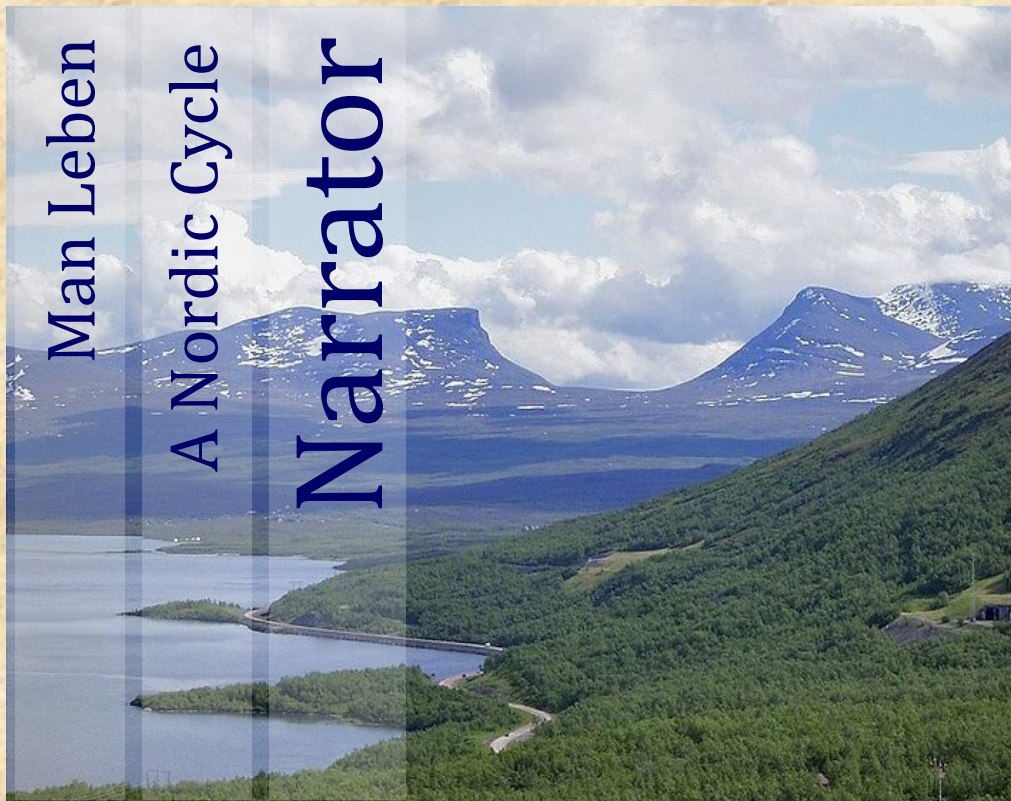


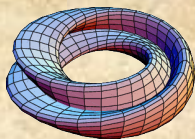
Man Leben

A Nordic Cycle

Narrator



Omnia  
Amsterdam



"Who are you" is about you and me and everything around us. Are you and I connected or are we separated? How are we connected? What makes you to the person who you are and who is involved in your creation? Who are you before your birth and who will you be after your death? Do you exist without an universe? What relationship do you have with the universe? How are you aware of yourself? And how are others aware of you?

This search will be a way home. Our journey leads from the beginning of time until now. At the end, we will look back. We will see that everything is finished in one sigh.

Man Leben, Carla Drift and Narrator started the Odyssey to "Who are you". A Nordic Cycle includes a year from the biography of Narrator.

# Narrator – A Nordic Cycle

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*One year from a biography*

Man Leben

Narrator Nārāyana is a fictional person. No existing human has been model for him.

Man Leben is a writer's name.

*Narrator – A Nordic Cycle* is a part of the biography of Narrator Nārāyana. This biography will be published soon.

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*Beauty is a terrible and awful thing! It is terrible because it has not been fathomed, for God sets us nothing but riddles. Here the boundaries meet and all contradictions exist side by side.*

- Fyodor Dostoyevsky, The Brothers Karamazov

*Let Your heart carry our lives! For peace will increase in days and nights of Your life. Our benefit and fidelity will not leave You, You carry them, breathes them and the world shares in Your peace.*

- Old Testament, Proverbs of Salomo

*If you want to avoid misery, rely on your own lot*

- Book of Serenity – One gain, One loss



# Acknowledgement

Without the familiar breath that shaped the complete universe in one sigh from start until end, this book would not be possible. I am deeply indebted my gratitude to the eternal wind – in Sanskrit वात or vāta – as manifestation of this breath.

I have received endless help from all manifestations in the universe that exist in its innumerable varieties.

As human being, I acknowledge my deep gratitude to the universe and world wherein we live. The creation of this book took place in this area.

Without the contribution of all the women, men, mothers, fathers, children, gatherer-hunters, wanderers, farmers, craftsmen and -women, warriors, monks, priests, rulers, scientist and people not mentioned from the beginning until now, this book would not be possible.

Our universe and world has been studied by many scholars in innumerable ways. Without the giant outcome of all these studies this book would not be started. I am deeply indebted my gratitude to all these studies.

Special gratitude I am indebted to:

- o My mother and father and family,
- o Friends and colleagues
- o Teachers, schools and university,
- o Villages I lived in, schools I attended and areas of employment.

Possible mistakes and omissions in this book are solely my responsibility. I aimed at a complete reference. May omissions in references be noted, would you be so kind to forward these omission to the author.

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# Inhoudsopgave

Prelude	9
Mask of an idol	13
Gate in the north	19
Gate in het north 2	27
Back to the civilised world	35
Back to the civilised world 2	43
Points to the snow	51
Copenhagen and Amsterdam – a reunion	57
Postlude	63
About the composer	67
Index	69





# Prelude

Unimaginably long ago I arose from the sound of falling rain in the blowing wind and the clattering of tumbling pebbles. With the rain the rhythm was created, by the wind my voice arose and with the tumbling pebbles the applause started. Stories emerged from the rhythm and the wind. Esteem started by the applause with the urge to seek the attention again and again.

My father is dark as the night. He was born and raised in a poor southern part of India. At school he learned Sanskrit fluently – the language of the Gods in the world of humans. All my grandparents and grand-grandparents spoke this language. As a young man my father travelled to Kenya in Africa to wander as storyteller and to have a better life. In this country he met my mother.

My mother is a proud woman from the Maasai nomads tribe. She does not know any borders; all the land is for everyone and the cattle needs food and care. She met my father as a young woman. He was starving and she took pity on him. Between them a love arose that transcends our existence. They went along through life; my father remained wandering as storyteller and my mother gave care and shelter when he was passing by. Herefrom I came on Earth.

Around 1960 I was born in Africa. My first name is Kṛṣṇa [1] because I am dark as the night like my father with my black blue skin and

because I was born during the dark period of the moon. My parents expressed the hope that I may awake up again every night like the Moon and may not die like all other people [2]. Later in my life I changed my first name in Narrator, because I wish to belong to the mortals. My family name from my father's side is Nārāyana. This means in the language of my ancestors: "Son of the original man". [3]

My mother took care of us, my brothers, my sisters and my father. My father is a wandering storyteller. When he came, my mother gave him care and shelter. We heard of his adventures and my mother was happy.

