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LOTUS LAKE DRAGON POOL



TREVOR LEGGETT

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Lotus Lake, Dragon Pool

FURTHER ENCOUNTERS IN
YOGA AND ZEN

by

Trevor Leggett



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Trevor Leggett Adhyatma Yoga Trust

To the late Hari Prasad Shastri
in whose life and words
the ancient traditions drew new breath
these translations and transcriptions
are reverently dedicated

Table of Contents

Publisher's Foreword

Lotus Lake

The Magistrate

Do Good

Self-Examination

Last Words

Anger

Habits

Honour

Prayers Answered

Proclaimed Wisdom

The Judge

Tail, No Tail

Powers

Obedience

Holy Ceremony

Handshake

Prescriptions

Excuses

Test Not

Giving Up Illusion

Fire Stages

In the Courtyard
Dream-Fair
Fireworks
The Swimmer
Mistakes
Too Good
Turtle
One Step,
Twenty Steps
Warning
Hypnosis
The Procession
The Well

Dragon Pool

Remembering
Reverence
Humble
Racing Dive
Devil, Devil
All Different
Seeds
Emptying
Silence
Mu in Prison
How Much
The Mantra-Sayer
Notes
Faith
The Part
Hero

Jobs
Good
Cat and Dog
Shooting Arrows
Trick
Gardens
Independence
Gone Away
Ghosts
The Pond
Fallacy Somewhere
Dark Spotlight
Cleaning
Spitting
Time, Time
The Blue Mountains
Paid For
Triumph
To the Last Drop
Wisdom Water
Channel
Pearls
Interlaced Trees
The Singing Eggs
The Pillar
Unseen

Publisher's Foreword

TREVOR LEGGETT collected many teaching stories from the Indian Yoga tradition and from the Chinese and Japanese Zen traditions drawn from various sources both ancient and modern: for example they may be from an old temple magazine, folk stories, from the oral tradition or sometimes from his own experience. These stories can provide inspiration to beginners as well as those with some knowledge and experience of Yoga and Zen. Their function is to strike a spark and if they do so they should be pondered daily for some weeks to find the deeper points. The author explains this in more detail in the introduction to the companion volume to this book, 'Encounters in Yoga and Zen - Meetings of Cloth and Stone' which can be found on the Trust website tlayt.org at Audio tracks - Going Further into a Story.

THE PICTURES in this book were brushed by Jacques Allais and generously given to Trevor Leggett for this book. The pictures are in the Suiboku style in which Jacques Allais was an expert. The style gives a hint for the focusing of meditation practice, providing the perfect complement to Trevor Leggett's text.

