

# Space and Light

by

Billy Lee Harman

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For All and Each Anywhere

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never  
the twain shall meet, Till Earth and Sky stand  
presently at God's great Judgment Seat.

The Ballad of East and West  
Rudyard Kipling

from  
om to amen  
and back again

contents

**Time**

5

**Veda**

19

**Buddha**

85

**Dao**

138

**Life**

193

index

207

# Time

What is time? Is it visible or tangible or describable? Does it behave?

Can one imagine it or meaningfully measure it independent of anything else? Whether or not one can imagine what one imagines to be in what one calls the past, and whether or not one can imagine what one imagines to be in what one calls the future, how can one imagine what one calls the present? How long has it been anywhere?

Immediately, in an instant or what one calls a moment, doesn't it become what one imagines to be the past? And, while one may imagine what one calls moments in the past or the future, does one ever imagine instants? And, if one doesn't, how can the present have any size or any other characteristic of being?

And how does the future become the present?

So consider what one imagines to be events in time one calls either historic or prehistoric. Some persons one calls physicists say the universe was nothing and nowhere until it banged from a black hole 13.8 billion of what one calls years ago. But physicists don't say what in the hole banged or where the hole was or whence it came

That is, ultimately, they say much of nothing. And neither do physicists say whether time also began with the bang! And how is a hole anything, and in what was the hole, etc.?

Yet one says a year is the amount of time Earth takes to travel around the sun. So, with those physicists being human and saying the bang was before either the earth or the sun was anything anywhere, in those questions is the question of whether time was anywhere before anyone imagined Earth or the sun. And, of course, all of that leads to the question of whether anything is ever anything or anywhere if no one imagines it.

Yet plainly one imagines. So another question is whether or how whatever one imagines to be humans use time or whatever one imagines to be time. And, since one's imagining this book makes plain that one imagines doing something with time, one may as well imagine using time to imagine imagining.

So, whether or not those physicists imagine answering the question of when either time or imagining began, one may as well begin one's efforts at imagining using time to imagine imagining by imagining what people imagining themselves to be archaeologists imagine to be as near as they've come to reasonably imagining when imagining began.

What one calls paleontologists say life began on what one calls Earth at least 3.5 billion years ago, that what one calls animal life began on Earth about eight hundred million years ago, and that what one calls mammal life began on Earth about 215 million years ago.

Neither archaeologists nor paleontologists say what life is. But they say using tools began on earth about 2.6 million years ago. And what one calls anthropologists say that, though human ways of thinking began as long as 1.8 million years ago, human life didn't begin until about three hundred thousand years ago.

And they say language didn't begin until about half that long ago and that writing may not have begun until about 5.5 thousand years ago.

So, while considering that, consider that the “logy” part of the words “archeology” and “paleontology” and “anthropology” is an inflexion of a Greek word meaning “word”.

And then consider that some archeologists or paleontologists say use of tools began because of a famine, that it began with a predecessor of humanity picking up a stick or a stone and killing another animal to eat it, and that previously predecessors of humanity were herbivores.

And then consider that the word “abstract” originated from Greek words meaning “out of touch”. And then consider that tools are a way of manipulating while not touching what one manipulates. And then consider that, if all that anthropology and paleontology is true, what eventually became humans began killing while out of touch with what they killed about 2.45 million years before anyone developed words.

And then consider that writing words is a way humans manipulate other humans while touching nothing near them. And then consider the anthropology of killing in the 5.5 thousand years since the development of writing. But then consider the word “consider”.

With “con” originating from the Latin word “*com*” meaning “with” and “sider” originating from the Latin word “*sidus*” meaning “star”, consider how far out of touch the word “consider” is with one’s use of it, but then consider how time flies.

That is, consider how distant either the future or the past can be, if a moment has no size.

And then try estimating how many instants occurred between the beginning of language and the beginning of writing, and then try estimating how many moments have occurred during what one calls history, the time between the beginning of writing and now.

And then ask yourself whether time isn’t only abstract. The time between the beginning of writing and the invention of the

printing press was nearly five millennia, but the time between the invention of the printing press and the invention of broadcast radio was less than half of a millennium, and the time between that and the invention of broadcast television was less than a decade. So ask yourself whether pictures or sounds or writing put you more in touch with what they ostensibly express. And then ask yourself what relationship is between the answer to that question and time. And then again consider how one measures time.

Anthropologists say we began counting about a half millennium before we began writing, and the words or pictures or sounds we've come to call numbers were necessary for the development of radio and the invention of television, and they're also essential to what one calls telling time.

And they're also necessary for what one calls calculating or computing and have been necessary for the development of that from the development of various kinds of abacus nearly five millennia ago to the development of the first mainframe computer less than a century ago and continue to be necessary for it, if the practical meaning of the word "development" in that consideration is decreasing the amount of time one needs to calculate or compute, but another practical consideration is how much space one needs for calculating or computing.

So a question is how, in the time since the development of the first mainframe computer, we've developed electronic calculation into pocket calculators and on to combining printing and radio and television into cell phones we also use for calculating or computing.

That is, how did humans learn, in little more than one ordinary human lifetime, how to do in less time through a device one can carry in a pants pocket more calculating and computing and communicating than one previously could do by way of a five-ton mainframe computer, after needing about three hundred millennia to learn to write.



So try imagining how, in what one calls now, through the computer network one calls the World Wide Web, one can use that pocket device to communicate with people all over Earth, in what one calls seconds.

But, beyond the question of how one can do more calculating and communicating and computing in less time in what one calls now than one imagines or otherwise thinks one could in what one calls then, a question is why.

So consider again the relationship between time and killing. And, while considering that, consider the relationship between the word “abstract” and the words “conscience” and “compassion”. And, in that consideration, consider that the English words “conscience” and “compassion” originated from Latin words meaning “with” and “knowing” and “feeling”.

Anthropologists say humans have used bows and arrows for about 71 millennia but didn’t develop swords until about 3.5 millennia ago with the development of metallurgy. That development of weaponry put humans more closely in touch with the humans they killed than did bows and arrows, but the invention of the firearms one call guns was about a century after the invention of what one now calls gunpowder, about twelve centuries ago. And, though the invention of nuclear weapons was about a millennium after the invention of firearms, the time between the development of ten-kiloton atomic bombs and the development of hundred-megaton hydrogen bombs was less than a decade. And the tons in those measurements are the explosive power of a ton of TNT, which is many times the destructive power of a ton of gunpowder, etc.

So doesn’t considering all that make conscience and compassion fundamental to the question of why one would do such and also take us back to considering the development of the computing one calls information processing and why one does that?

But we haven't yet considered here the question of what information is. So let's consider how that question relates to the relationship between the development of what one calls information processing and what one imagines to be time. And let's consider how all of that relates to conscience and compassion.

The time between the invention of mainframe computers and the invention of desktop computers was about three decades, about the average difference in age between humans and their parents, what one calls a generation. And the invention of laptop computers was less than one decade after the invention of desktop computers, and the invention of smartphones was about two decades after that, and some of the first smartphones had video cameras. But in the conscience and compassion question is what one does with them.

And an answer is that most of us use them mainly for what one calls social networking. But, in the conscience and compassion question, the next question is how social is social networking. And, at least in words, with the word "contemporaneous" basically meaning "with in time", at the core of that question is the question of how or why productiveness and destructiveness develop simultaneously, contemporaneously".

So let's consider two more logies.

Etymology is the study of the origin of words. So examples of the use of the word "etymology" are saying that etymologically "abstract" means "out of touch" and that etymologically "etymology" means "following words". And, also etymologically, "epistemology" means "on standing before words".

But, ordinarily, one says "epistemology" designates the study of knowledge. And the study of logic is a component of epistemology, and the word "logic" ordinarily designates using words reasonably, and reasoning is epistemologically different in

different languages. And semantics, the study of the relationship between words and meaning, is also a component of epistemology.

But, ordinarily, all those words are synonymous. So, ordinarily, only what one calls epistemologists try to distinguish them from one another. But, practically, people literally religiously give epistemologists reasons to treat those words as though they aren't synonymous.

And, though one wouldn't ordinarily use the word "religiously" in that way, that makes it an excellent illustration of the answer to the question of what information is and also of how information relates to what one imagines to be time.

That is, religion is a practical application of abstraction, and attitudes toward time vary from religion to religion. So let's consider how attitudes toward time vary epistemologically among the six religions currently most popular. But first let's define each of those three words etymologically.

"Religion" etymologically means "reading again". "Currently" etymologically means "running" or "flowing". And "popular" etymologically means "of people".

But ordinarily, at least hypothetically, the phrase "religions currently most popular" designates what the largest number of people claim to believe is most importantly true at this moment in time.

But that etymological meaning of "religion" implies that one can't be religious if one either doesn't read or doesn't believe what others tell them they've read. And each of the six most popular religions has writings its claimants claim to believe, and English-speaking people claiming belief in the two most popular religions and the sixth most popular religion say that most important is believing in what those people ordinarily call God, and the English word "god" etymologically means "good". And English translations of the definitive writings of those three religions most fundamentally say God is what they say is good.

An etymologist of the World Wide Web says no relationship is between the English word “god” and the English word “good”, but that World Wide Web etymologist also says that what some heathens say what they call gods do isn’t good, and both of those assertions of his are illogical in any epistemology.

A relationship between the word “god” and the word “good” is what logicians call *prima facie*. That is, the relationship between the word “god” and the word “good” is that those two words look and sound alike, and “*prima facie*” is Latin for “first face”. So logicians use “*prima facia*” to refer to what’s obvious with no need for abstract explanation.

And “heathen” is a word English-speaking people claiming belief in any of those first and second and sixth most popular religions use to refer to people who don’t believe in them. And most people who speak no language other than English or German claim belief in one of those three religions. And the German language is the origin of the English words “god” and “good”.

And what that etymologist says of goodness is illogical in that it essentially claims that goodness is *prima facie* a function of one’s choice of religions. And neither the English word “god” nor the English word “good” has any etymology other than its German origin. And the German words “*gott*” and “*gut*” have no etymology.

So that etymologist prefers bigotry to epistemology or etymology. And, more directly regarding time, an epistemological difference among those six religions is variance in how one imagines it. Three of them regard it as a reward while the other three treat it as at most a linguistic convention.

Christian scripture, the writings defining Christianity, the most popular of those six religions, says that most important is believing in the son of God, in order to live eternally. And Islamic scripture, the writings defining Islam, the second most popular of those six religions, says it confirms Christian scripture but that

most important isn't belief in God's son but in submission to God, in order to live happily ever after. And Judaic scripture, the scripture defining Judaism, the least popular of those six religions, is most of Christian scripture but says nothing of eternal life, and yet Islamic scripture also says it confirms Judaic scripture.

And the scriptures of the other three of those six religions say in various ways that all differences are delusion and that thus all is one and eternal anyway.

Scripture of Hinduism, the third most popular religion, is a compilation of writings constituting a labyrinthine metaphor saying that. Scripture of Buddhism, the fourth most popular religion, is compilations of less metaphorical writings saying more directly how to become conscious of that unity. And the one short writing that's the definitive scripture of Daoism, the fifth most popular religion and the only religion with no direct historical connection to any of the other five of the six, says more plainly than do the scriptures of either Hinduism or Buddhism that the abstraction of words initiated the schizoid delusions, uses government as a metaphor for differences one must obviate to return to consciousness of the primal unity, and demonstrates how semantic relationships make semantic differences illogical. So, however directly or indirectly, fundamental to each of those three religions is the notion that abstraction is temporary. So consider the ordinary use of the word "temporary".

Etymologically it refers to time in general. But ordinarily it refers to relatively brief periods of time and thus effectually to the insubstantiality of time. So, considering the question of how eternity is or isn't semantically different from timelessness, a question is how Hinduism or Buddhism or Daoism is different from Judaism or Christianity or Islam epistemologically.

And that question returns one to the question of how numbers are different from other words. And, because one calls Judaism and Christianity and Islam dualistic while one calls

Hinduism and Buddhism and Daoism monistic, that question in this context is literally binary. And, in words of what one calls a western person who grew up in what one calls the far east, that question is of how east and west can meet at God's great judgement seat.

Those geographical references are because the three dualistic religions originated in what one calls the middle east and came to dominate the theology and epistemology of what one calls the west while the three monistic religions originated in what one calls the far east and largely stayed there. But the theological difference between dualism and monism is that fundamental to the dualistic religions is the notion that God is separate from his creation while fundamental to the monistic religions is that all is one and only imagines separateness. And Hindu scripture expresses that most succinctly.

The basic premise of Hinduism is that the *atman* is *brahman*. "*Atman*" is a Sanskrit word meaning "self" and can refer to the physical self or the spiritual self or both as often does the English word "self". And "*brahman*" is a Sanskrit word meaning "expanse" that Hindus use to designate all that ever is or was or shall be.

So, in Hinduism, *brahman* is both eternal and eternity, but it's also each entity it imagines to be separate from any other entity it imagines, etc. But what claimants to the three most popular dualistic religions call God not only is a self separate from his creation but also feels and thinks toward and of separate selves he creates in ways humans feel and think toward and of themselves and each other and other entities of various sorts. But, etymologically, the English word "god", in translations of the scriptures of each of those six religions, is a misrepresentation.

Hebrew is the language of Judaic scripture while Arabic is the language of Islamic scripture. And both Hebrew and Arabic are Semitic languages, and the word "god" in English translations

of Judaic scripture is generally a translation of the Hebrew word “*el*” while, generally in English translations of Islamic scripture, it’s a translation of the Arabic word “*allah*”, and those words are cognates. Both “*el*” and “*allah*” etymologically mean “above”.

But the language of the scripture exclusive to Christianity is Greek. And the word “god” in English translations of that scripture is generally a translation of the Greek word “*theos*”. And, etymologically, the Greek word “*theos*” means “gleam”.

And that’s by way of Indo-European development of forms of the Sanskrit word “*deva*” as is the English word “deity”. That is, etymologically, neither does the Sanskrit word “*deva*” mean “good”. Both “*theos*” and “*deva*” mean “gleam” or “glow”.

But, in Hindu scripture, neither does the word “*deva*” refer directly to *brahman*. It refers to metaphorical personifications of various entities Hindus think are good or have good effects. So, when Hindus worship *devas*, they’re metaphorically worshipping the goodness of *brahman* and thus ultimately of all.

And they worship them only because they’re easier to imagine than is the expansive totality of *brahman*. So, effectually, worshipping *devas* is but stepping stones along the way to returning to consciousness of the primal unity. And therein is the fundamental epistemological discord between monism and dualism.

Claimants to the dualistic religions, failing to understand that claimants to the monistic religions think everything is everything, call monistic worship of *devas* polytheism.

But, etymologically, “polytheism” means “many gleams”. And so one wanders in one’s delusion of differences, and perhaps the most abstract expression of Christianity in Christian scripture is by one of four persons Christians call evangelists, authors of the four of the books of Christian scripture ostensibly telling the story of the origin of Christianity. And, etymologically, “evangelist” means “good messenger”.

And Christians call those four books gospels. And, etymologically, “gospel” means “good story”. And John, the evangel who wrote that extraordinarily abstract gospel, begins his version of that story by saying that in the beginning was the word and that the word was with *Theos* or *El* and that the word was *Theos* or *El*. And he says *Theos* or *El* made all things and that no one made anything *Theos* or *El* didn’t make and that life was in *Theos* or *El* and that life was the light of men. And, later in his gospel, he expresses the basic precept of Christianity.

He says *Theos* or *El* loved the world so much that he gave the only son he begat for whoever believes in the son not to perish but to have everlasting life. So, in the Greek of that gospel or the Hebrew of much of his audience, John etymologically says a gleam or the above produced everything in order for everyone who believes in the only son the gleam physically fathered to live eternally. But he extends that abstraction into saying the gleam or the above and the son and the word and light and life are all one person.

Of course, fundamentally, that extension is a monistic expression saying all is a gleam and the above and everything else one may or may not imagine, but John rambles on to attribute to that composite entity a separate name and to say the entity to which that name refers descended from a Judaic king Judaic scripture says will resurrect the kingdom of Judah, and that notion is why Judaic scripture is most of Christian scripture.

But, though Judaic scripture doesn’t extend that story beyond resurrecting the kingdom, Christian scripture extends it into resurrecting for eternity everyone who either hasn’t disobeyed what Judaic scripture calls the above while Christian scripture calls it a gleam, or repents any such disobedience and agrees with both Judaic scripture and exclusively Christian scripture, before dying.

And John further extends that abstract particularizing into calling his separate self the disciple of the resurrector’s whom the



resurrector loved. And such fragmentation pervades John's gospel and also the other gospels and the other Christian scripture. So, though Christian scripture promises eternal life, it waddles in the finite.

And so do people one calls scientists in what they call nuclear physics. And, also beginning with a word, they do that literally particularly. But that word is "atom".

"Atom", etymologically, means "indivisible". And nuclear physicists, observing that things they call physical are divisible into smaller things they call physical, obviously illogically hypothesized divisibility to be finite. So they selected the word "atom" to designate a particle of which no other particle is a part.

But, after discovering a particle they thought was indivisible and calling it an atom, they discovered that what they came to call electrons and protons and neutrons were parts of it and that different atoms had different numbers of each and thus were neither quantitatively nor qualitatively unique.

But, etymologically oxymoronically calling those particles subatomic, they continued their quest through many other hypotheses and discoveries and words. And, while, etymologically, the word "science" means "knowing" or "discerning", they continue to ignore the logic that their quest must be eternal, that divisibility of anything is hypothetically possible, and that thus their quest is logically impossible. And, extending that absurdity into what some call the big bang theory, some of them now are calling what they hypothesize to have banged the God particle.

But scientists also recognize or theorize that each entity or event is both a result of a cause and a cause of other actualities. And logic tells us that, if that hypothesis or theory or observation is actual, each event or entity is a cause of all. And that makes time and all else at least etymologically irrelevant.

Literally effectually, if each cause or effect is a cause and an effect of other causes and effects, all must already be or be about to be. So, while, logically, one might hypothesize that hypothesizing to be illogically redundantly perpetually eternal, one might also logically hypothesize that it's only now. So one may as logically suppose that both time and particularity are only a momentary imagining.

So, in the same way, one might also suppose that of space, and that would make space no different from time, but that's only logical. And, though what one calls scientists haven't hypothesized divisibility of space into particles, they've coined the word "ether" to imagine space to be something other than nothing. And, whether or not any word was in the beginning, logic doesn't answer the question of from what came that word.

Or either where or when.

And Christian scripture also says an evangel other than the one saying that in the beginning was the word says the person that evangelists say is the son of the gleam or the above while also being much else directs that we not look outside our self for the kingdom of the gleam or the above. And the definitive scripture of Daoism directs not looking outside one's window for the way of the sky. So both quite plainly say the *atman* is *brahman*.

And, historically, scripture of Hinduism is the oldest of the definitive scriptures of those half dozen religions. But, whatever or wherever one imagines time to be, one has all those scriptures in the instant one calls now. And one can also find that information in the scriptures of the others of those six religions. And in countless other places. Etcetera.

And, etymologically, the word "information" *prima facie* refers only to forming within!

So, ultimately or effectually or actually, what's the difference?

## Veda

*Veda* is knowledge. Or “*veda*”, in the Vedic dialect of the Sanskrit language, means “knowledge”. Or both or neither.

Whether either or neither or both, the *Vedas* are three or four compilations of writings claimants to the religion most people call Hinduism call their religion’s scripture.

The word “*hindu*” means “river”. Also, in its inflection “*indus*”, it’s the name of a river along which the ancestors of the founders of the Hindu religion settled before their descendants founded their religion. But the descendants who founded the religion founded it further east along the Ganges river, and adherents to that religion who are native to the land where it originated call the religion *Sanatana Dharma*, with “*Sanatana*” being Vedic Sanskrit for “eternal” while “*dharma*” is Vedic Sanskrit for “law”.

So, basically, the *Vedas* ostensibly define eternal law.

But Hindus call the parts of the *Vedas* they say most clearly define that law the *Upanishads*. “*Upanishad*” is Sanskrit for “sitting near” and refers to students sitting near teachers to learn what the teachers have to teach. And Hindus also call the *Upanishads* *Vedanta*, “*vedanta*” being Sanskrit for “end of the *Vedas*”, as in the English idiom “to what end”.

So it doesn’t refer to the last part of the *Vedas* but to their primary purpose. But some Hindus call some writings that are no

part of the *Vedas upanishads* while many call thirteen *upanishads* the *Mukhya Upanishads*. “*Mukhya*” is Sanskrit for “principal”.

So, while many Hindus continue to debate which *upanishads* are most definitive, most of them accept that the *Mukhya Upanishads* are the most likely to be the most definitive.

So *veda* is knowledge, while the *Vedas* are four compilations of Vedic words, while the *Mukhya Upanishads* are the parts of the *Vedas* most Hindus say are the most Vedic of those compilations of Vedic words.

The *Vedas* have names. They’re the *Rigveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Samaveda*, and the *Atharvaveda*. But those compilations have shifted, as what one calls space and light shifts, through what one calls time.

And many scholars say the *Atharvaveda* is a kind of receptacle for any later Vedic writing that may occur and seem especially definitive. And some of the *Upanishads* are also compilations and have also shifted in the same way. And some Hindus say some of the thirteen this book presents aren’t *mukhya*.

So, considering the possibility that knowledge doesn’t depend on particularities, this book doesn’t present the *Upanishads* as though their meaning depends on their context in any particular Vedic compilation..

That is, hopefully, the remainder of this section of this book summarizes an approximation of the dominant generality of the notion Hindus call *upanishad*.

The hope is that it at least refers to a generally Vedic notion of *veda*.

The oldest and longest of the thirteen *Mukhya Upanishads* is the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* .

“*Brhadaranyaka*” is Sanskrit referring to a great forest, and Hindus generally say it refers in that title to what one might learn

sitting near a teacher in relative seclusion in a forest, rather than more publicly.

As each of the *Vedas* most basically says each is all, in this *upanishad* the head of a gift horse is also dawn, while the horse's other parts are also other things, entities of several other sorts, not excepting time.

And the horse, also being a horse, carries all.

But, in this *upanishad*, all didn't always imagine itself to be anything one might call each. So, in the beginning of imagining, it imagined death to cover the nothing that was all that all imagined. And, with this *upanishad* saying hunger is only death, in it hunger also covers that nothing.

So death in hunger imagines a mind to give it an *atman*. But then it imagines liturgical recitation to effect that process. And, through the exertion of that recitation, water springs from it. And it also copulates with hunger to imagine another *atman*. And such imagining continues.

Yet, in the beginning of all that being, all the different beings are only food for death. But, because each of the different beings death imagines are nothing other than parts of death, they're also hunger. So they hunger for death and each other as death hungers for them.

So death decides to swallow the *atman* it's imagined.

But, because the *atman* is also words, when death opens its mouth to do that, the *atman* cries out with speech. And death, deciding killing the *atman* would deprive death of its food, decides to imagine something bigger. But, in its exertion to do that, it exhausts the breath it's imagined for the *atman*.

So the *atman* begins to bloat. But, with death's mind remaining in the *atman*, it imagines another desire. And that desire is that the *atman* be a worthy gift.

So it becomes the gift horse. But, deciding the horse should be free of its corpse, death lets it run free for a year. And

then it releases it in fire to be a gift to all the good entities it's imagined.

But another story in this *upanishad* is of a personification it doesn't say death creates. And, though that effectually makes it a personification of life, it has another name. It's name is Prajapati.

And it has children, some good and some evil, with the good ones older than the evil ones. The story personifies all of them and calls the good entities *devas* and the evil ones *asuras*. But it also calls some of the *devas* speech, breath, sight, hearing, and mind.

In the story, those five together ask each separately to sing for them what they call the high chant, and each does. And by that, while keeping for itself what's pleasant in what's particular to each, each procures for the five what's useful in what's particular to each. So the evil entities, thinking the good entities will overcome them with that singing, rush at each and riddle it with the evil that's what's disagreeable in what's particular to each.

But another *deva*, breath in the mouth, is present. And the five also ask it to sing the high chant for them. And the *asuras* can't riddle breath in the mouth.

Instead, like a clod of clay smashing against a rock, they shatter in all directions and perish. And, also driving from the five the evil that's death, breath in the mouth chases it to the edges of Earth and carries the *devas* beyond the reach of that evil, acquiring the name Dur, meaning "far". So the narrator of this story says those who know that will prosper and that those who hate those who know it will come to ruin. And the narrator also says that, to avoid confronting evil and death, one shouldn't visit strangers or travel to border countries.

But this story also says freedom from death made each of those personifications of vital functions, while remaining the vital functions, and also being other entities. It says they became fire

and wind, the sun and the directional quarters, and the moon. So, of course, that's a metaphor for all being all.

But, also in that story, breath in the mouth acquires a supply of food by singing. Then the other entities, telling it the world is only food, ask breath in the mouth to share the food. And it tells them to gather around.

And then the story says that thus food one eats through breath in the mouth satisfies others, making it a metaphor for political, familial, and priestly human leadership, and it extends it into a means of acquiring material wealth.

Also, in this story, a song asks for leadership from the unreal to the real and says the unreal is death while the real is immortality. But this story also asks that soma, a ritual drink and a metaphorical personification of the moon, shatter one's head apart if one sings the high chant by any means other than breath. And this and other Vedic stories call that drink a king.

But, throughout the *Vedas*, one's head's shattering apart is a metaphor for failing to know all is all. That is, metaphorically, throughout the *Upanishads*, what one imagines to be differences is only one's head shattering into imagining them. And that story of death creating others suggests that one does that out of loneliness.

But also, in this story and other Vedic stories, one tries to repair the shattering. And, in various ways, various Vedic stories say men imagining women or women imagining men next try to unite with what they imagine. But, also often in the *Vedas*, entities one imagines imagine they're better than one another. And then they try to conquer one another. And then they fear one another.

So, in the *Upanishads*, the shattering perpetuates itself. But their basic theme is that, if our heads don't shatter apart, we'll know we're all always all. And then we'll know that fearing anything is fearing oneself.

So then we'll know that knowing oneself is knowing that nothing, not wives or children or monetary wealth or anything else

we could imagine, is better than one's self. That is, one would realize that each particular person is the universe, the expanse of all. That is, one would realize the basic premise of Hinduism, that the *atman* is *brahman*.

So those stories of death and the vital functions lay the groundwork for Vedic metaphorical expression of that premise.

And, in the *Upanishads*, both some uniting and some shattering is systematically metaphorical and recurs throughout them, and one systematic Vedic metaphor is the deific personification of the various vital functions in the story of breath in the mouth uniting with the name Prana, with "*prana*" being a Sanskrit word for "breath".

But another systematic Vedic metaphor is what one calls the caste system. And in this *upanishad* is a creation story exemplifying that by personifying *brahman*. It begins by saying that in the beginning this world was only Brahman and that he then imagined all else. It says he included in that development a ruling power superior to and surpassing himself to rule over the deities. And then it says he developed the four main castes.

In it Brahman imagines priestly persons, political persons, trade persons, and working persons with no specialization, with the Sanskrit designations "*brahmin*", "*kshatriya*", "*vaisya*", and "*sudra*". The *brahmins* may also be academics, while the *kshatriyas* may be warriors or royal descendancies, while the *vaisya* caste includes artisans and farmers and other land holders. And the *sudras* are anyone serving the other castes.

But, telling of *brahman* imagining the ruling power, this story says that's why *brahmins* prostrate themselves to *kshatriyas* at royal anointings. It says they're bowing to the ruling power in them, but it also says the priestly power is the womb of the ruling power, and that accordingly a king returns in the end to the priestly power however high he may rise. So neither is this story an exception to the generality that *veda* is realization of unity.



But the shattering that's the caste system has shattered further into subdivisions. And, in some Vedic stories, the initial castes are a component of *dharma* and are hereditary. And, accordingly, some say each person must do the work of the person's parents.

So, while continuing to call *veda* words saying all is all, *upanishads* also call Vedic the words asserting that the notion of caste is *dharma*. And, through such processes, they also personify *brahman* as disparately as they personify the vital functions. So the shattering goes on.

Not only do *upanishads* personify *brahman* separately as vital functions and also as the unification of the vital functions into Prana, but also they personify the sun and the moon and fire and countless other entities both as separate entities and as *brahman*, and they also refer to *brahman* as though it's a separate person while continuing to call it supreme.

And a story in this *upanishad* combines its stories of the components of Prana into a story treating wind and fire and the sun similarly.

And *upanishads* also metaphorically include metaphorical rites and rituals in *dharma*. And, in the *Upanishads*, *brahmins* bicker with one another on questions ranging from what's *dharma* to which entity or entities one should worship as though they're *brahman*. And, while none directly deny that *brahman* is all, they bicker about whether parts of it are mortal or immortal or still or moving and about which part is most fundamentally or vitally real.

That is, essentially, they bicker about what words are Vedic. But the heads of some *brahmins* in the *Upanishads* shatter less than do others. So, while some offer alternatives to the shattering, others make themselves metaphors for the shattering.

But an example of an alternative to such bickering in the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* is a story of a *brahmin* telling one of his two wives how to follow him into the expanse.

The husband's name is Yajnavalkya. And Maitreyi, the wife he instructs, considers *veda* while his other wife spends most of her time in activities men of that time and place called particular to women. And the story begins with Yajnavalkya telling Maitreyi he's leaving what the story calls this place and asking her to let him make a settlement between her and his wife this story says is less Vedic. But, being Vedic, Maitreyi asks Yajnavalkya whether possessing the entire world full of wealth would make her immortal.

So he tells her it wouldn't, that she's always been dear to him, and that her asking that has made her more dear to him. But then he tells her holding any person or other entity dear is only holding the *atman* dear and that the *atman* is *brahman*. And he does that through various metaphors before ending them by saying that after death is no awareness. But Maitreyi says that closing assertion of his has completely confused her. So he points out the dilemma of duality.

He tells her that, to be aware of any entity, one must imagine it to be separate from oneself. And, effectually pointing out that all is *brahman* and that *brahman* is all, he asks how one can perceive the perceiver. And that closes the story.

And, in this *upanishad*, a metaphor for the expanse of the perceiver is that the earth, the waters, fire, wind, the sun, the directional quarters, the moon, lightning, thunder, space, the law, truth, humanity, and the *atman* are the honey of all being, the immortal, *brahman*, and the whole, and that thus the *atman* is the lord and king of all being, that all beings, all *devas* and worlds, and all breaths and *atmans* are like the fastening of all spokes to the hub and rim of a wheel, and that such is what seers see.

And, in this *upanishad*, before Yajnavalkya teaches such to Maitreyi and passes from this place, he teaches it to other *brahmins* and to at least one *kshatriya*. And, in one story, he teaches other *brahmins* in the presence of that *kshatriya*.

The *kshatriya*, a king whose name is Janaka, decides to perform a Vedic ritual with lavish gifts for the officiating *brahmin*, but many *brahmins* flock there for that. So, to discover which of them is most Vedic, Janaka ties ten pieces of gold between the horns of each of a thousand cows and tells the *brahmins* that the most Vedic of them may drive away the cows. And Yajnavalkya tells a student of his to drive the cows away.

So the other *brahmins* ask him whether he's actually the most Vedic. But, replying that he bows to the one who's most Vedic, he asks whether all of them aren't there for the cows. Then, in the presence of the king, several of the *brahmins* asks him Vedic questions, but most of the questioning is pedantic references to Vedic metaphors, and Yajnavalkya replies accordingly.

He ends one of the *brahmins'* questioning by telling him one's good action becomes something good and that one's bad action becomes something bad. And, after ending another's by telling him what he later tells his wife of perceiving, he ends another's by telling him all desires are the same and that thus a *brahmin* should stop being a pundit and try to live as a child and then stop living as a child and become a *muni*, that he'll be a *brahmin* when he stops all of that, and that then he'll always be a *brahmin*. "Muni" is a Sanskrit word for a wise or Vedic person.

So, essentially, Yajnavalkya says *veda*, while being wisdom beyond being either priestly or childlike, nevertheless literally guarantees the permanence of one's being a priestly person, and he tells each of those questioners that all other than what he tells them to end their questioning is grief.

But next a female *brahmin* questions him. Her name is Gargi Vacaknavi, and her first question of Yajnavalkya is on what air is woven back and forth, and he tells her it's woven on the intermediate worlds. But then she asks him on what those worlds are woven, and that cycle of questioning continues through the worlds of a particular kind of joyous spiritual being *vedas* call

*gandharvas* and on through the worlds of the sun and the moon and the stars, on through the worlds of the *devas* and the worlds of the chief of the *devas*, on through the worlds of Prajapati, and finally to the worlds of *brahman*.

Then she asks on what are woven the worlds of *brahman*. But, of course, Gargi's questions and Yajnavalkya's answers are a metaphor for the illusion of differences. So, of course, when Gargi asks Yajnavalkya on what the worlds of *brahman* are woven back and forth, he tells her that her head will shatter apart, if she asks too many questions.

So then she falls silent as have the other questioners.

But a *brahmin* who's a prominent Vedic metaphor for one's head shattering apart ignores that to ask Yajnavalkya whether he knows the string that's the inner controller who controls from within this world and the next and all beings, the string by which a man knows *brahman*, the worlds, the deities, the *Vedas*, the spirits, the *atman*, and all.

And that questioner, whose name is Uddalaka Aruni, tells Yajnavalkya he knows that string and that, if Yajnavalkya doesn't know it but drives away the cows rightly belonging to *brahmins*, his head will shatter apart.

Yajnavalkya says he knows it. But Aruni says anyone can say he knows. So then, first in regard to the sphere of the spiritual and next in regard to beings, Yajnavalkya goes through a long list of entities and says Aruni's *atman* within that's present within but different from each entity, whose *atman* is each entity and controls it, while the entities don't know it, is the controller and immortal.

And he says it sees and hears and thinks and perceives but can't be seen or heard or thought or perceived. And, after saying only it can see or hear or think or perceive, he tells Aruni more directly that Aruni's *atman* is the inner controller. And then, after Yajnavalkya tells Aruni that all else is grief, Aruni falls silent.

But then Gargi speaks again. She tells the other *brahmins* there that she'll ask Yajnavalkya two questions. And she tells them that, if he's able to answer those two questions, none of them will be able to defeat him in Vedic debate.

Then she tells Yajnavalkya she's rising to challenge him with the two questions as a fierce warrior of that kingdom, stringing his bow and taking two deadly arrows in hand, would challenge an enemy.

And then she demands that he answer the questions. And he tells her to ask, and the first of the two questions is on what are woven back and forth the things above the sky and below the earth and in between, and the things people here call past and present and future. And he replies that they're woven on space.

And, granting him honor, she accepts that answer. But her second question is on what then is space woven back and forth. And his answer is that it's woven on the imperishable.

He tells her the imperishable is indescribable and intangible while nothing is or acts other than by its command. And he says that, were a man not knowing that to make offerings or perform rituals or austerities for many thousands of years, all of that offering and sacrifice would come to nothing. But he says a man departing this world after coming to know the imperishable is as expansive as one says *brahmins* are.

So, basically, he tells her what he's to tell Maitreyi of perception. And he ends his answer by saying that more concisely, and then Gargi tells the other *brahmins* there that they should consider themselves fortunate if they escape Yajnavalkya by only giving him their respect, and then she again falls silent. But, ignoring her as did Aruni, one more *brahmin* there questions Yajnavalkya.

He begins by asking him the number of deific entities. Yajnavalkya tells him they're three and three hundred and three

and three thousand. But then the questioner asks him how many they are really.

So, through more questions, Yajnavalkya replies with successively smaller numbers until he reaches one. But then the questioner asks who then are the three and three hundred and three and three thousand. So Yajnavalkya says they're but the deific powers.

But then the questioner asks to whom Yajnavalkya's other numbers refer. So Yajnavalkya names some categories of deific personifications, designations for individual entities in the categories, and what they personify. And, in response to the question of who's the one deific entity, Yajnavalkya replies that it's Prana and *brahman* and all.

But the questioner persists. He tells Yajnavalkya that, were a man to know the person whose abode is Earth, whose world is fire, whose light is the mind, and who's the goal of every *atman*, he'd be a man who truly knows. So Yajnavalkya says he knows that person and that the person isn't other than the *atman*.

But then he asks the questioner which *deva* that person prefers, and the questioner says he prefers the immortal, and that cycle continues. The questioner asks the identity of more personifications of more entities, and Yajnavalkya identifies each entity and asks what personification the entity prefers, until the questioner says the *deva* the personification of the entity one associates with a son prefers is Prajapati. Then Yajnavalkya calls the questioner unfortunate and says he fears the other brahmins have made him their dupe.

But then the questioner asks him what formulation of *brahman* has enabled him to outtalk the other brahmins. And Yajnavalkya replies that he know the special directions and their personifications and foundations. So that begins another cycle.

But it's all a scattering and shattering of metaphors for all being all. So, when the questioner asks Yajnavalkya the

foundation of the heart, Yajnavalkya calls him an imbecile and asks him how the heart's foundation can be anywhere other than in one's *atman*. And he says that, if it were anywhere else, dogs or birds would eat it or tear it. But then he asks the questioner what's the foundation of his *atman*. And the questioner says its foundation is exhalation.