At school I learned to read and write. I never stoppen reading. I read Gilgamesh, Iliad, Odyssey, Mahābhārata, Shakespeare at school. Every day I go to a library to see what I do not know.

At the end of my school time I joined a militia as child soldier. At the end of one night we set a forest surrounding a village on fire. The God of fire and the wind spread the flames. Our militia shot with joy at everyone and everything that came out of the forest and we were happy [4]. In daylight the disillusionment followed. We saw that we had killed everything and everyone from the new-born to the elderly. Hereafter I left the world of hungry ghosts and hell.

With the change from boy to young man, I noticed that I fell in love with other young men. My mother saw that too.

She sent me away to a distant country where men may love men. After a long journey I arrived in Amsterdam. Life was a feast. Real gnomes walked around with long hair and tangled clothes. My exotic fragrance wafted through the city: I met the best and most beautiful lovers.

[1] Kṛṣṇa means amongst others “black”, “black blue”, “the dark period of the moon cycle”. Source electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta

[2] According to a Maasai myth the God Engai gives cattle to the people, he brings people to life after their death and each day he lets the Moon die. After a sin wherein an opponent was desired death, Engai lets people die and each night he brought the Moon to life. Source: [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masa%C3%AF\\_\(volk\)](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masa%C3%AF_(volk))

[3] Source electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta

[4] See the last part of book 1 of the Mahābhārata where during the fire in the Khandava forest, Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa shot arrows with joy to all that left the forest. Sources: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/maha/index.htm> boek 1 Section CCXXVII and further; Katz, Ruth Cecily, *Arjuna in the Mahābhārata: Where Krishna is, there is victory*. Delhi: Molital Banarsidass Publishers, 1990, p. 71 – 84



# M ask of an idol

12 November 2012

In the inverted world of Amsterdam I received the appearance of an idol. Suddenly I was more than welcome everywhere; I was asked at performances and for parties. Everyone wanted to be seen with me or wished to be in my neighbourhood. For other people I seemed to be encompassed by a divine halo. In my vicinity strangers felt to be included in a heavenly glow. They all dreamt that I owned the gateway to Heaven [1].



[2]

New lovers imagined themselves in my vicinity on an space travel, connected with the universe and included in dream-world more beautiful than life. I was for them the connection to an everlasting paradise.



[3]

In my wealth a Goddess – a white [4] Citroën DS – appeared wherein I accomplished the glory driving on the roads [7], just like the charioteer Kṛṣṇa [5] in the Bhagavad Gita [6]. As Idol and centre, I encouraged, I steered and I shaped the world around me; I was the eye of a cyclone – empty, volatile and stilled inside.

*Idolatry*

*Impermanent in one sigh*

*Seen in the Sunlight*

*Beauty is a terrible and awful thing! It is terrible because it has not been fathomed, for God sets us nothing but riddles. Here the boundaries meet and all contradictions exist side by side. [8]*

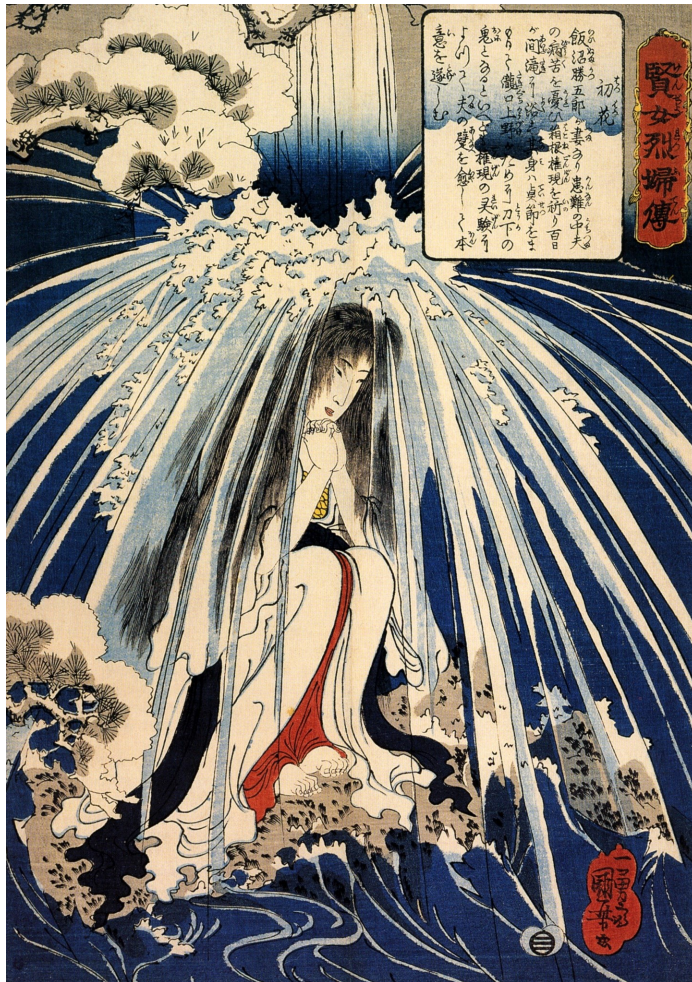
This citation – from *The Brothers Karamazov* by Dostojewski – described my volatile position as idol within the inverted world in Amsterdam. This quote was also the motto of *Confessions of a Mask* by Yukio Mishima from which I derived to some extent an interpretation of my role as icon in the world where men love men. For my lovers, I was not only their lover, but I was also their competitor in their love for other men in the polygamous homosexual world in Amsterdam at that time.



[9]



In addition to an interpretation of my idle position in the inverted world in Holland, I was looking for insight in the course of my life. After reading the tetralogy *Sea of Fertility* [10] by Yukio Mishima, the fourfold reincarnation of the second main person gave some clarification to my situation.



In a similar way, the first reincarnation in my life – under the name Kṛṣṇa – covered the period from my early childhood to my departure from Kenya. Now – as a temporary idol – I was at the height of my second incarnation. I foresaw that my life as icon would soon collapse; I decided to leave the inverted world of Holland for quite some time. After my share in a serious war crime during my first reincarnation in Kenya, I wished to guide the continuation of my life in the right direction. It was also time for penance for this war crime.

[1] See the book Genesis 28:10-19 in the Old Testament for Jacob's dream wherein Jacob takes a ladder with descending and ascending angels for the gate to Heaven. See also: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob's\\_Ladder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob's_Ladder)

[2] Painting: Jacob's dream of a ladder of angels, c. 1690, by Michael Willmann. Source image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dream>

[3] *The Dream* by Henri Rousseau, 1910. Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Droom>

[4] The name Arjuna means amongst others "wit, clear, silver"; one may recognise also "arh" in the name, meaning "worthy, capable of". Arjuna is one of the main characters in the Mahābhārata. He is one of the five brothers who lives together with one wife Draupadi – the most beautiful and influential wife of her time – in polyandry. The five brother fight for their rightful share of the kingdom, for the honour of Draupadi and for maintenance of the world order.

