Blake and Zen Buddhism: A Study in the Uses of Orthodox Religion

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There are perhaps as many critical approaches to William Blake as there are books and articles about him, not all of them illuminating.[1] The obvious reason for this is that Blake was a man who believed in different kinds and levels of truth and in the fact that the highest truth could not easily be expressed in words, so that no one theory or approach may be conveniently used to "pigeonhole" him. This study suggests that many of Blake's poems and proverbs may be better understood in terms of the logic, epistemology, and teaching methods of Zen Buddhism. Blake's division of man's experience into the states of innocence, experience, and organized innocence, for example, approximates a Zen master's comment on the three spiritual stages of a person seeking enlightenment. Blake's internalization of religious experience and his belief in "vision" are akin to the Zen Buddhist emphasis on everyday living and the notion of "instantaneous enlightenment." Blake's use of paradox and irony in his proverbs is similar to the methods used by Zen masters in *Kung-an* (公案) to awaken students to deeper levels of understanding. And the theme which runs through many of his short poems in *Songs of Innocence and Experience* – "Eternity is in love with the productions of time." – is also one of the central themes of Zen Buddhism.

The first part of this study takes a look at proverbs from Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and discusses how they are similar in both substance and method to the *Kung-an* and poetry of Zen Buddhism. The second part of this study discusses the affinity between Blake's division of man's experience into three states and the three spiritual stages of Zen Buddhism and how this division is relevant to our understanding of Blake's poetry. The third part brings the content of the first two parts to bear upon a study

of two of Blake's most difficult poems. In the course of this discussion, it will become clear that not only are there certain affinities between Blake's works and the literature of Zen Buddhism, but also that each presents us with a radically new interpretation of orthodox religion.

1.

A look at two well-known Zen Buddhist *Kung-an* will show how the profound and sophisticated wisdom of Mahayana Buddhism has been transformed in Zen into something at once both more immediate and more spontaneous:

> One day Hui-neng noticed two monks arguing over a flag that was blowing in the wind. One of them said that it was the wind that was moving. The other said that it was the flag that was moving. The two argued incessantly. Hui-neng remarked, "It is neither the flag nor the wind, but rather your minds that are doing the moving." Everyone present were shocked into enlightenment. They realized that this was the Sixth Patriarch and hailed him as their master.[2]

> Sheng-kuang cut a worm in half with a spade. He said to his master Tzu-hu, "Today I have cut a worm in half with my spade. Both ends are still moving. Can you tell me in which part of the worm does the life reside." The master seized the spade and struck the worm, first on the left side, then on the right side, and finally in the middle, then threw the spade away and left.[3]

Through the use of paradox and irony, through the play upon contraries in a dialectic, and through the use of violent tactics such as striking the worm with the spade or, in the case of other *Kung-an*, spilling tea, cutting fingers, pinching noses, smashing pots, or hitting the disciple with a stick, the disciple is suddenly awakened to a deeper level of understanding that may be outside of logic and difficult to express in words. As one commentator of Zen *Kung-an* has described it:

> The *Kung-an* do not represent the private opinion of a single man, but rather the highest principle, received alike by us and

> by the hundreds and thousands of Bodhisattvas of the three realms and the tea directions. This principle accords with the spiritual source, tallies with the mysterious meaning, destroys birth-and-death, and transcends the passions. It cannot be understood by logic; it cannot be transmitted in words; it cannot be explained in writing; it cannot be measured by reason. It is like the poisoned drum, struck in the midst of a group of people, killing all who hear it, or like a great fire that consumes all who come near it. What is called the special transmission of the Vulture Peak was the transmission of this; what is called the direct pointing of Bodhidharma at Shao-lin-ssu was a pointing at this.[4]

In the following proverbs from Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, we will observe how the poet makes use of the same methods, often with reference to traditional Christian beliefs, in making radically new points:

1. **"Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires."**[5]

