus, how can there be here association and dissociation? How, truly, can there be here any play or cessation of play?

The enlightened one is a yogi devoid of yoga and absence of yoga. He is an enjoyer, devoid of enjoyment and absence of enjoyment. Thus he wanders leisurely, filled with the spontaneous joy of his own mind.

If the yogi is always related to knowledge and perception, to duality and unity, how can he be free here? How can a yogi be natural and free from attachment here? He is the enjoyer of the pure, stainless, and homogeneous Being.

The Self is Destruction, devoid of the destroyed and undestroyed. The Self is the Auspicious Moment, devoid of the auspicious and inauspicious time. Thus how can there be here substance and absence of substance? The Truth which is homogeneous is of the form of the sky.

Forever divested of all and united to the Self, the enlightened one is the All, free and devoid of truth. Thus, how can there be here life and death, and how can there be any accomplishment through meditation or lack of meditation?

All this is magic, like a mirage in the desert. Only the absolute Self, of indivisible and impenetrable form, exists.

To all things, from the practice of religious laws and duties to liberation, we are completely indifferent. How can we have anything to do with attachment or detachment? Only the learned imagine these things.

Where one knows nothing, there is verily no versification. The supreme and free One, pure of thought, absorbed in the consciousness of the homogeneous Being, prattles about the Truth.

CHAPTER 8

By my making pilgrimage to Thee Thy all-pervasiveness has been destroyed by me. With my meditation Thy transcendence of the mind has been destroyed by me. Thy transcendence of speech has been destroyed by me by my singing Thy praise. Ever forgive me these three sins.

A sage is one whose intelligence is unsmitten by lusts, who is self-controlled, gentle, and pure, who possesses nothing, who is indifferent, who eats moderately, is quiet and steady, and has taken refuge in Me.

The sage is vigilant and resolute, has a profound mind, and has conquered the six bondages; he is not proud, but gives honour to others; he is strong, friendly to all, compassionate, and wise.

The sage is merciful, nonviolent, and enduring of all. He is pure-hearted and is the essence of truth; he is the same to all and beneficent to all.

The sign of an avadhuta should be known by the blessed ones, by those who know the truth of the significance of the letters of the Vedas and who teach Veda and Vedanta.

The significance of the letter "a" is that the avadhuta is free from the bondage of hopes, is pure in the beginning, middle, and end, and dwells ever in joy.

The syllable "va" is indicative of him by whom all desires have been renounced, whose speech is wholesome, and who dwells neither in past, present or future.

The syllable "dhu" is a sign of him whose limbs are grey with dust, whose mind is purified, who is free of all diseases, and who is released from the practices of concentration and meditation.

The syllable "ta" is significant of him by whom the thought of Truth has been made steady, who is devoid of all thoughts and efforts, and who is free from ignorance and egoism.

This Gita or Song is composed by Dattatreya Avadhuta who is the embodiment of bliss. Whoever reads or hears it has never any rebirth.

TEACHINGS OF DIOGENES

"Why is it, Diogenes, that pupils leave you to go to other teachers, but rarely do they leave them to come to you?"

"Because," replied Diogenes, "one can make eunuchs out of men, but no one can make a man out of eunuchs".

In winter Diogenes walked barefoot in the snow. In summer he rolled in the hot sand. He did this to harden himself against discomfort. "But aren't you overdoing it a little?" a disciple asked. "Of course," replied Diogenes, "I am like a teacher of choruses who has to sing louder than the rest in order they may get the right note."

A student of philosophy, eager to display his powers of argument, approached Diogenes, introduced himself and said, "If it pleases you, sir, let me prove to you that there is no such thing as motion." Whereupon Diogenes immediately got up and left.

A disciple asked Diogenes, "What is the main reason for wearing a cynics robe and the begging bowl?" "So as not to deceive oneself."

When someone once asked Diogenes why he often laughed by himself, he said, "For that very reason."

Plato considered Diogenes' stray-dog behaviour unbecoming to one calling himself a philosopher. "You really do live up to your name" he said to him disapprovingly one day. "By the Gods, you are right for once Plato," replied Diogenes, and then baring his teeth, he added, "But at least I've sunk my teeth into philosophy."

Plato was discoursing on his theory of ideas and, pointing to the cups on the table before him, said while there are many cups in the world, there is only one 'idea' of a cup, and this cupness precedes the existence of all particular cups.

"I can see the cup on the table," interrupted Diogenes, "but I can't see the 'cupness'".

"That's because you have the eyes to see the cup," said Plato, "but", tapping his head with his forefinger, "you don't have the intellect with which to comprehend 'cupness'."

Diogenes walked up to the table, examined a cup and, looking inside, asked, "Is it empty?"

Plato nodded.

"Where is the 'emptiness' which precedes this empty cup?" asked Diogenes.

Plato allowed himself a few moments to collect his thoughts, but Diogenes reached over and, tapping Plato's head with his finger, said "I think you will find here is the 'emptiness'."

Diogenes was knee deep in a stream washing vegetables. Coming up to him, Plato said, "My good Diogenes, if you knew how to pay court to kings, you wouldn't have to wash vegetables."

"And," replied Diogenes, "If you knew how to wash vegetables, you wouldn't have to pay court to kings."

Diogenes was once asked what he thought of Socrates. "A madman," he replied. Later, Plato was asked what he thought of Diogenes. "A Socrates gone mad," he replied.

Diogenes ridiculed Plato for being long-winded.

Some strangers to Athens once asked Diogenes if he would point out to them the great philosopher [meaning Plato]. Diogenes looked around and then led them to the most deserted part of the city and, gesturing to the empty air as one would in formal introduction, said, "May I present to you the great philosopher Plato."

Diogenes was once invited to dinner by a wealthy man. During the evening, one of the guests became so outraged by Diogenes' general behaviour that he began to throw bones at him, calling him a "dog." Whereupon Diogenes got

up, went to the guest, cocked up his leg and urinated on him.

Often when he was begging, Diogenes would be spat on by the people who passed him. Diogenes would ignore this and simply wipe his face with his sleeve. When ridiculed for his passive behaviour, Diogenes said, "Since men endure being wetted by the sea in order to net a mere herring, should I not endure being sprinkled to net my dinner?"

Diogenes stood outside a brothel, shouting, "A beautiful whore is like poisoned honey! A beautiful whore is like poisoned honey! A beautiful whore . . . ". Men entering the house threw him a coin or two to shut him up. Eventually Diogenes had collected enough money and he too went into the brothel.

Diogenes was asked why he always begged. "To teach people," replied Diogenes. "Oh yes, and what do you teach?" people would ask him scornfully. "Generosity", he replied.

Diogenes was once asked why he took money from people. "To show them how they ought to spend their money," he replied.

Diogenes was asked, "Tell me, to what do you attribute your great poverty?"

"Hard work," he replied.

"And what advice can you offer the rich?"

"Avoid all the good things in life."

"Why?"

"Because money costs too much. A rich man is far poorer than a poor man."

"How can that be?"

"Because poverty is the only thing money can't buy."

Whenever people complimented Diogenes, he would slap himself hard across the face and in self-reproach would cry, "Shame! I must have done something terribly wicked!"

A famous athlete was making his triumphal entry into the city after another successful games. As he was carried along, he was unable to tear his eyes away from the many beautiful women among the onlookers.

"Look at our brave victor," remarked Diogenes, "taken captive by every girl he sees."

On one bright, clear day, Diogenes was walking up and down the market place, holding a lighted lantern high in front of him and peering around as if searching for something. When people gaped and asked him what he was doing, he replied, "I am looking for an honest man."

"It's my fate to steal," pleaded the man who had been caught red-handed by Diogenes.

"Then it is also your fate to be beaten," said Diogenes, hitting him across the head with his staff.

Diogenes was strolling through the market place. Suddenly, he called out in despair, "Men! Men! Men! . . ."

Immediately, they came running from all directions: young fops with flowers in their hair; lusty young boys, scantily dressed, hanging off the arms of older men; freemen, their slaves beside them burdened down with groceries, their cheeks bulging with small change; merchants who had left their shops in answer to Diogenes' call.

He looked at them searchingly one by one and with a sad shrug turned to walk away. "I called for *men*," he said in disgust.

The city was under siege. Everyone was busy fortifying the walls - some were carrying stones, others were patching the walls, yet others were building battlements. Diogenes, not wanting to appear idle while everyone around him was working so frantically, diligently rolled his barrel back and forth along the battlements. The city fell.

In the midst of serious discourse in the Craneum, Diogenes realised no one was listening. So he instead began to whistle and dance about to attract

attention. Immediately, people flocked round him. Diogenes stopped and said, "You idiots, you are not interested to stop and pay attention to wisdom, yet you rush up to observe a foolish display."

A heckler in the crowd shouted out, "My mind is not made like that, I can't be bothered with philosophy."

"Why do you bother to live," Diogenes retorted, "if you can't be bothered to live properly?"

Very few of Diogenes' disciples had the physical and mental stamina to become cynics. One in particular left the circle, but not before entreating Diogenes to give him one of his books. "You really are a silly fellow," said Diogenes. "Surely you wouldn't have painted figs instead of real ones. And yet you pass over the genuine practice of wisdom and would be satisfied with what is merely written."

Someone once asked, "Tell me Diogenes, what does a wise man look like?" At once, Diogenes straightened himself up and stroked his beard.

Diogenes was gathering figs and had just filled his bag when a stranger came along the road. "I wouldn't touch this fruit! A man hung himself from the tree just the other day," warned the man, obviously believing the tree to be cursed.

By way of answer, Diogenes sank his teeth into the fig he was holding. Sucking, as one would suck venom from a wound, he proclaimed, "Thus I purify the tree."

Agog, the man stood there marvelling while Diogenes walked off.

Passing a stream, Diogenes saw a boy drinking out of his hands. "A child has beaten me in simplicity," he said, throwing away his cup.

A young man contemplating marriage sought advice from Diogenes. "Should I marry?"

"Marriage is too soon for a young man"

"Would you have me wait then until I am old."

"Oh no, Marriage is far too late for an old man."

"What am I to do then? I love the girl."

"Love is a luxury no one can afford. It is for those who have nothing better

to do."

"What should we be doing then?"

"To seek freedom. But it is not possible to be free if you have a wife and children."

"But having a wife and family is so agreeable."

Then you see the problem, young man. Freedom would not be so difficult to attain were prison not so sweet."

"You mean to be free is to be alone?"

"We come into the world alone and we die alone. Why, in life, should we be any less alone?"

"To live, then, is terrible."

"No, not to live, but to live in chains."

Once Diogenes was going into the theatre just as everybody was coming out. When asked why he did this, he answered, "Opposition has been my manner. It is what I have been doing all my life."

Diogenes was walking backwards across the Agora, affecting a studied indifference to all who laughed at him. Finally, when he had collected a large following he stopped and announced, "You are laughing at me walking just a little distance backwards while you all lead your entire lives arse-about."

"And what's more," he asked, "can you change your way of living as easily as this?" Whereupon, he turned on his heel and walked off in normal fashion.

Asked about his worst nightmare, Diogenes said, "Waking to find myself living in a palace and everyone else in barrels." .

Diogenes was asked, "What is the difference between life and death?"

"No difference."

"Well then, why do you remain in this life?"

"Because there is no difference."

THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS

These are the secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke and which Didymos Judas Thomas wrote down.

- 1) And he said, "Whoever finds the interpretation of these sayings will not experience death."
- 2) Jesus said, "Let him who seeks continue seeking until he finds. When he finds, he will become troubled. When he becomes troubled, he will be astonished, and he will rule over the All."
- 3) Jesus said, "If those who lead you say to you, 'See, the Kingdom is in the sky,' then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, 'It is in the sea,' then the fish will precede you. Rather, the Kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you. When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realise that it is you who are the sons of the living Father. But if you will not know yourselves, you dwell in poverty and it is you who are that poverty."
- 4) Jesus said, "The man old in days will not hesitate to ask a small child seven days old about the place of life, and he will live. For many who are first will become last, and they will become one and the same."
- 5) Jesus said, "Recognize what is in your sight, and that which is hidden from you will become plain to you. For there is nothing hidden which will not become manifest."
- 6) His disciples questioned him and said to him, "Do you want us to fast? How shall we pray? Shall we give alms? What diet shall we observe?"

Jesus said, "Do not tell lies, and do not do what you hate, for all things are plain in the sight of Heaven. For nothing hidden will not become manifest, and nothing covered will remain without being uncovered."
- 7) Jesus said, "Blessed is the lion which becomes man when consumed by man; and cursed is the man whom the lion consumes, and the lion becomes man."
- 8) And he said, "The man is like a wise fisherman who cast his net into the sea and drew it up from the sea full of small fish. Among them the wise fisherman

found a fine large fish. He threw all the small fish back into the sea and chose the large fish without difficulty. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear."

9) Jesus said, "Now the sower went out, took a handful of seeds, and scattered them. Some fell on the road; the birds came and gathered them up. Others fell on rock, did not take root in the soil, and did not produce ears. And others fell on thorns; they choked the seeds and worms ate them. And others fell on the good soil and produced good fruit: it bore sixty per measure and a hundred and twenty per measure."

10) Jesus said, "I have cast fire upon the world, and see, I am guarding it until it blazes."

11) Jesus said, "This heaven will pass away, and the one above it will pass away. The dead are not alive, and the living will not die. In the days when you consumed what is dead, you made it what is alive. When you come to dwell in the light, what will you do? On the day when you were one you became two. But when you become two, what will you do?"

12) The disciples said to Jesus, "We know that you are to depart from us. Who is to be our leader?"

Jesus said to them, "Wherever you are, you are to go to James the righteous, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being."

13) Jesus said to his disciples, "Compare me to someone and tell me whom I am like."

Simon Peter said to him, "You are like a righteous angel."

Matthew said to him, "You are like a wise philosopher."

Thomas said to him, "Master, my mouth is wholly incapable of saying whom you are like."

Jesus said, "I am not your master. Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring which I have measured out."

And he took him and withdrew and told him three things. When Thomas returned to his companions, they asked him, "What did Jesus say to you?"

Thomas said to them, "If I tell you one of the things which he told me, you will pick up stones and throw them at me; a fire will come up out of the stones and burn you up."

