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PROLOGUE to *THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE*, No. 7

Some have compared *The Voice of the Silence* to a precious jewel; and without straining the metaphor we might note that it is a multi-faceted one. A skilled lapidary can take a rough stone and transform it into an object of elegance and beauty; the facets of a well-cut gem both capture and disperse the light, creating a visual delight that includes depth and brilliance. *The Voice of the Silence* is truly a literary gem containing passages of impenetrable depth, as well as of vivid illumination. Like a diamond that has been cut and polished, *The Voice* is a multi-faceted work, which is one of the reasons why it is widely held in such high regard.

Just as a polished gem may be mounted in a ring, pendant, or other suitable setting, *The Voice* is set firmly within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. This is not to say it is a comprehensive work on Buddhism, but rather that it features elements associated with the Mahayana tradition, i.e., *Dharana*, the *Paramitas*, the Doctrine of the Eye versus the Doctrine of the Heart, the Path of Liberation versus the Path of Woe, and others.

In terms of style, one of its notable aspects is the artful employment of poetic imagery. The use of figurative language in *The Voice* is not ornamental or contrived, but poetry of the highest caliber, being evocative and suggestive, powerful and inspirational.

Another distinct characteristic of *The Voice* is its use of paradox. Just as the facets of a well-cut jewel have the ability both to release and capture the light, the poetry in *The Voice* serves to illuminate its teachings, at the same time that statements of paradox serve to “hide” the truth within pithy statements which tend to confound the intellect.

One final aspect deserves mention. Scholars have observed that *The Voice* is also a book of mysticism. The popular conception of mysticism, however, is often confused and conflated with psychic visions, out-of-body experiences, telepathy, and the like. The validity of the paranormal notwithstanding, true mysticism is a *sui generis*. Its essence is difficult, if not impossible, to convey in words, which probably accounts for the universal tendency of mystics to employ paradox and poetry in their attempts to express the inexpressible.

In summary, *The Voice of the Silence* is a marvelous book of Buddhist teachings, enhanced by poetic images, sprinkled with paradox, and elevated by a sense of genuine mysticism.

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