

Opposites need not be antagonists. They may be complements.

C. MEDITATION.

1. Visualize either of the following: (a) A river, winding through the countryside, in some places broad and slow-moving, in other places swift and turbulent with whitewater, but ultimately flowing into the ocean, whose calm depths are undisturbed by the river's course. (b) A solitary sacred fig tree growing in the snow at the top of a mountain and marvelously blooming at the hour of midnight, shedding its fragrance into the crisp night air.

2. Consider ways in which things that are opposites are complementary rather than oppositional, such as the diamond and the lotus flower (as in the mantra *Om mani padme hum*, "Oh the jewel in the lotus, ah!"). Also consider ways in which things are not always what they seem to be.

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The next group of nine verses concerns the nature of our quest, both as a struggle between parts of ourselves and as a path that divides into two branches.

A. VERSES [173-181].

[173] No Arhan, O *lanoo*, becomes one in that birth when for the first time the soul begins to long for final liberation. Yet, O thou anxious one, no warrior volunteering fight in the fierce strife between the living and the dead, not one recruit can ever be refused the right to enter on the Path that leads toward the field of battle.

[174] For, either he shall win, or he shall fall.

[175] Yea, if he conquers, Nirvāna shall be his. Before he casts his shadow off his mortal coil, that pregnant cause of anguish and illimitable pain — in him will men a great and holy Buddha honor.

[176] And if he falls, e'en then he does not fall in vain; the enemies he slew in the last battle will not return to life in the next birth that will be his.

[177] But if thou wouldst Nirvāna reach, or cast the prize away, let not the fruit of action and inaction be thy motive, thou of dauntless heart.

[178] Know that the Bodhisattva who liberation changes for renunciation to don the miseries of Secret Life, is called "thrice honored," O