So that leads to a cycle of questions regarding ways and sorts of breathing, but Yajnavalkya ends that cycle by returning to the question that initiated it, the question of the foundation of the *atman*.

He says all one can say of it is that it isn't anything else.

He then scatters more metaphors. But he ends that scattering by telling the questioner that, if he can't tell him who's the person who carries off the other persons and brings them back and rises above them, his head will shatter apart. And the questioner doesn't know that person.

So not only does his head shatter apart, but also robbers steal his bones, thinking them something else.

And then Yajnavalkya invites the other *brahmins* there to question him separately or all together, or to have him question them separately or all together, but then they dare to do neither.

So he questions them with some verses, a metaphorical poem ending with the assertion that perception and bliss and *brahman*, the gift of all who give the highest good, awaits those who know it, and stand firm

And other stories in this *upanishad* are of Yajnavalkya teaching Janaka.

In one Yajnavalkya begins by asking Janaka what other *brahmins* have told him. Janaka replies by naming six *brahmins* and saying each of five of them told him *brahman* is a different one of the entities in the story of breath in the mouth and that another told him *brahman* is the heart. Yajnavalkya, agreeing with the six but telling Janaka each was a one-legged Brahmin, tells him

what they told him was like saying one has a father and a mother. And then, effectually saying *brahman* is everything, he tells Janaka how the heart and those five other entities relate to other entities. So Janaka steps down from his throne and asks Yajnavalkya to teach him.

Then Yajnavalkya refers to some Vedic metaphors regarding the heart and the chief of the *devas*. But then he elaborates further on how the vital functions in the story of breath in the mouth relate to and are identical to other entities. And, after saying again that the *atman* isn't anything other than what it is and further elaborating on that, he tells Janaka that Janaka has attained freedom from fear.

After each segment of that teaching Janaka offers to reward Yajnavalkya with cows and bulls and elephants. But, when Yajnavalkya tells him he's attained freedom from fear, Janaka asks that the freedom from fear be Yajnavalkya's also. And then he tells Yajnavalkya that he and the people of his kingdom are at Yajnavalkya's service.

And next in this *upanishad* another story of Yajnavalkya teaching Janaka meanders through more scattering and shattering of metaphors and questions. But personifications of *prana* and the other vital functions separately or together as Prana and of the personification of life Prajapati are prominent throughout it, and Yajnavalkya also tells Janaka a hierarchy of bliss from the bliss of humans to that of *brahman*, and Janaka keeps asking for more teaching and giving him more cows for it. But all of that story, be it hypothetical or observational, ultimately argues that all is all and that all differences are illusions.

And an observation prominent in that arguing is that every cause both has and is an effect, and the primary significance of that in it is that the ubiquity of cause and effect is evidence that all is interrelated, that ultimately each and all are the cause and effect of all and each, and that thus all creates itself, thus being all.



And, in this *upanishad*, all the stories of Yajnavalkya and Janaka are between two versions of the story of Yajnavalkya teaching Maitreyi before leaving this world of differences.

But another story of Janaka is an extension of the use of phonetics as a metaphor for the notion that all is all. The phonetic metaphors are mainly assertions that entities whose names sound the same are thus otherwise the same, but this story is a brief extension of a series of such homophonic metaphors into Janaka asking another *brahmin* how the *brahmin* turned himself into a draft elephant, if he knew a prominent Vedic hymn to the sun on which this story also elaborates. And the *brahmin*'s reply is that he didn't know the hymn's mouth.

He says its mouth is like fire in that it burns however much one puts into it. He says that, in the same way, however many bad deeds a man knowing that may do, he eats them up and emerges clean and pure, and free from aging and death. And that story ends with a poem praising the sun as a metaphor for all and specifically death, wind, ashes, the mind, deeds, fire, and the syllable "om" basically meaning "all" in the *Vedas*.

But other stories in the *Upanishads* focus on earthly rewards one may receive through *veda*. And one in this *upanishad* is of the vital functions in the story of breath in the mouth vying with one another to know which is the most vital. But that story's also a story of unity.

In it, in reply to the functions' asking *brahman* which of them is most excellent, *brahman* tells them that the most excellent is the one in whose absence the others fail to operate.

As each function departs separately, the others operate as they did before its departure, but none of them operates in the absence of *prana*. So, though each declares its excellence by identifying itself with qualities or powers or abilities particular to it, each declares to *prana* that those qualities shall be *prana*'s also. So, effectually, each identifies itself with *prana*.

So, effectually, they call breath all, making this story essentially a story of *prana* becoming the metaphor for the vital functions together becoming the metaphorical personification of *brahman* one calls Prana, but this story also adds semen to the mix of vital functions. And, also in this story, *prana* or Prana asks what will be its food and clothing, and the vital functions reply that all that's there is *prana*'s or Prana's food, down to dogs and worms and insects and flies. And they say water is its clothing.

And that story ends with the assertion that, if a man knows in that way that *prana* or Prana is food, nothing he eats or accepts is improper food and that thus wise men, thinking they're assuring that one doesn't leave *prana* or Prana naked, sip water both while preparing to eat and after eating.

But that story begins by saying that, when a man knows the best and the greatest, he becomes the best and the greatest among his own people. Next it says the best and the greatest is *prana*, but next it says the man can also become the best and the greatest among others, if he know that and desires such. So, while being a sort of story of uniting, it begins with materialistic shatterings.

So, appropriately, next in this *upanishad* is a story of Uddalaka Aruni, the *brahmin* who most prominently serves as a metaphor for the metaphor of one's head shattering apart, and this story is typical of Vedic references to Aruni.

It refers to worldly needs or desires while questioning their value, and it also questions the scattering of metaphors, but it does it by parody.

In it Aruni's son comes into the presence of a king. The king asks the son whether his father has taught him. And the son replies affirmatively.

Referring to some Vedic metaphors, the king asks the son whether he knows them, and the son says he knows none of them.

The king invites him to stay. But the son runs home to his father and berates him for having told him he's taught him. So Aruni asks the son what's troubling him.

The son questions the legitimacy of the king but tells his father the king asked him five questions and that he could answer none of them.

So Aruni asks the son what were the five questions.

Neither does Aruni know any of the answers. So he asks the son to go with him to the king for them to live with the king as students. But the son tells him to go by himself.

He does. And the king, treating him as a guest, calls him reverend and tells him he'll grant him a wish. So Aruni asks the king to tell him what he told the son.

The king, telling him that's a spiritual wish, asks him to make a human sort of wish. But Aruni tells the king the king knows Aruni already has his share of gold, cows, horses, slave girls, blankets, and clothing. Telling him not to be stingy, but to give him more than that, he asks him to give him the infinite and boundless. The king tells him that for that he must ask in the proper Vedic manner. And Aruni does and lives there as a student.

So the king instructs him in a Vedic ritual using fire as a metaphor for *brahman* with soma springing from it, deities making offerings to soma, and calling soma King Soma. So, having *veda*, one would know Aruni gains no more from his asking for the teaching than he's gained by his worldly wealth. And the ritual ends with a recitation of a disciplic succession.

The succession begins by listing Yajnavalkya as a disciple of Aruni's. And, at each step in the succession, the narrator says a withered stump would grow new branches and new leaves were one to pour onto it the mixture of butter and other ingredients the king specifies in his description of the ritual. And the recitation closes with the assertion that one shouldn't disclose it to anyone who isn't a son or a student.

So this story is also a parody both of the caste system and of the notion that one can learn *veda* only from a *brahmin* and not otherwise.

And, though that assertion ends the story, it doesn't end the parody. Next in this *upanishad*, after instructions for another ritual offering, is a brief story in which Prajapati asks himself why he doesn't produce a base for semen and creates woman. Then, extending from himself a long stone for pressing soma, Prajapati copulates with her and impregnates her with the stone.

And then this *upanishad* uses the woman's genitals as a metaphor for a ritual and says a man copulating with that knowledge obtains a world as great as would a man performing the soma ritual, and that the man appropriates the merit of the woman with whom he copulates, but that the woman appropriates the man's merit if he lacks that knowledge.

And next this *upanishad* says knowing that made Aruni and other *brahmins* exclaim that *brahmins* and their descendants who engage in sexual intercourse while not knowing that depart this world bereft of both virility and merit.

It also says that, when a woman has changed her clothing after her menstrual period, she's the most auspicious of women. And it says that accordingly one should approach that splendid woman and invite her to copulate. But it says that, if she refuses consent, the inviter should bribe her.

It says that, if she continues to refuse, he should beat her with a stick or his fists and overpower her and tell her that, with his virility and splendor, he takes away her splendor. It says that, if she consents to having sexual intercourse with him, he should tell her he confers splendor on her with his virility and splendor. And then, with graphic details, this story treats sexual intercourse as a ritual with particular words and ways to assure or prevent pregnancy.

Next it describes a ritual to take away the breath, sons, livestock, sacrifices, good works, hopes, and expectations of one's wife's lover's, if she has a lover the performer of the ritual hates. And it says that, if a *brahmin* knowing that curses a man, the man will depart this world bereft of his good works and virility. And it says that thus one should never try to seduce a wife of a *brahmin* knowing that.

And this story continues on through graphic descriptions of rituals to determine qualities of the children one conceives. But most of them are for sons and range from handsomeness, through material wealth, to political power. And it describes no ritual for a daughter other than one for her to be learned and have a long life.

But it ends with the assertion that people say of a son the rituals produce that he's surpassed his father and grandfather and that a son of a *brahmin* with that knowledge has reached the pinnacle of prosperity and fame, the pinnacle of Vedic knowledge, *veda*.

And that's the final narrative of the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*. So, whether or not the Aruni stories are parody, they're a substantial component of the message of the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*. But that's especially true of its final chapter.

The second, fourth, and this sixth and final chapter of the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* end with a listing of genealogical lineage from a person whose name is Pautimasi back to *brahman*.

But, while the first two listings are the same, the final listing varies. And the variance is that only that final listing says Yajnavalkya descended from Uddalaka or that Uddalaka descended from Aruna. And, beginning with the story saying Yajnavalkya was Aruni's disciple but excepting the story with Aruni questioning Yajnavalkya, all the stories of Aruni in the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* are in that sixth chapter. And the

chapter begins with the story promising mundane superiority for knowing *prana* is the best and the greatest.

So, at least dominantly, that chapter is a metaphor for one's head shattering apart while the other five are more dominantly a scattering of metaphors for realizing that all is all. But, not excepting using Uddalaka Aruni as a metaphor for one's head shattering apart, much of what's in the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* is also in the other twelve *Mukhya Upanishads*. So, throughout the *Upanishads*, the complexity of the Vedic metaphors tends to obscure the fundamental Vedic message.

And the *Chandogya Upanishad*, the second-oldest and second-longest of the *Mukhya Upanishads*, demonstrates the shattering complexity of Vedic metaphors from its beginning.

The syllable “om” is its first word and is a cognate of the Latin prefix “omni” and the Hebrew word “amen”.

But the first syllable of the title of this *upanishad* is a cognate of the English word “chant”. And, immediately following the syllable “om”, this *upanishad* says one should venerate the high chant as that syllable. And then it promises to explain the syllable further but instead delivers a scattering of metaphors.

And, though, in keeping with its title, many of the metaphors in the *Chandogya Upanishad* are homophonic, its metaphors may be more diverse than those in the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*.

With the principle assertion of the *Upanishads* being that all is all, their ultimate goal and hope is to extinguish the distinction between good and evil along with all other delusions of differentiation, but the diversity of expressions of that tends not only to obfuscate that unity but also to exemplify the contrary.

So, while a personification prominent in the *Upanishads* is of the sun with various names, so is a personification of death with the name Yama. And, while fire is prominent in Vedic rituals,

much Vedic literature obfuscates the metaphorical meaning of the rituals by calling them sacrifices. And that's in keeping with the notion that burning something deprives it of its being.

But the basic metaphor of the fire rituals, that the burning turns what one burns into the brightness of flames and sends it up in smoke that mingles with air and space until it's indistinguishable from anything else and thus is one with all, makes neither the rituals nor the offerings sacrifices.

But, in the *Upanishads*, such obfuscating diversification may also be metaphorical. Etymologically, the word "metaphor" means "to carry beyond", and the diversification obfuscates itself to the extent that it may carry one beyond the distinction between the metaphorical and the literal. So, in that way, Aruni's head might shatter into so many pieces that it also may be indistinguishable from space. And not only stories of Aruni but also many other Vedic stories directly suggest that by way of apparent irony. And several such stories are in the *Chandogya Upanishad*.

In one, after locusts devastate a land, a pauper begs from a rich man while the rich man is eating groats. And, to the rich man's telling the pauper he has nothing other than the groats, the pauper replies by asking the rich man to give him some of that. But, to the rich man's giving him some and offering him some water also, the pauper replies that drinking the water would be drinking the rich man's leftovers. And, to the rich man's asking him whether eating the groats isn't eating his leftovers, the pauper says it is but that he'll die if he doesn't eat the groats. He says drinking the water is discretionary.

Then he takes what remains of the groats home to his wife. But, having already gathered enough alms food, his wife saves the groats until the next morning, when her husband tells her a king is preparing to perform a ritual and that he could earn some money, if

he had some food. So his wife, calling her husband her lord, tells him they still have the groats.

So he eats them and goes to the ritual. And, though he arrives after the beginning of the ritual, he sits among the priests and tells them their heads will shatter apart if they sing the praises while not knowing their deities. And they stop singing and sit down in silence.

So the patron of the ritual tells the pauper he'd much like to know who he is. And, upon the pauper's telling him his name, the patron tells him he's the person he's been seeking to perform the priestly functions of the ritual and that he hired the others only when he couldn't find the pauper. And he asks the pauper to perform them.

But, though the pauper agrees to do that, the pauper also asks that the others the patron has asked sing the songs of praise. And he also asks that the patron give him the same amount of money he'll give the others. And then each of the other priests reminds the pauper of what he said to them. They ask the pauper who is each hymn's deity. And the pauper tells them.

The songs are the introductory praise, the high chant, and the response. And the pauper tells them their deities are Prana, the sun, and food. But, of course, all of that's subject to interpretation.

So one question this story raises is how the notion that food is more vital than water relates to the story of Prana's food being everything down to the insects while water is food's clothing. And other questions it raises are what's a pauper or a rich man or a king or a priest and how that question relates to the notion that *brahman* imagined different kinds of work and different kinds of persons to do them. And those questions raise the question of whether the heads of *brahmins* calling that division of labor the caste system and calling it Vedic have shattered apart.

And in connection with that story is a story of the high chant of dogs. In it, while a *brahmin* is on his way to perform a



Vedic recitation, a white dog appears before him. And other dogs gather around the white one and ask it to procure food for them by singing.

The white dog tells them to meet him there next morning. And, as the *brahmin* keeps watch, the dogs slide stealthily in file while grasping each other's backs and singing a hymn of praise. And then they sit down, make the sound "hum", sing the syllable "om", and ask that they eat and that the deities Varuna, Prajapati, and Savitri bring food there.

Varuna and Savitri are the principal Vedic names for metaphorical personifications of water and the sun. And, particularly referring to this story, this *upanishad* says speech will yield to the man knowing such relationships the milk that's the milk of speech. And this story says that man will come to own and eat his own food.

So, while it doesn't say what happens next morning, the scattering and shattering and reuniting continues on and on. And most of the second chapter of this *upanishad* is especially appropriate to its title by running on and on to say that, because various designations of parts of various ritual chants sound like words designating various other entities, they're also the entities and all. But that dissertation also shatters into assertions that knowing that is a means to material wealth, quotidian accomplishments, and long life, instead of death.

And yet a basic Vedic fact is that life and death are also one. That is, more basically Vedic is that all that shattering and scattering is both shattering and scattering, while it's also neither shattering nor scattering. So all, while shattering apart, is also always in the process of returning to the primal unity.

So, in that consideration, both the past and the future are also the present, and thus both the *devas* and the *asuras* are gleams, etc. So, also in it, by knowing that, one becomes one with all, and thus achieves both dominion over all and subordination to all. And

this *upanishad* also uses what one might call literal descriptions of time to express metaphorically the unity of time.

It says it's twice as long as the sun will rise in the north and set in the south. It says that, upon rising above, because the sun has never risen or set, it shall remain in the middle, alone. And it says that, for one who knows that, all is always day.

And that also makes literal enlightenment a metaphor for *veda*. But this *upanishad* also says Brahma, the main Vedic personification of creation, taught that to Prajapati and that Prajapati taught it to the personification of mankind Manu. And it says Manu taught it to his children and that Brahma's or Manu's father taught it to Uddalaka Aruni.

And it says Aruni taught it to his oldest son. It says that, because that formulation of truth is greater than the earth full of wealth with the waters around it, one should never teach it to anyone other than one's oldest son or a worthy student, whether or not anyone offers one that reward, for doing that. And it also says all of creation is in a hymn to the sun and that the hymn is speech.

But it also says the space outside a person is clearly the space inside a person, and that *brahman* is nothing other than the space outside a person, but that it's also the space in the heart.

So it says the space in the heart is full and not depleting and that anyone who knows that obtains full and nondepleting prosperity. But next it says the heart has five openings for deities, and it continues on through saying various Vedic metaphorical entities pass through the openings, and so the cycle of uniting and shattering continues. But that that's a cycle is essential to its being a metaphor for *veda*.

So that's how Vedic stories and dissertations, saying the *atman* has various components, including the vital functions, *prana* or Prana, are Vedic. But, if *brahman* and the *atman* are one, so must *brahman* have various components. So that, in that rationale, is how *prana* is *brahman*.

And one dissertation in the *Chandogya Upanishad*, treating the stages of a man's life as a metaphor for the hymns and offerings of rituals, says each stage links to a separate deity that's also Prana.

And also in the *Chandogya Upanishad* is a story of Raikva the gatherer that perhaps also obviates the caste system.

In it, a man, in devotion to giving and giving much including much cooked food, thinking people will eat food from him everywhere, arranges for the building of hospices everywhere. And, as some geese fly over at night, one of them tells another to look at a light like that of that giving man spreading throughout the sky and tells the other goose, if the goose doesn't wish to be burnt, not to touch the light. But the second goose, asking the first to consider who the giving man is, asks the first why the first is speaking of him as though he's Raikva the gatherer.

The first goose, replying that all good things people do go to the giving man as all lower throws of the dice go to the one who wins with the highest throw, says that's also true of anyone who knows what Raikva knows.

And the giving man hears that conversation. So, next morning, he tells his steward of it, and the steward searches for Raikva, but he doesn't find him. So the giving man tells the steward to search in a place where one would search for one who isn't a *brahmin*. So the steward, finding a man scratching his sores beneath a cart, respectfully approaches him and asks him whether he's Raikva the gatherer. And the man says he is.

So the giving man, taking Raikva six hundred cows, a gold necklace, and a carriage with a female mule drawing it, asks him to teach him the deity he venerates. But Raikva calls the giving man a *sudra* and tells him to keep his goods and cows and drive them back to the giving man's place. So the giving man does but returns with all of that, four hundred more cows, and his daughter.

Then he offers Raikva his daughter as his wife, also offers him the village where Raikva lives, and again asks him to teach him. Then Raikva lifts the daughter's face, tells the giving man to drive all that stuff to Raikva's place, and tells him he could have swindled him with only the daughter's face. And then the story says the villages one calls Raikvaparna stand where the giving man lived with Raikva and that what's next is what Raikva told the giving man.

And next it says Raikva told the giving man that, because the fire goes into the wind when it goes out as the sun and the moon pass into the wind when they set, the wind is the gatherer.

But it says that's with respect to the deific sphere.

It says with respect to the *atman* that, because a man's speech and hearing and mind pass into *prana* when he sleeps, *prana* is the gatherer. Then it summarily says the gatherers are the wind among the deities and *prana* among the components of Prana. But in direct connection with that story in this *upanishad* are several others stories.

In one two men refuse a Vedic student begging food from them. So, addressing the men by name, the student recites verses saying one deity has swallowed four mighty ones. And he asks who's the guardian of the world..

The verses, also addressing the two men by name, tell one of them mortals don't see that guardian of the world and tell the other that yet the guardian of the world is everywhere.

And then the student tells the men they haven't given food to a man to whom it's due. So one of them, after reflecting on that awhile, replies with verses saying the one deity is the *atman* of the deities, that it's the father of creatures and is the wise devourer with golden teeth, and that one says the greatness of one who eats what isn't food while not being eaten is great. And then, telling the student that thus the two men venerate that deity, that man directs giving the student some alms food.

So they give him some. And that brief story closes with an assertion that the highest throw of the dice is only food, that a poetic meter the story designates is the eater of food and has sunk its teeth into the whole world, and that one who knows that sinks his teeth into the whole world and becomes an eater of food. And that introduces another story obviating the caste system.

In it a boy, telling his mother he wishes to become a Vedic student, asks her to tell him his lineage. She replies that she had many relationships when she was young and that she doesn't know his lineage. But, saying her name is Jabala and that his is Satyakama, she tells him he should say he's Satyakama Jabala.

So he goes to a teacher and tells him he wishes to live under him as a Vedic student. And, in reply to the teacher's asking him his lineage, he tells him what his mother told him. And the teacher, asking him who but a *brahmin* could speak in that way, calls him son. He tells Satyakama to fetch him some firewood and says he'll initiate him. And, telling him he hasn't strayed from the truth, he does initiate him.

But then the teacher selects four hundred of the leanest and feeblest cows and tells Satyakama to care for them. So, driving them away, Satyakama calls back that he won't return with fewer than a thousand. And he stays away for years.

Then, when the cows become a thousand, the bull tells him they have and that, if he returns them to the teacher's house, he'll tell him a quarter of *brahman*. And, along the way, the bull, a fire, a wild goose, and a water bird, by way of various Vedic metaphors combining to say all is one, tell Satyakama the four quarters of *brahman*. And they also designate a reward for knowing each.

So, at the teacher's house, the teacher tells Satyakama he has the glow of one who knows *brahman* and asks who taught him. Satyakama acknowledges that other than humans have taught him, but he tells the teacher he's heard from people of the teacher's eminence that knowledge leads one securely to the goal, only if it

comes from a teacher. And he asks the teacher to teach it to him if it pleases the teacher, and the teacher explains it to him, omitting nothing.

So that story, while questioning the caste system by suggesting lineage isn't essential to being a *brahmin*, also promotes the Vedic notion that a *brahmin* should be one's teacher.

But following that story is a similar story of a student of Satyakama's. And, in that story, the student tends Satyakama's fires for twelve years while Satyakama lets other students return to their homes. So Satyakama's wife, telling Satyakama the student has performed his austerities and faithfully tended his fires, tells him to teach the student before the fires do.

But, instead, Satyakama goes on a journey. So, in affliction, the student stops eating. And Satyakama's wife's urges the student to eat and asks him why he's stopped eating. And he replies that desires lurking in him are many and bring a variety of dangers. So the fires agree with one another to teach him.

They tell him *brahman* is Prana and joy and space. The student replies that he understands *brahman* is Prana but doesn't understand how *brahman* can be joy and space. And then they teach him various Vedic metaphors as the bull and the fire and the wild goose and the waterbird taught Satyakama.

And, by being the householder's fire, the southern fire, and the offering fire, the fires also imply ritual metaphors.

But then they tell the student they've told him of themselves and the *atman* but that his teacher will direct him to the goal. And Satyakama returns and tells the student his face has the glow of a man who knows *brahman*. But this student is somewhat evasive.

He asks Satyakama who possibly could have taught him.

But then he says the fires don't appear as they did earlier.

So Satyakama asks him what they told him, and then the student acknowledges what they told him, and Satyakama tells him

he'll teach him that about which one says bad actions of one who knows it don't stick to him as water doesn't stick to a lotus leaf.

He tells him the person he sees here in the eye is the *atman*, the immortal free of fear, and *brahman*. He tells him that, because all lovely things come together to that *atman*, people call it the lovely uniting. And he tells him all lovely things also come together to anyone who knows that.

He says that *atman* is lovely leading and leads all lovely thing and that anyone who knows that also leads all lovely things. And he says that *atman* is shining and shines in all worlds and that anyone who knows that also shines in all worlds. So, essentially, he says it's the lovely shining gatherer that's lovely and shining and leads the lovely everywhere.

But then Satyakama's teaching shatters into a scattering of metaphors including a creation story and some instructions for rituals, and that extends into the personal notion that one's realizing the unity makes one the most excellent of all, and that extends into the political notion that realizing unity makes one a refuge of one's people.

So, discordantly or not, that scattering and shattering promotes and promises one's being separate from and superior to the others one imagines in that shattering.

And, like the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*, the *Chandogya Upanishad* contains stories of Aruni that stray more conspicuously from the basic Vedic epistemology.

In one, another story of Aruni and his son and a king, after the son can't answer the king's questions after saying his father taught him, the king teaches Aruni as Aruni typically teaches but says that previously his teaching was available only to *kshatriyas*, not to *brahmins*. And, in a story involving neither Aruni's son nor a king, some wealthy and learned householders come to Aruni for answers to the question of what are the *atman* and *brahman*. And,

recognizing that he can't completely answer the question, Aruni takes them to another teacher.

That teacher, asking each householder what he venerates as the *atman*, replies to their replies with a scattering of fractious metaphors typical of Aruni. And he ends each reply by telling the householder of a misfortune that would have befallen the householder had he not come to him. They range from one of the householders' head shattering apart to Aruni's feet withering away.

And, in another story in this *upanishad*, Aruni tells his son to take up the life of a celibate student. He tells him no one of their family hasn't studied and is a *brahmin* only because of birth, and twelve years later the son returns at 24 years old, thinking himself learned. But Aruni, calling him swell-headed, tells him he must have asked about the rule of substitution by which one hears what hasn't been heard, thinks what hasn't been thought, and perceives what hasn't been perceived.

And the son asks him how it works. So Aruni rattles a scattering of shattering *non sequiturs* with his son begging for more. And, telling his son a man consists of sixteen parts, he directs him to eat nothing for fifteen days.

But, telling his son that, because *prana* is water, it won't be cut off if one drinks water, he tells him to drink water during that time. His son complies and returns and asks his father what he should recite, and Aruni tells him to recite Vedic verses and formulas and chants, and his son tells him he can't remember them. And then, telling his son his situation is like a huge fire not burning much when only an ember the size of a firefly remains of it, Aruni says the reason he can't remember them is that but one of his sixteen parts remains.

Then, after the son eats, Aruni tells him covering with food the water part of his sixteen parts set it ablaze and that that's how he then remembered the verses, and then he tells him that's



because the mind consists of food while *prana* consists of water while speech consists of heat, and his prattle continues on.

But, next in the *Chandogya Upanishad*, a story not involving Aruni both parodies such artificial complexity and exemplifies the cycle of shattering and returning to unity.

In it a man goes to a teacher and tells him he's studied the *Vedas*, the body of histories and ancient tales, ancestral rites and mathematics and soothsaying, the art of locating treasures, the dialogs and monologs, and the science of ritual and spirits, government and astrology, and serpent beings.

But he says that, while he knows all the Vedic formulas, he doesn't know the *atman*. And, telling the teacher he's heard by the teacher's peers that those who know the *atman* pass beyond sorrow, he asks him to take him there. So, not excepting the *Vedas*, the teacher tells him that clearly all he's studied is only name.

But, telling the man to venerate name, the teacher says a man who venerates *brahman* as name obtains complete freedom of movement in every place name reaches.

So the inquiring man asks the teacher whether anything is greater than name. And the teacher, saying speech is greater than name, tells him of its causal relationship to the inquiring person's original question. But then the inquiring man asks whether anything is greater than speech.

And the teacher, replying that the mind is greater than speech, refers to its causal relationship to other entities and circumstances, and that cycle continues on through other entities, including intention and food and hope, until it reaches Prana.

But the teacher tells the inquiring person to venerate *brahman* as each entity. So, essentially, that's a literally circuitous way of saying one should worship *brahman* as all. But many of the relationships the teacher asserts are *non sequiturs* with no metaphorical meaning.

And then, scattering the question further, he refers to names and speech in terms of talking back to one's father or mother or brother or sister or a *brahmin*.

He says that, were one to do that, people would tell him he's to be damned and call him a killer of those people to whom he's talked back. And he tells the inquiring man that a man who sees and thinks about and perceives that in that way becomes a man who out-talks. But he tells him that, if people tell him he's a man who out-talks, he should readily acknowledge he is.

And he scatters that into saying a man out-talks only when he out-talks with truth and that a man must perceive in order to speak truth, think in order to perceive, have faith in order to think, produce in order to have faith, act in order to produce, and attain wellbeing in order to act.

And he tells the inquiring man he should perceive all of that. So the inquiring man, replying that he shall be a man who out-talks with truth, says he perceives all of that. But then the teacher tells the inquiring man that wellbeing is only plentitude, that prosperity is in plentitude and isn't in scarcity, and that plentitude is what he should seek to perceive.

And then he says plentitude is seeing or hearing or perceiving nothing else while scarcity is seeing or hearing or perceiving something else. And then he tells the inquiring man that plentitude is the immortal while scarcity constitutes what's mortal. But next the inquiring man asks what's the basis for plentitude.

And the teacher says its basis is one's own greatness. And then, scattering and shattering on to the end of this chapter, the teacher details the ubiquity of the *atman* as though it nevertheless interacts with other entities for its separate benefit. So, effectually, that story with that and its scattering of *non sequiturs* is a metaphor for failing to understand one's own talk.

But the final chapter of the *Chandogya Upanishad* begins by directing trying to discover something in a small space in a small lotus that's a dwelling place in the fort of *brahman*.

But then it directs how a person it doesn't name should reply to some people it doesn't name asking him what's in that space. And it says that person should reply that this space in the heart is as vast as the space around us and that it contains both the earth and the sky, both the fire and the wind, both the sun and the moon, and both lightning and stars. And it says it contains both what belongs here to this space around us and what doesn't

And it says that, if they ask him further, he should reply that the fort of *brahman* contains the whole world, all beings, and all desires.

But it says that, to the question of what remains when old age overtakes it or if it perishes, he should reply that it doesn't age when the body ages and isn't killed when the body is slain.

And it shatters on, with more Vedic references involving many vedic metaphors and personifications including a dialogue between Prajapati and Indra, until its final section begins by saying Brahma told all that to Prajapati, that Prajapati told it to Manu, and that Manu taught it to his children. And the remainder of that short final section closes that final chapter of the *Chandogya Upanishad* and thus the *Chandogya Upanishad* by briefly idealizing the lives of Manu's children. That is, it expresses an ideal of the quotidian lives of the children of that metaphorical personification of humanity, of what one might imagine to be the lives of humans.

It says that, from the teacher's house, where one learns *veda* in the Vedic manner during one's discretionary time after one's tasks for one's teacher, one returns to one's own house and does one's daily Vedic recitation in a clean place and rears virtuous children, but it also says one draws one's sense organs into oneself and refrains from killing, excepting a worthy person, any creature.

And that idealizing closes by saying that one who lives in that way throughout life attains the world of *brahman* and doesn't return again. But none of the *Mukhya Upanisads* says what constitutes a person worthy of death. And their only reference to such is this reference to quotidian life.

And generally the eleven *Mukhya Upanishads* other than this *upanishad* and the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* are emulation and interpretation of those two through variations of the stories in them and additional metaphors and personifying.

But some of them are less metaphorical and offer means more direct than rituals for returning to the primal unity.

Hindus attribute the *Taittiriya Upanishad* to students of a teacher whose name was Tattir.

It also begins with the syllable “om”, and it plainly says *brahman* is om and that so is the whole world, but it says it in a mix of various metaphorical references.

Its first section is a few verses. They pray to *brahman* and some metaphorical personifications and ask that the homage help us and the teacher. But they close with a repetition of the syllable “om” and three iterations of the Sanskrit word “*shanti*” meaning “peace”.

Appropriate to this *upanishad*'s attribution, its narrative is from the first person plural point of view, and it says in its brief second section that they'll then explain phonetics.

But, though its narrators close that section by saying that describes phonetics, its only explanation of phonetics is to say it's phoneme, accent, quantity, strength, articulation, and connection. And homophonic metaphors and assertions of other such relationships dominate the next five sections with some of them referring to students and teachers. But most are typically Vedic, and they treat the man in the *atman* as various other entities, much as the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* treats the gift horse

The eighth section begins by saying *brahman* is om. But then it says “om” indicates compliance and that that’s why ritual priests say it at various times during rituals and why, when a *brahmin* is about to recite *veda* publicly, he first says “om”. And it says that then, asking that he grasp *veda*, the *brahmin* indeed grasps it.

And, while affirming the essentiality of various qualities and activities and entities ranging from truth to progeny, this *upanishad* says private and public recitation of *veda* is also essential. It says that, while one teacher affirmed only truth while another affirmed only austerity, another affirmed only the private and public recitation of *veda*. But it says the affirmation of only the private and public recitation of *veda* is because its actuality is austerity.

And this *upanishad* also lists admonitions of teachers to students upon the students’ completion of Vedic study. It says they admonish them to speak the truth and follow the law but also not to neglect their private and public recitation of *veda*. But it says they also admonish them, after they’ve given a valuable gift to the teacher, not to cut off their family line.

It says they admonish them not to neglect their health or wealth or rites to deities or ancestors, to treat their parents and teacher and guests and deities as deities, and to perform irreproachable rites and no others.

And it says they admonish them to esteem no practice other than those they’ve observed in the teacher, to honor any superior *brahmin* by offering him a seat and giving with dignity, modesty trepidation, and comprehension, and to observe the behavior of an experienced, qualified, and gentle *brahmin* devoted to the law.

It says they admonish them, if they have any doubt regarding a rite or practice while such a *brahmin* isn’t able to make a judgement in the question, to behave as such a *brahmin* does.

And, calling that the rule of substitution, teaching, and the *upanishad* of the *veda* and the admonition, it says one should worship in that way.

The second of the three chapters of this *upanishad* is a scattering of Vedic metaphors ending with a hierarchy of bliss from the bliss of an extraordinarily fortunate human to that of *brahman*. It says the *atman* consisting of bliss is free of agonizing on the questions of why one's deeds weren't right or were wrong. And it calls that the *upanishad*.

Its third and final chapter begins with the son of Varuna, the principal Vedic personification of water, asking his father to teach him *brahman*. Varuna replies that *brahman* is that which gives birth to food and Prana and Prana's components and is that on which beings live and into which they pass upon death. And he tells his son to perceive that.

So, in that story, the son practices austerities and perceives that. But then he returns to his father and again asks him to teach him *brahman*. And the father, telling him *brahman* is austerity, tells him to seek *brahman* by austerity.

So, continuing, through Prana and its components and bliss, with the son practicing austerities to perceive that each is *brahman*, that cycle ends with the son's perceiving that *brahman* is bliss.

And, after saying that's the doctrine of the son of Varuna, that story says both that the doctrine is firm in the highest firmament and that, when one knows it, one becomes firm. But it also says one who knows it will become a man who has and eats food and that, because of his offspring and livestock, the luster of sacred knowledge, and his fame, he'll become a great man. And next it says that of knowing *prana*, water, and earth are food, that various other entities are food-eaters, and that the basis of the food and the food-eaters is one another.

And this *upanishad* closes by effectually saying one reaches *brahman* through perceiving food and bliss to be *brahman*.

And, scattering on, this *upanishad*'s closing section contains some more complex uses of food as a metaphor for *brahman*. And, in that complexity, closing a series of references to venerating *brahman* as entities other than food, it says one's hateful rivals and detestable foes will die around one who venerates food as the dying around of *brahman*. So it makes that metaphor for food being *brahman* also a metaphor for the shattering.

But this section also says the person here in a man and the person up there in the sun are the same. It says that, after a man who know that departs this world, he first reaches the *atman* consisting of food and then passes on to the *atmans* consisting of life, *prana*, mind, and perception successively, and then to the *atman* consisting of bliss. And it says that then, eating whatever the person likes and appearing however the person likes, the person continues traveling through these worlds to sing a Saman chant this section then quotes.

The chant closes with the singer saying he or she is food and eats him who eats food and that she or he has conquered the whole universe and is like the light in the firmament.

And this *upanishad* closes by saying that's true of anyone who knows that but that it's the obscure teaching.

The *Aitareya Upanishad* received its current title as an *upanishad* by way of a fourteenth century commentator saying a person whose name was Mahidassa Aitareya wrote it.

The authenticity of that is questionable, but this *upanishad* begins with a creation story meandering through a scattering demonstrating how Vedic metaphors operate, and its third and final chapter effectually says all of that is the *atman* and that the *atman* is *brahman* and Indra and Prajapati and all the deities.

Indra is the principal name of the principal Vedic personification of the chief of the *devas*. And much of the first

section of the first chapter of this *upanishad* is a creation story in which the *atman* shatters its *atman* into various worlds. One of the worlds is of the waters, and the *atman* creates from the waters keepers in the shape of a man who shatters into body parts hatching other entities ranging from Prana to death, with wind and the sun in the mix.