14) Jesus said to them, "If you fast, you will give rise to sin for yourselves; and

if you pray, you will be condemned; and if you give alms, you will do harm to your spirits. When you go into any land and walk about in the districts, if they receive you, eat what they will set before you, and heal the sick among them. For what goes into your mouth will not defile you, but that which issues from your mouth - it is that which will defile you."

15) Jesus said, "When you see one who was not born of woman, prostrate yourselves on your faces and worship him. That one is your Father."

16) And Jesus said, "Men think, perhaps, that it is peace that I have come to cast upon the World. They do not know that it is dissension which I have come to cast upon the Earth, fire, sword & war. For there will be five in a house, three will be against two, & two against three, the father against the son, & the son against the father. And they will stand solitary."

17) Jesus said, "I shall give you what no eye has seen, & what no ear has heard & what no hand has touched & what has never occurred to the human mind."

18) The disciples said to Jesus, "Tell us how our end shall be."

Jesus said, "Have you discovered then, the beginning, that you look for the end? For where the beginning is, there the end will be. Blessed is he who will take his place in the beginning; he will know the end & will not experience death."

19) Jesus said, "Blessed is he who came into being before he came into being. If you become my disciples & listen to my words, these stones will minister to you. For there are five trees for you in Paradise which remain undisturbed summer & winter & whose leaves do not fall. Whoever becomes acquainted with them will not experience death."

20) The disciples said to Jesus, "Tell us what the Kingdom of Heaven is like." He said to them, "It is like a mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds, But when it falls on tilled soil, it produces a great plant, & becomes a shelter for birds of the sky."

21) Mary said to Jesus, "Whom are your disciples like?" He said, "They are like children who have settled in a field which is not theirs. When the owners of the field come, they will say, 'Let us have back our field.' They will undress in their presence in order to let them have back their field & to give it back to them. Therefore I say to you, if the owner of the house knows that the thief is coming, he will begin his vigil before he comes & will not let him dig through into his house of his domain to carry away his goods. You, then, be on your guard against the World. Arm yourselves with great strength lest the robbers find a way to come to you, for the difficulty which you expect will surely materialize. Let there be among you a man of understanding. When the grain

ripened, he came quickly with his sickle in his hand & reaped it. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear."

22) Jesus saw some infants being suckled. He said to His disciples, "These infants being suckled are like those who enter the Kingdom." They said to Him, "Shall we then, as children, enter the Kingdom?" Jesus said to them, "When you make the two one, & when you make the inside like the outside & the outside like the inside, & the above like the below, & when you make the male & the female one & the same, so that the male be not male nor the female female; & when you fashion eyes in place of an eye & a hand in place of a hand, & a foot in place of a foot, & a likeness in place of a likeness; then you will enter the Kingdom."

23) Jesus said, "I shall choose you, one out of a thousand, & two out of ten thousand, & they shall stand as a single one."

24) His disciples said to Him, "Show us the place where you are, since it is necessary for us to seek it." He said to them, "Whoever has ears let him hear. There is light within a man of light, & he lights up the whole world. If he (or it) does not shine, he is darkness."

25) Jesus said, "Love your brother like your soul, guard him like the pupil of your eye."

26) Jesus said, "You see the mote in your brother's eye, but you do not see the beam in your own eye. When you cast the beam out of your own eye, then you will see clearly to cast the mote from your brother's eye."

27) Jesus said, "If you do not fast as regards the world, you will not find the Kingdom. If you do not observe the Sabbath as a Sabbath you will not see the Father."

28) Jesus said, "I took my place in the midst of the world, & I appeared to them in flesh, I found all of them intoxicated; I found none of them thirsty. And my soul became afflicted for the sons of men, because they are blind in their hearts & do not have sight; for empty they came into the world, & empty too they seek to leave the world. But for the moment they are intoxicated. When they shake off their wine, then they will repent."

29) Jesus said, "If the flesh came into being because of the Spirit, it is a wonder. But if spirit came into being because of the body, it is a wonder of wonders. Indeed, I am amazed at how this great wealth has made its home in this poverty."

30) Jesus said, "Where there are three gods, they are gods, Where there are two or one, I am with him."

31) Jesus said, "No prophet is accepted in his own village, no physician heals those who know him."

32) Jesus said, "A city being built on a high mountain & fortified cannot fall, nor can it be hidden."

33) Jesus said, "Preach from your housetops that which you will hear in your ear & in the other ear. For no one lights a lamp & puts it under a bushel, nor does he put it in a hidden place, but rather he sets it on a lampstand so that everyone who enters & leaves will see its light."

34) Jesus said, "If a blind man leads a blind man, they will both fall into a pit."

35) Jesus said, "It is not possible for anyone to enter the house of a strong man & take it by force unless he binds his hands, then he will be able to ransack his house."

36) Jesus said, "Do not be concerned from morning until evening and from evening until morning about what you will wear."

37) His disciples said, "When will you become revealed to us and when shall we see you?" Jesus said, "When you disrobe without being ashamed and take up your garments and place them under your feet like little children and tread on them, then will you see the Son of the Living One, and you will not be afraid."

38) Jesus said, "Many times have you desired to hear these words which I am saying to you, and you have no one else to hear them from. There will be days when you will look for me and will not find me."

39) Jesus said, "The Pharisees and the scribes have taken the keys of Knowledge and hidden them. They themselves have not entered, nor have they allowed to enter those that wished to. You, however, be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves."

40) Jesus said, "A grapevine has been planted outside of the Father, but being unsound, it will be pulled up by its roots and destroyed."

41) Jesus said, "Whoever has something in his hand will receive more, and whoever has nothing will be deprived of even the little he has."

42) Jesus, "Become passers-by."

43) His disciples said to him, "Who are you, that you should say these things to us?" Jesus said to them, "You do not realize who I am from what I say to

you, but you have become like the Jews, for they either love the tree and hate its fruit (or) love the fruit and hate the tree."

44) Jesus said, "Whoever blasphemes against the Father will be forgiven, and whoever blasphemes against the Son will be forgiven, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven either on earth or in heaven."

45) Jesus said, "Grapes are not harvested from thorns, nor are figs gathered from thistles, for they do not produce fruit. A good man brings forth good from his storehouse; an evil man brings forth evil things from his evil storehouse, which is in his heart, and says evil things. For out of the abundance of the heart he brings forth evil things."

46) Jesus said, "Among those born of women, from Adam to John the Baptist, there is no one so superior to John the Baptist that his eyes should not be lowered before him. Yet I have said, whichever one of you comes to be a child will be acquainted with the Kingdom and will become superior to John."

47) Jesus said, "It is impossible for a man to mount two horses or to stretch two bows. And it is impossible for a servant to serve two masters; otherwise, he will honour the one and treat the other contemptuously. No man drinks old wine and immediately desires to drink new wine. And new wine is not put into old wineskins, lest they burst; nor is old wine put into a new wineskin, lest it spoil it. An old patch is not sewn onto a new garment, because a tear would result."

48) Jesus said, "If two make peace with each other in this one house, they will say to the mountain, 'Move away,' and it will move away."

49) Jesus said, "Blessed are the solitary and elect, for you will find the Kingdom. For you are from it, and to it you will return."

50) Jesus said, "If they say to you, 'Where did you come from?', say to them, 'We came from the light, the place where the light came into being on its own accord and established itself and became manifest through their image.' If they say to you, 'Is it you?', say, 'We are its children, and we are the elect of the Living Father.' If they ask you, 'What is the sign of your Father in you?', say to them, 'It is movement and repose.'"

51) His disciples said to him, "When will the repose of the dead come about, and when will the new world come?" He said to them, "What you look forward to has already come, but you do not recognize it."

52) His disciples said to him, "Twenty-four prophets spoke in Israel, and all of them spoke in you." He said to them, "You have omitted the one living in your presence and have spoken only of the dead."

53) His disciples said to him, "Is circumcision beneficial or not?" He said to them, "If it were beneficial, their father would beget them already circumcised from their mother. Rather, the true circumcision in spirit has become completely profitable."

54) Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor, for yours is the Kingdom of heaven."

55) Jesus said, "Whoever does not hate his father and his mother cannot become a disciple to me. And whoever does not hate his brothers and sisters and take up his cross in my way will not be worthy of me."

56) Jesus said, "Whoever has come to understand the world has found only a corpse, and whoever has found a corpse is superior to the world."

57) Jesus said, "The Kingdom of the Father is like a man who had good seed. His enemy came by night and sowed weeds among the good seed. The man did not allow them to pull up the weeds; he said to them, 'I am afraid that you will go intending to pull up the weeds and pull up the wheat along with them.' For on the day of the harvest the weeds will be plainly visible, and they will be pulled up and burned."

58) Jesus said, "Blessed is the man who has suffered and found life."

59) Jesus said, "Take heed of the Living One while you are alive, lest you die and seek to see him and be unable to do so."

60) They saw a Samaritan carrying a lamb on his way to Judea. He said to his disciples, "Why does that man carry the lamb around?" They said to him, "So that he may kill it and eat it." He said to them "While it is alive, he will not eat it, but only when he has killed it, and it has become a corpse." They said to him, "He cannot do so otherwise." He said to them, "You too, look for a place for yourselves within Repose, lest you become a corpse and be eaten."

61) Jesus said, "Two will rest on a bed: the one will die, and the other will live." Salome said, "Who are you, man, that you, as though from the One, (or: as whose son), that you have come up on my couch and eaten from my table." Jesus said to her, "I am he who exists from the Undivided, I was given some of the things of my father." Salome said, "I am your disciple." Jesus said to her, "Therefore I say, If he is undivided, he will be filled with light, but if he is divided he will be filled with darkness."

62) Jesus said, "It is to those who are worthy of my mysteries that I tell my mysteries. Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."

63) Jesus said, "There was a rich man who had much money. He said, 'I shall

put my money to use so that I may sow, reap, plant, and fill my storehouse with produce, with the result that I shall lack nothing.' Such were his intentions but that same night he died. Let him who has ears hear."

64) Jesus said, "A man had received visitors. And when he had prepared the dinner, he sent his servant to invite the guests. He went to the first one and said to him, 'My master invites you.' He said, 'I have claims against some merchants. They are coming to me this evening. I must go and give them my orders. I ask to be excused from the dinner.' He went to another and said to him, 'My master has invited you.' He said to him, 'I have just bought a house and am required for the day. I shall not have any spare time.' He went to another and said to him, 'My master invites you.' He said to him, 'My friend is going to get married, and I am to prepare the banquet. I shall not be able to come. I ask to be excused from the dinner.' He went to another and said to him, 'My master invites you.' He said to him, 'I have just bought a farm, and I am on my way to collect the rent. I shall not be able to come. I ask to be excused.' The servant returned and said to his master, 'Those whom you invited to the dinner have asked to be excused.' The master said to his servant, 'Go outside to the streets and bring back those whom you happen to meet, so that they may dine.' Businessmen and merchants will not enter the Places of my Father."

65) He said, "There was a good man who owned a vineyard. He leased it to tenant farmers so they might work it and he might collect the produce from them. He sent his servant so that the tenants might give him the produce of the vineyard. They seized his servant and beat him, all but killing him. The servant went back and told his master. The master said, 'Perhaps they did not recognize him.' He sent another servant. The tenants beat this one as well. Then the owner sent his son and said, 'Perhaps they will show respect to my son.' Because the tenants knew that it was he who was heir to the vineyard, they seized him and killed him. Let him who has ears hear."

66) Jesus said, "Show me the stone which the builders have rejected. That one is the cornerstone."

67) Jesus said, "Whoever believes that the All itself is deficient is himself completely deficient."

68) Jesus said, "Blessed are you when you are hated and persecuted. Wherever you have been persecuted they will find no Place."

69) Jesus said, "Blessed are they who have been persecuted within themselves. It is they who have truly come to know the Father. Blessed are the hungry, for the belly of him who desires will be filled."

70) Jesus said, "That which you have will save you if you bring it forth from yourselves. That which you do not have within you will kill you if you do not

have it within you."

71) Jesus said, "I shall destroy this house, & no one shall be able to rebuild it."

72) A man said to him, "Tell my brothers to divide my father's possessions with me." He said to him, "O man, who has made me a divider?" He turned to His disciples & said to them, "I am not a divider, am I?"

73) Jesus said, "The harvest is great but the labourers are few. Beseech the Lord, therefore, to send out labourers to the harvest."

74) He said, "O Lord, there are many around the drinking trough, but there is nothing in the cistern."

75) Jesus said, "Many are standing at the door, but it is the solitary who will enter the bridal chamber."

76) Jesus said, "The Kingdom of the Father is like a merchant who had a consignment of merchandise & who discovered a pearl. The merchant was shrewd. He sold the merchandise & bought the pearl alone for himself. You too, seek his unfailing & enduring treasure where no moth comes near to devour & no worm destroys."

77) Jesus said, "It is I who am the light which is above them all. It is I who am the All. From me did the All come forth, & unto me did the All come forth, & unto me did the All extend. Split a piece of wood, & I am there. Lift up the stone, & you will find me there."

78) Jesus said, "Why have you come out into the desert? To see a reed shaken by the Wind? And to see a man clothed in fine garments like your kings & your great men? Upon them are the fine garments, & they are unable to discern the truth."

79) A woman from the crowd said to him, "Blessed are the womb which bore you & the breasts which nourished you." He said to her, "Blessed are those who have heard the word of the Father & have truly kept it. For there will be days when you will say, 'Blessed are the womb which has not conceived & the breasts which have not given milk'"

80) Jesus said, "He who has recognized the world has found the body, but he who has found the body is superior to the world."

81) Jesus said, "Let him who has grown rich be king, & let him who possesses power renounce it."

82) Jesus said, "He who is near me is near the fire, & he who is far from me is

far from the kingdom."

83) Jesus said, "The images are manifest to man, but the light in them remains concealed in the image of the light of the Father. He will become manifest, but his image will remain concealed by his light."

84) Jesus said, "When you see your own likeness, you rejoice. But when you see your images which came into being before you, & which neither die or become manifest, how much will you have to bear!"

85) Jesus said, "Adam came into being from a great power & a great wealth, but he did not become worthy of you. For had he been worthy he would not have experienced death."

86) Jesus said, "The foxes have their holes & the birds have their nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head & rest."

