

## Part II

At the turn of the nineteenth century, tuberculosis was the single most deadly communicable disease afflicting humanity. Estimates attribute one out of four to five late nineteenth century deaths in England and France to TB, and TB deaths worldwide during the first half of the twentieth century approached 100 million.

In 1905, the same year that the Russo-Japan War ended with the signing of the Treaty of Portsmouth, a German physician named Robert Koch was awarded a Nobel Prize for having identified, in 1882, the bacillus responsible for tuberculosis; but until the discovery of streptomycin in 1946, modern medicine could no more effectively treat TB than could physicians in the middle ages. Even today, while TB can be medically controlled and deaths are rare in the developed world, it still has no known cure and continues to plague second and third world populations.

When Nakamura Saburo was first examined for the disease during his reprieve from Manchuria in 1904, even accurate diagnostics were lacking. His doctors did not have sufficient grounds to place him under quarantine, and Nakamura, eager to return to service, prevailed upon them to keep their opinions to themselves.

Nakamura's army intelligence commission ended in February of 1906, but neither was the army eager to let him go nor he to leave; his commission renewed, he was deployed to the Office of General Command in Korea as a senior level interpreter. After only three months at this post, however, he began coughing blood. He was told that he had the "galloping consumption", the name used at that time to describe virulent pulmonary tuberculosis because it exhibited the speed and unpredictability of a runaway stallion. His doctors' best estimate on mortality was anywhere from six months to one year.

Discharged from service, returned to Japan, and confined to his residence, Saburo, for the first time in his life, succumbed to despair. While his illness was physical, the crisis confronting him was existential. On the battlefield, or even when standing before a Russian firing squad, the prospect of death had not bothered him because the context in which it occurred gave it meaning: He would die with honor in the line of duty and for love of country. On the other hand, the prospect of a slow death meted by an invisible

foe in the form of debilitating fevers and unseemly coughing fits rendered life utterly meaningless. And the thought of not just dying but dying meaninglessly was terrifying.

Retrospectively, Nakamura would characterize this period as one of unconscionable self-pity; and indeed his mentor, Toyama Mitsuru, exercising the kind of tough love for which he was known, told him to his face that he was a disgrace. But Saburo was too indulged in the hopelessness of his condition to see anything other than the bleak picture he had painted for himself.

As the medical profession had declared itself useless to him—his fate, his doctors told him, was entirely out of their hands—Saburo searched elsewhere for consolation. For a brief period, he turned his attention toward religion and sought out a number of prominent religious leaders of the day. Among the first of these was Nakahara Toju, otherwise known as Zennin or Nantembo. Nakahara was an abbot of the Rinzai Zen sect and known for the hard, often physical, discipline he dispensed upon his followers. He had come into notoriety when acknowledged by Generals Nogi Maresuke and Kodama Gentaro, two of the greatest heroes of the Russo-Japan War, to be their spiritual mentor.

Nakamura's audience with Nakahara was of short duration. The abbot, after assessing Saburo's pathetic state, yelled Damned fool! and stomped out of the room.

Saburo also called on Ebina Danjyo, then pastor at a church not far from the Nakamura residence. Ebina was a friend of Saburo's father, the two men having been born in the same town of Yanagawa in Fukuoka. He was also a philosopher and theologian, and in his later years would be called back to his Alma matter in Kyoto, Doshisha University, to serve as its eighth president.

But for the most part, Saburo passed his days confined to his study. His inherited, physically strong constitution served him well, and in spite the prognosis given him by his doctors, the months stretched into years. During these years, he read prodigiously, searching the annals of philosophy, religion, and medical science for anything that might shed light on his predicament.

Nakamura's only child, a daughter named Tsuruko, had been born while Nakamura was still serving in Manchuria, and her earliest memories of her father date from this period. She described him as stern and reserved, an awesome and unapproachable household presence.\*

One day, a friend left him with a copy of a book entitled *How to Get What You Want* by an American author named Orison Swett Marden; as the first Japanese translation of this book did not appear until 1922, Nakamura would have had to have received and read it in the original English. Marden was a leading proponent of a movement called New Thought, a product of progressive Christian thinking that

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\* When I joined the Tempukai, Tsuruko was still alive and appeared regularly at Tempukai events. She died in 2006 at the age of 97.

allowed for rational speculation on the relationship of God to man; in Marden's own writings, for example, Christ is discussed as a human thinker and teacher rather than a divine savior.

As well as Christ, Marden credited Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., and William James as sources of spiritual inspiration. His success, however, was a product of his ability to make what he had gleaned from these sources accessible to the common man through simple and clear language.

Marden had raised himself out of poverty into a position of considerable wealth after reading a book by Scotsman Samuel Smiles entitled *Self Help*. He then went on to become even more successful and famous by declaring that anyone could achieve what he or she wanted to achieve by exercising unwavering faith in his or her own abilities to do so. His first book, *Pushing to the Front*, published in 1894, was translated into twenty-five languages, including Japanese; the Japanese edition alone sold over one and a half million copies and the Meiji bureau of education even approved the English edition for use as an English textbook in schools.

Marden went on to write over sixty books and to publish "Success Magazine". As Samuel Smiles had done for him, he in turn set the stage for future motivational writers and speakers such as Napoleon Hill, Dale Carnegie, Norman Vincent Peale, and Earl Nightingale. Even a quick glance through his writings is cause for sobering reflection on how little in the New Age movement and motivational and self-help industries of today is truly new.

An entire chapter in *How to Get What You Want* addresses the question of health, and in it, Marden advances the notion that faith and creative visualization have more power over disease than medical science. Like all of the best motivational writers, his enthusiasm for his subject is infectious, and Nakamura apparently fell under its spell. Could this teaching provide the answer to his quandary? To find out, he would need to travel to America.

As Nakamura, still under quarantine, could not obtain a passport, direct passage was out of the question. Instead, with help from his Genyosha associates, he smuggled to Shanghai and there obtained a counterfeit Chinese passport under the name Sun Yilang. In May of 1909, he boarded a steamship bound for New York. His family would not hear from or of him for another five years.

Nakamura's meeting with Marden was to be the first among many disillusioning meetings with prominent persons. Soon after docking in New York, he traveled north to Boston to seek out Marden in his office. There, after introducing himself, explaining the precarious state of his health, and praising Marden for his book, he poured forth a litany of questions.

How many times have you read the book, Marden asked.

At least ten, he replied.

Then keep reading it until you know it by heart. Read it until you can recite it from cover to cover and know what is written on any given page.

But I don't have that kind of time, Saburo responded. By then I shall be dead.

In that case, even so, you will die a happy man!

Nakamura could not believe his ears. He thanked Marden for his time and made a hasty exit.

Marden, the man, had not, in Saburo's eyes, even remotely lived up to the ideals expressed in his writings. Is that how he gets what he wants, he wondered; by asking others to believe in what he says but to ignore what he does?

Saburo, exhausted by the long sea voyage, during which his chronic fever and coughing had plagued him constantly, was now not only sick but also alone and destitute in a foreign land. Before leaving Japan, he had done his best to provide for his family—they would continue to receive his military disability pension—and was consequently carrying little money.

Back in New York, however, he made the acquaintance of a Chinese man attending Columbia University. The man was being provided for by his wealthy father on the condition that he obtained a medical degree from this prestigious American institution. As his family's wealth was more than ample to last his lifetime, however, the man had little incentive to study; having taken up residence with his wife and child in one of New York's better hotels, he was far more interested in the city's social scene than campus life.

Nakamura struck a deal. He would go to school on the Chinese man's behalf—to the school faculty and administrators, all Orientals looked alike—in return for a princely living allowance of one thousand dollars a month.

The Chinese man's elected field of study was ear, nose and throat, for which Columbia had a separate college. Once inside of this center of learning, however, Saburo directed his attention elsewhere. While fulfilling his obligations to his mentor, he was also able to enroll himself, under his assumed Chinese name, in the main medical school.

This laxity over admissions was indicative of the state of medical science: While it had turned a corner on nineteenth century superstition and become solidly grounded in the scientific method, it was still in its infancy. Nakamura successfully completed both courses of study by Christmas of the following year and came away with two degrees: a master's in ENT in the name of his benefactor and a Ph.D. in general medicine under his assumed name.

Nakamura, of course, had no more intention of pursuing a career in medicine than did his benefactor, but he did have a vested interest in learning more about the nature of diseases and their causes and cures. In this regard, nothing he encountered at Columbia promised even a glimmer of hope, and his graduation passed without cause for celebration.