But this *upanishad*'s first chapter closes with a homophonic metaphor saying Indra's name is Idandra.

It says that, after the *atman*'s birth, it contemplated the creatures with the thought of whether anyone would declare another to be there but that it saw that only the man, the *brahman*, the utmost, was there, and that that's why one calls it Idandra.

"Idandra" sounds like Sanskrit for "I have seen". But "*indriya*" is Sanskrit for "senses", and much of this *upanishad* anthropomorphizes Prana, but this final section of its first chapter closes by saying Idandra's name is Idandra. It says that's what he is but that, because the deities somehow love the cryptic, people call him Indra.

But that section also says the *atman* preceded that thought by splitting open its head after asking who it is if other functions and ejaculation occur through Prana and the penis.

And, though the second chapter generally describes the human reproduction cycle in Vedic terms, it says it begins within a man as semen gathering the radiance of all his body parts in and as his *atman*, and that his depositing it in a woman gives it its first birth. Then it describes the time in the womb as the unification of the man and the woman and the embryo through protection and nourishment. And then it says that's how the worlds continue and that that's its second birth.

Then it says what follows that unity is *atman*'s appointment to perform Vedic rights until its bodily *atman* has done all it can do and grows old and dies and departs from this world to achieve its third birth.



Then it quotes a short poem paraphrasing that. Then it says Vamadeva, a Vedic personification of that cycle, spoke that way while in the womb. And that chapter closes by saying that, knowing that after the dissolution of the body and having attained all his desires in the world above, Varnadeva became immortal.

But the third and final chapter of this *upanishad* says knowledge is in the eye, that it's the foundation of all that's the *atman*, and that *brahman* is knowing. And it closes by saying *brahman*, with the *atman* consisting of knowledge having obtained all its desire in the sky above, went up from the world and became immortal. And all that's but one of countless complex ways Vedic efforts to express *veda* meander through their scattering and shattering to return to the simplicity of their purpose.

And the *Kausitaki Upanishad*, another of the *Mukhya Upanishads* whose title is the name of a teacher, does that through another story of Uddalaka Aruni and his son and a king and through a parody of Indra.

In the story of Aruni, the king asks him to perform an offering, but Aruni instead sends his son. The king asks the son whether the world into which the son will send him has an open road. And the son replies that he doesn't know but that he'll ask his teacher. So he returns to his father and asks him the question. But Aruni says neither does he know.

So, after he and his son perform their Vedic recitations, he asks his son to go with him within the ritual arena to receive what outsiders may give them.

So, carrying firewood in hand, Aruni goes to the king and asks the king to let him come to him as a student. The king, after telling Aruni that, by not succumbing to pride, he's proven himself worthy of the formulation of *brahman*, says he'll see that he perceives the teaching clearly. But his teaching, a story of meandering along a path of encounters with Vedic

personifications, has no meaning beyond that it's literally a scattering and thus a metaphor for one's head shattering apart.

And the story ends with a personification of *brahman* telling the meanderer that he's attained *brahman*'s world and that a man who know that has won whatever victory and success belongs to *brahman*.

And the second chapter of this *upanishad*, beginning by presenting the notion that *brahman* is Prana as a metaphor for possession, says it's like a man begging in a village and responding to receiving nothing by vowing never to eat anything from there.

It says that, while the Prana that's *brahman* doesn't ask for offerings, all the deities bring it offerings. It say that accordingly the people who spurned the beggar bring him offerings when he vows not to eat anything from their village. And it says that thus, for one who doesn't ask, that becomes the rule.

And the remainder of that chapter is a scattering in Vedic terms of other presentations of attitudes toward possession and descriptions of ritual ways of acquiring material wealth and worldly power and deploying them against people competing with one for the wealth and power.

But the third chapter begins the parody of Indra. In it, as a result of war and valor, a person arrives at the favorite residence of Indra. Indra tells that warrior to select a gift, but the warrior asks Indra to choose for him a gift Indra thinks is most beneficial to humans, and Indra tells the warrior a superior doesn't choose for someone inferior to him. He tells him his choosing for himself would be better. But then he tells him to perceive him.

He tells him he thinks what would be most beneficial to a human would be perceiving Indra.

But then he brags about his cruelty and deceit, his killing and smashing and breaking agreements, and his doing that while not losing a hair of his body. Saying that, when a man perceives him, nothing the man does will make the man lose a hair of his

body, he specifies stealing, performing abortions, and killing one's father or mother. And he says that, when a man perceiving him commits an evil deed, the man's face won't lose its color.

And next, after shattering into particularities the metaphor of the components of Prana being one, he does the same with other Vedic metaphors for all being all. And, though, near the end of that chapter, he says no diversity is in all the particularities he's described, next he shatters that assertion into designating what he says are the ten particles of being and saying they exist in correlation with intellect. And that chapter closes with his saying his *atman* is the lord of the world.

And the fourth and final chapter of this *upanishad* is more such scattering and shattering. It says that, as long as Indra didn't understand the *atman* to which other *atmans* cling as to a chieftain, the *asuras* prevailed over him. But it says that, when he came to know that *atman*, he secured the supremacy and sovereignty and lordship over all the deities.

And it ends by saying a man who knows that wipes off all evils and secures the supremacy, sovereignty, and lordship over all beings.

The title of the *Kena Upanishad* means "by whom". It also makes Indra a metaphor for the vanity of the shattering resulting from dualism. But it does that after two prefatory chapters.

Its first chapter is a poem beginning by asking by whom is the mind impelled and compelled to soar forth, who impels speech and enjoins the breath to march as the primal, and who's the deity who joins sight with hearing. And next that poem says the answer to those questions is the hearing, thinking, speech, sight, and breathing behind those entities. But it says the wise, departing this world completely free of those entities, become immortal.

And the remainder of that poem says in various ways that *brahman* is both inexpressible and unrecognizable and that it's

beyond all while being all and not what anyone in the illusion of differences venerates.

This *upanishad*'s second chapter begins with the assertion that, if we think we know *brahman* well, we may know part of it. Then, more clearly speaking from the first person point of view, its author says we may know a little of the visible part of *brahman* but that a part of it's among the deities. And then the author says he or she thinks what we must do is to speak on that part one doesn't know.

And the remainder of that chapter is a poem in which the persona struggles further with that dilemma. The poet, beginning by saying he or she doesn't think she or he knows *brahman* well but doesn't know what he or she doesn't know, says those of us who know that know it. Then, after speaking similarly of envisioning and perceiving, the poem says one envisions *brahman* when one awakens to know it and that that's because then one gains the immortal state.

Then the poem says one gain's power by one's *atman* but gains the immortal state by knowledge. Then it says the real belongs to a man who comes to know that in this world and that great is the destruction of a man who doesn't know it. And then it says that, discerning it within each and every being, the wise become immortal when they depart from this world.

And then, spanning the final two chapters of this *upanishad*, is the metaphorical story of Indra.

*Brahman*, in this story, achieves victory for the *devas*. But the *devas* jubilantly tell one another that the victory is theirs. So *brahman* makes itself visible to them.

But the *devas*, not recognizing *brahman*, wonder what that strange apparition is. So they send fire to discover what it is, and fire scurries to it and asks it who it is, but it replies by asking fire who fire is. And fire's reply is only that it's fire.

So *brahman*, saying it sees that, asks fire what power fire has. And fire replies that it can burn up the whole world, and *brahman* sets a blade of grass in front of it and tells it to burn that, and fire goes at it with full velocity. But it can't.

So fire returns to the other *devas* and tells them it couldn't discover what the apparition is. So they send wind to try, but the interaction between wind and *brahman* is the same, with wind unable to blow away a blade of grass. So then the *devas* send Indra.

But, when Indra scurries to *brahman*, *brahman* vanishes from his sight. In its stead is the great beauty Uma, daughter of the deific personification of the Himalayas, and Indra asks her what that strange apparition was. So the final chapter of this *upanishad* begins with Uma telling Indra the apparition was *brahman* and that Indra and the other *devas* were jubilant at the victory *brahman* achieved.

And then this chapter says the reason Indra and fire and wind have surpassed the other deities is that they came into close contact with *brahman*.

But, effectually, next in this chapter is a metaphor for Vedic metaphors. It says the rule of substation is the cry Ah, when lightening flashes and when it makes one blink, and that that's with respect to the deific sphere. It says that, when something comes to mind, and the imagination somehow suddenly recollects something through it, that's with respect to the body. It says the name of *brahman* is *brahman*'s adoration and that one should venerate it as that. And it says all being longs for one who knows it as such.

And next in this chapter a person asks to be taught the *upanishad*.. Another person replies that the person asking has been taught the *upanishad* relating to *brahman* itself, that austerity, self-control, and rites are the foundation and that the *Vedas* are all the limbs, and that truth is the abode. And this *upanishad* closes with the assertion that, when one comes to know the *upanishad* in that

way, one undoubtedly wipes out evil and becomes established in the endless and invincible deific world.

The title of the *Katha Upanishad* means “distress”. Most of its first two chapters is a dialogue between the personification of death Yama and a boy whose name is Naciketas. Naciketas’ name is a Sanskrit phrase referring to being conscious of nothing other than perpetual flame.

The dialogue is in a story in which, reflecting on his father’s offering cows for ritual too late in their life for them to be productive, Naciketas says to himself that the worlds to which a man who offers such cows goes are joyless.

And then he asks his father to whom he’ll give him.

His father, after Naciketas twice repeats that question, shouts at him that he’ll give him to death. Then, reflecting that he’s both the first and the midmost of many to go, Naciketas tells himself that a mortal man ripens and achieves rebirth as does grain. And next, in his reflection, he asks himself what, of what Yama must do, he’ll do with him that day.

But then, in the story and presumably in Yama’s house, Naciketas reflects that a *brahmin* guest enters a house as the fire of all men and demands water. He reflects that appeasing such a guest requires bringing him some water and that he wrests hopes, expectations, fellowship, good will, children, livestock, rites, and gifts from a foolish man in whose house he resides with no food. And, next in this story, presumably returning home, Yama begins the dialogues by calling Naciketas a *brahmin* and a guest worthy of homage, telling him he’s stayed in his house three nights with no food, offering Naciketas three wishes, and asking that Yama fare well.

Naciketas’ first wish is that his father’s disposition toward him return to good will, that his temper cool and his anger subside, and that he greet him with joy, when Yama releases him.

But, though, at this *upanishad*'s beginning, it calls Naciketas' father Usan, Naciketas calls him Gautama while he's making that wish, and Gautama is a frequent epithet for Uddalaka Aruni, and Yama calls him Auddalaka Aruni.

But, saying he dismisses him, he tells Naciketas that, seeing Naciketas' release from death, he'll be affable as before. And he says his anger shall subside and that he'll have restful nights. But Naciketas' second wish is more Vedic.

He sees that Yama is studying the fire altar leading to the deific world, calls himself a man of no faith and says people in the deific world enjoy the immortal state, and tells Yama that no fear of Yama or of old age is in the deific world and that, transcending hunger and thirst and beyond all sorrow, one rejoices there.

And then, asking Yama to explain the fire altar to him, he says that's his second wish.

So Yama, calling Naciketas one who understands, tells him to heed that teaching of his. Telling him he'll explain it to him, he calls that teaching leading to the deific world and to an endless world he says is its foundation. And he tells him to know it lies in the cave of the heart.

Then, calling the fire altar the beginning of the world, this *upanishad* says Yama described it to Naciketas with details including the kinds of bricks and how many. Then, calling Yama the large-hearted one, it says Naciketas delighted and pleased Yama well by repeating exactly what he described. And then in this dialogue Yama tells Naciketas he'll grant him another wish that day.

He tells him the fire altar will bear his name, He calls him a three-Naciketas man and tells him to take a glittering disk of gold. And he says that, uniting with the three by performing the triple rite, Naciketas crosses over birth and death.

He says that, perceiving *brahman* as the deity of becoming and the deity to adore and recognizing the gold disk to be that,

Naciketas attains unending peace. And he says that, knowing the three and piling the altar of Naciketas with that knowledge, Naciketas shoves aside the fetters of death before him and passes beyond sorrow to rejoice in paradise. So, presumably, the three and the triple rite are the *Rig*, *Yajur*, and *Sama Vedas* and learning them.

But, effectually, Naciketas's third wish is to know the full expanse of *veda* that's knowing *brahman*. Saying a doubt concerning dead men is whether they're anyone, he tells Yama his third wish is to know that, and he asks him to teach it to him. But, replying that, because it's a subtle doctrine difficult to understand, the ancient deities also had doubts concerning it, Yama asks Naciketas not to press him for that.

He asks him to release him and make another wish. And Naciketas agrees that people have said the deities had doubts and that it's difficult to understand. But he says he can't find another like Yama to explain it and that no other wish is equal to it.

Then, asking Naciketas not to ask him about death, Yama asks him instead to choose sons and grandsons who will live a hundred years, plenty of cattle and elephants and horses and gold and dominion over a wide expanse of earth, and to live as many autumns as he wishes to live. And, adding to that enjoying his desires at will, he shows him lovely girls and chariots and lures of a kind men can't obtain. But Naciketas tells him to keep his horses and songs and dances.

He says that, because the passing days of a mortal in this world sap the energy of the senses, a full life is but a trifle. Telling Yama that Yama can't make a man content with wealth, he asks him whether we'll be able to keep it, when we've seen Yama. And, telling him we'll live only as long as Yama allows, he says his wish to know whether the dead are anyone is the only wish he wishes to choose.



And, asking Yama what mortal man with insight would delight in a long life, while decaying in this miserable lowly place while seeing its beauties and pleasures, after meeting those who don't decay or die, he repeats his request.

Calling Yama death, asking what happens at that great transit, and calling it probing the mystery of the deep and the point on which one has great doubt, Naciketas says again that he wishes for nothing other than that, but still Yama doesn't directly answer.

Instead he begins his reply by making a distinction between the good and the gratifying. He says good awaits one who chooses good and that one who chooses the gratifying misses the goal. He says both bind a man but that the wise assess them, note the difference, and choose the good over the gratifying, while fools choose the gratifying rather than the beneficial.

And, praising Naciketas for looking at and rejecting things lovely to look upon that people desire, he says many men flounder in the disk of gold. And then, praising Naciketas for not accepting the disk as a thing of wealth, he extends that praise to knowledge and ignorance. He says he takes Naciketas as one yearning for knowledge.

And, telling him the many desires don't confound him, he says the transit is obscure to careless fools wealth deludes and that, like blind men a blind man is leading, they stagger about in ignorance. And he also says that, though one may think much, the transit is difficult to grasp when an inferior man teaches it and that yet one can access it only by way of another. And, though that's fundamentally discordant with the notion that *atman* is *brahman*, it also suggests that he may be the teacher Naciketas needs.

But, after saying the reason one needs a teacher is that the answer is smaller than the smallest possible particle and beyond the realm of reason, he says Naciketas already has grasped it and that he would that he had one like Naciketas to teach him.

And Naciketas replies that the reason he built his fire altar is that he knows that what Yama called treasure is transient and that one can't attain the perennial by fleeting things. And Yama, saying satisfying desires is the foundation of the world, that rites with no interruption bring ultimate security, and that great and broad praise is the foundation, says Naciketas has seen and firmly rejected all that. So both Yama and Naciketas shatter the conversation into other questions.

Yama tells Naciketas that, by regarding as a deity and an insight one gains by inner contemplation the primal one who's difficult to perceive and resides in the impenetrable depth of mystery in a cave, the wise abandon both sorrow and joy. He tells him that, when a mortal has heard that and understood it and drawn out that subtle point of doctrine, he rejoices because he's found something in which to rejoice. And he tells Naciketas he considers his house to be open to such a person.

But Naciketas replies by asking Yama to tell him what he sees to be different from the right doctrine and the wrong, from what one has done in this world and what no one has done, and from what's been and what's yet to be.

So then Yama grants Naciketas' third wish. He tells him that the word all *Vedas* disclose, that all austerities proclaim and that people living student lives seek, is "om". He says that, because that syllable alone is supreme, it alone is *brahman*.

He says it's the best and supreme support and that, when one knows that syllable, one obtains one's every wish. And then he says the wise one has no birth or death, hasn't come from anywhere or become anyone, and is both primal and eternal. So, he says, killing the body doesn't kill it.

He says that, if the killer thinks he kills or if the person the killer kills thinks he's killed thinks he's been killed, both fail to understand.

He says neither of them kills or is killed.

But he scatters further. He says the *atman* in the heart of a living being is finer than the finest and larger than the largest. He says that, by way of the creator's grace, a person with no desire and free of sorrow perceives the *atman's* grandeur. He says that, sitting or lying, the person perceiving that roams everywhere. And he asks who other than he can know the ceaselessly knowing deity.

And he says that, when one who's wise perceives that omni-pervasive *atman* to be bodiless within bodies and stable within unstable beings, one ceases to grieve.

And then he contradicts all he said of teachers. He says only the person the omni-pervasive *atman* chooses can grasp the person whose body that *atman* chooses as his own and that no one can grasp it either by teaching or by intelligence. And he says no person who hasn't quit his evil ways or isn't of calm composition or lacks a tranquil mind can secure the *atman* only by the person's wit.

And that chapter of this *upanishad* closes with Yama asking who knows where is the person for whom both the *brahmin* and the *kshatriya* are like a dish of boiled rice and for whom death is like the sprinkled sauce.

And that also closes that dialogue and that story.

But, of course, the omni-pervasive *atman* is the *atman* that's *brahman*. So the next question is how one can marshal one's mind into that perception. And the next chapter of this *upanishad* is a sort of reply to that question.

But, beginning by calling knowers of *brahman* men with five fires and the three-fire altars of Naciketasa, it's also another scattering and shattering of metaphors.

Asking that we master that altar, it calls it a dike for those who've sacrificed, for those wishing to cross the danger to the highest *brahman*, to the imperishable, the furthest shore.

It directs knowing the personality as a rider in a chariot, the intellect as the charioteer, the body as the chariot, and the mind as

the reins. It says one says the senses are the horses, that the entities they sense are the paths around them, and that the wise proclaim one linking to the *atman* and senses and mind to be the one who enjoys. And it says that, when one lacks understanding and control of one's mind, one's senses disobey one as bad horses disobey a charioteer but that, when one has understanding and always has control of one's mind, one's senses obey one as good horses obey a charioteer.

And then it extends that metaphor into the metaphor of reincarnation.

It says that, when one lacks understanding and is unmindful and always impure, one doesn't reach the final step but mounts the cycle of rebirth. It says an alternative to that is that, when one has understanding and is mindful and always pure, one reaches the final step from which one has no more rebirths. And it says that, when one's mind is one's reins and intellect one's charioteer, one reaches the end of the road that's the highest step of Vishnu.

Vishnu is the name of the main Vedic personification of preservation. But the preservation is of the imagining of differences, as Brahma is the name of the main Vedic personification of the beginning of that imagining, and Shiva is the name of the main Vedic personification of the destruction of it. So, effectually, Shiva is a Vedic personification of returning to realizing the primal unity that's *brahman* by means of destroying Vishnu's preservation of Brahma's creation.

And next this chapter relatively succinctly describes that cycle in other Vedic terms and with other Vedic references. Listing a hierarchy, with the senses lowest and nothing the highest, it includes between the senses and nothing the sense objects and the mind and the intellect, the immense *atman* and the *unmanifest*, and the person. The person, "*purusha*" in Sanskrit, is essentially the personality of *brahman*.

But next this *upanishad* says that, while the *atman* that's the nothing is in all beings but invisible, people with keen vision and eminent and sharp minds can see it. And next it says a wise man should curb his speech and mind and control them within the intelligent *atman* and that he should control the intelligence within the immense *atman* and control the immense *atman* within the tranquil *atman*. And next it directs, when one attains one's wishes, arising and awakening and giving attention, but next it says a razor's sharp edge that's the difficulty of the path is hard to cross, and the words go on and on.

It says a wise man hearing the tale of Naciketas that's an ancient tale death told will rejoice in *brahman*'s world, and next it says a pure and devout man proclaims that great secret in a gathering of *brahmins* or during a meal for the dead, and this chapter closes by saying it will lead that man to eternal life.

And, through two more chapters, this *upanishad* scatters more metaphors and similes and references to other Vedic references until it closes by saying that, after receiving that body of knowledge and the entire set of *yoga* rules death taught, Naciketas attained *brahman* and freedom from aging and death, as will others knowing that teaching, of the *atman*.

But “*yoga*” is a Sanskrit word meaning “union”. So *yoga* rules are ways to realize the unity of all. And the *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, another *Mukhya Upanishad* whose title is the name of a teacher, more extensively uses that word in that way.

It begins by saying people making inquiries regarding *brahman* ask what causes it, what are the reasons and means for our birth and life, and who governs us. And it says those who follow the discipline of meditation have seen *devas* and the *atman* and the power in their own qualities. So, effectually, it says that *yoga*, the way to obviate the distinctions of those questions, is by meditation.

But, after also saying that but one governs all causes ranging from time to the *atman*, it says we must study the one by various metaphors it cites.

But other *upanishads* say that both *dhyana* and *jnana* are methods of *yoga*.

“*Dhyana*” is a Sanskrit word meaning “meditation” while “*jnana*” is a Sanskrit word meaning “knowledge”, not the generality of *veda* but the particularities of Vedic relationships, as one may make a distinction between facts and truth.

So *jnana yoga* seeks *veda* by way of studying those relationship in order eventually to find the *veda* that all relates to all and thus is all. And *dhyana yoga* is an effort to use the mind to obviate all those particularities directly by meditating only on unity itself. But “*yoga*” is also the source of the English word “yoke”.

And the second chapter of this *upanishad* begins by saying a deific personification of the sun first yoked his mind and then extended his thoughts and, having recognized fire as light, brought it from earth. And it extends that expression of yoking the earth with the sun through fire into expressions of yoking rites and ancient formulations with other actualities. And some *upanishads* particularize *jnana yoga* into only studying the *Vedas*.

But this *upanishad* also describes a physical approach to *yoga*.

It says that, when a wise person, keeping his body straight with its three sections erect, draws the senses together with the mind into the heart by the boat that’s that formulation of *brahman*, the person will cross all the fearful rivers.

It says that, compressing his breaths and curtailing his movements, a man should breathe only nasally. It says a wise man should keep his mind vigilantly in control as one would a wagon one has yoked to unruly horses. And it describes a place in which it says one should do that.

The place is level, free of gravel and fire and sand, and near such as noiseless running water. And, with a cave or nook sheltering one from the wind, it's pleasing to the mind and not offensive to the eye. But then this *upanishad* describes transitioning from that physical approach to the complete extinguishing of such distinctions.

It says that, within *yoga* practice, mist, smoke, the sun, the wind, fireflies, lightning, crystal, and the moon are apparitions preceding and paving the way to the full manifestation of *brahman*.

It says that, when earth, water, fire, air, and space have risen together to equip the body consisting of those five entities with the attribute of *yoga*, the man practicing *yoga* obtains a body the fire of *yoga* tempers and that he'll no longer experience sickness, decay, or suffering.

It also says one says lightness, health, absence of greed, a bright complexion, a pleasant voice, a sweet aroma, and little feces or urine are the first workings of *yoga* practice.

But that chapter closes by bidding adoration to the deity that's in the fire, water, trees, and other plants and has entered every being. And the third chapter of this *upanishad* calls Shiva Rudra, describes him as other *upanishads* describe *brahman*, and says he's greater than *brahman*. And this *upanishad*'s other three chapters extend that to other entities.

But its final chapter asserts its namesake's credibility. It says that, by the power of austerities and by the grace of deity, the wise Svetasvatara first came to know *brahman* and then proclaimed it as the highest means of purification, bringing delight to those who've passed beyond their ordinary life, to the company of seers. And, calling that the supreme secret and saying its proclamation is from a former age in the purpose of the *Vedas*, it says one should never disclose it to a person who isn't of a tranquil disposition or one's son or student.

And it closes by saying that those points the noble one declared shine forth only in a man who has the deepest love for deity and shows that love also toward his teacher.

But the title of the Mundaka Upanishad, perhaps referring to ascetics shaving their heads, refers to shaving.

It begins by saying Brahma arose as the first of the deities. It says a teacher, replying to a wealthy householder's question of what knowledge is the knowledge by which a man knows this whole world, said it's of two sorts. And it says the teacher said the two sorts are the higher and the lower.

It says he said the lower consists of the *Vedas*, phonetics, ritual science, grammar, etymology, metrics, and astronomy. And it says he said the higher is that by which one grasps the imperishable but that it's what one can't grasp. And the remainder of this *upanishad* is a debate.

Unclear is whether the debate is between the teacher and the householder. But clear is that it's between a proponent of *dhyana yoga* and a proponent of *jnana yoga*, with the proponent of *jnana yoga* arguing for the use of rituals and such as speaking of breath or food as though its a necessary step toward obviating such distinctions, while the proponent of *dhyana yoga* struggles to use words to describe what he says one can't grasp. But each, using diction common to all the *Mukhya Upanishads*, blurs that distinction and thus effectually argues the other's argument.

And the *Prasna Upanishad*, the title of which means "question", is a story of six learned *brahmins* carrying firewood to another *brahmin* and, after asking him to teach them the highest *brahman*, asking him six questions. Essentially, the questions are a scattering of Vedic references, and the replies are further scattering in the way the *Vedas* otherwise use metaphors as though they explain metaphors. And, to the question of what world one



would win by meditating on the syllable “om” until death, the teacher shatters that syllable into its three phonemes.

He treats “a” separately, then treats “a” and “u” together, and then treats “a” and “u” and “m” as one and sites some verses saying a man knowing om as the only support attains the supreme that’s serene, beyond old age and death, and free from fear. And it says poets proclaim that scattering through the world and the mid-regions and the place that’s the *Vedas*. And it closes by bidding homage to the supreme seers.

And some commentators say the title of the *Mandukya Upanishad* means “frog” while others say it’s the name of a breed of horses while others say it refers to the bottom of a horse’s hoof. And, after calling om *brahman*, the *atman* consisting of the four quarters, and simply om, it also shatters “om” into the phonemes “a”, “u”, and “m”. And it says they’re three of the quarters.

And, during the shattering, it calls the first quarter universal, calls the second brilliant, calls the third intelligent, assigns them various other possessions and characteristics, and further describes the one it calls intelligent as the *upanishads* generally describe *brahman*.

But, after the shattering, it says the fourth quarter is beyond the reach of ordinary transactions, the cessation of the visible, and auspicious and unique. And this *upanishad* closes by saying that thus the *atman* is om and that anyone who knows that enters the *atman* by way of the *atman*. So it somewhat concisely epitomizes the Vedic metaphorical cycle of shattering and reuniting.

But “*maitri*” is Sanskrit for “friendship” or benevolence”. And the *Maitri Upanishad*, the most recent of the thirteen *Mukhya Upanishads*, begins by saying it’s the *brahman* offering that’s the laying of the fire of the former works. Asking that, after laying the fires, the offering person meditate on the *atman*, it says that thus

the offering becomes complete and perfect, in all its parts. And then, asking upon whom one should meditate, it answers that one should meditate on Prana and that what follows is a story of him. But most of the remainder of this relatively long *upanishad* is a story of a teacher teaching a king.

The king's name is Brhadratha. Regarding his body as transitory, and having ceased to feel any desires, he establishes his son in his kingdom and goes into a forest where, standing with his arms upward and gazing at the sun, he practices the greatest penitence. And, at the end of a thousand days or years, a teacher comes to him.

The teacher is Sakayana, the adorable son of Sakayana and a knower of the *atman*, and he comes to the king burning with splendor like a smokeless fire and tells him to rise and choose a boon. Making obeisance and calling Sakayana the adorable one, Brhadratha says he doesn't know the *atman* and that he's heard that Sakayana knows its nature, and the boon he chooses is that Sakayana teach it to us. But, like Yama in the story of Naciketas, Sakayana asks Brhadratha to choose other desires and tells him accomplishment of his request was in ancient times but has become difficult to attain.

So Brhadratha, touching Sakayana's feet with his head, recites a song. In the song, referring to the body's insubstantiality, calling it a mass of substances ranging from bone to phlegm, and complaining of conditions ranging from greed to disease assailing it, Brhadratha asks what enjoyment and desires are to him. And then, referring to seeing the body perish as do entities ranging from gnats to great kings and on to mythical imaginings and other entities including oceans and Earth and stars, he asks what enjoyment and desires are to him in such a world.

Then, saying or singing that completely fulfilling a person's desires wouldn't keep the person from returning to Earth again and again, he asks for deliverance from that returning. And

then, saying or singing that his presence in this world is like that of a frog in a well with no water, he again calls Sakayana adorable and tells him he's our refuge. So, in the second chapter of this *upanishad*, Sakayana begins, with pleasure, his reply.

Calling Brhadhratha the banner of the race of a legendary king he names, he tells him he's widely famous by the name of the wind and that he's speedily attained his desire and knows the *atman*, that the *atman* he seeks is his. But Brhadhratha replies by asking Sakayana which *atman* he means. And then Sakayama gives this *upanishad* its name.

He tells Brhadhratha that the adorable Maitri said the *atman* is what ceaselessly exhales, proceeds upward while varying in various ways while not varying, and dispels the darkness of illusion. He tells him that what's at perfect rest, having risen from both the differential *atman* and the *atman* with no difference, to reach the supreme light and become what it is, is the *atman* that's the immortal and fearless, and also *brahman*. And, telling Brhadhratha that that's the knowledge of *brahman* and the *upanishads* as taught to us by the adorable Maitri, Sakayana says he'll tell it to him.

But what he tells him next is of a Vedic conversation between the Valakhilyas and Prajapati Kratu. In other Vedic writings, the Valakhilyas are authors of Vedic writings or sons of Kratu, while "*kratu*" means "strength" and has various referents in the *Vedas* while also being another name for Prajapati. But, whatever the Valakhilyas are, in this *upanishad* they're pure and eminently mighty.

And the conversation begins with their calling Prajapati Kratu the adorable one and telling him the differential *atman* has no intelligence, asking him to what being that's imperceptible to the senses belongs the power by which the differential *atman* seems to be intelligent, and asking him what moves it. And Prajapati Kratu replies with a scattering of Vedic assertions in

Vedic terms including references to Prajapati, Prana, reincarnation, and food, and to other Vedic writings. But it all adds up to saying all is all and thus is the cause and effect of all.

And, with more such questions and replies, that dialogue closes the second chapter and continues through the third and fourth chapters.

But the third chapter closes by defining two of the three *gunas*. “*Guna*”, generally, is a Sanskrit word meaning “quality” or “attribute”. But, in Vedic writings, the three *gunas* are *tamas*, *rajas*, and *sattva*.

*Tamas* is darkness, while *rajas* is impulsiveness, and *sattva* is purity of essence, the quality of being what anything or all perfectly is, essentially how *brahman* is.

But, more particularly in the *Vedas*, the *gunas* drive nature in various ways to varying degrees and mix in the personalities of each differential *atman* to determine how it behaves. And Prajapati Kratu says others have said results of *tamas* are fear, grief, sleep, sloth, carelessness, decay, sorrow, hunger, thirst, niggardliness, wrath, infidelity, ignorance, envy, cruelty, folly, shamelessness, meanness, pride, and changeability. And he says others have said results of *rajas* are inward thirst, fondness, passion, covetousness, unkindness, love, hatred, deceit, jealousy, vanity, restlessness, fickleness, instability, emulation, greed, patronizing of friends, family pride, aversion to disagreeable entities, devotion to agreeable entities, whispering, and prodigality.

And the fourth chapter begins with the Valakhilyas asking Prajapati Kratu how the differential *atman*, having escaped from the conditioning of the *gunas*, attains union with the *atman* that’s *brahman*. And one of the metaphors in this chapter is of the *karma* that some say justifies the caste system. “*Karma*” is a Sanskrit word meaning “work” or “action”.

But this chapter, as do other Vedic writings, uses it to refer to cause and effect and the absolute omnipresent interrelationship

between cause and effect that makes evident the unity of all. So, in the metaphorical Vedic use of the word “*karma*”, the notion that one must do one’s duty means only that one must be what one is because of that ubiquitous interrelationship. And this chapter makes clear that that’s ultimately *brahman*.

But, listing designations for personifications of fire, wind, the sun, time, breath, food, creation, destruction, and preservation, and saying time is Prana, the Valakhilyas ask Prajapati Kratu which is best and say the one he designates shall be theirs.

And that’s a reference to *bhakti yoga*. “*Bhakti*” is Sanskrit for “worship”, and *bhakti yoga* is the approach to *yoga* by way of worshiping a particular deific personification as though only it is *brahman*, and Prajapati Kratu’s reply clarifies that metaphorical function. He says those deific personifications are but the principal forms of the supreme immortal embodied *brahman*.

And, saying that, though *brahman* is all, each man in the world rejoices in that to which he clings, he asks that accordingly a man meditate on that to which he clings and worship it. But he also asks that, as the man wanders in higher and higher worlds until all differentiability perishes, when he becomes one with the *atman* that’s *brahman*, the person who’s all, he reject each. And that closes the fourth chapter.

But the fifth chapter exemplifies *bhakti yoga* in verse and tells a creation story telling how the *gunas* are relevant to it. At first, in the story, *tamas* is alone in *brahman*, but then it passes into *rajas* for *rajas* to pass into *sattva*. And, in the story, Rudra, Brahma, and Vishnu are the same as *tamas*, *rajas*, and *sattva*.

So that chapter closes by saying Vishnu is the one multiplying to infinity and pervading all beings and that it’s the person both within and without.

But the sixth chapter, beginning by saying the *atman* is Prana, and that it’s the sun with the designation Aditya with the two paths for it inwardly and outwardly revolving with the day and

the night, continues the dialogue between the Valakhilyas and Prajapati Kratu through more Vedic assertions, including that the lotus is the same as space, that *brahman* is the light in the sun, and that the sun is om. And, after also saying om is the three mantras weaving all things warp and woof, it also says it's the high chant and many other entities it specifies. And then, addressing Satyakana, this chapter says om is the high and the low *brahman*.

And then, with more scattering of Vedic terms and ritual references and assertions that entities ranging from food to time are also other entities as all are *brahman* and om, this chapter continues the *jnana yoga* exercise that's basically all of the conversation between the Valakhilyas and Prajapati Kratu as it's also all of the Vedic writings.

And, referring to the *Gayatri*, a Vedic chant to the sun to which many Vedic writings refer, this scattering builds on three words on which the *Gayatri* builds, and it says Prajapati uttered them. But the three words, "*bhuh*", "*bhuvah*", and "*svar*", vary in meaning with their metaphorical context, and the *Gayatri* doesn't mention Prajapati, and "*gayatri*" means "hymn". So all of that is another metaphor for all Vedic writing.

And, after that address to Sakayana, Sakayana fixes his heart on his inner person. But he also bows before Brhadhratha and speaks to him as though the entity addressing him were speaking also to Brhadhratha. He tells him that, by that knowledge of *brahman*, the sons of Prajapati mounted the path to *brahman*.

And he tells him that, by the practice of *yoga*, a man attains contentment, and he tells him that that's dispassionate endurance of contrarities. He also cites the Vedic injunction that a man not reveal that deep secret to one who isn't a son or a student and in complete devotion to his teacher. But, while citing that injunction may open a door to the shattering of one's head, it also enjoins that the person to whom one reveals the secret also be dispassionate.

And, exclaiming the syllable “om”, he asks that the person continue studying, speaking and meditating on, and worshipping, *brahman*.

And he asks that the person do it in a pure place while pure and abiding in the *sattva guna*. He says that then, in the absorption of the perfection of *brahman* while yearning toward the perfect, the person becomes other than the differential *atman*. He says that, with the person’s bonds asunder by earning the manifestation of *brahman*, void of all hope and desire and void of fear of others as one is void of fear of one’s *atman*, the person attains the boundless happiness of the imperishable, the supreme treasure.

He also says the natural makeup of a man is desires whose characteristics are certainty and volition and awareness of the differential *atman* and that thus the man is in bonds. But then he says that thus one who’s the opposite of that is free. And then he says how.

He says that, while some here say the *gunas* bind with certitude through the differences of nature and that deliverance occurs upon the destruction of the fault of certitude, only by the mind does one see or hear.

He says desire, volition, doubt, belief, disbelief, certainty, uncertainty, shame, opinions, and fear are nothing other than the mind. He says that, with the *gunas* carrying one along and darkening one’s imaginings, unstable and vacillating and full of desires while destitute and forlorn, one becomes one’s own subjection. And he says that then, thinking thoughts of the separateness of one’s *atman* and others’, one binds the *atman* in the differential *atman* as one binds a bird in a snare.

And then, saying that thus certitude and volition and awareness bind one and that thus the alternative is emancipation, he asks that one stand void of certitude and volition and imagining the differential *atman*. He says that’s the path to *brahman*, the opening of the door through which one passes to the other side of

darkness, to wherein is the fulfillment of all desires. And he refers to the hierarchy in the closing chapter of the *Katha Upanishad* with the senses the lowest state and no distinctions the highest.