87) Jesus said, "Wretched is the body that is dependant upon a body, & wretched is the soul that is dependant on these two."

88) Jesus said, "The angels & the prophets will come to you & give to you those things which you already have. And you too, give them those things which you have, & say to yourselves, 'When will they come & take what is theirs?'"

89) Jesus said, "Why do you wash the outside of the cup? Do you not realise that he who made the inside is the same one who made the outside?"

90) Jesus said, "Come unto me, for my yoke is easy, & my lordship is mild, & you will find repose for yourselves."

91) They said to him "Tell us who you are so that we may believe in you." He said to them, "You read the face of the sky & of the earth, but you have not recognized the one who is before you, & you do not know how to read this moment."

92) Jesus said, "Seek & you will find. Yet, what you asked me about in former times & which I did not tell you then, now I desire to tell, but you do not enquire after it."

93) Jesus said, "Do not give what is holy to dogs, lest they throw them on the dung-heap. Do not throw the pearls to swine, lest they grind it to bits."

94) Jesus said, "He who seeks will find, & he who knocks will be let in."

95) Jesus said, "If you have money, do not lend it at interest, but give it to one

from whom you will not get it back."

96) Jesus said, "The Kingdom of the Father is like a certain woman. She took a little leaven, concealed it in some dough, & made it into large loaves. Let him who has ears hear."

97) Jesus said, "The Kingdom of the Father is like a certain woman who was carrying a jar full of meal. While she was walking on a road, still some distance from home, the handle of the jar broke & the meal emptied out behind her on the road. She did not realize it, she had noticed no accident. When she reached her house, she set the jar down & found it empty."

98) Jesus said, "The Kingdom of the Father is like a certain man who wanted to kill a powerful man. In his own house he drew his sword & stuck it into the wall in order to find out whether his hand could carry through. Then he slew the powerful man."

99) The disciples said to him, "Your brothers & your mother are standing outside." He said to them, "Those here who do the will of my Father are my brothers & my mother. It is they who will enter the Kingdom of my Father."

100) They showed Jesus a gold coin & said to him, "Caesar's men demand taxes from us." He said to them, "Give Caesar what belongs to Caesar, give God what belongs to God, & give me what belongs to me."

101) Jesus said, "Whoever does not hate his Father & Mother as I do cannot become a disciple to me. And whoever cannot love his Father & His Mother as I do cannot become a disciple to me. For my mother gave me falsehood, but my true mother gave me Life."

102) Jesus said, "Woe to the Pharisees, for they are like a dog sleeping in the manger of an oxen, for neither does he eat, nor does he let the oxen eat."

103) Jesus said, "Fortunate is the man who knows where the brigands will enter, so that he may get up, muster his domain, & arm himself before they invade."

104) They said to Jesus, "Come, let us pray today & let us fast." Jesus said, "What is the sin that I have committed, or wherein I have been defeated? But when the bridegroom leaves the bridal chamber, then let them fast & pray."

105) Jesus said, "He who knows the father & the mother will be called the son of a harlot."

106) Jesus said, "When you make the two one, you will become the sons of man, & when you say, 'Mountain, move away,' it will move away."

107) Jesus said, "The Kingdom is like a shepherd who had a hundred sheep. One of them, the largest, went astray. He left the ninety-nine & looked for that one until he found it. When he had gone to such trouble, he said to the sheep, 'I care for you more than the ninety nine.'"

108) Jesus said, "He who will drink from my mouth will become like me. I myself shall become he, & the things that are hidden will be revealed to him."

109) Jesus said, "The Kingdom is like a man who had a hidden treasure in his field without knowing it. And after he died, he left it to his son. The son did not know about the treasure. He inherited the field & sold it. And the one who bought it went ploughing & found the treasure. He began to lend money at interest to whomever he wished."

110) Jesus said, "Whoever finds the world & becomes rich, let him renounce the world."

111) Jesus said, "The heavens & the earth will be rolled up in your presence. And the One who lives from the Living One will not see death." Does not Jesus say, "Whoever finds himself is superior to the world?"

112) Jesus said, "Woe to the flesh that depends on the soul; woe to the soul that depends on the flesh."

113) His disciples said to him, "When will the Kingdom come?" Jesus said, "It will not come by waiting for it. It will not be a matter of saying, 'Here it is', or 'There it is'. Rather, the Kingdom of the Father is spread out upon the earth, and men do not see it."

114) Simon Peter said to them, "Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life." Jesus said, "I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

SOME TALKS

BY

HAKUIN

A sample from

Talks by Hakuin
Introductory to Lectures On the Records of Old Sokko
(Sokko-roku kaien fusetsu)

Translated by Norman Waddell

[\[I highly recommend you obtain the book for the whole series of talks.\]](#)

When the resolve to seek the Way first began to burn in me, I was drawn by the spirits of the hills and streams among the high peaks of Liyama. Deep in the forests of Narasawa, I came upon a decrepit old teacher in a mountain hermitage. His name was Shoju Rojin. His style was Etan. His Dharma-grandfather was National Master Daien. His Dharma-father was Shido Munan. He was a blind old bonze filled with deadly venom - true and authentic to the core.

He was always telling students:

"This Zen school of ours began to decline at the end of the Southern Sung. By the time it had reached the Ming the transmission had fallen to earth, all petered out. Now, what remains of its real poison is found in Japan alone. But even here there's not much. It's like scanning the midday sky for stars. As for you, you smelly blind shavepates, you ragtag little lackwits, you haven't stumbled upon it even in your dreams."

Another time, he said: "You're imposters, the whole lot of you. You look like Zen monks, but you don't understand Zen. You remind me of the monks in the teaching schools - but you haven't mastered the teachings. Some of you resemble precepts monks, yet their precepts are beyond you. There is a resemblance to the Confucians - but you haven't grasped Confucianism either. What, then, are you really like? I'll tell you. Large rice-bags, fitted all out in black robes."

Here is a story he told us:

"There is a Barrier of crucial importance. In front of it sit a row of stern officials, each of whom is there to test the ability of those who wish to negotiate the Barrier. Unless you pass their muster, you don't get through.

"Along comes a man, announcing that he is a wheelright. He sits down, fashions a wheel, shows it to the officials, and they let him pass. Another person walks up, an artist. He produces a brush and paints them a picture. They usher him through the gates. A singing girl is allowed to pass after she sings them a refrain from one of the current songs. She is followed by a priest of one of the Pure Land sects. He intones loud invocations of the Nembutsu - 'Namu-amida-butsu,' 'Namu-amida- butsu.' The gates swing open and he proceeds on his way.

"At this point, another man clothed in black robes appears. He says that he is a Zen monk. One of the guardians of the Barrier remarks that 'Zen is the crowning pinnacle of all the Buddhas.' He then asks: *'What is Zen?'*

"All the monk can do is stand there, in a blank daze, looking like a pile of brushwood. The officials take one look at the nervous sweat pouring from under his arms and write him off as a rank imposter. A highly suspicious and totally undesirable character. So he winds up as a poor devil of an outcast, condemned to a wretched existence outside the Barrier. What a pitiful turn of events."

Shoju also told us: "Suppose at some future day you men have temples of your own. You receive an invitation from one of your parishioners, asking you to visit him at his home. When you arrive with your head monk and some of your students, you are ushered into a large room, where you find layers of thick, soft cushions to sit upon. Dishes filled with rare delicacies are arranged before you. You sit there in high spirits, partaking of the food without a single qualm, regarding it as your due. When you finish eating, as you are enjoying yourself amid the loud talk and boisterous laughter, one of the people present addresses you, and brings up a difficult point of Zen - the kind that furrows the brows of Zen monks. He suggests casually that you explain it. At that moment, what kind of response will you make? Your heart will probably start to thump wildly in your chest. Your body will break out in a muck of sweat. Your distress will cast a black pall over the entire room.

"So inasmuch as you are members of the Zen school, you should concentrate diligently on your training. If you don't, you will be unwittingly sowing the seeds of your own shame and disgrace. There's no telling when you'll find yourself in such a harrowing situation. It's too terrifying to contemplate."

I know a wealthy family in the province of Shinano. They have a large inherited fortune, and the influence they wield rivals that of the provincial daimyo himself. The family is so large that they must ring a dinner bell to call them all together. The great and powerful are frequent visitors. Although they have no family business as such, they have been able to maintain a quiet and comfortable existence.

But recently they started brewing sake. They added male and female servants to the staff. The water mill now grinds away day and night hulling rice. A continuous procession of grain carts thunders heavily in through the gates. Their prosperity has increased tenfold over what it was before. Ten thousand bushels of rice are said to be consumed daily in the brewing of sake.

An old man living nearby and witnessing these events, said: "Those folks are finished. Their prosperity cannot continue much longer. What you now see is really a symptom of serious trouble. When the inner workings decay, the outer aspect always swells like that. They will probably try their hand at selling grain. Or open a shop to sell medicinal herbs. But before long they will have to dispose of them too."

When my teacher Shoju Rojin heard the old man's prediction, he heaved a heavy sigh.

"I know just what he means. Since the Sung period, our patriarchal school has been in constant decline. Zen monks have extended their interests into a variety of different fields. It's just like the family in that story."

As he finished speaking, his eyes were swimming in tears.

I have recorded as I remember them a few brief examples of Old Shoju's instructions. I thought that they would give you an idea of the anger, the scoldings and verbal abuse, that shouts of encouragement, that he used in his daily teaching, as well as of the deep concern and sad regrets he often voiced about the present state of the Zen school.

At present, we are infested in this country with a race of smooth-tongued, worldly-wise Zen teachers who feed their students a ration of utter nonsense. "Why do you suppose Buddha-patriarchs through the ages were so mortally afraid of words and letters?" they ask you. "It is," they answer, "because words and letters are a coast of rocky cliffs washed constantly by vast oceans of poison ready to swallow your wisdom and drown the life from it."

Giving students stories and episodes from the Zen past and having them penetrate their meaning is a practice that did not start until after the Zen school had already branched out into the Five Houses, and they were developing into the Seven Schools. Koan study represents a provisional teaching aid which teachers have devised to bring students up to the threshold of the house of Zen so as to enable them to enter the dwelling itself. It has nothing directly to do with the profound meaning of the Buddha-patriarchs' inner chambers."

An incorrigible pack of skinheaded mules has ridden this teaching into a position of dominance in the world of Zen. You cannot distinguish master from disciple, jades from common stones. They gather and sit - rows of sleepy inanimate lumps. They hug themselves, self-satisfied, imagining they are the paragons of the Zen tradition. They belittle the Buddha- patriarchs of the past. While celestial phoenixes linger in the shadows, starving away, this hateful flock of owls and crows rule the roost, sleeping and stuffing their bellies to their hearts' content.

If you don't have the eye of *kensho*, it is impossible for you to use a single drop of the Buddha's wisdom. These men are heading straight for the realms of hell. That is why I say: if upon becoming a Buddhist monk you do not penetrate the Buddha's truth, you should turn in your black robe, give back all the donations you have received, and revert to being a layman.

Don't you realize that every syllable contained in the Buddhist canon - all five thousand and forty-eight scrolls of scripture - is a rocky cliff jutting into deadly, poison-filled seas? Don't you know that each of the twenty-eight Buddhas and six Buddhist saints is a body of virulent poison? It rises up in monstrous waves that blacken the skies, swallow the radiance of the sun and moon, and extinguishes the light of the stars and planets.

It is there as clear and stark as could be. It is staring you right in the face. But none of you is awake to see it. You are like owls that venture out into the light of day, their eyes wide open, yet they couldn't even see a mountain were it towering in front of them. The mountain doesn't have a grudge against owls that makes it want to hide. The fault is with the owls alone.

You might cover your ears with your hands. You might put a blindfold over your eyes. Try anything you can think of to avoid these poisonous fumes. But you can't escape the clouds sailing in the sky, the streams tumbling down the hillsides. You can't evade the falling autumn leaves scattering spring flowers.

You might wish to enlist the aid of the fleetest winged demon you can find. If you plied him with the best of food and drink and crossed his paw with gold, you might get him to take you on his back for a couple of circumnavigations of the earth. But you would still not find so much as a thimbleful of ground where you could hide.

I am eagerly awaiting the appearance of some dimwit of a monk (or barring that, half such a monk) richly endowed with a natural stock of spiritual power and kindled within by a raging religious fire, who will fling himself unhesitatingly into the midst of this poison and instantly die the Great Death. Rising from that Death, he will arm himself with a calabash of gigantic size and roam the great earth seeking true and genuine monks. Wherever he encounters one, he will spit in his fists, flex his muscles, fill his calabash with deadly poison and fling a dipperful of it over him, drenching him head to foot, so that he too is forced to surrender his life. Ah! what a magnificent sight to behold!

The Zen priests of today are busily imparting a teaching to their students that sounds something like this:

"Don't misdirect your efforts. Don't chase around looking for something apart from your own selves. All you have to do is to concentrate on being thoughtless, on doing nothing whatever. No practice. No realization. Doing nothing, the state of no-mind, is the direct path of sudden realization. No practice, no realization - that is the true principle, things as they really are. The enlightened ones themselves, those who possess every attribute of Buddhahood, have called this supreme, unparalleled, right awakening."

People here this teaching and try to follow it. Choking off their aspirations. Sweeping their minds clean of delusive thoughts. They dedicate themselves solely to doing nothing and to making their minds complete blanks, blissfully unaware that they are doing and thinking a great deal.

When a person who has not had *kensho* reads the Buddhist scriptures, questions his teachers and fellow monks about Buddhism, or practices religious disciplines, he is merely creating the causes of his own illusion - a sure sign that he is still confined within samsara. He tries constantly to keep himself detached in thought and deed, and all the while his thoughts and deeds are attached. He endeavors to be doing nothing all day long, and all the while he is busily doing.

But if this same person experiences *kensho*, everything changes. Although he is constantly thinking and acting, it is totally free and unattached. Although he is engaged in activity around the clock, that activity is, as such, non-activity. This great change is the result of his *kensho*. It is like water that snakes and cows drink from the same cistern, which becomes deadly venom in one and milk in the other.