As had been agreed, the Chinese man paid Nakamura a bonus of ten thousand dollars—a small fortune by 1910 standards and enough, in the end, to keep him solvent for the remainder of his travels abroad.

With nothing more to keep him in New York, Nakamura moved on to Europe. Arriving in London, he attended a lecture by H. Addington Bruce, a Canadian born, American journalist, on the relationship between the nervous system and the mind. While Bruce had no academic credentials in either medicine or psychology, he had written a popular introduction to the new science of psychology entitled *The Riddle of Personality*. The book had sold well and he would go on to write a series of books in the same vein under titles such as *Scientific Mental Healing* (1911), *Adventurings in the Psychical* (1914), *Sleep and Sleeplessness* (1915), *Psychology and Parenthood* (1915), *Nerve Control and How to Gain It* (1918), and *Self Development, Handbook for the Ambitious* (1921).

Bruce's lecture made an impression on Nakamura, for what he took away, the notion that the nervous system is the bridge that connects mind with body, was to play a prominent role in the formulation of his philosophy of mind-body unification many years later. When Saburo sought him out following the lecture, however, Bruce also failed to earn Nakamura's approval.

Don't think about your problems, was Bruce's advice to him. Just forget.

Just how does one forget something as urgent as a life-threatening illness, especially when the accompanying fever and cough serve as constant reminders, Saburo wondered. While Nakamura, thirty-six at the time of their meeting, was two years Bruce's junior, he had in that almost equal life span been to war and was now engaged in another kind of life or death struggle; Bruce on the other hand, if knowledgeable, was in Saburo's eyes grossly lacking in worldly experience.

While in London, Nakamura made the acquaintance of a career diplomat named Hogata Kenkichi. Two years older than Nakamura, Hogata had also served two assignments in China and had been an observer to the Japanese siege of Ryojun. Married to the eldest daughter of Inukai Tsuyoshi, he would serve, when Inukai became Prime Minister in 1929, as Minister of Foreign Affairs in Inukai's cabinet and while in that position would voice strong opposition to the Japanese creation of the Manchurian state. In 1945, as Privy Counselor, he would be among the inner circle of rational moderates urging the emperor to accept allied

demands for an unconditional surrender. His Foreign Service career would span sixty years and include appointments as Consular General to Peking and Ambassador to France, Indochina, and Taiwan. The friendship that developed between Hogata and Nakamura in London would endure for many years; Hogata passed on just three years ahead of Nakamura at the age of ninety-one.

Hogata in turn introduced Nakamura to a number of people of influence within the expatriate Japanese community in London, among them the head of the London branch of one of Japan's major trading companies. This man impressed upon Nakamura the need to visit Paris, the cultural and intellectual capital of Europe, and provided him with a letter of introduction to none other than the actress, Sarah Bernhardt.

In the words of Mark Twain, there are four kinds of actors: poor ones, good ones, and great ones. And then there is Sarah Bernhardt. Sixty years old when Saburo met her, Bernhardt was legendarily the greatest actress the world had ever known. Having achieved fame at the Comédie Française when in her early twenties, she had gone on to become one of the first entertainment superstars, touring England, the United States, South America, and Australia, as well as the rest of Europe. Everywhere, she mesmerized her audiences, and kings, emperors, presidents, intellectuals, inventors, and capitalists all sought her company.

Almost as legendary as her acting ability was her lust for life and men. By even the most modern standards, she was a liberated woman. Her lovers included a staggering lineup of actors, artists, intellectuals, financiers, and nobles, and her amorous association since the fall before Nakamura's arrival in Paris with a professionally second-rate but extremely handsome twenty-seven year old actor had made for scandalous publicity in both Paris and New York.

Sarah, thus renowned as both an actress and a courtesan, was also a shrewd judge of character. That she should have taken an immediate liking to Nakamura Saburo is telling; even in his state of deteriorating health, Saburo had enough charm to meet with her approval. Moreover, as Sarah herself was a traveler of the world, she could appreciate the distance—not just in kilometers but also in culture and experience—he had traveled to reach her doorstep.

Most importantly, however, as one who made her living by putting on the roles of others, she could recognize sincerity when she saw it. Here was a young man who had travelled more than half way around the world in search of answers to questions of life and death. Her assessment of Nakamura was formed, no doubt, within the first minute of their meeting, for he was welcome, she graciously insisted upon his arrival, to treat her home at boulevard Péreire as his own for as long as he wished.

Western civilization at the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century was breeding a plethora of new ideas—most of which, for all the interest generated in their day, would soon be forgotten. One such body of ideas is contained in the work of the German biologist and philosopher Adolf Eduard Driesch. Driesch, in antithesis to the Cartesian notion that the phenomenon of life could ultimately be explained by biomechanics and biochemistry, advocated a "vitalistic" approach to biological science; that is, in the tradition of Aristotle, Kant, and Hegel, he posited the existence of a life force, *élan vital*, or "vibrill" as the organizing principle behind life. This vibrill, he necessarily concluded, was inherently intelligent and teleological, and in this respect, it closely paralleled the Indian concept of *prana* (Driesch had spent time in India) with which Nakamura would later become familiar, as well as the Chinese and Japanese concept of *qi* or *ki*.

Bernhardt recommended Nakamura visit Driesch in Heidelberg, and provided him with a letter of introduction. Saburo looked forward to this meeting with great anticipation. Driesch, after having established his reputation as one of the foremost biological researchers of his day, had, at the time of their meeting, turned his attention to academic philosophy; surely, Nakamura thought, this man of learning could shed some light on his suffering and its cause and cure.

Driesch met Nakamura graciously and as an equal. The questions you are asking, he said, are of importance, not just to you but to all of humanity. Whether you or I am the first to answer them is not so important as the contribution those answers will make to the greater good, so let us each continue to pursue them.

If warmed and flattered by this response, it was not what Nakamura had hoped to hear. He was being told, once again, that even the cutting edge of western thought fell short of providing him any relief. Could no one help him?

This incident was to have unexpected consequences many years later, for Nakamura was to meet Driesch twice more, in the 1930's, upon Driesch's visits to Japan, and during the second of these meetings, through an interpreter arranged by the German embassy, he was to explain the tenets of his practical approach to mind-body unification. Driesch, after listening with great interest and upon returning to Germany, was to make Nakamura an honorary professor of philosophy at the University of Berlin.

Through conversations with Sarah and her eclectic friends and visitors, Saburo became acquainted with other elements of European thought. One day Sarah told him the story of how Immanuel Kant, as a child suffering a debilitating and painful skeletal deformity, had been told by his physician that although the cause of his pain was physical and real, it did not need to touch his mind; that complaining of his pain

served no constructive purpose and only caused his parents to worry; and that rather than direct his attention toward his suffering, he would be better served to be thankful that he was alive. The young Kant took this admonishment to heart and discovered that his suffering in fact diminished in direct proportion to the attention he gave to it. This story evidently made a strong impression on Nakamura, for it appears in the transcripts of his talks at the Tempukai. Tempu, like Kant, was to refute the philosophical notion plaguing Western philosophy since René Descartes that mind and body were in some way divorced and separate.

While at Bernhardt's, Nakamura also learned of the work of Max Planck. Planck, in 1900, had applied statistical mechanics to problems associated with black-body radiation and observed that electromagnetic energy emissions seem to occur in multiples of a mathematically definable constant, to which he attributed the letter  $h$ . Five years later in 1905, Planck's constant would be put to use by an obscure patent office clerk in Bern, Switzerland to explain the photoelectric effect and thereby give birth to quantum mechanics.

Paris, like the rest of Europe, was abuzz with talk of these developments, and Nakamura absorbed what he heard with great interest. The exposition of quantum mechanics, like the theory of special relativity, which Einstein also published in 1905, requires mathematics of a sophistication in excess of Nakamura's education; and in fact, Nakamura's references in his Tempukai talks and writings to Planck's constant indicate that his understanding was less than accurate. In the context in which he makes them, however, these references serve a purpose: The energy that Driesch called *vrill* and the Indians called *prana*, Nakamura is saying, Planck had shown to be not an elusive and mystical medium but a real phenomenon subject to physical measurement.

