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The Way of the Pipe

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“Pipesmoking is
properly an intellectual
exercise”



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The Way of the Pipe

Prologue

The Way of the Pipe teaches sensuality, tolerance, and patience.

Pipesmoking is pleasure, pipesmoking is discipline, pipesmoking is wisdom.

Pipesmoking is the body, pipesmoking is the mind, pipesmoking is the spirit.

Beauty does not have to be abstract. Smoking is a piece of good workmanship is beauty in action.

Essentials

Three essentials: the smoker, the pipe, the tobacco.

Four elements: air, wood, fire, water.

Air is the breath, the mover, the keeper of life;

Wood is ruggedness, the body, beauty, the elegance of lines;

Fire is the spark, attention, insight;

Water is humidity, wetness, circulation and flow.

Three times: Creation, Preservation, and Closure

Harmony is the lesson to be gained from good pipesmoking: if one of the three essentials is out of harmony, the end product is faulty. If the four elements are not equalized, pipesmoking is flawed. If the three times are not respected, chaos ensues.

Creation

Fill your pipe slowly: all creation takes time.

Fire does not light a pipe on its own. It is the breath which draws fire on inside the bowl.

Attention, respect, and awe accompany the lighting of the pipe: it is a moment of exquisite pain and pleasure, a moment when fire consumes and creates at the same time.

Preservation

Control your breath: as it is the breath which inhabits the body, it is the breath which keeps the smoke alive.

The art of keeping the smoke alive is the middle way between concentration and distraction: concentrate too much and the smoke goes out; forget about it and the smoke goes out. Likewise, our goals are to be attained by neither wanting them too much, nor forgetting about them. Thus, the way of smoking is the way of non-smoking.

Pipesmoking is the gate to enlightenment: it is through concentrated meditation

that the goal is reached.

Closure

Beginning, middle, end, who can say which is sweeter, and which is more bitter?
Each bowl is unique.

Smoking to the end teaches the virtue of perseverance.

Everything must come to an end, this is the lesson of good pipesmoking.

Emptying and cleaning the pipe symbolize the perfect closure of all actions and of all life.

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