[5] In Sanskrit Kṛṣṇa means amongst others "black", "blue black", "the dark period of the moon-cycle" Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta

[6] See also: [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhagavad\\_gita](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhagavad_gita)

[7] See also: Katz, Ruth Cecily, *Arjuna in the Mahābhārata: Where Krishna is, there is victory*. Delhi: Molital Banarsidass Publishers, 1990

[8] Source: Dostoevsky, Fyodor, *The Karamazov Brothers*. Ware: Wordsworth Edition Limited, 2007, p. 114

[9] Source image: front of the cover of: Mishima, Yukio. *Confessions of a Mask*. New York: A New Directions Book, 1958 (Eleventh printing)

[10] See also: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Sea\\_of\\_Fertility](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sea_of_Fertility)

[11] Source image: *Hatsuhana doing penance under the Tonosawa waterfall* van Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861). This image is used as cover for the French edition of the *Sea of Fertility* by Yukio Mishima.

# Gate in the north

18 November 2012

It was time to discard my mask of an idol, because my heaven on earth in the inverted world of Amsterdam was slowly changing in a Buddhist hell. Everything and everyone in my area lived to my whims. The old Jewish curse "*I wish you will have much personnel*" and the Roman wisdom "*power corrupts*" [1] described the influence that my life as icon in Amsterdam had on my personality. My destination as Narrator Nārāyana [2] was somewhere else.

In my heyday in Amsterdam I became Dutch citizen with a valid passport: I could freely travel around the world with the exception of Kenya and several countries in Africa. After saying goodbye to my friends and lovers in Holland I departed halfway spring to Sweden. I had an open invitation from my American beloved to live with him in Stockholm.

In my Citroën DS, I glided along the highways in Netherlands and Germany via Bremen and Hamburg to Denmark. I thought my Goddess was a fast car, but on the German autobahn I met the real "raser" or "speed devils" who moved with speeds of 200 km/h. Did they wish to flee as quickly as possible from the "here and now"?



[3]

I visited Copenhagen [4] in Denmark – the city where I would live for several years after my stay in Sweden and Norway. My amorousness still beamed around me as a halo; within hours I met friends where I could stay. Through these new friends I found accommodation one year later in this city near the water.



[5]



After a stopover of two weeks in Copenhagen, I took the ferry to Malmö. In Sweden I drove along the Swedish archipelago [6] to Stockholm [7]. I neared my destination, but before I entered the island Stadsholmen – where my beloved lived in a beautiful old house within the old town Gamla Stan [8] – I saw the City Hall of Stockholm in the distance.



[9]

For a year I moved in the Golden House of hopes and dreams of my beloved in the Prästgatan [10]. A year full of music and joy, a year with a trip to the North Cape and back along the Norwegian Fjords, a year without sorrow and a year of farewell.



[11]



In countries around the Baltic Sea, many street names end on "Gatan", "Gade" or "Gate". Upon hearing or reading these words I was reminded of the Sanskrit lessons by my father. He taught me that in Sanskrit the word "gate" is not only a conjugation of the verb meaning "going", but it is also the "locativus or place-conjugation" of a noun derived from the verb "to go".

When I read many years later the following parable [12] about Buddha, I was reminded of my first arrival in Prästgatan in Stockholm:

"More than 2500 years ago an outsider concealed a life sparrow in his hands and he asked Buddha: *"Is this sparrow in my hands alive or dead?"*. Buddha straddled the "gate" [13] with his feet and asked: *"Tell me, am I about to leave or enter?"*" [14]

Entering the Prästgatan and the house of my beloved, it felt like an arrival and departure in my life; the sun shone her golden glow.

[1] The Roman verb “corrumpere” means “to spoil, destroy, or pollute”.

[2] The word “nama” means “designation, pointer, destiny” and “Narrator” means “taleteller” in Sanskrit. Narrator is composed of “nara” literally meaning “someone who does not rejoice” and “nara” describes an ordinary man; the verb root “tr - tarati” means “cross over”. Nārāyana means “son of the original man”. Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta

[3] This photo is dated around 2005 AC. Source image: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autobahn>

[4] See also: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copenhagen>

[5] Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kopenhagen>

[6] See also: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockholm\\_archipelago](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockholm_archipelago)

[7] See also: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockholm>

[8] See also: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gamla\\_stan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gamla_stan)

[9] Source image: <http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockholm>

[10] “Präst” means “priest” in Swedish according to “Google Translate”

[11] Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockholm>

[12] The word "parable" comes from the Greek παραβολή (*parabolē*), meaning "comparison, illustration, analogy". It was the name given by Greek rhetoricians to any fictive illustration in the form of a brief narrative. Later it came to mean a fictitious narrative, generally referring to something that might naturally occur, by which spiritual and moral matters might be conveyed . Source (more information is given): <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parable>

[13] The Gateless Gate. See also: Yamada Kōun Rōshi, *Gateless Gate (Mumonkan)*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1990

[14] See: Cleary, Thomas, *Book of Serenity – One Hundred Zen Dialogues*. Bosten: Shambhala, 1998 p. 95 – 96.



## Gate in the north 2

*25 November 2012*

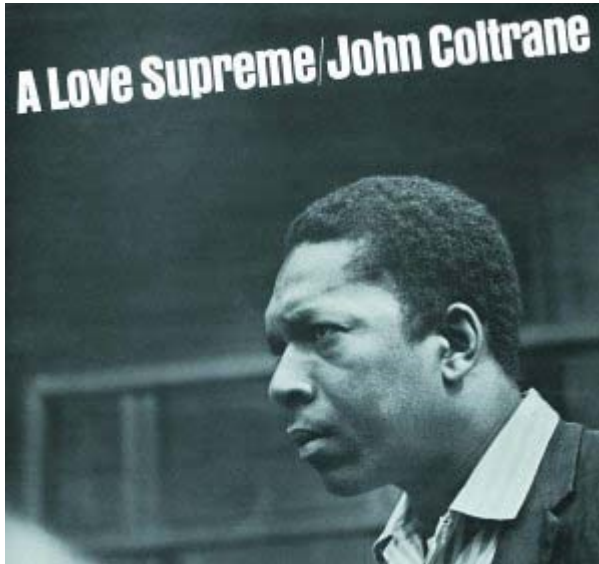
In Stockholm, life with my beloved – who had evaded his military service in the U.S. Army during the war in Vietnam and still stayed in Europe although he might return to the United States after the general pardon of president Carter in 1977 [1] – was as familiar as in Amsterdam and at the same time it was different in all respects.

In addition to the Golden House in the old town, he also had a beautiful country house in the Stockholm archipelago. In the weekends and during holidays we stayed in this wooden house on a small island. We enjoyed the beautiful skies and during night we slept outside if the weather permitted. I was amazed about the long days.



[2]

Several friends of my beloved played in jazz ensembles. Through them I learned to appreciate the music of the giants in jazz; my favourites were the Miles Davis – Quintet [3] and John Coltrane [4] with his quartet; I learned his records of "Joy", and "A Love Supreme" – composed during the struggle for equal rights in America wherein John Coltrane wanted to create a spiritual unity with this music in order to influence a social change [5] – by heart.



[6]

During several practice sessions I played on percussion with a jazz ensemble; the members were so impressed that I could play with them at the Stockholm Jazz festival [7] that summer. Afterwards I regularly performed with varying musicians in Stockholm and later in Copenhagen.