Another set of ideas causing waves among European intellectuals was the work of Sigmund Freud, and Bernhardt introduced Nakamura to a professor named Lindler at the University of Lyon who, like both Marden and Bruce, had become intrigued with the impressionability of the subconscious mind. From Lindler, Nakamura learned a simple but effective auto-suggestion technique that he would later incorporate, while crediting Lindler, into his teachings regarding mind-body unification. This technique works on the principle that the subconscious is most impressionable when the conscious mind is least active, especially just before and just after sleep. Easily learned, the technique is as follows.

The first step is to identify some habit that you would like to change or some goal that you would like to achieve.

The next step is to summarize that wish in a one sentence, second person command. Thus, if my goal were to give up smoking, I might summarize this in the sentence, "you will give up your desire to smoke".

Other examples are, "you will achieve (some goal)" or "you will be competent and successful at your work". As these examples indicate, avoid the use of negatives and make the statement a command towards positive action or results. Also, state your wish not as a present reality but something to be realized or achieved in the future (thus, "you will" or "you shall" as opposed to "you are").

The third step is, just before going to sleep, to look at yourself in the mirror (keeping a small mirror at your bedside for this purpose is helpful), to address yourself out loud and by name, and to deliver the command you have decided to use; thus, I might look at myself in the mirror and say aloud, "Steve, you will give up your desire to smoke."

Finally, as soon as possible upon waking the following morning, affirm to yourself silently and in the first person that the wish has been achieved. So in my case, I might say to myself, "I no longer desire to smoke."

Continue this practice, evening and morning, until you feel that you have achieved the results you desire.

Speaking from personal experience, noticeable results may come as soon as after the third day but usually occur within the first two weeks of practice; ultimate fulfillment may take longer. And of course, the more abstract and open ended the nature of your wish, the longer it will serve. Tempu himself reportedly used the command, "shinnen ga tsuyoku naru", your faith or trust (in the universal order) will grow stronger, for over forty years.

The practice is malleable to almost any purpose, grand or minor, and within the Tempukai, something of a competition for originality is on-going. One of my favorite entries is "you will be lucky"—a wish that, since almost every circumstance can be attributed to luck, quickly becomes self-fulfilling.

But in spite of all the wisdom and encouragement shared by Bernhardt and the learned men she introduced to him, Nakamura's health continued to decline. By spring, his strength was seriously failing; he was coughing blood more frequently and spending more hours in bed. His search for salvation had come up empty; the time had come, he decided, to throw in the towel. He would, he decided, return to Japan; for if all he had to look forward to was death, then he would prefer to die at home rather than in a foreign land.

With Bernhardt's help, he booked passage on a steamship from Marseilles that would take him as far as Penang; from there he would need to find further passage to Shanghai and then steal himself back into Japan, just as he had stolen away two years earlier.

Nakamura's ship left port on May 21, 1911 and headed down the Mediterranean toward Port Said. On the way, however, the captain, informed by wireless that an Italian freighter had run aground in the Suez, took his ship into Alexandria to wait out the estimated five day delay. Whether by luck or providence, this unexpected change of plans would make all the difference in the outcome of Nakamura's story.

While docked in Alexandria, Saburo was befriended, as one fellow Asian to another, by a Filipino seaman, and at the sailor's invitation, accompanied him the short distance to Cairo to visit the pyramids. Arriving in late afternoon, they put up at an inn for the evening. During the night, however, Saburo's illness returned in force; in the morning, he sent the sailor on to the pyramids alone and stayed in the hotel to recuperate (Nakamura did get to the pyramids the following day).

Thus it was that, midmorning, Nakamura made his way down to the dining room in search of sustenance and ordered a bowl of soup. The dining room was empty but for one other table occupied by a slight, dark-skinned man with a white beard that reached his knees. The man was dressed in a dark purple gown over a white sari, and he was attended by two boys, one waiting at his knee and the other standing behind with a large, peacock feather fan that he used to lessen the effect of the dry, desert heat.

As Nakamura sat sullenly sipping his soup, his eyes met with those of the other guest, and in that instant, the old man's eyes elicited a twinkle and his face softened into a smile.

Won't you join me, the man asked from across the room in English. I see that you are alone.

Nakamura consented and moved himself to the man's table.

Where are you from, the man asked.

Japan.

Oh, Japan! I know some Japanese. Hara kiri!

The unlikelihood of hearing this phrase spoken in this place by a man of unknown origins had its desired effect; Nakamura laughed in spite of the pain it caused him. The two engaged in casual exchange, Nakamura mentioning where he had been and where he was going.

These pleasantries completed, the conversation lulled, whereupon the countenance of the man across the table became suddenly serious. You have a large, dark spot in your right lung, he said.

Until now, Nakamura had said nothing about his physical condition; thus he was startled by the accuracy of this pronouncement from a strange man he had only just met. All the while holding Nakamura in a penetrating gaze, the man continued to speak.

If you return to Japan in your current condition, you will be digging your own grave.

The words were spoken as a simple observation, and their effect on Saburo was to elicit not fear but trust. He opened himself further to this stranger.

You are quite correct, he said. I am well aware that my condition is beyond cure, and I am returning to Japan because I would prefer to die at home rather than abroad.

Why do you say that you cannot be cured? The question was asked in the same unassuming voice.

Nakamura explained that he carried a medical degree from Columbia University and was well aware of the limits of modern medicine.

The doctors can't help you, you say?

Yes, that is right.

The man paused. Is medicine everything, he asked.

Saburo was at a loss for words.

What I mean to say is, are you ready to make up your mind that there is no hope for you just on the basis of what the doctors say? Are you really sure that theirs is the final word? Or, as you say that you yourself are a doctor, maybe the doctor's opinion of which you speak is your own, isn't that so?

Nakamura was still at a loss as to how to answer these questions. That tuberculosis was incurable was an established medical fact; on top of that, had he not spent the last two years seeking out men of learning in a variety of disciplines in the hope of finding someone who could tell him differently? And had he not come up empty handed? Who was this stranger and what could he possibly know that these other men did not?

The man continued to speak in the same gentle but persuasive voice. You may think that there is no hope left, but from where I sit, I see a man whose time has yet to come. What I see is someone who has yet to discover what is most important about life. If you discover that, then there is no reason for you to die before your time. You had better follow me.

At this juncture in his story, Sasaki Masando-sensei tells me, Tempu would always pause to take a deep breath and to recompose himself, his eyes wet with tears. For indeed, even if only in retrospect, his entire life had hung at that moment in the balance of his answer.

Nakamura, after all, was hardly lacking in critical thinking ability; the rational response to such an invitation offered by a complete stranger would be to ask a few questions: Follow you where? For what purpose? What is this all-important knowledge that you say I am lacking? And how do you propose to teach it to me?

But he asked none of these questions. Here, for the first time in all of his travels, he had met someone who was saying to him that there was hope and that he could help. For once, Saburo allowed his gut rather than his mind to answer for him. And this made all the difference.

Yes, Sir. Certainly, he responded.

Much later he would learn that above all else it was this response that had endeared him to his mentor. On the basis of these few words—words that chose life over death—the pact between master and disciple was formed.

From the hotel staff, Nakamura learned something of this man and his provenance. His name was Kaliappa, and he was a revered sage from India. How lucky you are to have made this man's acquaintance, he was told. Nakamura, who knew nothing of India, Indian philosophy, or yoga, was unimpressed by these credentials; all he knew was that he had finally met someone willing to deal with his disease.

By Nakamura's account, based upon what he was later told after reaching India, Kaliappa was over one hundred and forty years old. Yogis, he was told, commonly live to advanced ages—some as old as three hundred and sixty years. In a recorded talk delivered by Nakamura Tempu in 1966, he mentions that he understands Kaliappa to be alive and well at over two hundred years of age. Be that as it may, he was not alive in the 1980's when some members of the Tempukai went searching for him; they did however locate the village in which his ashram had existed, and one very old man distinctly remembered that, while he was a boy, a Japanese man had arrived in the village and had lived there for several years.

Kaliappa, Nakamura also learned, was returning from a visit to England at the invitation of one of the branches of English nobility—as imperialist Britain's presence in India was already two hundred years old, and as several generations of Englishmen had been born and brought up in India, even if only superficially, something of India's rich cultural and spiritual tradition had inevitably rubbed off on at least a few of its citizens. After England, Kaliappa had also stopped in Rome, where he had met with Pope Pius X.