He says one says that, when the five instruments of perception are still and stand together with the mind with reasoning also not stirring, one calls that the highest state.

And then this *upanishad* says that, having thus spoken and fixing his heart on his inner person, Sakayana ceased. And then, calling Brhadratha the king with a name for the wind, this *upanishad* says Brhadratha bowed before Sakayana and duly worshiped him and then went full of contentment to the northern path, the path that's the only path, the path to *brahman*. But it also says that, bursting open the door of the sun, he departed by the upward path. So the scattering of metaphors and similes continues. And it extends into shattering.

But it also says the scattering and shattering and the *Vedas* all belong to the one. And, saying that what causes the cycle of reincarnation is the intellect and that what one thinks upon is what one becomes, it asks that one cleanse one's intellect with every effort. And it says that, when the intellect is at rest, one destroys all *karma* good or bad abiding in the *atman*.

And it assigns eminence to the fire ritual. And, literally, that burning all would be dispersal of all through fire and smoke into space and light, what at least metaphorically makes the fire ritual neither an offering nor a sacrifice, also may make it the most pure and complete metaphor for the basic Vedic promise. But then this chapter scatters and shatters further.

After bidding adoration to the Vedic personification of fire Agni, this chapter also bids adoration to Vedic personifications of wind and the sun. Then, calling his or her self the worshiper, the narrator calls all of them the rememberers of the world and asks them to give her or him the world, but then he or she bids adoration to *brahman*, abiding in all. And then, calling *brahman*



the rememberer of all, he or she asks *brahman* or the rememberer to give her or him all.

And, in various other Vedic ways, the remainder of this chapter says worshipping anything in various Vedic ways is worshipping all and thus is *bhakti yoga*.

And the seventh and final chapter of this *upanishad*, after an apparently materialistic scattering of Vedic metaphors, addresses Brhadratha with no mention of Sakayana. Addressing him as king, and telling him to follow then the impediments to knowledge, it says that one who's worthy of the sky lives with those who aren't and that that's the source of the net of yearning. It says that, regardless of revelation of a tree with branches spreading broadly before the worthy, those who aren't worthy of the sky cling to a meager bush.

And then it lists sorts of meager bushes, including those whom pleasure lures and those whom others always send on errands, those who beg in cities and those who perform offerings for those who shouldn't offer them, *sudras* who read Vedic writings and their disciples who do that, and craftsmen, knaves with matted hair, dancers and soldiers and actors, religious mendicants, outcasts, people kings corrupt in their service, people who seek profit by propitiating yakshas, rakshasas, ghosts, goblins, devils, serpents, imps, etc., and those who deceitfully don red garments, earrings, and skulls.

But then it refers directly to *veda*. It adds to that list those who, by false arguments, analogies, paralogisms, and artificial complexities, distract followers of *veda*. It says they're clearly thieves and unworthy of the sky, that thus one shouldn't associate with them, and that such bewilder the world.

And it says that, by such artificially complex denial of the *atman*, the world doesn't know *veda* from sophistry. But then, referring to a Vedic metaphorical counselor to the deities, it adds artificial complexity to its argument. It says the counselor became

clarity and brought that sophistry for the security of Indra and the destruction of the *asuras*. It says the purveyors of it make good appear to be evil and make evil appear to be good. And it says its fruit is like that of one who falls from one's caste.

But keeping one from falling from one's caste doesn't keep others from climbing above their caste. So, effectually, it says the security of the artificial complexity the counselor brought to Indra was the clarity *jnana yoga* brings. So it's secret only until one wends one's way through it

But next this final chapter of the *Maitri Upanishad* says the *devas* and *asuras* approached *brahman* and worshiped it and told it they desired to know the *atman* and that *brahman* pondered a long while and reflected that the *asuras* thought the *atman* was something other than itself and that *brahman* accordingly told them something other than the truth.

And next this chapter makes that a metaphor for how one sees paralogical falsity as though its truth. But, saying that what the Vedic writings declare is true and that the wise follow it, it asks that no *brahmin* study anything contrary to it. And it says the reason for that injunction is that the fruit of study contrary to *veda* would be such delusion.

And next it says the nature of *veda*, the supreme light of the space abiding in the heart, is in the three entities fire, the sun, and Prana and that om is the nature of that space.

But next it shatters into a scattering of more mundane metaphors.

And this benevolence *upanishad* closes by saying that, by way of both the false and the true having their way, the great *atman* appears to be two.

So, effectually, this *upanishad* may say all the *Vedas* say.

But, in India, the land where the most people claim to believe in the *Upanishads*, perhaps understandably because "India"

and “Hindu” are etymologically the same word, most collections of the *Mukhya Upanishads* begin with the *Isa Upanishad*.

“*Isa*” is Sanskrit for “ability” and can also mean “master”, and some people translate it to mean “lord”, or God.

But, in the *Isa Upanishad*, it effectually refers to the *atman* that’s *brahman*. And the *Isa Upanishad* is a poem beginning with the assertion that, whatever living being is in the world, the *isa* lives in the whole world. And next it says that thus we should eat what’s abandoned and not covet anyone’s wealth, and it also says that only through our *karma* should we desire to live our hundred years in this world, and that only in that way does *karma* not smear off on us.

And, saying those who kill the *atman* go after death to *asura* worlds, it says blind darkness cloaks those worlds. It says that, though the one doesn’t move, it’s swifter than the mind. And it says that, as it speeds on ahead, the deities can’t reach it.

It says that, while standing, it outpaces those who run. And, saying fire places the waters in it, it says it’s far away while near at hand and within the whole world while outside the whole world. And it says that, when a man sees all beings within his *atman*, it won’t seek to hide from him.

It asks what bewilderment or sorrow can be in regarding the *atman* of one who sees the unity that occurs when a discerning man sees that his *atman* has become all beings.

And then it says he’s reached the seed with no body or wound or sinews and no evil riddling.

But, saying that, existing in the *atman* and encompassing all, the wise one has dispensed objects through countless years, it says those who follow ignorance enter blind darkness while those who devote their *atman* to learning enter blinder darkness.

And, saying we’ve heard from the wise revealing *isa* to our understanding that it’s far different from either knowledge or ignorance, it says that one knowing knowledge and ignorance

together passes beyond death by ignorance and by knowledge attains immortality.

It says those who follow not becoming enter blind darkness while those who devote their *atman* to becoming enter blinder darkness. It says we've heard from the wise revealing all to our understanding that the *isa* is far different from either becoming or not becoming but that one who knows becoming and not becoming to be one passes beyond death by dissolution and attains immortality by becoming. But then the persona declaring this *upanishad* prays to the Vedic personification of the sun Pusan.

Saying a golden dish covers truth, the persona calls itself a man believing in truth and asks Pusan to uncover it, for him to see. But, after also calling Pusan the sole seer and Yama and a son of Prajapati, asking it to spread out its rays and draw in its light, and saying it sees its fairest form, it declares itself to be that also. And then, calling wind the immortal and saying ashes are one's body's lot, it exclaims the syllable "om".

And then, after asking the mind to remember the deed, it tells fire it knows all coverings. But then it asks fire or *isa* or deity in general or *brahman* both to lead us to wealth along an easy path and to keep the corruption that angers far from us. And then it promises for that disposition the most complete mantra of submission.

So this poem may be a key more simple than the *Maitri Upanishad* to synthesizing all Vedic writing and accordingly, hopefully, all.

## Buddha

“*Buddha*” means “consciousness” both in the Pali dialect of Sanskrit and in Vedic Sanskrit, and the Pali word “*sutta*” means “thread” and refers to what people calling themselves Buddhist say are records of what a person they call Buddha taught, how to be conscious of all.

That person’s name was Siddhattha Gotama. He was a son of a king of the Shakyas, a people of a region south of the Himalayas in what we now call Nepal, near its border with India. But Buddhists say Siddhattha left his father’s palace at 29 years old to learn how to end all the suffering in the world.

And, whatever his motive was, he spent most of the remainder of the eighty years of his life wandering along the Ganges valley teaching what he learned. And, while Pali was the dialect of Sanskrit the Shakyas spoke, Vedic Sanskrit was then the language of the Hindus along the Ganges valley. But Buddha wrote nothing.

So, because scripture is writing, Buddhists say Buddhism has no scriptures. But, while the *suttas* are Pali records of memories of Buddha’s words Buddhists passed on vocally for about three centuries before any one wrote them, “*sutra*” is the Vedic Sanskrit word for “*sutta*”. And, while Buddhists use “*sutra*” to designate later efforts to clarify in Vedic Sanskrit writing what

Buddha taught, many Buddhists regard some *sutras* as more authoritative than some *suttas*.

Yet, while, like most of the writers of the *Upanishads*, Buddha taught most basically that a common thread ties all together into common decency, most of the *suttas* and *sutras* are less metaphorical than are most of the *Vedas*. So this section of this book is an effort to say what the three *suttas* and two *sutras* most clearly definitive of Buddhism say Buddha taught. Other *suttas* and *sutras* are more metaphorical or more quotidian.

So these *suttas* and *sutras* are to Buddhism what the *Mukhya Upanishads* are to Hinduism.

The *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* is the seminal thread of Buddhism. “*Dhamma*” is Pali for “*dharmā*”, and “*dhammacakkappavattana*” is Pali for “setting in motion the wheel of *dhamma*”. And, establishing a format for reporting *suttas*, this *sutta* begins with its narrator saying the fortunate one told what it says he said to five *bhikkhus* at the deer sanctuary near Varanasi. *Bhikkhus* are mendicants, and Varanasi was the kingdom of Janaka and is now a city in northeastern India, on the Ganges. And, like most *suttas*, this *sutta* mainly ostensibly directly quotes Buddha.

In it, at least ostensibly, he says one who has gone forth from the worldly life should follow neither of two extremes, that one should seek neither sensual pleasure nor sensual pain. He says sensual pleasure is low, coarse, vulgar, and unprofitable and that sensual pain is not only painful but also ignoble and unprofitable. And he says the *tathagata*, having avoided those extremes, understood the middle way producing knowledge and leading to calm and entrance into consciousness, *nibbana*.

“*Tathagata*”, in both Pali and Vedic Sanskrit, means “having arrived”. And “*nibbana*” in Pali and “*nirvana*” in Vedic Sanskrit mean “blowing out”. And, in Buddhism, each of those

three words refers to arriving at extinguishing the illusion of differences.

That is, in Buddhism, “*tathagata*” refers to arriving at consciousness of the unity of all by way of “*nibbana*” or “*nirvana*.” But many persons calling themselves Buddhists consider Buddha’s use of the word “*tathagata*” in the *suttas* and *sutras* to be a way Buddha refers to his differential *atman*. So they use both Buddha and Tathagata as titles for Siddhattha Gotama.

But, in the *suttas* and *sutras* in this book, Buddha doesn’t. He uses both words to refer to being conscious of the primal unity. So, effectually, he uses them as Hindus most generally use the word “*brahman*”.

And, similarly, many Buddhists treat the word “*atman*” as though it refers only to the differential *atman*. And, somewhat misrepresenting Hinduism, so do many of the *suttas* and *sutras*. But this *sutta* leaves that distinction ambiguous.

And it also leaves other diction relativity ambiguous. In it, calling the middle way the noble eightfold path, Buddha says it’s right vision, right thought, right speech, right deeds, right living, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. But he doesn’t say what’s right.

So, in Buddhism as in Hinduism, knowing what’s right depends on context. And the context particular to Buddhism is thousands of *suttas* and hundreds of *sutras*. So one may lose oneself in Buddhist scattering as one loses oneself in Hindu scattering.

But the context particular to this relatively brief *sutta* is what Buddha calls the four noble truths.

The first he designates is the noble truth of suffering. He says it’s birth, age, disease, death, sorrow, lamentation, grief, pain, association with what one doesn’t love, dissociation from what one loves, and not acquiring what one desires. And he says that more

concisely it's the five heaps of clinging. And, similarly, neither are the other three noble truths axioms. Essentially they're definitions.

Other *suttas* and *sutras* say the five heaps of clinging are forms, sensations, perceptions, mental entities, and awareness. So here, effectually, Buddha is saying suffering and those five basic conditions or circumstances of what one calls personal being are reciprocal causes. And other *suttas* and *sutras* also say clinging or attachment is a basic obstruction of *nibbana* or *nirvana*.

That is, with clinging being a function of desire, Buddhism associates suffering with desire for the most basic conditions of differential recognition.

And the second noble truth he designates is the origin of suffering. He says it's that the desire for a variety of sensual pleasures in a variety of circumstances accompanies the thirst for becoming and being and not being. So, basically, he's saying suffering arises from clinging to particularities of life and considering the value of one's life to depend on such.

The third noble truth he designates is cessation of suffering. And he says that's complete cessation of that desire and thirst, relinquishing it and abandoning it, and liberating oneself from it. So he says it's detaching oneself from it completely.

So, with detachment being the opposite of clinging, he's effectually saying the third noble truth is what the first and second noble truths imply. And the fourth noble truth he designates is the way leading to that cessation. And he says that's the noble eightfold path.

So, in the context of this *sutta*, what's right is incorporating detachment into those steps along those components of the noble eightfold path in order eventually to extinguish any distraction from consciousness of all being one.

And, basically, next he says one must actuate those noble truths and that he has, but most of the rest of this *sutta* is



assurances of its credibility and declarations of propagation of it, some from Buddha and some from others.

Buddha tells the *bhikkhus* that, with the thought of the noble truth of suffering, vision, knowledge, perception, and light concerning considerations one hasn't known before arose in him, and he says the same of the thought that one must understand that and of the thought that one has understood it.

And he says the same of the origin of suffering and abandoning that origin, of the cessation of suffering and accomplishing that cessation, and of the following the path leading to the cessation.

Then Buddha says that, as long as his vision of actuality concerning those four noble truths in those three approaches and twelve progressions wasn't fully clear to him, he didn't declare to the world with its *devas* and *maras* or to the mass of beings with its *devas* and humans that he'd realized the incomparable perfect consciousness.

*Maras* are Vedic personification of death. The three approaches are the three degrees of realization of the thoughts he specifies in regard to each noble truth he designates. And the twelve progressions are three approaches for each of the four noble truths.

And next in this recording of this *sutta* Buddha says that, when his vision of actuality concerning those four noble truths in those three approaches and twelve progressions was fully clear to him, he declared to the world with its mass of being including those various entities that he'd realized the incomparable perfect consciousness.

The consciousness is incomparable because it's of all being all. But the references to *maras* and *devas* are an indication of Buddhism's relationship to Hinduism and may be an indication of failure of persons recording or conveying this *sutta* to understand what Buddha tried to convey. And another question is whether

Siddhattha studied the *Vedas* carefully enough in his first 29 years of quotidian life to recognize that wending through their metaphors could have taken him to the realization he achieved through his travels.

So, as Buddha's designation of the eightfold path leaves knowing what's right to context, those questions leave presentations of this *sutta* in their cultural context. And next, in this presentation of it, Buddha says that thus his mind's deliverance is unshakable and that then is the last birth and that no more rebecoming shall be. And that's a presentation of the Hindu metaphor of reincarnation.

But that metaphor easily fits into Buddha's assertion that ending suffering requires detaching oneself from one's desire for the particularities of life. And Buddha's saying he didn't present his discovery until he actualized it for himself subordinates the diction to the actuality. So, leaving each aspirant to verify this *sutta* for his or her self, it obviates any assertion of sectarianism.

And all diction is somewhat cultural. But, establishing a convention for closing *suttas* and *sutras*, this *sutta* says the five *bhikkhus* approved of the words of the fortunate one as though the fortunate one and each *bhikkhu* were a separate differential *atman*. And this *sutta* also says someone whose name was Kondanna realized during that exposition of Buddha's that all having the nature of arising has the nature of ceasing.

So the difficulty may be only in the epistemological shift from the absolute to the relative that's inherent in any effort to use the relativity of words to explain the absolute.

And this *sutta* says that, when the fortunate one set in motion the wheel of *dhamma*, *devas* of various places proclaimed with one voice that he'd done that in that deer sanctuary. And the various places it designates for the *devas* are of metaphorical or mythical cosmology and, also indicating Hindu influence, include

Yama. And this closing also says no recluse or *brahmin* or *deva* or *mara* or Brahma or other being in the world can stop it.

So, noting that, while both *maras* and Yama are Vedic personifications of death, Brahma is the primary Vedic personification of creation, again consider Kondanna's realization.

Consider whether Kondanna understood all to be one or many and whether he thought any difference is between arising and ceasing.

And this *sutta* also says echoing and re-echoing of that utterance reached the upper realms and other places it designates. And it says that thus, in a moment and an instant and a flash, word of the turning of the wheel of *dhamma* went forth up to the world of Brahma and that the system of ten thousand worlds trembled and quaked and shook and that a boundless sublime radiance surpassing the power of the *devas* appeared on Earth. And this *sutta* closes by saying that then the fortunate one uttered that Kondanna truly understood and that that's how Kondanna received the appellation Kondanna the wise.

So that closing, with its references to differential *atmans* and other beings and worlds and smaller places and times, literally disintegrates the notion of absolute unity.

So, whether or not this recording of this *sutta* describes a path to *nibbana*, it opens paths to mythical metaphors and to distinguishing differential *atmans*. So, by being its closing, this *sutta*'s closing leaves the reader with the question of whether the persons transmitting it through the centuries understood it. But, of course, those questions don't require discounting what this *sutta* or other *suttas* or *sutras* say Buddha said in them.

And, if the basic premise of Buddhism and Hinduism is true, the reader is Buddha and all. And the notion that all having the nature of arising has the nature of ceasing doesn't except the power of imagining the *devas* or the wheel of *dhamma*. With all being one, beginnings are no different from endings, etcetera.

But further complicating all that is translation, and an example of that is that many translators translate the Sanskrit word “bhagavan” to mean “blessed one” or “lord”, while it literally means “fortunate”. And, while “blessed” literally means fortunate, dualistic scriptures use it to designate fortune particular to their doctrine. And the word “lord” denotes the duality of superiority.

So using that translation of that word *suttas* and *sutras* use to refer to Buddha is like treating the word “*buddha*” as though it’s a title for Siddhattha Gotama conferring on him particularly powerfully divisive duality.

And that would be the opposite of the meaning of the Buddhists words “*tathagata*” or “*nibbana*” or “*nirvana*”.

“*Satipatthana*” is Pali for “mindfulness foundation”. And, in keeping with conventions for beginnings of *suttas* and *sutras* the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* initiated, the record in writing of the *Satipatthana Sutta* begins by describing the circumstances of Buddha’s saying what this *sutta* says he said. It says that, while living at Kammasadamma, a market town of the Kuru people, the fortunate one addressed some *bhikkhus*.

Then in it, giving it its title, Buddha tells the *bhikkhus* that the only way for the purification of being, overcoming sorrow and lamentation, and attaining *nibbana*, is the four foundations of mindfulness.

And then he tells the *bhikkhus* what those foundations are. He tells them that here, ardent, clearly comprehending, and mindful, having overcome in this world covetousness, repugnance, and grief, a *bhikkhu* lives contemplating body in body, feeling in feeling, awareness in awareness, and mental entities in mental entities. And then he says how the *bhikkhu* contemplates each of those foundations.

But important to note, considering that bodies, feelings, awareness, and mental entities apparently differ from one another,

is that mindfulness literally includes distraction from consciousness of unity. So that contemplation, like the *suttas* and *sutras*, is but steps in that direction. And, in this *sutta*, Buddha speaks accordingly.

He says that, to contemplate body in body, the *bhikkhu* goes to a forest and sits at the foot of a tree or in an empty place. He says that, crossing the legs, with the body erect and the mindfulness alert, the *bhikkhu* arouses mindfulness of the object of meditation, the breath before the *bhikkhu*. He says that, mindfully inhaling and mindfully exhaling, the *bhikkhu* thinks the inhaling or exhaling is short or long and that he understands whether the breathing is short or long.

But then, as the *Upanishads* treat Prana as the union of all the vital functions, Buddha says in this *sutta* that the *bhikkhu* thinks that by way of breathing in or out he'll experience the whole body and calm its activity.

And he says the *bhikkhu* does that as a clever turner or turner's apprentice turns long or short while understanding which he's doing.

And he says that thus the *bhikkhu* lives contemplating the body in the body internally or externally or both internally and externally, that the *bhikkhu* lives contemplating origination entities or dissolution entities in the body or both origination entities and dissolution entities in the body, or that the establishment of the *bhikkhu's* mindfulness is with the thought that the being of the body is only to the extent necessary for knowledge and remembrance, and that the *bhikkhu* lives with no attachment, clinging to nothing in the world.

And, excepting what he says of the turner and the turner's apprentice, he repeats that in regard to each of the other mindfulness foundations and again for many of the components of them he designates.

So, with a turner being one who operates such as a potter's wheel or a lathe, the reason he doesn't repeat what he says of the turning would be that it's but an illustration of detachment.

That is, essentially, Buddha is saying that the *bhikkhu's* regard for his breath and body is no different from the *bhikkhu's* regard for anything else.

So, with what he says of the turning being but a way of saying what he repeats regarding clinging, he's saying the *bhikkhu* perceives all as one with no disparity between anything and anything. And, while Buddha also uses masculine pronouns to refer to *bhikkhus* in general, that also exemplifies the limitations of the meaningfulness of linguistic conventions. And, before extending that notion of detachment to the other three foundations of mindfulness, Buddha extends it to dispositions of the body beyond breathing.

He extends it to recognizing whether the body is going or standing still and whether it's sitting or lying down. He says the *bhikkhu* practices clear comprehension of whether he or she is going forward or backward, looking straight on or looking away, or bending or extending. He says the *bhikkhu* practices such clarity of comprehension in her or his various forms of dressing, in carrying the alms bowl, and in eating, drinking, chewing, and savoring. He extends that recognition and comprehension to the *bhikkhu's* defecating, urinating, falling asleep, and awakening. And he includes in it the *bhikkhu's* speaking and keeping silent.

And next Buddha says the *bhikkhu* reflects on the body's being full of the many impurities the skin hems in from the soles of the feet up and from the top of the hair down. He lists nails and teeth, skin and flesh and bones and marrow, various threads or strands of connection or conduction, kidneys and the heart and liver and spleen and lungs, the stomach and intestines and feces and urine, bile and phlegm and pus and blood, sweat and tears and saliva, fat and grease and mucus, and synovial fluid. And he says

that reflection is as a man with seeing eyes, loosening a double-mouthed provision bag containing various grains, thinks that in the bag are hill paddy and paddy, green gram and cow peas, and sesamum and rice.

And he says the *bhikkhu* reflects on the modes of materiality, the modes of solidity, cohesion, caloridity, and oscillation, as a clever cow butcher or cow butcher's apprentice would reflect, having slaughtered a cow and divided it into portions, while sitting at a juncture of four highways. And of course, like comparing breathing to turning, comparing contemplation of biological functions to contemplation of grain in a bag and comparing reflecting on conditions of materiality to reflecting on marketing meat also refer to detachment. So all of that refers to the clinging to nothing Buddha says in *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* is necessary for cessation of suffering.

But saying the *bhikkhu* is also mindful of the various entities and their circumstance effectually says the detachment isn't detachment from imagining the separate entities but only from their disparate emotional effect and thus from the actuality of those imaginings.

So, effectually, he's saying differentiation isn't unreal but only insubstantial. So, essentially, he's saying that what *nibbana* extinguishes isn't the perception to which Yajnavalkya refers in his conversation with Maitreyi but only failure of acceptance that all is one and thus neither better nor worse or actually variant from anything in any way making one imagine it to be anything that's other than anything else. And next in this *sutta* Buddha expresses that in regard to a dead body.

Describing in detail nine stages of decomposition of a body in a charnel ground he effectually directs the *bhikkhus* to compare that to their differential *atmans*.

A charnel ground is an area of land for dead bodies one neither buries nor burns. So, in the first stage, the body has been in the charnel ground one to three days and is blue and festering. And, in the second, crows and other predators and a variety of worms are eating the body.

In the third stage, the body is a skeleton with some flesh and blood and tendons holding it together. In the fourth, blood smears the skeleton, and tendons hold it together, but it has no flesh. In the fifth stage, tendons continue to hold the body's skeleton together, but it has neither blood nor flesh.

In the sixth stage the body is a scattering of bones with a hand bone, a foot bone, a shin bone, a thigh bone, the pelvis, the spine, and the skull all in different directions.

In the seventh stage the bones are white like a conch. In the eighth the bones are together in a heap more than a year old. And, in the ninth, they've decayed into dust.

But, after the description of each stage, Buddha says a *bhikkhu* seeing it thinks his or her body is also of that nature and is going to be like it and that her or his body hasn't passed beyond the condition of becoming like it.

And, also after the description of each stage, he repeats what he said of internality and externality, origination and dissolution entities, knowledge and remembrance, and attachment and clinging. So, by being a process from unity to scattering before gathering into unity again, the descriptions are also a metaphor for the metaphor of one's head shattering apart before returning to *yoga*. And repeating the call for detachment after each stage essentially calls for recognizing that the unity always is anyway.

And thinking a *bhikkhu*'s body is of the nature of that body and is going to be like it and hasn't passed beyond the condition of becoming like it is also effectually an assertion of the inevitability of that recognition or perception or awareness or realization.



But, in this *sutta*, though Buddha also repeats regarding feeling in feeling what he says of internality and externality, what he says of feeling in feeling otherwise is less metaphorical than what he says of body in body. He says nothing particular to contemplating feeling other than that the *bhikkhus* recognize whether they're experiencing a pleasant feeling, a painful feeling, or a feeling neither pleasant nor painful and whether the feelings they're experiencing are worldly or spiritual. So, effectually, all he says of feelings is that the *bhikkhus* contemplate detachment from emotions while recognizing them for their recognizability..

That is, he says one must recognize the differences only to the extent of identifying them, effectually that one must recognize emotions unemotionally.

So, essentially, he says differentiating emotions, like differentiating components of the body from the entirety of the *atman*, may distract from the experiencing of the totality of all that's the absolute bliss and space and light and all else that's the expansive totality that's *brahman*, but that neither must one cling to that distraction.

And, of contemplating awareness in awareness, Buddha says the *bhikkhus* recognize whether their awareness is or isn't with lust or hate or ignorance, whether it's constricted or distracted, whether or not its state has become great, whether or not another state of awareness is superior to it, and whether or not it's quiescent or free.

And, of course, Buddha also repeats regarding that contemplation that a result of it is the *bhikkhus*' living independently and clinging to nothing in the world. And, also of course, mental entities in mental entities, the fourth mindfulness foundation Buddha designates in this *sutta*, subsumes the other three. And, though Buddha designates five taxonomies for contemplating mental entities, they intertwine with one another and all of Buddhism.

And perhaps more plainly indicating the cohesiveness of Buddhist doctrine, the fifth of those taxonomies is the four noble truths from the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, and the second is the five heaps of clinging the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* makes focal to its explication.

And the other three, the five hindrances, the six internal and six external sense bases, and the seven factors of consciousness, plainly intertwine with the second and fifth.

The five hindrances are sensuality, anger, lethargy, worry, and doubt. And the *bhikkhus* recognize having each when it's present, not having it when it's absent, how the arising of each comes to be, how the abandonment of each arisen hindrance comes to be, and how one keeps each of the hindrances from arising again after one has abandoned it. But, though Buddha also repeats regarding the five hindrances what he says of internality and externality and detachment, they're specific personal dynamics.

So that contemplation may be the most practically purposeful category of contemplation this *sutta* designates.

But it also has a direct dynamic relationship to detachment. That is, while contemplating the five heaps of clinging may be the most broadly purposeful, accomplishing that contemplation may depend on contemplating the five hindrances. What the five hindrances most directly hinder is detachment.

And the five heaps of clinging, forms, sensation, perception, mental entities, and awareness, are basically designations for differentiation of entities of which one may be aware. And, of course, with mental entities being the foundation of mindfulness of which the five heaps of clinging are a subcategory, they subsume the other five heaps of clinging as the heaps of clinging subsume all the mental entities. And, while one may call that redundancy, contemplating redundancy essentially is directly contemplating unity and accordingly is frequent in the *suttas* and *sutras*.

So, in this *sutta*, Buddha doesn't distinguish between the five heaps. He says nothing in particular to that taxonomy of mental entities beyond that the *bhikkhus* consider how each heap arises and disappears. But, with arising and disappearing determining whether or not an entity is susceptible to contemplation, any contemplation effectually demands considering the process of *nibbana* through distinguishing between consciousness and awareness.

So, effectually subsuming all the foundations of mindfulness by including the mind and the mental entities, all of that contemplation effectually uses redundancy to idealize that distinction. And, of course, one can especially say that of contemplating awareness being both a foundation of mindfulness and a heap of clinging. And the six internal and six external sense bases are literally the foundation of imagining that distinction.

They're the eye and sights, the ear and sounds, the nose and odors, the taste buds and flavors, the somatosensory system and what's tangible, and the mind and mental entities.

So, in their regard, Buddha says *bhikkhus* recognize each base and the fetter arising dependent on the interdependence between each internal base and its external base, how each fetter comes to be if it hasn't arisen and how abandoning each arisen fetter comes to be, and how one keeps each fetter from arising again after one has abandoned it.

And, as Buddha doesn't say in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* how the noble eightfold path is ways, neither does he say in this *Sutta* how any of the interdependence of the sense bases is fetters.

But "fetter" is effectually a synonym for "clinging" or "attachment". So, if the title of this *sutta* is appropriate to it, abandoning dependence on the interdependence of the six sets of sense bases would effect detachment from all dependence or interdependence and obviate any need for this *sutta*. And, literally,

so would contemplating the fourth of the five taxonomies of mental entities Buddha designates in it.

That taxonomy, the seven factors of consciousness, is mindfulness, investigation of mental entities, energy, joy, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity.

And Buddha says the *bhikkhus*, also recognizing having each of those factors when it's present and not having it when it's absent, recognize how each factor arises if it hasn't arisen and how the completion by cultivation of each comes to be.

So, beyond the redundancy of including in this taxonomy mindfulness and investigation of mental entities, calling this taxonomy the factors of consciousness subsumes all of Buddhism. And, other than the instrumentality of cultivation, Buddha's directions for contemplating the subcategories of this subcategory of the mental entities foundation of the foundations of mindfulness add nothing to his instructions for contemplating the other four of the five taxonomies of contemplation of mental entities. But, also of course presumably, cultivation of means to consciousness is the purpose of all the contemplation this *sutta* says the *bhikkhus* do.

And Buddha's beginning his teaching in this *sutta* by saying it's the only means to *nibbana*, essentially to extinguishing the illusion of such as factors to be conscious of all at once, says that. So, of course, in this *sutta*, Buddha doesn't elaborate on the fifth and final category of mental entities, the four noble truths. He says nothing of them here other than that the *bhikkhus* understand what each truth is and that it accords with actuality.

But next, also of course, Buddha says once more that the *bhikkhus* live contemplating mental entities internally or externally or internally and externally, contemplating origination entities or dissolution entities or origination and dissolution entities, or that they establish their mindfulness with the thought that mental entities are only to the extent necessary for knowledge and

memory, and that the bhikkhus live independently and cling to nothing in the world.

Buddha doesn't say why that bears repeating, why one must go beyond remembering this *sutta*'s words, or why one must contemplate the foundations it designates. But, if one contemplates as this *sutta* says Buddha says *bhikkhus* contemplate, one may discover much difficulty in perceiving how or when either origination or dissolution of mental entities arises. So that's the answer to those questions.

That is, if digging oneself out of one's delusions of disparity were easy, one wouldn't need to contemplate.

And, finally in this *sutta*, Buddha refers to that process in terms of time.

He says that, if any person sustains contemplation of those foundations of mindfulness in that way for seven years, the person properly may expect to attain complete consciousness then. But he also says that, if a form of clinging then remains, the person may achieve the condition of no more reincarnations in other lengths of time ranging from six years to a week. And he doesn't say what would make the difference.

So, effectually, he says time is irrelevant to both consciousness and incarnation.

But, while this *sutta* suggests that one's imaginings are as real as anything else and that thus the purpose of the contemplation isn't to detach oneself from them but only to detach oneself from imagining them to be different from one another, that distinction is also only a linguistic convention.

So, still, he says detaching oneself from imagining differences replaces awareness of the various entities with consciousness only of the expanse of all that's Buddha or *buddha* or *brahman*.

But, following the mundane conventions of closing *suttas* and *sutras*, this *sutta* also says the *bhikkhu*'s approved the words of the fortunate one.

So still one waddles in linguistic conventions.

The *Metta Sutta* is a poem in ten four-verse stanzas. In Pali, “*metta*” means “friendship” or “benevolence”, as does “*maitri*” in the Vedic Sanskrit of the *Maitri Upanishad* and most broadly the English word “mate”. But this *sutta* neither says Buddha said it nor follows any of the other conventions of *suttas*.

Its first stanza says that one who's adept at goodness and wishes to attain the state of tranquility should be able and perfectly upright while also being docile and gentle and humble.

Its second stanza says one should be accepting, easy to support, and not burdensome, and that one should live simply with few duties. It says one should have one's senses in control and should be discrete and not impudent. And it says one should have no greedy attachment to personal communal relationships.

Its third stanza, saying one shouldn't, by the least commission of any deed, bring reproach from other wise persons, asks for comfort and safety for all that be and that all be joyful and happy.

Its fourth and fifth stanzas, also asking for joy and happiness for all that be, specify those weak or strong, tall or short, large or small or of middle size, and flaccid or firm, whether or not they're visible, whether they dwell near or far away, and whether or not they've yet become

And its sixth stanza asks that no one despise any person in any place or wish another any harm in anger or ill will.

Its seven and eighth stanzas ask that, as a mother would protect her only son with her whole being, all that be maintain boundless thoughts of benevolence toward all that be in all the

world, above and below and all around, with no obstruction, malice, or enmity.

Its ninth stanza, asking that one, whether walking or sitting or lying down, pursue that mindfulness as long as one is awake, says one calls that *brahman* abiding here.

And its tenth stanza says that, abandoning sensuality and greed and with an endowment of virtue and insight and views not falling into error, one shall not again come from a womb.

Of course that reference to reincarnation also calls into question either the validity of the transmission of Buddha' teaching or the completeness of Buddhism's cultural independence.

And no other *sutta* or *sutra* as directly stipulates benevolence as a requirement for *nibbana* or *nirvana*. But, of course, compassion is inherent in the notion that all is one. That is, if one is all and feels anything, one must feel with all.

That is, conversely, malice is inherently schizoid obstruction of *nibbana*.

“Compassion”, etymologically, means “feeling with”.

But Buddhism has divided into two sects.

The older sect calls itself Theravada while the newer calls itself Mahayana. “*Theravada*” is Pali meaning “elders’ doctrine” while “*mahayana*” is Vedic Sanskrit meaning “large vehicle”. But Mahayana Buddhists call Theravada Buddhism Hinayana Buddhism.

“*Hinayana*” is Vedic Sanskrit for “small vehicle”. So the reason Mahayana Buddhists call Theravada Buddhists Hinayana Buddhists is the Mahayana notion of *bodhisattvas*. Mahayana Buddhists use the term “*bodhisattva*” to refer to persons devoting their self to leading all beings to *nirvana*.

But the Sanskrit word “*bodhisattva*” means “consciousness of the essence of being”. And that of course would be eliminating any awareness of any distinction between anything and anything.

And both Theravada Buddhists and Mahayana Buddhists recognize that the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* is the seminal thread of Buddhism. And Mahayana Buddhists tend to accept all of what Buddhists of both sects call *suttas*. But Theravada Buddhists tend not to accept what both call *sutras*.

And, by being inherently divisive, sectarianism is antithetical to Buddhism in general. So, in that regard, neither Theravada Buddhists nor Mahayana Buddhists are wholly Buddhist. But, now, many more persons calling themselves Buddhist claim Mahayana Buddhism than claim Theravada Buddhism.

And, excepting the difference of language, the most sectarian difference between *suttas* and *sutras* is in that *sutras* have fewer references to Hinduism.

But that may be only because the recording of the *suttas* was nearer to the time of the life of Siddhattha Gotama. And that consideration is contrary to the notion that Siddhattha Gotama is Buddha. And it's contrary to the basic premise of Buddhism.

It's only a linguistic convention.

What English-speaking people call the *Diamond Sutra* is a Mahayana Buddhist effort to obviate any straying from the fundamental principle of Buddhism.

Its Sanskrit title is *Vajracchedika Prajnaparamita Sutra*.

“*Vajra*” is Sanskrit for “diamond” or “thunder” while “*chedika*” is Sanskrit for “cane”. “*Prajna*” is Sanskrit for “wisdom” while “*para*” is Sanskrit for “beyond” while “*mita*” is Sanskrit for “fixed”. And a Vedic story calls a weapon of Indra's the *vajracchedika*.

But the *Vajracchedika Prajnaparamita Sutra* doesn't otherwise refer to Indra.