This remark is made with reference to the Christian belief in restraint of one's desires. The extreme violence of the act of murdering an infant in its cradle is perhaps overstated and only symbolic in nature. Like hitting the worm with the spade or striking the poisoned drum, or cutting fingers, it is a gesture designed to jolt one out of one's customary prejudices and cause one to suddenly apprehend a higher truth. Blake did not believe in the traditional Christian denial of the senses. As he said, "Man has no body distinct from his soul. . . . Energy is the only life and is from the body."[6]

2. **"The thankful receiver bears a plentiful harvest."**[7]

The remark is paradoxical at first because it seems as if it should rather be worded, "The receiver of a plentiful harvest is thankful." The cause-effect relationship between the thankful receiver and plentiful harvest in the proverb appear to have been reversed. And it has been done so deliberately. For if we dwell upon the meaning of the proverb long enough, we are suddenly able to understand the deeper reason why the proverb is true. It is because the receiver is first thankful that he consequently bears a plentiful harvest. Good kharma begets more good kharma. And in any case, the "thankful" receiver's harvest will seem to him "plentiful." A Zen poem provides an appropriate description of this state of mind:

In Spring, there are a hundred flowers, in Fall, the moon,
In Summer, there is a cool breeze, in Winter, snow.
If there are no worries on your mind,
Each season can be a good one.[8]

3. "The cut worm forgives the plow."[9]

The remark is paradoxical because, for one thing, the cut worm, having no thought, is incapable of forgiveness. If it did have thought, the proper reaction would be feelings of hatred and regret, not forgiveness. The contradictions confront us and force us to dwell upon the proverb until we have reached a new level of understanding. For one thing, plowing the fields, as the farmer was doing, is a good thing since it is a productive activity and since, as Blake believed, "Energy is eternal delight."[10] Second, if the worm were capable of thought, he would understand that the farmer was doing a good thing and that he did not mean to cut the worm in half. Forgiveness would be possible under these circumstances, even though the worm was destined to die. If the farmer himself felt remorse for what he had done and sympathy for the worm, there would be all the more cause for forgiveness on the worm's part. Behind all this is the Buddhist notion that:

Of all living creatures, there are none which do not have a mind,
All those who have minds will eventually attain to Buddhahood.[11]

4. "Eternity is in love with the productions of time."[12]

This remark, in addition to being paradoxical, is in direct contradiction to the Christian doctrine of time and eternity. According to the Christian view, time and eternity are antithetical and mutually exclusive categories. There is the time of this life and the end of time which is the beginning of eternity, as foretold in St. John's vision. Those of us who are living in time look forward to the eternity of the next life and view the time of this life with a little contempt. For Blake, however, the notions of time and eternity are inextricably interrelated. Eternity is not an absolute. It cannot exist on its own or it will experience loneliness, as did the goddess Chang-O when she was condemned to eternal exile on the moon:

Chang-O should have good reason to regret stealing the elixir
of immortality,
Every evening she stands alone, with only a sea of stars to keep
her company.[13]

Time, on the other hand, is all the more precious for its brevity. The mayfly which has never seen Spring or Autumn[14] may seem pitiable by ordinary standards. The value of its brief hours and minutes are enhanced, however, when they are set in contrast to eternity. Hence, Blake's belief that "Eternity is in love with the productions of time," a radically new formula of the relationship between time and eternity, one which stands the Bible on its head. Not only are time and eternity not mutually exclusive, but rather dependent upon and complementary to one another. In Zen Buddhist terms, "one moment is eternity"[15] or, in terms of one of the most frequently reiterated couplets in Zen literature:

An eternity of endless space;
A day of wind and moon[16]

And in a well-known poem by Basho:

An old pond.
A frog jumps in, —
Splash!"[17]

Where the "old pond" corresponds to "An eternity of endless space" while the frog jumping in and causing the water to splash corresponds to "A day of wind and moon." There is certainly something mysterious and awe-inspiring about seeing ageless silence suddenly flower to life, and the motion of that split second juxtaposed against the ageless silence.