Nakamura, when he fell in with Kaliappa and his small entourage, had no clear idea of where they were headed. Nor did he bother to ask; for even if they had told him, he thought, he would most probably not have recognized the place names given. From Cairo, the journey lasted for three months. They travelled aboard a private yacht, on loan to Kaliappa by an Indian Maharaja, through the Suez, down the Red Sea and around the Arabian horn, then along the Arabian and Persian coast, stopping in ports along the way. Upon reaching Karachi, they left the yacht and ascended the Indus River on a barge drawn from the shore by camels. Next, they struck out due east on camelback along trading paths across Rajasthan

and the Hindustani Plain to Calcutta. From Calcutta they headed due north, passing through the English hill town resort of Darjeeling and into the foothills of the Himalayas, arriving finally in the town of Gorke in the shadow of the Kanchenjunga massif, containing the world's third highest peak.

Nakamura, enfeebled and in pain, managed this journey in a dazed state of exhaustion. The village turned out to jubilantly welcome the venerable Kaliappa home, but Saburo played no part in the festivity; retiring to the quarters he was shown, he fell quickly asleep.

Kaliappa's ashram, nestled in a steeply sloped valley, was a village unto itself consisting of a collection of small, thatch-roofed and stilted huts that surrounded a grassy green central commons. Kaliappa's residence was only slightly more stately than the others, but beside it, and connected by a covered walkway, was a much larger building that served as a congregational study hall.

During their journey, Saburo and Kaliappa had often engaged in the light conversation of one traveler to another; but upon reaching the ashram, the rules of engagement were drastically changed. Kaliappa called for an older man who spoke a few words of English and instructed him to look after Nakamura; master and disciple were hastily separated and Saburo was given lodging in a small stable where he was to room with a goat. This would be his place of residence for the duration of his entire stay. He was told to undress and was then given a light blue sheet of cloth that he was shown how to wrap around his waist. Any time that Kaliappa came into sight, Nakamura was instructed, he was to sit and bow, as did all of the other villagers, so that his forehead touched ground, with his arms extended, palms down, straight in front of him.

As Nakamura was without station in the Indian social order, he was placed by default on the lowest rung of that order, that of the untouchables. Tempu, years later in his talks, would comment that if you were going to be born in India, you had better be born into one of the higher castes; that where in Japan, no one would think to treat their animals better than their servants, in India this appeared to be the norm. Saburo reserved comment on this social order while in India, but judging from these later remarks, the injustices he observed made a lasting impression on him.

Meals consisted of cooked vegetables and a kind of grass seed or fine cereal grain that his benefactors showed him he was to wet with water and eat raw. With only slight seasonal variation, this meal was served twice each day, once at mid-morning and once again in the evening.

The morning following their arrival, when Kaliappa stopped by Saburo's stable to ask how he had slept, Saburo took the opportunity to register his complaints regarding the food. The standard regimen for tuberculosis patients in the sanatoriums of both Europe and Japan stressed, along with rest and fresh air,

adequate nutrition, including ample animal protein—meat, fish, and dairy—under the working premise that the patient's body needed proper fueling in order to stand up to the disease; such common knowledge may not yet have made its way to these hinterlands of civilization, but clearly an exception was going to need to be made. Nakamura had lost a full twenty four kilograms (fifty-three pounds) of bodyweight since contracting the disease. What little resistance to the disease he had left, he needed to keep, and proper nutrition was key.

Kaliappa listened to Nakamura with faint amusement. Look at that, he said, pointing across the grounds to an elephant standing in the shade. Look how much bigger and stronger he is than you are, yet he does just fine on a diet of straw.

Look at the people living here. They never get sick. Yet they are all eating the same food; in fact, they have never eaten anything but this food.

Nakamura was unconvinced, but he could also see that his argument was not going to be heard.

This, in fact, was to be his last verbal exchange with Kaliappa for some time. He would see Kaliappa only from a distance; and when he did, like the others he would prostrate himself on the ground until the master had passed from view.

Nakamura had not the strength to wander far from his hut. The low, TB fever continued to plague him, and he slept only fitfully during the night; while the journey had taken its toll, his fatigue was more directly related to the advanced state of his disease. Day after day he passed time sitting sullenly in the shade.

A full month passed. Still Kaliappa had said nothing to him about his training or what was this all-important truth that he was to discover, the truth he had been promised in Cairo. Had he been forgotten? Had Kaliappa given up on him? Perhaps he had himself discovered a truth, the truth that Saburo's condition was beyond the powers of even a great Indian saint; perhaps, rather than set himself up for failure, he was leaving the sick man to the ravages of fate.

Another month passed. Kaliappa had said not a word to Saburo as to what were his intentions, and Saburo's anxiety continued to rise. Not that he had the strength to do much more than he was currently; but if his only purpose in this hinterland was to waste into oblivion, he could just as well have been doing it in the comfort of his own home under the care of his family.

He pondered the prospects of making an escape. Could he get himself to Darjeeling? If so, he could probably find some sort of public transportation back to Calcutta, from where he could perhaps secure passage on a steamship headed somewhere—anywhere, as long as it was to the east. Just the mental

exercise, however, was exhausting; clearly it was a plan that exceeded his physical means. He was, he soberly reflected, hostage to this remote valley and village.

When well into his third month in the ashram, Saburo, unable to bear his frustration any longer, decided to bring the matter to a head. Each morning, after the yogis had returned from their sunrise meditations in the cold waters of the river that flowed by the village, Kaliappa would appear at his door; the entire ashram would be gathered in silence in the commons in front of the training hall, and the moment that Kaliappa appeared, the villagers and yogis to a person would bow low in supplication. They would maintain this posture until Kaliappa had traversed the covered walkway and disappeared into the training hall with his closest disciples. The gathering would then disperse—the yogis into the forest and the women, children, and other villagers back to their chores.

On this particular morning, Saburo made sure that he had arrived in the commons early enough to take up a position near the front of the gathering and close to the walkway. When Kaliappa appeared, he like the others prostrated himself with outstretched arms. But the moment that the master passed in front of him, he bobbed back up and glared awkwardly, a stalk among a sea of ducklings, at his master.

Kaliappa stopped and turned, the twinkle from his eye catching Nakamura off guard. Saburo had planned his speech but the words did not come; instead, he continued to stare at Kaliappa like a surprised animal.

What? You have something to say to me, Kaliappa asked.

Nakamura managed to find his voice. His stay in this village was going on three months, he burst out. What of the promise that Kaliappa had made to him in Cairo?

Did I promise you something in Cairo, the master answered absentmindedly. Saburo caught his breath in astonished disbelief.

You told me that it was not my time to die. You said that, if I followed you, you would teach me something important—something that I didn't know but that if I learned could save me. I have been waiting day after day after day, but you have said nothing. How am I to learn without instruction? When will my instruction begin?

Saburo's words were fuelled with indignation. Kaliappa, however, was unmoved.

Oh that, he said. Yes, I did say that to you in Cairo, and it is still true today. If you can learn but one simple truth then you need not die at such an early age. I have been ready to begin teaching you since the evening that we arrived here. But you have not been willing to learn.

Saburo gasped in open disbelief. That is not true. Every day I have been waiting and wondering, will today be the day? Every day I have hoped against hope that today might be the day my instruction begins.

Kaliappa smiled a faint smile but remained firm. Evidently I know you better than you know yourself. You think that you are ready to learn, but clearly you are not.

Saburo objected once again. His time had been spent in single-minded anticipation.

Let me show you, Kaliappa said. Go fetch a jug of hot water.

Saburo's indignation had by now given way to confusion. Just what was this old man telling him? Gingerly, he stepped over and around the still prostrated bodies and made his way out of the crowd. At the edge of the commons was a series of open fire pits and roofed but open-sided preparation stalls that constituted the communal kitchen. Over one of the pits was a large iron cauldron filled with simmering water. Borrowing an earthenware jug, he ladled the steaming water from the cauldron until it was full. This he carried back to where Kaliappa was still standing and placed it at his feet.

Now fetch a jug of cold water, the master said.

Again, Saburo obeyed. At the kitchen site, water was kept in a large, earthenware receptacle with a narrow top, a material and a design that, Saburo had noticed, somehow kept the water inside cool during even the hottest part of the day. From this he ladled water into another jug similar to the first and returned.

Now, said Kaliappa, pour the cold water into the jug containing the hot water.

Saburo was speechless. Does he take me for a fool, or is he simply making fun of me, he thought.

You can't be serious, he finally said. The one jug is already full; anything I pour into it will just spill over onto the ground.