Beginning with the syllable “om”, it bids salutation and fortune to the *arya prajnaparamita*, and “arya” is Sanskrit for



“noble”. The Aryan people founded Hinduism after migrating from the Caucasus to the Indus valley and on to the Ganges valley and proving their nobility by improving India’s agriculture. But “*arya*” is also the Pali word for “noble” in the designations of the four noble truths and the noble eightfold path

Next, following conventions of the *suttas*, the narrator of this *sutra* says he or she has heard that once, while dwelling at Sravasti in the Jeta Grove in the garden of Anathapindika with 1250 *bhikkhus* and many *bodhisattva* great beings, the fortunate one dressed early in the morning, donned his cloak, and took his bowl into the great city Sravasti, to collect alms.

So saying the fortunate one collected alms effectually calls Buddha a *bhikkhu*.

Next in the narrative Buddha returns from his round. After eating he puts away his bowl and cloak and washes his feet. And then, in a seat arranged for him, he sits in the manner in which the *Satipatthana Sutta* says a *bhikkhu* sits in a forest to be mindful of the body. But then many *bhikkhus* approach him, salute his feet with their heads, walk around him to his right, and sit aside from him. And then a person this *sutra* calls the venerable Subhuti comes to the assembly and sits.

But then Subhuti rises, puts his upper robe over one shoulder, and places one knee on the ground.

And then he speaks to Buddha.

Calling Buddha well-gone, Subhuti tells him that exceedingly wonderful is how much the *tathagata arhat* fully conscious one has helped the *bodhisattvas* and favored them with the highest favor, and he asks him how a community son or daughter who has set out in the *bodhisattva* vehicle stands, progresses, and controls his or her thoughts. Buddha tells Subhuti he’s correct and, telling him to listen well and attentively, promises to do what he asked. And Subhuti, asking Buddha to do that, listens.

“*Arhat*” in Vedic Sanskrit and “*arahant*” in Pali mean “worthy”. In Buddhism those words refer to persons who have achieved *nirvana* and thus effectually are *buddhas* while retaining a semblance of their differential *atman*. And the word meaning “community” here is the Vedic Sanskrit equivalent of the Pali word designating personal communal relationships in the *Metta Sutta* and can also refer to genetic families or tribes or councils or communes of various kinds including communities of Buddhists.

Buddha begins his answer by saying that one who’s set out in the *bodhisattva* vehicle should produce a thought such as that one must lead all beings in the universe of beings into the realm of *nirvana* leaving nothing behind.

And, as in the *Metta Sutta*, he excepts no one from that social responsibility. He specifies comprehending in that term meaning “being” those whose birth is from eggs or wombs or moisture or miracle, those with perception or no perception and those with neither perception nor no perception, and any other being as far as one conceives any conceivable form of being. But he also says that, though innumerable beings thus have been led to *nirvana*, no being has been led to *nirvana*.

He says that’s because, if the notion of a being takes place in a *bodhisattva*, one can’t call that person a *bodhisattva*. And he says that’s because one shouldn’t call a *bodhisattva* anyone in whom the notion of an *atman*, an inherent essence, a life, or a personality takes place. But, of course, in that context, the *atman* to which he’s referring is what the *Maitri Upanishad* calls the differential *atman*, and that’s the general use of the word “*atman*” in both Mahayana Buddhism and Theravada Buddhism. And the word meaning “inherent essence” in that assertion is the Vedic Sanskrit word “*sattva*” designating both *bodhisattvas* and the *sattva guna*. So that assertion concisely expresses the purity of purpose of this *sutra* while also expressing the difficulty of using words to indicate that purpose.

And that's Buddha's primary method of communication in this *sutra*. For various reasons and in various ways, he continues expressing that difficulty through referring to other inconsistencies in ostensibly Buddhist diction, effectually to do what the *Upanishads* do with stories. And he leads Subhuti into exemplifying the difficulty of that somewhat as Aruni does in the *Upanishads*.

And next, saying that moreover a *bodhisattva* who presents a gift shouldn't depend on anything anywhere, he specifies not depending on what *Satipatthana Sutta* calls the six external sense bases.

Some *suttas*, in various ways, say attaining *nirvana* depends on accumulating merit by presenting gifts. But, throughout this *sutra*, Buddha uses words in various ways to question how such dependence or other relationships can have any significance in the face of the absolute interrelationship of all. So, perhaps suggesting another variance between Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism, that also effectually obviates the Hindu notion of giving cows and other gifts to *brahmin* teachers.

And, throughout this *sutra*, asking Subhuti what he thinks, Buddha lets Subhuti evaluate for himself the ineffectuality of words and other relativity. So this *sutra* questions the degree of detachment of people ostensibly following Buddha. But the basic question is how one can relate to all while dependent on nothing. And, of course, if all is all, giving anything must be giving all, etc. And next in this *sutra* Buddha brings space into the question.

He asks Subhuti whether he thinks the extent of space in the east is easy to measure. To Subhuti's negative reply, he extends that question to the south, the west or the north, upward, downward, and the intermediate directions. And, to Subhuti's continuing to reply negatively, he says that's also how the heap of merit of a greatly *sattva bodhisattva* who presents a gift with no dependence is similarly not easy to measure.

But, of course, all of that raises the question of what sort of gift a *bodhisattva* might give in consideration of all that.

And, after also saying that's also why those who have set out in the *bodhisattva* vehicle should present gifts independent of a notion of significance, Buddha asks Subhuti whether one can see the *tathagata* by his possession of marks. And Subhuti, also replying negatively to that, says his negative reply is because the *tathagata* has taught that the possession of marks one has taught is no possession of marks. And Buddha replies that, because fraud is in the possession of marks while no fraud is in no possession of marks, one is to see the *tathagata* from marks being as no marks.

Marks are inherently distinctions. And the notion that one can recognize great persons by 32 physical characteristics preceded Siddhattha Gotama. So it may have developed through Vedic extrapolation.

And the fraud here is false distinctions of both body and identity. But Subhuti's reply, while perhaps accurate, explains nothing. And what he says next indicates misunderstanding.

He asks whether, at the time of the collapse of the good doctrine, in the future period that's the last time that's the last five hundred years of the last epoch, when one teaches the words of this *sutra*, any beings will understand their truth.

So Buddha replies to those references to other *suttas* or *sutras* by telling Subhuti not to speak that way.

Subhuti is referring to false distinctions of time and doctrine and merit that may have arisen from extrapolating from metaphorical expressions in *suttas* in ways in which much Vedic literature developed from treating metaphorical expressions in the *Vedas* literally. But this is the only instance in this *sutra* in which Buddha admonishes Subhuti for anything. Otherwise he bears with him.

But that's as bearing with the abstraction of words and other delusions of difference is essential to producing *suttas* or

*sutras* to express the notion of leading differential *atmans* along the noble eightfold path to *nirvana*.

So, in this instance, next Buddha says such beings shall be in that time. He says that then shall be *bodhisattvas* with gifts of good conduct, virtuous qualities, and wisdom. And he says that then, during the teaching of the words of this *sutra*, they'll understand their truth.

But he also says they'll not be such as have honored and planted their roots of merit under but one Buddha. He says they'll be *bodhisattvas* who, during the teaching of the words of this *sutra*, will find a single thought of serene belief. But he says they'll be such as have honored and planted their roots of merit under many hundreds of thousands of *buddhas*.

He says the *tathagata* fully knows them through the *tathagata's buddha* cognition and sees them through the *tathagata's buddha* eye and that all of them shall beget and acquire an immeasurable and incalculable heap of merit.

But he says that's because no perception of an *atman*, an inherent essence, a life, or a personality takes place in them. And he says that neither do they have a perception of a *dharma* or of no *dharma*. He says that neither perception nor no perception takes place in them.

And he says that's because, were those *bodhisattvas* to have a perception either of a *dharma* or of no *dharma*, they'd thereby hold to an *atman*, an inherent essence, a life, or a personality.

And he says that's because a *bodhisattva* holds neither to a *dharma* nor to no *dharma* and that that's why the *tathagata* has taught with an obscure meaning the saying that those who know the discourse on *dharma* to be like a raft should forsake *dharmas* and should forsake no *dharmas* still more.

The metaphor of the raft is in a *sutta* saying that, as one wouldn't carry a raft with one after using it to cross a stream, neither would one have need of *dharma* after achieving *nirvana*.

But inherent in the literal meaning of that metaphor is the question of how, if *nirvana* is extinguishing the illusion of differences, more than one person can achieve *nirvana*. And, similarly, the question of the multiplicity of *buddhas* is like the question of whether the word “*tathagata*” in this *sutra* refers to the person Buddhists generally call Buddha. That would require holding to a differential *atman*.

But, of course, inherent in the notion that all is all is that all of these references to any persons or sorts of persons are delusional. So all of this *sutra*'s references to large numbers and to things' being what they are because they aren't are ways of saying all is all and that neither nothing nor everything is an exception. So, essentially, he's telling Subhuti that the reason he shouldn't speak as he has in regard to time and *dharma* is that neither *dharma* nor any other words or particular imaginings, whether or not they refer to the absolute, have separate significance.

But, essentially, he's also saying that, while the imaginings to which one refers are imaginable and thus no less real than one's ability to imagine, neither are they more real or absolutely significant than any imagining.

So he's saying the reason such persons shall be at that time is that, though not separately significantly, all always is. And all of Buddha's replies to Subhuti may be only an effort to answer such as the question of how communication can be between people if all is one. But, whatever one may say in any way, it's likely to have an obscure meaning.

That is, one could say we're both all and each of us and only the person with whom we converse, and one could say the

*suttas* and *sutras* are only an effort to remind oneself of what one already knows.

So one could also say that's how the *tathagata* taught the metaphor of the raft with an obscure meaning.

Words, be they *suttas* or *sutras* or *dhamma* or *dharma* or fall under any other ostensibly semantic label, are inherently abstract and thus inherently obscure. And, of course, that would also be true of this book. But on and on one goes

And, obscure or not, if this *sutra* has any meaning, whatever one may say and however obscure it may be, Buddha both continues and doesn't continue both anyone's and everyone's questions and both everyone's and no one's answers.

He asks Subhuti whether he thinks the *tathagata* has demonstrated any *dharma* or known any *dharma* to be the right and perfect consciousness. And Subhuti replies that he understands the fortunate one to have said the *tathagata* hasn't and that that's because one can't hold to or speak of the *dharma* the *tathagata* has demonstrated or fully known. But, raising the question of what Subhuti thinks is absolute or exaltation or noble or a person, Subhuti also says that's because an absolute exalts the noble persons.

That is, Subhuti or all implies that Subhuti or all thinks some differential *atmans* are absolutely noble, as though they have that separate characteristic as one would have a mark.

So then Buddha asks him whether, were a community son or daughter to fill this world system of a billion worlds with the seven precious things and present them as a gift to the *tathagata arhat* fully conscious ones, the son or daughter would beget a great heap of merit on the strength of that.

In Indian tradition, the seven precious things are gold, silver, diamonds, other gems, lapis lazuli, coral, and pearls. So, as with Buddha's reference to the 32 marks, he's essentially asking Subhuti whether the seven precious things are either more or less

real or worthy of exaltation than is any other differential imagining. And Subhuti, replying affirmatively, says the heap would be great because the *tathagata* spoke of it as no heap.

So, if only because Subhuti doesn't point out that the seven precious things have no separate preciousness or merit, whether he understands or is only parroting Buddha remains questionable.

But Buddha doesn't point that out. Instead, replying to that reply, he says the strength of another person's taking but one stanza of this discourse on *dharma* and demonstrating and illuminating it in full detail to others would beget a still greater heap of merit, a heap immeasurable and incalculable. And, making that a motif in this *sutra*, he expands further.

He says that's because from this discourse on *dharma* have issued the utmost perfect consciousness of the *tathagata arhat* fully conscious ones and *buddhas* and fortunate ones. And he says that's because the *tathagata* has taught that the *dharmas* special to the *buddhas* aren't merely the *buddhas'* special *dharmas*. And he says that's why one calls them the *dharmas* special to the *buddhas*.

So, effectually, he's saying this *sutra* is all *sutras* as all is all, and next he asks Subhuti a series of questions in reference to some terms more particular to Buddhism, to how Buddhists try to express all that in words

In Buddhism, winning the stream is a component of the metaphor of boarding the *bodhisattva* vehicle or a raft to flow toward *nirvana*, and once returning and never returning are components of the metaphor of reincarnation.

And Buddhists use those terms to refer to how firm is one's establishment in one's progress toward becoming an *arhat*.

So Buddha asks Subhuti whether a stream winner hopes or doubts that he or she has attained the fruit of a stream winner.

And Subhuti, replying that a stream winner doesn't hope or doubt she or he has attained that fruit, says that's because stream winners haven't won any *dharma*. Referring to what the



Satipatthana Sutta calls the six external sense bases, he says the reason one calls a stream winner a stream winner is that the stream winner has won none of them, and he also says hoping or doubting that would require the stream winner to hold to the notion of an *atman*, an inherent essence, a life, or a personality. And then Buddha asks the same question in reference to a once-returner and a never-returner.

And, also replying negatively to those questions, Subhuti also says of that conditionality that the reason is that the person has won neither any *dharma* nor no *dharma*. So then Buddha asks the same question in reference to an *arhat*. But Subhuti replies more elaborately to that question.

After repeating what he said of the other three terms, he says the reason *arhats* don't hope or doubt that they've won the fruit of an *arhat* is that no one calls any *dharma arhat*, and he says hoping or doubting that would place in the person a holding to an *atman*, an inherent essence, a life, or a personality.

But then he makes plain that he does that. He says his reply is why he's the one the *tathagata arhat* fully conscious one has indicated to be the foremost of those who dwell in peace. And he says that, though he's an *arhat* free of greed, he has no hope or doubt of his attaining the fruit of one.

And next, saying that, had he hope or doubt of that, the *tathagata* wouldn't have declared of him that the community son Subhuti who's the foremost of those who dwell in peace dwells nowhere, and he says that's why one calls him a dweller in peace. So Subhuti makes obvious that, instead of finding his way from Buddha's words to the extinguishing of the dilemma inherent in "*dharma*" and any other words, he's parroting them as one parrots dogma as though it were *dharma*. But Buddha continues the discourse.

He asks Subhuti whether the *tathagata* learned any *dharma* from the *tathagata arhat* fully conscious one Dipankara.

Dipankara, in some notions or efforts to express Buddhism, was a *buddha* longer ago than what one calls scientists now say what they call the universe began. So that's a metaphorical reference to the notion that time is no exception to all entities' being one.

And, though Subhuti also replies negatively to that question, he doesn't say why. So then Buddha says that, were any *bodhisattva* to promise to create harmonious *buddha* fields, the *bodhisattva* would be speaking falsely. And he says the falsity would be because the *tathagata* taught the harmonies of *buddha* fields as no harmonies and that that's why the *tathagata* spoke of harmonious *buddha* fields.

And that's a reference to metaphors in other *sutras*, including the long metaphorical *Lotus Sutra*, ostensibly describing *nirvana*.

But, literally, those metaphors differentiate space. So here Buddha says the *tathagata*'s having spoken of harmonious *buddha* fields as no harmonies is why the *bodhisattva* great beings should produce an independent thought, a thought not dependent on the six external sense bases. And then, asking Subhuti to consider one's conferring on a person a personage as great as the *atman* of the king of mountains Sumeru, Buddha asks him whether that *atman* would by that have become great.

And Subhuti, again calling Buddha well-gone, replies affirmatively but says the reason is that the *tathagata* has taught that becoming an *atman* or any other being is no becoming and that that's why one calls it becoming. Here, with the king of mountains presumably being a mountain, Buddha is referring to the physical body differentiation of the differential *atman*. But Subhuti doesn't refer to that aspect of the literal question.

So then Buddha asks Subhuti whether he thinks that, were Ganges rivers to be as many as the grains of sand in the great Ganges River, the grains of sand in them would be many. And Subhuti replies that the Ganges rivers would be many and that the

grains of sand would be many more. So Buddha uses that as another way of saying what he's said of the seven precious things.

He asks Subhuti whether, were a woman or a man to fill with the precious things as many world systems as those grains of sand and present them as a gift to the *tathagata arhat* fully conscious ones, that woman or man would beget on the strength of that a great heap of merit.

The world systems, like the Vedic worlds and stories and deities, are all the possible imaginings with the imaginary relationships among them.

And, to Subhuti's replying that the heap of merit would be immeasurable and incalculable, Buddha predictably replies that the merit a community son or daughter would beget on the strength of taking but one four-verse stanza of this discourse on *dharma* and demonstrating and illuminating it to others would be immeasurably and incalculably greater.

But to that he adds that the spot of earth where one has taken from this discourse on *dharma* but one four-verse stanza and taught or illuminated it would be effectually a shrine for the whole world with its *devas*, humans, and *asuras*. And he asks what then one should say of those who bear in mind this discourse on *dharma* in its entirety and recite and study and illuminate it in full detail for others. And he says they'll be most wonderfully fortunate and that either the *guru* or a *muni* representative of the *guru* shall be on the spot of earth where they do that.

But, of course, pertinent is that Buddha doesn't call this *sutra dharma* but a discourse on *dharma*. And, also of course, with all being all, any four-verse stanza would be every verse and stanza, and any spot would be every spot as any world or system of worlds would be every world and the universe. And, were one to arrive at what Buddha says *buddha* is, *devas* and humans and *asuras* would be neither more nor less real or better or worse than any or all being or beings.

And “guru” is a Sanskrit word meaning “teacher” and presumably here refers to Buddha and all *buddhas*. And, similarly of course in that context, one can learn from anyone and everyone and everything, and any representation is as real as anything else or all, and thus also representative of anything or all. And, presumably in that context, that’s how one can learn from this discourse on *dharma*.

So, if all is all, no *tathagata* or *buddha* is different from any *guru* or more or less conscious than anyone else, and all *dharmas* and discourses are all discourses and *dharmas*, because ultimately no else is.

But then Subhuti asks Buddha what is this discourse on *dharma* and how he should bear it in mind. And, not mentioning Indra’s weapon, Buddha replies that one calls it the *prajnaparamita* and that Subhuti should bear it mind as such. But he says one calls it that because the *tathagata* has taught as fixed beyond what the *tathagata* has taught as not fixed beyond.

And that’s a way of saying illusion is no exception to all being all. But then Buddha again asks Subhuti whether the *tathagata* has taught any *dharma*. And again Subhuti replies negatively.

So then, continuing his efforts, his efforts at making diction semantic, Buddha continues to question Subhuti’s credibility, his degree of fixation beyond delusion.

He asks him whether, when he considers the number of particles of dust in this world system of a billion worlds to be many, they’re many. And Subhuti says one calls the particles of dust particles of dust because the *tathagata* has taught as no particles of dust what the *tathagata* has taught as particles of dust. And he says one calls a world system a world system because the *tathagata* has taught it as no system.

So then Buddha asks him again whether he thinks one can see the *tathagata* by means of the 32 marks of a great person.

And, again replying negatively, Subhuti says the reason one can't is that the 32 marks of a great person the *tathagata* has taught are actually no marks. And he says that's why one calls them the 32 marks of a great person.

And next Buddha asks Subhuti to consider a man or woman renouncing his or her belongings once for each grain of sand in the river Ganges and to consider someone else taking but one four-verse stanza from this discourse on *dharma* and demonstrating it to others. But, not making that a question, Buddha tells Subhuti that the latter would beget on the strength of that demonstration a greater heap of merit and that it would be immeasurable and incalculable. So also pertinent is that, if something is immeasurable or incalculable, one can't know whether its great or small or many or few.

But, up to this point in this *sutra*, the nearest Subhuti has come to making clear whether he understands Buddha's efforts or only parrots his words is what he says of the *tathagata* calling him the foremost dweller in peace, and the nearest Buddha has come to answering the question of whether Subhuti understands Buddhism is his repeating his questions and telling him not to speak of time, but Subhuti's repetitions may answer that question.

That is, as some Hindus in the *Upanishads* treat metaphors literally, Subhuti exemplifies learning by rote. Yet some Buddhists and other scholars, ignoring that variations lace the repetitions and how the abstraction inherent in words makes their meaning vary with context, argue that the repetitions following Subhuti's asking Buddha what to call this *sutra* indicate that it ends with Buddha's reply to that question. And still, if all is one, the question remains how one can either demonstrate anything to others or be other.

But, at this point in the context or continuity or repetition, the impact of *dharma* moves Subhuti to tears. And, after wiping away his tears, he tells Buddha that exceedingly wonderful is how

well the *tathagata* has taught this discourse on *dharma*. And then he tells Buddha that through it has occurred in him a producing of cognition and that never has he heard such a discourse on *dharma*.

And then, again parroting the pattern of Buddha's diction in this *sutra*, he tells Buddha that most wonderfully fortunate will be those who will produce a true perception upon the teaching of this *sutra* but that what's true perception is indeed no perception and that that's why the *tathagata* teaches true perception.

And he also says that, during the teaching of this discourse on *dharma*, accepting it and believing it isn't difficult for him. And he says the beings who, at the time of the collapse of the good doctrine, in the future period that's the last time that's the last five hundred years of the last epoch, will take up this discourse on *dharma*, bear it in mind, recite and study it, and illuminate it in full detail for others, will be most wonderfully fortunate. So, again speaking as Buddha has told him not to speak, he again plainly indicates that he's repeating Buddha's words while not understanding them.

He then expresses relatively succinctly the fundamental premise of Buddhism. He says that no perception of an *atman*, an inherent essence, a life, or a person will take place in those beings, that that's because what's perception of an *atman*, an inherent essence, a life, or a personality is indeed no perception, and that that's because the fortunate *buddhas* have left all perceptions behind. But his references to time and to his relative difficulty or ease again suggest that he understands none of that.

And, though Buddha replies that such is how it is, next Buddha says that most wonderfully fortunate will be the beings whom hearing this *sutra* won't frighten or terrify, that that's because the *tathagata* has taught this *sutra* as the furthest beyond of the fixing beyond, and that what the *tathagata* teaches as that is also what the fortunate *buddhas* beyond number teach, and he says that's why one calls it that.

So his reply is only to the last part of Subhuti's reply.

Yet, whether or not Buddha is making a distinction between the *tathagata* and the various *buddhas*, he's making a distinction between people who can accept this *sutra* and those who can't. And the root of the fright or terror may be the essence of the story in the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* of death being all before the imagining of differences. It may be fear of loneliness.

That is, failing to recognize that the primal unity is all, one may think it's death as that story says it is.

But try imagining death.

And loneliness depends on imagining separateness, and next Buddha says the *tathagata*'s perfection of patience is actually no perfection, and that also alludes to ostensibly Buddhist expressions in other *suttas* and *sutras*.

The *suttas* and *sutras*, if they have any being, are ostensibly verbal expressions of what one imagines to be words of the differential *atman* of a particular *buddha*. But many Buddhists, whether they call themselves Theravada or Mahayana or both or neither, treat *suttas* or *sutras* or both and Buddhist verbal extrapolations from either or both as though they're Buddhist *dharma*. And some of that lists patience among ten qualities Buddhists call perfections.

But next in this *sutra* Buddha illustrates how the notion of patience also depends on the notion of a differential *atman*. He says that, when the Raja of Kalinga cut Buddha's flesh from each of Buddha's limbs, Buddha had no perception of an *atman*, an inherent essence, a life, or a personality. And he says that's because, had he then a perception of an *atman*, an inherent essence, a life, or a personality, he also would have had a perception of ill will.

And that reference to Kalinga is also relevant to the question of whether this *sutra* or any writing originating after the development of Mahayana Buddhism is genuinely Buddhist.

Kalinga was a country in India with no monarchy hundreds of miles south of where Siddhattha Gotama taught. And its main historical connection to Buddhism is that an ostensibly Buddhist monarch conquered it by way of a battle so murderous that the monarch's conscience compelled him to end his imperialism in order to be actually Buddhist enough to institute decades of political peace in the region. And that battle was centuries after the life of Siddhattha Gotama.

So that reference to it in this *sutra* must be metaphorical, and the metaphor must be of *nirvana* obviating any cause of fear, or need for patience. And next Buddha says that by means of his *veda* he remembers having become a wise person during five hundred lives of devotion to patience and that neither then did he have a perception of an *atman*, an inherent essence, a life, or personality. So, effectually, he's saying that neither is patience more or less real than any other imagining and that thus no difference is between patience and ill will.

And next he expresses that in the context of how he's otherwise answered Subhuti's question initiating this *sutra*.

He says that, because of whatever all that is, after a greatly *sattva bodhisattva* becomes void of all perceptions, he or she should raise her or his thought to the utmost right and perfect consciousness. He says he or she should produce a thought independent of the six external sense bases, of both *dharma* and no *dharma*, and of any other entity. And he says that's because no dependence has any dependence.

He says that's why the *tathagata* teaches that presenting gifts should be by independent *bodhisattvas* and not by ones depending on the six external sense bases. He says a *bodhisattva*'s presenting gifts in the manner of no dependence is for the welfare of all beings, that that's because the perception of any being is merely no perception of no being, and that the all beings of whom the *tathagata* has spoken are indeed no beings. And he says that



thus the *tathagata* speaks in accordance with actuality, speaks truth and of what is and not otherwise, and thus doesn't speak falsely.

And, regarding the *dharma* the *tathagata* has fully known and demonstrated, he says that nevertheless neither truth nor fraud is because of it.

And, saying a person can't see anything in darkness, he says one should view in the same way a *bodhisattva* who, having fallen among entities, renounces a gift. And, saying a person with eyes would see many forms when night becomes light upon the rising of the sun, he says one should view in the same way a *bodhisattva* who, not having fallen among entities, renounces a gift. And all of that's a metaphorical way of saying that renouncing a gift is a metaphor for relinquishing dependence on the six internal and six external sense bases.

But that the *bodhisattva* would see many forms after relinquishing dependence on the six internal and external sense bases effectually says that neither detachment from nor disappearance of what the *Satipatthana Sutta* calls the five heaps of clinging eliminates them. So that's another metaphorical way of saying that what one imagines is neither more nor less real than any other entity. So it's a way of saying how all beings are no beings while also being all beings.

And then, repeating what he's said of the merit community sons and daughters would beget by studying and reciting and illuminating this *sutra* in full detail for others, Buddha says the *tathagata* has fully known those community sons and daughters by his *buddha* cognition and seen them by his *buddha* eye.

And then, again in terms of numbers of grains of sand in Ganges rivers, comparing a person hearing this *sutra* and not rejecting it to a woman or man renouncing her or his belongings, he asks what then we should say of one who would write it and learn it, bear it in mind and recite and study it, and illuminate in full detail for others.

But all those expressions are relative. So the reasoning is that the *tathagata*'s knowing and seeing the community sons and daughters would be by *tathagata*'s being consciousness of all. And the reason merit of sharing this *sutra* would be beyond any number would be that the consciousness it ostensibly elucidates would be beyond the valuing of any separate belongings. And that would also be why imagining is as real as anything else. The premise is that all is absolute.

Still, of course, a question, if all differences are illusion, is whom the *tathagata* knows and sees. But next, beginning by adding that this discourse on *dharma* is unthinkable and incomparable, Buddha answers that question. Saying again that the *tathagata* has taught it for the welfare of beings who have set out in the best and most excellent vehicle, he says again that the *tathagata* has fully known with his *buddha* cognition and seen with his *buddha* eye those who will take up this discourse on *dharma*, bear it in mind and recite it and study it, and illuminate it in full detail for others. And he says again that all those beings will be fortunate with an immeasurable heap of merit unthinkable and incomparable and measureless and limitless. But he also says those beings will carry an equal share of consciousness.

And he says that's because hearing this discourse on *dharma* is impossible for beings of inferior resolve or for people who have an *atman* in view, or an inherent essence, a life, or a personality. And he also says that neither can beings who haven't taken the pledge of a *bodhisattva* hear it. He says that cannot be.

So he's saying that those whom the *tathagata* knows are the *tathagata*, but also no one and everyone, each and all.

So, in this *sutra*, the answer to the question of why it may seem to contradict itself is the same as the answer to the question of why Subhuti may seem to misunderstand Buddha. It's that, because words are inherently abstract, out of touch with all and thus also with that to which they ostensibly refer, depending on

them to explain the expanse of the totality of all would be like *bodhisattvas*' depending on the sense bases when presenting gifts. It's because knowing with *buddha* cognition and seeing with *buddha* eyes is knowing and seeing all at once with none of the differences one would imagine were one to fall among entities. That is, the premise is that, as all entities are one, all entities are all beings as all consciousness is consciousness of all, as all is indivisible.

And that's how *nirvana* isn't nihilism. It's how detachment wouldn't be separation and would be both inevitable and impossible. But, through more repetition of previous words in this *sutra*, Buddha continues his effort to explain.

Referring again to the spot of earth where one will reveal these *sutras*, he says it'll be worthy of worship by the whole world with its *devas* and men and *asuras*, that it'll be worthy of respectful salutation, of honor by circumambulation. And he says that, though that spot of earth will be like a shrine, the community sons and daughters who will take up these *sutras* and bear them in mind and recite and study them will be humbled. But he says they'll be well humbled.

He says that by means of that humbling will be the annulment in this life of the impure deeds of those sons' or daughters' former lives that could lead them into states of woe.

And he says they'll reach the consciousness of a *buddha*.

That's a reference to the Hindu notion of *karma*, of the relationship of each to each and all to all through cause and effect, the notion adherents to the Abrahamic religions extrapolate into their notion of retribution. But, in the monism of Buddhism, that notion goes beyond such Abrahamic dualistic disparity to the absolutism that ultimately detaches one also from the difference between good and evil as each life is all life as all is all. The Abrahamic notion of retribution depends on the notion

fundamental to Abrahamic dualism that what it calls God or the above or a glow creates all but is separate from it.

But absolution, in the consciousness of monism, absolves itself. So *Buddha's* saying a community son or daughter ultimately becomes a *buddha* is the same as saying the *atman* is *brahman*. And next in this *sutra*, by effectually saying he's the same as any of those sons or daughters, Buddha effectually says that of his and other *buddhas'* differential *atmans*.

He says that, with his expansive consciousness, he recalls a period long before the *tathagata arhat* fully conscious one Dipankara. He says that then, during quite incalculable eons, he gave satisfaction by loyal service to 84 thousand million billions of *buddhas* with never any estrangement from any of them. And then, in terms frequent in this *sutra*, he expands that to all that's apparently other persons and time.

He says that, in comparison to the heap of merit of those who will take up these *sutras*, bear them in mind and recite them, and illuminate them in full detail for others, in the last time in the last epoch, in the last half millennium, when the good *dharma* collapses, the heap of merit from the satisfaction he gave to those *buddhas* and fortunate ones doesn't bear number or fraction or counting, similarity or comparison, or resemblance.

So that's a kind of metaphor for a kind of *nirvana* of Subhuti's dependence on that metaphorical notion of time as though the metaphor is literal.

And then Buddha refers to the obscurity or confusion one may imagine the fusion of all with all to be. He says that moreover, were he to teach the heap of merit of those community sons and daughters and teach how great would be the heap of merit they'll then beget and acquire, beings would be frantic and distraught. And he says that, as the *tathagata* has taught this discourse on *dharma* as unthinkable, one should expect unthinkable results from it.

But both the notion of teaching and the notion of cause and effect inherently imply separateness.

So, with *karma* being the ubiquity of cause and effect, Buddha's essentially saying the beings would panic from recognizing the responsibility earning that merit would incur. But, if all is one, all *sutras* are also one, as 84 thousand million billion is also one, and countless and immeasurable. So that recognition would also be recognition that cause and effect are also one.

So the responsibility would be only for one's self. So it's only acceptance of the *atman*'s being *brahman*. So it doesn't incur guilt by recognition but absolution by consciousness.

But next in this *sutra* Subhuti repeats his initial question in it. So Buddha repeats part of his original reply to it, but he says of what he originally said of *nirvana* and the notion of an *atman*, an inherent essence, a life, or a personality, that all of that's because one who's set out in the *bodhisattva* vehicle isn't one of the *dharmas*, and then he again refers to Dipankara. He asks Subhuti whether he thinks the *tathagata*, when he was with the *tathagata* Dipankara, fully knew the *prajnaparamita*.

And, to Subhuti's negative reply, he says that's why the *tathagata* Dipankara then called him a young *brahmin* and predicted of him that in a future period he'd be a *tathagata arhat* fully conscious one with the designation *Shakyamuni*. And, with *Shakyamuni* not being a name but a title designating a *muni* of the Shakya people, next in this *sutra* Buddha says the reason for that prediction is that becoming a *tathagata* is becoming *tathata*. So, with the word "*tathata*", like the English word "such", referring to how anything is, effectually Buddha is saying the condition of *tathagata* is arriving at being everything.

And that, presumably, is the reason for the designation *bodhisattva*. It would be that the *sattva guna* is the quality of being the essence of all while the word "*bodhi*" is an inflection of

the word “*buddha*”. So a *bodhisattva* would be conscious of the essence of what all is.

And then Buddha extends that into saying that anyone saying the *tathagata* hasn’t fully known the utmost right and perfect consciousness would be speaking falsely. And he extends that into saying that, because neither truth nor fraud is a result of the *dharma* the *tathagata* has fully known and demonstrated, the *tathagata* teaches that all *dharmas* are Buddha’s own and special *dharmas*. And he extends that into saying that’s because the *tathagata* has taught all *dharmas* as no *dharmas* and that thus one calls all *dharmas* Buddha’s own and special *dharmas*.

So that, effectually through the ambiguity of the word “*atman*”, is like the Vedic metaphorical cycles from expressions of the primal unity to scatterings of shatterings and back to yogic expressions,.

And then Buddha says that’s like the possibility of endowing a man with a huge body. And Subhuti, parroting that the *tathagata* has taught as no body the man of whom the *tathagata* has spoken as a man with that endowment, says that’s why one calls that condition endowment of a body that’s huge. But Buddha, after replying that that’s so, says again that one shouldn’t call a *bodhisattva* who would say he or she will lead beings to *nirvana* a *bodhisattva*.

So, again, one might ask whether Buddha is contradicting himself. But one might also ask whether a person recording or composing a *sutta* or *sutra* is, by failing to understand what that person is recording or composing, misrepresenting Buddha. So, reading all the *suttas* and *sutras* or only this one, one might consider both questions before deciding that both those questions and the notion of fraud are but examples of the delusion of differences..

And, next in this *sutra*, Buddha asks Subhuti whether *bodhisattva* is the name of any *dharma*.

And, to Subhuti's replying negatively, he replies that the reason it isn't is that the *tathagata* teaches that *dharmas* have no *atman*, inherent essence, life, or personality.

And, after repeating what he said of *bodhisattvas*' saying they'll create harmonious *buddha* fields, Buddha says that yet the *tathagata arhat* fully conscious one has declared that a *bodhisattva* great *sattva* being. And, separately as four questions, he asks Subhuti whether the flesh eye, the divine eye, the wisdom eye, or the *dharma* eye, of the *tathagata*, is. And Subhuti replies affirmatively to each question.

And then Buddha asks Subhuti whether he thinks the *tathagata* has spoken of the many grains of sand in the great river Ganges. And, to Subhuti's replying affirmatively, he asks whether many would be grains of sand as many as would be in as many Ganges rivers as the grains of sand in the Ganges river and whether many would be that many world systems. And Subhuti again replies affirmatively.

And to that Buddha replies that he knows in his wisdom the many trends of thought of as many beings as are in that many world systems. And he says that's because the *tathagata* taught trends of thought as no trends of thought and that that's why one calls them trends of thought, And he says that's because one finds no trends of thought in the past, the future, or the present.

So, while he refers to time in various other expressions, here he specifically includes it in the notion that all differences are illusion. And then he again asks Subhuti whether a community son or daughter would beget a great heap of merit on the strength of filling this world system of a billion worlds with the seven precious things and presenting that to the *tathagata arhat* fully conscious ones. And this time, after replying to Subhuti's replying affirmatively that they'd beget an immeasurably and incalculably

great heap of merit, he says the *tathagata* wouldn't have spoken of a heap of merit if anything were a heap of merit.

But all of that repetition and variation is a form of what the *Vedas* call *jnana yoga*.

So, while the variation is less than that of the *Vedas*, the assumption here is that one can reconcile it in the same way, that one can let the fundamental notion separate the wheat from the chaff, and then reunite it.

And next *Buddha* asks whether one's to see the *tathagata* by way of the accomplishment of the *tathagata*'s body form. And, replying negatively, Subhuti says the reason is that the *tathagata* has taught that the accomplishment of the *tathagata*'s body form is no accomplishment and that that's why one calls it accomplishment of the *tathagata*'s body form. And next *Buddha* again repeats his question of whether one's to see the *tathagata* through his possession of marks.

And, of course, that's a way of asking whether "*tathagata*" is a designation for *Buddha*'s differential *atman*.

But, of course, those two questions are essentially the same question. So this time, though Subhuti again repeats his initial reply to that earlier form of it, *Buddha* doesn't repeat what he early said of fraud and marks. Instead he asks Subhuti whether he thinks the *tathagata* hopes or doubts that he's demonstrated *dharma*.

