

How Many Buddhas Can They Destroy¹

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When you cling to things you have
Or crave a little you don't
And a voice whispers
Let go
For everything is impermanent
It's the Buddha speaking

When your mind is a medley
Of wayward thoughts
And a voice whispers
Get a grip on yourself
It's the Buddha speaking

When your vocal cords are taut and ready
To hurl a volley of abuse
Your fists are itching to fly
And a voice whispers
Take it easy
It's the Buddha speaking

When your hand reaches
Under the table
For a wad of banknotes
And you hear a cautionary voice
It's the Buddha speaking

¹ On 29 September 2012 a photograph offensive to pious Muslims tagged by an unknown person to the Facebook account of a Buddhist youth in southeastern Bangladesh was circulated, arousing mob frenzy, and well-organized attacks launched to destroy Buddhist homes and temples, putting an end to centuries of peaceful coexistence.

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When you are panting around the maze
Of the rat race
And you hear an amused voice tell you
What a waste of energy it is
It's the Buddha speaking

When you have given up all hope for the world
And place a fantasy finger
On a nuclear button to blow it up
And a gentle voice
Counsels love for all there is
It's the Buddha speaking

Who can tell
How many Buddhas there must be
In our overpopulated world
For us to hear the voice so often every day

Social scientists might find it interesting
To conduct a worldwide survey
They needn't bother
I can give you the answer straightaway
It's over six billion

There are over six billion of us
Each with a living Buddha
In a tiny yet immeasurable space
Within the heart

Now tell me
What can they do to so many
Those merchants of calculated hatred
Those engineers of irrationality
Tell me
What can they do against six billion Buddhas
Tell me
How many Buddhas can they destroy