My beloved practised and studied Buddhism and meditation in Stockholm in order to give meaning to his life. Under his influence, I

slowly engaged in the Buddhist and Taoist side of Oriental wisdom. He could use some help with comprehending the source texts written in Sanskrit. Together we followed this way of living in Stockholm: he studied the content and I supported at the form.

Friday and Saturday before the last week in June, I celebrated Midsummer in Scandinavia for the first time. In Stockholm the night lasted only a few hours and that Saturday and Sunday the entire public life was closed. We stayed at friends for participating in this traditional celebration.

A few days after midsummer my beloved and I began our holiday trip to the North Cape in the Goddess. By the almost deserted landscape of Northern Sweden – where your neighbour is your best friend, because there is no one else in the vicinity – we drove in eternal light.



Just before the border with Norway we saw Lappporten. My beloved named it the Empty Gate [9].



[10]

He asked me what "empty" is in Sanskrit. Hereupon I replied "śūnya" [11] that is akin to the English word "shunt" [12] where a low parallel resistor causes a parallel circuit within an electric circuit.

He began to chant a part of the Heart Sutra:

रूपं शून्यता शून्यतैव रूपम् ।

rūpaṁ śūnyatā śūnyataiva rūpaṁ ।

रूपान्न पृथक् शून्यता शून्यताया न पृथग्रूपं ।

rūpānna pṛthak śūnyatā śūnyatāyā na pṛthagrūpaṁ ।

यद्रूपं सा शून्यता या शून्यता तद्रूपं ।

yadrūpaṁ sā śūnyatā yā śūnyatā tadrūpaṁ ।

एवं वेदनासंज्ञासंस्कारविज्ञानानि च शून्यता ।

evaṁ vedanāsañjñāsaṁskāravijñānāni ca śūnyatā ।

एवं शारिपुत्र सर्वधर्मा शून्यतालक्षणा अनुत्पन्ना अनिरुद्धा अमला विमला अनूना

असंपूर्णाः ।

evaṁ śāriputra sarvadharmā śūnyatālakṣaṇā anutpannā aniruddhā amalā  
vimalā anūnā asampūrṇāḥ ।

तस्मात्तर्हि शारिपुत्र शून्यतायां न रूपम् न वेदना न संज्ञा न संस्कारा न विज्ञानं ।

tasmāttarhi śāriputra śūnyatāyāṁ na rūpaṁ na vedanā na sañjñā na saṁskārā na  
vijñānaṁ ।

न चक्षुर्न श्रोत्रं न घ्राणं न जिह्वा न कायो न मनो न रूपं न शब्दो न गंधो न रसो

न स्प्रष्टव्यं न धर्माः ।

na cakṣurna śrotraṁ na ghrāṇaṁ na jihvā na kāyo na mano na rūpaṁ na śabda  
na gandho na raso na spraṣṭavyaṁ na dharmāḥ ।

The Heart Sutra can be listened at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0jcx9fnoWc>



A free rendering in English:

*Form is equal to emptiness as emptiness is equal to form;  
Form itself is empty and emptiness is form;  
So also feeling, knowledge, formation and consciousness.  
Thus Shariputra, all Dharmas are empty of characteristics.  
They are not made, nor destroyed, nor defiled and they are not pure;  
And they neither increase nor diminish.  
There is no form, feeling, cognition, formation, or consciousness;  
no eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind;  
no sights, sounds, smells, tastes, objects of touch, or Dharmas;*

I said that the Empty Gate may give access to the Nirvana [13]. He replied that the Empty Gate was also empty of Nirvana and he shone [14] as a god. My beloved remained perfectly shining well beyond the North Cape.

[1] Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam\\_War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam_War)

[2] Source image: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockholm\\_archipelago](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockholm_archipelago)

[3] See also: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miles\\_Davis\\_Quintet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miles_Davis_Quintet)

[4] See also: [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Coltrane](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Coltrane)

[5] Source: [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/A\\_Love\\_Supreme](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Love_Supreme)

[6] Source image: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A\\_Love\\_Supreme](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Love_Supreme)

[7] Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockholm\\_Jazz\\_Festival](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockholm_Jazz_Festival)

[8] Source image: <http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nalovardo>

[9] The Mumonkan – in English often translated in Gateless Gate - is a collection of 48 Zen Koans compiled by the Zen monk Mumon in the 13<sup>th</sup> century after Christ.

The character 無 (*wú*) has a fairly straightforward meaning: *no, not, or without*.

However, within Chinese Mahayana Buddhism, the term 無 (*wú*) is often a synonym for 空 (*sunyata*). This implies that the 無 (*wú*) rather than negating the gate (as in "gateless") is specifying it, and hence refers to the "Gate of Emptiness". This is consistent with the Chinese Buddhist notion that the "Gate of Emptiness" 空門 is basically a synonym for Buddhism, or Buddhist practice. 門 (*mén*) is a very common character meaning *door* or *gate*. However, in the Buddhist sense, the term is often used to refer to a particular "aspect" or "method" of the Dharma teachings. Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Gateless\\_Gate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Gateless_Gate)

There are four well known versions in English:

Aitken, Robert, *The Gateless Barrier, The Wu-men Kuan (Mumonkan)*. New York: North Point Press, 2000

Sekida, Katsuki, *Two Zen Classics – Mumonkan & Hekiganroku*. New York: Weatherhill, 1977

Shibayama, Zenkei, *The Gateless Barrier, Zen Comments on the Mumonkan*. Boston: Shambhala, 1974

Yamada Kôun Roshi, *Gateless Gate (Mumonkan)*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1990

[10] Source image: [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lapland\\_\(Zweeds\\_landschap\)](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lapland_(Zweeds_landschap))

[11] “Empty, void” according to: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta

[12] According to Shorter Oxford English Dictionary a natural or artificial blood vessel to divert the blood stream.

[13] “Land without forest” according to: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta

[14] The word Deva whereof Deus in Latin, Zeus in Greec and Dieu in French arose, is Sanskrit connected with the verb root “Div” meaning amongst others “to shine, to play, to increase”.

# Back to the civilised world

*2 December 2012*

From the Empty Gate to the North Cape, we travelled in the eternal light. No night, no darkness, no visions of murdered villagers who wanted to escape from the nightly fire in the forest, no vigils for the breath of the deceased, only the constant day where the sun did not set. This peaceful world without nightly phantoms was new to me. Finally I could sleep quietly.

My beloved was in euphoria about passing the Empty Gate – his “Here and Now” was boundlessly connected with the universe. At the North Cape he did not need any sleep; he rested peacefully sitting on the ground while I slept.



[1]

The outward journey to the Empty Gate in the north was straightforward. The return to the civilised world included many detours along the winding coast of the fjords in Norway. From the North Cape my beloved studied the endlessly intertwined worlds described in the Avatamsaka Sūtra [2].

My beloved was deeply moved by the abundance of descriptions of these intertwined worlds. Dumbfounded he read that there had existed many Buddhas in the past; and in the future unmentionable Buddhas would follow according to this sūtra. Until that moment my beloved with his American Protestant Christian background knew but one god. After he had studied Buddhism, that one god was replaced by Buddha.

The road to the Empty Gate led to a unity including the comprehensive Buddhist universe, but now this sūtra proclaimed the existence of infinitely intertwined universes in which many, many Buddhas were involved. His dismay was complete, just as complete as my amazement about the eternal days and about the infinitely intertwining separation of mountain landscape and sea along the coasts of the Norwegian fjords.