And then, continuing with no reply from Subhuti, he says anyone who'd say the *tathagata* has demonstrated *dharma* would be speaking falsely and would misrepresent *Buddha* by holding to what isn't there. And he says that's because one can find no *dharma* to be a demonstration of *dharma*. But then Subhuti repeats the question of which *Buddha* earlier told him not to speak.

He asks whether, at the time of the collapse of the good doctrine, in the future period that's the last time that's the last five hundred years of the last epoch, beings hearing such *dharmas* will believe. But this time *Buddha* replies that those beings are neither



beings nor no beings and that all beings are no beings. And he says that's why the *tathagata* spoke of all beings.

Of course speaking of all being all is inherently speaking of no divisions. But, presumably, at least in this *sutra*, if all could understand that simple sentence, it would obviate the need for this *sutra*. But, also presumably, failing to understand it is also the need for it.

And next in this *sutra*, after Buddha and Subhuti repeat the exchange questioning whether the *tathagata* has known the *prajnaparamita* by any *dharma*, Buddha says one can't find or approach the least *dharma*. And, saying that's why one calls the *prajnaparamita* the *prajnaparamita*, he says that furthermore the least *dharma* is the same as the utmost right and perfect consciousness and that nothing is at variance. And he says they're the same through the absence of an *atman*, an inherent essence, a life, or a personality.

He says that, through the absence of an *atman*, an inherent essence, a life, or a personality, one knows the *prajnaparamita* to be the totality of all the wholesome *dharmas*. And he says that, because one calls them wholesome *dharmas*, the *tathagata* has taught them as no *dharmas*. So, essentially, he's saying the least is also all.

And *kusaladhamma*, "*kusala*" being both Pali and Vedic Sanskrit for "wholesome", is also a Buddhist doctrine of wholesome behavior that originated through *suttas*.

But next Buddha again compares, to a woman or a man presenting the seven precious things as a gift, a community son or daughter demonstrating to others one four-verse stanza of this discourse. But this time the number of presentations of the seven precious things is the number of kings of mountains Sumeru in the world system of a billion worlds. And Buddha doesn't say to whom the woman or man would present that gift.

And this time, instead of calling this *sutra* a discourse on *dharma*, he calls it a *prajnaparamita* as he did when Subhuti asked him what one should call it.

And then he asks Subhuti whether he thinks the *tathagata* has any hope or doubt that he's set any being free. And, again with no reply from Subhuti, he says one shouldn't see it that way and that the *tathagata* hasn't liberated any being. He says that surely, had the *tathagata* liberated any being, the *tathagata* would have held to an *atman*, an inherent essence, a life, or a personality.

And, having begun that question and comparison by indicating that he's asking or saying it again, he says the *tathagata* has taught that as no holding. But, for that, he again calls the *prajnaparamita* a discourse on *dharma*, and he previously asked that question of *bodhisattvas*, not of the *tathagata*. Yet, of course, all that's consistent with the notion that all is one.

If no difference is between anything and anything, certainly no difference is between a *bodhisattva* and a *tathagata* or a buddha or an *arhat*, or between the *prajnaparamita* and any *dharma*.

And, after next saying that yet the foolish common people have held to the particularities of being to which he says the *tathagata* doesn't hold, he says the *tathagata* has taught that the foolish common people are no people and that that's why one calls them foolish common people.

So, effectually, he's saying that, as neither Buddha nor the *tathagata* is a particular person, neither are the foolish common people. So, effectually, he's saying that all of that particularity, whether or not it provides an indication of the actuality of the primal and eternal unity, is but more illusion. So, effectually, he's making this *sutra* a metaphor for both the misunderstanding and the *jnana* path to *nirvana*.

And then he again asks Subhuti whether one can perceive the *tathagata* by his possession of marks. And this time Subhuti says that, if he understands the fortunate one's teaching, one can't

see the *tathagata* through his possession of marks. And this time Buddha replies that the universal monarch would be a *tathagata* if one could perceive the tathagata by his possession of marks. Universal Monarch was an official title for monarchs in India. And tradition says they had those marks.

So this time Buddha says that's why one can't see the *tathagata* by his possession of marks.

And then Buddha teaches two four-verse stanzas.

In the first he says those who have seen him by form and those who have followed him by voice are wrong in the efforts in which they engage and won't see him.

In the second, he says one should see the *buddhas* from *dharma* and that the *buddhas*' guidance should come from *dharma* bodies, while yet one can't discern *dharma*'s actual nature or be aware of it as an entity.

But then Buddha asks Subhuti whether he thinks the *tathagata* has fully known the right and perfect consciousness through his possession of marks.

And, with no reply from Subhuti, he tells him he shouldn't see it that way and that the reason is that the *tathagata* surely couldn't do that. And next he tells Subhuti that neither should anyone tell him those who've set out in the *bodhisattva* vehicle have conceived of either the destruction or the annihilation of a *dharma*. And he tells him that, because they haven't conceived of either, neither should Subhuti see that.

And that's another reference to the collapse of the good doctrine in the future period that's the last time that's the last five hundred years of the last epoch. So, like the assertions that *bodhisattvas* lead no one to *nirvana*, that's a contradiction of literal meaning of other *sutras*. And that's the core of Buddha's method here.

So, throughout this *sutra*, including his references to teaching or holding to a perception of an *atman*, Buddha is

referring to such as Aruni's making of himself a metaphor for the metaphor of one's head shattering apart and to such as Mahayana Buddhists' calling Theravada Buddhists Hinayana Buddhists.

Effectually he's saying the distinction between the differential *atman* and the *atman* that's *brahman* is the same as any other illusion of difference. And, of course, that includes any words, not excepting "*buddha*" or "*tathagata*", or "*nirvana*". But that isn't to say they can't aid in effecting *jnana yoga*.

So next he tells Subhuti that, if a community son or daughter filled with the seven precious things as many world systems as the number of grains of sand in the river Ganges and presented them as a gift to the *tathagata arhat* fully conscious ones, and a *bodhisattva* gained the patient acquiescence in *dharmas* that are inherently nothing and fail to become anything, the strength of the latter would beget a greater heap of merit, immeasurable and incalculable.

And he also says he's saying that again. But, in this *sutra*, he hasn't said it in that way. And next he says that moreover a *bodhisattva* shouldn't acquire a heap of merit, and Subhuti replies that surely one should. And Buddha replies that the reason one says a *bodhisattva* should acquire is that a *bodhisattva* shouldn't hold to anything.

And then he says that anyone saying the *tathagata* goes or stands or sits or lies down doesn't understand the meaning of his teaching. He says that's because one calls the *tathagata* one who's neither gone anywhere nor come from anywhere. And he says that's why one calls the *tathagata* the *arhat* fully conscious one.

And then, again suggesting that he's again saying what he hasn't previously said in this *sutra*, Buddha asks Subhuti whether an enormous collection of indivisible quantities would result from a community son or daughter grinding with incalculable vigor as many world systems as the particles of dust in this world system of

a billion worlds as finely as one can grind them and actually reduce them to something like a collection of indivisible quantities

And of course, if all his other expressions of huge numbers are but synecdoche for an infinite number, all he's said in this *sutra* has led Subhuti to reply to that question as he does.. He replies affirmatively and says that's because, had an enormous collection of indivisible quantities been anywhere, the fortunate one wouldn't have called it an enormous collection of indivisible quantities. And he says that's because the reason one calls it a collection of indivisible quantities is that the *tathagata* has taught a collection of indivisible quantities as no collection.

And of course the logic in that is the same as the lack of logic in nuclear physicists' hypothesizing either an indivisible particle or a God particle.

So, accordingly, Buddha adds that the reason one calls the world system of a billion worlds the world system of a billion worlds is that the *tathagata* has taught it as no system. He says that's because, were any world system anywhere, it would be an instance of holding to a material entity, and he says the *tathagata* has taught as no holding what one teaches as holding to a material entity, and he says that's why one calls it holding to a material entity. So, to that, he adds that such holding to a material entity is but a form of linguistic convention with no actual content.

And he says that, while it's neither a *dharma* nor no *dharma*, the foolish common people have held to it. And he says the reason for that is in the question of whether a person would be speaking rightly in saying the *tathagata* has taught a perception of an *atman*, an inherent essence, a life, or a personality. So, replying that the person wouldn't be speaking rightly, Subhuti parrots that the reason is that the *tathagata* has taught as no view what the *tathagata* has taught as a perception of an *atman* and that that's why one calls it a perception of an *atman*.

So then Buddha says that's how one who's set out in the *bodhisattva* vehicle should know and perceive and be intent on all *dharmas*, that the person should perceive and be intent on them in a way in which the person doesn't establish the perception of a *dharma*, and that the reason is that the *tathagata* has taught perception of *dharma* as no perception.

And he says that's why one calls it perception of *dharma*.

And then Buddha, after indicating that he's closing this discourse, makes the final comparison of this *sutra*. He says that, if a great *bodhisattva* being filled immeasurable and incalculable world systems with the seven precious things and presented them as a gift to the *tathagata arhat* fully conscious ones, and a community son or daughter took from this *prajnaparamita* discourse on *dharma* but one four-verse stanza, bore it in mind, and demonstrated, recited, studied, and illuminated it in full detail for others, the strength of the community son's or daughter's doing that would beget an immeasurable and incalculably greater heap of merit. But then he asks how the son or daughter would illuminate it.

And, answering that he or she would illuminate it in a way not to reveal, he says that's why one says she or he would illuminate. So, while that's a reference to obscurity, it's also an assertion that the obscurity is only if one holds to it. And then he quotes one more four-verse stanza.

It says one should view what's conditional as stars, a fault of vision, a display of illusion, dew drops, a bubble, a dream, a lightning flash, a cloud.

And then the recorder or reporter of this *sutra* closes it.

He or she says the fortunate one spoke thus, that the venerable Subhuti, the male and female *bhikkhus* and *bodhisattvas*, and the whole world with its *devas*, men, *asuras*, and *gandharvas* rapturously rejoiced in the fortunate one's teaching, and that that's

the completion of the noble *vajracchedika* fortunate *prajnaparamita*.

So quite plain is that, like many people calling themselves Buddhists and like many people calling themselves Hindus, he or she holds to the notion of an *atman*, an inherent essence, a life, or a personality.

So, essentially, she or he is holding to Siddhattha Gotama, as people calling themselves Hindus might hold to Indra or a teacher, as people calling themselves Christians might hold to Christ or Jesus.

So, effectually, after Buddha ostensibly closes this *sutra* by saying all the reasons and causes and effects he designates throughout it are neither reasons nor causes or effects, its narrator says it accords with Vedic metaphors, nobly.

But one may also regard that as having an obscure meaning and accordingly also regard regarding it as a tool for either *bhakti* or *jnana yoga*.

The *Prajnaparamita Hridayam Sutra* what English-speaking people call the *Heart Sutra* because “*hridayam*” is Sanskrit for “heart”, also begins with the syllable “om” before bidding salutation and fortune to the *arya prajnaparamita*, but its narrative is of the *bodhisattva* Avalokitasvara speaking to Buddha’s disciple Sariputra, and it doesn’t mention Buddha.

The narrative begins with the noble *bodhisattva* Avalokitasvara moving in the deep course of *prajnaparamita*, looking down from that height and beholding but five heaps, and seeing that in their own being they’re empty.

Then he tells Sariputra that here form is emptiness and that emptiness is form. He tells him emptiness doesn’t differ from form and that form doesn’t differ from emptiness, that all that’s form is emptiness, and that emptiness is form. And he says the

same is true of sensations, perceptions, mental entities, and awareness.

That is, he tells him that what the *Satipatthana Sutta* calls the five heaps of clinging are emptiness, and then he says that here emptiness marks all *dharmas* and that nothing produces or stops them, that neither are they either immaculate or in defilement, and that neither are they deficient or complete.

He says that thus in emptiness is none of those heaps and that neither are what the *Satipatthana Sutta* calls the six internal and six external sense bases in emptiness. He says that extends up to no foundation of mindfulness being in emptiness, that it extends up to neither ignorance nor extinguishing of ignorance being anywhere, and that neither is any decay or death or extinguishing of decay or death anywhere. And then he says that neither is any suffering or origin or cessation or path.

So, also saying that neither is any *jnana* or attainment or nonattainment anywhere, essentially he's saying that both the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* and the *Satipatthana Sutta* refer to and are only emptiness.

And next he tells Sariputra that, because of a *bodhisattva*'s nonattainment through having relied on the *prajnaparamita*, the *bodhisattva* dwells with no thought coverings. He says that, in the absence of thought coverings, nothing has caused a *bodhisattva* to tremble and that the *bodhisattva* has overcome what can upset. And he says that in the end the *bodhisattva* attains *nirvana*.

He says that, because all who appear as *buddhas* in the three periods of time have relied on the *prajnaparamita*, they fully awaken to the full and righteous consciousness.

The three periods of time are the past, the future, and the present. And then Avalokitasvara tells Sariputra that one should know the *prajnaparamita* as the great mantra, the utmost and incomparable great *veda* mantra, the allayer in truth of all suffering. And he asks what then could go wrong.



He says the *prajnaparamita* has delivered that mantra and that it runs: Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone wholly beyond; hale the awakening.”

And this *sutra* closes by saying that’s the completion of the *hridayam prajnaparamita*. So, essentially, this *sutra* says what the *Diamond Sutra* says but more concisely. And now many Buddhists daily chant all of it as a mantra.

So, while it doesn’t mention Buddha, many Buddhists accept its effectually saying *buddha* is consciousness of emptiness being all and that thus Buddhism must be wisdom fixed beyond any such distinctions.

## Dao

The definitive scripture of Daoism is the *Dao De Jing*. “Dao” is a Chinese word meaning “way” or “path”, and “de” is a Chinese word meaning “virtue” or “power”, as in the English idiom “by virtue of”. “*Jing*” is a Chinese word literally meaning “abiding” but idiomatically meaning “abiding writing”.

And, with the basic premise of Daoism being the notion that the way to return to the primal unity is simply through accepting it, Daoism is a Chinese expression of the monism of Hinduism and Buddhism.

And that connection has proven itself historically, geographically, and personally. Zen is a subset of Mahayana Buddhism, and “zen” is a Japanese pronunciation of “chan”, a Chinese pronunciation of “*dhyana*”, the Sanskrit word for “meditation”, as in “*dhyana yoga*”. The reason for that is that, before Chinese Buddhist monks took Zen to Japan, an Indian Buddhist monk formulated it at the Shaolin Monastery in China’s eastern mountains.

And “*sheng ren*”, in the *Dao De Jing*, effectually means “*bodhisattva*”. The most frequent English translation of that phrase is “holy man”, but the Chinese pictograph *ren* means “human” and can refer to any human of any sex, and the principal division of the Chinese pictograph *sheng* means “ear”. A principal division, what English-speaking linguists radically abstractly call

radicals, is the basic component of each of the pictographs the Chinese use, instead of an alphabet, for writing.

And relevance of that here is that Hindus call their definitive scriptures what one has heard. And the relevance of that relevance is that making a pictograph meaning “ear” the basic component of the pictograph “*sheng*” suggests that *sheng rens* listen while most of the men most English-speaking people call holy define their character by preaching. And Bodhidharma, the Buddhist monk who formulated Zen, demonstrated his listening in how he formulated it.

Zen is a synthesis of Daoism into Buddhism he formulated by way of traveling from India to Persia and back along the Silk Road to Dunhuang on his way to the Shaolin Monastery.

The oldest book with its date in print in it is a Chinese translation of the *Diamond Sutra* from Dunhuang. The date is about three centuries after the life of Bodhidharma, but the Buddhist community there preceded the life of Bodhidharma by a century or more, suggesting a reason for Bodhidharma to continue his travels eastward from Persia. And that a Daoist monk found that book there and took it to England further suggests both the relationship between Daoism and Buddhism and the general receptivity of Daoism.

And, like most of the Buddhist *suttas* and *sutras*, the *Dao De Jing*'s expression of the cycle from the primal unity through disparity and back to unity is less complexly metaphorical than are the personifications and stories of the *Vedas*. And, with no direct reference to any particular person, it says all of what the *Sutras* and *Suttas* and *Vedas* most basically say. And historians say Siddhattha Gotama and Lao Zi, the person Daoists say wrote the *Dao De Jing*, may have been contemporaries.

So Bodhidharma, whose name means “conscious of *dharma*”, has made of the *Dao De Jing* a kind of metaphor for a kind of *nirvana* of sectarianism.

And, like the *Diamond Sutra*, the *Dao De Jing* uses linguistic conventions to obviate linguistic conventions' ineffectuality.

But, literally more fundamentally, it says words are the origin of the delusion.

The first of the *Dao De Jing*'s 81 segments, beginning by saying that neither *dao* nor names must continue, next says the origin of sky and earth had no names and that having names is the ten thousand things' mother.

So, with “*dao*” essentially meaning “*dharma*” and the ten thousand things being Daoist synecdoche for the multiplicity of entities one imagines in the delusion of differences, it essentially agrees with the *Diamond Sutra*'s assertion that holding to a material entity is but a linguistic convention with no actual content.

And its saying that neither *dao* nor names must continue essentially says that all eventually will return to the primal unity, that *dao* is the raft in the Buddhist metaphor of crossing a stream from the illusion of disparity to the consciousness of unity, and that the linguistic conventions originated the illusion but sustain it but temporarily.

And next, essentially saying greed deprives one of truth, this segment of the *Dao De Jing* says the way to perceive the essence of the many entities is by continually having no desire while the way to continually have desire is by perceiving the manifestation of the many entities.

But next it says those two perceptions, both perceiving the essence of the many entities and perceiving their manifestation, are one's unity. So, as the *Diamond Sutra* says the various entities neither are nor aren't anything, so does the *Dao De Jing*. And, effectually paraphrasing the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, it makes that a formula for detachment.

But next it says that, while unity emits different names, one calls that obscuring obscurity's again obscuring everything's essence's gate. So it says both how words perpetrate the illusion of differences and how the linguistic conventions of the *Vedas* and *suttas* and *sutras* are difficult to understand. But, most basically, this segment says everything's essence is the primal unity and that *dao* is the path by which one returns through that gate.

The *Dao De Jing*'s second segment begins with the first of its many expressions of how apparent differences aren't actual differences.

It says that, below the sky, all know the action of beauty and good only by having disdained and having been not good. It says that thus, having and not having are mutual causes living together, as difficulty and ease complete one another as long and short mutually compare, as lofty and low support one another as sound and melody mutually fuse, as front and back follow one another. And it says that's how *sheng rens* sustain while having no acting and how their work's progress isn't words' teaching

It says that's as the many entities arise in that work while not refusing it. It says it's how, living while not having and acting while not relying, *sheng rens* serve incessantly. And it closes by saying incessant service is largely only by not abandoning.

So, effectually, it says *sheng rens*, like *bodhisattvas*, effect *nirvana* for all by way of detachment permitting acceptance.

And, in its third segment, the *Dao De Jing* begins its expressing that in terms of quotidian life. It says not honoring worth would keep people from contending and that people's not valuing goods difficult to obtain would keep them from robbing. And, generalizing that into saying not seeing ability to desire keeps people from discord, it steps into the first of the *Dao De Jing*'s expressions of how to govern people in the way *sheng rens* serve.

It effectually says *sheng rens* would govern in accordance with the notion that not seeing ability to desire keeps people from cause for desire and thus from reason for discord. And, for that, it says emptying people's minds to fill their stomachs yields their will to enforcing their bones and that continually causing people to have no cunning and have no desire keeps largely cunning ones from risking acting. And it closes by saying action having no acting is next having no not governing.

That is, it says *sheng rens* would govern by leading people into being what they most basically are and thus most basically need to be, and it calls that action having no acting.

Daoists, in a parallel with both the Buddhist metaphor of the raft and the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad's* story of Maitreyi's asking Yajnavalkya to tell her what he knows before leaving this worldly life, say Lao Zi wrote the *Dao De Jing* in response to a request from a ferryman before Lao Zi crossed a stream to leave his career as a government official.

And the acting while not relying in the second segment is essentially action having no acting. And “*wei wu wei*”, Chinese for “action having no acting”, is a motif in the *Dao De Jing* that practically defines the relationship between *dao* and *de*. Difficulty is in that the word “*wei*” can mean either “action” or “acting”. But such is the obscurity of linguistic conventions. Meaning of words varies with context.

So, of course, emptying the mind is *dhyana yoga*.

The fourth segment says how *dao* is always part of everything and thus effectually is the primal unity itself as all is all. It says it absorbs while perhaps not filling and that it's deep while seeming to be the ancestor of the many entities, blunting their edges and loosening their knots, fusing their brightness and uniting their dust. Of course the uniting of dust, like the final stage of the decomposition of the body in the *Satipatthana Sutta*, after

gathering the bones from their scattering, refers to returning to unity. And this segment closes with its author saying that, while he or she doesn't know who *dao*'s children are, imagining creation is *dao*'s precedent.

The fifth segment is another way of saying what the *Satipatthana Sutta* says of detachment. It says that, as sky's earth doesn't feel as humans feel for the many entities' acting as straw dogs, neither do *sheng rens* feel as humans feel for the hundred family names' acting as straw dogs. Straw dogs are fagots for kindling, and the hundred family names are Chinese synecdoche for all families, and thus all persons.

And next this segment says the space of sky and earth is like a bellows emptying while not collapsing while emitting more in its motion. So that's an extension of the straw dogs metaphor into another way of saying what the fourth segment says of *dao*'s absorbing while perhaps not filling. And this segment closes by saying that as many words as one can count to exhaustion aren't like keeping to the core.

So that extends the bellows metaphor into another expression of the superficiality of words.

The sixth segment begins by saying valleys' spirit doesn't die and that one calls that obscure femininity. Throughout the *Dao De Jing*, valleys are a metaphor for the flow of all returning to the primal unity, and femininity is a metaphor for quietly accepting that flow. And next this segment says obscure femininity is valleys' spirit's gate and that one calls that the sky's earth root. And this segment closes by saying that, perpetually perpetuating seeming to remain, valley's spirit's use isn't labor. So, effectually, it expresses the insubstantiality of time.

So the obscurity is only in that it may not be apparent from the ripples of the stream.

And the seventh segment tells how that works. Saying sky continues while earth endures, it asks how and wherein one can continue, and yet endure. And, answering that sky and earth don't live by their self, it says that thus they can perpetuate life.

Of course the self here is the differential *atman*. So, to clarify that, next this segment, saying that's how *sheng rens* are, asks whether *sheng rens*' bodies' being behind while bodies precede theirs, or their rejecting their bodies while bodies apparently of others' remain, is contrary to being by *sheng rens*' having no self-interest. And this segment closes by answering that *sheng rens*' having no self-interest is their ability to complete their self-interest.

And, while a pictograph meaning "self" is one of the 214 principal divisions, the principal division of the pictograph meaning "self-interest" here is a pictograph meaning "grain". So the pictograph meaning "self" can refer to *brahman* while the pictograph meaning "self-interest" implies multiplicity. So it implies disparity.

So, in keeping with the notion that the *atman* is *brahman*, this segment effectually says *sheng rens* realize that all differences are ultimately only what some may call distinctions with no difference.

And, accordingly, the eighth segment extends the metaphor of valleys into saying high good is like water.

Saying water's not contending is advantageous to the many entities, and that staying humans' disdain is thus near *dao* in that way, it specifies water as a metaphor for the *wei wu wei* of *dao*.

And next it says stopping is good on Earth as mind is good in depth as sharing is good in human sentiment, that words are good in honesty as norms are good in governing, and that work is good in ability as motion is good in timeliness.



So it uses the pliancy of water to extend the valleys' spirit metaphor into the notion that things are at their best when they're pliant enough to be what they inherently are, essentially what the Maitri Upanishad calls dominance by the *sattva guna*, essentially accepting the primal unity.

And it closes by saying that thus only not contending has no fault.

But the ninth segment returns to the question of the futility of the illusion of self-interest that characterizes the differential *atman*. It directs grasping while what one's filling doesn't seem to be full and securing while the sharpness of what one's securing can't long protect it. And it clarifies that by saying that, if one fills halls with gold and jade, one can keep none of it.

And, by saying valuing abundance while being proud of the self leaves both the self and the abundance to fall, it generalizes to any differential self-interest the futility of that hoarding of material wealth. And it closes by saying the *dao* of the sky is that, upon achievement of service, the body retreats. So, essentially, this segment says material wealth would sink the *bodhisattva* vehicle.

That is, it treats imagining the *atman* to be physical as it treats imagining gold and jade to have value, essentially as having no more value than that of a raft after crossing a stream.

So the tenth segment is a lesson in the clarity of the obscurity of diction as it applies to *wei wu wei* governance.

It says that, carrying managing personalities, embracing oneness can have no separateness. And next, referring to how infants wail while waving their arms and legs, it says concentrating breath to bring pliancy is an ability of infant children. So, effectually, it says *sheng rens* would govern others as infants govern themselves.

And it extends that simile into saying washing and clearing obscure vision can have no fault, that loving people and governing nations can have no knowing, and that the sky's gate's opening and closing can act as a hen. That is, metaphorically, it says that both infants' crying and rain wash away obfuscation and that *sheng rens*' govern accordingly. And pertinent is that neither infants nor hens use words.

But the assertion that unity and not knowledge is necessary for loving people and governing nations isn't metaphorical. And, saying nothing's wrong with that, this segment extends the metaphor of the sky into the brightness of the sun, perhaps explaining why the *Vedas* use the sun as a personification of *brahman*, and perhaps explaining why we use "enlightenment" as a synonym for "wisdom". And this segment nearly literally clarifies that.

It say light's brightening the four reaches can have no acting, that light's living and emitting enliven and actuate while neither having nor relying, and that light prolongs while not controlling.

But this segment closes by saying that's obscure *de*. And that pictograph meaning "obscurity" is in the *Dao De Jing* a dozen times. And, on four of those occasions, its in that phrase meaning "obscure *de*".

So the variety of diction in this segment makes it a metaphor for the notion that the superficiality of words is both a cause and an effect of the obscurity.

So, with *de* effectually being the power of *dao*, the *Dao De Jing* expresses the ineffectuality of words more specifically than does the *Diamond Sutra*.

And the eleventh segment extends further the notion that evidence of the unity of all is the interdependence of apparent opposites.

It points out that use of carts depends on their spokes sharing the space at their wheel's hub and that use of clay implements depends on the space the clay surrounds. And, while not pointing out that space is why one calls rooms what one calls them, it points out that use of rooms depends on chiseling doors and windows to open the rooms to space beyond them. And from that it concludes that having is those things' acting advantageously while not having actuates their use.

So, while being an elaboration on what the first segment says of having names, it's also an elaboration on what the ninth segment says of gold and jade.

And it does both by implying the insubstantiality of what one calls substance.

So, by effectually saying nothing can be worth as much as or more than something, it includes being and not being among the apparent but not actual sorts of polarity.

And the twelfth segment extends that elaboration on obfuscation into other artificial complexity. Referring to traditional Chinese designations of colors, melodic pitches, and flavors, it says the diversity of the five colors, sounds, and flavors makes humans' eyes, ears, and mouths confuse what they see or hear or taste. And, extending that deprecation of artificial complexity into hunting for sport, it says excessively chasing in fields hunting makes human minds turn mad.

And then it extends that deprecation of the futility of hoarding gold and jade into saying difficulty of attaining goods makes humans hinder others from obtaining them. It says that, in order to avoid that, *sheng rens* actuate stomachs and not eyes, by leaving eyes as they are, to capture stomachs. And all of that alludes to what the third segment says of how *sheng rens* govern.

And, of course, the deprecation of hoarding gold and jade is also analogous to what the *Diamond Sutra* says of the merit from giving the seven precious things.

But, like “self” and “self-interest”, the words “fusion” and “confusion” have identical but opposite meanings. So confusing the five colors or the five sounds or the five flavors can be to fuse them into consciousness of all being one anyway. So, “literally,” this segment says confusion can convert extreme polarity into no polarity.

And the thirteenth segment extends the notion of the artificiality of materialism into the relationship between emotions and valuation of the differential *atman* one calls one’s physical body.

It says favor and dishonor are like fear and that value and great grief are like bodies. And then, asking what that means, it answers that favor and dishonor are like fear in that, because one can’t fall from favor if one doesn’t have it, attaining it incurs fear of losing it. And it says value and great grief are like bodies in that, if we don’t acquire bodies, we can’t lose them.

But then, asking what grief we can have if we don’t acquire bodies, it answers that trust depends on the relationship between grief and having bodies. It says valuing bodies’ action below the sky enables entrusting below the sky and that cherishing bodies’ action below the sky enables trusting below the sky. That is, it says that, however abstract may be the diction around dishonor and fear, value and grief, and bodies, they also engender or facilitate the unifying dynamic of trust.

So, effectually, it says that, with all being all anyway, abstraction doesn’t entirely obscure unity but provides *de* to keep open the gate for *dao*. And all that also effectually says *wei wu wei*, while referring to the unity of action and inaction, doesn’t

obviate the unifying of trust. And the *Dao De Jing* uses the word “wei” similarly ambiguously in other segments.

So consider that “trust” is a kind of synonym for “faith”.

And the fourteenth segment says such in words like what the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* says Yajnavalkya said of perceiving to his Vedic wife.

It says perceiving’s not seeing names speaks smoothly, effectually that words make what is appear to be what it isn’t, that their being only a medium and thus inherently abstraction distorts perception. And it extends that into saying listening’s not hearing names speaks quietly and that grasping’s not attaining names speaks subtly. And it says one can’t bring those three expressions into inquiry.

And next, effectually saying how the obscurity of *de* isn’t obscure, it says how those three conditions are an indication of the primal unity. It says that thus, mixing while enacting oneness, their above isn’t bright as their below isn’t dim, and it says boundless boundlessness can’t name returning, reverting to having no things. And it says one calls that having no shape’s shape and no thing’s image.

So it says what the *Heart Sutra* says of the five heaps of clinging. It says one calls that vague and elusive, that its front doesn’t see its face and that its rear doesn’t see its back, but it says seizing the primal of *dao* is by directing now its having the ability to know the primal origin. And this segment closes by saying one calls that *dao*’s thread.

So, if one accepts the notion that time is actual, one might consider that what one calls history says the lives of Lao Zi and the Shakyamuni were approximately contemporaneous. And then one might consider the question of how, if Buddhism didn’t reach China until about seven centuries later, both Lao Zi and followers of Shakyamuni used a word meaning “thread” to refer to trying to

use words to explain what words obscure. But that would require denying the basic premise of monism by imagining shattering Lao Zi and Shakyamuni into separate entities.

So it would muddle the fifteenth segment's beginning with another ambiguous use of the word "wei" to use still more words to clarify the obscurity. Its words say the good of the primal, actuating mastering one's subtle essence, obscurely penetrates depth one isn't able to understand. And it says only inability to understand thus forces one to call the demeanor of the primal good cautious.

It says its caution is like fording a stream in winter. And it says it's vigilant like fearing all around and reverent like tolerance, yielding like ice beginning to melt and kind like the uncut, and open like valleys while mixing like mud. But those references depend on previous metaphors.

And, while the yielding, the uncut, and the valleys are references to metaphors within the *Dao De Jing*, the mixing like mud is like the gathering of bones into dust in the *Satipatthana Sutta*.

But next this segment clarifies that. It asks what the stillness of mud can gradually clear and what the enduring motion of stillness can gradually enliven. And, effectually, it answers that it's *dao*.

It says that, protecting this *dao*, one doesn't desire filling and largely only doesn't fill, thus enabling shielding, not new completion.

That is, it says *dao* is the path to realizing that all always is, however murky one's perception of it may be.

And the sixteenth segment, beginning by saying bringing emptiness to polarity keeps quiescence firm, further clears the murk. Polarity, etymologically disparity between the two ends of

one pole, in the monistic epistemology of Daoism is an example of the apparent but not actual differences among units of the multiplicity, and next this segment says the many entities arise together, and that we return by perception. And next, calling largely blooming the differentiation the first segment says originated with the having of names, this segment says each entity returns as it blooms.

It says each reverts to its root, that reverting to root speaks stillness, and that one calls that returning to destiny. It says returning to destiny speaks continuity and that knowing continuity speaks light while not knowing continuity is error raising disaster. And it says that, knowing continuity's demeanor, its demeanor is broad. So, effectually, it makes polarity a metaphor for unity. It says how it illustrates returning to it.

And, saying broad is noble, that noble is the sky, that the sky is *dao*, and that *dao* is endurance, it concludes by saying that thus ending bodies isn't danger.

So, somewhat clarifying what Yajnavalkya says of perceiving, this segment and all of what the *Dao De Jing* says of obscurity also says how it might have confused Yajnavalkya's wife in any sense of the word "confusion".

And, with those Chinese words meaning "noble" and "broad" also meaning "monarch" and "minister", the *Dao De Jing*'s seventeenth segment elaborates on how polarity is why *sheng rens* would govern as the *Dao De Jing* says they would.

It says extreme height is the low knowing one has it. It says that next in extremity is the low personally attaching themselves to the high in exaltation and that next is the high having the awe of the low. And it says that next is the high having the contempt of the low.

And then it says honesty isn't enough in that and that having isn't honesty. In this context, and throughout the *Dao De*

*Jing*, the reason honesty isn't enough is that, as preaching isn't practicing, words aren't service. And neither is subordinating.

So next this segment says reticence is the value in words' saying service is complete and work achieved when the many families all say accomplishing the work is as though they did it themselves. So, essentially, it says again that letting people be what they are leads to the primal unity. And, effectually, it says that's value in words regardless of words.

But, more fundamentally, this segment says high isn't high and that low isn't low, as the *Diamond Sutra* says measuring distance in any direction is difficult, essentially that neither are height and depth different from one another.

And, of course, that implies that neither are superiority and inferiority different from one another.

After all they're only words.

So the eighteenth segment says how *dao* is necessary for cutting through the corruption of government use of hypocrisy. It says great *dao* abolishes having human sentiment and morality, that it abolishes intellect's and cunning's emitting having great hypocrisy, and that it abolishes the six personal attachments' having reverent devotion but not fusing. And it says it abolishes nations' and households' being in murky discord while having loyal ministers.

The six personal attachments, in Chinese tradition Confucius fostered, are to one's father and one's son, to one's older brother and younger brother, and to one's husband or wife. But some listings omit wives and include monarchs, and that also could explain how having loyal ministers could bring discord to both nations and families, but the failure to fuse having devotion could be hypocrisy in any relationship. And the reference to loyal ministers also extends abolishing intellect and cunning to national government.



But, whether or not the six attachments exclude wives or include monarchs, they otherwise exclude women. And, more generally, the call for abolishing human sentiment and morality effectually paraphrases what the fifth segment says of straw dogs. So it calls for abolishing any sort of prejudice or discrimination.

And the sexism inherent in that tradition and doctrine is especially discordant with the metaphors of femininity and valleys.

And the word meaning “minister” here isn’t the one also meaning “broad”.

And the nineteenth segment extends that notion of hypocrisy to *sheng* and academics.

It begins by saying that, breaking from *sheng* and rejecting cunning, people are advantageous a hundred times. Next it says that, breaking from human sentiment and rejecting morality, people return to reverent devotion. And next it says that, breaking from scholarship and rejecting advantage, robbery and theft have no having. And Confucius also fostered entry into government service by way of scholarship. So that’s another variance between Daoism and Confucianism.

But this segment says actuating the rhetoric of those three assertions isn’t enough.. It says that, accordingly, to make the wherein of dependability, belittle self-interest, and diminish desire, one must see plainness and embrace the uncut. And the principal division of the pictograph for “uncut” in this segment means “tree”. And that pictograph also refers to an uncut block of wood. And it connotes “simple” or “whole”.

And, with its inherent richness of metaphorical meaning, it’s in the Dao De Jing eight times.

And the twentieth segment elaborates further on how the artificial abstraction of scholarship is contrary to *dao*. Beginning by directing breaking from scholarship to have no sorrow, next it

asks what good its only sharing mutual abandonment approaches, and then it asks what humans mutual abandonment's sharing of disdain resembles. And then it asks in what those humans' fear can't be fear.

The sharing is of the political advantage of scholarship. And the mutual abandonment is the lack of social interaction between the scholars and the less scholarly and thus less advantageous people. But then, after saying the fear is wild and lacks limits, the author compares other humans to him or her.

She or he says that, while he or she is calm, humans in general are as joyful as one would be while enjoying great feasts or climbing terraces in spring.

But then she or he says that, like infant children lacking sons, humans lack significance. And then he or she says that, while they're weary as one would be having no place to which to revert, they all have surplus while only she or he seems to be losing. That is, essentially, he or she is saying the joy is temporal and that so is progeny and material wealth, that rest would be the quiescence of the primal unity, and that the distractions obfuscate the path.