5. "To create a little flower is the labor of ages."[18]

This remark is puzzling at first because of its seeming simplicity. It is true that for the gardener whose job is to grow flowers, it requires a lengthy process of planting seeds, sprinkling water, and applying fertilizer for a flower to grow and finally mature. If we take this flower to be a particular variety of flower, it may take the horticulturist years of pollinating and

grafting to create a new variety of flower. All this is true, but it is not where the true emphasis of Blake's proverb lies. The emphasis of Blake's proverb lies in the time and effort put into the raising of the little flower, which represent the love of eternity for the productions of time. When the little flower finally blooms, "labor is blossoming."[19] The hard, painstaking effort over a long period of time flowers into something beautiful and rewarding. The concept of "blossoming" is best explained in a passage from the prose writings of D. H. Lawrence:

> No man, or creature, or race can have vivid vitality unless it be moving towards a blossoming. And the most powerful is that which moves towards the as-yet-unknown blossoming. Blossoming means the establishing of a pure, new relationship with all the cosmos. This is the state of Heaven. And it is the state of a flower, a jenny-wren in spring, a man when he knows himself royal and crowned with the sun, with his feet gripping the core of the earth.

The concept of "blossoming" has its counterpart in many Zen poems and *Kung-an*, among them the story of the monk Chang Chiu-ch'en who was pondering a *Kung-an* when he was in the toilet. Suddenly he heard the croak of a frog, and he was awakened, as evidenced by the following lines which he wrote:

> On a moonlit night in spring, the croak of a frog
> Pierces through the cosmos and turns it into a single family.[20]

It is manifested in a much-quoted Zen poem:

> All day I looked for spring but could not find it,
> The mist-shrouded mountains bear the tracks of my grass shoes;
> On my return, I inadvertently smelled the fragrance of plum blossoms,
> And found spring there, on the branches, in full bloom.[21]

6. "If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is: infinite."[22]

The proverb is a statement of Blake's belief in the ability of "vision"

to transcend time and space. Heaven and eternity, contrary to orthodox religion, are not far away in the next life, but here and now. For those who can see clearly, "heaven" is "in a wild flower, and eternity in a grain of sand." The proverb brings to mind the story of the succession of Hui-neng to the Patriarchate in the *Platform Sutra:*

> The Fifth Patriarch announced that he was looking for a successor to whom he might transmit his office. This honor was to be conferred upon the person who submitted the best poem, expressing his understanding of Buddhism. The chief monk of the community was Shen-hsiu, who posted the following lines near the Patriarch's quarters:
>
> The body is the Bodhi Tree;
> The mind like a bright mirror standing.
> Take care to wipe it all the time,
> And allow no dust to cling.
>
> The following morning, when Shen-hsiu came to the Patriarch to claim authorship, the Patriarch declared that his understanding was still far from perfect. On the following morning, another poem appeared beside the first:
>
> There was never a Bodhi Tree,
> Nor bright mirror standing.
> Fundamentally, not one thing exists,
> So where is the dust to cling?
>
> The Patriarch knew that only Hui-neng could have written this. He summoned Hui-neng to his room and conferred the Patriarchate upon him, then told him to flee into the mountains until the Patriarchate of the other monks had subsided and the time was ripe to begin his public teaching.[23]

In Hui-neng's poem, the doors of perception are cleansed thoroughly. The Buddha nature is achieved instantaneously. There are no longer any distinctions or contradictions of the intellect, nor any contamination with purity itself as a result of attempting to purify the mind. Another *Kung-an* similar to this one concerns the Zen master Chao-chou:

> A monk asked Chao-chou, "I am a newcomer to these woods. Please give me guidance." Chao-chou asked him: "Have you

> eaten your gruel yet?" The monk answered. "Yes, I've eaten it." Upon which Chao-chou said, "Then go wash your bowl."[24]

In symbolic terms, Chao-chou's question whether the monk had eaten yet was a question of whether or not he had attained enlightenment. When the monk replied in the affirmative, that he had, Chao-chou further ordered him to cleanse himself of the notion of enlightenment.