[3]

During our return along the Norwegian coast, the nights with my dark phantoms came back almost unnoticed. I kept the vigil while my beloved slept. In the northern ports and places I was an attraction – not many people arrived with a blue-dark complexion. Fortunately we were in transit; my mask of an idol evaporated on leaving the place.

After a few weeks of study in the Avatamsaka Sūtra, my beloved was used to the intertwining of the universes, but he also read that the universes are mirrored in each other and thereby affect each other. He could understand this intellectually when he looked at the water and the air in the fjords, but these thoughts were inconsistent with his cultural background. His euphoria and happiness after passing the Empty Gate was shocked upon reading this sūtra.



[3a]

The descriptions of Indra's Net [4] brought some clarification in the confusion that had arisen after studying the abundance of intertwined worlds, but he experienced this model as artificial. The euphoria and liberation of the Northern Cape changed in care and doubt about an infinite winding road that my beloved could never finish during his life. A parable of my father – about an endless life with many rebirths in which living beings in many manifestations (from microbe to enlightened people and gods via individual universes) followed the road to a blissful existence – gave no rest. My beloved uttered gloomy comments upon the description of the 32 abodes "from hells, titans, hungry ghosts, animals, people, gods in 22 categories to five spheres of infinite space, consciousness and emptiness" [5] in the long discourses of Buddha.

From the Sognefjord we decided to travel to Oslo via a direct route along stave churches. First we visited the stave church in Kaupanger and then the oldest stave church in Urnes with a crucifix whereof part

of the original paint came from Afghanistan according to the guide. The dark night was inside the Church with glimmer from above – outside there was the excess of the summer light.



[6]

My beloved and I made a day trip on the plateau of Hardangervidda [7]. To the North the clouds and the landscape appeared to go on endlessly. My beloved compared the repeating clouds with the intertwined universes from the Avatamsaka Sūtra. He wondered how we can achieve the enlightenment of all the intertwined universes. I indicated that the clouds and the worlds can take care for themselves; the wind is the same everywhere – ultimately there are no two kinds of wind [8]. After my remark my beloved started to beam again; his concerns and confusion were gone. My nightly phantoms remained.





[9]

The joy of my beloved remained in my life until the following spring he returned to his parents' house.

[1] Source image: <http://nn.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nordkapp>

[2] See also: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avatamsaka\\_Sutra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avatamsaka_Sutra). De full name of this sūtra is: “ Mahāvaiṣṭya Buddhāvataṃsaka Sūtra ( महावैपुल्यबुद्धावतंसकसूत्र )” or “The extensive marvellously decorated garland of flower-buds sūtra”, wherein “Avatamsaka” means amongst others “marvellously shining garland” and “sūtra” stands for “transference of the good”.

[3] Source image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Geirangerfjord.jpg>

[3a] Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sognefjord>

[4] See also: Origo, Jan van, *Who are you – a survey into our existence, part 1*. Amsterdam: Omnia – Amsterdam Publisher, 2012, p. 65 - 67

[5] *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*. Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications, 1995 p. 38-39

[6] Source image: [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stabkirche\\_Urnes](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stabkirche_Urnes)

[7] See also: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hardangervidda>

[8] See: Cleary, Thomas, *Book of Serenity – One Hundred Zen Dialogues*. Bosten: Shambhala, 1998 p. 110.

[9] Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hardangervidda>



## Back to the civilised world 2

9 December 2012

After the day trip on the plateau of Hardangervidda – a National Park in Norway – my beloved and I travelled in one day to Oslo. In Gol [1] we visited our last medieval stave church in Norway. Actually, it is a copy of the original that once stood on this site and now is placed in an open air museum near Oslo. It struck us that this church was much lusher than the stave churches that we had seen before – we were approaching the civilised world.



[2]

From Gol to Oslo the road became fuller and busier, we approached a medium-sized city. The quiet floating on the roads in our Goddess [3] was finished, now traffic required attention again.

Upon our arrival in Oslo we first put the tent in the city camp-ground. Then we visited the Norwegian Folk Museum where we saw the original stave church from Gol again. We noticed that the interior of the traditional Norwegian houses was always the same and always different. The design of the furniture and the household was different, but inside the house the objects were always positioned in the same place. This created an immediate recognition for every resident and visitor, while the individuality of the residents was shown. A unity in multitude and multitude in the same design.



[4]

The next day my beloved and I visited the Frogner Park [5] in which a sculpture collection made by the Norwegian sculptor Gustav Vigeland [6] is exhibited. In the Centre of the park stands a monolithic column composed of intertwined human figures. My beloved was deeply

touched by the similarity with the stave churches and by the intertwined worlds of people portrayed. He thought the column looked like a forefinger reminding us that we will once pass Heaven's Gate together.



[7]

I told my beloved a parable which my father has heard of his ancestors:

*"When I was a child, my parents taught me and said: "Let Your heart carry our lives! For peace will increase in days and nights of Your life. Our benefit and fidelity will not leave You, You carry them, breathes them and the world shares in Your peace [8]. Hereinafter my father began to recite the first verses of the Īśāvāsyā Upaniṣad:*

*"That is overall. This is overall. Overall comes from overall. Take away overall from overall and thus remains overall. Peace, peace, peace".*

*In a pitch dark period of my life I had violated the trust of my parents. My heart was cold and empty, my fidelity to the peace in the world changed in hatred and I enjoyed myself in wrongdoing that I committed to fill my heart with vanity. One night I set the forest around a village on fire, the wind and the fire gods spread the flames. I shot on everything and everyone who wanted to escape the flames. I was happy! [9]*

*The next morning I saw that everything of value for filling my empty heart with vanity was turned into ashes and corpses by the fire. The stench of rotting and the flies remained. Hungry and empty I moved on. On the road I filled my stomach with food and my heart with compassion. Kindliness, detachment and joy came into view again.*

*Years later I shared my food with several hungry beggars. They thanked me with the words: "All in All, may you realize that Our fidelity and benefit cannot leave You". Via the words of this passer-by, my heart felt again the continuing benefit and fidelity that I always carry and breath wherever I go".*

*After this parable my father taught me the meaning of the keyword "realize" that is composed of "re", "all", "iše" [10], whereby "realize" origins from honouring "again and again", "all and everything", "in Your omnipotence".*

*Wherever You go and whatever You do, the benefit and fidelity will not leave You".*

At the end of this parable my beloved said that everyone and everything is enlightened; we must realize it constantly. I still had a

long way to go. Fortunately, there was benevolence and joy in my life again; detachment would follow soon.

After the visit to the Frogner Park we walked a few streets in the Embassy district where a friend of ours lived with a group in a beautiful traditional wooden house. During our visit we heard worrying news from Amsterdam. Many of our friends and former lovers suffered from a mysterious illness whereby they quickly lost weight; the disease fully exhausted them. The doctors had no cure and no answer; at the West Coast of America several distant friends were already deceased by this mystery.

When retrieving the post-restante at the post office in Oslo, my beloved read in a letter from his sister that his mother was very ill. During a phone call with his sister, he heard that – due to her illness – his mother had less than a year to live.