Bodhidharma spoke of this in his *Essay on the Dharma pulse*:

If someone without kensho tries constantly to make his thoughts free and unattached, he commits a great transgression against the Dharma and is a great fool to boot. He winds up in the passive indifference of empty emptiness, no more able to distinguish good from bad than a drunken man. If you want to put the Dharma of non-activity into practice, you must bring an end to all your thought-attachments by breaking through into kensho. Unless you have kensho, you can never expect to achieve a state of non-doing.

* *kensho* is having a perfect understanding and consciousness of Ultimate Reality. [seeing into the self-nature]

Zen Master Joso Shogaku of Torin, a Dharma heir of master Oryo, used to tell his students:

"Senior priests Maido and Shinjo, fellow students of mine under master Oryo, were only able to penetrate our late teacher's Zen. They were unable to attain his Way."

Master Daie said: Shogaku said that because for him, attaining the "Way" meant remaining as he was and doing nothing all the time - keeping thoughts, views, and the like from arising in his mind, instead of seeking beyond that for wondrous enlightenment. He constructed a teaching out of the Dharma gate of *kensho*, the true sudden enlightenment of Buddha-patriarchs such as Tokusan, Rinzai, Tosan, Sozan, and Ummon. He took what the *Ryogon Sutra* says about mountains and rivers and the great earth all being manifestations that appear within the inconceivable clarity of the true mind, and rendered it into words devoid of substance - constructions erected in the head. In fabricating his Zen from profound utterances and wondrous teachings of Zen masters of the past he blackened the good name of these Dharma ancestors - and he robbed later generations of students of their eyes and ears. Beneath his skin not a drop of blood flowed. In his eyes there was not a shred of strength. He and men like him infallibly get things turned upside down. Then they forge on, blissfully unaware, into ever-increasing ignorance. How pitiful they are!

In the *Sutra on Perfect Enlightenment* we read that *"In the latter day of the Dharma, sentient beings who aspire to attain the Buddha Way should not be made to seek enlightenment, for if they do they will just end up amassing large stores of knowledge and deepening their self-made delusions."*

In the same sutra: *"In the latter day, even sentient beings who seek out a good teacher encounter those who hold false views and they are thus never able to attain right enlightenment. This is a known pedigree for heresy. It is the fault of the false teachers. It is not the fault of the sentient beings who come to them for help."*

Could these statements from a sutra be merely empty words?

It was this same problem that prompted priest Shinjo to declare in an informal talk to his monks:

"These days priests everywhere latch on to phrases such as 'everyday mind is the Way,' and set them up as some sort of Ultimate principle. You hear that 'Heaven is heaven.' 'Earth is earth.' 'Mountains are mountains.' 'Streams are streams.' 'Monks are monks.' 'Laymen are laymen.' They tell you that long months last thirty days and short ones last twenty-nine. The fact of the matter is, the whole bunch of them are unable to stand on their own legs. They sit about like disembodied spirits. Clinging onto trees. Leaning onto plants and grasses. Blinded by ignorance, unawakened, they plod their blinkered one-track ways.

Confront one of them and suddenly ask, 'Why does this hand of mine resemble a Buddha's hand?' and he says, 'But that's your hand.'

"Ask him, 'How does my foot resemble a donkey's?' 'That's your foot,' he retorts.

"'Everyone has causes which determine his birth. What are yours, senior priest?' 'I am so and so,' he responds. 'I'm from such and such province.'

"Now what kind of answers are those? They proceed from a mistaken understanding that should never be allowed. These priests distribute the same teaching to everyone. All you have to do is make yourself one-track like them and remain that way through thick and thin. This, they assure you, is attainment of the final state of complete tranquillity. Everything is settled. Everything is understood. Nothing doubting. Nothing seeking. There is no questioning at all. They will not venture a single step beyond this, terrified they might fall and tumble down into a hole. They tread the long pilgrimage of human life as if they were blind from birth, grasping their staff with a clutch of death, refusing to venture forward an inch unless they have it along to prop them up."

Priest Maida told his students: *"Go to Mount Lu [where Shogaku's temple was located] and plant yourselves firmly within the realm of non-doing."*

But Torin's descendants have now all disappeared. His line is deader than last night's ashes. For that we must feel intense regret.

Zen master Nando Genjo says that *"you must see your own nature (kensho) as clearly as you see the palm of your hand. After kensho, each one of you must diligently continue to cultivate your own native ground."*

I want to fully impress all you patricians who probe the secret depths - great men all - with the need to put your innate powers to work for you as vigorously and relentlessly as you can. The moment your kensho is unmistakably clear, throw it aside. Dedicate yourself to boring through the difficult-to-pass koans. Once you are beyond those barriers, you are certain to understand exactly what the Buddha meant when he said in the Nirvana Sutra that a Buddha can see the Buddha-nature with his own eyes as distinctly as he

sees a fruit lying in the palm of his hand. Upon penetrating to see the ultimate meaning of the patriarchal teachers, you will be armed for the first time with the fangs and claws of the Dharma Cave. You will sport the divine, life-usurping talisman. You will pass into the realm of the Buddhas, stroll leisurely through the realms where evil demons dwell, pulling out nails and wrenching free chocks and dispersing great clouds of compassion as you go, practicing the great Dharma giving, and immensely benefitting the monks who come to you from the four quarters. But you will be the same worthless old duffer of a monk you were before, doing nothing at all with your time. Your eyes will stare out from your face from the same position as before. Your nose will be where it always was. At this point you will be the genuine article, an authentic descendant of the Buddhas and patriarchs, to whom you will have repaid in full that incalculable debt of gratitude you owe them.

You will be at liberty to spend your days free from the clutch of circumstances. Drinking tea when given it, eating rice when it comes. Doing and non-doing will be firmly in your grasp. Not even the Buddha-patriarchs will be able to touch you. You will now be ready to use millions in gold. (* An unenlightened priest would do harm with such wealth.)

If, on the other hand, you follow the trend of the times, when you gain entry into the eighth consciousness's dark cave of unknowing¹ you will begin crowing about what you have achieved. You will go around telling one and all how enlightened you are. You will proceed to accept, under false pretenses, the veneration and charity of others, and become one of those arrogant creatures who declares he has attained realization when he has not.

If that is the course you follow, a horrifying future lies before you. Every grain of rice that you have received as a donation will turn into a red-hot particle of iron or a burning grain of sand. Every drop of water you have received will become a speck of molten bronze or boiling excrement. Each thread of the cloth you have accepted will become part of a flaming wire net or white-hot chain.

Ahh! Hoping to free yourselves from the press of birth and death you men have your heads shaved. You put on a black robe. But then you make the mistake of falling under the spell of a false teacher. You live out the rest of your life like this as an irresponsible, no-account man of the Way. If you die with your eyes in this unopened state, you are destined for harrowing retribution. You will head straight back to your old home in the three evil paths - as though you had not suffered enough already! You, who have worn the surplice of a Buddhist priest, will sink to the bottom of a loathsome hellish mire and experience unending agonies. No more horrible fate is conceivable than to fall victim to the delusions these false teachers serve up to you.

¹ This level of consciousness is the root of all existence. If you become attached to it, you remain ignorant and entrapped.

Once, at the time of Shakyamuni, a group of seven women was walking through a graveyard. Coming upon a fresh corpse, one of them pointed to it and said: "Here is a man's body. Where has he gone?"

Another answered: "What . . ."

Hearing this, the women all realized the truth that she spoke and were instantly enlightened.

Taishaku, Lord of the Devas, was moved by this to shower a rain of flowers down upon them.

"Tell me," he said to them, "if there is anything that any of you holy ladies desires. I will see to it that you have it as long as you live."

Take a good hard look at this story. If people today are right in paying no attention to it, the realization these ladies attained long ago must have been mistaken. But why would the Lord of the Devas have spoken to them as he did if they had not attained realization?

In response to Taishaku's offer, one of the women said: "All of us have the four basic necessities of life. We have the seven rare treasures as well. There are, however, three things we would like. A tree without roots. A piece of land where there is neither light nor shade. Some corner of a mountain valley where a shout does not echo."

"Anything else, ladies," replied Taishaku, "and I will gladly provide it to you. But the things you ask for . . . to tell the truth, I just don't have them to give you."

"If you don't have them," said the women, "how can you possibly expect to help others liberate themselves?"

Taishaku found himself at a loss for words. He decided to confer with the Buddha.

Do you see what that wise young girl says! "If you can't give us such things, how do you expect to save others?" Compare that with the fellows today who quake with fear when they encounter a few touches of poison. How infinitely superior she is - the difference between a crown and an old shoe is not nearly so great.

You men set out on your religious quest with fire in your blood. You go through great difficulties, suffer untold hardship, as you bore into the secret depths. Isn't it all because you intend at some later date to do great work by bringing the benefits of salvation to your fellow beings? What about you? Don't you think you'd be lacking if you couldn't come up with these three things?

When the Buddha learned why Taishaku had come, he said, "As far as that's concerned, Taishaku, none of the Arhats in my assembly has the slightest clue either. It takes a great Bodhisattva to grasp it."

Why did the Buddha utter these words, instead of quaking and quivering with fear? Or do you think he was unaware of the deadly poison contained in the girl's utterance?

Try to fathom the Buddha's intent here. Don't you suppose he was hoping to make Taishaku realize the true meaning of the young girl's words? To enable him to leap directly beyond the gradual steps of the four attainments and three ranks and arrive at the stage of the great Bodhisattvas?

IN THE THIRD section of the *Platform Sutra*, the one devoted to doubts and questions, the Sixth Patriarch makes the statement: "Considered as a manifestation in form, the Paradise in the West lies one hundred and eight thousand leagues from here, a distance created by the ten evils and eight false practices in ourselves." Shuko of Unsei, a Ming priest of recent times who lived in Hangchou during the Wan-li period (1573-1672), wrote in his commentary on the *Amida Sutra*:

The *Platform Sutra* mistakenly identifies India with the Pure Land of Bliss. India and China are both part of this defiled world in which we live. If India were the Pure Land, what need would there be for people to aspire toward the eastern quarter or yearn toward the west? "Amida's Pure Land of Bliss lies west of here, many millions of Buddha lands distant from this world."

What we know as the *Platform Sutra* consists of records compiled by disciples of the Sixth Patriarch. We have no assurance that what they have compiled is free from error. We must be very careful to keep such a work from beginning students. If it falls into the hands of those who lack the capacity to understand it, it will turn them into wild demons of destruction. How deplorable!

Faugh! Who was this Shuko anyway? Some hidebound Confucian? An apologist for the Lesser Vehicle? Maybe a Buddhist of Pure Land persuasion who cast groundless aspersions on this sacred work because he was blind to the profound truth contained in the *Meditation Sutra*, [Which states that the Pure Land is "not far from here."] because he was simply not equipped with the eye which would enable him to read sutras? Or maybe he was a

cohort of Mara the Destroyer manifesting himself in the guise of a priest, shaven-headed, black-robed, hiding beneath a mask of verbal prajna, bent on destroying with his slander the wondrously subtle, hard-to-encounter words of a true Buddhist saint?

Such ascriptions would seem to fit him all too well. Yet someone took exception to them. "There is no reason to wonder about Master Ko," he said. "Take a good look and you will see that he just lacked the eye of kensho. He didn't have the strength that comes from realizing the Buddha's truth. Not having the karma from previous existence to enable him to reach prajna wisdom if he continued forward and being afraid to retreat because of the terrible samsaric retribution he knew awaited him in the next life, he turned to Pure Land faith. He began to devote himself exclusively to calling Amida's Name, hoping that at his death he would see Amida and his attendant Bodhisattvas arriving to welcome him to birth in the Pure Land and thereby attain the fruit of Buddhahood.

"So when he happened to open the *Platform Sutra* and read the golden utterances of the Sixth Patriarch expounding the authentic 'direct pointing' of the Zen school, and he realized they were totally at odds with the aspirations he had been cherishing, it dashed all his hopes. Yet this also roused him into putting together the commentary we now see. It was his way of redeeming the worthless notions to which he had grown so attached.

"So he was no Confucian, Taoist, or ally of Mara either. He was just a blind priest with a tolerable facility for the written word. We should not be surprised at him. Beginning from the time of the Sung dynasty, people like him have been as numerous as flax seed."

If what this person says is in fact true, the course of action that Shuko took was extremely ill-advised. We are fortunate that we do have the compassionate instructions of the Sixth Patriarch. Shouldn't we just read them with veneration, believe in them with reverence, and enter into their sacred precincts? What are we to make of a person who would use his minimal literary talent to endeavor to belittle the lofty wisdom and great religious spirit of a man of the Sixth Patriarch's stature? Even granting that to be permissible as long as he is deluding only himself, it is a sad day indeed when he commits his misconceptions to paper and publishes them as a book which can subvert the Zen teaching for untold numbers of future students.

We generally regard the utterances of a sage as being at odds with the notions held by ordinary people, and people who are at variance with such utterances we regard as unenlightened. Now if the words of a sage are no different from the ideas the unenlightened hold to be right and proper, are not those words themselves ignorant and unenlightened, and unworthy of our respect? If the ignorant are not at variance with the words of an enlightened sage, doesn't that make them enlightened men, and as such truly worthy of our reverence?

To begin with, Sokei Daishi was a great master with an unsurpassed

capacity for transmitting the Dharma. None of the seven hundred pupils who studied with the Fifth Patriarch at Mount Huang-mei could even approach him. His offspring cover the earth now from sea to sea, like the stones on a go board or the stars in the heavens. A common hedgerow monk like Shuko, whose arbitrary conjecture and wild surmise all comes from fossicking around in piles of old rubbish, does not even belong in the same category as Sokei.

Are you not aware, Shuko, that Master Sokei is a timeless old mirror in which the realms of heaven and hell and the lands of purity and impurity are all reflected equally? Don't you know that they are, as such, the single eye of the Zen monk? A diamond hammer couldn't break it. The finest sword on earth couldn't penetrate it. This is a realm in which there is no coming and going, no birth and death.

The light emitted from the white hair between Amida Buddha's eyebrows, which contains five Sumerus, and his blue lotus eyes, which hold the four great oceans, as well as the trees of seven precious gems and pools of eight virtues that adorn his Pure Land, are all shining brilliantly in our minds right now - they are manifest with perfect clarity right before our eyes. The black cord hell, aggregate hell, shrieking hell, interminable hell and all the rest, are, as such, the entire body of the venerable Sage of Boundless Life (Amida) in all his golden radiance.