7. "The cistern contains, the fountain overflows."[25]

The remark is deceptively simple at first glance because it is non-judgemental. Neither the cistern nor the fountain are said to be better or worse for what they are. They are only different. But upon closer examination of the proverb, it becomes clear that, though understated, Blake had an opinion in the matter of which of the two is to be considered more preferable. The cistern, though admirable in its function, is clearly less admirable than the fountain for it lacks in the quality of "vivid vitality," of "blossoming" which the fountain manifests in its perpetual overflowing. A cistern filled with water will begin to grow dark and to smell after a period of time, no matter how fresh and clear the water was to begin with. The proverb brings to mind a Zen *Kung-an* in which Yi-ts'un asked of the Zen master Hsüeh-feng, "What is it like to be in an old well?" Hsüeh-feng replied, "You can't see the bottom."[26] Hsüeh-feng's answer clearly shows his disapproval of the spiritual condition represented by the "old well." The self-restraint and stoicism symbolized by the "old well" are necessary, of course, in the effort to achieve Nirvana. But in the end, this self-containment and self-negation will lead to contamination of the very spiritual condition one is striving to achieve. One must realize, as Hui-neng did, that "Fundamentally, not one thing exists, / So where is the dust to cling?"

2.

According to the famous saying of the Zen master Ch'ing Yüan:

> Before I had studied Zen for thirty years, I saw mountains as mountains, and waters as waters. When I arrived at a more intimate knowledge, I came to the point where I saw that mountains are not mountains, and waters are not waters. But

> now that I have got its very substance, I am at rest. For now I see mountains once again as mountains and waters once again as waters.[27]

Though there are differences between the substance of Blake's division of human experience into contrary states and the spiritual conditions described by Ch'ing Yüan, it may still be of interest to draw certain parallels between them, particularly in point of the structure of the dialectic. The first stage mentioned by Ch'ing Yüan, in which one sees "mountains as mountains, and waters as waters" is, in Blake's dialectic, the first state of "innocence" which, in Biblical terms, is the mythical state of Paradise, only understood and internalized within the realm of personal experience. This is a condition in which one is in harmony with all things in the universe. The second stage in which "mountains are not mountains and waters not waters can be likened to Blake's second state of "experience." In Biblical terms, this is the state of "Paradise Lost" internalized in the experience of the individual. This is a condition in which the self is no longer in harmony with the universe. The mind is deluded and the individual experiences evil and suffering. The third stage in which one sees "mountains once again as mountains and waters once again as waters" is comparable to Blake's third state of "organized innocence" or, in Biblical terms, "Paradise Regained." It is a state of second innocence different from the primeval state of innocence for in it, all the contradictions and disturbances of the mind are assimilated into a unity of higher order. One feels in harmony again with oneself and one's surroundings.

An understanding of this dialectic makes it easier for us to understand Blake's poems in the *Songs of Innocence and Experience.* Without this system, Blake may seem to be the simplest of poets and every child may joy to hear his songs, for they are all children's songs at first glance. With this system, however, it becomes clear that in each of the poems to differing extent and in different combinations, Blake makes use of the various stages of the dialectic and that collectively, they tell the story of the progress of the human soul on its way to enlightenment.

Thus, there are poems in the *Songs of Innocence and Experience* such as "The Laughing Song":

> When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy
> And the dimpling stream runs laughing by,

When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hills laugh with the sound of it.

When the meadows laugh with the lively green,
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene,
When Mary and Susan and Emily
With their sweet round mouths sing Ha, Ha, He.

