

WHAT
THE BUDDHA
REALLY
TAUGHT

David Maurice

What
the Buddha
REALLY
taught

The Most Amiable and Meritorious

Gift of

Field Marshal Thanom and

Thanpaying Chongkol Kittikachorn

of Thailand.

19-3-1981.

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the Buddha
REALLY
taught

David Maurice

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For my friends
whose name is Legion
for they are many

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PREFACE

The Teaching in Brief

*(With acknowledgement to Mrs. Jane Williams
for help in arrangement.)*

'The Buddha' means 'The Enlightened man', neither a 'God' nor the messenger of any 'God', and this state, of full enlightenment was gained in this aeon by Siddhatha Gotama, born 623 B.C. the son of the ruler of a petty principality on the northern border of India.

At the age of 29 he left home in search of 'the deathless' if there were such a condition and spent six years in the search; first under, successively, the two most famous philosopher-teachers or 'Gurus' of his day and then with five companions practising the most rigid austerities, only to find that neither 'Yoga' nor austerity could lead him to the goal of utter release.

He then remembered that as a mere child he had, after deep contemplation, stilled thought and gained a moment of cosmic consciousness. Here, he realized, was a way, and following that way he found the goal and was then able to point out the way to all men. He was then 35 years old and, founding an Order of Bhikkhus (monks) he wandered India for the next 45 years, until his death, teaching it.

He taught by a gradual method, giving the teaching in brief and then explaining it in full and simple detail.

He said: 'I teach only one thing, suffering and the release from suffering' and: 'Not to do any evil, to cultivate morality and to clarify one's mind — this is the Teaching of all the Buddhas'.²

Here it is necessary to say something of the language and the manner of its use. The Teaching has been preserved in the Pali Canon ('a' as in 'father' and 'l' as in 'Milton' said quickly) and the language has its own idioms and takes for granted that there are very many degrees of feeling and emotion. In fact in the Buddha's teaching everything is a matter of degree.

Far from making it complicated, it makes it much simpler to use fewer words.

Words are used to express to others what we see and feel, and do not always work as we would wish them to. It is necessary to mention that the people of another age and a very slightly different race, used words manufactured to express their experience and feelings which were just a little different from ours. The race was not so very different really being only a few hundred years removed from the European stock of that day.

And basically there is the very slightest difference between one race and another.

In parenthesis, it may be remarked that now, if we wish to save this present civilization from falling apart and collapsing (as it so obviously has begun to do) we must very quickly realize that no country, no colour, no creed has the monopoly of bastards, and we must all, of whatever race, hasten to join the human race.

A little simple explanation of how words were used will make it easy for those with intelligence to understand, especially as the Buddha gave a clear and simple teaching and used many similes to make this meaning clear and in my translation I have been guided by these.

The one thing that must be stressed is that often single words cover the whole range of feeling.

Take a few common words to illustrate this: the Pali word 'Dukkha' ('u' as in 'put'). It covers the whole range from a slight unsatisfactoriness to the deepest anguish. It has been translated as these and also as 'ill', 'pain' etc. I find 'suffering' seems to be the best word to express the meaning above.

In English we must use dozens of words to express the degrees of feeling and they do not always say what we mean, nor do they mean exactly the same to all people.

I shall discuss eight more words, the first because it has been used in English and used so wrongly, and the others because they are necessary for the understanding of the Buddha's teaching.

The first is 'Kamma' often in its Sanscrit version used in English as 'Karma'. It means one thing and one thing only, 'deed' or 'action'. It can be a deed of body, speech or thought and is *not* 'Fate' or the result of a deed.

Another word that has come into English at times is 'Metta' and this is hard to translate because some common English words have changed their meanings and mean different things to different people. It has been translated as 'Love', 'Benevolence', 'Friendliness': but there are different sorts of 'love', 'benevolence' has lost its original meaning of actively wishing well to all one's fellow beings, human and non-human, and 'friendliness' no longer has the strong meaning it once had. I had long ago translated it as 'Lovingkindness' and this translation has been widely accepted but now find that to some it has a meaning of

sentimentality. Therefore I propose to use the word 'Metta' and you should remember that wherever you see it, it means 'A strong, unemotional, intelligent, directed wish for the welfare of all beings in this world and in all worlds, human, supra-human or sub-human, animals and insects also.'

In the basic things, the Buddha's teaching is clear and simple, and there is no room for misunderstanding the morality. In the Buddha's teaching there is no 'sin' and in one sense neither 'good' nor 'bad', there is 'skilful' and 'unskilful', and there are three skilful motivations and three unskilful motivations: these are the six 'springs of action' and there is no mistaking the meaning. The three unskilful motivations are Lobha, Dosa and Moha ('o' as in 'nor') and the three skilful motivations are Alobha, Adosa and Amoha (A as in 'father').

