

The Merging of Difference and Unity

Shitou, dharma grandson of Huineng

The mind of the great sage of India
Is intimately communicated between east and west.
People's faculties may be keen or dull,
But in the path there are no "southern or "northern" ancestors.
The spiritual source shines clearly in the light;
The branching streams flow in the darkness.
Grasping things is basically delusion;
Merging with principle is still not enlightenment.
Each sense and every field
Interact and do not interact;
When interacting, they also merge—
Otherwise, they remain in their own states.
Forms are basically different in material and appearance,
Sounds are fundamentally different in pleasant or harsh quality.
"Darkness" is a word for merging upper and lower;
"Light" is an expression for distinguishing pure and defiled.
The four gross elements return to their own natures
Like a baby taking to its mother;
Fire heats, wind moves,
Water wets earth is solid.
Eye and form, ear and sound;
Nose and smell, tongue and taste—
Thus in all things
The leaves spread from the root;
The whole process must return to the source;
"Noble" and "base" are only manners of speaking.

Right in light there is darkness, but don't confront it
as darkness;
Right in darkness there is light but don't see it as light.
Light and dark are relative to one another
Like forward and backward steps.
All things have their function—
It is a matter of use in the appropriate situation.
Phenomena exist like box ad cover joining;
Principle accords like arrow points meeting.
Hearing the words you should understand the source;
Don't make up standards on your own.
If you don't understand the path as it meets your eyes,
How can you know the way as you walk?
Progress is not a matter of far or near,
But if you are confused, mountains and rivers block the way.
I humbly say to those who study the mystery,
Don't waste time.