Although we felt at home in Oslo, our concern about the fate of our friends in Amsterdam and the illness of the mother of my beloved overshadowed our stay in this city. After a week we travelled to Stockholm via an area with many lakes. At the beginning of autumn we arrived in Gamla Stan. The leaves on the trees at the water front showed their red, brown, yellow glow. That autumn and winter was the last time my beloved and I were carefree together.





[11]

[1] See also: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gol,\\_Norway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gol,_Norway)

[2] Source image: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gol,\\_Norway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gol,_Norway)

[3] Our white Citroën DS

[4] Source image: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norwegian\\_Museum\\_of\\_Cultural\\_History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norwegian_Museum_of_Cultural_History)

[5] See also: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frogner\\_Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frogner_Park)

[6] See also: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustav\\_Vigeland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustav_Vigeland)

[7] Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vigelandpark>

[8] The first sentences of this parable are a free rendering of chapter 3 of the Proverbs of Salomo in the Old Testament.

[9] See the last part of book 1 of the Mahābhārata where at the fire in the Khandava forest, Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa shot arrows with joy to all that leaves the forest. Sources: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/maha/index.htm> boek 1 Section CCXXVII. And further: Katz, Ruth Cecily, *Arjuna in the Mahābhārata: Where Krishna is, there is victory*. Delhi: Molital Banarsidass Publishers, 1990, p. 71 – 84; in her study Ruth Katz can hardly explain these crimes done by Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa.

[10] This is the locative of Īśa. In Sanskrit Īśa means amongst others “God in Heaven”, “someone with omnipotence”. The sound of īśā resembles “ich” – the German pronoun first person singular.

[11] Source image: <http://www.communityofsweden.com/photos/photo/?photo=41411>. This image is not included in the Creative Common Licence; see the conditions for use via the following hyperlink: <http://www.communityofsweden.com/footer/editorial/community-of-sweden/terms-of-service/>



# Points to the snow

*15 December 2012*

The first snow fell early in autumn; the days were still not very short. In that dark morning the crackling of snow under my shoes sounded muted in the Prästgatan wherein the Golden House of hopes and dreams was situated on the island Gamla Stan in Stockholm.



[1]

The white snow and cold absorbed all colours; the Moon and the starry sky merged with the snow and the full colours of last summer

were gone. In the course of the morning the snow was smeared by everyday life. That evening a vague glow appeared in the light of lanterns.



[2]

My beloved came home that night from a visit to his sick mother in America. His return was the beginning of a big change in our lives. He wanted to live closer to his mother, because due to her illness she only had less than one year to live. During his stay in America my beloved visited various Buddhist communities; he had decided to enter a convent near the house of his parents. The contact with his father was still stiff by their mutual incomprehension about his evasion of military service during the Vietnam war. Unbeknownst to my beloved, I wrote a letter to his father in which I made a comparison between the

general pardon of president Carter in 1977 for evasion of military service during the Vietnam war and the parable of the lost son [3] in the New Testament: Your son was lost and he is found [4] by the general pardon. After the next visit to his parents my beloved returned joyfully; his father had welcomed him with open arms.

That winter my beloved toiled on a Buddhist question in which a teacher points to the snow and asks: "Is there any that can go beyond this colour?". Another teacher said: "At this point I had have pushed it over for him". A third teacher said: "He only knows how to push down, he does not know how to help up". [5]

This question is about passing the Empty Gate and the state of enlightenment. Snow, cold and white – in which the Moon merges – are metaphors for enlightenment. The first teacher asked for any beyond this colour where this colour stands for the road after passing the Empty Gate or after enlightenment. The other teacher immediately removes the illusion of enlightenment and a road after passing the Empty Gate by amongst others to refer to the colourless colour and to the Bodhisattva ideal from Mahâyâna Buddhism in which a human who is on the verge of enlightenment – or even a living Buddha – forgoes out of compassion until everything and everyone is able to enter enlightenment or the state of a Buddha. My beloved could comprehend the statements of the first two teachers, but that winter he toiled on the third statement.

Just as many people, I struggled with the short days in northern countries. Our last common Christmas and New Year's evening we celebrated exuberantly with many friends and acquaintances. Fortunately, in January and February the days got longer.

That winter my beloved sold the country house in the Stockholm archipelago and the Golden House in the old town of Stockholm. For a

short time we moved to a rented wooden house on the island of Södermalm where we had a beautiful view on the inner city of Stockholm. Here we lived our last two months together. My beloved studied and I played percussion in several jazz ensembles.



[6]

At the beginning of the spring my beloved asked me what the meaning of "māyā" is in Sanskrit. I told him that in the distant antiquity "māyā" had the meaning of "art and wisdom" and later the meaning of "illusion", "compassion, sympathy" and "one of the 24 small Buddhist sins" [7] were added. The name of the mother of Siddhartha Gautama was Māyādevī wherein "devī" as feminine form of "deva" [8] means among others "feminine goddess". I also said that my father has taught me that "māyā" takes shape in the form of the general or cosmic



consciousness and thus is directly connected with the all-encompassing Īśa, and in addition in the form of the individual or human consciousness and thus often has the meaning of illusion [9]. Both forms stem from and are included in the one reality.

After this explanation my beloved beamed. By the warmth of the sun glow the blossom buttons opened again. With the blossoms of spring my beloved moved to America permanently.



[10]

That summer, his mother past quietly. Four years later I received a sad message that my beloved had died from the mysterious disease that plagued our friends and acquaintances. In our correspondence he has never mentioned it. And always when the blossom ...



In the society where I from, community means everything – you are who you know [11]. In Stockholm I was the friend of my beloved at best. Now I no longer really knew anybody, I was a nobody in Stockholm. At the end of the spring I terminated the rent of our beautiful wooden house and I moved to Copenhagen.

[1] Photo of the Prästgatan on the island Gamla Stan in the beginning of June.

Source image: <http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pr%C3%A4stgatan>

[2] Photo of the Prästgatan on the Island Gamla Stan in the beginning of December.

Source image: <http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pr%C3%A4stgatan>

[3] See the Gospel of Luke 15: 11-32 in the New Testament

[4] See also: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parable\\_of\\_the\\_Prodigal\\_Son](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parable_of_the_Prodigal_Son)

[5] See also: <http://zazen.rutgers.edu/talks/yangshanpointstosnow.html>

[6] Source image: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockholm\\_during\\_the\\_Age\\_of\\_Liberty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockholm_during_the_Age_of_Liberty)

[7] Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta

[8] The word Deva whereof Deus in Latin, Zeus in Greek and Dieu in French arose, is connected in Sanskrit with the verb root “Div” meaning amongst others “to shine, to play, to increase”.

[9] See also: Nikhilananda, Swami, *The Upanishads – A new Translation, Volume I*. New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 2003, p. 57, 58

[10] Source image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kungstr%C3%A4dg%C3%A5rden>

[11] See also: Reybrouck, David van, *Congo – Een geschiedenis*. Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 2012, p. 58

## Copenhagen en Amsterdam, a reunion

28 December 2012

With all my belongings in the trunk of the Citroën DS, I left Stockholm on an early morning in spring. During the Nordic cycle that lasted more than one year, my reincarnation wherein I had adopted the appearance of an idol earlier in Amsterdam, evaporated. In the nearness of my beloved I had returned in the world of ordinary mortals.

