

KUNG FU WISDOM

One's words are not better than silence. One should keep silent.

Kaine needs no company. A Shaolin priest is at one with himself.

There are two types of strength. The outer strength is obvious, and it fades with age. The *Chi* is the Inner Strength. Everyone possesses it too, but it is indeed much more difficult to develop. The Inner Strength lasts through every heat and every cold, through old age and beyond.

Development of the Mind can be achieved only when the Body has been disciplined. The Ancients have taught us to imitate God's Creatures. From the Crane, we learn Grace and Self-Control. The Snake teaches us Suppleness and Rhythmic Endurance. The Praying Mantis teaches us Speed and Patience. And from the Tiger, we learn Tenacity and Power. And from the Dragon, we learn to Ride the Wind!!! All Creatures — the Low and the High — are One with Nature. If we have the wisdom to learn, all may teach

us their virtues. Between the Fragile Beauty of the Praying Mantis, and the Fire and Passion of the Winged Dragon, there is no discord. Between the Supple Silence of the Snake and the Eagle's Claw, there is only Harmony. No two elements of Nature are in conflict. When we perceive the ways of Nature, we remove conflict within ourselves, and discover a Harmony of Body and Mind, in accord with the Flow of the Universe.

It may take half a lifetime, to master one System.

How do you deal with force? Perceive the way of Nature, and no force of man can harm you. Do not meet a wave head-on. Avoid it. You do not have to stop force. It is easier to redirect it. Learn more ways to preserve, rather than destroy. Avoid rather than check. Check rather than hurt. Hurt rather than maim. Maim rather than kill. All life is precious, nor can any be replaced.

The Wise Man walks with his head bowed, humble, like the dust.

Do we seek victory in contention?

Seek rather not to contend.

Shall we not then be defeated?

We know that where there is no contention, there is neither defeat nor victory. A supple willow does not contend against the storm, yet it survives.

Weakness prevails over strength. Gentleness conquers.

Become the calm and rustle(?) breeze that tames the violent sea.

Our bodies are prey to many needs: hunger, thirst, the need for love.

In one lifetime, a man knows many pleasures: his mother's smile in waking hours, a young woman's intimate sirian(??) touch, and the laughter of grandchildren in the twilight years. To deny these in ourselves is to deny that which makes us one with Nature.

Shall i then seek to satisfy these needs?

Only acknowledge them, and satisfaction will follow. To suppress a Truth is to give it force beyond endurance.

To know Nature is to put oneself in perfect harmony with the Universe. Heaven and Earth are One. So must we seek a discipline of Mind and Body within ourselves.

What endures?

The Sun endures. The Moon endures. Life endures.

Of man's roots, which is the stronger?

It is the Shaolin belief that the Paternal Line controls.

What is a man without roots?

What is a tree without roots? The deeper into the Earth the roots reach, the stronger the Tree! Parentage: it is this thread which holds you to the Past and binds you to the Future. Fix your place for all Time in Eternity.

Vengeance is a water vessel with a hole. It carries nothing

but the promise of emptiness.

Shall i then repay injury with kindness?

Repay injury with justness and forgiveness, but kindness always with kindness.

Fear is the enemy. Trust is the armor.

But knowing not what will happen, am i not wise to be afraid?

He who conquers himself is the greatest warrior. Do what must be done with a docile heart.

How do i know if this is possible for me?

Listen for the color of the Sky. Look for the sound of the hummingbird's wings. Search the air for the perfume of ice on a hot day. If you have found these things, you will know.

He who knows how to live need not fear Death. He can walk without fear of Rhino or Tiger. He will not be wounded in battle. In him, the Rhino can find no place to thrust his horn. The Tiger, no place to use his claws. And weapons, no place to pierce. Because a man who knows how to live has no place for Death to enter.

To hate is like drinking salt water. The thirst grows stronger.

Is it good to seek the Past? Does it not rob the Present?

If a man dwells on the Past, then he robs the Present. But if a man ignores the Past, he may rob the Future. The seeds of our Destiny are nurtured by the roots of our Past.

The Mind, the Body and the Spirit are one. When the Body expresses the desires of the Mind and the Spirit, then the Body is in tune with Nature. The act is pure. And there is no shame.

And what is Love?

Love is Harmony, even in Discord.

Each Journey begins and also ends.

Does not the Pebble, entering the Water, begin fresh Journeys?

It seems unceasing.

Such is the Journey through Life. It begins, It ends. Yet fresh Journeys go forth. Father begets Son, who becomes in turn, Father, who begets Son.

Then the Roots I have are Me. And I am Them.

Seek first to know your own Journey's Beginning and End. Seek then the other Journeys of which you are a close part. But in this Seeking, know Patience. Wear that Traveler's Cloak, which shelters and permits you to endure.

Seek always Peace. Wear no path for the footsteps of others, unless the Soul is endangered. We are all linked by our Souls. To endanger one... endangers All.

And if so endangered?

In such times, the Soul must be the Warrior.

What the Eye sees disappears with a blink. Or a wandering puff of Breath. Where there was Light... the Eye, denied, sees nothing. That is what the Eye sees.

What the Soul sees cannot be denied.

Will not the Soul too see nothing, when Death blinks its Eye?

No. The Soul sees always.

Yet the Body dies.

Does the Sun die?

It does not shine at night

It shines somewhere. You do not see it.

How does one find the Strength within himself?

By being One with all that is without himself.

Yet these sometimes contend.

When Fire meets Ice, which prevails? That prevails which refuses to know the power of the other. Where fear is, does not danger also live? And where fear is not, does not danger also die? Where the Tiger and the Man are two, he may die. Yet where the Tiger and the Man are one, there is no fear, there is no danger. For what creature, one with all Nature, will attack itself?

The best charioteers do not push ahead. The best fighters do not make displays of anger. The wisest antagonist is he who wins without engaging in battle. The power of not contending is how the weak overcome the strong.

The hands are the eyes and tongue of touch. Through them, a man may reach out and see another's feelings or speak his own.

Pain and pleasure are like two bells, side by side. And the

Voice of each makes a trembling in the other.

The scissors cut the paper. The paper covers the rock.
The rock crushes the scissors. Look beyond the Game, as
you look beneath the surface of the pool to see its depths.
Each, in turn, conquers the other. There is no stronger or
weaker. This is the Harmony of Nature.

Three treasures to hold and keep: The first is Mercy, for
from Mercy comes Courage. The second is Frugality, from
which comes Generosity to others. The third is Humility,
for from it comes Leadership. Hold and keep these
treasures not in Memory but rather in Deeds.

A good soldier is not violent. A fighter is not angry. A victor
is not vengeful.

*How may one walk a peaceful path, when the world is
seldom peaceful?*

Peace lies not in the world, but in the man who walks the
path.

But in my path may be men not filled with peace.

Then seek a different path.

*And if at each turn appear those who would be violent and
do not love peace?*

To reach perfection, a man must develop equally
compassion and wisdom.

*But how do i not contend with a man that would contend
with me?*

In a heart that is one with Nature, though the body

contends, there is no violence. And in the heart that is not one with Nature, though the body be at rest, there is always violence. Be, therefore, like the prow of a boat. It cleaves the water, yet it leaves in its wake water, unbroken.

Look at the world you live in and this pool of fish. There are twelve fish... twelve worlds.

But only one pool.

Many. The one you see... and the one i see... and the world of each. The world you live in is mysterious, exciting, unknown. And mine is older, familiar and calm. You will never know my world, nor i yours.

Never?

Can you see with my eyes? Think with my brain?

But, Master, you are one with the Universe. So am i.

We are one... yet we are not the same. Ten million living things have as many different worlds. Do not see yourself as a center of the Universe, wise and good and beautiful. Seek rather: wisdom, goodness and beauty... that you may honor them everywhere.

Where is evil? In the rat, whose nature it is to steal grain? Or in the cat, whose nature it is to kill the rat?

The rat steals, yet for him the cat is evil?

And to the cat, the rat.

Yet surely one of them is evil.

The rat does not steal. The cat does not murder. Rain falls, the stream flows, a hill remains. Each acts according to its Nature.

Then is there no evil for men? Each man tells himself that what he does is good. At least for himself.

A man may tell himself many things. But is a man's Universe made only of himself?

If a man hurts me and i punish him, perhaps he will not hurt another.

And if you do nothing?

He will believe he may do as he wishes.

Perhaps. Or perhaps he will learn that some men receive injury but return kindness.

If you plant rice, rice will grow. If you plant fear, fear will grow.

The cobweb is made of silken thread so fine, a puff of breath destroys it. Yet to the spider, it is a secure haven.

Yet to me, only a cobweb.

When the wind blows, a feather dances in its wake.

But the feather much weaker than the wind, can do no other.

Is this the way of men?

There are strong and weak.

You do not see. Which is stronger? These boards or your arm? Strike the boards, using your arm as a weapon. Yet the boards resisting do not endure.

Can the weaker be the stronger?

See the Way of Life as a stream. A man floats, and his way is smooth. The same man — turning to fight upstream — exhausts himself. To be one with the Universe, each must find his True Path and follow it.

Do not use archery for killing. It is a form of meditation. Think of nothing but to be one with the target. It is not done. It is only experienced. It happens. The target, the arrow, the bow... they are all one. Not many things. Not different things. One. Do not understand it. It remains a puzzle. When you cease to strive to understand, then you will know... without understanding.

Meditation = Cleansing one's mind of impurities, of disturbances. It lets one see the nature of things, as they really are. It is how one can encounter life's many faces with some sense of peace.