It should be understood that here also the words cover the whole range of feeling, every degree. 'Lobha' covers the whole range from a faint desire up to uncontrollable lust. 'Dosa' from a faint aversion up to mad rage. 'Moha' from ignorance of what is right up to a complete delusion.

To the degree that one or more of these is present, so is the motivation unskilful. Alobha, Adosa and Amoha are the exact opposites of the three unskilful motivations and are not merely passive and negative. In the 'Explanation of life' following, I have given these as greed, hate, delusion and as Altruism or unselfishness; unselfish love or lovingkindness (equivalent to Metta); and intelligence or wisdom.

THE BUDDHA'S EXPLANATION OF LIFE:

The following list is given as a helpful reference and these subjects are explained in full detail in this book.

I am not giving references as these are to be dealt with more fully in following pages.

3 Basic Facts:

Everything is impermanent, transient.
Therefore unsatisfactory, suffering.
In nothing, therefore, is there an unchanging Soul.

5 Groups of Existence or parts of the 'Soul':

Body.
Feeling.
Perception.
Formative tendencies (that form character).
Consciousness.

4 Noble Truths:

Suffering.
The origin of suffering.
The extinction of suffering.
The noble path that leads to the extinction of suffering.

The Noble eightfold path:

Right: understanding,
thought,
speech,
action,
livelihood,
effort,
mindfulness,
concentration.

HELPFUL ON THE PATH:

Skilful motivation:

Altruism (Unselfishness)
Metta (Lovingkindness)
Wisdom (Intelligence)

4 Bases of Psychic Power:

Intention	} with the co-factors of concen- tration and effort of will
Energy	
Directed consciousness	
Investigation	

5 Controlling faculties:

Confidence
Energy
Mindfulness
Concentration
Insight

8 Thoughts of a superman:

This practice is for one
whose wants are few
who is contented
who is fond of seclusion
who is energetic
who is mindful
whose mind is composed
who is wise
who is free of hindrances

HINDRANCE ON THE PATH:

Unskilful motivation:

Desire (Greed)
Aversion (Hate)
Delusion (Ignorance)

4 Corrupting Influences:

Obsession with Sensual pleasure
Obsession with Eternal soul idea
Obsession with Mere opinions
Obsession with Delusions

5 Hindrances:

Sensual desire
Ill-will
Torpor and languor
Restlessness and worry
Blind disbelief

10 Fetters:

Belief in an unchanging soul
Sceptical doubt (blind unbelief)
Clinging to rite and ritual
Sensual craving
Ill-will (hate)
Craving for fine-material existence
Craving for immaterial existence
Conceit
Restlessness
Delusion

7 Links of enlightenment:

Mindfulness

Investigation into mental objects

Energy

Rapture

Tranquillity

Concentration

Equanimity

THE FOUR RIGHT EFFORTS

The effort to reject

The effort to eject

The effort to develop

The effort to maintain

THE FOUR POWERS

The ability to reject

The ability to eject

The ability to develop

The ability to maintain

You will note that many factors are repeated under different heads, for they fall into these categories and are, as will be clear, not exclusive.

A most important part of the Teaching requires a later full explanation which will be given. It is:

DEPENDENT (OR CAUSAL) ORIGINATION

Dependent on UNWISDOM are the Formative tendencies.

Dependent on FORMATIVE TENDENCIES is Consciousness.

Dependent on CONSCIOUSNESS is Mind and Body.

Dependent on MIND AND BODY are Six Points of Contact.

Dependent on SIX POINTS OF CONTACT is Contact.

Dependent on CONTACT is Feeling.

Dependent on FEELING is Desire.

Dependent on DESIRE is Clinging.

Dependent on CLINGING is Becoming.

Dependent on BECOMING is Birth.

Dependent on BIRTH is

OLD AGE & DEATH.

And here we should give:

THE FIVE PRECEPTS

These are 'Rules of Training' (Not 'Commandments') voluntarily undertaken by all laymen. Monks take more.

Abstaining from: Killing anything with the breath of life.
Taking anything not freely given.
Any sexual practice with minors or those married
to or engaged to others.
Untrue or harmful speech.
Intoxicants or drugs causing heedlessness.

Those who wish to become 'Buddhist' should understand that there is a gradual purification; that is, a gradual rising from less skilful states to those more skilful using the standard of the motivations given above. The 'Five Precepts' are the very basic, and in the matter of 'sexual practices' for instance, the idea is not to repress sex but to completely transcend all desire including, of course, sexual desire. Naturally in this all sexual practices could not be listed but the fact that sexual aberrations are not mentioned does not mean that these are less unworthy; they are indeed more unskilful since they usually entail also lies and deceit.

CHAPTER 1

About you, yourself

As modern science is now beginning to teach and as the Buddha saw more than 25 centuries ago¹, this universe consists of countless suns with planets revolving round them. We cannot even begin to comprehend the enormous distances.

You in this vast expanse of space are the merest speck and one lifetime is like a flash of lightning, here and gone.