Ah. So that much you understand, Kaliappa replied. Saburo's face began to flush with anger.

Don't you see then, Kaliappa continued, that you are just like the jug of hot water? You are so full of acquired knowledge—so full of your own ideas about what is wrong with you and what you need in order to be cured—that anything I tell you will only spill out onto the ground like the cold water in the second jug.

You say that you are a doctor, Kaliappa continued. If you are really a doctor, then why are you sick? Would you have me believe that all of your learning has some value when you appear before me in such a sorry state? If I were the patient, would you honestly expect me to trust you, the doctor, if you are unable to cure yourself?

This was a perspective that Nakamura had never considered; but its logic, he had to admit, was persuasive. He hung his head in silence.

That is better, Kaliappa said quietly. Come to my house this evening. But when you do so, leave your learning at the door. Come to me to like an empty jug, so that neither my time nor yours is wasted.

Thus began Nakamura's formal training in the ways of yoga. That evening, Kaliappa gave him a few brief instructions and sent him away. The following morning, he arose before dawn and set forth with the other yogis to the river.

Even during the hottest months, the river, fed by runoff from the glaciers and snowfields of Kanchenjunga, was icy cold. The yogis waded into its shallows without the least hesitation, each then seating himself at a spot that was evidently habitual. Nakamura reluctantly sought out a spot of his own where, like the others, when he assumed a seated lotus position, the water came up to just above his waist.

The temperature of the morning air was rising quickly, but the cold of the river penetrated to his core. Nevertheless, through sheer willpower, he remained seated until, one by one, the other yogis stood up and began walking toward the shore. The time elapsed had been perhaps thirty minutes but felt like an eternity. Nakamura, lips blue and trembling, followed the others back to the village.

For several weeks, this was the full extent of Saburo's practice. Indeed, the journey to the river and back used all the strength he could muster; the remainder of the day he spent reclined under the branches of a huge linden tree.

Then one morning, upon returning from the river to the village, Kaliappa beckoned him. Follow me, he said. Kaliappa, mounted on a donkey, began up a steep mountain path; Saburo, on foot, straggled behind.

Each step he took caused him pain. From time to time, Kaliappa would pat the donkey on its shanks and the animal would promptly halt; patiently, man and donkey would wait for Saburo to catch up. No words were exchanged. No sooner would Nakamura come up to where they were standing than Kaliappa would lightly kick the donkey and continue on up the path.

As they gained altitude, a panorama of lush, green hills opened up below them, while the glistening presence of Kanchenjunga loomed ever larger above. Even in his dilapidated state of exhaustion, Saburo was awed by the majesty of this scenery.

Also as they gained elevation, Saburo became aware of a dull roar in the distance. A waterfall, he thought. The roar grew gradually louder until, upon rounding a corner, the waterfall came into full view. River water hurdled through a notch at the top of a sheer rock wall and fell fifty meters into a basin below. Rainbows played in the spray rising off of the rocks in the basin where the water struck.

Kaliappa lead Saburo to an outcropped rock to the side of the falls basin. Sit here, he yelled into Saburo's ear. You can think about whatever you want, but just stay put. Above all, don't wander off, as there are snakes. I will come back for you in the evening.

The rock beside the waterfall was to become Saburo's principal training ground. Each day he would follow Kaliappa up the path and take his seat on the ledge. Each evening, Kaliappa would return, and Saburo would follow him back to the village.

Think about whatever you want, the instructions had been. But the roar of the falls was so loud that Saburo was unable to think about much more than this singular distraction and how uncomfortable he was under its effect. As the days passed, however, his ears grew accustomed to the unrelenting wall of sound, and his thoughts began to wander. He reflected on his life's journey and how it had led him here to this waterfall at the edge of the earth. Would he ever see his home and family again? The magnificence of the mountains only reinforced his loneliness and self-pity.

One morning as they set off, Kaliappa remarked, as he always did, what a beautiful day it was. Saburo, also as always, returned a comment to the effect that the day would be nicer if his head did not hurt so much. Only this time, Kaliappa did not let the comment pass.

I wasn't talking about your state of health, he said. I can see that you don't feel well just by looking at you; you don't need to remind me. Nevertheless, don't you agree that it is a beautiful day?

Saburo would not be persuaded. For you, the day may be beautiful, but for me, it could be better.

Kaliappa looked down at him sternly from his perch atop his donkey. Fool, he said. Don't you see that whether or not the day is beautiful is up to you? It's your choice; yet you insist upon choosing to have bad days over good ones.

Saburo protested. Surely the master did not mean to say that his sickness was of his own choosing; if that were so, he would have given up being sick years ago.

Look, Kaliappa said. Every morning, I ask you, how are you this morning? And every morning, you tell me that your head hurts. Or that you did not sleep well. Or that your fever is higher than usual. But don't you see that all of those things are just symptoms of your physical condition? They do not need to affect your spiritual condition. Just because your head hurts is no excuse for the day to be anything less than beautiful.

Do this, he continued. Whether or not you believe that the day is beautiful at first is unimportant; from now on, when I say that the day is beautiful, just agree with me. When I ask you how you are, just answer, very well, thank you.

Kaliappa delivered this instruction with a finality that informed Saburo that the conversation was now over and set off up the path. Saburo, not given the opportunity to disagree further, reluctantly followed. He would, he decided, do as he was told, even if he was hardly convinced by the old man's logic. The next morning, when Kaliappa greeted him and asked him how he was, Nakamura mustered himself to say,

quite well, thank you. And when the master remarked on what a beautiful day it was, Saburo, if less than enthusiastically, agreed.

That is better, the teacher said.

Several weeks passed. One day, as they were resting by the side of the path, Kaliappa looked over at Saburo and said, you are afraid of dying, aren't you?

Caught off guard, Nakamura did not know how to respond. At an earlier time in his life, he had unflinchingly begun each day not knowing whether or not he would see the evening. He had even had the nerve to refuse the blindfold offered him by his captors while looking into the barrels of three firing squad rifles. Each brush with death had only strengthened his will to fight.

But tuberculosis was a different kind of enemy. Not only had it sapped him of his physical resilience, it had also sapped him of his dignity. Dying the quick and honorable death of a warrior was one thing; the slow and meaningless death of an invalid was another. Kaliappa had once again seen into the core of Nakamura's condition with uncanny accuracy: Even more persistent than the physical symptoms that plagued him was the specter of his demise and the utter terror that it housed in his heart.

What is so frightening about death? Kaliappa asked the question with such honest simplicity that Saburo could only admit that, as obvious as the question seemed, he had never considered it before. He was afraid of death because death was frightening. This circular reasoning was grossly inadequate; yet the fear remained.

When you go to sleep at night, do you fear that you may not wake up in the morning?

Of course not, Saburo replied.

And while you are asleep, are you aware of the passage of time?

No, not at all, Saburo answered.

So when you are asleep, are you not in fact dead to the world?

When Kaliappa said this, Saburo was reminded of an incident in Manchuria. One day, he had climbed to the top of a lookout tower, only to hear a bullet pass his ear. As the tower was fully exposed and offered no place to hide, he had taken the only option open to him: he had jumped. The next instant, he had opened his eyes to find himself back in Harbin and Hashitsune looking down at him. Hashitsune expressed relief. We were afraid you weren't coming back, he said. You have been out for three days.

Yet the idea of falling asleep does not frighten you in the least, does it? Kaliappa was speaking again. In fact, from what I have seen, you are more than eager to bed down by the time that evening comes, isn't that so?

That was the case, Nakamura admitted.

So if you are not afraid of going to sleep at night, why are you afraid of dying? More importantly, He continued, when you wake up in the morning, why are you not filled with joy to discover that you are still alive? Has it never occurred to you that the very fact that you wake up each morning is nothing less than a miracle?

Your attention is so fixed on the prospect of dying that you are missing out on the joy of being alive. Don't you see?

For a split second, Nakamura did see. Evidently this showed in his face, for Kaliappa smiled.

Good. From now on, as you sit, you are to seek to answer to the following questions: Why were you born into this world? And what is the purpose of living?

This was the first of several problems that Kaliappa was to give to him. In the beginning, Nakamura had no idea how to even approach these questions. But for sure, he recognized, none of his academic learning was going to help; the only place to begin was going to be from his own experience.

Kaliappa and Saburo returned to the village one evening to find it astir with excitement. A yogi had just returned from a ten-year solitary retreat into the wilderness.