When the painted birds laugh in the shade,
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread,
Come live and be merry and join with me,
To sing the sweet chorus of Ha, Ha, He.[28]

Which, in their pure joy and simplicity, celebrate the state of primeval innocence in which one is in complete harmony with one's surroundings. There are poems like "The Ecchoing Green" which begins with a description of children playing and ends with the lines:

And sport no more seen,
On the darkening Green.[29]

Hinting at the loss of "innocence" and the coming of "experience." There are poems such as "Holy Thursday" in which "innocence" and "experience" – the "thousands of little boys and girls raising their innocent hands" and the "grey-headed beadles" with "wands as white as snow"[30] – co-exist beside one another. There are poems such as "The Garden of Love":

I went to the Garden of Love,
And saw what I never had seen:
A chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of the chapel were shut,
And "Thou shalt not" writ over the door;
So I turn'd to the Garden of Love,
That so many sweet flowers bore,

And saw it was filled with graves,
And tombstones where flowers should be:
And priests in black gowns were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars my joys and desires.[31]

In which the abrupt appearance of the words "Thou shalt not" and the sudden quickening of pace in the last two lines through the use of internal rhymes ("gowns" and "rounds," "briars" and "desires") shock us into an awareness of the loss of innocence and the menacing cruelty and austerity of the Church, much in the way in which the sudden use of paradox and irony in Zen *Kung-an* awaken us to deeper levels of understanding. There are poems such as "Ah Sunflower" and "The Sick Rose" in which the main character is clearly deluded and which belong completely to the realm of "experience." And there are poems such as "The Fly" which belong simultaneously to the realms of "innocence," "experience," and "organized innocence." Each poem is like a *Kung-an* for it presents a puzzle and awakens in us, as do the *Kung-an* an awareness of the particular state of the dialectical progression in which the poem appears.

3.

The remainder of this study will bring the discussions in Part 1 and Part 2 to bear upon the examination of two difficult poems in the *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, "Ah Sunflower" and "The Fly." These two poems provide good illustrations of the principles already discussed. They are also works which critical literature has, up to now, failed to give adequate interpretations for. We begin first with "Ah Sunflower":

> Ah Sunflower! weary of time,
> Who countest the steps of the Sun,
> Seeking after that sweet golden clime,
> Where the traveller's journey is done;
>
> Where the Youth pined away with desire
> And the pale virgin shrouded in snow,
> Arise from their graves and aspire,
> Where my Sunflower wishes to go.[32]

The symbolism of the Sunflower and the Sun, "that sweet golden clime" represent Heaven, to which the sunflower aspires. He is a pilgrim, a "homo viator" in St. Augustine's sense, seeking the eternity of Heaven which lies at the end of time. The poem ends abruptly and we are left in doubt as to whether or not the Sunflower has achieved this goal. Our initial impression may be that the Sunflower has already done so and that this is a very

simple and straightforward poem. A closer look at the poem, however, reveals that this is not the case for it is clear that the Sunflower is "weary of time" and only "wishes to go" to "that sweet golden clime." It is also clear that the line "Where the traveller's journey is done" at the end of the first stanza is only descriptive of "that sweet golden clime" and not a fact accomplished. And it is clear that the "Youth pined away with desire" and the "Virgin shrouded in snow" are awaiting that day when, according to Christian theology, time will come to an end and all the dead may arise and go to Heaven, but have yet to accomplish this goal. What is wrong with the Sunflower can also be perceived as a problem with orthodox religion for according to the Bible and St. Augustine, time and eternity are separate and mutually exclusive categories. We who live within time are all waiting for the day when time will come to an end and we will see God "face to face." But according to Blake's radically different way of thinking, the wait for the end of time may take too long. Moreover, the relationship between "time" and "eternity" may be complementary instead of antithetical. As we observed earlier in Part 1, "Eternity is in love with the productions of time," the sunflower, whose mind is deluded and dwells in the realm of "experience," is unable to see this truth which belongs to a higher realm, that of "organized innocence." Herein lies the irony of this poem, of which only we the reader, who have knowledge of Blake's dialectic of contrary states and who are able to observe the Sunflower objectively, are aware of. In terms of the literature of Zen:

> An eternity of endless space;
> A day of wind and moon.
>
> One moment is eternity.[33]

These lines provide us with insight into the Sunflower's problem. They present a radically new understanding of the relationship between time and eternity, which a man of vision is capable of attaining. Two other Zen Buddhist poems are relevant to this discussion:

> Looking at the moon in the sky,
> You lose the pearl in your hand.[34]
>
> The origin of the Tao is not distant,
> The sea of self-nature is not remote,
> One need only seek it in oneself,

And not seek it afar,
Seeking afar, one will not find it,
Nor will what one finds be real.[35]

If Blake's Sunflower were in possession of this wisdom, he would no longer have cause for being weary.