Just before the departure to his new stay in a monastery in America, my beloved was engaged in the Buddhist question: "*One gain, One loss*" [1]. Now he had left more than two months ago, my life felt like a gain and a loss – a void and a new destination. In the notes to this Buddhist question was written: "*If you want to avoid misery, rely on your own lot*" and "*Gain and loss, right and wrong, let go of them all at once*" [2]. Both sentences were applicable to my new reincarnation as ordinary mortal. Much later during the quest to "Who are you" I may get more insight in the first sentence. The peace of the second sentence I hope to find in my final homecoming.

Via a road along the many water of several inland lakes – to which I had become accustomed during my stay in Holland – I drove in my white Citroën DS from Stockholm to Malmö. There I took the ferry to Copenhagen. First I visited my friends where I could stay a few nights. With their help I rented a room in the attic floor of a characteristic House in the Klosterstræde in the Centre of Copenhagen near the University and various libraries. First I saw this room as a temporary stay for several months; eventually I lived there for several years. I felt

immediately at home. From my window I could see the moon and the starry sky at night. During daytime the name of the street reminded me of my beloved who really lived in a monastery at that time. I had received his book with Buddhist question [3] as a farewell gift. From time to time I read a passage from this book whereupon the question found a place in my life as far as I could realise. In this way my beloved and I remained connected with each other.

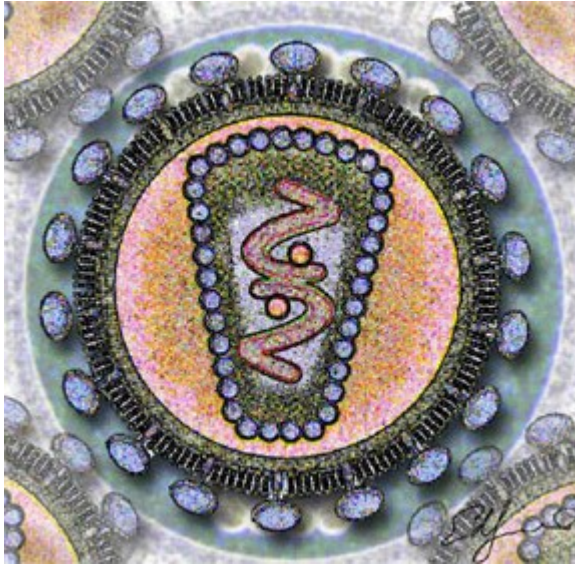


My years in Copenhagen I lived from the legacy – that my beloved had left for me – supplemented by a small income from performances in Jazz ensembles. Almost every day I visited the colourful painted houses along the Nyhavn, that reminded me of the canals and the fields with flowers in Holland.



[5]

My first autumn in Copenhagen I received sad news from Amsterdam; one of my precious lovers died from the mysterious disease which at that time around 1983 had received the name HIV and AIDS [6]. After reading the funeral card, I drove to Amsterdam in one day. Upon arrival I heard that many more of my former lovers suffered from this disease, which is caused by transfer of a virus – that affects the human immune system – during the love game [7].



[8]

In this sad environment I was welcomed by my former friends and acquaintances as an long lost friend and they saw me as a refund idol. I had discarded my mask of an idol during my stay in Sweden. The former carefree feast of everlasting love that wafted exotically around me through Amsterdam, was gone forever.

The funeral of my deceased lover was impressive. One of our loved ones was too ill to attend. With several former friends we cared for him until his death; his funeral was also intense. Both times all relatives, friends and acquaintances were present. For a number of lovers it was a sombre forecast for their future.

After this second funeral I fled to Copenhagen. Again it was an escape from my earlier stay in Amsterdam where I did not belong anymore and it was at the same time a flight for this disease wherefrom I was saved by a wondrous lot [9]. Later, during a medical examination it

appeared that I belonged to a small group, which is resistant to the infection of HIV.

Back in Copenhagen, I was again an ordinary mortal, that was only noticed by a black/blue colour and rhythmic play on percussion during Jazz music.

[1] The Zen Koan: "Fayan points to the blinds"

[2] See: Cleary, Thomas, *Book of Serenity – One Hundred Zen Dialogues*. Bosten: Shambhala, 1998 p. 118

[3] Cleary, Thomas, *Book of Serenity – One Hundred Zen Dialogues*. Bosten: Shambhala, 1998

[4] Source image: [http://da.wikipedia.org/wiki/Den\\_danske\\_guldalder](http://da.wikipedia.org/wiki/Den_danske_guldalder)

[5] Source image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copenhagen>

[6] See also: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HIV/AIDS>

[7] See also: [http://www.rivm.nl/Bibliotheek/Professioneel\\_Praktisch/Richtlijnen/Infectieziekten/LCI\\_richtlijnen/LCI\\_richtlijn\\_Hivinfectie](http://www.rivm.nl/Bibliotheek/Professioneel_Praktisch/Richtlijnen/Infectieziekten/LCI_richtlijnen/LCI_richtlijn_Hivinfectie)

[8] Cross-section of the Human Immunodeficientie Virus (HIV). Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aids>

[9] Source: <http://www.nationaalkompas.nl/gezondheid-en-ziekte/ziekten-en-aandoeningen/infectieziekten-en-parasitaire-ziekten/soa/aids-en-hiv-infectie/welke-factoren-beinvloeden-de-kans-op-hiv-infectie-en-aids/>



# Postlude

After living several years in Copenhagen, I regularly moved to Amsterdam. From there I wandered as a storyteller for over 20 years wandering through Europe.

My fiftieth birthday I wished to celebrate in Istanbul. In the autumn, I hiked from Amsterdam to Istanbul. The cold and snow started early that year. One night it was so cold that I slowly slipped away to another world. In a dream a woman named Carla Drift appeared. With her warmth and endless patience she let me return to the world of mortals. Hereafter Carla and I moved on together.

A year ago, Man Leben and I started our Odyssey to "Who are you – a survey into our existence". I was invited on this quest as tale teller .

The search for "Who are you" is about you and me and all that is in connection with us. Are you and I connected or are we separated? What makes you to the person who you are? Who are you before your birth and who will you be after your death? Do you exist without an universe? How are you aware of yourself? And how are others aware of you? The answer to all these questions is currently unknown, but nevertheless we raise these questions.

We started looking for the way that made you to who you are. This quest – with 17 stages – will be a homecoming. The journey from Troy to home took Odysseus ten years. We will make our Odyssey quite longer: our trip runs from the beginning of time until now. At the end,



we will look back on our journey. We will see that everything is finished in one sigh.

During the first part of this Odyssey, you and I experienced the complete oneness at our first stage. Then we endured the first separation of Air and Earth – *if there is a only one hair width of difference, then Heaven and Earth are clearly separated* [1] – and all subsequent separations: we were completely disintegrated. After an incredible long time we returned again in a human form. Then we visited stage three. Here we experienced how people try to overcome doubts and separation by placing "people, objects, offerings and words in the middle" between themselves and the uncertainty. During the preparation for the continuation of our Odyssey, an intermezzo followed. The report of the first part of our Odyssey is available on the website of the publisher.

On the second part of our Odyssey we will meet the following five common realities at separate stages:

- o Facts and logic
- o Intensities and associations
- o Void
- o Change
- o Interconnectedness

In this second part we will enter everyday life.