The valley that was home to the ashram was in the first of three ranges of mountains standing in front of the Kanchenjunga massif, and the land between these successive ranges was carpeted with deep virgin rain forests. If rich in sub-tropical flora and fauna, these forests were also decidedly hostile to human penetration. Home to tigers, panthers, bears, and numerous varieties of poisonous snakes, they were also infested with malaria-bearing mosquitoes and provided a natural breeding ground for all manner of tropical diseases.

These forests were used by the more advanced yogis as places of ascetic training. Retreats of one to two years were not unusual, but rarely did they extend beyond three years. The yogi in question had long since been assumed to have fallen prey to the ravages of the wilderness.

Far from dead, however, he was now returned looking not the least bit worse for wear. Kaliappa was delighted; his eyes twinkled with pride.

The next day, while he and Saburo paused on their journey up the mountain path, he explained to Saburo what an extraordinary feat this man had accomplished. Saburo listened with great interest to his descriptions of the wilderness.

I would like to go there, Saburo said.

Kaliappa laughed. Not in your current condition, he said. You wouldn't last twenty-four hours. Before going into the forest, you must first master *kumbhakka*.

Saburo was hearing the word for the first time. What is this *kumbhakka*, he asked.

This is the most sacred of states, when mind and body are fully awake yet fully at rest. In this state, even the tigers will leave you alone.

Now he had Saburo's full attention. How does one learn this *kumbhakka*, he asked. How is it done?

This, Kaliappa answered, you must discover for yourself. It cannot be taught. *Kumbhakka* is the essence of yoga. It cannot be explained. But in the yoga literature, it is described as a state where the body is maintained like a jug filled with water.

The description made no sense to Nakamura, but Kaliappa would not comment further. Time to go, he said. They continued on up the path.

Upon coming to retrieve Saburo from his rock by the waterfall one late afternoon some ten days later, Kaliappa looked down from his donkey and smiled. Today you are very lucky, he said. I am going to allow you to witness something very special; something you will need to see to believe. This evening, you must come to the meeting hall.

Saburo waited until, after the evening meal, he could see some of the yogis making their way to the hall. Following them, he entered the hall for the first time and took a seat on the dirt floor.

All together, maybe forty yogis were gathered. They were seated in a large circle that was open in the middle. Spread out on the floor in the middle of the circle was a white sheet of cloth.

Presently, Kaliappa entered, followed by the yogi who, ten days earlier, had returned from the wilderness. Kaliappa walked to the round cushion put out for him at the head of the room and sat down. The yogi seated himself in the middle of the white cloth.

A yogi bearing a flute and another a bell were seated on either side of Kaliappa, and they now struck up a slow tune that reminded Saburo of music played in Japanese Shinto shrines. As this music played, the yogis in the circle rose one by one and walked slowly but deliberately around the circle and the still seated yogi on the white cloth.

The seated yogi had his eyes closed, and judging from his demeanor and deep, slow breathing, had already entered a meditative state. Now, however, he raised both hands to his neck. His breathing stopped, and his hands closed tightly with both thumbs applied to his esophagus just under his jaw. The yogi's face turned purple. Then both his hands and his neck went limp.

Saburo watched this spectacle in speechless amazement. He was reminded of the tradition of *seppuku*, ritual suicide, in Japan.

The flute and the bell stopped playing. One yogi stepped forward and gently uncrossed the legs of the still seated corpse and stretched it out to its full length. The cloth was then wrapped and tucked neatly around the body.

The door to the hall opened. A small army of men, straining under the weight of their load, carried in a marble coffin and deposited it beside the wrapped body. The lid was removed and the white bundle lifted gingerly and laid out inside; then the lid, with the combined strength of eight men, was lifted back onto the coffin and hermetically sealed with a generous coating of pine tar.

Transported back outside, the coffin was lowered into a hole that had been prepared in advance. The excavated earth was shoveled in, around, and over it, so that when all was done only a low mound remained. The yogis quietly dispersed and returned to their huts.

Saburo was mystified as to the meaning of all of this. The whole affair had been conducted without any expression of emotion by the participants. And Kaliappa did not mention it, either the next day or the days following.

Seven days and seven nights passed. On the morning of the eighth day, Saburo was called once again to the meeting hall and arrived to find the same group of yogis gathered. Seated near the back of the room, he was surprised to see the doors thrown open and the stone coffin carried into the room once again. The hardened pine tar was chiseled away and the lid removed. The shrouded corpse was lifted out and laid on the floor. Once again, the flute and bell began to play.

The skin color of the body that appeared from the cloth was ashen gray; Saburo had seen enough corpses to know a dead man when he saw one. Yogis on either side of the corpse, however, began rubbing it with *gheeta*, butter made from goat's milk. Over the butter they applied a white powder. Then they began to massage the body, beginning at its extremities—the hand and feet—and moving up the arms and legs. The other yogis in the circle, in time to the flute and bell, began chanting something from Sanskrit scripture.

Some thirty minutes into this process, Saburo noticed a change in the body. Its flesh was responding to the pressure applied by the masseurs. A faint glow of pinkness was returning to the skin. The yogis

increased the intensity of their massaging of the muscles, their thumbs and fingers deftly seeking out the same vital spots manipulated by *shiatsu* masseurs in Japan. Presently, the man's chest quivered; unmistakably, Saburo saw it rise and fall. The dead man was beginning to breathe.

All at once, the flute, bell, and chanting ceased. The room became still. The man on the cloth opened his eyes, and as easily as someone waking from a deep sleep, sat up and folded his legs into a lotus posture.

Joyous shouts erupted. Looking over at Kaliappa, Saburo saw his eyes twinkle. His face opened into a broad smile.

The next day, Kaliappa asked Saburo what he had thought of these events. Saburo was still dumbfounded; nothing of what he had witnessed made sense, and certainly everything that he had learned in medical school told him that it was not possible.

Kaliappa laughed. To you, he said, what you saw appears to have been a miracle. But to the yogi himself, the experience was no different than going to sleep at night and waking up again in the morning.

Kaliappa was speaking from experience. He had, Saburo would learn, passed this same test himself on two separate occasions. For the yogi in question, this constituted something of a final examination; he could now be called a master and would begin to take students and build an ashram of his own.

But, Kaliappa said, understand that there was no guarantee that he would return to us. The success rate, he went on to explain, was about one in three; for the other two in three, the sleep was one where the morning never comes.

The point, however, is that these yogis—both the ones who return and those who do not—have no fear of death. They are different from you.

As yet, you do not recognize your own power, Kaliappa went on to say. You have yet to discover what life is. But perhaps you now begin to see that its strength and resilience are much greater than what you believed.

Saburo had to admit that this was so.

Saburo's second spring in India came and went. His days had long since settled into a stable routine. He had grown used to the icy chill of the river in the morning; he had regained enough strength to climb the path to the waterfall without stopping to rest; and he had harnessed enough resolve and will power, he thought, to focus his daily meditations diligently upon the problems that Kaliappa had given him.

Several months after first arriving in the village, he had wandered out of his hut on a bright, moonlit night to encounter an eerie scene. Scattered about the commons were the yogis, each transfixed like stone in some odd pose. One yogi stood like a stork on one leg, his other leg bent so that its foot rested on the standing leg's thigh and his hands raised over his head with palms together so that his fingers pointed straight to heaven. Another had arched backwards so that both his hands and feet were planted firmly on the ground; directly under this human arch was placed a branch of spiky thorns. Yet another hung by his knees from a high branch of the linden tree. Curious, Saburo watched these figures in their various poses for about fifteen minutes until sleepiness got the best of him and he returned to his hut; not one of the figures had shown the slightest movement during this entire time.

Now Kaliappa invited Saburo to join in this nighttime training. Assume a position in which you think you will be comfortable, Kaliappa instructed him. Any position is fine, but you must face the moon.

Saburo settled into a seated position, back against a tree—a position comfortable enough, he thought, to be able to hold for any length of time. Observe the moon, the instructions were; but in so doing, Saburo was not to move even so much as a muscle until Kaliappa returned, which would be, he said, in about an hour.

Saburo took in the moon. As far as he had traveled, the moon was the same moon that he had watched as a child in Japan. It was the same moon that he had observed over Manchuria and from America and Europe. The world was not so large after all.

Within minutes, however, he began to feel discomfort; the bark of the tree was biting into his back and the unevenness of the ground bothered his bottom. Furthermore, his discomfort increased incrementally as the minutes passed, so that, by the time that Kaliappa returned, he was sweating profusely.