Our discussion now turns to one of the most difficult poems in the *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, "The Fly":

Little Fly,
Thy summer's play
My thoughtless hand
Has brushed away.

Am not I
A fly like thee?
Or art not thou
A man like me?

For I dance,
And drink, and sing,
Till some blind hand,
Shall brush my wing.

If thought is life,
And strength and breath,
And the want,
Of thought is death;

Then am I,
A happy fly,
If I live,
Or if I die.[36]

The outward simplicity of this poem belies the complexity and sophistication of its inner meaning. It is clear that a correct interpretation of it hinges upon a proper understanding of the word "thought." Our initial impression is that "If thought is life . . . And the want / Of thought is death" means that if while one is alive, there is thought, or consciousness, and if this consciousness ceases with death, then death is a kind of release and one would be happy to identify with the fly who, through death, has gained

a release. Our second impression is that "If thought is life" refers to the condition of the speaker in the poem, or mankind in general. "And the want / Of thought is death" refers to the condition of the fly who, not being capable of thought, is not really living. In this case, one would prefer to be a fly rather than a human being since a fly has no thought, no consciousness of his own existence and therefore, no fear of death at the hands of "some blind hand" and is therefore, happy. Another interpretation of the poem along the same lines has been provided by D. G. Gillham, author of *Blake's Contrary States:*

> Blake's intention in this poem is not very clear, but a paraphrase may be made as follows: the fly I have just idly killed and myself are very similar creatures. We go about our business, each according to our nature, as though there were nothing else in the world except ourselves, until some force we can know nothing about mechanically swats us. My nature is human and so my proper activity is thinking, a process which is like the buzzing of the fly. It goes on while I am alive because I can't help it, and it stops when I am squashed, also because I can't help it. Thought is the "life," "strength," and "breath" of the speaker. His flow of consciousness goes on continuously, that flow is what he recognizes as essentially himself, and it will stop only when he ceases to be. . . . The thinking of the present speaker is a superficial business, happily playing over the surface of things, "dancing," "drinking," and "singing" – a making merry, for tomorrow we die. . . . There are no inarticulate depths within the speaker and so he is like the giddy fly. Both are subject to the operation of other forces, obviously with a mechanism of their own. The poem depicts a universe of separate blind wills, necessarily destructive of each other, for all things die or disintegrate by the action of other things eventually.[37]

The first thing that is wrong with these interpretations is that in them, the speaker and the fly have been literally equated with one another. In Gillham's and in the first interpretation, the lines "And the want / Of thought is death" have been understood to mean. The cessation of consciousness of the fly and the speaker upon bodily death. The lines "Then am I / A happy fly" equate the happiness of the fly with the speaker, whether in life or death when in fact, as we shall soon see, there must be some distinction between them. According to Blake's system, the two cannot share

the same spiritual condition. The second thing that is wrong with these interpretations is that they present a very passive and mechanistic view of life, a view which Blake, with his belief in vision and imaginative sympathy, was very much against.[38]

A proper understanding of the poem depends upon the recognition that the word "thought" in the fourth stanza is related to the preceding stanzas and in particular, to the word "thoughtless" in the first stanza. "Thought" should be understood as the thought of killing this fly, and sympathy for the fly and for all living things, a notion not very different from the Buddhist concept of "compassion" (慈悲). This thoughtfulness is in direct contrast to the thoughtlessness of the first stanza. If one is capable of such all-encompassing compassion, that will bring "life," "strength," and "breath." If one is not, after committing such an act, then it is a kind of spiritual numbness and spiritual death. In conclusion:

Then am I
A happy fly,
If I live
Or if I die.