We learn to make powerful the force of our bodies. Yet we are taught to reverence all against whom we may use such force.

When your life is threatened, or the innocent life of another, you will be prepared to defend them.

Being thus prepared better than others, should i not always stand and fight?

Ignore the insulting tongue. Duck the provoking blow. Run from the assault with a straw.

Are these not the actions of a coward?

The wild boar runs from the tiger, knowing that each — being well-armed by nature with deadly strength — may kill the other, running. He saves his own life and that of the tiger. This is not cowardice. It is the love of Life.

You wish no longer to savor the memory of your father,

through that which was close to him?

You have taught me to claim no possessions, that none may claim me.

The sextant was only a memory, which you could keep not only in your heart but in your hands.

I am of age. I must put away such memories.

Between father and son, there is a bridge which neither time nor death can shatter. Each stands at one end needing to cross and meet.

But he is dead.

The bridge of which i speak, is your love for him.

Man — like the animals — is meant to live together with others like himself. But the meaning of belonging to such a group is found in the comfort of silence and the companionship of solitude.

Life is a corridor, while death is only a door.

Superstition is like a magnet. It pulls you in the direction of your belief.

A man without fear cannot be controlled.

What is cowardice, but the body's wisdom of its weakness? What is bravery, but the body's wisdom of its strength? The coward and the hero march together within every man. So to call one man coward and another brave merely serves to indicate the possibilities of their achieving the opposite.

Those who speak convincingly of peace cannot go armed.
Those who speak convincingly of peace must not be weak. So we make every finger a dagger, every arm a spear, and every open hand an axe or sword.

When you are attacked by more than one person, the enemy should be allowed to make the first move. Thus creates the beginning of his downfall.

The mountain is beautiful with snow. But after it loses its snow, green grows from underneath. In loss, there is gain. As in every gain, there is loss.

Love cannot measure itself till the hour of parting.

With each ending comes a new beginning.

I seek not to know all the answers, but to understand the questions.

What is the best way to meet the loss of one we loved?

By knowing when we truly love, it is never lost. It is only after death that the depth of the bond is truly felt, and our loved one becomes more a part of us than is possible in life.

Are we only able to feel this towards those whom we have known and loved a long time?

Sometimes a stranger known to us for moments can spark our souls to kinship for eternity.

How can strangers take on such importance to our souls?
Because our soul does not keep time. It merely records growth.

Of man's roots, which is the stronger?
It is the Shaolin belief that the paternal line controls.

I see something which puzzles me. The stick is straight, yet in the water, it seems to vanish!
That is not a puzzle! It is only something you do not yet know.

Is what i see so unimportant?
Do you not know that what you see is made of reflections, sent back to your eyes, like a ball thrown against a wall?
[This from the blind Master Po...]

Why does the stick seem to bend?
The same ball is thrown against two different walls: water and the air. Your eye is deceived!

I'm sorry Master, i still do not understand...
Look closer! You will see some things clearer. Perhaps you will see other things you do not know at all!! But the puzzle, Grasshopper, that is to find the way so that others may see... *you*.

Master, these things which we are taught [death blow to the neck], i cannot do them.

Do you find the exercises too difficult?

No, master... too cruel!

And to be killed, what is that?

I must learn these exercises to defend myself.

Learn first how to live. Second how not to kill. Then third, how to live with death. And fourth, how to die.

What beautiful image have you made, Grasshopper, to please your eyes?

The branch of a tree...

Is not painting the joyful reaching out of a man so filled with beauty, that there is not room enough in him to contain it?

How shall i know if this is Love?

What do you see? [indicates hour-glass...]

Two glasses joined together. One is with sand.

One only??

The other is empty.

Look! [turns hour-glass upside-down...] To know Love, be like a running brook, which death yet sings its melody for others to hear. Feel the pain of too much tenderness.

Awake at Dawn with a Winged Heart. Give thanks for yet another day of Loving. Empty yourself and yet be filled...

An old man tells you: this is how to know Love.

Tell me: what makes the shadow? [indicates sun-dial...]

The arm of the sun-dial.

But, what of the Sun?

Yes, the Sun. Both help us. They tell us Time.

Does not that sun-dial, standing in the way of the Sun, defeat its Light?

Master, i do not understand. Like many things you teach me, it is a contradiction. [holds bow-and-arrow...]

Shoot the arrow. Which brings it to its target? The bow or the arrow? Launched, the arrow has no choice but to seek its target. Yet without the arrow, the bow is an empty promise of flight.

Still, i do not understand.

When you must choose between one good and another, or one evil and another, remember this. If men would contend with you, seek not their death, but choose your own Life.

A wise man walks with his head bowed, humble like the Dove.

I thought to keep it. [the shiny pebble finally snatched from the Master's hand...]

It is yours.

I want it too much, Master. I have formed an attachment for it i was not aware of.

For a fragment of shiny stone?

For wanting it in my hand all these years... a foolish thing, Master.

Perhaps... The Universe contains a certain pebble known as the Earth. And many are the men who have formed attachments to it, no less foolish than yours... That we are possessed by what we would possess, held in bondage to Earth and vested things by the attachments we form for them... even so holy a thing as a chalice, so slight a thing as a pebble...

What troubles you, Grasshopper? That the boy was your

own age?

He spoke of a curse.

Who was it that cursed him?

His master — Sorcerer Lu — because he ran away.

The undiscerning mind is like the root of a tree. It absorbs equally all that it touches — even the poison that would kill it.

But he took no poison. And he was not ill.

That is true.

Why did he die, Master? I do not understand.

Did the boy not believe that he was to die?

He did not believe otherwise.

And so, his life had no choice but to fly away. Learn from him, Grasshopper.

Master?... I have been to the temple of the Sorcerer Lu. I followed him thinking to learn great secrets. I ran away.

Before you learned his “great secrets”?

He cursed me, as he cursed the boy who died! Now, i shall die!!

[Master moves mirror to show reflection of the candle he holds...]

Will this lift the curse?

What do you see in the mirror?

The flame of the candle!

Is the mirror harmed by the flame?

No, Master. It only reflects it.

Be like the mirror.

How am i to do that?

Allow no evil to pass through you. Reflect it to its source.

Then, shall i be safe?

[Master nods his head yes...] Go and sleep, Grasshopper.

If you found the flame of a candle struggling to survive,
what would you do? [referring to a man who tried to
commit suicide...]

Free it, from its own wax.

How much?

As much as needed, to save the flame.

Does a man's life deserve less?

Fear brings anger to a man's tongue.

A friend sticks to the heart.

Oh Great Spirit, whose voice i hear in the winds, and
whose breath i see in the morning mist. Come, Spirit
Helper, come now with the rising Sun! Oh Shield of Sun,
fulfill my Vision Quest! Long have i fasted, long have i sent
out the arrows of my prayers to you. Send your Spirit
Helper to reveal to me the mysteries you have hidden in
every leaf and rock, in every stream and every creature.

What is it to be a man?

To be a man, is to be One with the Universe.

But what is the Universe?

Rather ask: what is NOT the Universe?

Then, it is everywhere!

It is in your eye, and in your heart. As the seed of the
peach contains the fragrance of the flower, and the

substance of the fruit...

And the bitter pit at its core?

Even that.

You call the mountain sacred?

As you know, the Great One — wishing to visit that which he had made — cut a small opening in the Sky. Through it, he pushed rocks, snow and ice... until the mountain grew so high, that he could reach the Earth! As the stepping stone of the Sun Chief, the Mountain is Sacred.

What is a son, without a father or mother?

Is not a son the Love of a father and a mother, and the life they gave him? A design of the Universe he must fulfill, if he is to be a man.

What is it, Grasshopper?

Master Po, i have been troubled.

I have sensed that in you these past days. While your body has been healing, your Spirit has sickened.

It is because i have done nothing about the murder of my parents!

What do you propose to do?!

Find Gao Chung, kill him!

You? A boy, not yet a man? Against a ruthless warlord and his soldiers?

If i could find him alone, it could be done!

And being done, what do you derive?

Satisfaction!

[Master Po shakes his head in disappointment, goes over

to array of candles, licks his fingers and extinguishes a candle...]

Is there now more or less light in this chamber?

There is less!

Is it not more important that you find yourself than a killer of men? Would your parents not wish you to go forward to Life and Light, rather than backwards to Death and Darkness?

How do i find myself and the Light?

By taking the path that leads to the Truth.

Will you help me walk the path?

I can only point the way, Grasshopper. You must walk the path yourself!

You must tell me what to do.

Does a man ask another to show him what to do?

It is a personal thing, not to take life.

I too have been taught to reverence all Life. For there — as you know — is “nahi”/Soul in all things: animals, rocks and trees, wind and rain. Life that is perfect and more free from the weaknesses of man.

What are you doing?

My duty: to avenge my father’s death, so that his Spirit can find Peace.

Did you not tell me an Indian revere all Life?

Yes.

And you believe the Great One gave Life to us all?

Only He could.

Then, what man has the right to take from another the gift

given by the Great One?

What is in your thoughts, Grasshopper?!

That is the man who killed my mother and my father!

Revenge is a double-edged sword! It cuts both ways!!

Either Chung's soldiers will kill you, or you will destroy yourself by the certain suicide of your Spirit! Ah,

Grasshopper! The Wheel of Life, it turns inexorably by the Infinite Star. So it is: the Truth will not be cheated! The bitter General Chung is used to stealing some few bags of rice. Is not the Wheel crushing him? Is not an Abyss opening at his feet? Is not his path — which he treads with his own feet — leading to an eternal grave?