Lotus Lake



The Magistrate

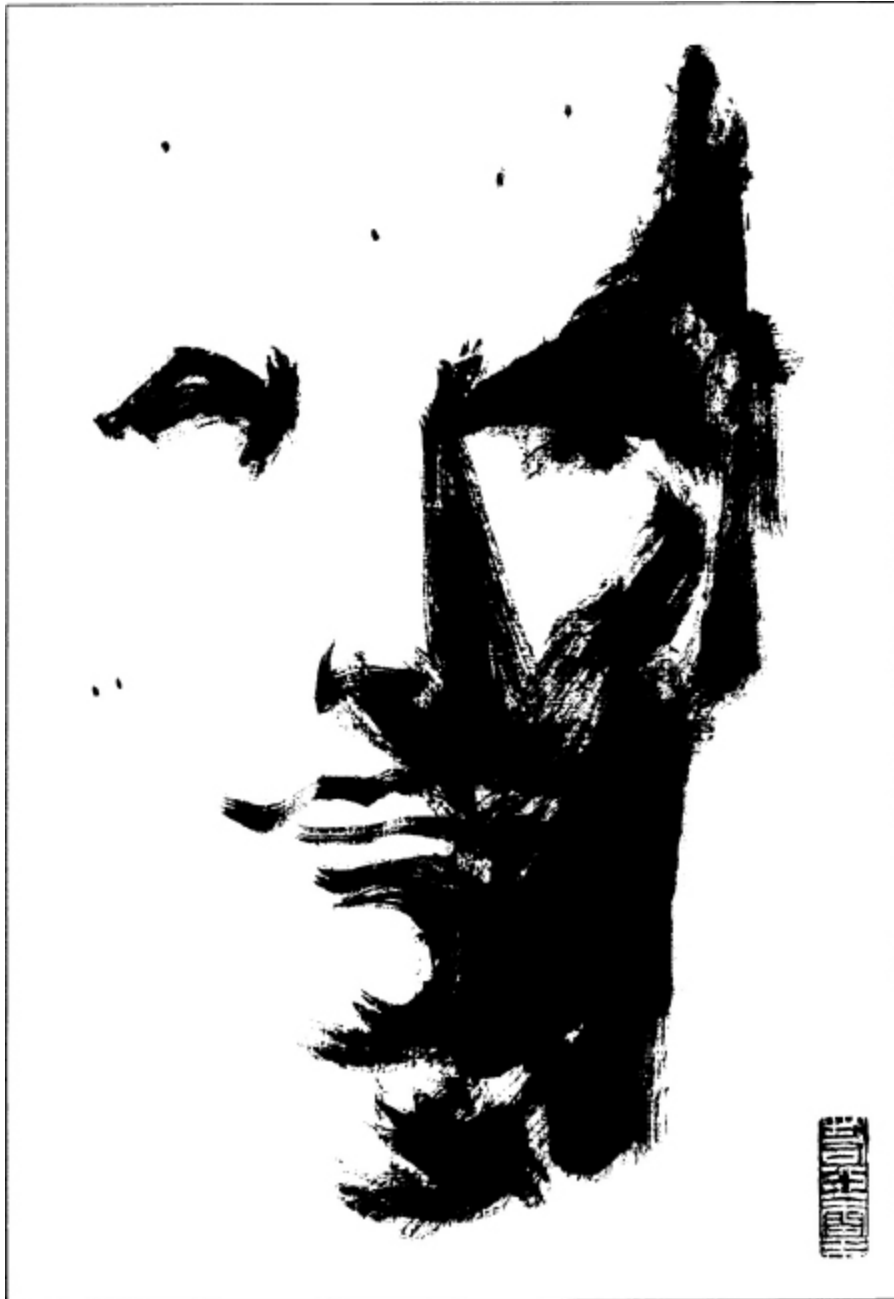
A TEACHER of the Yoga of the Bhagavad-Gita came to the district and set up a school in a village there. When this was reported to the local magistrate (the chief administrative officer for the district), he was displeased. He was a follower of a Western philosopher who held that traditional religion and its compulsive morality was the cause of many of the ills of man.

The magistrate had a great love for the people of the district, and worked night and day to bring them to what he saw as modern and progressive views. He therefore put many obstacles in the way of the yoga teacher, and for a time was successful in turning public opinion against him.

When he heard that the school was also teaching secular subjects to the local children (admittedly poorly served by the present arrangements, because of the poverty of the district), he briefed the school inspector to apply the most stringent tests to the teaching methods. The latter, however, reported favourably, and in fact two of the yoga teacher's disciples had been school-teachers and were teaching very ably for a tiny salary. In five years, three of the pupils of this school obtained state scholarships to go on to a high school in the capital, and then to the university. Such a thing had never happened before.

The magistrate's attitude began to soften. Though he never even came to meet the yoga master, he used his influence to help him in various ways, and indirectly conveyed to the group that if they were in difficulties, they

could approach him through a designated intermediary. The disciples concluded that though the magistrate could hardly reverse his previous stance, he had in fact become a religious devotee in private.



After some years he fell ill. He went to the capital for a major operation, but returned little better, and it was generally assumed that he had come home to die. The teacher sent a disciple, with no instructions except to

present himself. He was refused admission. He sat down on the ground in an inconspicuous place not far from the door. As night came on, his body shivered in the cold, and a servant who saw him brought a mat and a straw coat; he then reported to his master that the disciple was still waiting.

Late in the night, the master asked, "Is he still there?"

"Yes," was the answer. "I gave him some food."

"Well, let him in," ordered the sick man. "I have decided to see him."

As the disciple bowed on the threshold, the magistrate said irritably, "You've come to preach to me, I suppose."

"I won't say a word unless you tell me to," promised the brahmachari.

"Well, I have decided that I may as well tell you—in fact, I must tell you in fairness—that I have never believed that superstitious stuff you are propagating among the people. And I don't believe it now. But I have seen that your teacher could get people to cooperate, and to work and study, on the basis of pleasing God; and I had found that they just couldn't see clearly enough when I explained to them the same things, on the basis of enlightened self-interest. And I concluded that perhaps the religious phase is a necessary one, to get them moving. Afterwards, as they become better informed, they will discard it. So I gave some help to your efforts; the dogmas do seem to be of some immediate benefit to the people, and ultimately they are bound to destroy themselves.