Whether it is called the Shining Land of Lapis Lazuli in the East or the Immaculate Land of Purity in the South, it makes no difference - originally, it is all a single ocean of perfect, unsurpassed awakening, and, as such, it is also the intrinsic nature in every human being.

Yet even while it is present in them all, the way each one of them views it is never the same, but varies according to the weight of individual karma and the amount of merit and good fortune they enjoy.

Those who suffer the terrible agonies of hell see seething cauldrons and white-hot furnaces. Craving ghosts see raging fires and pools of pus and blood. Fighting demons see a violent battleground of deadly strife. The unenlightened see a defiled world of ignorance and suffering - all thorns and briars, stones and worthless shards - from which they turn in loathing to seek the Land of Purity. Inhabitants of the deva realms see a wonderful land of brilliant lapis lazuli and transparent crystal. Adherents of the two vehicles see a realm of transition on the path to final attainment. Bodhisattvas see a land of true recompense filled with glorious adornments. Buddhas see a land of eternal tranquil light. How about you Zen monks. *What do you see?*

You must be aware that the jewelled nets of the heavenly realms and the white-hot iron grates in the realms of hell are themselves thousand-layered robes of finest silk; that the exquisite repasts of the Pure Land paradise and the molten bronze served up to hell-dwellers are, as such, banquets replete with a hundred rare tastes. Nowhere in heaven or on earth will you find a second moon. Yet there is no way for those of ordinary or inferior capacity to know it.

Followers of the patriarch-teachers, you monks of superior capacity investigating the hidden depths, until you release your hold from the edge of the precipice to which you hang and perish into life anew, you can never enter this samadhi. But the moment you do, the distinction between Dharma principle and enlightened person disappears, differentiations between mind and environment vanish. This is what the coming of the old Buddha to welcome you to the Pure Land is really about. You are those superior religious seekers the sutra says are destined for "the highest rank of the highest rebirth in the Pure Land."

Master Ko, if you do not once gain entrance into the Pure Land in this way, you could pass through millions upon millions of Buddha lands, undergo rebirth eight thousand times over, but it would all be a mere shadow in a dream, no different from the imagined land conjured up in Kantan's slumbering brain.²

The Zen master Sokei stated unequivocally that the ten evils and eight false practices separate us from the Western Paradise. It is a perfectly justified, absolutely authentic teaching. Were the countless Tathagatas in the six directions all to manifest themselves in this world at one time, even they could not change a single syllable of it.

Furthermore, Master Ko, if I said to you, "The Western Paradise is eighteen leagues from here." "The Western Paradise is seven feet from here." "The Western Paradise is eighteen inches over there." these would be perfectly justified, absolutely authentic teachings. How can you lay a hand, or foot, on them! When I make those statements what village do you suppose I am referring to? And if you hesitate or speculate for even a split second, a broken vermilion staff seven feet long stands ready against the wall.

Your resentment at finding the Sixth Patriarch's ideas different to your own led you to take a true teacher totally dedicated to the Buddhist goal of universal salvation and represent him as a dunce who does not even know the difference between the Pure Land and India – do you think that is right?

We can only suppose that some preconception of the Sixth Patriarch which had formed in Shuko's mind led him to think: "It's really a shame that the Sixth Patriarch, with that profound enlightenment of his, was originally a woodcutter from the uncivilized south. Being illiterate, he couldn't read the Buddhist scriptures. He was rude, completely ignorant, in fact, he was no different from those countrymen who tend cows and catch fish or work as menials."

But is it really possible that even such people wouldn't know the difference between the Pure Land and India? Even a tiny child believes in the

² Kantan was a poor scholar who, while travelling to take the official examinations, dreamed that he passed them with flying colors and, after an illustrious government career, attained the post of prime minister, whereupon he woke up, realized that life is an empty dream, and returned home.

Pure Land and worships it with a sense of reverence. And we are talking about a great Buddhist teacher - one of the "difficult-to-meet, hard-to-encounter" sages who rarely appears in this world. The venerable Sokei Daishi was a veritable udumbara flower who blossomed auspiciously in answer to the prophecies of the Buddhist sages.

This genuinely enlightened man, endowed with the ten superhuman powers of Buddhahood, appeared in the world riding upon the vehicle of the universal vow and revealed a secret of religious attainment not preached by any Buddha-patriarch before him. It was like the Dragon god entering the world-encompassing ocean, turning its salt water to fresh and working with perfectly unobstructed freedom to make it fall over all the earth as pure, sweet manna, reviving parched wastelands from the ravages of great drought. It was like a rich man entering an immense treasure house, emerging with many articles rarely seen in the world and distributing them to the cold and hungry, giving them new life by relieving their need and suffering. Such activities have nothing to do with speculation or conjecture. They cannot be approached by ordinary human understanding.

Priests of today who have woven themselves into complicated webs of words and letters, who, after sucking and gnawing on this literary sewage until their mouths suppurate, proceed to spew out a tissue of irresponsible nonsense - should not even be mentioned in the same breath as the Sixth Patriarch.

Shakyamuni Buddha tells us that the Pure Land lies many millions of Buddha-lands distant from here. The Zen patriarch Eno says the distance is one hundred and eight thousand leagues. Both utterances come from men whose power - strength derived from great wisdom - is awesomely vast. Their words reverberate like the earth-shaking stomp of the elephant king, resound like the roar of the lion monarch, bursting the brains of any jackal or other scavenger who stops to ponder them or shows so much as the slightest hesitation.

Yet Shuko glibly delivers the judgment that the "*Platform Sutra* mistakenly regards India as the Pure Land of Bliss." "What we know as the *Platform Sutra*," he says, "consists of records compiled by disciples of the Sixth Patriarch. We have no assurance that what they have compiled is free from error." Now maybe that sounds like he is trying to be helpful, but what he is really doing is disparaging the Sixth Patriarch.

In the *Rokusodankyo Kokan*, a commentary on the *Platform Sutra*, the author writes: "According to gazeteers and geographical works I have consulted, the distance from the west gate of Chang-an to the east gate of Kapilavastu in India is one hundred thousand leagues, so Shuko's criticism of the *Platform Sutra* for mistaking India for the Pure Land may well have a solid basis in fact."

Now that isn't even good rubbish. But even supposing (alas!) that the author's penchant for poking into old books is justified, I want him to tell me: What gazeteer or geography since the time of the Great Yu ever stated that

India is distant from China by ten evils and eight wrong practices? It's a great shame, really. Instead of wasting his time nosing through reference books, why didn't he just read the *Platform Sutra* with care and respect, and devote himself attentively to investigating Shakyamuni Buddha's true meaning? If he had continued to contemplate it - both coming and going - he would suddenly have broken through and grasped that meaning. Then he would have that "solid basis" of his. He would be clapping his hands joyfully, howling with laughter - he couldn't have helped himself. *How about those great roars of laughter? What would they mean?*

It is absurd for someone in Master Ko's advanced state of spiritual myopia to be going around delivering wild judgments on the golden utterances of a genuine sage like the Sixth Patriarch. The author of the *Rokusodankyo Kokan* is another of those like Master Ko who spends his entire life entangled in a jungle of vines down inside a dark cave. They are like a midget in a crowded theatre trying to watch a play. Since he can't see anything, he jumps up and down and applauds when everyone else does. They also remind you of a troupe of blind Persians who stumble upon a parchment leaf inscribed with Sanskrit words; they wander off into the middle of nowhere and secretly pool their knowledge trying to decipher the meaning of the text. But as they haven't the faintest idea what it says, they fail to get even a single word right, and they turn themselves into laughing stocks in the bargain.

Actually, such people do not even merit our attention, and yet since I am afraid of the harm they can do misleading even a few sincere seekers, I find it necessary to lay down a few entangling vines of my own like this.

"The greatest care must be taken to keep such a work from beginning students," says Shuko's commentary. "If it does chance to fall into the hands of those who lack the capacity to understand it, it will turn them into wild demons of destruction. How deplorable!"

My answer to the gross irresponsibility of such a statement is: we must take the greatest care not to pass stupid, misinformed judgments on a work like the *Platform Sutra*. When people with unenlightened views judge such a work on the basis of their own ignorance, they immediately transform themselves into wild demons of destruction. It is that which I find deplorable.

To begin with, Tathagatas appear in the world one after another for the sole purpose of opening up paths to Buddha-wisdom for sentient beings. That has always been their primary aim in manifesting themselves. Although the sutras and commentaries contain a variety of Dharma "gates" - abrupt and gradual teachings, verbal and pre-verbal teachings, exoteric and esoteric teachings, first and last teachings - in the end they all come down to one teaching and one teaching alone: the fundamental self-nature inherent in each and every person.

It is no different in Sokei Daishi's case. While the *Platform Sutra* which contains his teaching has chapters devoted to his religious career, to his answers to questioners doubts, to meditation and wisdom, to repentance, and so

on - they are in the end none other than the one teaching of kensho (seeing into the true self-nature). Wise sages for twenty-eight generations in India and six generations in China, as well as the venerable Zen teachers of the Five Houses and Seven Schools who descended from them, have every one of them transmitted this Dharma of kensho as they strove to lead people to awakening in Shakyamuni's place devoting themselves singlemindedly to achieving the fundamental aim for which all Buddhas appear in the world. None of them ever uttered one word about the Western Paradise, nor preached a single syllable about birth in the Pure Land. When the students who came after them began their study of the Way and took it upon themselves to read the *Platform Sutra*, none of them was ever reduced to becoming a wild demon. On the contrary, it matured their attainment and enabled them to grow into great Dharma vessels. So please, Master Ko, stop whining about the *Platform Sutra*.

It is because of misguided men like you that Nankai Soho of the Yuan wrote:

The *Platform Sutra* is not mere words. It is the principle of Bodhidharma's 'direct pointing' that has been transmitted from patriarch to patriarch. It is thanks to it that great, venerable masters in the past like Nangaku and Seigen cleared their minds. After them, it cleared the minds of their disciples Baso and Sekito. The spread of the Zen school today throughout the world is also firmly rooted in this same principle of direct pointing. Indeed, is it possible that anyone in the future could clear his mind and see into his own nature without recourse to this same direct pointing?

These words of Nankai Soho represent the accepted norm in Zen temples and monasteries everywhere. Yet there is Master Ko, ensconced in some remote temple, giving forth with those partisan hunches of his. The one is as different from the other as cloud from mud.

Since some people are naturally perceptive and some are not, and some have great ability while others have little, there is a correspondingly great variety in the teachings which Buddhas impart to them. Buddhas work in the same way that skilled physicians do. A physician does not set out when he examines patients with just one medical prescription already fixed in his mind; since the ailments from which they suffer vary greatly, he must be able to prescribe a wide variety of remedies for them.

Take, for example, the desire for rebirth found among followers of the Pure Land school. Shakyamuni, the Great Physician King who relieves the suffering of sentient beings, in order to save Queen Vaidehi from the misery of a cruel imprisonment, converted her to firm belief in the Pure Land of her own intrinsic mind- nature by using good and skillful means which he devised for her particular situation. It was a specific remedy prescribed for the occasion and imparted to Queen Vaidehi alone.

Men like Shuko, not having attained the truth of the Buddha's wonderful skillful means, cling mulishly to the deluded notion of a Pure Land and Buddhas which exist separately apart from the mind. They are incapable of

truly grasping that there is no such thing as a Buddha with his own Buddha land, that the village right in front of them and the village behind them and everywhere else - it is all Buddha land. There is no such thing as a Buddha body either. South and north, east and west, all is the Buddha body in its entirety. Being incapable of truly grasping such truths, when Shuko heard a genuine Buddhist teaching which said, "you are separated from the Western Paradise by the ten evils and eight false practices in yourself," he was appalled because it did not agree with the conception of the Pure Land which he had erected in his own mind. He hoped that by roundly condemning it he could keep others from hearing or reading about it.

If we let Shuko have his way and keep beginners from reading the *Platform Sutra* on the grounds that it is unsuitable for them, then the *Kegon Sutra*, and the *Lotus, Nirvana*, and other Mahayana sutras in which the Buddha reveals the substance of his enlightenment, are not suitable for them either. I say this because the great master Eno, having penetrated the profoundest subtleties of the Buddha-mind, having broken decisively through the deep ground whence the ocean of Buddhist teaching finds its source, spoke with the same tongue, sang from the same mouth, as all the other Buddhas.

Furthermore, the *Kegon Goron* states that "aspirants belonging to the first class recognize the Buddha's great power, observe his precepts, and by utilizing the power of the vow working in themselves, gain birth in his Pure Land. That Pure Land is a provisional manifestation, not a real Pure Land. The reason aspirants seek it is because they have not seen into their own true nature and hence do not know that ignorance is in itself the fundamental wisdom of the Tathagatas - and they are thus still subject to the working of causation. The preaching of a scripture such as the *Amida Sutra* is based upon such a principle."

We may be sure if Shuko had seen this passage, he would have grabbed his brush and dashed off some lines about the *Kegon Goron* being unfit for beginners. The *Kegon Goron* is fortunate indeed to have avoided the blind-eyed gaze of the "Great Teacher of the Lotus Pond." It saves us having to listen to warnings about "giving it to people of small capacity," and "turning them into wild demons." Sohaku Daishi dwelling within the stillness of eternal samadhi, should be delighted at this stroke of good fortune.

Seen by the light of the true Dharma eye, all people - the old and the young, the high and the low, priest and laymen, wise and otherwise - are endowed with the wonderful virtue of Buddha wisdom. It is present without any lack in them all. Not one among them - or even half of one - is to be cast aside and rejected because he is a beginner.

Nonetheless, since when students first set out on the Way they do not know what is beneficial to their practice and what is not, and they can't distinguish immediate needs from less urgent ones, we refer to them for the time being as beginners. At that point, they read the sacred Buddhist writings and entrust themselves to the guidance of a good teacher and friend. Upon

bringing the Great Matter to completion and fully maturing into great Dharma vessels, they will acquire a wonderful ability for expressing their attainment and, using that ability, will strive to impart the great Dharma-gift to others, holding Buddha-wisdom up like a sun to illuminate the eternal darkness, keeping its vital pulse alive through the degenerate age of the latter day. It is these we can call true descendents of the Buddhas, those whose debt of gratitude to their predecessors has been repaid in full.