And then the author elaborates on the obfuscation. She or he says that, while his or her foolish human mind may muddle, common humans are bright, that, while she or he is murky, common humans are sharp, that, while only he or she confuses, common humans are like ocean gales' seeming ceaseless while she or he is calm, and that, while he or she seems stupid and base, all humans have purpose. But, of course, for *sheng rens*, the murky muddling is the mixing of mud in the fourteenth segment, and the confusion is the fusion that's unity.

And the author closes this segment by saying that, while she or he is different from humans, he or she values mothers' nurturance. And, while that reference to the maternal is to the primal, this is also the only segment of the *Dao De Jing* in which

its author unquestionably writes from the first person singular point of view. But she or he may also be referring to *sheng rens* in general.

That pronoun in Chinese can be either singular or plural.

But the 21<sup>st</sup> segment says how that ambiguity or obscurity is neither ambiguous nor obscure. Calling *de* inclusive, it says its demeanor is wholly *dao* and that that's following *dao*, and it says its action is things wholly illusive and wholly vague. But it says that, while vague and illusive, its center has images and things and that its center is hidden and dim but has quiescence.

It says that, with its vitality quite genuine, its center has honesty. And it says that, with the self's primal reaching now, the self doesn't abandon its identity. And it closes by saying that, by watching any or all of creation, we know every creature's condition.

That is, it says that, apparently obscure or not, each differential *atman* has the identity of *brahman*, and that makes both the *atman* and *brahman* the antecedent of the first person pronoun with which it closes.

And its saying the primal reaches now and that the self doesn't abandon its identity effectually says the one that's all can clear the mud now and forever and forever for now.

So it says that, with time also being all, truth is timeless.

And the 22<sup>nd</sup> segment extends the notion of actual but not apparent unity into defining *sheng rens*' purpose, how to accord with it, and why. It says bent is next whole, that crooked is next correct, that what's hollow is next full, that what's worn is next new, that little next attains, and that much next confounds. And, after saying that's why *sheng rens* embrace oneness to actuate sky's below's standard, it tells how to absolve self-interest into self.

Directing not seeing self, it says a result of that is light, and it also says prominence is a result of not being selfish, that having service is a result of not boasting of self, and that prolonging is a result of not arrogating self. With seeing self being what one idiomatically calls self-regard, those injunctions refer to regarding one's self as though it's better than others' selves, and thus this segment refers to differentiation of the *atman*. And then, directing that one largely only not contend, it says a result of that would be that none below the sky can share one's contention.

And then it asks whether the primal of that in which one calls bending being next whole is one's empty words.

And it answers that truth is its wholeness while reverting.

And the 23<sup>rd</sup> segment raises and answers the question of hope.

It begins by saying both hope and words are also in that absolutation of self. And, saying that thus gusty wind doesn't last all morning and that torrential rain doesn't last days, it says what actuates that is one's sky's earth. And it says that, with sky's earth not honoring the ability of circumstances to endure, more of such is from humans.

And it directs thus following the working of one's *dao*. It says *dao* is one's uniting with *dao* and that *de* is one's uniting with *de* and also that loss is one's uniting with loss. And it says uniting with each is also one's enjoying attainment of it.

And, repeating what the seventeenth segment says of government, it closes by saying honesty isn't enough in that and that neither is honesty having.

So it clarifies what the first segment says of continuity. And, similarly referring to the insignificance of words, it equates both arrogance and vacillation with disunity, while it includes both in the mix, along with loss. So essentially it says that ultimately neither is gain or loss an exception to the unity of all.

But, more fundamentally, loss is extinguishing the illusion of differences as perceiving that differences aren't differences is what absolute is.

And the 24<sup>th</sup> segment expresses the relationship of that to the insubstantiality of what's apparently physical. It says one isn't steady while erect and that one doesn't progress while striding. But, of course, that's also metaphorical.

Saying again that one's self-regard isn't light and that the self isn't one's promoting it, it also says again that boasting of the self or arrogating it neither serves nor sustains anything, and it says that nevertheless the self is present in *dao*.

And, saying that in *dao* it speaks of surplus food and superfluous progress as things perhaps of disdain, it closes by saying that thus one doesn't stagnate if one has *dao*.

That is, paraphrasing the ninth segment's closing, it says of arrogance and surplus that the *dao* of the sky is to withdraw upon completion of service.

And that also effectually paraphrases the Buddhist metaphor of the raft.

And, were words more effectual than the *Dao De Jing* says they are, its 25<sup>th</sup> segment would be a map of *dao*.

It says that, by ability to act as sky's below's mother, having things completely mixed preceded sky and earth and life, everywhere progressing while not endangering, silent and void and alone, steady and not changing.

Next it says that, while we know its name, its children speak *dao*. And next it says forcing actuating its name speaks greatness, that greatness speaks reaching, that reaching speaks distance, and that distance speaks returning. So, following a description of the primal unity, this segment describes the cycle of

*dao* from the primal unity, through the extreme polarity words originate, and eventually back to the primal unity.

And next this segment expresses that in terms of government. It says that thus *dao* is great, that so are sky and earth, and that so is nobility. But it says that, while countries have four greats, nobility stops its oneness there while humans emulate earth, as earth emulates sky, as sky emulates *dao*. That is, effectually, it says the nobility of monarchs exemplifies that cycle by way of departing from governing as *sheng rens* would govern. And this segment closes by saying the cycle of emulation it describes is how *dao* emulates the self.

So, beginning by describing the primal unity in terms the *Upanishads* use to describe *brahman*, it says it divided itself as the *Upanishads* say Prajapati divided *brahman*. Then, more explicitly, in political terms, terms of speech with no deific personifications, it says monarchs disrupt the flow. But, essentially, it concludes by saying *dao* is the path through all that for the *atman* eventually to realize it's *brahman*.

And it says nobility goes with that flow as does all.

But the 26<sup>th</sup> segment effectually contrasts the temporal nobility of monarchs with the *dao* of the nobility of *sheng rens*.

It says weight enacts light roots and that quiescence enacts restless masters. It says that's why and how *sheng rens* outlast a days progress while not separating from the heavy baggage, while calmly remaining indifferent, while having honorable sights. And it closes by asking how, with bodies light below the sky, loss of root following lightness, and loss of mastery following restlessness, one can be chief of ten thousand chariots.

So, by both literally and metaphorically comparing gravity to frivolity, it's an elaboration on what the 25<sup>th</sup> segment says of nobility stopping its oneness.

And the 27<sup>th</sup> segment extends that into saying how *sheng rens* are *bodhisattvas*.

It says good progress has no wheel ruts or footprints, that good words have no flaw or blame, that good counting uses no tally slips, that good closing has no bolt bar but can't be opened, and that good knots have no rope restraint but can't be loosened.

Then it says that's how *sheng rens* are continually good at liberating humans and thus have no rejecting humans, that thus they're continually good at liberating things and thus have no rejecting things, and that one calls that following light.

And then it says that thus good humans don't instruct good humans. It says the resources for good humans' instruction are humans who aren't good and that thus, if good humans don't value instructing people who aren't good but are aware of their great delusion, they don't cherish their resources. And it says one calls that cherishing important essence.

Then, as the 25<sup>th</sup> segment defines *dao*, the 28<sup>th</sup> segment defines *de*. But it does it in terms of the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> segments and thus effectually paraphrases them. It says knowing sky's below's roosters while keeping its hens actuates sky's below's creeks and that actuating sky's below's creeks continually keeps *de* from separating from returning and reverting to infant childhood.

It says knowing sky's below's white while keeping its black actuates sky's below's standard and that actuating sky's below's standard continually keeps *de* from deviating from returning and reverting to having no polarity.

And it says knowing sky's below's honor while keeping its dishonor actuates sky's below's valleys and that actuating sky's below's valleys continues *de* enough to return and revert to the uncut.

And it closes by making clear that that's cyclic. It says that next the uncut disperses, that the dispersal actuates implementing

*sheng rens*, that use of *sheng rens* actuates lasting officiality, and that thus is great regulating, regulating that doesn't injure. So, essentially, this segment also says *de* is *dharma* and that *sheng rens*, the lasting officials, are *bodhisattvas*.

And the 29<sup>th</sup> segment continues that synthesizing.

It says how what the third segment says of *wei wu wei* is essential to both *dao* and *de*. It says that, beginning to desire capturing sky's below while the action of that desire is our showing that one hasn't already attained it, sky's below's spirit implements inability to act. And it extends that into saying acting is one's ruin and that seizing is one's loss.

And it extends that extension into more examples of the interrelationship of apparently antonymous conditions. It says things perhaps progressing are perhaps following and that exhaling is perhaps inhaling. And it says force is perhaps weakness and that blunting is perhaps succumbing.

And it closes by saying that's why *sheng rens*, quite abandoning extravagance, abandon excess.

Capturing sky's below is such as the hoarding of gold and jade in the ninth segment, and sky's below's spirit includes what the ninth segment says is sky's *dao*, one's body's retreating upon achievement of service.

And what this segment says of exhaling and inhaling is what *hatha yogins* seek to realize through the body in body *dhyana* to which the *Satipatthana Sutta* refers.

And the thirtieth segment extends to war the notion of abandoning excess. It says that, with *dao* aiding human chiefs, one doesn't use weapons to force what's below the sky. It says weapons' work, teaching that briars and brambles live where weapons reside, usually rebounds and that thus disastrous crops follow great wars. And, saying good wars are already resolving



while not risking capturing by force, it says they resolve with no arrogance or boasting or pride. But then it refers to the inevitability of returning to the peace of the primal unity.

It says that, while one calls not being *dao* things' developing and next decaying, not being *dao* is early and already. But, of course, in that inevitability, while the extreme polarity between the primal unity and the return to it isn't *dao*, neither is the primal unity. That is, with *dao* being only the way to end the extreme polarity, it both begins and ends with it.

So, with the primal unity ultimately already being always and thus also early, this segment quite plainly says both time and tide are also illusion.

But the 31<sup>st</sup> segment returns to discussing the temporal not *dao* of the extreme polarity of war.

It says that largely, with one's excellent weapons not being implements of fortune but things perhaps of disdain, one's having *dao* doesn't abide by them. It says masters and children stop and next value the left while using weapons next values the right, that one's weapons are implements of neither masters nor children and that neither are they implements of fortune, and that weapons don't attain while masters and children use their peace insipidly to act highly. And then, extending that into the notion of the glory of war, it says conquering's being one's beauty while not being beautiful is enjoying killing humans and thus can't attain the will of sky's below.

The beauty may be what some call glory, and the references to left and right refer to Chinese ceremonial conventions, and next this segment refers more explicitly to those conventions.

It says that thus, as prosperous work honors the left while disastrous work honors the right, subordinates beginning war stand on the left while superiors beginning war stand on the right. And it

says that, in that way, lamentation, sorrow, and weeping are by way of every killing of a human by battles' conquering and that mourning's propriety is words of lamentation. So, with propriety basically being honoring tradition, this segment basically expresses relationships between traditions of war and funeral traditions

And it closes by saying that's how mourning's propriety stands by it words.

Yet the 32<sup>nd</sup> segment says that's all part of the cycle of *dao* by *de*. It says that *dao*, continually having no name, is whole though small while none below the sky can administer it. It says that, as sky and earth unite with one another to drop sweet dew, princes' nobility is like its ability to keep the many things' original self-homage. It also says people, with none of them making harmony with themselves, originate governing with names. But then it says that, having largely begun to know ceasing, names also end.

So, essentially, this segment says again that princes follow the cycle from unity through polarity and back to unity as does all. But it also says knowing the ceasing wherein is the ability not to endanger illustrates *dao*'s presence below the sky and that that's like streams flowing through valleys to great rivers and oceans. That is, effectually, it say disparity eventually will wash itself away.

And the 33<sup>rd</sup> segment says, both more succinctly and more comprehensively, how all that can operate within each differential *atman*.

It says that, while knowing humans is one's wisdom, knowing one's self is one's light. It says that, while conquering humans is one's having strength, conquering one's self is one's force. And it says knowing what's enough is one's abundance.

And then it says that, while strengthening progress is one's having will, not losing it is wherein one endures. And it closes by saying that dying while not perishing is one's immortality. And that also cuts through the obscurity of *wei wu wei*.

Essentially, this segment says the reason for *wei wu wei* is that the path to eternal life is simply letting oneself be what one is, either anyway or early and already.

But the 34<sup>th</sup> segment particularizes that to temporal chiefdom. It says great *dao* pervades, that it can be all around the many entities, for them to rely on it while they live. And it says that, while not refusing it, serving completely doesn't designate having but designates clothing and feeding the many entities.

And it extends that to saying that thus, while not acting and yet continually having no desire, chiefs can name from little. It says that, with the many entities reverting to that, chiefs not acting can name the greatness of their action by their outlasting chiefs who act. And it closes by saying that not being selfish actuates greatness and thus can complete one's greatness.

Note that that's also how the seventh segment says *sheng rens* can complete their self-interest.

And the 35<sup>th</sup> segment says how what the *Satipatthana Sutta* calls detachment is neither apathy nor nonattachment. It says that, beholding great scenery, sky's below wanders while not excessively losing still peace. But it says that, to enjoy sharing cake, passing guests stop that wandering.

And then, after saying *dao*'s mouth's emission is insipid and that *dao* has no taste, it says one doesn't see *dao*'s perception enough, hear *dao*'s listening enough, or finish its use enough. So, effectually, it says enjoying stopping to share cake distracts excessively from the peace of attachment to the meandering of *dao*. So, effectually, it says detaching oneself from the enjoyment

of cake permits one to enjoy the peace of the scenic meandering of *dao*.

So, effectually, this segment treats the word “detachment” as the *Dao De Jing* treats the word “*wei*”. And it does it in terms of what Yajnavalkya says of perception in response to what Maitreyi asks regarding wealth. Both “perception” and “wealth” generally imply differentiation.

And the 36<sup>th</sup> segment similarly tells how *dao*’s insipidness operates against desire through *wei wu wei*.

It says that, as beginning to yield to desire surely confirms that it has forced, beginning to withdraw from desire surely confirms that it has drawn. And it says that, as beginning desire’s depriving surely confirms that one has shared, beginning to abolish desire surely confirms that it has arisen. And then, calling that subtle light, it says pliant yielding conquers rigid force.

And next it somewhat obscurely illustrates that somewhat oxymoronic reference to obscurity. It says that, as fish can’t be taken from the deep, human’s can’t reveal the advantageous instruments of nations. Desire’s depriving is the desiring person’s depriving persons with whom one otherwise might share, and the relationship between fish in the deep and the advantageous instruments of nations is the obscurity of both the darkness of the deep and the politics of government, that fish depend on what they don’t see as humans depend on what they don’t understand.

But, of course, unity obfuscates obscurity. And, of course, governing by advantageous but obscure instruments is governing as would *sheng rens*. So this segment says that, however subtle or obscure anything is or however much one may struggle in any circumstance, ultimately the flow will absolve into unity.

The 37<sup>th</sup> segment says that less obscurely. It relatively concisely describes the flow, in regard to desire and government,

and also in regard to names. Saying that *dao*, while having no acting, continually has no inaction, it says princes' nobility is like their ability to keep the many things' beginning to evolve themselves while desiring to rise, and that we begin to suppress that desire by the uncut of namelessness.

And, saying the uncut of namelessness is the beginning of having no desire, it says that then sky's below begins to settle itself by the quiescence of not desiring. So, here, in the context of the uncut wholeness of namelessness, the antecedent of the first person pronoun is *sheng rens*, but it's also all of us.. And the princes' nobility is in keeping the evolving within *dao*.

But the 38<sup>th</sup> segment, less concisely but with more direct reference to *wei wu wei* and hypocrisy, through the *Dao De Jing's* many words referring to both relative and absolute nobility, defines *de* and *dao* and how they relate to one another, to effect the flow.

It says high *de*, by having *de*, isn't *de*. It says low *de*, by having no *de*, doesn't lose *de*. And it says high *de*, by action's having no acting, has no acting while low *de's* action is while having by acting.

It says that, as high morality's action is while having by acting, high human sentiment's action is while not having by acting, and it says high propriety acts while no one responds, and that next it bares its arms to force.

And it says that thus is losing *dao*, that after that is losing *de*, that after that is losing human sentiment, that after that is losing morality, and that after that is losing propriety.

And it says that, with discord being the face of propriety, propriety is largely the thinness of one's loyalty and honesty while confronting understanding one's *dao*, while foolishness is its origin by great reverence staying *dao's* solidity.

And it concludes by saying that thus, by not stopping the thinness of one's loyalty, honesty abides in the loss of propriety

while not stopping *dao*'s flowering, thus abandoning propriety's thinness, to retain *dao*'s solidity.

So obscurity here is in treating high and low as though they're superior or inferior, and that somewhat confuses the closing referenced to honesty, and such is a kind of leitmotif in the *Dao De Jing*.

But, in this segment, it explains the use of the *zi* meaning "rise" in the 37<sup>th</sup> segment.

And the 39<sup>th</sup> segment provides some relief from the obscurity of such complexity.

It, still less concisely but also more plainly, describes the cycle and its effectual simultaneity. It says that, of those anciently attaining oneness, sky attained it by clarity while earth attained it by rest, that spirit attained it by alertness while valleys attained it by filling, and that the many entities attained it by life. And it says princes' nobility attained it by enacting refinement below the sky.

But it says that attainment brought fear. It says sky, by having no clarity, began to fear rending; that earth, by having no rest, began to fear evolving; that spirit, by having no alertness, began to fear stagnation; that valleys, by having no filling, began to fear depletion; that the many entities, by having no living, began to fear dying; and that princes' nobility, by having no lofty value, began to fear falling. And what it says of princes' nobility is like what the thirteenth segment says of both favor and dishonor being like fear.

But, more generally, all of that is fear of becoming what each entity becomes during the polarity. And next this segment extends that notion of polarity and oneness into saying humble action is the root of value and that low action is the foundation of loftiness. And next, again referring to princes' hypocrisy, it asks whether the nobility of princes' calling themselves orphans and diminutive and unworthy is the root of humble action.

And then, answering that their nobility is contrary to that, it says such hypocrisy brings counting as exalted what has no exaltation. And this segment closes by directing not desiring shining, but shining as does jade, to drop as do stones. So, of course, metaphorically pertinent is that gravity also causes rivers to flow through valleys.

So this segment, the longest segment of the *Dao De Jing*, refers to all of the *Dao De Jing*'s temporal but metaphorical relationships and is thus a kind of synopsis of the *Diamond Sutra*.

The oneness here isn't the primal unity but separate identity.

And the fortieth segment, saying nothing other than that returning is the motion of one's *dao* while yielding is its use and that the many entities of sky's below live from having while having lives from not having, defines the *Dao De Jing*'s core.

And this segment is the *Dao De Jing*'s shortest segment.

But the 41<sup>st</sup> segment, numerically the central segment of the *Dao De Jing*, returns to the question of whether the polarity of lofty and low is actual.

And it does that by referring to it as though it is but then showing how it, and other apparent polarity, isn't. It says high masters hearing of *dao* labor while practicing it, that mediocre masters hearing of *dao* both seem to retain it and seem to lose it, and that low masters hearing of *dao* greatly laugh. But it says laughing isn't enough.

It says that thus, by actuating *dao*, one confirms the words that bright *dao* seems dim, that advancing *dao* seems to retreat, and that smooth *dao* seems faulty.

And then it similarly refers to *de*. It says high *de* resembles valleys as excessive whiteness resembles dishonor and that broad *de* seems insufficient as firm *de* seems unsteady. And then, saying

that what's solid and genuine seems to change, it compares the conditionality of the greatness of other circumstances to the obscurity of *dao*.

It says that, as great places have no boundaries, great implements are slow to complete. It says that, as great sounds are quietly melodious, great images have no shape. And it says that's as *dao*, having no name, conceals.

And it closes by saying that largely only *dao* is good and giving and complete. So, while saying *dao* is obscure and that *de* may not be what it seems, it says that what *dao* and *de* obscure and thus confound is the illusion of differences. So it says in one more way that together *dao* and *de* are *yoga*.

So the 42<sup>nd</sup> segment, the only segment of the *Dao De Jing* deploying the words “*yin*” and “*yang*”, uses those words in their original metaphorical sense but relatively unobscurely to describe returning to the primal unity.

Originally those words meant “shade” and “sunlight”. And the traditional circular representation of them is a schematic representation of a mountain from above as shade and sunlight flow across it. So, originally, with the mountain being but one mountain, that representation symbolized unity during apparent but temporary difference.

So, together, *yin* and *yang* represented both harmony and unity. But, at least since the Zhou Dynasty, people have used that black and white diagram as a symbol of polarity. And, before the Zhou dynasty, people also used those two words as binary digits for a systems of augury, and Zhou emperors used that system to decide how to unite China by subjugation.

But, of course, disunity is also inherent in subjugation, making that process and system an oxymoronic polar opposite of the original symbolism that *yin* and *yang* diagram, and also an illustration of the abstraction of words.



And now people are calling a record of Zhou interpretations of the 64 binary numbers of that system the *Yi Jing*, and “*yi*” in that title means “change” while “*jing*” in that title is the “*jing*” in the title of the *Dao De Jing*, and the writing of the *Dao De Jing* was also during the Zhou dynasty.

So what the *Dao De Jing* says of government may be partly a reaction against the Zhou dynasty. And a tradition has developed of attributing to Confucius interpretations of the Zhou interpretations and including them in presentations of the *Yi Jing*. So, with Confucius also fostering the Chinese tradition of advancement into government service by way of academic achievement, what the *Dao De Jing* says of scholarship may be partly a reaction against all of that.

And now, effectually producing and promoting what the *Dao De Jing* calls obscurity, many people say the *Dao De Jing* and the *Yi Jing* explain one another.

But the 42<sup>nd</sup> segment of the *Dao De Jing* obviates that. It begins by saying *dao* engendered one but that the one engendered two and that then the three engendered the many entities. And then it says the many entities, absorbing breath by enacting fusion, carry *yin* while embracing *yang*.

So it effectually says what the *Mukhya Upanishads* say of Prana and what the *Satipatthana Sutta* says of contemplating the body in the body.

And then, asking wherein is humans’ disdain, it refers to what the 38<sup>th</sup> segment says of orphans. It says that, while nobility broadens by enacting titles, only the diminishing of orphans isn’t worthy. And then it says that thus things’ perhaps diminishing while gaining is perhaps their gaining while diminishing.

And then, in another of the *Dao De Jing*’s ambiguous first person pronoun deployments, it asks wherein humans’ teaching is also that of the antecedent of that pronoun, and it answers that teaching humans’ force and aggression is one’s not attaining and

one's death, and that thus the author or *sheng rens* in general begin by actuating teaching fostering.

So this segment alludes, as does the *Dao De Jing* throughout, to the alienating pretentiousness of authoritarian government. But, by placing that allusion in the context of the numerology of the militant Zhou dynasty, it implies that numbers are a kind of word and thus are as abstract as any disparity. So, effectually, it also says *sheng rens* are what Zhou monarchs hypocritically and murderously claimed to be.

And the 43<sup>rd</sup> segment concisely says how *wei wu wei* is *dao*'s alternative to the futility of the force and aggression humans otherwise may foster. It says that, as nothingness enters spacelessness, what's most pliant below the sky outruns what's most firm below the sky. It says that's how we know the gain from having no acting isn't what words teach but sky's below's quiet reach. And, at least metaphorically in the *Dao De Jing*, nothing is more pliant than Water. So consider how the Colorado River dug the Grand Canyon.

And the 44<sup>th</sup> segment refers to other sorts of abstract artificiality of valuation of importance.

Saying names share bodies, it asks which relates personality. Saying bodies share goods, it asks which is the greater quantity. And, saying attaining shares losing, it asks which is disease.

And it answers that extreme cherishing assures great cost and that much hoarding assures substantial loss, that knowing when one has enough doesn't dishonor and that knowing when to stop doesn't endanger, and that ability is by continual endurance.

So, effectually, it says patient acceptance eventually makes those three questions moot.

And the 45<sup>th</sup> segment lists several more examples of apparent but not actual polarity relevant to the 43<sup>rd</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> segments. It says great completion is like lack in that its use doesn't deter and that great filling is like absorbing in that it doesn't exhaust. That is, it points out that one can't overcomplete, or over-absorb.

And it says that, at least presumably similarly, great correcting is like bending, as great cleverness is like clumsiness, as great disputing is like stammering.

And, saying that's as restlessness conquers cold as quiescence conquers heat, it says clear is that quiescence actuates sky's below's norm. So, with quiescence apparently antonymous with acting, this segment reasons that the norm below the sky reconciles all of that apparent polarity. So, though less metaphorically than does the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*, it decries Prajapati's sweat.

But the 46<sup>th</sup> through 48<sup>th</sup> segments present that notion of normality in terms of abnormality.

The 46<sup>th</sup> says that, if sky's below has *dao*, one uses race horses to draw manure. And it says that, if sky's below has no *dao*, war horses live at the borders of the cities. And then it says no calamity is greater than not knowing what's enough and that no downfall is greater than desiring to attain.

And it closes by saying that thus knowing sufficiency's sufficiency perpetuates sufficiency.

The 47<sup>th</sup> segment, saying increasing distance diminishes knowledge, extends that to learning. It directs not going from doors to know what's below the sky and not watching from windows to see the *dao* of the sky. It says that's how *sheng rens* know while not progressing, and it closes by saying seeing doesn't name, and that acting doesn't complete.

So consider what Luke's gospel says Jesus said of looking beyond one's self for the kingdom of God.

And the 48<sup>th</sup> segment specifies scholarship in that consideration of knowledge. It says actuating scholarship daily gains while actuating *dao* daily diminishes. And, saying perpetuating that diminishing is by maximizing having no acting, it says *wei wu wei* continually acquires below the sky by having no work.

So all of that's an especially direct allusion to the relationship between the abstraction of words and the Chinese tradition of awarding government positions on the basis of academic achievement Confucius fostered.

And, closing by saying the work scholarship achieves isn't enough for acquiring below the sky, it makes that both plain and specific if one doesn't consider the gold and jade of the ninth segment to be sky's below's wealth.

And the 49<sup>th</sup> segment connects all that to what the first segment says of the continuity of words and *dao*, to what the seventeenth and 23<sup>rd</sup> segments say of honesty, and to what the 27<sup>th</sup> segment says of instruction.

It says that, because the many families accord their actions with their minds, neither are *sheng rens* minds constant. And then, plainly using the first person pronoun to refer both to the author and to all *sheng rens*, this segment says that pronoun's antecedents in it are the good of both good people and people who aren't good and that they're the honesty of both honest people and people who aren't honest. And it closes by saying *sheng rens'* presence below the sky is shy, that they shyly actuate sky's below's muddy minds as all the many families take note with their ears and eyes, and that they're everyone's sons.

In Chinese and other cultures, parents expect their children to care for them when they're old, and parents in nearly all cultures attend to their children.

And the shyness here is humble acceptance.

But the fiftieth segment, shifting to the question of one's apparently separate responsibility for what one calls the body of one's differential *atman*, refers to the relationship between the quotidian notion of life and the quotidian notion of death. It says that to depart from life is to enter death, that both life and death have ten having three companions, and that humans' life motion and their death on earth are largely also ten having three. And then, asking by what is humans' life's solidity, it directs hearing of good covering for maintaining one's life.

It directs, while traveling on land, not encountering tigers or rhinoceroses and not entering war not clad in armor or weapons. It says that by that rhinoceroses and tigers have no place in which to thrust their horns or attach their claws and that neither do weapons have a place in which to impress their blades. And it says that, largely by such covering, humans have no dying on Earth.

Scholars bicker about whether ten having three is thirty or thirteen or three tenths and to what that number, whichever it is, refers. And, within the faction saying it's thirteen, scholars disagree regarding whether the thirteen are body parts or senses or emotions or other human qualities. And many "translators" omit one of the negatives in this segment to say it says people who know how to live have nothing to fear in the presence of rhinoceroses or tigers or in battle with no weapons or armor.

But, be any of that whatever anyone says it is, in no way does the *Dao De Jing* promote deliberately looking for trouble.

And, whatever the fiftieth segment means, the 51<sup>st</sup> segment says how and why the relationship between *dao* and *de* prolongs

life. It says that, by *dao*'s life's being *de*'s domestication of things' shaping and completing their circumstances, none of the many entities fails either to esteem *dao* or to value *de*. But it says neither *dao*'s esteem nor *de*'s value either esteems or values and that thus the destiny of *dao* and *de* is to continue the self in that way.

It says *dao*'s life is *de*'s prolonging and developing, that it's *de*'s protecting and preparing, and that it's its feeding and sheltering. But then, pointing to how the *Dao De Jing* generally defines Daoism, it says living while not having and acting while not asserting prolongs while not controlling. So it closes by saying one calls that obscure *de*.

So, in this segment, the obscurity may be in that the many entities, not knowing the relationship between the *wei wu wei* of *dao* and the feeding and sheltering and controlling of *de*, don't know *dao* or *de* is what they esteem or value.

Important to recognize while reading this segment is that domestication is protecting, preparing, feeding, and sheltering. And, in each of the *Dao De Jing*'s dozen deployments of that word meaning "obscure", the obscurity is only in the perception of the separately perceiving differential *atman*. But more obscurity is in that "*dao*" and "*de*" are also words as are "*buddha*" and "*dharmā*".

But the 52<sup>nd</sup> segment follows the 51<sup>st</sup> segment 's referring to the obscurity of "*de*" in relationship to its relationship to *dao* with an effort to describe the cycle with neither the word "*de*" nor the word "*dao*".

It says sky's below's origin, by acting as sky's below's mother, finishes attaining its motherhood by knowing its children. And then it says finishing that knowing is returning and that thus, by perpetuating that motherhood, ending bodies isn't danger. That is, essentially, it obscurely says clarity of perception obviates death.

And then it describes the intermediate process and its alternative. It says that, shutting bodies' mouths and closing their gates, in the end bodies don't labor. And it says that, opening their mouths and busying their work, in the end they aren't liberated.

And then, saying that thus seeing smallness speaks light, it describes the process less obscurely. It says retaining pliancy speaks strength, that using bodies' brightness for the returning reverts them to light, and that thus one calls that light following continuity. And it says it leaves no calamity.

So, returning to overtly referring to *dao* with a relatively unambiguous use of the first person pronoun, the 53<sup>rd</sup> segment begins by saying that our cause, having knowledge of progress from great *dao*, is transitional. Then it says that only straying from it is fear but that, while progress from great *dao* is quite free of obstruction, people usually deviate from it. And then it refers to ways of straying from *dao*.

It says that, while mornings are quite clear, fields are quite weedy with granaries quite empty. It says that, dressed in rhetoric, covering themselves by carrying blades advantageous to them, and excessively drinking and eating, the wealthy have surplus goods. And it asks whether one doesn't call that robbery and pride and contrary to *dao*.

And the 54<sup>th</sup> segment, again referring to the light roots in the 26<sup>th</sup> segment, tells how not to stray from the progress of great *dao*. It says good firming isn't uprooted and that one isn't taken from good clinging. And it says that, by offering and sacrifice, progeny doesn't stop.

It says that, from cultivation of bodies, their *de* becomes genuine. It says that, from cultivation of households, their *de* becomes surplus. It says that, from cultivation of villages, their *de* becomes continuous. It says that, from cultivation of nations, their

*dé* becomes abundant. And it says that, from cultivation of sky's below, its *de* becomes pervasive.

But then it directs perceiving bodies, households, villages, nations, and all else below the sky by what each is. And then, asking what tells us sky's below is like that, it replies simply that such perception tells us that. But, from the *Dao De Jing*'s point of view, unobscured perception tells us all ultimately is always so.

So, of course, in the context of the *Dao De Jing*, the offering and sacrifice is sharing, and thus isn't sacrifice. Some "translators" translate this segment as though the offering and sacrifice is a sort of dualistic ritual. But they also say the segments of the *Dao De Jing* don't relate to one another.

So, apparently, those "translators" are trying to "translate" the monist epistemology of the *Dao De Jing* into their dualistic epistemology.

But such "translators" also do that with "yajna", the Sanskrit word meaning "worship" or "offering" or "ritual", in the *Vedas*.

So they may also "translate" the 55<sup>th</sup> segment as though it describes a sort of child shamanism.

Saying possessing *de*'s solidarity is comparable to infant children, it says wasps, snakes, fierce beasts, and predatory birds don't sting them, attack them, or grab them. It says their bones yield while their tendons are pliant while yet their grasp is firm and that, while not knowing the intercourse of males and females, they rise fully while their quiescence is utmost. And it says that, with their fusion utmost, they outlast a day of wailing while not hoarse.

But, as always in the *Dao De Jing*, the fusion here is realization of unity. So next, explaining that metaphor, this segment says knowing fusion speaks continuity and that knowing continuity speaks light. But then it succinctly describes the polarization.



It says gaining life speaks fortune and that then minds cause breath to speak force, and it closes by repeating what the thirtieth segment says of things' developing and next decaying, that one calls it not being *dao* and that not being *dao* is early and already.

So, with the fortune here being the gold and jade of the ninth segment, this segment describes the entire cycle.

And the 56<sup>th</sup> segment, asserting directly and plainly the abstraction of words, says knowing isn't one's words and that word's aren't one's knowing. Next it directs shutting words' mouth to close their gates and blunting words' edges to loosen their knots. And next, directing diffusing words' brightness to unite their dust, it calls that obscure unity.

And it says that thus one can't attain that unity while either personally relating or shunning, while either taking advantage or losing, or while either valuing or humiliating. And it says that thus, by detaching oneself from any of those apparent opposites, one actualizes sky's below's value. So, while the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> segments call such sky's below's standard and norm, this segment calls it its value.

But the norm of the standard value isn't the relative valuing this segment suggests one may use to humiliate.

And this segment is in terms specific to the first segment.

And the 57<sup>th</sup> segment, beginning by saying normality governs nations while abnormality deploys weapons, elaborates on the 45<sup>th</sup> segment.

It says acquiring below the sky is by having no work. It says that, while many constraints and prohibitions are below the sky, people's poverty increases. It says people's many advantageous implements, nations, and households increase the murkiness below the sky. It says humans' many skills cleverly but

abnormally increase that multiplicity of entities arising and that emulating it promotes it. And it says that next is having many robbers and thieves.

And then it says how *sheng rens* respond to all that. It says they have no acting while people's self evolves and that they implement quiescence while people's self is normal. And it says they have no work while people's self abounds and that they have no desire while people's self remains uncut.

Of course the multiplicity in this segment is of the extreme polarity that takes one from the uncut wholeness of no polarity, and the evolving in it is the cycle that returns one to no polarity after extreme polarity takes one from it, and the normality is the quiescence of the 45<sup>th</sup> segment.

So, with the acquiring by having no work and the *sheng rens*' having no work while people's self abounds, this elaboration on the 45<sup>th</sup> segment basically says *wei wu wei* is the quietness of the standard for normality.

And the 58<sup>th</sup> segment, saying more of polarity, also says how *sheng rens* respond to it. Saying people are genuine when their government is dull but deficient when their government is sharp, it asks how and wherein is the interdependence of people's happiness and calamity, and then it asks who knows the polarity, the having no norm, of that. And it replies that humans' delusions, with normality returning to acting abnormally and good returning to acting ominously, daily affirm polarity's endurance.

But then it says that's why and wherein *sheng rens* shape and correct and brighten, while not disfiguring or overreaching or dazzling, and do all that harmlessly. So this segment, continuing the 57<sup>th</sup> segment's elaboration on the relevance of the norm of the 45<sup>th</sup> segment and the standard of the 22<sup>nd</sup> segment to government, specifies the sharpness of government as a deviation from that

norm and standard. And it also makes plain the relationship between disparity and delusion.

So, together, the 55<sup>th</sup> through the 58<sup>th</sup> segments treat infants and *sheng rens* and all other humans and government as the *Dao De Jing* treats all apparent but not actual differences.

And, beginning by saying no one governing humans or work or the sky seems to be in restraint and that one largely calls restraint only the early dressing one calls the weight of accumulating *de*, the 59<sup>th</sup> segment describes further how *de* effects the transition from sharp government to dull government.

It says that next the weight of that accumulation has no not subduing and that having no not subduing is next no one's knowing one's polarity. It says no one's knowing one's polarity can be by having nations and that having nations' mothering can be by continuing to endure. And it closes by saying one calls that deep roots and firm stems' continuing life and the enduring perception of *dao*.

So, while decrying polarizing government, the *Dao De Jing* treats unifying government as an implementation of *de* and treats the nationalization resulting by virtue of that as a metaphor for the primal unity.

So early is primal, and the dressing is the artificial complexity bringing the need to accumulate *de* to restrain the abnormality the 58<sup>th</sup> segment decries, in order to return by way of *dao* to the quiescence of the primal unity.

But, while much of the *Dao De Jing* may be enigmatic to many people, perhaps most obscure is its beginning its sixtieth segment by saying governing great nations is like frying small fish. But reading the *Dao De Jing* carefully enough to see how its pieces fit together would obviate much of the enigma. And that assertion is no exception.