Your final test: the Urn of the Two Symbols — the Dragon and the Tiger. When you can walk in this corridor — the Inner Path to the Outer World — and can push the Urn aside with your forearms, you will bear its markings with you for the rest of your life!

Hundreds of pounds of burning coal and iron... how can i, Master, having only the strength of a man, and the weaknesses.

It is because you are a man that you can do this, Grasshopper.

I do not understand.

As the softest clay in time becomes the hardest brick, a fragile leaf a diamond... As a stream of fiery ore freezes into unbending iron, so too may a man ascend to himself.

How?

By slowly forging the *Chi* within yourself. The bond

between the Finite and the Infinite. The Inner Essence of your Spirit and the Limitless Power of the Universe!

How can i do this?

You will have found your strength and the source of your survival. You will be free.

Master? I am troubled.

Why?

My parents are long dead, General Chung is tumbled from his arrogance and power, yet within me anger boils as water in a heated pot.

Observe the day lily. Each morning with the warmth of the Sun, it opens in lovely blossoms. Each night it closes.

I do not understand. What has a flower have to do with my anger?

Once, your anger warmed you, and like the flower you opened to it. That is long past. It is night.

Am i then to do nothing, feel nothing, be still?

Still water is like glass. It is the perfect level. A carpenter could use it. The heart of a wise man is tranquil and still. Thus, it is the Mirror of Heaven and Earth, the Glass of Everything. Be like still water. You look into it and see yourself.

Do you not want to be a man? Is it not better to embrace the living than to avenge the dead?

Master, why do we mourn for this man, who is a stranger?

Is he someone special?

You heard the circumstances of his death?

He was killed on the road, by bandits — of the red turban Tong. This is what i was told.

There is more you were not told. There is much evil in the world, Grasshopper. It has always been thus. And so our ancestors built this monastery and developed the art of Kung Fu, so they might cultivate virtue and protect themselves from harm. But, whatever one man possesses, another will covet. The Manchu Emperor heard of our prowess, so he sent an army of soldiers to burn the monastery to the ground. Only five escaped. They made their way to Fukia and founded the Tong, to overthrow the Manchus and restore the main Emperors to the throne. Violence became their tool for combatting violence. Thus the sage — Ju-an Sziu — has said: by ethical argument and moral principle, the greatest crimes are shown to have been necessary, and in fact, a great benefit for mankind... Two hundred years have passed. The Manchus still sit on the throne. The Tongs still kill, no longer for a noble cause. Yet they are the children of the five Shaolin priests, who went to Fukia long ago. And we are the parents. So, we mourn this stranger's death.

Master, must we not do more than mourn this wrong? We must right it.

How, Grasshopper?

Strike down this Tong. Take away from our children the power to do wrong.

Hahaha. That is what they said in Fukia two-hundred years ago! No, Grasshopper, evil cannot be conquered in the world. It can only be resisted within oneself.

Are you alright now?

Yes. My nose is bleeding.

That is because you fought in anger. It is a bad way to fight.

I wanted to repay a hurt to Hofan.

And what was the hurt?

He called me "Oil and Water" because i have white blood.

Hahaha. And this made your nose bleed?

It caused me pain.

Is it a lie then?

No, it is the truth.

And you wish it were not true... [They visit a wood carver...] What is he making?

An animal, master. I cannot yet tell what kind.

It was just a piece of wood. And now it will become an animal. And this will go feed the fires in the kitchen. And yet, they are the same in this... that each has been diverted from its true nature. Time is carving you, Grasshopper. Let yourself be shaped according to your true nature.

If a man lives... it is a certainty he will die. Therefore, it is foolish to think of death as if he were a foe to be vanquished. He will come when he will come. That's all.

Had you good cause to risk this danger?

My purpose was to prove my agility and my courage.

I had hoped such qualities were already yours.

I sought to test them.

For yourself or them? [Points to young disciples]

watching...] Is it not better to see yourself truly... than care about how others see you?

Yes Master. If i look truly, will i see truly?

It can be done.

Grasshopper!

Yes, master.

Have you injured yourself?

My knee hurts from hitting the stone, but it is nothing serious.

I am glad! Did you not think to look where you were going?

I placed the sash over my eyes. I chose not to see,

Do you prefer darkness to light??

I wanted to know darkness.

Why, grasshopper?

I wanted to be like you. It is nothing to place one foot in front of the other... but to walk without seeing is most special!

I never thought it special, only unavoidable. Is it not better to enjoy the gift of light that is yours... than to seek a darkness you are spared?

What is keeping his hand in the jar? **[Referring to a chimp...]**

Let us see. **[Pulls the chimp's hand out of the jar...]**

If it is so easy, what was it that held him?

Put your hand in the jar. Remove it. **[Puts a fruit back into the jar...]** This time, remove the fruit.

I cannot do it master!

How then can you remove it?

By dropping the fruit. That is a very foolish monkey. The gardens are filled with fruit, yet he chose to hold on to the one in the jar.

I am pleased you are wiser than the monkey.

I am much wiser, master.

I would hope you remain so... and will know when to let go of those things which do not serve you... but force you to serve them.

I loved him.

He was my master.

How did you know where he was?

There could be only one place for him: his favorite path in the foothills. We found Master Sun's body... in a comfortable position... his back resting against the boulder... staring down at our valley. His face glistened in the frost. But his lips were black... from the poison of the wild berries.

Everyone loved him. Why did he take his own life?... [The Master clasps his hands together...] Yin and Yang?

The "yes" and the "no"... In him, the "no" conquered.

But i sensed that he was in harmony.

Perhaps he looked down into our valley... knowing that soon he would have to leave it. But instead of the beauty we observed... he saw ugliness.

How is that possible?

He looked with his eyes... and we look with ours.

Young people, you will venture out into the forest... and go to a certain clearing. The clearing will be easy to find. It is

marked on this map. You will go on horseback. The horse is experienced in these matters. Once there, you will dismount. Face the clearing across the water. Watch very carefully. Something will happen.

What will happen, Master?

Afterwards... you will return here and tell me... one by one... exactly what you saw.

Is this a game, Master?

Did i say it was a game?

But if it is not a game, what is it?

It is what i have described.

A test?

A journey to the clearing in the forest.

[Prospector's son stares at the campfire for extended period of time, mesmerized...]

When i was a child, i saw a salamander. Strange beast.

He did not know what was to become of him. He was ugly.

And some men threw him in the fire... to die. But the fire did not destroy him. It tested him and made him strong.

[Prospector's son asks:] Was he still ugly?

I do not know how the salamander saw himself.

[Prospector's son obsesses with staring into the flames of the campfire. Then he asks Caine to shoot him, passes him a rifle, and closes his eyes. Caine throws the weapon to the ground. The sound of this startles the young man, and he opens his mind in relief that it wasn't a bullet fired...]

Your mind is troubled... because you do not know if what

you see is real. That is true of me too.

You?

The sky is blue. I see it. You see it. But how can i know...

what is in my mind is like what is in yours? What is real?

I know how it is with my mother. She has visions. And they're not real.

Her mind is not at peace with herself?

That's what i'm afraid of.

Why? Is it not a child's fear... to make things of terror...

out of nothing... but innocent darkness?

You did not fail.

I did not see what you sent me to see.

What you saw or did not see in the clearing is not important.

Then why did you send me?

When old Master Sun looked down into tour valley and saw ugliness... he revealed something about himself to himself. He did not like what he revealed.

But i saw evil in the peacock... that it was the robber. Yet the peacock contained no evil at all. [Young Caine — and the other two young disciples — had been tricked by three monks who wore costumes and put on a performance. One pretended to be a mercenary napping on the ground. Another came to rob him, stole a purse of money and hung it around his neck. The “robber” walks behind a rock and then a peacock emerges from the other side, also wearing a purse around its neck. Later, this seemingly magical transformation recurs, in the opposite direction, as if the peacock transformed itself back into human form.

The monks played a trick, to make the boys think the robber could transform himself into a peacock...]

You saw what your eyes told you.

But Master, what i saw was not real.

You made it so. As Master Sun saw ugliness where nothing exists but a valley.

Master... i am puzzled.

That is the beginning of wisdom.

I have seen you laugh, and i have seen you cry.

And you do not?

We are taught discipline.

The purpose of discipline is to live more fully, not less.

But, how shall i know... if my sorrow is only the echo of self-pity? Or my laughter the preening of my own happiness?

The bird sings in the forest. Does it seek to be admired for its song? Let tears come when your heart tells you of its sadness. Let joy come unasked, unplanned.

It is written, shape clay into a vessel. It is the space within that gives it value. Place doors and windows in a house. It is the opening that brings light within. Set spokes within a wheel. It is the emptiness of the hub that makes them useful. Therefore, be the space at the center. Be nothing, and you will have everything to give to others.

Your feet tread heavily on the ground. Have you a burden, Grasshopper?

It is my thoughts that carry the weight, Master. I have been

*in the marketplace. All the men there argue and fight.
There is no peace.*

Why does that trouble you, when your home is here?

I want all men to know peace.

It is written in the *Tao Te Ching*: "Under heaven, all can see beauty as beauty... only because there is ugliness. All can know good as good... only because there is evil.

Therefore, having and not-having arise together. Difficult and easy complement each other.

High and low rest upon each other. Front and back follow one another.

But, Master, do we not want all men to know our peace, our joy?

