

The Merging of Difference and Unity

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by Shiht'ou

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The Mind of the great sage of India
Is intimately communicated between east and west.
While human faculties may be keen or dull,
The Path has no southern or northern Ancestors.
The subtle Source is clear and bright;
The branching streams flow through darkness.
Grasping things is delusion;
According with Absolute is still not enlightenment.
All objects of the senses
Interact yet do not interact.
When interacting, they merge—
Otherwise, they keep their own place.
Forms vary in material and appearance;
Sounds differ in pleasant or harsh quality.
The word “dark” is used to merge high and low;
The word “light” is employed to distinguish pure and defiled.
The four elements return to their natures
As a child to its mother.
Fire heats, wind moves,
Water wets, earth is solid.
Eye and form, ear and sound,
Nose and smell, tongue and taste—

Each is independent of the other,
But these different leaves spread from the same root.
The whole process must return to the source;
The words “noble” and “base” are used relatively.
Within light there is darkness,
But don't take it as darkness.
Within darkness there is light,
But don't see it as light.
“Light” and “dark” are relative to one another
Like forward and backward steps.
Each thing appears to have its own intrinsic value,
Yet is related to everything else in function and position.
Phenomena fit Absolute like box and cover joining;
Absolute accords the relative like arrows meeting in air.
Hearing these words, you should Know the Source;
Don't set up standards of your own.
If you don't see the path as it meets your eyes,
How will you Know the Way as you walk?
Practice is not a matter of “far” or “near,”
But if you are confused, mountains and rivers block the way.
I humbly say to those who would awaken,
Don't waste time.