Kaliappa laughed at Saburo's sigh of relief when he gave him permission to move. Did you observe the moon, he asked.

Saburo assured him that he had seen more than enough of the moon for one evening.

Then show me what you saw, Kaliappa responded. Draw me a picture.

Puzzled, Saburo took a stick and etched a circle in the dirt.

Idiot. Is that all? Kaliappa's reprimands had a way of falling like lightning out of a blue sky.

Saburo hung his head. His attention had, in fact, been so consumed by his own discomfort that he had not seen the moon at all. The moon he had seen was the moon he remembered—not the moon that was hanging over head right now.

Ever so dimly, Saburo gained an insight into the meaning behind this practice. In maintaining a stance or *asana* for a long period of time without moving, the yogis were engaging not so much in physical discipline as mental discipline; each was honing his ability to remain mentally focused under difficult circumstances and despite physical discomfort.

Kaliappa continued his reprimand the following day in a quieter voice. You act like time is on your side, he said. You have been here for almost two years; yet you continue to act as though your training has yet to begin. How can I teach you if you don't put your heart into what I ask you to do?

Saburo began to protest. In his own mind, he had been making the noblest of efforts. Despite a deadly physical affliction, he had done his best to follow the master's instructions to the letter. And he had ceased to complain. He had put up with the river training every morning and had climbed to his perch by the waterfall every day—all just as he had been told to do. He had applied himself diligently to the questions that Kaliappa had assigned to him. And this despite the distraction of the falls! The roar of the falls was nothing short of torture; leaving it behind each evening was the happiest part of his day.

Perhaps he would do better to train in another location, Saburo suggested. If he was to meditate, wouldn't he be better to do so somewhere conducive to meditation?

But Kaliappa was unyielding. If you can't focus just because of the sound of running water, you won't be able to focus anywhere. Kaliappa had chosen this spot for Saburo, he went on to explain, because it was especially well suited to the purpose of his training.

But why, Saburo asked. Surely he would find it easier to quiet and focus his mind in a quieter environment.

To the contrary, Kaliappa insisted, this place is most well suited for what Saburo needed to learn. You need to be able to hear the voice of heaven, he said. And you need to learn this as soon as possible.

Saburo was intrigued. The voice of heaven? What was that?

Just what I said. The voice of heaven.

Saburo's skepticism reasserted itself. How could heaven have a voice? Was Kaliappa asking him to subscribe to some animistic belief system?

So, he asked, have you actually heard this voice of heaven?

I hear it all of the time, Kaliappa answered matter-of-factly. I hear it now as we are talking. I even hear it while I am asleep.

But you. Bothered by the simple sound of a waterfall, you can hardly expect to hear the voice of heaven. You probably don't even hear the voice of earth.

The voice of earth? Saburo cocked his head in disbelief.

The sound of the wind in the trees. The songs of the birds. The chirping of insects. All these are the voice of the earth.

Of course I can hear those things, Saburo responded.

Not now, Kaliappa said. When you are sitting at the falls.

Saburo was incredulous. Had he not been sitting beside these falls every day for these many months? Better than anyone, he knew for sure that the sound from the falls was loud enough to muffle the song of any bird or the chirping of any insect.

As long as you believe that it is impossible without trying, there is no way that it can be otherwise. You will most certainly never hear the voice of earth, Kaliappa answered.

This was a challenge, and Saburo was not one to back away from a challenge. At the falls, he settled in with determination. If Kaliappa could hear, as he insisted he could, the sound of the birds over the sound of the falls, then surely Saburo could as well.

But strain as he might, his ears caught nothing but the roar of the water. Put the sound of the falls aside, he said to himself; but this only made it more present.

The morning wore into afternoon, and with the passing of time, Saburo's frustration grew. And as his frustration grew, his attention began to wander.

This isn't working, he thought. It is useless. No one—not even Kaliappa—can possibly hear anything over this noise.

Dejected, he looked out at the falls. In the afternoon light, a sparrow was flying in and out of the spray. Presently it landed on an outcrop of ledge protruding from behind the wall of water.

Just at that moment, it happened. A tiny tear occurred in the curtain of sound. And through the tear, loud and clear, came the chirp of a sparrow.

Saburo's back arched back in surprise, the tear closing back up as quickly as it had appeared. But not without leaving Saburo with the hint that he needed.

The voice of earth had penetrated the curtain of sound not when Saburo was trying hardest to hear it but when he was trying least. As long as his attention was fixed upon hearing something other than the sound of the falls, the sound of the falls was in the way. But in the moment that his attention shifted away from his own listening—in this case, his attention had shifted to his field of vision and the flight of the bird—what had been foreground noise shifted to the background.

By retracing the same process, Saburo succeeded, if again for only an instant, to recreate the same results a second time, then a third time, and then a fourth. Each time came easier than the time preceding it. And each time, he was able, ever so slightly, to prolong its duration; what at first had been momentary now occurred over time—a second, then a couple of seconds then longer.

After three days of practice, Saburo had become proficient and was listening at will for not only the sounds of birds but the chirping of insects and even the wind in the trees.

It appears that you have gotten it, Kaliappa said before Saburo could say a word; his face bore the news. With practice, you will soon be able to hear far more than the chirping of insects. When the mind is still, it can hear even the sound of ants walking and earthworms burrowing.

While these were powers well beyond Saburo's current abilities, he was nevertheless inclined to now take Kaliappa at his word.

But in order to be able to do that, Kaliappa continued, you first need to be able to hear the voice of heaven. When you can hear the voice of heaven, you will be able, with training, to pick any one sound out from among all of the sounds that surround you and to hear it clearly.

Again, Saburo was no longer disposed to doubt his teacher. But he did need more guidance: Where to look for the voice of heaven? And how would he know it when he heard it? What would it sound like?

This you will have to discover yourself, Kaliappa answered.

Having chalked up one small success, Saburo took on this new challenge with body and soul. The voice of earth, after all, had revealed itself to him when he stopped trying to listen for it. He would begin, therefore, by attempting to apply the same principle to his search for the voice of heaven.

Sitting by the waterfall, he could now listen at will to not only the birds and insects but the distant voices of the forest. But what he now needed to do, he reasoned, was to put these sounds aside as he had the sound of the falls; maybe then this mysterious voice of heaven would speak to him.

What sounded reasonable in theory, however, proved difficult in practice. Day after day, Saburo returned to the falls and sat, legs crossed and eyes closed, listening intently for any hint of heaven's voice. Evening after evening he returned to the village with nothing to show for his efforts. The days became weeks and the weeks became months.

A full three months went by. Saburo sat as usual on the ledge. Clearly, he thought to himself, this is producing no results. He even had no idea for what it was that he was supposed to be listening; could the voice of heaven really be all that important? Why was he doing this? What was the point?

What was he doing spending days and months out of what might be his last days and months on earth in pursuit of some voice, the very existence of which he had only his master's word to go on? Enough is enough, he declared to himself. He could, after all, always take up again tomorrow, but today he would play hooky.

Saburo rose to his feet and wandered aimlessly several hundred yards downstream. Coming to a particularly inviting patch of lush, green grass, he threw himself down and rolled over on his back with his feet apart and his arms out at right angles. Looking straight up, his field of vision was filled with the blue of the cloudless sky. Lying like this for several minutes, he suddenly had the odd sensation that he was being sucked into the sky's emptiness. His mind, the mind he had been straining day after day in focused meditation, gave up.

Awake and observant as ever, his mind became a passive observer instead of an active one; instead of a mind that was seeing and hearing, it became a mind in which seeing and hearing were taking place. For some brief span of time, the notion of a self, separate from the sky above and the earth below, dropped away.

Saburo sat up. What had happened? For a fleeting moment, all the sounds of the world had been framed by a background of absolute silence; and furthermore, in the same moment that that background had become known, it had become the foreground.

Saburo looked around. Nothing had changed—the same river, the same forest, the same sky—but everything had changed. The river was dancing with light; the forest was dancing with joy; the sky was a visible link to the farthest reaches of the universe. Warm tears ran down his face. The world was whole, perfect, complete. Furthermore, he was not separate from that world; he was one with it and neither less perfect nor less complete.

When he reported this experience to Kaliappa, the master smiled. Congratulations, he said. That is the voice of heaven. The voice of heaven is the voice of no voice, the voice of silence. It is the voice of the silence that is the wellspring of all of the sounds of the world.