Would you make the whole world a temple? Be like the Sun... and what is within you will warm the Earth.

Do you marvel at the carver's skill?

Yes, Master. And at his meaning. Each is free to move, yet each is held captive.

Are we not also?

The temple does not hold us. We have only to open the door.

Are we then free to go anywhere we choose, even up into the heavens?

No, Master. We, too, are captive, just as these.

Then why do I speak to you of freedom?

It puzzles me, Master.

Is your mind not free to seek its own course... to soar even to the heavens... though you turn and spin within a prison?

But... i wish to be... truly free.

Bind yourself to nothing. Seek harmony with all. Then you will be truly free.

Master. That man suffers for want of food.

Did he not say he had eaten well?

He does not speak truly. He is weak from hunger.

Perhaps his desire for dignity is greater than his need of food?

He is poor. He should admit it. He is too proud.

Perhaps pride is the only crown he has left to wear. Would you not truly help him by offering first respect and then food?

Grasshopper, do you find mystery in the fire?

My thoughts are of a girl i saw in the marketplace. She was very pretty. She sought my friendship... and then, when she had it, she did not want it. Master, why can the female not be direct and open, as the man can?

Is it not better that the female act as a female?

She seeks only to confuse. The truth is not within her.

Perhaps you only fail to perceive it.

I do not know that i wish to perceive it!

What is it that makes the heat, the coal or the flame?

The coal. The heat is within the coal.

What if the coal is not touched by the flame?

The heat is not felt.

Are not male and female coal and flame? If the coal does not seek to know the flame, can either fulfill its destiny?

Master... you have said that we are to make ourselves one with life.

As the leaf flows with the river, it does not hold it back. It makes not even a ripple. [Says as ties a broken branch back together...]

Should not the branch then be left as the wind has left it?

If i do not help it to heal, it will wither.... never to bear fruit for the birds to eat. Would you have the birds go hungry?

No, Master... but if we help, how then are we like the leaf on the river?

Do what must be done.

But, Master, how will i know when to be like the leaf and when to do what must be done?

What do you think?

I do not know.

The way to do is to be.

Master, i have gathered these for you. [Says another of the disciples, who walked in front of Caine to cut him off, and then offers flowers to the blind Master...]

Why?

Because they are the most perfect flowers of all, as you are the most perfect Master.

I cannot accept them... Grasshopper! Were you not preparing me a gift of great beauty?

I was, Master.

What has become of it?

You do not want flowers.

Have you no love for me?

I have only love for you.

The other boy does not. His was a gift without love. It was false.

I feared you would not accept them. I feared i would be hurt.

And now, have you not lost the joy we might have shared?

Master... we are taught that a good man's heart is not shut within itself... but is open to the hearts of others.

The sage says: "Find good people good and bad people good... because i am good enough. Trust men-of-their-word and liars if i am true enough." To be yourself, Grasshopper, feel the heartbeats of others above your own.

But, if i shall love others... how can i be sure... that they in turn will love me?

Do you seek love or barter?

But, if i love others and they do not love me... i shall feel great pain.

That is what you risk, Grasshopper: great pain. Or great joy.

[Woman speaks of kissing the gunman...] Then it's over. that was then. Now is now.

Does not tomorrow begin now? Each act... can be an act of improvement.

Why do we have law?

To help us live in harmony.

The law of the fast... seeks to strengthen the spirit... by purifying the body. A man may die... from a hunger of the

body... but whole nations have fallen... from that of the spirit. Discipline. Discipline cures. The fruit of this tree is delicious... but in the discipline of our fast, no one may touch it — not even I.

[Other disciple Yet-Sen asks:] Then why show to us, Master? It is already difficult for us to fast. To be certain you know and understand the law. It will test you. Do not break it.

Admiring my tree, Kwai Chang?

Yes, Master. What is my duty to the law?

You must assist the law, to serve justice.

I have seen a law broken. Would i serve justice if i let it go unpunished?

What is the purpose of this law?

Discipline.

And who is served by this discipline?

Each one who obeys the law.

Then, to break the law of self-discipline... denies justice only to oneself.

Is it the same with all laws?

Consider: if you break them, do you deny justice only to yourself?

[Other disciple Yet-Sen admits to stealing the forbidden plums, but it wasn't to feed himself. He fed them to an injured dove he was nursing back to health...] I have broken the law, Master. I ask forgiveness.

As i do.

Why did you not come and tell me of your injured dove?

[Other disciple Yet-Sen again:] I have broken your law, Master, and you told me, “Do onto break it.”

Then the wrong that was done was to yourself. Young Caine, when you observed Yet-Sen take the plum... you presumed they were for himself.

I did, Master.

Then the wrong you did was to Yet-Sen.

And to you, Master, by not telling you.

And i **have done a greater wrong to you both.**

How?

By leading you to attend only to the letter of the law... and not respect its meaning. I bow to you both.

You have both bravely shown your mastery of what you have been taught.

[Other disciple who fought against Caine in the practice fight says:] Master Kan. Which... which one of us has won?

Won?

Must there not be one who is the victor?

[Other disciple:] And one the vanquished?

When you were young... did you not stand by the fountain and watch the bubbles rise?

They were very beautiful to see.

In a sense, a victory for the gossamer circles of liquid... over the insubstantial air they imprison. When you tried to grasp them, what became of them?

[Other disciple:] They were gone.

They were... empty... without substance.

So too, can victory be.

And defeat?

Does not the true value lie in what one does with either?

[Young Caine looks at caterpillar with magnifying glass...]

Ugly!

And yet to another such creature... might not this one appear beautiful?

So beauty differs from being to being.

Beauty is constant, as is the Truth. Seek and find what is the Truth.

What is the Truth of Man, Master?

It has been said that a man is three things: what he thinks he is, what others think he is... and what he really is.

Which of these do you believe is the Truth?

What he really is. But if a man is wrong about himself...

and others are wrong about him... who is left to say what he really is?

At what point in time can a man be fixed and frozen... if he is to live and grow?

He must change.

As the lowly caterpillar transforms itself... into a finer and more beautiful creature.

[Metal dragon censer burns with incense as Caine writhes in his sleep:] *Ah! Ah!! Ah!!!*

What is it, Grasshopper?

Demons! Demons trying to kill me!!

There are no demons here. See for yourself. Only a bad dream.

Oh, Master... why do i have such a dream?

All men have dreams of different types, good and bad. There are the **vain** dreams, futile, based on baseless hopes. There are the dreams that spur and **inspire**, based on aspiration to a high ideal. And there are the **false** dreams, based on lies to oneself or others.

Which is mine?

The incense container was the catalyst of your dream. A fiction frozen to fact... that summoned forth the demons of your dream.

My dream was false then.

False to you. Therefore, a nightmare. And yet, to the artist, a good and true dream... for in that fabrication... he realized his inner ideal of the perfect dragon.

He fights with such power. He is the strongest and surely the best.

He is the strongest... and the weakest. He will soon be dismissed.

You confuse me, Master.

What is gained by using one's strength in violence and anger?

A victory that i swift.

Yet to be violent is to be weak. Violence has no mind. Is it not wiser to seek a man's love than to desire his swift defeat?

[Young Caine admires some painted vases...] *The praying mantis: speed and patience. The snake: suppleness and rhythm endurance. The crane: grace and self-control. The tiger: tenacity and power. The dragon: to ride the wind.*

*Master, each time i look at them, knowing them better...
they appear even more beautiful!*

Excellent, Grasshopper. Now, look down. Do you see the ornamented sash?

Yes, Master.

Good. Now then, draw the sash towards yourself.

[Caine pulls the sash and it fires a gun. Its shot destroys the vases. Caine covers his ears...] Why do you hold your ears, Grasshopper?

The sound is horrible. I feel as though my ears have been injured. I have destroyed something beautiful, Master.

The vases were only imitations, made of inferior materials.

Trouble yourself not about them, but about this. [The Master refers to the gun hidden under the lid of a wooden box...] It seems a handsome tool, to be used like others... but it is an instrument which can fulfill its purpose only through destruction. As the sound injures the ear, so its discharge consumes the flesh.

They laugh at me, Master.

Good. To bring joy to others honors the giver.

But their laughter is not joyful, for it derides me.

Are you hurt by it?

Yes.

Because you gave comfort where comfort was needed?

Was this not unmanly?

There is a strength in us that can shatter an invincible object with a hand... which comes from a strong and disciplined body. There is another strength that allows us to feel the pain of others... and give comfort where

comfort is needed. This comes from a compassionate heart. True strength must combine both... for that is in harmony with the duality of our natures. For what you have done, you may indeed take comfort in their laughter.

[Young Caine and other disciples bring dishes of food and tea to their Master, who sits at the head of a long table...]

Young Caine. Do i see the scar of anger on your face?

I do not like to be a servant.

Oh... You consider it beneath you to serve another.

How am i to answer? I do not know what it is to be served.

Do not the ancients say?: “Rank and reward have no appeal... for a man one with himself.”

Yet you, Master, are served and therefore greater.

[The Master smiles and shakes his head...] Smaller. I have taken without true respect what you have given. We must both learn. [The Master gets up and motions for young Caine to sit at the Master’s seat...] Please... sit here.

It does not seem right.

It is my joy, Master. [With a big grin on his face, the Master bows to young Caine...]

[Young Caine walks into the laundry area, as other disciples wash their black garments in wooden barrels. He approaches the Master, busy washing Caine’s clothes. The Master looks up and smiles...] It was my pleasure to wash them for you.

