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Whenever I am in Kyoto I seem to meet unexpected friends from home, and, I shall never forget a long night spent with Dom Aelred Graham and David Padwa in the *ryokan* above the Miyako. Dom Aelred was then Prior of the Benedictine house at Portsmouth, Rhode Island, undertaking a spiritual pilgrimage to Asia.

David Padwa was on vacation from being a director of Xerox Corporation, having had the sense to drop out after a swift and remarkable career in law and business, exemplifying the saying that the secret of the mastery of life is to know when to stop. He came to Kyoto from India, carrying nothing but a knapsack and a copy of the *Lankavatara Sutra*, and it should be said here that his home in New York contains the world's cosiest library, comprising a most respectable collection of works on Mahayana Buddhism.

David went into a discourse on the relativity of all concepts and ideas that made our heads swim. He reduced all basics to babble. He developed the epistemological impasse of knowing about knowing to demonstrate that we knew nothing at all about anything, that survival was a whim, time a hallucination, and sanity a majority consensus of the blind. He was like a trapeze artist at a hundred feet with no net, playing with his own sanity over an abyss of absolute madness, which -- who knows? -- might be a viable life form if we could ever decide what we mean by viable. He showed that the act of making sense between each other had, in itself, no more sense than the gurgle of a stream. With the whole of his own remarkable intellect he tore every intellectual canon to shreds -- and all this without bitterness or hostility, in the feeling of a joyous and terrible dance, for he seemed to be Shiva doing the *tandava* dance that brings all the worlds to an end.

Dom Aelred listened and listened, obviously cooking inside. For David was repeating, in a modern way, the dialectical process that the Madhyamika school of Nagarjuna had worked out as an intellectual approach to enlightenment by teasing the mind completely out of thought. In effect, this can bring about the same *paravritti* or flip at the root of consciousness as the contemplation of one's eventual nothingness.

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