

we know is only a reflection of reality, subject to the distortions of an ancient mirror or the dust that gathers upon it. The dust is our accumulated experience of illusory head-learning, which obscures our vision of reality.

The reference in verse 115 to mind and Soul suggests another triplicity that matches the one treated centrally in these passages: namely, body, mind, and soul. The body is ignorance; the mind is head-learning, and the soul is Soul-Wisdom. We have all three within ourselves, and to be whole (holy or enlightened), we must blend them.

Verse 116 advises us to shun the ignorance (of the body) and the illusion (of head-learning) but, being in the body, to seek in the impersonal aspect of ourselves the eternal Buddha nature, that is, the persisting reincarnating self, which becomes enlightened through a conscious union with the highest reality. Two glosses comment on these matters:

Gloss 7. The reincarnating Ego is called by the Northern Buddhists the “true man,” who becomes, in union with his Higher Self, a Buddha.

Gloss 8. “Buddha” means “Enlightened.”

Verses 117-119 are cautions against pride, the special vice of head-learning. The image in verse 118 of a tower to whose top a fool has climbed may suggest the picture on the Tarot card of the Tower, which shows it collapsing and a figure, a fool perhaps, falling from its top.

The reference in verse 119 to the “Doctrine of the Eye” and the “Doctrine of the Heart” relates those to, respectively, head-learning and Heart-Wisdom, and gloss 9 on the former refers back to the distinction between exoteric and esoteric teachings:

Gloss 9. [See gloss 1 on verse 102, p. 2] The *exoteric* Buddhism of the masses.

The following gloss on the confession of those who follow the esoteric Doctrine of the Heart, “thus have I heard,” emphasizes the caution against pride and self-aggrandizement:

Gloss 10. The usual formula that precedes the Buddhist scriptures, meaning that that which follows is what has been recorded by direct and oral tradition from Buddha and the Arhats.