Whether I am living or whether I am dead, if this incident has brought out the all-embracing compassion in me, I will not have lived in vain or lived in a state of spiritual numbness, but rather lived happily, regardless of how long I live. The well-known Buddhist saying, "Lay down the butcher's knife, and you shall attain instantly to Buddahood" (放下屠刀，立地成佛)[39] comes to mind here and provides an appropriate gloss on this stanza. The poor little fly, on the other hand, will not feel hatred towards the speaker if he knows that the act of brushing his life away was not done intentionally. As we quoted from Blake's proverbs earlier: "The cut worm forgives the plow."[40]

As for the equation of the speaker with the fly in the lines, "Then am I / A happy fly" it may be taken either literally or figuratively. When taken literally, one is reminded of a passage from D. H. Lawrence, a passage with radically heretical overtones when read in the context of orthodox Christianity:

> For man, the vast marvel is to be alive. Whatever the unborn and dead may know, they cannot know the beauty, the marvel

> of being alive in the flesh. We ought to dance with rapture that we should be alive and in the flesh, and part of the living, incarnate cosmos. I am part of the sun as my eye is part of me. My soul knows that I am part of the human race. There is nothing of me that is alone and absolute except my mind, and the mind has no existence by itself; it is only a glitter of the sun on the surface of the water.[41]

The equation of the speaker with the fly may also be taken in a figurative sense, with the emphasis on the word "happy." The happiness of the speaker at the moment of insight and compassion may be likened to the imagined happiness of a fly that goes about its business of "dancing," "drinking," and "singing" in carefree manner, though they are not the same. The happiness of the fly belongs to the first state of "innocence" whereas the happiness of the speaker belongs to Blake's third state of "organized innocence." Both the speaker and the fly discover themselves in harmony with their surroundings, but the harmonies are of different levels.

On another level, our appreciation of this poem is further enhanced by the knowledge that despite such distinctions, there is an ultimate equality between the speaker and the fly, for as mentioned in Part 1 of this study:

> Of all living creatures, there are none which do not have a mind,
> All those who have minds will eventually attain to Buddhahood.[42]

Notes

1. Northrup Frye, "Blake's Treatment of the Archetype," *English Romantic Poets*, ed. M. H. Abrams (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 55-71; David V. Erdman, "Blake: The Historical Approach," *English Romantic Poets*, pp. 72-89; Robert F. Gleckner, "Point of View and Context in Blake's Songs," *English Romantic Poets*, pp. 90-97; Martin Price, "The Vision of Innocence," *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Songs of Innocence and Experience* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1969), pp. 36-48; Peter F. Fisher, *The Valley of Vision* (University of Toronto Press, 1961); and D. G. Gillham, *Blake's Contrary States* (Cambridge University Press, 1966), to name a few. Gillham's study is one which I consider to be unilluminating. This example will be discussed in detail in Part III of this study.
2. From *The Platform Sutra* (Taipei: Wei Hsin Publishing Co., 1977), p. 67. All translations are by the author unless otherwise indicated.
3. From *Ku Tsun Su Yü Lu*, in *Ch'an Tsung Chi Ch'eng* (Taipei: I Wen Publishing Co.), Vol. 12, p. 322.