No existing man has been model for one of the main characters. Their names may be Allman and Everyman. Now it is the time to give you and me a fictitious name and place in our society. My name is Man

Leben, your name is Carla Drift and the name of your tale-teller is Narrator.

In the biography of “Carla Drift – An Outlier”, a short description is given of Carla’s course of life to date. The biographies of Narrator and Man Leben will be published before we report on our experiences in the five common realities.

On the third part of our Odyssey, we plan to visit the seven other realities:

- o Ishvara
- o Et incarnatus est
- o Show me a small truth
- o No time, no change
- o Thou art that
- o And death has no dominion here
- o Here and now

The last stage on our quest will be:

- o Zero – Not one, not two

At the last stage, I hope to be back home.

- [1] See also: Wick, Gerry Shishin, *The Book of Equanimity – Illuminating Classic Zen Koans*. Somerville MA: Wisdom Publications, 2005, p. 54.

# About the Composer

**M**an Leben is my other name

In early January 1934, Man Leben was born in Amsterdam. At the age of 7 years old, he moved without his parents to a farm in South Limburg. There he lived with his godparents under his new name until the end of 1945.

At the end of the Second World War, he moved with his aunt to a village near Rotterdam. After his diploma Gymnasium β, Man studied with good results Architecture at the Delft University of Technology.

Less than a year he was employed in an Architecture firm on utility projects, where he also met his wife. Through this firm he started in the trade of building materials. In 1959 Man and his wife moved to Amsterdam. In the mid 1970s – with its freedom unknown before – Man and his wife divorced. At the end of the 70's, Man took a part-time post as senior research fellow at the University of Technology.

In the spring of 1982 Man moved again to South Limburg; he helped his godmother as temporary farmer. At the end of the summer 1983, he started his pilgrimage to Dachau, the place where his mother died near the end of the Second World War.

In 1984 his convent years began, he remained connected to the convent until 1993. In this year he made his pilgrimage to Auschwitz, where his father died during the Second World War.

From autumn 1993 until his retirement, he was involved as partner in a Design/Architecture office to introduce modular building.

After his retirement he lived for two years with his second life companion. After her death, he made preparations for the survey to "Who are you". Among others, he started his study Sanskrit.

Man Leben is composing the biography of "Narrator – A Taleteller".

## **Name**

| Man Leben

## **E-mail**

| man.leben@omnia-amsterdam.com

## **Age**

| At the age of 76, Man died in his sleep

## **Children**

| Two children

## **Married**

| Divorced

## **Hobby**

| Reading, writing, religion, philosophy, human science, poetry, culture, design, music

## **Work**

| Retired

# Index

## A

Africa, 9, 19  
AIDS, 59, 61  
Aitken, Robert, 33  
Amsterdam, 10, 13, 15, 19, 27, 41, 47, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63  
Arjuna, 11, 18, 49  
Avatamsaka Sūtra, 36, 37, 39

## B

Bhagavad Gita, 14  
Blossom, 55  
Bodhisattva, 53  
Buddhas, 36  
Buddhist question, 53, 57, 58

## C

Carter, President, 27, 53  
Citroën DS, 14, 19, 49, 57  
Cleary, Thomas, 25, 41, 61  
Coltrane, John, 28  
Copenhagen, 20, 22, 25, 28, 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 63

## D

Davis, Miles, 28  
Denmark, 19, 20  
Deva, 34, 56  
Devī, 54  
Dostojewski, 15  
Draupadi, 18  
Drift, Carla, 63, 65

## E

Empty Gate, 30, 32, 35, 36, 37, 53  
Engai, 11

## F

Frogner Park, 44, 47

## G

Gamla Stan, 22, 47, 51, 56  
Gate, 24, 25, 32, 33, 45, 53  
Gateless Gate, 25, 33  
Genesis, 18  
God, 9, 10, 11, 15, 49  
Goddess, 14, 19, 29, 44  
Gol, 43, 44, 49  
Golden House, 23, 27, 51, 53  
Gospel of Luke, 56

## H

Hardangervidda, 39, 41, 43  
Heart Sutra, 30, 31  
Heaven, 13, 18, 45, 49  
HIV, 59, 61

## I

Idol, 13, 15, 17, 19, 37, 57, 60  
India, 9  
Indra's Net, 38  
Īśa, 49, 55  
Īśāvāsya upaniṣad, 45

## J

Jacob's dream, 18  
Jazz, 28, 54

## K

Katz, Ruth Cecily, 11, 18, 49  
Kaupanger, 38  
Kenya, 9, 17, 19  
Klosterstræde, 57  
Kṛṣṇa, 9, 11, 14, 17, 18, 49

## L

Leben, Man, 63



## M

Maasai, 9, 11  
Mahābhārata, 10, 11, 18, 49  
Mahāyāna Buddhism, 53  
Māyā, 54  
Māyādevī, 54  
Mishima, Yukio, 15, 16, 18  
Militia, 10  
Moon, 10, 11, 51, 53  
Mumonkan, 25, 33

## N

Nārāyana, 10, 19, 25  
New Testament, 53, 56  
Nikhilananda, Swami, 56  
North Cape, 23, 29, 32, 35, 36, 38  
Norway, 20, 30, 36, 43, 49  
Nyhavn, 59

## O

Odyssey, 10, 63, 64, 65  
Origo, Jan van, 41  
Oslo, 38, 43, 44, 47

## P

Parable, 24, 25, 38, 45, 46, 49, 53  
Prästgatan, 23, 24, 51, 56

## R

Reincarnation, 16, 17, 57  
Reybrouck, David van, 56  
Rhythm, 9

## S

Sanskrit, 9, 18, 24, 25, 29, 30, 34, 49, 54, 56  
Sea of Fertility, 16, 18  
Sekida, Katsuki, 33  
Shibayama, Zenkei, 33  
Shunt, 30  
Snow, 51, 53  
Södermalm, 54  
Sognefjord, 38, 41  
Stadsholmen, 22  
Stave church, 38, 43, 44  
Stockholm, 19, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 33, 47, 51, 53, 56, 57  
śūnya, 30  
Sūtra, 36, 37, 41  
Sweden, 19, 20, 22, 29, 60  
Swedish archipelago, 22

## U

Urnes, 38, 41

## V

Vietnam, 27, 33, 53  
Vigeland, Gustav, 44

## W

Wick, Gerry Shishin, 66

Wind, 9, 10, 39, 46

## Y

Yamada Kôun Roshi, 25, 33

## Z

Zen Koan, 61

Narrator Nārāyana is a writer's name.

Around 1960 I was born in Africa. My mother took care of us, my brothers, my sisters and my father. My father is a wandering storyteller. When he came, my mother gave him care and shelter. We heard of his adventures and my mother was happy.

I am as dark as Kṣṇa, but in this "I-era" nobody needs a charioteer. I travelled through Europe and I told stories. One time it was cold and I was so hungry that I could not stand anymore. Carla Drift gave me food. We started travelling together. A year ago Man Leben, Carla and I started the search for "Who are you". I'm still on the road - once I hope to arrive home again.

If you want to avoid misery,  
rely on your own lot

*- Book of Serenity – One gain, One loss*



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