Next this segment says that, by *dao*'s ruling sky's below, its ghosts aren't spiritual. Next it says it isn't that sky's below's ghosts aren't spiritual but that their spirit doesn't harm humans. And next it says it isn't that their spirit doesn't harm humans but that *sheng rens* don't harm humans.

So the small fish may be a metaphor for the many Chinese folk religions. But more likely is that they're a metaphor for the many words over which people bicker as though they're the countless entities to which they ostensibly refer while people bicker over that also. And the harmlessness of *sheng rens* includes *sheng rens*' refraining from bickering.

And all of those references to harmlessness allude to the harmlessness in the 58<sup>th</sup> segment. So, last before closing, this segment says all that's largely that the two, *sheng rens* and other humans, don't harm one another. And this segment closes by saying that therein is *de*'s reciprocal return.

So another fish needing frying is the tendency of dualistic "translators" to treat the word "*dao*" in the *Dao De Jing* as obscurely as they treat the word "*deva*" in the *Upanishads*.

But, beginning by saying great nations are nations downstream and that the integrity of what's below the sky is its femininity, the 61<sup>st</sup> segment extends the metaphors of valleys and femininity directly into national politics and economics. It says femininity, by continual stillness and by stillness acting from below, conquers masculinity. But it says that, in international relations, that's a reciprocal return.

It says that, by being downstream, great nations' capture small nations. But next it says that, by being below great nations, small nations next capture great nations. And then it says how.

It says that, with great nations willingly domesticating small nations' people along with theirs for small nations to enter

willingly into working for humans for their food, perhaps being below captures while being captured.

And it closes by saying that, with the great nations properly acting as below, one and each of the two attain what they desire.

So, accordingly, the 62<sup>nd</sup> segment, beginning by alluding to what the ninth segment says of filling halls with gold and jade, describes sharp government. It says that, though *dao* is the storehouse of one's many things, a place protecting the treasure of both good humans and humans who aren't good, beautiful words sell esteeming progress by people's ability to gain. And, saying beautiful words do that because they can, it asks what protects from that.

So then it asks what keeps humans who aren't good from having and thus strengthening sky's child's appointing the three broad while their having tribute jade behind teams of four horses isn't like settling into advancing this *dao*. During the Zhou dynasty, the time during which Lao Zi presumably was a government official, the three broad were the ministers of works, education, and war, and Child of the Sky was the official title of the emperor. So next this segment asks whether that's primal and wherein is it's value and how it's one's *dao* if it is.

And, like the 56<sup>th</sup> segment, it closes by directing that one actuate sky's below's value instead of preaching seeking salvation by way of crime. That is, summarily and succinctly, it closes by saying how to obviate sharp government. And that's by realizing that gold and jade aren't one's treasure.

And the 63<sup>rd</sup> segment says how one may actuate that value by way of *wei wu wei*. It says that, by action having no acting, work having no working, and taste having no tasting, great and many are small and few. And it says that, by requiting malice by way of *de*, planning difficulty from its being easy, and actuating

greatness from its being small, sky's below's difficult work surely arises from ease.

And it says all of that's how *sheng rens* in the end can complete their greatness while not acting greatly. And, saying light promises largely assure diminishing honesty as much ease assures much difficulty, it says that's why and how *shengs rens* are like difficulty. And it says that's how in the end they have no difficulty.

And, of course, pertinent is that taste having no tasting is an example of what Buddhist *suttas* and *sutras* call detachment.

And the 64<sup>th</sup> segment says more of how the difficulty of *sheng rens' wei wu wei* isn't difficult. It says what's still is easily grasped as what's insignificant is easily planned and that what's frail is easily dissolved as what's subtle is easily dispersed. And it says acting's lack is from having as government's lack is from discord.

It says tiny seeds engender forests, as nine levels of terraces arise from accumulating soil, as a journey of a thousand miles begins beneath one's feet.

It says acting is one's ruin and thus seizes one's loss. It says that by that *sheng rens* have no acting and thus have no ruin and have no seizing and thus have no loss while others pursue their work until they've nearly completed it and then run it. And it says maintaining caution from beginning to end would have no ruining.

It says that's why *sheng rens* desire not to desire and don't value goods for the difficulty of acquiring them and that such is how scholarship isn't scholarship. And it closes by saying that's how *sheng rens*, by helping the many things help themselves by not risking acting, return every human to the wherein of their past. And that closing essentially defines the Buddhist term "*bodhisattva*".

And the 65<sup>th</sup> segment, beginning by saying primal's good actuates one's *dao*, describes the cycle from beginning to end in terms of the sharpness of some governing.

It says that, contrary to by light, people decide their behavior by their foolishness. Next, saying difficulty of people's governing is by the extent of their cunning, it says that thus governing nations by cunning is nations' theft while governing nations with no cunning is nations' happiness. And next it says that, knowing those two alternatives, one models the standard also.

It also says one calls continually modeling the standard obscure *de*. But then, saying obscure *de* is deep and distant but is returning from disdain, it says that accordingly back is then utmost great conforming. So, considering that the 28<sup>th</sup> segment says sky's below's standard is knowing sky's below's white while keeping it's black, one might interpret this segment to say *de* keeps the *yin* and *yang* diagram in motion both perpetually and reciprocally.

And the 66<sup>th</sup> segment applies the metaphor of the spirit of valleys to that. Asking how, like rivers and oceans, one can actuate the nobility of a hundred valleys, it answers that one can actuate it by their goodness and lowness, and it says that's how *sheng rens* govern. And it says that's why humans surely desire high people by their low words and surely desire people to lead by their bodies' being behind. But it also says that's why and how *sheng rens* stay high while not burdening people and stay in front while people aren't lost. And it says that, by means of all that, sky's below joyously exalts but not excessively.

And it closes by saying that thus, by way of that spirit's not contending, none below the sky can contend with one another. So the 65<sup>th</sup> and 66<sup>th</sup> segments effectually express the literal meaning of the word "absolution". They say polarity eventually absolves itself.

And the 67<sup>th</sup> segment, with another ambiguous use of the first person pronoun, expands further on that. It says all below the sky say our *dao* seems greatly extraordinary but that largely the only greatness seeming extraordinary in our *dao* is its seeming ordinarily to endure, while small. And then it extends that ambiguous use of that pronoun into saying we have the protecting and holding of three treasures.

It says the first treasure speaks devotion and that the second speaks frugality while the third speaks not risking acting as though we're the precedent of sky's below. It says devotion can dare, while frugality can broaden, while not risking acting as though we're the precedent of sky's below can complete, implement, and sustain. And it says shunning devotion and frugality and being behind, while yet daring and broadening and preceding, are now dying.

And it says largely battling for devotion is next to die. And, perhaps referring to the Zhou dynasty's campaign to subjugate all of China, it says annexation for the purpose of further conquest is to die after that. And it says that thus sky's beginning to liberate is by way of the protection of one's devotion.

So, quite clearly referring to polarity's apparent obstruction of absolution, it says that nevertheless the absolution is early and already.

And the treasures here are the treasure in the 62<sup>nd</sup> segment.

But the 68<sup>th</sup> segment more concisely and directly cites an alternative to the methods of such as the Zhou dynasty.

It says that, mastering action well and conquering opponents well, one isn't violent or angry. It says that, conquering opponents well and using humans well, one doesn't reciprocate but acts as though one's below them. And it says one calls that the *de* of not contending but using humans' strength.



And, explicitly expressing how that's literally absolution, it closes by saying one also calls it connecting the sky's primal polarity.

And the 69<sup>th</sup> segment expands further on that. It says words of using weapons are that we shouldn't risk acting as chiefs while acting as guests or risk advancing an inch while retreating a foot. And, saying one calls that progress with no progress and baring arms one doesn't have to force opposition one doesn't have to seize no one's weapons, it says no calamity is great from light opposition. And it says that, while such lightness doesn't approach mourning our treasure, mutual matching of weapons increases one's lamenting one's conquering. And, literally of course, neither is this treasure the gold and jade of the ninth segment.

It also the devotion and frugality and humility of the 67<sup>th</sup> segment.

And the seventieth segment, with another ambiguous use of the first person pronoun, alludes to what the 56<sup>th</sup> segment says of words, value, and obscurity.

It says that, though our words are quite easy to know and quite easy to practice, no one below the sky can know them or practice them. But it also says words have ancestors while work has masters, and that refers both to the first segment's assertion that the primal unity preceded words and to the notion that action doesn't depend on acting, and next it says that largely only having no knowledge is how we don't know. So it effectually says the relationship between action and acting is the same as the relationship between truth and abstraction.

And next it says we're one's quiet by knowing and that next we're one's value. And it closes by saying that's how *sheng rens* clad in wool conceal jade. And that may suggest how Zen is Buddhist.

Consider how Zen koans operate and the relationship between valuing and value. Koans are for contemplating apparent *non sequiturs* in order to realize that ultimately all is *sequitur*. So their purpose is to use the wool to reveal the jade.

So obscurity here is the distinction between relative knowledge and absolute knowledge.

And the 71<sup>st</sup> segment continues that obviating obfuscation of obscurity. It says knowing one doesn't know is high while not knowing what one knows is disease and that largely only disease diseases. And, saying that, by not diseasing, *sheng rens* don't disease by their disease diseasing, it says that's how not to disease.

And, while that may be a parody of less meaningfully talking in circles, one might consider that the Chinese word meaning "disease" here can refer to any defect. So one might also consider that the components of the English word "disease" mean "apart from" and "free of difficulty". And one might also consider that in relation to *wei wu wei*.

So one might also consider this segment to be a parody of the seventieth segment to demonstrate further why it decries what it decries.

And the 72<sup>nd</sup> segment, while saying more clearly why and how *sheng rens* don't disease, may also further demonstrate the abstraction of words.

It says that, when people don't fear awe, great awe is at its utmost and lacks the constraint by which it might end. It says that not having the excess wherein awe lives is only by not being excessive and that that's why *sheng rens*, while knowing the self, don't regard the self. And it says it's why they cherish the self but don't value the self and thus abandon valuing the self to capture cherishing it.

So considerations here are the relationship between the word “awesome” and the word “awful” and the relationship between loving and prizing”.

And the 73<sup>rd</sup> segment, while primarily comparing the valuing of *sheng rens* to the valuing of the sky, also implies the ineffectuality of words in comparison to the *dao* of the sky. Saying being killed results from daring to risk and that daring not to risk results in survival, it says either of those alternatives may be either to one’s advantage or to one’s loss, and then it asks wherein is the sky’s disdain and who knows it. And, suggesting that *sheng rens* know it and that the disdain is what the *Satipatthana Sutta* calls detachment, it says that’s how *sheng rens* are like the difficulty of sky’s disdain.

And it paraphrases all that by saying sky’s *dao* doesn’t contend but conquers well and isn’t words but responds well, and that neither do *sheng rens* or the sky summon, while yet selves come. And it says that, slowly while planning well, sky’s net is vast and vastly shunning while not losing. So it further explains how *sheng rens*’ detachment is neither malicious nor irresponsible.

So, effectually, it says difficulty isn’t difficulty.

And, like the eighth segment, the 74<sup>th</sup> segment considers that risk and loss in relationship to government and the norm of the 45<sup>th</sup> segment.

It asks how and by what, if people don’t fear death, dying is a threat. It answers that causing people to continue to fear dying is like our attaining the seizing and killing of people acting abnormally. And it asks what risk is in continually having officials do that killing.

And, saying it’s largely having officials be one’s killers, it answers that that’s having great artisan hewers stand in for great artisan hewers to have the hewing quietly and not harm the

hewers' hands. So questions here are whether capital punishment is a deterrent, whether judges or executioners or legislators execute, and why. But, more fundamentally, the question is who loses what.

And in that question are the questions of how vast is the net or shunning of a governments' doing that and how well such a government plans.

And, also in that regard, the 75<sup>th</sup> segment refers to another sort of shunning by government. It says people's starving is by those high taxing much for the high ones' food and that thus the difficulty of governing people is by the acting of the high people. And, saying that thus people's lightly dying is by the high ones' seeking life's solidity, it says people's worth from valuing life largely would be only by having no life acting.

So this segment, perhaps more than the 74<sup>th</sup> segment or any other, indicts the norms of tyrannical government. Effectually it says people's valuing their lives may depend on governments' not acting. But, more to the purpose of the *Dao De Jing*, it offers a solution.

Most essentially it says one should govern by *wei wu wei*. But it doesn't say plainly how all of that's early and already. It leaves that to segments saying how ending bodies isn't danger.

And the 76<sup>th</sup> segment says how *dao* ultimately supersedes what the 74<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> segments say of death. It says humans' living is pliant and yielding while their dying is firm and forcing and that the life of the grass and trees and the many other things is pliant and frail while their death is brittle and dry. And it says that thus firm force accords with one's dying while pliant yielding accords with one's living.

And, saying that's how weapons' force next fails to conquer and how trees' force next becomes weapons, it says

forcing greatly stays low while pliant yielding stays high. One might say it's referring to killing trees to make spears and arrows or to forcefully limiting the pliancy of bows for more force. But that would require denying the fundamental assertion of the *Dao De Jing* that eventually all returns to the primal unity.

And metaphorically it would deny what the *Dao De Jing* says of the pliancy of water and the acceptance of femininity. So one must consider how the pliant yielding stays high. And the 77<sup>th</sup> segment clarifies that.

The 77<sup>th</sup> segment, again referring to the relationship between apparent opposites, uses the pliancy of bows as a metaphor for sharing to say how the *dao* of the sky compensates for the excessiveness to which the 74<sup>th</sup> through 76<sup>th</sup> segments refer.

It says that, with the lofty lowering to lift the low, sky's *dao* shares like drawing a bow. And then, again referring to the calamity of not knowing what's enough, it says having surplus is one's taking while not giving to those who don't have enough. And it says that, while the *dao* of the sky takes from surplus to compensate for insufficiency, humans' *dao* provides for surplus by taking from what's already insufficient.

It says that, below the sky, only one's having *dao* can have surplus by providing. And it says that's how *sheng rens'* action is while not asserting and why they move on upon completion of service. It says they don't desire seeing worth.

That is, effectually, it says the distinction between the sky's *dao* and humans' *dao* is like the disparity between any differences.

So, effectually, it says that all, early and already, is one.

And the 78<sup>th</sup> segment similarly refers to nobility.

It begins by saying directly that nothing below the sky is more pliantly yielding than water. It says that, by not having the ease of water's yielding and pliancy in conquering force and

rigidity, no one's force can conquer water's attacking one's firm force. And then, referring to the obscurity in the words of the seventieth segment, it again presents *sheng rens* as an alternative to government hypocrisy.

It says that, while no one below the sky doesn't know what it's said of the pliancy of water, no one can practice it. And then it says that's why *sheng rens* say one calls keeping nations humble the grain shrines' chief. And it says that's why *sheng rens* say one calls keeping nations unfortunate sky's below's nobility.

But then, after that reference to the arrogant hypocrisy of ostensibly noble governments' using folk religions to keep people humble but unfortunate, it says normal words are like returning.

And the 79<sup>th</sup> segment refers to the relationship between propriety and greed and to the relationship between evil and detachment.

Beginning by saying fusing great malice with more malice surely produces surplus malice while quiet can be by actuating good, next it says that's why *sheng rens* take the creditor's copy of contracts but don't impose their claim on people, and that thus officials having *de* agree while officials having no *de* claim.

And, again referring to the lack of fusion of reverent devotion into the six personal attachments, it closes by saying the *dao* of the sky has no personal attachment but continually shares goodness with humans.

And the eightieth segment, elaborating on the 57<sup>th</sup> segment, is a graphic description of the futility of greed.

It says results of small nations' diminishing population are having many implements for which the nations have no use, people's considering dying while not considering emigrating while having boats in which they could and exalting their chariots for

which neither do they have use, and returning to knotting cords to count ways of using their weapons they have no reason to wield.

It says that, with their food sweet, their clothing beautiful, and their dwellings quiet, though they're in the neighborhood of nations near enough for the nations to see one another and hear one another's birds' and dogs' chirping and barking, the people enjoy their particular customs.

And it says that, at the utmost of that, the peoples decay and die not visiting one another. So, essentially, it says how not knowing what's enough results in alienation and stagnation partly through overvaluation of both having and acting. And the enjoying of particular customs is attachment to disparity.

But all of it's clinging.

And, of course, the 81<sup>st</sup> and final segment of the *Dao De Jing* summarizes the entire *Dao De Jing*.

It says honest words aren't beautiful and that beautiful words aren't honest, that good persons aren't disputing persons as disputing persons aren't good persons, and that knowing ones aren't learned as learned ones aren't knowing.

And, referring to knowing what's enough, it says *sheng rens* don't hoard. And then it extends that into a reference to how *wei wu wei* operates toward one's return to the primal unity by the way and means of *dao* and *de*. It says that, finishing by acting, humans' self has more, but that humans' self is much more when it finishes by sharing, essentially by not hoarding.

And this segment closes the *Dao De Jing* by saying that, as the advantage of the *dao* of the sky isn't while losing, *sheng rens'* *dao's* action isn't while contending.

So the last three segments of the *Dao De Jing*, like Yajnavalkya in the *Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishad*, say attachment to the illusion of disparity is grief.

# Life

Life, if the *Mukhya Upanishads* and those *Suttas* and *Sutras* and the *Dao De Jing* are correct, makes death impossible. And linguistic conventions have us most basically using the word “life” to refer to not being dead! But what is life?

Saying what an entity isn’t doesn’t say what it is. And neither does science or any other religion plainly say what life is. And neither do any of those categories of words say what or whether one was before one was alive.

And, though we generally agree that life begins, the question of how is like the question of how the universe banged from a black hole. Another logy is biology, and that logy etymologically is words of life, and it designates various biological processes involving various physiological objects and substances. But no words describe either the moment life begins or the moment one begins to know one is.

Do you remember your first thought? Do you remember the moment of your first imagining anything to be other than you? Do you remember the moment of your first thinking you’re different from your surroundings, that you’re you and not others, that others are, that else is, etc.? But, more pertinent to life, do you remember learning which of that else is alive. And do you remember how you recognized that you do any of that?

And do you recognize that now?



But, whether or not you do, the next question is how you can know whether you were alive or dead or anything else or all immediately before any of that seemed to you to be. So in all those questions or answers remains the question of what, other than the linguistic convention that life isn't death, life is. Etcetera.

That is, other than not being dead, what do you think is essential to being alive? And that is, if you think both you and viruses are alive, what do you think you and viruses have in common? And, if you don't think that, why not?

Do you think life is the ability to decide for oneself what one does? Do you think you're able to decide for yourself any or all of what you do? Can you decide what comes to your attention or what doesn't? And, if you can, what or how much of that can you decide? And how completely?

And how about what you call your physical ability?

Could you go for a walk if you had no legs or decide to walk or control your walking if you had no brain? Does your brain have a physical relationship with or a connection to your mind? And, if so, how?

And can you cause or affect a physical event that has no physical relationship to you?

But also in that question is the question of whether anything has no physical relationship to you or to anything else. And in that question is the question of whether cause and effect is a chain or a web, and in that question is whether it has any breaks or holes as does the labyrinth of neurons and synapses in your brain, however or whether or not your brain connects to your mind. And, regarding life and linguistic conventions, if the unconventional use of diction in this book is obscure to you, consider the meaning of the word "born" as an English verbal form of the English noun "birth", and then compare it to those words' nearest equivalents in Sanskrit.

That English word “born” is in the passive voice. But the Sanskrit word English-speaking people translate into the phrase “born again”, when referring either to the Christian notion of resurrection or to the Hindu notion of reincarnation, is in the active voice. So consider what that says of *karma* or determinism or predestination.

That is, consider the question of whether the question of whether anyone does anything to anyone is epistemological or actual, logical or physical.

So, in that question of proximal relationships, isn’t another question whether your first consciousness came to you suddenly or gradually or in pieces? And, if it came all at once, from what did it come and from where? And how could it not always have been everywhere?

And, if it hasn’t, did it come from your parents? And, whether or not it did, did your life come from your parents? And, if your life came from your parents, didn’t it come from their parents by way of your parents’ life coming from your parents’ parents? But, whether by how your parents were before they gave you life or by what they’ve done since then, how much of what you’ve done in your life have they caused? So whose life is it?

So do you honor your parents? And, if you honor your life, why? And, if you honor your parents, for what do you honor them? And, if you honor them for giving you life, do you honor your life or others’ life? And, whatever you honor, why and how and for what do you honor it?

Did your father take you into a forest or onto a river and teach you how to end others’ life there, the life of deer or fish or mosquitoes, any others’ life? And, whether or not he did, how could anyone honor that, and what do you eat, and why? Can or can’t you live if you or others don’t kill to feed you?

And why, while the earth has plentiful provision, enough to feed and house every human on earth while not killing any living

being other than vegetation, do humans kill one another for land while also killing other animals for food, and for fun?

Is that because God gave them that sort of dominion and told them to do it? And, if it's because God told them to do it, is that god the god of our parents or the god of our nation or a god any of us imagined for all of us or for his or her separate self? And, if God gives humans religion, why do humans have so many different religions.

And, if God didn't give us our religion, why not? And, if our parents determine our religion, do they do it genetically as they give us life? Or do they do it by preaching or by example?

And, if they do it by teaching, what other values do they teach us? Do they teach us to play football, to enjoy fighting one another over a ball, for control of a hundred yards of land? Do they teach children to feel shame, when other children don't select them to take their side in that fighting, and do they teach children to inflict that shame?

Do they teach them to feel shame for inflicting that shame, or do they teach them to feel pride for not participating in that fight, or do they leave all that teaching to other children? And, with all the plentitude on earth, what proportion of the time of parents who control more than enough of it to sustain comfortably their lives and the lives of their children spend teaching their children or feeding them or otherwise caring for them? And do those who don't accept that responsibility feel pride or shame for what they or their children do with their lives?

And, if you do none of that, do you have a life? That is, what responsibility for life do you honor, and how much of your responsibility for life do you either accept or admit? That is, should your children honor you, if you don't honor their lives? And whose children are they? Isn't having owning?

That is, if we disown our responsibility for our children's lives or otherwise fail to determine their behavior, how are they ours?

And aren't those questions also pertinent to the dog you chain in your backyard or the cat you lock in your apartment? How responsible are you for their lives, and how do you own them or justify owning them, if you do? And how did wolves become yard dogs, and how did lions become house cats, and why?

And why do humans kill sharks and bears for killing humans invading their dominion? And, if the answer to that question is that humans think their life is more valuable than other animals' life, isn't the next question after that question also why? And, if humans are correct in saying the reason is that humans can reason while other animals can't, isn't the next question why humans kill one another more than other animals kill one another?

That is, how reasonable is that, and how do humans decide how reasonable each human is? That is, how logical is that reasoning, that linguistic convention or the convention of parents' calling for killing umpires at little league baseball games? And who, adults or children, make violent video games children play, and who sells them or buys them, and why? And why do adults blame the video games for children's violence? Do eggs lay chickens?

And why do universities subordinate academics to athletics? Do their administrators know the origin of the word "sport" was Greeks' training for war? Do they know the Spartans conquered the Athenians, who also subordinated academics to athletics, apparently?

How philosophical were the Athenians in naming their city state for a deific personification they called the goddess of both war and wisdom?

But what, in any attitude, are love and knowledge, the etymological roots of "philosophy", Athens' academic claim to

fame? And what's the relationship between either and life, and what do adults sell in adult bookstores, and how is it adult? That is, beyond for progeny, what's the relationship between life and what one calls sex?

That is, similarly, what's the relationship between the word "sex" and the words "sect" and "section", "sectarian" and "sectarianism", and "dissect" and "bisect"?" And why do we use the word "competition", a word that originally referred to walking together, to refer to walking against or over or trampling? And how has communism, whatever it etymologically means, failed?

How isn't the tenet "from each according to his ability and to each according to his need" a viable foundation for government? Why has every revolution one has called communist ended in its leaders' perverting the ideal of communism into the actuality of giving their followers the least they need, while giving their politically powerful differential selves the most they can grab, short of inspiring a counterrevolution? And why do other political leaders also call that hypocrisy communism and not the feudal form of capitalism it is?

What difference is between those detractors' misrepresentation and the misrepresentation they deprecate? And why do the "masses" who need the promise of communism believe either of those misrepresentations? Did anyone ever believe in the original ideal?

That is, does sharing characterize human life, and how is the actuality of humanity what humans call humane? That is, how humane are humans, and do Christians believe Christ said loving one's neighbor is like loving God? Or do they believe he said he didn't come to bring peace but to bring a sword to divide us against one another?

And why, if Christ told his disciples to beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees, do 2.2 billion Christians heed or preach the words of the Pharisee they call Paul more than they heed or

preach the words of the person they call Christ? And how can they believe God killed a husband and wife for selling their possessions and not laying all the proceeds at the feet of Christ's disciple who denied knowing him three times on the morning of his crucifixion.? Do most Christians read what they call the word of God carefully enough to know Christianity is principally the doctrine of the Pharisees?

Or is the promise of eternal life the reason for the popularity of Christianity? And, whether or not it is, how many Christians read what they call the word of God closely enough to know the Pharisees misrepresented the scriptures they say promised eternal life? That is, if they did, wouldn't Christians know the Pharisee who founded Christianity, after Pharisees demanded the death of the person Christians call Christ, misrepresented what they call the word of God?

And that is, if they read in what they call the word of God its saying the person they call the Christ misrepresented himself, would they have faith in it or him? And that is, are humans so desperate for life that they lie for it, both to themselves and to or about what they call God? But how many people read the scriptures of any religion in which they say they believe?

And, if they don't, how do they decide which set of linguistic conventions they call scriptures is the most reasonable, and don't all those questions ask how many ways one can lie to oneself to make oneself think one's better than one has reason to believe one is or to think one's life is more important than others' life, and whether people claiming Christianity value life so little that they're too lazy to bother to read what they say they believe?

And can't one also include in those questions the question of what's the basis for the linguistic conventions of calling people calling themselves communists left wing while calling people calling themselves Christians right wing and doing the same to or for people calling themselves Democrats or Republicans?

Does religion or politics determine which hand one uses most? And, whether or not either does, how many people read the platform of any political party for which they vote or research the voting records of the candidates for whom they vote? And what determines how literate one is?

That is, is any of that determination genetic or honoring one's parents, or is it linguistic conventions or reasoning? And does answering that question answer the question of why people call a professional sports team the home team and root for it while they know their home town is the home town of nearly none of the team's members? And, whether or not the answer to any of those questions is that ignorance is bliss, is any love ever unconditional?

Is any difference between parents' wanting children to honor their parents' ideals and parents' wishing to be role models for the kids they call theirs? If a spouse loses love of or for a spouse, is that because life during the marriage changed the spouses, eliminating the conditions they loved at the beginning of the marriage? And do parents or spouses regard any of that as conditioning or determinism?

If you love a person, are you willing to let the person be free, to be whatever the person is? Do you believe the truth shall or can make you free, or do you fear that it may enslave you to shame, or to a linguistic convention? And who will you be when you remove the shirt in which you've dressed to identify your ego with your favorite sports idol? And what will children be if they don't dress in their parents' jerseys? Will they love their parents?

And will a dog be your friend if you don't train the dog to fit your notion of a friendly dog? And why did that Pharisee Christians heed more than they heed the person he called the Christ say Christians are slaves to Christ and thus shouldn't care if they're slaves to men? And, if one cares, would that Pharisee be that caring person's friend.

And what difference would that make? And, if it makes a difference, is the difference like what one calls political differences? What do liberals try to liberate, and what do conservatives try to conserve, if both don't try to conserve their liberty? And why do people one calls liberals try to conserve the lives of criminals but not the lives of embryos? And why do people one calls conservatives try to liberate economic forces but not political forces? And how many partisans recognize that partisanship is inherently bigotry? But what difference isn't?

So how many people know the etymology of the word "bigotry", or know its relevance to a Spanish Harvard professor's saying ignoring history condemns one to repeat it, and how many know its relevance to how illogically we let linguistic conventions affect our lives?

So consider this. Angles, a Germanic tribe, migrated to what we now, because it became the land of the Angles, call England. Then Vikings, a Norwegian tribe, migrated to what we now, because the Vikings were Norwegian men, call Normandy.

Then consider this determinism or lack of it.

Then the Normans invaded England and killed the Angle king. And, though the Normans learned French because Normandy was a province of France before the Normans migrated there, they didn't bother to learn the Angles' language English-speaking people now call Old English. And, while "*par Dieu*" was French for "by God", "*bei Gott*" was Old English for "by God."

So, when the Angles swore at the Normans by God because they didn't like their invading them, the Normans didn't know what they were saying. But, because they easily discerned that the Angles meant ill will toward them when they said it, they threw it back at the Angles as an insult designating that ill will. So now "bigot" is modern English referring to any unreasonable dislike of any particular group of people while "*sectarisme*" is French for



“bigotry”. And, etymologically, the root of the word “*sectorisme*” is also the root of the words “section”, “bisect” and “sex”, etc.

But the question in all that is how we consider or evaluate differences. And we don’t need to return to the Norman Conquest or the Hundred Years War to ask that question. The Hundred Years War, beginning four centuries after the Norman Conquest, most basically was a century of English effort to make France part of England. But plenty of reason to ask that question is in the inappropriateness of the current use of the term “information age”. The question is why we don’t use our smartphones to take the advice of that Spanish Harvard professor.

That is, more specifically, why do most people using the World Wide Web instead use it most for shopping or to speak for or entertain their differential *atmans*? And, more generally, why haven’t we used the booming information possibilities of the most recent several decades to understand one another all over our world well enough to know that all the horrors humans inflict on one another arise from failure to understand one another? But, with or without the World Wide Web, why don’t we understand that the fundamental motive for committing horrors is the same as the fundamental motive for committing any discretionary act?

That is, why don’t we understand that it’s the disparate desperation to be better than we find reason to believe we are and that fundamentally that’s the desire to be worthy of love, whether or not we love? And, if any of us can understand that, how can’t we understand that every criminal is not guilty by reason of insanity? But isn’t that the same as the question of why all of us don’t love all of our neighbors as ourselves?

And what’s racism? Isn’t it belief that one’s genetic heritage is superior to others’ genetic heritage and trying to oppress others for theirs? And, if it is, isn’t belief that God preferred the descendants of Israel and commanded them to kill others for their land, and promised to help them do that, the epitome of racism?

That is, whatever life is or whatever we think it is, why would anyone use it to differentiate one's own life from others' and blame it on someone the blamer says is better than anyone?

And why would any god or human or beast who's omnipotent and omnibenevolent and omnipresent need or wish to kill his son to accomplish anything? And why would such a person need to send an angel to tell a prophet to tell humans what he'll do or why he's decided to do it? And why would such a person create lives believing any of that?

And why would such a life or any other sort of entity imagine space and light in which to do or cause or permit all that or this book or anything else one calls else or other?

But perhaps the answer to that question is in the question of why, of the six religions most popular among the more than seven billion lives commonly deploying linguistic conventions, three are epistemologically monistic while the other three are epistemologically dualistic.

And isn't any of the answer to that question in that, while the three most popular dualistic religions share their origin and agree with one another in many ways, the dualism inherent to them extends beyond their fundamental notion that God is separate from his creation?

Though the ostensibly definitive scripture of the oldest of those three religions says God preferred one race over all other races and commanded it to annihilate nine or ten other races for their land, it also says God commanded people not to kill and not to covet one's neighbor's possessions, and such contradictions are frequent in that scripture.

And another example is that scripture's saying the person it says delivered God's commandment not to kill ordered the largest single mass murder in any of the scriptures of those six religions. And it says he specifically included women and children in that killing, and that the victims of that particular effort at genocide

weren't one of the nine or ten races that scripture says God included in his murderous racist landgrab commandment, and that scripture also contradicts itself regarding the reason. It says both that it was that a member of that race cursed the race it says God preferred and that the person it accuses of that refused to curse that race and blessed it instead.

And another example of contradictions within the linguistic conventions one calls scripture is particular to the second oldest of those three religions.

The oldest of those three dualistic religions is Judaism. And fundamental to Christianity, the second oldest of those three dualistic religions, is interpretations of prophecies in the scripture of Judaism. In Judaic scripture, the Kingdom of Israel, the kingdom of the race Judaic scripture says God prefers, divides itself into the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah, and eventually other kingdoms subsumed both. And the prophecies are that a descendent of the member of the Israelite tribe of Judah, who that scriptures says was the last king of all of Israel, will resurrect his kingdom and rebuild his capital. But the interpretation is the extension of that into saying the descendent will also resurrect everyone who either hasn't disobeyed their murderous racist god's commandments or has repented disobeying them.

And Judaic scripture also says that, while fighting to take the Kingdom of Israel from its first King, that king of that prophesy begged protection of a commander of Israel's most powerful enemy in the land it tried to take. It says that, while under the protection of that enemy commander, he attacked cities belonging to that enemy and killed everyone in them. And it specifically says that, to keep the commander from knowing that, he included all the women and children in that slaughter.

And the scripture particular to Christianity, while saying the namesake of Christianity descended from God through a virgin, also says he's the descendent that prophesy designates. "Christ" is

an inflection of Greek and Latin words meaning “anointed” as in anointing a king, and the Judaic scripture calls the descent of that prophesy the messiah, and “messiah” is from a Hebrew word meaning “anointed”. But Christian scripture also says the Christ said that better for a person than offending a child would be throwing the person into a sea with a millstone around his neck.

So why would an ancestor of his be infanticidal?

But the basic scriptural contradiction concerning the doctrine of Christianity is that, while that misrepresentation of those prophesies is both the basis for the Christian promise of eternal life and fundamental to the doctrine of the Pharisees, the scriptures of Christianity also says the person they call the Christ told his disciples to beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees.

And Jesus, the person the scripture particular to Christianity calls the Christ and the messiah, also contradicts Abrahamic dualism more plainly and directly than does saying that loving one’s neighbor is like loving God while also saying he didn’t come to bring peace but to bring a sword to divide us against one another.

In it he also directs that, because the kingdom of God is within us, we shouldn’t look in other places for it. And essentially that’s the same as the *Chandogya Upanishad*’s saying the space within the heart contains both the earth and the sky. And it’s literally the same as the *Dao De Jing*’s directing not watching from windows to see the *dao* of the sky.

Of course the logic of the murderous racism of Abrahamic dualism may be like the logic of Judaic scripture’s also saying God gave man dominion over the beasts.

But isn’t another possibility that those contradictions absolve themselves into *brahman*, as Zen Buddhists imagine apparently inherently contradictory questions in order to find *sequitur* in what’s apparently *non sequitur*, in order to find the *dao* to consciousness of the truth Jesus said will make us free?

That could make Abrahamic scripture, like the diversity of stories in the *Vedas*, an exercise in *jnana yoga*.

But the question remains what boomed or otherwise initiated any person or place or thing or idea. And, in that question, with the question of what difference is between life and death, is the question of what difference is between space and light, between seeing and where one sees. And in that question is all of this conglomerate of questions and more.

And another obvious question may be what difference is between light and other entities that seem to us to occupy what we call space. And also indicative may be the question of how artists and scientists can agree that the different colors of entities other than light occupying space unite into black while the different colors of light unite into white. But another question is how, if artists and scientists can agree on that, they can't agree on everything.

So why do we call any of what we call knowledge enlightenment? And are any of the thoughts one imagines or thinks one has imagined more reasonable than the thought that this book is nothing other than one's telling oneself to stop diffusing one's confusion and instead accept the single actuality, that everything is everywhere and bright and full of only joy, but for one's disparate desire? So how can theology be anything other than a glow?

If God is omnipotent and omnibenevolent and omnipresent, why would he or she or whatever create what that entity billions of humans apparently call God can't control, and then punish what it created for not complying with his or her or its wishes?

But perhaps more basic is the question of why he or she or it or any entity would create life that kills.

Does God lie to God. Do you lie to yourself? Won't truth make you free?

Isn't God love?

But perhaps still more basic is the question of how one can achieve salvation through others' ideas, how one can achieve salvation through any means beyond understanding one's self, both ultimately and absolutely.

But how don't all of those questions add up to the question of how one can't or won't obviate all of those questions and conditions by simply accepting the answer.

Isn't God all?

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## index

Aitareya Upanishad	55
Brhadaranyaka Upanishad	20
Buddha (Buddhism)	85
Chandogya Upanishad	38
Dao (Daoism)	138
Dao De Jing	140
Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta	86
Diamond Sutra	104
Heart Sutra	135
Isa Upanishad	82
Katha Upanishad	62
Kausitaki Upanishad	57
Kena Upanishad	59
Life	192
Mahayana	103
Maitri Upanishad	73
Mandukya Upanishad	73
Metta Sutta	102
Mundaka Upanishad	72
Prasna Upanishad	72
Satipatthana Sutta	92
Svetasvatara Upanishad	69
Taittiriya Upanishad	52
Time	5
Veda (Hinduism)	19

Books  
by  
Billy Lee Harman

Dust  
a novel  
2005

Ashes  
some memories  
2015

Angels  
summaries of scripture  
2020

Dao De Jing  
a literal translation  
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2021

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2023