

# Editor's Preface

Volume 4 represents a new phase in the remarkable Journey we are on. Previous volumes have included a significant amount of material written by the author during earlier stages of his journey. The road was wide and gentle with many places to stop and enjoy and pass the time. There was a feeling of familiarity with some of the terrain although we may not have walked the specific path before. Many things we had previously seen or heard of were shown from a new angle; connections we were unaware of revealed themselves.

In this volume we are catching up in real time with our intrepid traveler. The path is now much steeper. It is narrow and arduous. At times mired in difficult terrain and fraught with difficult side paths and cul-de-sacs. We have to scrabble, grasping at gnarled tree roots and ancient rocky outcrops to pull our slipping feet forward. Now and then we are lost, as clouds of uncertainty and confusion close in around us.

The clouds clear from time to time, affording tantalising glimpses of the beautiful mountains and valleys where we have followed. And of the towering peaks in the distance which beacon us on. Although the way is marked here and there, we must still make the journey ourselves. No-one can live this for us. Testing our own feet and hands and determined spirits. We must adapt ourselves to (and be adapted by) the terrain, the elements, the broadened sweep and perspective.

All that drives us on is the knowledge that someone has passed here before us. Or rather "lived" this before us.

The Japanese word "*Sensei*" (先生) is roughly translated into our languages as "teacher" or "master". But these words lose the true sense and potentially misguide us.

It is our responsibility to learn, not the responsibility of someone else to somehow enforce teaching upon us. 'Mastery', too, is problematic as it suggests a certain level to attain. This can be limiting by instilling a sense that such a level is out of reach. Or more insidiously, that such a level exists. No, the master is learning and traveling faster than ever, disappearing out of sight. The characters for *sensei* actually mean something like: one who has lived (生) before (先). It is only through having literally lived the challenges and experiences we have before us that a 先生 can point out the pitfalls and turns in the road.

Such people are sometimes called "sighted" for the perspective they offer. We can instead think of them as "hind-sighted". This reminds us that their gift of perspective is not bestowed upon them by some deity or lineage or birthright. Rather by toil and experience... Blood sweat and tears.

Thank you for your hindsight, Edward *sensei*!  
**Toby Stephens, London, 2015**