They were very dirty from my work in the garden.

Yes, but no more.

I am very grateful. [Caine bows to his Master...]

And i to you, for allowing me to be of service. If in serving, one is served... and in being served, one also serves... are these not the folds of the same garment?

I do not understand. I am pleased you have done my wash... and ashamed i have not done it for myself.

Again, you have taught me.

How?

A man truly himself will not enrich his own interests... and make a virtue of poverty. He goes his way without depending on others... yet is not arrogant that he needs no one. The greatest man... is nobody.

[The Master approaches young Caine, who holds a garland of flowers and stares at his reflection in a pool of water...] Do you see yourself?

(sigh...) Too clearly, Master. I feel shame for wanting to be more than i am.

The sage says: "That which shrinks... must first expand. That which fails... must first be strong. That which is cast down... must first be raised. Before receiving... there must first be giving."

It was pride that kept me from bowing to you.

Is it not easy to bow and still honor oneself?

Can it truly be for you?

Truly. *[The Master smiles and bows to Caine...]*

But you are important. I am not.

Are we not equally important... and not important?

How is that possible, when you are my Master?

I am old. You are young. I am wrinkled. You are smooth.

Do these things change the Nature that we share? Look beyond the surface. See what is real... in yourself and others.

Beware of judgement of others. In this imperfect world in which we live... perfection is an illusion. And so the standards by which we seek to measure it... are also, in themselves, illusions. If perfection is measured by age, race, color of skin, color of hair, physical or mental prowess... then we are all lacking. It is well to remember that the harshest judgements... are reserved for ourselves.

[As disciples practice martial arts, Caine starts to cry. The Master narrates:] Simple controlled movements... to begin a harmony of mind and body... a moment, surely, of grace and beauty, of serenity. Yet strangely, some choose this moment to weep.

The greatest warrior wins without a battle.

Tears.

Master, it is all too beautiful. I weep at my good fortune.

Tell me why.

I stood outside these gates once... with many other boys... hoping to enter this place of peace. Only i was chosen. What if it had not been so?

But it was.

Yes. But it might not have been. Where would i have been then?

Who can say?

And what of the others? Where are they now?

That too, is unknowable for us.

And what of those who may never come here... who will never know this peace?

Do you pity them?

Oh, yes.

Please... come with me. [Young Caine follows his Master out of the training area and into a field of flowers...]

Consider a field of lilies in seed. The wind which carries a seed plays no favorites. The seeds fall where they will according to the fortunes of wind and weather. Those that fall in fertile soil may be tended and cared for... grow strong and bloom. Those that fall in barren soil will die. Yet some will cling to life in arid places... or hillsides, in deep clefts. And so the traveler, unsuspecting... comes upon a sight of beauty. A single lily growing amid the rocks. The thoughtful traveler will water this lily in passing... grateful for its strength, its beauty, its tenacity to life. And growing in the rocks as it is... is it not, in its essence, still a lily? And every bit as beautiful as these?

Man against man. It is a contest that may have an end. He who is most skilled will prevail. You are both enjoined by your vows to do your utmost. Disciple Caine, you will attack. Disciple Han, you will defend... [Caine wins the fight...] Disciple Han, you have done well. He who attacks must vanquish. He who defends must merely survive.

We swore an oath of friendship, Master.

You are speaking of Disciple Han?

Yes, Master.

And he no longer feels bound by his oath?

Because of the contest yesterday between us in which he was defeated.

And do you feel you have lost something?

I do.

What will you do now with your oath?

Is not an oath eternal?

But how can you control such a thing as a friendship... which requires the assent of two persons. It is well to consider deeply before binding yourself to an ideal... a cause, a man. For what is an oath worth that binds a man... who makes it to an unachievable task?

He is still angry. It troubles me. I do not know how to answer his hatred.

How else but with love? One cannot always keep a friend... when that friend believes that one has wronged him.

But i have not wronged him. He is mistaken.

Each man has the right to choose his enemies and his friends. He may choose unwisely... but the decision is his alone to make. Then he must live with the consequences... and so must his enemies and his friends.

PRODUCTION NOTE: The episode “Crossties” features Harrison Ford as “Mr. Harrison”, who brings a settlement deal to a group of men fighting against a railroad company. The credits don’t list Harrison Ford. It was one of his first

TV roles?

[Young Caine and his blind Master walk through the garden at night. A man in black carrying a knife ambushes them...] What is it, Grasshopper?

A man in need!

[Mugger:] Whatever you have, valuables, money, throw them on the ground. [Young Caine throws an empty red bowl down...] What about you, old man?

How many bowls do you need to eat from?

[Mugger:] I can sell it. Throw it down!

[The Master throws down another red bowl and a small book, then crouches down to pick up the book... Mugger says:] What's that?

It is of value to no one but myself. Some poems i wrote.

[Mugger:] Throw it down!

No one would buy it.

[Mugger:] Then i'll use it to start my fire!... What have you priests got to worry about? You sit content behind your walls with plenty of rice and wine... while others work for a living. Or starve. [Ironically, the mugger looks well-fed,—far from starving!...] Give me the book! [Mugger reaches for the book that the blind master threw at his own feet. Like this, the blind Master can easily strike him with his walking cane, and does so, kicks his ass until the mugger flees!...]

[Young Caine picks up the Master's bowl...] *Master, do you not know all the poems in that book by memory?*

Yes, Grasshopper. But can any man afford such

arrogance?

[Young Caine watches as the other Master gives a bowl of rice to the same mugger, now seated like a beggar at the steps up to the Shaolin Temple. The mugger eats greedily...] *He betrayed us, yet we feed and clothe him.*

And you disapprove?

It is said he swore an oath, as one of use, never to reveal our secrets. It is said that when he left us, he taught farmers to be soldiers... and led them to their deaths in foolish rebellion.

I am aware of his unsavory ventures. I am aware also of his hunger and cold.

But, Master, will not food and new clothing... strengthen him to go out and cause more suffering?

It may. But when he leaves us in the morning... will the Earth fall away from under his feet? Will the Sun, shining on all else, withhold light and warmth from him? Will Water turn to mud, when he stops to drink? If Sun and Earth and Water refrain from judgement... who am i to withhold a blanket and a bowl of rice?

It is said that honor dies, where interest lies. [Refers to how a member of the Tong gang wants to become the leader, claiming the gang's honor was betrayed by the current leader...]

[Monk grinds herbs in mortar and pestle. Young Caine and the seeing Master walk in...] “Sao-Du”, Monkshood. Mixed with the white of an egg... it is effective for relieving pain in

bruises and swelling. Taken internally, it quiets the heart and lungs or causes death.

You mean, it is a poison?

A very powerful one. Its essence is aconite.

Then it can be used to heal.

Yes. But only when combined with other substances... in the most exact proportions. As with all things of Nature, it can be used by man for good or evil. Study this herb carefully. For the difference between life and death in it... can be measured by the blinking of an eye.

Master...

I am here.

I looked deep into myself... and i saw something that frightened me.

What did you see, Grasshopper?

I saw dark and fearful shadows in motion. Shadows that shunned the Light.

Did you put a name to these shadows?

I called them "evil".

And what is the Nature of Evil?

I do not know.

Do you sometimes feel Love, Grasshopper? And Joy? Do you sometimes feel Pride in what you have accomplished?

Often, Master.

And do you sometimes feel Good?

I try.

But the threads that make up our Human Nature are two-ended. There is no capacity for feeling Pride... without an equal capacity for feeling Shame. One cannot feel Joy

unless one can also feel Despair. We have no capacity for Good without an equal capacity for Evil.

Must we not then fear Evil?

Shall we fear our own Humanity?

Must we not fight Evil?

Who can defeat himself? For what is Evil but the self seeking to fulfill its own secret needs? All that is necessary is that we face it and choose.

You are the new student! Come closer.

You cannot see!

You think i cannot see.

Of all things, to live in darkness must be the worst.

Fear is the only darkness. Take your broom and strike me with it. Do as i tell you! Again!! Here, catch! Ha ha ha ha ha!! Never assume that because a man has no eyes that he cannot see! Ha ha! Close your eyes. What do you hear?

I hear the water. I hear the birds.

Do you hear your own heartbeat?

No.

Do you hear the grasshopper which is at your feet?

Old man, how is it that you hear these things?

Young man, how is it that you do not?!

You have learned discipline and acquired many new abilities. However, never forget that a priest's life is a simple one and must remain free of ambition.

Have you no ambition, Master Po?

Only one. Five years hence, it is my wish to make a

pilgrimage to the Forbidden City. It is a place where even priests receive no special status. There, in the temple of heaven, will be a festival: the Full Moon of May. It will be the thirteenth day of the fifth month of the year of the Dog. *That is not such a great ambition.* But it is ambition nonetheless! Who among us is without flaw?

You must prepare yourself for what lies ahead in your chosen role as priest. The nature of wind and fire and ice, the frailty of the human condition in hunger and thirst and fatigue, the predatory instinct of living things, the greed and banality buried in the hearts of men. You must be prepared to survive through all of them. These graceful movements you now perform, along with the rigors of all those disciplines which your masters impose upon you, will help you to develop the **inner strength**, that which we call **Chi**. And when you come to meet your greatest test and your highest challenges, call upon your *Chi*. It will not desert you.

What do you look for beyond the sea, Grasshopper?
That part of me which i know little of, the past out of which i was born.

Then someday you must seek it!
Is it good to seek the past, Master Po? Does it not rob the present?