4. From Isshu Miura's *Zen Dust* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1966), p. 5.
5. From *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Plate 9, in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), p. 38.
6. From *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Plate 4, Ibid., p. 34.
7. From *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Plate 9, Ibid., p. 37.
8. "春有百花秋有月，夏有涼風冬有雪，若無門事掛心頭，便是人間好時節。" A poem by the monk Wu Men, quoted from John C. H. Wu, *The Golden Age of Zen* (Taipei: National War College, 1967), p. 286.
9. From *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Proverbs of Hell*, in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, p. 35.
10. "一切衆生，莫不有心，凡有心者，皆當成佛。" A well-known Buddhist saying, quoted here from Ch'i Chün's discussion of Buddhism in *Chung Kuo Chin Tai San Wen Hsüan* (Taipei: Hung Fan Publishing Co., 1981), p. 435.
11. From *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Plate 4, in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, p. 34.
12. From *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Proverbs of Hell*, Ibid., p. 36.
13. A poem by the T'ang poet, Li Shang-yin, "嫦娥應悔偷靈藥，碧海青天夜夜心。" Quoted from *Tz'u Hsüan*, ed. Cheng Ch'ien (Taipei: Publishing Committee for Chinese Culture, 1954), p. 249.
14. From *Chuang-tze, Ch'iu Shui*, "蟪蛄不知春秋"。 Quoted from *Chuang-tze*, ed. Kuo Ching-fan (Taipei: Ho Lo Publishing Co., 1974), p. 563.
15. "剎那卽永恒"。 Quoted from Wu I, *Lao Chung Yü Ch'an* (Taipei: San Ming Publishing Co., 1966), p. 20.
16. "萬古長風，一朝風月" from *Wu Teng Huei Yüan*, quoted from John C. H. Wu, p. 246. The translation is by John C. H. Wu.
17. Ibid. The translation is by John C. H. Wu.
18. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Plate 9, in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, p. 37.
19. An expression I have borrowed from Yeats' poem "Among Schoolchildren," *The Poems of W. B. Yeats*, ed. Richard S. Finneran (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1983), p. 215.
20. From *Wu Teng Hui Yüan* (五燈會元), "春天月夜一聲蛙，撞破乾坤共一家。" Quoted from John C. H. Wu, p. 284. The translation is by John C. H. Wu with ammendations by the author.
21. From *He Lin Yü Lu* (鶴林玉露), a commentary of poetry by the Sung Scholar Lo Ta-ching, "盡日尋春不見春，芒鞋踏徧嶺頭雲；歸來偶把梅花嗅，春在枝頭已十分。" Quoted from Pa Hu-t'ien, *I Hai Wei Lan* (Taipei: Kuang Wen Publishing Co., 1971), p. 6.
22. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Plate 14, in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, p. 41.
23. From *The Platform Sutra*, pp. 5-6. The two poems are as follows:

    "身是菩提樹，心如明鏡台，時時勤拂拭，勿使惹塵埃。"

    "菩提本無樹，明鏡亦非台，本來無一物，何處惹塵埃？"

24. From *Chih Yüeh Lu*, quoted from Pa Hu-t'ien, p. 19.
25. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Plate 8, in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, p. 36.
26. From *Ch'uan Teng Lu* (傳燈錄), quoted from Pa Hu-t'ien, p. 39.

27. From *Wu Teng Hui Yüan* (五燈會元), "老僧三十年前未參禪時，見山是山，見水是水。乃至後來親見知識，有個入處，見山不是山，見水不是水。而今得個休歇處，依前見山是山，見水是水。" Quoted from Pa Hu-t'ien, p. 71.
28. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, p. 6.
29. Ibid., p. 8.
30. Ibid., p. 13.
31. Ibid., p. 26.
32. Ibid., p. 25.
33. See the discussion of the fourth proverb in Part 1 on pages 4 and 5.
34. From *Lin Chi Yü Lu* (臨濟語錄), "貪看天上月，失却掌中珠。" Quoted from Pa Hu-t'ien, p. 5.
35. From *Ch'uan Teng Lu* (傳燈錄), "道源不遠，性海非遙，但向己求，莫從他覓，覓得即不得，得亦不眞。" Quoted from Pa Hu-t'ien, p. 5.
36. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, p. 23.
37. D. G. Gillham, *Blake's Contrary States* (Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 218-219.
38. Blake's poem, "Mock on, Mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau," is an example of this point of view. See *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, p. 477.
39. The expression originates from the *Shan T'ang Ssu K'ao*: "A butcher who happened to be present at a Buddhist ceremony laid down his knife and suddenly attained to Buddhahood." Quoted from *Tz'ih Yüan* (Taipei: Shang Wu Publishing Co., 1977), p. 2016.
40. See discussion of the third proverb in Part 1 on page 4.
41. D. H. Lawrence, *The Apocalypse* (New York: The Viking Press, 1966), pp. 199-200.
42. See discussion of the third proverb in Part 1 on page 4.

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