

## Poetry of Seng-ts'an, the third patriarch

“You’re suffering from leprosy; what could you want from me?” “Even if my body is sick, the heart-mind of a sick person is no different from your heart-mind.” This convinced the second patriarch, Hui-k’o, of Seng-ts’an’s spiritual capacity and he accepted him as a student.

### **Hsin Hsin Ming - The Mind of Absolute Trust**

By Seng-ts’an, as translated by Robert Olson

The Great Way isn’t difficult  
for those who are unattached to their preferences.  
Let go of longing and aversion,  
and everything will be perfectly clear.  
When you cling to a hairbreadth of distinction, heaven  
and earth are set apart.  
If you want to realize the truth,  
don’t be for or against.  
The struggle between good and evil  
is the primal disease of the mind.  
Not grasping the deeper meaning,  
you just trouble your mind’s serenity.  
As vast as infinite space,  
it is perfect and lacks nothing.  
But because you select and reject,  
you can’t perceive its true nature.  
Don’t get entangled in the world;  
don’t lose yourself in emptiness.  
Be at peace in the oneness of things,  
and all errors will disappear by themselves.

If you don’t live the Tao,  
you fall into assertion or denial.

Asserting that the world is real,  
you are blind to its deeper reality;  
denying that the world is real,

you are blind to the selflessness of all things.  
The more you think about these matters,  
the farther you are from the truth.  
Step aside from all thinking,  
and there is nowhere you can't go.  
Returning to the root, you find the meaning; chasing  
appearances, you lose their source.  
At the moment of profound insight,  
you transcend both appearance and emptiness.  
Don't keep searching for the truth;  
just let go of your opinions.  
For the mind in harmony with the Tao,  
all selfishness disappears.  
With not even a trace of self-doubt,  
you can trust the universe completely.  
All at once you are free,  
with nothing left to hold on to.  
All is empty, brilliant,  
perfect in its own being.  
In the world of things as they are,  
there is no self, no non-self.  
If you want to describe its essence,  
the best you can say is "Not-two."

For the mind in harmony with the Tao,  
all selfishness disappears.  
With not even a trace of self-doubt,  
you can trust the universe completely.

In this "Not-two" nothing is separate,  
and nothing in the world is excluded.  
The enlightened of all times and places  
have entered into this truth.  
In it there is no gain or loss;  
one instant is ten thousand years.  
There is no here, no there;  
infinity is right before your eyes.

The tiny is as large as the vast when objective boundaries have vanished;  
the vast is as small as the tiny,  
when you don't have external limits.  
Being is an aspect of non-being;  
non-being is no different from being.  
Until you understand this truth,  
you won't see anything clearly.  
One is all; all are one. When  
you realize this, what reason for holiness or wisdom?  
The mind of absolute trust  
is beyond all thought, all striving,  
is perfectly at peace; for in it  
there is no yesterday,  
no tomorrow,  
no today.