If a man dwells on the past, then he robs the present. But if a man ignores the past, he may rob the future! The seeds of our destiny are nurtured by the roots of our past.

Master, can these things be real?

Did you not see them with your own eyes?

Is it not possible that the lama put them into our minds, to make us believe they were there?

We are taught that all things are possible.

Grasshopper, would you please gather some of the fruit?
They promise to be most succulent and nourishing!

It is often said that to be effective, one must act with both brightness and great force. But what is to be gained from such a course? If the end one has embarked upon is a righteous action, it flows the way of the Dao, forces our emotions to which we cannot add, from which we cannot subtract. If our path is right, there is only one course to follow. The correct action is to do nothing, and all will be done.

Please get up. Why have you come?

To confess my unworthiness, honorable Sir. I have disgraced my teachers and shamed this Holy Place.

Tell me how.

I have senselessly taken a life.

You speak of the nephew of the Emperor. It was he, was it not, who killed our Master Po?

I have shamed my Master's memory.

Did you not think to run?

I thought to run, but I could not find it within me to leave Master Po dying!

The guilt is not yours... This is the grave of Master Po. This earth is honored to receive him. May his bones find rest in this place. And may his passing in its violence not wake the tiger's outrage, the dragon's a-vengeance. The pursuit by the Imperial Police will be relentless, unending.

I understand Master.

You will remain a Shaolin priest, nothing is diminished, nothing undone.

Thank you Master.

You have visited the grave of Master Po. Now you must leave us forever. And I cannot say which is the greater grief to my heart. Go!

Does such things exist?

Do wars, famine, disease and death exist? Do lust, greed and hate exist?

They do. But how? Where do they come from?

They are men's creations, brought to being by the **dark side** of their nature. [FORESHADOWING "STAR WARS"??!?!...]

How can man rid himself of such terrible things?

Each man must start with himself, within himself, by slowly forging his *Chi*, the bond between the finite and the infinite, the **inner essence of his Spirit** and the limitless power of the Universe. Only thus, can you conquer the power and the presence of evil.

Your tread must be light and short, as though your path were on rice paper. It is said: a Shaolin priest can walk

through walls. Looked for, he cannot be seen. Listened for, he cannot be heard. Touched, he cannot be felt. This rice paper is the test. Fragile as the wings of the dragonfly, clinging as the cocoon of the silkworm. When you can walk its length and leave no trace, you will have learned.

Master Kyu?

Yes?

There is an injured man at the gate.

[Woman asks:] Are you the old man who heals?

I am Kiu.

[Injured man:] It is gone.

Come, let me see.

[Woman says:] You deserve it, drunken fool.

No one deserves pain. All will be cared for, but you must do just what i tell you. You may see him tomorrow.

[Woman says:] I have work to do. And so has he.

We shall do what we can. Come.

[Injured man:] Because i was a rascal and a fool, i gambled away all the month's rent from my tenants... bought wine for everyone, paid the flower girls for their songs. There was nothing left, at last. They goaded me into it! I bet my finger. Mao threw the dice... and i lost. It hurts, Master Kyu, it hurts!!

And what would you have won, if the dice had been otherwise?

[Injured man:] Four pieces of silver. As many as i have fingers left.

And with the four pieces of silver... you would have bought

more wine... and flower girls, would you not? Then perhaps with the finger, you have bought wisdom... and that would be well worth the price.

[Injured man:] No you cannot. I have lost too much already. You cannot!

The fire has entered the hand through the wound... and the hand is dead already. And if we do not remove the fire, you, too, may die! Did you hear me? Liu, i've done all i could... but the spirit of the finger is calling to the hand. If we do not give it, the spirit will be angered... and may even demand more!

[Injured man:] The spirit? Have you seen the spirit? Was it here?

It is here at the window! [Crow caws at the window...]

[Injured man:] Aaah! Drive it away! Drive it away! No, you cannot have my hand! How can i work? How??
Here you are, broth.

[Injured man:] Make him go! Make him go! I will do as you say! You can have my hand!

But it may be too late. Do you understand?

[Injured man:] I don't care! Try the gas on me!
Go tell Master Kan. And go to the laundry and get clean rags. Hurry.

[Injured man:] Master Kiu, i was so much trouble for you. You were much more trouble for yourself, Liu.

[Woman:] I see nothing to give thanks for. I brought you my husband, who had a hand and an arm. And you

returned to me a man who is half himself.

[Injured man:] Woman, be still. And you, boy, thanks for keeping vigil so long with me. Master. Come, woman.

Master... why was the spirit not satisfied with his hand?

The spirit might have been. But Liu, himself, had not done with gambling. He refused, as we recall, to let me help him.

I do not understand. What did the spirit want?

That, we may not know. Only what they do. But it seems clear that the finger was lost foolishly... and that angered the spirit of the finger... to be ripped wantonly off with so many good years of work left in it. But to take the arm and save the life... that appeased the spirit, for it was a good loss. The spirit decided to let Liu live. Sometimes we must lose part of a gamble in order to win in the end.

Master, Liu might not have consented to the loss of his arm, except for the appearance of the crow.

Yes, the crow did appear.

And on the floor of the sick room, i found this. [Shows the grains that attracted the crow...]

Liu believed in his demons by his own choice, not by ours. If the appearance of one of his demons helped him to make the right choice... then we can only be grateful for the ways of providence. Can we not?

[“Crazy dude” attacks one of the Masters...] Devils! Devils! What have you done with the priests?! You think i don’t know? I heard the scratching in the wall. You sealed the priest in the wall behind my room. And now they listen to me. They listen to me. I can’t sleep, thinking about it! I

can't sleep. [The Master brings a bottle down...] I will help you to sleep.

["Crazy dude":] No! Poison!

[The Master drinks some and hands the bottle to crazy dude, who now takes some...] When you have rested, we can talk.

Master, what besets that man?

He has been marked to wander inward... through and beyond a dark and terrifying land... where no road exists and no signpost points the way.

But, why?!

Who can say?

Should he not be locked in his room?

And prevented from his journey? If he can pass through the trackless land... he will find peace, his answer, his cure. As far as we are able, we must travel with him... help him along his way.

But how, when there are no roads and no signposts?

There are steps, his and ours. We take them together.

This is our duty to all who are marked, as he is.

I should hope then never to meet another like him.

Very often, a wanderer in the trackless land... finds that which he sought and more... something of rare value for the one who shared his journey. Could you risk the loss of such a benefit?

There's something horrible there, Caine, something dark and terrible. If I see it, I'll die, I know it! I feel it, like a chill all the way to my Soul!

When a fear becomes strong enough, it is like another

being within you... who fights to stay alive. It is not you will die, Gwyneth, it is your fear.

Your heart beats too fast. You must quiet it. What frightened you?

I heard the silence, Master. I felt my whole being diffuse, like a cloud. Then rain fell from the sky through me. I was part of everything, yet i was myself.

You have experienced Oneness.

Yes, Master. But in this great joy, i felt as if i was dying! That is what frightened me.

You know the lesson of the silkworm?

The silkworm dies, the moth lives... yet they are not two separate beings, but one and the same.

It is the same with man. His false beliefs must die, so that he may know the joy of the Way. What you felt in the Silence was real. Something in you is dying. It is called Ignorance.

How did you know, when i didn't?

Without fear, one sees more clearly. Your vision is not a curse, it is a gift. It saved those people's lives.

I'm not afraid anymore.

You have come to the end of your journey.

You've walked with me step by step, and now i've left my fears behind me. I must go back and serve my people now.

You have found what you were seeking. Peace for yourself. It was once said to me that if i shared a journey such as yours,... at the end i might find something of value

for myself.

Your question?

Yes, it is time. Since coming to this land, I have searched for my brother. Now, i wonder if my search is idle. Tell me if he still lives.

Oh, Caine, after all you've done for me... i can't answer your question.

Please try.

How?

Think. Look. I need to know.

Oh please, just this once. Oh, Caine. You've done so much for me. If i could — Nothing. Nothing. Oh, poor Danny, if i could just help you in some way!

I had not told you his name!

Yes, he lives! And you'll find him!!

[Teh-Soong:] I ask you as a brother. Stand with me. Take up the cause of justice. We shall triumph over the Mandarins, and the people shall be free!

[Other white-robed monk in training:] Your words are vain, Teh-Soong.

[Teh-Soong:] Listen to me! Hear me, my brothers! All my brothers, hear me!! This is a holy cause! Victory awaits us... if we stand together. Victory! Triumph!

Master?

You do not intrude. Come. Speak.

[Teh-Soong:] We can prevail! We will prevail! Fight with me! Take up this holy cause!

I have long admired our brother Teh-Soong.

There is much in him to be admired.

I fear he grows apart from us, from our way.

He is fired by a deep conviction. Would you have him deny this truth... he feels so deeply?

But if we are brothers, should not our beliefs be one?

That is what Teh-Soong desires most fervently. He would have us deny our truth and accept his. Who is right?

There can be no way but the way of the Tao.

So we believe. What, then? Do we renounce Teh-Soong as our brother?

Master, wherein does brotherhood lie?

Your question is most worth asking. Most worth considering.

Master? Teh-Soong is ready to leave.

Let him enter. [to Teh-Soong:] You will not be dissuaded?

[Teh-Soong:] Never! I will not waste another day within these walls.

Waste?

[Teh-Soong:] The people are like slaves. They starve, and still the Mandarins demand tribute for the Emperor?

We pray, we meditate, we...