But if they are compelled to practice the Nembutsu along with all other students of whatever kind and capacity on the grounds that they are beginners, we will have all the redoubtable members of the younger generation - those Bodhidharma praised as being "native born to the Mahayana in this land," people gifted with outstanding talent, who have it in them to become great Dharma pillars worthy to stand in the future with Tokusan, Rinzai, Baso, and Sekito - traipsing along after half-dead old duffers, sitting in the shade next to the pond with listless old grannies, dropping their heads and closing their eyes in broad daylight and intoning endless choruses of Nembutsu. If that happens, whose children are we going to find to carry on the vital pulse of Buddha-wisdom? Who will become the cool, refreshing shade trees to provide refuge for those in the latter day? All the true customs and traditions of the Zen school will fall right to earth. The seeds of Buddhahood will wither, die, and disappear forever.

I want these great and stalwart men to choose the right path. If, at a time like this, the golden words in the Tripitaka, all the Mahayana sutras which were compiled in the Pippali cave for beginners to use in after ages, if everything except the three Pure Land sutras is relegated to the back shelves of the bookcase and left there untouched, it will end up as bug-fodder, buried uselessly in the bellies of bookworms, no different from stacks of fake burial money left forgotten in an old shrine deep in the mountains - of absolutely no use to anyone. How deplorable!

Those people mentioned before whom the *Meditation Sutra* says are destined for the highest rank of the highest rebirth in the Pure Land, those suited to read the Mahayana sutras, have now bitten the dust as well - they no longer exist. Shuko's commentary, in slanderously rejecting anything counter to his own notions, may be compared to the infamous Ch'in emperor's book-burning pit. The Ch'in emperor's tyrannical policies were totally at odds with the teachings in the Confucian classics and other Confucian writings. Resenting this, he had his Confucians buried alive and all their books consigned to the flames. What Shuko has done represents a catastrophe of similar proportions.

The three Wu emperors undertook openly to suppress Buddhism. Shuko attempted to do the same thing surreptitiously. The former went about it publicly, the latter did it on the sly - yet the crime is one. But Shuko is not really to blame for his transgressions. He did what he did because he never encountered an authentic master to guide him and was unable to attain the eye that would have enabled him to see through into the secret depths. He did not

possess the wonderful spiritual power that comes from kensho.

Yet Shuko is given as "an example for good teachers past, present, and future." People praise him as "foremost among the great priests of the Zen, Teaching, and Precepts schools." Can they be in their right minds!

The Zen forests of today will be found upon inspection to be thickly infested with a race of bonzes just like Shuko. You find them everywhere, fastened with grips of death to the "silent tranquillity" of their "withered-tree" sitting - and imagining that to be the true practice of the Buddha's Way. They don't take kindly to views which are not in agreement with their own. The Buddha's sutras they regard as they would a mortal enemy and forbid students to read them. They fear them as an evil spirit fears a sacred amulet.

Being foolishly wedded to ordinary perception and experience in the belief that it is Zen, they take offense at anything which differs from their own convictions. They view the records of the Zen masters as they would a deadly adversary and refuse to let students near them. They avoid them like the lame hare avoids the hungry tiger. When we have adherents of the Pure Land shunning and disparaging the sacred writings of the Buddhas, and followers of Zen out to slander them into disrepute, the danger to the Buddhist Way must be said to have reached a critical stage.

Don't get me wrong. I am not urging students to become masters of the classics and histories, to spend all their time exploring ancient writings, or to lose themselves in the pleasures of poetry and letters; I am not telling them to compete in these fields against others and win fame for themselves by proving their superiority. They could attain an eloquence equal to that of the Great Purna, possess knowledge so great they surpassed Shariputra, but if they are lacking in the basic stuff of enlightenment, if they do not have the right eye of kensho, false views bred of arrogance will inevitably find their way deep into their spiritual vitals, blasting the life from the seed of Buddhahood, and turning them into sentient beings destined for permanent residency in hell.

It is not like this with true followers of the Way. They must as an essential first step see their own original nature as clearly as if they are looking at the palm of their hand. When from time to time they take and read through the writings that contain the words and teachings of the Buddha-patriarchs, they will illuminate those ancient teachings with their own minds. They will visit authentic teachers for guidance. They will pledge themselves with firm determination to work their way through the final koans of the patriarchal teachers and, before they die, to produce from their forge a descendent - one person or at least half a person - as a way of repaying their deep debt of thanks to their predecessors. It is such people who are worthy to be called "progeny of the house of Zen."

I respectfully submit to the 'Great Teacher of the Lotus Pond': "If you wish to plant yourself in some hinterland where you are free to finger your lotus-bead rosary, droop your head, drop your eyelids, and intone the Buddha's Name because you want to be born in the Land of Lotus Flowers, that is no

business of mine. It is entirely up to you. But when you start gazing elsewhere with that myopic look in your eyes and decide to divert yourself by writing commentaries that pass belittling judgment on a great saint and matchless Dharma-transmitter like the Sixth Patriarch, then I must ask you to take the words you have and shelve them away, far out of sight, where no one will ever lay eyes on them. Why do I say that? I say it because the great Dragon King, who controls the clouds in the heavens and the rains that fall over the earth, cannot be known or fathomed by a mud snail or a clam."

One of the teachers of the past said:

The 'western quarter' refers to the original mind of sentient beings. 'Passing beyond millions and millions of Buddha-lands [to attain rebirth in the Pure Land]' signifies sentient beings terminating the ten evil thoughts and abruptly transcending the ten stages of Bodhisattvahood. 'Amida,' signifying immeasurable life, stands for the Buddha-nature in sentient beings. 'Kannon,' 'Seishi,' and Amida's other attendant Bodhisattvas represent the incomprehensible working of the original self-nature. 'Sentient being' is ignorance and the many thoughts, fears, discernments, and discriminations that result from it. 'When life ends' refers to the time when discriminations and emotions cease to arise. 'Cessation of intellection and discrimination' is the purifying of the original mind-ground and indicates the Pure Land in the West.

It is to the west that sun, moon, and stars all return. In the same way, it is to the one universal mind that all the thoughts, fears, and discriminations of sentient beings return. It is thus one single mind, calm and undisturbed. And because Amida Buddha exists here, when you awaken to your self-nature the 84,000 evil passions transform instantly into 84,000 marvelous virtues. To the incomprehensible working which brings this about we give the names Kannon, Seishi, and so on. The uneasy mind you have while you are in a state of illusion is called the defiled land. When you awaken and your mind is clear and free of defilement, that is called the Pure Land.

Hence the *Kechimyaku-ron* says that "the Nembutsu practiced by Buddhist saints in the past was not directed toward an external Buddha; their Nembutsu practice was oriented solely toward the internal Buddha in their own minds. . . . If you want to discover Buddha, first you must see into your own true nature. Unless you have seen into your own nature, what good can come from doing Nembutsu or reciting sutras?"

"Buddha" means "one who is awakened." Once you have awakened, your own mind is itself Buddha. By seeking outside yourself for a Buddha invested with form, you are proclaiming yourself a foolish man. It is like a person who wants to catch a fish. He must start by looking in the water, because fish live in the water and are not found apart from it. If a person wants to find Buddha he must look into his own mind, because it is there and nowhere else that Buddha exists.

Question: "In that case, what can I do to become thoroughly awakened to my own mind?"

What is that which asks such a question? Is it your mind? Is it your original nature? Is it some kind of spirit or demon? Is it inside you? Outside you? Is it somewhere intermediate? Is it blue, yellow, red, or white? This is something you must investigate and clarify for yourself. You must investigate it whether you are standing or sitting, when you are eating your rice or drinking your tea, when you are speaking and when you are silent. You must keep at it with total, singleminded devotion. And never, whatever you do, look in sutras or in commentaries for an answer, or seek it in the words you hear a teacher speak.

When all the effort you can muster has been exhausted, when you have reached a total impasse, and you have become like the cat at the rathole, like the mother hen warming her egg, it will suddenly come to you and you will break free. The phoenix will be through the golden net, the crane will fly clear of the cage.

But even if no breakthrough occurs until your dying day and you spend twenty or thirty years in vain without ever seeing into your true nature, I want your solemn pledge that you will never turn for spiritual support to those tales that you hear the down-and-out old men and washed-out old women peddling everywhere today. If you do, they will stick to your hide, they will cling to your bones, you will never be free of them. And as for your chances with the patriarchs' difficult-to-pass koans, the less said about them the better, because they will then be totally beyond your grasp.

Hence a priest of former times said, "A person who commits himself to the practice of Zen must be equipped with three essentials. A great root of faith. A great ball of doubt. A great tenacity of purpose. Lacking any one of them, he is like a tripod with only two legs."

By "great root of faith" is meant the belief that each and every person has an essential self-nature which he can see into; and the belief in a principle by which this self-nature can be fully penetrated. Even though you attain this belief, you cannot break through and penetrate to total awakening unless fundamental doubts arise as you tackle the difficult-to-pass koans. And even if these doubts crystallize so that you yourself become a great ball of doubt, you will still be unable to break it apart unless you constantly engage those koans with great burning tenacity of purpose.

Thus it has been said that it takes three long kalpas for lazy and inattentive sentient beings to attain nirvana, while for the fearless and stout-hearted, Buddhahood comes in a single instant of thought. What you must do is to concentrate all your effort on bringing your fundamental potential into full play. The practice of Zen is like making a fire by friction. The essential thing as you rub wood against stone is to apply continuous, all-out effort. If you stop when you see the first trace of smoke, you will never get even a flicker of fire, even though you might rub away for three long kalpas.

Only a few hundred yards from here is a beach. Suppose that someone is bothered because he has never experienced the taste of sea water and decides to sample it for himself. He sets out for the beach but before he has gone a hundred paces he stops and comes back; then he starts out again but this time he returns after he has taken only ten steps. He will never know the taste of sea water that way, will he? But if he keeps going straight ahead without turning back, it doesn't even matter if he lives far inland in a landlocked province such as Shinano, Kai, Hida, or Mino, he will still eventually reach the sea. Then, by dipping his finger in the water and tasting it, he will know in an instant what sea water tastes like the world over, because it is of course the same everywhere, in India, China, the great southern sea or the great northern sea.

Those Dharma practitioners who explore the secret depths are like this too. They go straight forward, boring into their own minds with unbroken effort, never letting up or retreating. Then the breakthrough suddenly comes, and with that they penetrate their own nature, the natures of others, the nature of sentient beings, the nature of the evil passions and of enlightenment, the nature of the Buddha nature, the god nature, the Bodhisattva nature, the sentient being nature, the non-sentient being nature, the craving ghost nature, the contentious spirit nature, the beast nature - they are all of them seen in a single instant of thought. The great matter of their religious quest is thus completely and utterly resolved. There is nothing left. They are free of birth and death. What a thrilling moment it is!

WITH GREATEST respect and reverence, I encourage all you superior seekers in the secret depths to devote yourselves to penetrating and clarifying the self as earnestly as you would put out a fire on the top of your head. I urge you to keep boring your way through as assiduously as you would seek a lost article of incalculable worth. I enjoin you to regard the teachings left by the Buddha-patriarchs with the same spirit of hostility you would show toward a person who had murdered both your parents. Anyone who belongs to the school of Zen and does not engage in the doubting and introspection of koan must be considered a deadbeat rascal of the lowest kind, someone who would throw aside his greatest asset. As a teacher of the past said, "At the bottom of great doubt lies great enlightenment. . . From a full measure of doubt comes a full measure of enlightenment."

Don't think the commitments and pressing duties of secular life leave you no time to go about forming a ball of doubt. Don't think your mind is so crowded with confused thoughts you are incapable of devoting yourself singlemindedly to Zen practice. Suppose a man was in a busy market place,

pushing his way through the dense crowd, and some gold coins dropped out of his pocket into the dirt. Do you think he would just leave them there forget about them and continue on his way because of where he was? Do you think someone would leave the gold pieces behind because he was in a crowded place or because the coins were lying in the dirt? Of course not. He would be down there frantically pushing and shoving with tears in his eyes trying to find them. His mind wouldn't rest until he had recovered them. Yet what are a few pieces of gold when set against that priceless jewel found in the headdresses of kings - the way of inconceivable being that exists within your own mind? Could a jewel of such worth be attained easily, without effort?

There once was a denizen of the Eastern Sea, Redfin Carp by name. He was endowed with an indomitable spirit and unbending integrity, a figure of immense stature among his fellow fish. He was constantly bemoaning the fate of his comrades. "How many untold millions of my brethren proudly swim the vast ocean deeps. They entrust themselves to its boundless silver waves, glide up and down among the swells, sport in the seaweed and kelp. Yet countless of them are taken by baited hooks and caught in nets. They wind up on a chopping block where they are sliced and cooked to fill the bellies of those in the human world. Their bones are cast away and mingle in the dust and mire. Their heads are thrown to the stray dogs. Some are dried or salted for inland markets, to be exposed in stalls and shopfronts for all to see. Not a single one finishes out his natural span. How sad is the life of a fish!"

With these sad musings there came a great welling of spirit in Redfin Carp's breast. He pledged a solemn vow. "I shall swim beyond the Dragon Gates. I shall brave the perilous bolts of fire and lightning. I shall transcend the estate of ordinary fish and achieve a place among the sacred order of dragons, ridding myself forever of the terrible suffering to which my race is heir, expunging every trace of our shame and humiliation."

Waiting until the third day of the third month, when the peach blossoms are in flower and the river is full, he made his way to the entrance of the Yu Barrier. Then with a flick of his tail, Redfin Carp swam forth.

You men have never laid eyes on the awesome torrent of water that rolls through the Dragon Gates. It falls all the way from the summits of the far-off Kunlun Range with tremendous force. There are wild, thousand-foot waves that rush down through perpendicular gorges towering on either side, carrying away whole hillsides as they go. Angry thunderbolts beat down on all sides with a deafening roar. Moaning whirlwinds whip up poisonous mists. Funnels of noisome vapor spit flashing forks of lightning. Even the mountain spirits are stunned into senselessness; the river spirits are limp with fright. Just a drop of this water will shatter the carapace of a giant tortoise break the bones of a giant whale.

