

Going to visit tai-tien  
mountains master of  
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finding  
him ,searchin...

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Poetry Reading Response and Analysis The three poems all speak not only of peace and quiet through nature but also of Zen, enlightenment and personal discovery. The title of the poem “ Going to Visit Tai-T’ien Mountain’s Master of the Way without Finding Him” is actually a paradox because it states that one seeks the master but he does not find him, for this master does not physically exist but does exist as the peace in one’s heart. During the search for the master, the character in the poem finds “ a dog [barking] among the sounds of water” (Jones 45) as well as peach blossoms, deer, wild bamboos and a stream (45). He therefore finds no “ Master of the Way” but instead finds “ two or three pines” (45), which symbolize rest, relaxation and peace of mind. Indeed there is no physical “ Master of the Way” and this “ master” is nothing but the peace that we can find within us. In my case, I can find my center whenever I take a rest from all the goings-on in my hotel job here in Las Vegas and spend time with my family, and when I do this, I can say that indeed “ no one knows where you’ve gone” (45), or no one cares about why I need this peace or that. The most important thing is that I am experiencing it at that moment, and I just “ know” it from my heart. The same thing is true in the poem “ Searching for Master Yung,” where the character in the poem rambled for years, “ sought the Ancient Way” (46) and even intentionally “ listened to streams flow” (46) just to search for Master Yung but he was nowhere to be found. It is because this master is not a physical entity but someone who speaks through the heart and not through ramblings, tradition or the Ancient Way, or from any deliberate search. For after all these, still “ alone, I came down, through the cold mist” (46). The search was not fruitless, however, because I found “ Master Yung” within me and speaking

through my heart. I feel the same thing when I just seem to “ know” in my heart that things will get better for me and my family though things may sometimes be difficult and stressful. In the third poem, “ Seeing Off a Friend,” one learns that farewells are hard but nevertheless inevitable. During farewell, one feels that everything else including the world around us is lonely. The “ floating clouds” and the “ falling sun” (47) all speak of the narrator’s loneliness as he parts with his friend, but unlike anything romantic, this poem does not have a happy ending. The line “ Touch hands, and now you go” (47) tells the reader that all goodbyes are meant to happen and are a sign of letting go. As for me, I have experienced the same thing when some friends leave me but deep within me I believe the pain is justified and everything will be all right. These three poems reveal the idea of enlightenment not through a physical master but through nature within and nature without. The poems also speak of personal discovery not through intentional learning but through the natural unfolding of events. After reading these poems, I have gained a deeper insight about my life and have realized that the best things I have learned in life were those that my own heart has taught me. Top of Form Bottom of Form Works Cited Jones, Jake. Portable Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing. Boston, MA: Michael Rosenberg, 2010. Print.