The days that followed were filled with delight. Morning training in the river, climbing to the falls, sitting in meditation at the falls' edge—all became an adventure in which Saburo partook with childlike enthusiasm. At times he was overwhelmed by a sense of profound privilege to have been allowed to participate in this splendid playground and profound gratitude for the grace by which he had come to be here.

He practiced listening, first for the voice of earth and then for the voice of heaven. During this practice, he made another important discovery. He was listening to the sound of the cicada. As his

listening became more refined, he found that he could distinguish the sounds of the individual insects from among the chorus; each had a slightly different pitch. Singling out one of these insects, he focused upon it with total and undivided attention. The sensation was that of attaching his mind to the external phenomenon so that even the act of listening was occurring outside of himself.

Just at that moment, the cicada brought its droning to a sudden and full stop. Saburo's mind, the mind that had been attached to cicada's drone was left dangling in the silence that had taken its place.

In this, Saburo recognized a practical method, one that could be recreated at will, for bringing the mind in touch with the silence of creation. Many years later, he would refine this practice method and name it *anjo daza*, the meditation practice that is part of his mind-body unification system.

Not only did Saburo's mental and emotional outlook undergo a transformation, but his physical condition also began to change. He was, for the first time in years, sleeping soundly and waking up in the morning feeling fully rested. The fever that had been his constant companion subsided and did not return. His complexion went from pale to healthy pink.

And finally, he began to gain weight. At first, he thought it was some kind of swelling; but no, it was his body filling back out to its former proportions.

Very soon now, you will be completely well. Kaliappa looked at his student approvingly. Do you see now? Your body has access to all of the wisdom that it needs in order to heal itself. That wisdom is inherent to the energy or *prana* that is the wellspring of life.

Saburo reflected again on the path that he had walked. All of those years that he had spent wrestling with demons and wallowing in self-pity and despair . . . all that time he had been standing in his own way. His body had not been able to heal because he had been denying it access to the source of its own vitality.

At the same time, only because of this sickness and his own ignorance had he come to a realization that was ever so more important than physical health. He owed much to his sickness; this dark companion had been a teacher in disguise. For in the process of seeking a cure, he had discovered the joy of living.

Saburo's return to health was unquestionably also influenced by the environment into which he had come. The vegetarian diet that he had so vigorously objected to in the beginning, he now recognized, had been essential to his reconstitution—as had also the clean mountain air and the breathing practices he had learned as part of the yoga discipline. Likewise, the morning submersion in the cold river water had helped to strengthen his immune system, and the physical exercise of climbing the mountain every day that Kaliappa had subjected him too in even his most depleted condition had been a blessing. All of these factors would be taken into account when Tempu formalized his method of mind-body unification.

Above all, however, he had to attribute his return to health to the simple realization that the mind leads the body—this because health must be possible before it can be real. Only when Saburo had opened to possibility had latent forces come to the fore and reestablished his balance and equilibrium. The change in his mental disposition had affected his physiology all the way down to its cellular and biochemical levels of constitution.

Saburo was going into his third winter at the ashram. Winter in these parts was nothing like winter in Japan, but nevertheless, the air was considerably cooler than in the summer.

No longer the troubled and lonely figure that he had been when he first arrived, Saburo had developed an affection for this village, his adopted home. Thoughts of Japan had not disappeared, but they also did not weigh upon him in the way that they had before.

Each morning, he rose to eagerly greet the new day. As always, these days began with the river training. Saburo would settle into his habitual spot, legs crossed in a half-lotus and hands cupped in front of him with interlocking fingers—forefingers bent at the second knuckle, touching back to back, and meeting with the respective thumbs. The river water reached just above his waist.

The practice that had been pure torture two years ago, Saburo now found refreshing. Breathing slowly but freely and without excess force, he could generate as much internal heat as he needed to keep warm.

Kaliappa passed among the seated yogis, observing their posture and breathing. That's it. That's good, he said softly as he passed Saburo. Saburo was puzzled but pleased. Kaliappa had never said anything in the past; what was it about Saburo's posture that had elicited this approval?

The next day, the same thing happened. That's good, Kaliappa said as he passed.

On the third day, Kaliappa again commended Saburo as he passed. The session ended and Saburo, as usual, rose to his feet to walk to the shore.

From the riverbank, Kaliappa's voice rang out like a rifle shot. No good, no good. That isn't it.

Saburo was mystified. What was so right about the way he was sitting in the river and so wrong about the way in which he stood up to go to the shore?

The next day, the same scene was repeated. Now Saburo was genuinely curious: Just what was the master looking for?

Whatever it was, Saburo clearly had it while he was seated in the river. All I need to do, he reasoned, is to maintain the same attitude when I stand up.

Easier said than done, he soon realized. Kaliappa observed his efforts in silence.

In the river, Saburo was relaxed and centered. Once he rose from that position, however, it was a different story; the river currents pulled at his feet while he tried to find a firm footing on the slippery rocks.

Gradually, however, he got what he thought was the knack of it. He was able to maneuver the river without giving up his balance or poise.

A full two weeks had gone by since Kaliappa had first commended him on his posture while seated. Congratulations, the master said with a broad smile. You have learned it. That is kumbhakka. That is the state of holding the body like a water jug filled with water.

Nakamura thought about what Kaliappa had said. A water jug holds water in because it is closed; the water inside the jug always seeks a state of rest and distributes itself equally, thereby exerting pressure evenly against the walls that contain it.

The water, he realized, was a metaphor for prana, the universal vital energy; the body was a vessel made to hold this fluid prana. But in a body that was porous and not properly conditioned, this vital energy was allowed to leak away. Kumbhakka was the practice of maintaining a state of ever ready fullness and equilibrium. It was a state of subtle relaxation but equally subtle tension, of calmness but full alertness, and of immovable solidity combined with vibrant vitality.

The practice of kumbhakka is also core to Nakamura Tempu's method of mind-body unification. Tempu would distill the essence from what he had learned in India into a practical and teachable method, the basic instructions for which are to relax the shoulders; to allow the body to center itself in its "one-point", the *seika-tanden* located three finger-widths below the navel; and to tightly close the anal sphincter. The third of these instructions, the closing of the anal sphincter is the most novel: Japanese culture has stressed the importance of *hara* or *seika-tanden* training for centuries; yet nowhere within the annals of either Zen or the martial arts is the tightening of the anal sphincter discussed as a necessary component of that training. Furthermore, it is also essential, since to make the anal sphincter tight is almost impossible unless the shoulders are relaxed and the body is centered; and conversely, the act of tightening the anal sphincter automatically brings the body into relaxed alignment and its center of gravity down.

Tempu's description of kumbhakka, I am told, differs from the way that it is described in most traditional schools of yoga. This is probably because Tempu is exact, where yoga, just as Kaliappa's explanation to Nakamura had been, tends to be vague. During the American occupation of Japan following the Second World War, Tempu was invited to speak before members of the Allied General Headquarters. Following his talk, an American lady, in her thirties, rushed to the front of the room and

kissed him on the cheek. I have been practicing yoga for more than ten years, she said; but I have never been able to understanding the meaning of kumbahakka. What ten years of yoga instruction couldn't explain, you were able to explain in fifteen minutes.

One evening, about a month after being commended by Kaliappa for his success in acquiring the teaching of kumbahakka, Saburo was called by Kaliappa to his house. You have pleased me greatly, the master said. You have mastered the art of listening for the voice of heaven, and you have cured yourself entirely of a dreaded disease. Moreover, you have acquired the teaching of kumbahakka in record time; not one of my students has ever learned so quickly.

You are now capable of many things. You could go into the wilderness to deepen your understanding further. I have no doubt of your readiness and ability to pursue the ascetic path of a yogi.

But you are not from here. Your future is back in your home country with your family and your countrymen. That is a life about which I have nothing to teach you; from here, you are on your own. I can only wish you a long, happy, and prosperous life.

As Saburo listened to these words, tears flowed uncontrollably down his cheeks. The man who had rescued him in Cairo and who had shown him the way to health had just now given him back his life. Nothing he could ever say or do would ever compensate for what he had received; it was a debt that could never be repaid. The two sat together in silence for a long time until Saburo's tears subsided.

Two days later, Saburo donned the western clothes that he had shed two years and ten months earlier and took leave of the ashram. A week later, he boarded a steamship in Calcutta bound for Shanghai. He would never return to the village, or to India, again.

*To be continued.*