[Teh-Soong:] We do nothing! How can you go on being blind to the misery around you?

I see it.

[Teh-Soong:] And do nothing.

What will you do?

[Teh-Soong:] Everything. I will take up the cause of the people. I will lead them, speak for them, fight for them! An awesome task. You will be in our thoughts.

[Teh-Soong:] All has been said.

We wish you life.

He was taught to be one with the Tao, to flow. Now he stands against the current.

He believes it is the will of Destiny.

Could it be so?

Can any man... be asked to be more than a man?

[Teh-Soong bangs at the temple doors, stumbles and falls:] The soldiers... we could not stop them all. There were so many of them.

Bathe him. Tend to his wounds. Call Master Li Nu.

He was beset by soldiers.

Yes, the word came while we were eating. He led a revolt in a village to the north. Now the village is destroyed, and Teh-Soong is marked for death.

Will he be safe here?

Yes. But will he be content to stay?

How does Teh-Soong progress?

His wounds cool. His anger does not. He speaks against you, Master.

I know. He has done so to my face.

I have lost all respect for him.

The sage says: "A sound man's heart is not shut within itself... but it is open to other people's hearts."

Teh-Soong accepts your kindness, and at the same time, defies you.

Would you have him hide his defiance? Is there honor in such deception?

I understand your thoughts, Master.

But what?

This particular virtue you find in Teh-Soong, is it most limiting?

Still, it is there. And it is for us to acknowledge it.

[Teh-Soong:] Parasites! Leeches! Have you no feelings? No Passion? Leave here! Come with me! We can bring justice to the people.

[White-robed monk in training:] How?

[Teh-Soong:] We will lead them against the Mandarins and the soldiers. We will kill them all.

[White-robed monk in training:] Violence gives rise to violence, not to justice. You have just seen that for yourself, Teh-Soong.

[Teh-Soong:] My belief has only been strengthened, my anger sharpened. Will you come?!

Is that you Teh-Soong?

[Teh-Soong:] It is i, Master.

You return once more to us. Alive, unharmed. You wear the rags of a beggar?

[Teh-Soong:] A lowlier garment i could not find.

You have turned from your cause?

[Teh-Soong:] It was false.

You sought to relieve the burdens of the people.

[Teh-Soong:] My concern only visited greater suffering upon them. I failed. For in their name, loudly proclaiming... i sought my own glory.

It has been said: "Be utterly humble... and you shall hold true the foundation of Peace, be at on e with all these

living things... which having arisen and flourished... return to the quiet whence they came.” Will you... abide with us?

[Teh-Soong:] You will allow me?

Our hearts are open.

[Teh-Soong:] I beg your forgiveness, Master.

You have my Love.

[Teh-Soong:] Forgiveness?

If you will find that... it must come from the one who has condemned you, Teh-Soong. I would hope he would be generous. Surely... there has been enough destruction.

Let us review the words of the Sage: “Man at his best...”

[Teh-Soong:] “Like water...”

“Serves as he goes along.”

[Teh-Soong:] “Like water...”

“He seeks his own level...”

[Teh-Soong:] “The common level of Life.”

“What he must do, he does...”

[Teh-Soong:] “But not for glory.”

“What he must do, he does...”

[Teh-Soong:] “But not for show.”

“What he must do, he does...”

[Teh-Soong:] “But not for self.”

“A sound man, not advancing himself...”

[Teh-Soong:] “He endlessly becomes himself.”

Yes.

He is one with us again.

And with himself. Every man has his yes and his no. From moment to moment, always. His yes... and his no.

A name, a face in my mind, a place... it is all i know of my father. One half of myself an emptiness, a mystery.

Seek to discover it then... for it is this thread which holds you to the path... and binds you to the future, to fix your place for all time in eternity.

You once told me my present is rooted in my past.

And it is through those roots we draw our nourishment and strength.

Do not the roots, then, also form the future?

Uprooted, can the tree flourish and bear fruit? Without the fruit, what may bear the seeds of future generation... and thus fulfill the ordained cycle of eternity?

Then my future is rooted in my past. And half my roots are across the sea in America. How will i find my place?

Time, and your Tao, will tell you that, Grasshopper.

A picture of the World we live in. Now you will tear your papers, thus. When you are finished, you will reassemble the pieces in their proper place.

Master Kan? I have finished, Master.

So swiftly? It is correct in all respects. How did you do it, my son?

It was not difficult, Master. On the other side was a picture of a man. I put the man together, and the World was remade at the same time.

The man, the World. The wholeness of each seems related.

And all men added together, do they not make up the world we live in?

Happy New Year, honorable demon. [Master says to young Caine, who tried to sneak up and scare him, wearing a mask...]

Why do you not tremble before me?

Is the student Caine, then, so fearful?

How did you know?

Your *chi* is not that of a demon, Kwai Chang, only a mask. Thus, while you appear to be a demon... your inner energies betray who you really are.

I suppose the trouble is i don't really want to be a demon.

You have hit on a profound truth. Can you not tell me what it is?

I must first decide who and what i want to be.

And then, in order to achieve that Ideal?

I must become one with It.

Possessed and be possessed by it... until you are what you will to be... and not merely a mask, attempting to deceive yourself and others.

I'm with you Grasshopper. Be calm. Perhaps you would like to tell me of your dream?

There was an animal, a beast. A very strange beast.

Did he have more than one head?

No, Master.

An excess of legs?

No.

You said he was strange.

His shoulders were like mounds. His head did not rise above them. He was like an ox, yet he was not an ox.

Was he of great size?

No, Master. No higher than my chin, and most gentle. I could tell he was very young. And he was frightened of something.

And you were frightened for him?

Yes. This is not like other dreams i have had. Even now, i feel as if it was real... and i was truly there!

Perhaps you were, Grasshopper. Or perhaps you will be.
But i know it was a dream.

Do you? Hahahahaha. Have i been here at your side...
and am i leaving you now, to drift back to sleep... or has
this too... been a dream?

Grasshopper!

Yes, Master.

Is it i, or a dream?

It is you, Master, as it truly was last night.

Hahaha. I will accept your judgment.

*After you left, i remembered more of the dream... and of
the strange beast who was so frightened.*

Yes?

*He tried to speak to me. He tried again and again, but he
was unable. Then he turned and was gone.*

Did he simply disappear?

No. He passed through a red door.

Is it your wish to enter?

*Yes, i believe i will then learn what the gentle beast was
trying so hard to say.*

Let's see. I'll follow you.

It is only an empty chamber. Has it no purpose?

Let us call it the Chamber of the Answer. Tell me what you see.

Only the red door.

Does it lie before you?

Yes.

Ah. Then that is where your answer must be waiting.

Behind the red door.

But... but i am behind it.

Are you?

Do not fear. She will be taken care of. She is about to bring forth a new life.

I know, Master. I heard her baby cry.

That is most unusual!

Do i deceive myself? Could such a thing truly happen?

It was you who heard. Life calls to life.

A baby not yet born calls to me! I do not understand...

Nor do i. But how beautiful.

A beast. He was frightened. It was as if i was truly there.

Perhaps you were or will be.

Grasshopper?

Yes, Master?

You sit very still.

I listen for the cry of new life.

Soon. The woman's time approaches swiftly.

The life she will bring forth will live.

That is our wish.

I know it, Master.

Yes, you do. Strange. A thing of wonderment. You and this infant not yet born, you are as candle and flame. Separate and not separate.

There must be others bound together in this fashion.

I would not disagree.

Perhaps, then, there are couplings beyond couplings.

I would not disagree.

Do you think?... Could it be that all men are bound together and all things?

There is no reason to believe so. Nor reason not to believe so.

How can we learn the answer?

That is simple. Do not seek it.

Do you forget that your Spirit is stronger than the flesh? It can defeat the power of another, no matter how great.

There is no failure, no defeat... no weakness within you... only that which you allow to settle in your own mind. Draw upon the strength of your Spirit.

I will be forever grateful for what you have taught me.

It was a truth, disciple Huo... one among many. What you believed to be inner weakness... existed in your mind alone... and in no other place.

You performed with great skill when it had to be done... working with others to prevent destruction here.

Master, i do not understand all that has happened.

No one knows all. We were challenged by a festering anger. The challenge was accepted. And in the end... the seeds of hatred destroyed themselves... as they always do... as they always will.

Battles are waged on the Earth and in the Heavens... within the Mind and within the Soul. This battle has been won.

See it did not give way. [Huo holds his custom-made lance out to Kwai Chang...]

And the man who wields it, he did not give way!

Communication between self and self... between self and others, may take many forms. Dreams are a language which we may learn to interpret. Our deeper self talking to our self. The needs, the sensations, the flights of fancy of others... impinging on our own. Take heed not to disregard these communications... but rather, listen and hear what they have to say.

A most imperfect movement, disciple Caine. Fortune, not skill, achieved the result.

May i be instructed, Master LI?

Let us repeat the movements. [Master Li throws Caine to the ground...] You see?

Yes, i will try to improve, Master.

[A messenger walks in...] Kwan Li of the family of Kwan Chou of the province of Hupeh?

Yes.

A message for you. [Messenger hands a scroll to Master Li, then pulls a knife on him. The Master throws the man to the ground...] Speak.

It was the order of the Emperor... that you be killed.

Why?!

Your family has been decreed guilty of treason.

That is not true!

The Emperor's edict makes it the truth... whatever the truth.

My family still lives?

Their death was to follow quickly upon yours.

I must go to Hupeh.