"Now I've told you. I felt suddenly that your master was entitled to know, to prevent any misunderstandings later. I hope it isn't too much of a shock to you. I don't suppose you have any text to cover this case, have you?"

"My Lord, we have," the disciple told him. "It is in the Gita, where the Lord says that in whatever form people worship Him, that same faith He makes unwavering."

There was a long silence.

The magistrate said feebly, "Is there any other text that comes to your mind?"

The brahmachari replied softly, "Yes—He sees, who sees the Lord standing in all beings, the undying in the dying."

Another silence.

"Anything else?" The magistrate's voice was very weak.

The brahmachari came and knelt by the bed with his palms joined. "O my Lord, you cannot tease me any more. I see you clearly now."

A great surprise came over the magistrate's face; and then he died.

The brahmachari called the servant, and told him, "Your master is gone now, and well gone." The servant stood in the doorway looking toward the dead man for a little. Then he said in a choked voice, "He was a great man. Yes, and he was a good man too. They said he was strict and hard. Well, he was; he was strict and hard. I should know that; I served him for twelve years. But it was for our own good, and I know that too. And he was much stricter with himself, and much harder on himself. He was so anxious that he shouldn't leave anything undone, so anxious. I don't think I ever saw him smile, he was so anxious."

He took a step toward the bed, and peered toward the face.

"But tell me—I'm not seeing very well just now—that's a smile there, isn't it?" He caught the brahmachari's arm. "It's true, isn't it? He's smiling now, isn't he?"

"Yes," the brahmachari told him. "He's smiling now."

Do Good

“NOT MUCH thanks in this world when you do a kindly action,” grumbled a disciple. “They at once try to find something wrong with it, and if they can’t find something wrong with it, they find something wrong with you. Seems to make them feel better somehow.”

“I heard a good saying in one of the devotional schools,” remarked a senior. “Apparently their teacher used to say: ‘Do good, and be abused.’ But he told them that the resistance and abuse against good deeds was like the bow-wave when a ship is moving forward strongly; in a way it is a confirmation, and should not be resented too much.”

“Yes, I know, I know. It’s all very clever and elevating, but the fact is that when spiteful things are actually being said, when a well-meant action is deliberately twisted to seem self-seeking—it’s a bit different then. I haven’t got the patience to listen to all that venomous stuff.”

“We have the saying in our own school: Do Good and Go. They tell us not to hang about, either for praise or blame.”

“Still, one’s bound to hear something even as one goes ... and one remark can be as wounding as twenty.”

“Well, I suppose in your case we’ll have to amend the saying. Try this then: Do Good and Run!”

Self-Examination

TWO FRIENDS who belonged to a group practising interior training were given the practice of self-examination. "At the end of the day, sit down for a few minutes and try to see where you have gone wrong: make attempts to correct the faults." One of them, a desperately conscientious man, raised the point when they next had a meeting with the teacher.

"I find myself overwhelmed when I do self-examination," he said. "I feel absolutely crushed. It seems to have been all blunders and meanness and weakness. I can't get rid of the thought of them afterwards, either. Sometimes I can't sleep."

The teacher said, "There is another way for people like you. You need not do formal self-examination. Whenever you think of your mistakes, turn your mind on to the Lord. Create vividly in your mind the scenes from the life of His incarnations. This will free you. Make friends with the lion, and you will not be bothered by jackals." Then he turned to the other, and asked him how he found the practice.

"Oh, I don't have trouble at all," he replied. "I've come to realize that humility is the secret of self-examination. If the thought comes up that I have failed in virtue, I just think, the Lord did not give me the strength. If the idea comes that I have not prayed, I think, He did not give me a devotional nature. If it occurs to me that I have not studied the holy scriptures, to find out how to approach Him, then I say, after all, He did not give me the head for that. When I realize that

I have not been very helpful to my fellow men, I think, He did not bless me with loving kindness.

“All I am and all I do and all I think—it is all from Him. What have I to repent of, what have I to correct? It is all His, nothing of mine at all.”

“There might be just one thing of your own in all this,” said the teacher.

“And what is that?”

“Perhaps ... a tiny bit of pride in your own cleverness?”