It was into this maelstrom that Redfin Carp, his splendid golden-red scales girded to the full, his steely teeth thrumming like drums, made a direct all-out assault. Ah! Golden Carp! Golden Carp! You might have chosen an

ordinary life out in the boundless ocean. It teems with lesser fish. You would not have gone hungry. Then why? What made you embark on this wild and bitter struggle? What was waiting for you up beyond the Barrier?

After being seared by cliff-shattering bolts of lightning, after being battered by heaven-scorching blasts of thunderfire, his scaly armor burned from head to tail, his fins singed through, Redfin Carp suddenly died the Great Death, and rose again as a divine dragon - a supreme lord of the waters. Now, with the thunder god at his head and the fire god at his rear, flanked right and left by the gods of rain and wind, he moved at will with the clouds clutched in one hand and the mists in the other, bringing new life to the tender shoots withering in long-parched desert lands, keeping the true Dharma safe amid the defilements of the degenerate world.

Had he been content to pass his life like a lame turtle or blind tortoise, feeding on winkles and tiny shrimps, not even all the effort Vasuki, Manasvi and the other Dragon Kings might muster on his behalf could have done him any good. He could never have achieved the great success that he did.

What do I mean by "blind tortoise"? One of the current crop of sightless, irresponsible bungler-priests who regard koan as nonessential and the Zen interview (sanzen) as expedient means on the part of the master. While even such men are not totally devoid of understanding, they are clearly standing outside the gates, whence they peer fecklessly in, mouthing words like,

"The self-nature is naturally pure, the mind-source is deep as an ocean; there is no samsaric existence to be cast aside, there is no nirvana to be sought. It is a sheer and profound stillness, a transparent mass of boundless emptiness. It is here that is found the great treasure inherent in all people. How could anything be lacking?"

Ah, how plausible it sounds! All too plausible. Unfortunately, the words they speak do not possess even a shred of strength in practical application. These people are like snails. The moment anything approaches, they draw in their horns and come to a standstill. They are like lame turtles, pulling in their legs, heads, and tails at the slightest contact and hiding inside their shells. How can any spiritual energy emerge from such an attitude? If they happen to receive a sally from an authentic monk, they react like Master Yang's pet crane, who couldn't even move his neck. There's no difference between them and those fish who lie helpless on the chopping block, dying ten thousand deaths in their one life, their fate - whether they are to be sliced and served up raw or carved into fillets and roasted over hot coals - entirely in the hands of others. And throughout their ordeal they haven't the strength even to cry out. Can people of this kind be true descendents of the great Bodhidharma? They assure you that there is "nothing lacking." But are they happy? Are their minds free of care?

Genuine monks who negotiated the Way in the past flung themselves and everything they had into their masters' white-hot forges without a thought

for their own lives or well-being. Once their minds were turned to the Way, they too, like Redfin Carp, gathered all their strength and courage and strove until they broke beyond the Dragon Gates. Thereafter, in whatever situation, under whatever circumstance, they functioned with total self-dependence and perfect, unattached freedom. What intense joy and gratification they must have felt. It is these people you must emulate, not the crane. Not those turtles and snails.

What is a "sacred dragon"? Those authentic patriarchs of the past with a strong and vigorous spirit who committed themselves singlemindedly to the practice of Zen. Ah, you are human beings, aren't you? If you let yourselves be outdone by a fish, you may as well be dead!

You often run up against obstructive demons of yet another type, ones who teach their followers:

"If you want to attain mastery of the Buddha's Way you must, to begin with, empty your mind of birth and death, of arising and subsiding thoughts. Birth and death exists, nirvana exists, heaven and hell exist, because the mind gives rise to them. None of them ever arises unless the mind causes them to. There is thus one and only one thing for you to do: make your minds completely empty."

Falling right into step, the students set out to empty their minds. The trouble is, though they try everything they know, emptying this way, emptying that way, working away at it for months, even years, they find it is like trying to sweep mist away by flailing at it with a pole, or trying to halt a river by blocking it with outstretched arms - they only cause greater confusion.

Suppose a wealthy man mistakenly hired a master thief of the greatest skill and cunning to guard his house and, after seeing his granaries, treasures, and the rest of his fortune dwindle by the day, had several suspicious servants seized, and ordered the thief to interrogate them around the clock until they confessed. The family would be worried sick, the household on the brink of bankruptcy, yet the fortune would go on shrinking as before. All because of the man's original mistake in employing and placing his trust in a thief.

What you must learn from this is that all attempts to empty the mind are in themselves a sure sign that birth-and-death is in progress.

In the *Shurangama Sutra* the Buddha says, "*You have continued to undergo transmigration in the cycle of birth and death from the beginningless past right on up to your present existence because you have acknowledged a thief as your son and heir and thus have remained unaware of the fundamental and changeless truth of your own true nature.*"

This passage is explained in a commentary on the *Shurangama Sutra*:

"The word 'thief' is used to describe the way in which you have been deprived of the virtues and merits of the Dharma's priceless resources. Having been deluded and thus unaware of this situation, you have mistaken this 'thief' for something changeless and true, believing it to be your legitimate heir to

whom your most valuable possessions can be entrusted. Instead, you have brought on your own downfall, reduced yourself to endless kalpas of wretchedness and poverty, all because you have been separated from the Dharma treasure."

If you really want to empty your mind of birth and death, what you should do is to tackle one of the totally impregnable, hard- to-pass koan. When you suddenly merge with the basic root of life and everything ceases to exist, you will know for the first time the profound meaning contained in Yoka Daishi's words "do not brush illusions away, do not seek the truth of enlightenment."

The Zen master Daie said: *"At the present time, the evil one's influence is strong and the Dharma is weak. The great majority of people regard 'reverting to tranquillity and living within it' as the ultimate attainment."*

He also said: *"A race of sham Zennists has appeared in recent years who regard sitting with dropped eyelids and closed mouths letting illusory thoughts spin through their minds to be the attainment of a marvelous state that surpasses human understanding. They consider it to be the realm of primal Buddhahood 'existing prior to the timeless beginning.' If they do open their mouths and utter so much as a syllable, they will immediately tell you that they have slipped out of that marvelous realm. They believe this to be the most fundamental state it is possible to attain. Satori is a mere side issue - 'a twig or branch.' Such people are completely mistaken from the time they take their first step along the Way."*

These people who ally themselves with the devil are present in great numbers today as well. To them I say, "Never mind for now about what you consider 'nonessentials.' Tell me about your own fundamental matter, the one you are hiding away and treasuring so zealously. What is it like? Is it a solid piece of emptiness that you fix firmly in the ground like a post to fasten mules and horses to? Maybe it is a deep hole of sheer black silence? It is appalling, whatever it is."

It is also a good example of what is called falling into fixed views. It deceives a great many of the foolish and ignorant of the world. It's an ancient dwelling place of evil spirits, an old badger's den, a pitfall that traps people and buries them alive. Although you kept treasuring and defending it till the end of time, it would still be just a fragment from an old coin. It also goes by the name of "dark cave of the eighth Alaya consciousness." The ancients suffered through a great many hardships as they wandered in arduous pursuit of the truth. It was all for the sole purpose of getting themselves free of just such old nests as these.

Once a person is able to achieve true singlemindedness in his practice and smash apart the old nest of Alaya consciousness into which he has settled, the Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom immediately appears, the other three great Wisdoms start to function, and the all-discerning Fivefold Eye opens wide.

If, on the other hand, he allows himself to be seduced by these latter-day devils into hunkering down inside an old nest and making himself at home there, turning it into a private treasure chamber and spending all his time dusting it, polishing it, sweeping and brushing it clean, what can he hope to achieve? Absolutely nothing. Basically, it is a piece of the eighth consciousness, the same eighth consciousness which enters the womb of a donkey and enters the belly of a horse. So I urgently exhort you to do everything you can, strive with all your strength, to strike down into that dark cave and destroy it.

On that day long ago when the World-Honored One attained his great awakening and clothed himself in the precious celestial robe to expound the true heart of the extensive Flower Garland, he preached for three whole weeks to an audience which listened, without comprehending, as though they were deaf and dumb. Therefore, in order to make salvation accessible to people of mediocre and inferior capacities, he erected a temporary resting place for them to use on the way to ultimate attainment, calling this provisional abode a "phantom dwelling." After that, Shakyamuni attempted to destroy this abode by preaching about it from within the Buddhist order; Layman Vimalakirti attempted to do the same by inveighing against it from without. They even likened those who attach to it, the adherents of the Two Vehicles (those content just to listen to the Buddha's teaching and those satisfied to enjoy their own private realization) to "supperating old polecats." But in the end they were between them unable to eradicate that dwelling place at its source in the Alaya consciousness.

Gradually, foster children spawned by adherents of the Two Vehicles multiplied and slowly and imperceptibly spread throughout India and the Western Regions. In time, even China filled with them. There venerable masters like Sekiso, Shinjo, Bukka, and Myoki set their jaws, clenched their teeth and strove valiantly to root them out, but even for them it was like trying to drive off a big wily rat by clapping your hands. He disappears over here, but he reappears over there, always lurking somewhere, furtively disparaging the true, untransmittable style of the patriarchal teachers. How lamentable!

In Japan, during the Jokyū (1219-21), Katei (1235-37), Karyaku (1326-28), and Kembu (1334-5) eras, twenty-four wise Zen sages entrusted their lives to the perilous whale-backed eastern seas, cast themselves bodily into the tiger's den, in order to transmit the difficult-to-believe methods of our authentic traditions. They fervently desired to fix the sun of wisdom permanently in the highest branches of the Divine Mulberry; to hang a previous Dharma lamp that would illuminate forever the dark hamlets of the Dragonfly Provinces. How could any of them have foreseen that their transmission would be slandered and maligned by these quietistic pseudo-Zennists and that in less than three hundred years the Zen they had transmitted would be lying in the dust? Would have no more life in it than last night's ashes? Nothing could be more deplorable than to be witness to the wasting away of the true Dharma in a degenerate age like this.

On the other hand, if a single person of superior capacity commit himself to the authentic pursuit of the Way and through sustained effort under the guidance of a true teacher fills with the power of sheer singlemindedness so that his normal processes of thought, perception consciousness, and emotion cease, so that he comes to resemble an utter fool who has exhausted his stock of words and reason, and everything, including his erstwhile determination to pursue the Way disappears, his very breath itself hangs almost suspended - at that point, what a pity that a Buddhist teacher, one who is supposed to act as his "great and good friend," should be unaware that this is the occasion when the tortoise shell is about to crack, the phoenix about to break free of its egg; should not know that these are all favorable signs seen in those poised on the threshold of enlightenment, should be stirred by grandmotherly kindness to immediately give in to tender effeminate feelings of compassion for the student and begin straight on explaining to him the reason for this and the principle for that, dragging him down into the abode of delusory surmise, pushing him down into the cave of intellectual understanding, and then taking a phoney winter melon seal and certifying his enlightenment with the pronouncement,

"You are like this. I am like this too. Preserve it carefully."

Ah! Ah! It's up to them if they want to preserve it. The trouble is they are still as far from the patriarchal groves as earth is from heaven. What are to all appearances acts of kindness on the part of a teacher helping a student are, in fact, doings which will bring about his doom. For his part, the student nods with satisfaction and, without an inkling of the mortal injury he has incurred, prances and frisks about wagging his tail, sure in the knowledge: "Now I have grasped the secret of Bodhidharma's coming from the West."

How are such students to know they haven't made it past any of the patriarchs' Barriers? That the thorny forests of Zen are much much deeper than they can even conceive? What a terrible shame for people of marvelous gifts, unexcelled capacity, who have it in them to become great beams and pillars of the house of Zen, to succumb to these corrupting winds and to spend the rest of their lives in a half-waking, half-drunk state, no different from the dull and witless type of people who never get around to doubting their way through anything! Is it any wonder that the groves of Zen are so barren of real men? Anyone who attaches to half-truths of this kind believing them to be essential and ultimate will probably not even know that he has fallen into the unfortunate category of "scorched buds and shrivelled seeds."

Long ago, when Zen master Nangaku sat in front of Baso's hermitage and began polishing a tile, he did so because of his desire to make Baso grasp his true meaning. When teachers of the past left phrases behind them, difficult-to-penetrate koan that would strip students' minds of their chronic inclination to attach to things, they did it because they wanted to kick over that comfortable old nesting place in the Alaya consciousness. Hence a master of the past said, "I made the mistake of burrowing into an old jackal hole for over thirty years myself, it's no mystery to me why so many students do the same."

There's no doubt about it, the practice of Zen is a formidable undertaking.

In his later years, Zen master Hoen enjoyed strolling the south corridor of his temple on Mount Goso. One day he saw a visiting monk pass by reading a book. He took it from him and, glancing through it, came to a passage which caught his attention:

"Most Zen students today are able to reach a state of serenity in which their minds and bodies are no longer troubled by afflicting passions, and their attachment to past and future is cut away so that each instant contains all time, but there they stop and abide contently like censers lying useless and forgotten in an ancient cemetery, cold and lifeless, with nothing but the sobbing of dead spirits to break the silence of their world. Assuming this to be the ultimate Zen has to offer them, they remain unaware that what they consider an unsurpassed realm is, in fact, obstructing them so that true knowing and seeing cannot appear and the radiant light of extraordinary spiritual power (jinzu) cannot shine free."

Hoen closed the book and raised his arms in a gesture of self-reproach. "Wonderful!" he exclaimed, "A true teacher! How well he expresses the essentials of the Dharma!"

He hurried to the quarters of his student Engo, who was serving as head monk, calling out to him, "It's extraordinary! I've come upon something really and truly extraordinary!" He placed the book in Engo's hands and had him read it too. Then Dharma father and Dharma son congratulated each other on their good fortune, and acclaimed the author with endless refrains of ecstatic praise.

When Daie Soko went to study under Zen master Engo for the first time, he had already decided on a course of action. "By the end of the ninety-day summer retreat," he declared to himself, "if Engo has affirmed my understanding like all the other teachers I've been to, I'm going to write a treatise debunking Zen."

Daie, did you really think Engo wouldn't be able to see through the fundamental matter you secretly treasured? If you had persisted in clinging to it like that, revering it and cherishing it for the rest of your life, the great "Reviler of Heaven" would never have emerged.