[Other Master concurs...] At once!

Forgive me if i have injured you.

Now call the investigator to arrest me.

I only meant to show you what you yourself have taught me. No man is omnipotent. It is not for me now to tell you what to do. You are the Master.

Forever? "Forever" is a word for children. The tallest candle burns to an end. Even the stones which form our temple walls... built to last a thousand years... will grind down under the attrition of time. A thousand years. Yet, even in the time i have been Master of monks here at Honan... there have been occasions... when it seemed like the end would come far sooner.

The sage says: a man is born gentle and weak. At his death, he is hard and cold. Green plants are tender and filled with sap. After death, they are withered and dry. Therefore... the stiff and unbending is the disciple of Death. The gentle and yielding is the disciple of Life.

You have passed here many times, Grasshopper... but never before paused. What is it that has caught you up?

The tapestry, Master.

Ah, a treasure of great age and beauty.

Beauty? An image so sinister!?

Does it frighten you?

It disturbs me. The figure in the center, does it have a name?

Kuei, a demon. Why does it disturb you?

I have seen it before, somewhere else.

Where?

I am unable to say.

Could it have been in your mind?

Perhaps it was.

That is likely. We all encounter a demon when our conscience is not at rest. What troubles you, Grasshopper?

My thoughts seem to warn of a meeting with this demon. It is as if something remains to be settled between us.

Do you know what or why?

I cannot remember.

Cannot? Or is it that you do not choose to remember?

I stare at you and i speak. You stare back at me and say nothing!

A piece of cloth upon a wall? Truly, Grasshopper, do you expect a reply?

I realize the tapestry cannot speak, Master.

Then who is it that you address? Yourself?

Yes!

And are you able to answer the question... the tapestry cannot?

No, Master.

Is it not because, as the tapestry is mute, so are we?... so long as we are held immobile by the tightly woven threads of fear?

What must i do, Master?

You will know that, once you have sought out your demon and confronted him. Only then will you come face to face with the thing you fear... that which you have given the shape of this demon.

It is a time when the body is at its weakest... and the mind, seeking to protect itself, looks for something beyond itself. It creates, in its fear, a figure that exacts a more terrible price.

Ah, then your journey inward has begun?

Yes, Master. Though as yet, i do not recall where i met this demon... or what was said between us.

You must go deeper into this world.

I'm afraid, Master.

Why?

I may lose my way within this strange world... and never emerge.

It's a risk, Grasshopper.

Must i take this risk?

It is the only way to confront your demon.

I do not wish to confront him.

Let us sit here for a moment... To run from your demon is to have him pursue you. Better to advance and meet him in his world... than to retreat and have him enter yours.

The doorway to another reality lies before you. You must step over the threshold. You must enter this world, meet your demon... wherever you were in the past when you created him... however young you were at the time.

I have entered.

Do you see your demon now?

I begin to.

How does he appear? As the tapestry portrays him?

In much the same way... but more present! More real!!

What else do you see?

[In background...] Oh, ho ho... Oh, ho ho...

Nothing. But i hear things.

Things?

Sounds. Voices, i think.

When you created your demon, as i did mine...

What are you doing, Grasshopper? How do you account for this strange and violent behavior? What demon possesses you to make you abandon the ways of Tao?

Grasshopper! Where are you, Grasshopper?

Master, i am trapped in this world.

You trapped yourself! You must fight!!

There is no way out.

You seek to escape. Instead, you must go in even deeper!

How?

This demon is your own creation. Search out when you first created him. Search out when you put yourself in his power... when you were very young.

What strange behavior is this, Grasshopper?

[Demon:] I command you to die!
And i command you... to be nothing.

Master, as i walk these roads... are there none i may call on for help when i need help?

None.

Would this not be useful?

To those who would destroy us, in the past, when we have relied on our great teachers to lead us... our enemies in high and low places could deal us a mortal blow... by simply lopping off our heads. Now, in our oneness, we are not like a great beast... which may be destroyed by a single well-planned stroke to the brain. Rather, we are like an ocean of many waves... or a field of flowers. Though one or more be uprooted... the others still live with a life of their own.

As a wave upon this ocean... a single flower in a field of many... what will the people ask of me?

To lead them against their enemies, the despots, the tyrants... wickedness, iniquities, ignorance... persecution, superstition, dishonor.

May i ask, Master, when i leave the Temple... what will be expected of me?

To walk the roads of the land... and use what you have learned for the needs and benefits of the people.

Will i always know when to act and when to stand off?

That which you do not know, the doing will quickly teach you.

Well, Master...

Tell me.

Body and mind as one, working in unison.

They are one!

It is as though the unity may have found itself unnecessary.

And all those years of rigor and discipline?

What else could a man seek except this unity?

As the wise farmer puts back into the land at least as much as he has taken out of it... so, soon, must you give back to others what you have taken for yourself.

I am ready.

You are ready, Grasshopper. Ready indeed.

[Young Caine has befriended a thief, who showed up wounded to the Temple. Then Caine seems distracted during sparring practice, as he fails to win against his opponent...]

I am sorry. [Caine says to his Master, who watches over the sparring practice...]

For me or for yourself? It was not I who was defeated.

[The Master indicates for the sparring to continue...]

Again. [Young Caine again gets knocked down by his opponent...] Enough.

I have disgraced myself.

It is no disgrace to lose... If one has sought to win.

I have been troubled.

Will you tell me why?

I cannot. [The Master starts to walk away...] Master... I feel ungrateful.

Tell me why.

In withholding from you.

That is your right, student Caine.

It is not for myself.

How can that be?

Another is involved.

And you fear to betray a confidence?

Yes.

Is this confidence imposed upon you?

I am not certain.

Then be certain for yourself.

And if i am wrong?

You will discover it.

Can one commit a wrong and still maintain the path?

Who can be so right... as to commit no wrong?

If one has stolen?

Have you stolen, student Caine?

Oh no, Master! May one not befriend a thief?

Is a thief not a man?

No less, Master.

The choice is not the same for all. This morning, the Emperor's soldiers appeared at our gate. They were seeking a thief. It was apparent, student Caine, they were not seeking him as a friend. If i knew such a man, i would caution him to beware.

Master, may we speak further on the forces of destiny?

Speak.

As we stand with two roads before us, how shall we know... whether the right road or the left road will lead us to our destiny?

You spoke of chance, Grasshopper, as if such a thing were certain to exist. In the matter you speak of — destiny — there is no such thing as chance! For, whichever way we choose — right or left — it must lead to an end... and that end is our destiny.

I follow the Tao.

[Caine's brother Danny speaks...] No one can say to what solitude that might lead.

My journey is endless, until it comes full circle... at my death.

What will it be like, Master, when i leave these walls?

Do you tire of our company here, Grasshopper?

Oh no, Master. Only...

Only?

One day i hope i shall become a priest.

You will.

Sometimes i try to imagine what it will be like, when i am a priest and on the outside.

What do you imagine, Grasshopper?

You will laugh at me.

Ha ha ha. Will that destroy you, if an old man laughs?

No, Master. Laugh if it pleases you.

Hmmm, tell me what you have imagined.

I shall be a man and wear the robes of a priest.

And?...

People in need will call on me to help.

Imagine now, that you are entering such an adventure. Do you see that castle up ahead? It is the home of a Duke, a Duke whose life is in peril and who has sent a need for help.

And you have sent me!

To the very walls of the castle. Along the way, Grasshopper, you must remain always alert. People — even priests — are not always what they seem.

Does the ring still glow, Grasshopper?

Very faintly.

Then the Duke still lives.

How shall i find him, Master?

Seek help where you can. It may be found in those places where help seems most unlikely and those who might seem most against you. For as your enemies may wear the garb of friends, so your friends may seem to be enemies.

How would it be possible, to prove such a worth?

You must wait for the moment, Grasshopper. For at the right time, all may be reached.

And with those who have done evil, Master, how shall i deal?

The saying says: for good, return good; for evil, return justice.

In your actions, be bold, be resourceful, be forthright. For what walls may stop a Shaolin priest?

As the light in ring grows dull, so your path may sometimes seem obscure.

Still troubled, Grasshopper?

Sometimes, Master, it seems as if a wall lies between myself and others — a wall which i may see but may not touch.

You feel a fault within yourself?

I do not know where the fault lies, but i feel apart!

In your conversation with this other, the more is left unsaid than is said.

It is so.

Who can know himself well enough to speak all? Who is so well founded to hear all? The sage says: shape clay into a vessel, cut doors and windows for a room. It is the spaces within which make it useful. So, we must listen for the spaces between us. We must hear the silences.

Master, how can we find our way, when all the paths seem just?

The Way runs true through darkness, through shadows. Neither is cause for despair. The Sage has said: “The five colors blind the eye; the five tones deafen the ear; the five flavors dull the taste. Therefore, the wise man is guided by what he feels, not by what he sees. When our senses are confused and overpowered, our deeper feelings may yet keep us on the way.”

At times, the path that you face may seem overwhelming.

And you may feel unequal to what is required.

Master, i observe others, and they seem to know the Way.

Do you?

I am puzzled and unsure. I move one way and then another, with no purpose.

And therefore, grieve.

Yes, Master.

The Sage has said: "Others are contented. I alone am drifting, not knowing where i am. I am alone, without a place to go. I am different. I am nourished by the Great Mother. In an uncertain hour, the wise man acknowledges uncertainty."

People in need will call on me for help.

And will you help them?

With all my heart.

Will there be difficulty and danger for you?

Yes, Master...