Fortunately, however, a poisonous breeze blowing from the south snuffed Daie's life out at its roots, cutting away past and future. When it happened, his teacher Engo said, "What you've accomplished is not easy. But you've merely finished killing yourself. You're incapable now of coming back to life and raising doubts about the words and phrases of the ancients. You have a serious ailment. You know the saying, 'Release your hold on the edge of the precipice. Die, and then be reborn'? You must believe that there's truth in those words."

Later, upon hearing Engo say, "What happens when the tree falls and the

wistaria withers? The same thing happens." Daie suddenly achieved great enlightenment. When Engo tested him with several koan, he passed them easily.

Daie rose to become abbot of the Kinzan monastery, the most important in the land with a thousand resident monks. As he supervised his sterling collection of dragons and elephants he was like a hungry eagle gazing over a covey of rabbits. We should feel honored to have a man of such profound attainment among the teachers of our school. Yet, as we have seen, there are some who consider such attainment unimportant - "nonessential." The matter they themselves regard as essential, and secretly cherish, is so worthless that even if you put it out together with a million pieces of gold, you would find no takers.

Engo said, "After the ancients had once achieved awakening, they went off and lived in thatched huts or caves, boiling wild vegetable roots in broken-legged pots to sustain themselves. They weren't interested in making names for themselves or in rising to positions of power. Being perfectly free from all ties whatever, they left turning words for their descendents because they wanted to repay their profound debt to the Buddha- patriarchs."

The priest Mannan Dogan wrote a verse comment on the koan Nansen On The Mountain: ³

Lying on a pillow of coral, eyes filled with tears,
Partly because he likes you, partly because he resents you.

When these lines came to Daie's notice he immediately ordered his attendant to take down the practice-schedules [and gave his monks a day of rest], saying, "This single turning word amply requites Mannan's debt to the Buddhas."

³ A monk visited Nansen Fugan who was living by himself in a small hut. Nansen told him he had something to do up the mountain and asked him to carry some food to him when the mealtime came. When the monk didn't appear, Nansen returned and found the cooking vessels smashed and the monk asleep; thereupon he stretched out and took a nap himself. When he awoke, the monk was gone. In later years, Nansen said, "Back when I was living by myself in a small hut I had a visit from a splendid monk. I've never seen him since."

According to Tokiwa, Mannan's verse comment may allude to an encounter he had with a laywoman who was studying with Daie while Mannan was head monk at Daie's temple. Daie allowed the woman to stay in the abbot's quarters, despite Mannan's objections, on the grounds that she was "no ordinary woman." When finally, at Daie's insistence, Mannan went to see her, she asked him if he wished a worldly meeting or a spiritual one. He indicated the latter, but when he entered her room he found her lying on her back, completely naked. "What kind of place is that?" said Mannan, pointing at her. "The place from which all the Buddhas of the Three Worlds, all six Zen patriarchs, and all the venerable priests in the land have emerged," she said. "Would you allow me to enter there?" he asked. "It isn't a place donkeys and horses can go," she said. Mannan was unable to reply. "The meeting is over," she said, and turned her back to him.

Most people arrange their altars with lamps and incense holders; they set out offerings of tea, flowers and sweets; they prostrate themselves over and over, perform various other practices around the clock; they even inflict burns on their fingers, arms, and bodies. But none of that repays even a tenth of the debt they owe the Buddhas. How, then, is it possible for a single couplet from an old poem that cuts away entanglements and complications to immediately repay that debt - and repay it in full? This question is by no means an idle or trivial one. Daie was the Dragon Gate of his age, a towering shade tree who provided shelter to over 1700 students. Do you suppose a man of his stature would utter such words frivolously?

In the past, Haryo had his Three Turning Words. His teacher Ummon Daishi told his disciples, "When I die, I don't want you to hold funeral observances of any kind. I just want each of you to take these three turning words and work on them." ⁴

Now do you really think that a Zen patriarch like Ummon would be espousing "non-essentials" just because he preferred them over offerings of flowers, sweets and rare foods?

Enko writes: *"If one of my monks came forward and said, 'Since there is essentially no moving up toward satori and no moving back toward the everyday world, what's the use of practicing Zen?' I'd just say, 'I can see that you're living in a pitchdark hole with the other dead souls.' How sad!*

"Many people like to cite the sayings of the Buddhist sages, or some words from the sutras such as 'ordinary speech, subtle speech, it all comes from the same ultimate source,' persuaded that they really understand their meaning. If any of you are operating under such an assumption, you'd better give up Zen. Devote your life to scholarship and become a great exegete."

"Nowadays you often hear people say, 'There's essentially no such thing as satori. The gate or teaching of satori was established as a way of making this fact known to people.' If that's the way you think, you're like a flea on the body of a lion, sustaining itself by drinking its lifeblood. Don't you know the ancient's words, 'If the source is not deep, the stream is not long; if the wisdom is not real the discernment is not far-reaching'? If the Buddha Dharma was a teaching that had been created or fabricated as you say, how could it possibly have survived to the present day?"

Chosha Keijin sent a monk to the priest Tojin Nyoe, who belonged to the same lineage as his teacher Nansen. The monk asked him "What was it like after you saw Nansen?"

⁴ The Three Turning Words of Haryo Kokan, an heir of Ummon Bun'en (Yun-men Wen-yen, 862-949): **1.** What is the Way? A clear-eyed man falls into a well. **2.** What is the Blown Hair Sword? Each branch on the coral holds up the moon. **3.** A monk asked Haryo, "What is the school of Devadatta?" "Filling a silver bowl with snow," Haryo replied.

Nyoe was silent.

"What was it like before you saw Nansen?" he asked.

"There wasn't any difference," said Nyoe.

The monk returned to Chosha and reported Nyoe's response. Chosha set forth his own understanding in a verse:

Perched motionless at the tip of a 100-foot pole
The man has attainment, but hasn't made it real.
He must advance one more step beyond the tip
And reveal his whole body in the ten directions.

Afterwards, Sansho Enen sent a monk named Shu Joza to ask Chosha some questions.

"When Nansen passed away, where did he go?" said Shu. ⁵

"When Sekito was just a young monk, he went to visit the Sixth Patriarch," said Chosha.

"I'm not asking about when Sekito was a young monk," replied Shu. "I want to know where Nansen went when he died." "Give it deep consideration," said Chosha.

"You're like a noble old pine tree towering thousands of feet in the winter sky," said Shu. "You're not like a bamboo shoot springing straight up through the rocks."

Chosha was silent.

"Thank you for your answers," said Shu. Chosha was still silent.

Shu returned to Sansho and told him about his meeting with Chosha.

"If that's the way Chosha is," said Sansho, "he's a good seven steps ahead of Rinzai."

Now both Rinzai and Chosha are beyond question genuine dragons of the Buddha ocean. They are the celestial phoenix and auspicious unicorn that frequent the gardens of the patriarchs. There is no one comparable to them. Having far transcended all forms and appearances, they move slowly or move quickly in response to changing conditions like huge masses of blazing fire, like iron stakes burning at white heat. Neither gods nor demons can perceive their traces; neither devils nor nonBuddhists can discern their activity. Who

⁵ The story of Nansen's death is a famous koan. When Nansen was about to die, the head monk asked him where he would be a hundred years hence. "A water buffalo at the foot of the hill," he answered. "Do you mind if I follow you?" asked the monk. "If you do," replied Nansen, "you must hold a stalk of grass in your mouth."

could conceive their limits? Who could ascertain their differences?

Yet when Sansho, who was himself a direct Dharma heir of Rinzai, heard what Chosha had said, he praised him as being superior to his own teacher! Can words be so awesomely difficult? You must understand, however, that within what is to you a mass of entangling verbal complications is contained a small but wonderful element which is able to work miracles.

When Zen master Sekiso passed away and the brotherhood asked the head monk to succeed him as abbot, Zen master Kyuho, who had previously served as the master's attendant, came and addressed them. He posed a question to the head monk, "The master often told us to `cease all activity,' to `do nothing whatever,' to `become so cold and lifeless the spirits of the dead will come sighing around you,' to `become a bolt of fine white silk,' to `become the dead ashes in a censer left forgotten in an ancient graveyard,' to `become so that the present instant is ten thousand years.'

"What is the meaning of these instructions? If you show that you grasp them, you are the next abbot. If you show that you do not, you aren't the man for the job."

"His words," said the head monk, "refer to the essential oneness of all things."

"You have failed to understand the master's meaning," said Kyuho.

"Get some incense ready," replied the head monk. "If I have terminated my life by the time that incense burns, it will mean I grasped the master's meaning. If I am still living, it will mean I did not."

Kyuho lit a stick of incense. Before it had burned down the head monk had ceased breathing. Kyuho patted the dead man on the back, and said, "Others have died while seated; some have died while standing. But you have just succeeded in proving that you could not have even seen the master's meaning in your dreams."

Often those who approach the end of their lives having devoted themselves singlemindedly to the practice of the Way will regard the solitude of their final hours, sitting in the light of a solitary lamp, as the last great and difficult barrier of their religious quest, and as the smoke from the incense burns down they will move quietly and calmly into death, without having made an authentic Zen utterance of any kind. It is then Kyuho is patting on the back when he says, "You haven't grasped your late master's meaning." We must reflect deeply on those words.

Once Zen master Ungo of Kosho had an attendant take a pair of trousers to a monk who was living by himself in a grass hut. The monk refused the trousers, saying he already had the pair that he was born with. When Ungo was informed of the monk's reply, he sent the attendant back to ask the question, "What did you wear prior to your birth?" The monk was unable to answer. Later, the monk died, and when his body was cremated, relics were found among his ashes. When these were brought to Ungo, he said "I'd much rather

have had one phrase from him in response to that question I asked when he was living than ten bushels of relics from a dead man."

It is said that the relics found among the ashes of virtuous priests are produced as a natural result of meditation and wisdom they attained in their previous lives. Whenever a relic is discovered after a cremation even if it is only the size of a millet grain or mustard seed, there is a great rush of people, men and women, young and old, priests and laymen, crowding around to marvel at it and worship it with expressions of deep veneration. But doesn't Ungo say that ten bushels of such relics would not be worth a single phrase uttered while the monk was alive? What is this "one phrase" that it could be more esteemed than genuine Buddhist relics which everyone venerates so deeply? This is a question that baffled me for a long time.

After the priest Hoan had retired to the Shifuku-in, he received an invitation to come to the monastery at Kinzan from the abbot Moan Genso, who appointed him to the post of senior priest. One of the monks at the monastery, Ho Joza, was a man of penetrating insight. He would always be there when the abbot or senior priest was receiving students and could invariably get the best of an opponent by seizing the slightest opening and turning his thrusts aside with a sudden and swift attack.

One day, as Hoan was teaching students, Ho Joza came into the room. Hoan was speaking and was midway through a passage he was quoting from the *Hozo-ron*, "amid heaven and earth, in all the universe, there is here . . ." when Ho looked as though he wanted to say something. Hoan suddenly slapped him and drove him out of the room.

Actually, Ho had planned to interject a comment the moment Hoan had finished the quotation, and Hoan had anticipated him. Ho was convinced that Hoan was deliberately out to humiliate him. After Ho left Hoan's room, he returned to his place in the meditation hall and expired. When his body was cremated, villagers from the neighboring areas found some relics among his ashes. They took them and presented them to Hoan. Hoan held them up and said, "Ho Joza. Even if there had been ten bushels of these among your ashes, I'd set them aside. I just want that one turning word while you were alive!" With that, he threw the relics to the ground. They turned out to be merely bits of pus and blood.

An ancient said that "of the seventeen hundred eminent masters included in the *Records of the Lamp*, relics were found among the ashes of only fourteen. Of the eighty monks who appear in the *Biographies from the Groves of Zen*, relics were recovered from the ashes of only a few. Moreover, there are just two things our school holds essential: thorough attainment of self-realization and thorough mastery in instructing others. That means being armed with the fangs and claws that spur students onward by dissolving their attachments and breaking off their chains. Buddhists also call this 'transmitting the Dharma, ferrying people to the other shore.' Everything else is unimportant."

The teachers of our Zen school have in their possession moves and maneuvers which are hard to believe, hard to understand, hard to penetrate, and hard to realize. They can take someone whose mind seems dead, devoid of consciousness, and transform him into a bright-eyed monk of awesome vitality. We call these methods the fangs and claws of the Dharma cave. It is like when an old tiger gives a long, terrifying roar and emerges from the forest, throwing such fear into the rabbits, foxes, badgers and their kind that their livers petrify and their eyes fix in glassy stares and they wobble around on rubbery knees, piddling and shitting involuntarily. Why do they react that way? Because the tiger is armed with claws of steel and a shining set of golden fangs like razor-sharp swords. Without those weapons, tigers would be no different from other animals.

Hence these words by a Zen master of the past: "In the first year of the Kien-chung era (1101), I obtained at the quarters of a now-deceased friend a copy of Zen master Tozan Shusho's recorded sayings compiled by his disciple Fukugon Ryoga. It contained words and phrases of great subtlety and profundity - the veritable claws and fangs of the Dharma cave."

What the ancients regarded as lonely and desolate would be considered thriving prosperity by people today, and what people today regard as thriving prosperity would have been considered lonely and desolate by the ancients. How can our school have fallen into such decline?

I haven't been telling you all this in hopes of impressing you with the originality of my ideas. All of the matters I have related here are ones that greatly concerned my teacher Shoju Rojin. He was constantly grieving and lamenting over them when I studied with him thirty years ago. I can never tell people about them without tears streaming down my old cheeks and dampening my robe. Now, recalling how earnestly old Shoju was in entrusting his teaching to me, the way he told me how much he was counting on me, I feel an immediate need to run off and hide my worthlessness somewhere. I am divulging my true sentiments to you like this only because I fervently desire that you will expend every effort to make the true, penetrating wind blow once again through the patriarchal gardens, breathing vigorous and enduring strength into the fundamental principles of our school.

Finally, I ask that you overlook once more an old man's foolish grumblings, and thank you all for listening so patiently and attentively during these long talks. Please take care of yourselves.

In the fifth year of Genbun [1740], during the final third of the first month.