Yet to you, yourself, you are the most important thing in all the universe.

If you say 'No' you are telling the worst possible lie, you are telling a lie to yourself.

Now since your 'Self' has been with you ever since you can remember, and since it is so important to you, how much do you know about it and how it works? You should know everything about it but I think you know very little of it really. Unless you know a little of it you cannot understand what the Buddha taught, so this first chapter is a chapter about you. It will help to clear the ground for what follows.

Who are you?

If somebody asks 'Who are you?' you will probably give them your name, but your name is not you. Other people, quite different from you, have the same name perhaps, and it is possible for you to change your name. Your name is merely a word or a set of words to tell people you are not the same as certain others. We shall discuss this further when we come to talk about words, how they came and what they tell.

Here, perhaps, is a good place to mention that some people who know a little of the Buddha's teaching may object that the Buddha taught Anatta which means 'Not self' or 'absence of self'. He did not say that in the ordinary mode of speaking 'There is no self'. Indeed he said: 'Self is the guardian of self; what other guardian could there be? With the self fully controlled one has a guardian difficult to obtain.'² and there are many other sayings of the same kind. However, in the

philosophical sense, when the wanderer Vacchagotta asked: 'is there a Self?' the Buddha made no reply. Then Vacchagotta asked: 'is there then not a Self?' and again the Buddha did not answer. Later when questioned as to his silence by Ananda who was attending on him, he pointed out that if he had said there is a Self, it would be taken as agreeing that the view that there is an Eternal is correct and that if he had said there is no Self it could be taken that the view that all is annihilated would be correct.³ This also will be dealt with in its proper place. He did say that it is possible for the ordinary unadvanced man to think the Self or Soul to be a single undivided thing but that it would be impossible for an advanced man to think so.⁴ And with this we must take the assertion that 'All compounded things are subject to decay'.⁵

So now, again, about you.

What are you?

A man or woman? A human being? A two-legged animal? All these are only sets of words to show your difference from other living things. What are you really? We can say a body-mind-spirit. They are all part of the one compound. Just as a clock, if kept wound up, ticks away telling the time with its springs moving the wheels and the wheels moving the hands. Take it apart and you have springs, wheels, hands, a dial, a frame, but it isn't any more a clock. Grind them all into powder and where is the clock or its parts?

In the same way if a cobalt bomb were dropped just where you stood, you'd be turned into gas. Pft! Just like that. Where would *you* be?

We shall get a better idea if we consider how you came to be, what you are now and how you can know things, and also how much of things you can know.

Here is the ordinary materialist idea which is quite true as far as it goes. Let's consider it before we discuss what the Buddha said, that there is something more than this.

We have to speak of the sexual side of course. There is nothing at all wrong with sex. For the ordinary people it can be a very nice and pleasant thing.

If there weren't any sex you wouldn't exist. Sex is wrong only when it is joined with cruelty or selfishness, when it is taught as being something to be ashamed of and to fear and to hide or when too much importance is given to it and it is used too much and without any control at all. Otherwise it is only wrong in itself for Buddhist monks or for those laymen who have vowed themselves to chastity for a good reason. More of this also, later.

At present we are discussing what you are. For you to be born as a human being at all there had to be two persons, your father and mother, who came together for a shorter or longer period and

copulated, that is your father put his sexual organ, the penis, into your mother's sexual organ, the vagina. From your father's penis was squirted a couple of cubic centimetres of spermal fluid which contained many millions of living sperm cells. I stress the many millions as some persons think of these as living beings just as you are. They are living but not in an organised form as you are, only as a plant lives or as the hair on your head lives. You may know that the hair has a separate life from that of the body and can continue to grow for a little while after the death of the body.

The sperm cells can travel and one travelled up and met one of the eggs which was coming down. Your mother carried very many small egg-cells capable of maturing and forming a human being when joined with a sperm cell.

The sperm cell and the egg joined and then grew onto the wall of your mother's womb and began to grow with blood fed to it from your mother. It grew and after going through more than one form it became a child, you, and at the end of about nine months you came out into the hard, cold, cruel world. I am giving here the materialist view which is, as I said, true as far as it goes.

When you were in the womb and after you already had some feeling, you were well-protected, well-fed and with no real effort on your part and you reacted to your mother's joy and sorrow and hopes and fears to some extent.

When you came out all your senses were attacked by what happened in the outside world and it was painful. You objected and yelled loudly. You are still reacting to sensations received from the world through your five senses and your mind.

Now you will note in this that there is an enormous amount of waste.

Every month if there is not an egg-cell fertilised the woman bleeds and an egg-cell comes away, wasted, and in the man's spermal fluid there are very many millions of sperm-cells wasted. There could be twins or triplets or even more in one birth but there could hardly be a hundred million: and very often no birth takes place. Then again, a man has a very strong sexual urge and unless the mind is trained and controlled by a special method he cannot resist that urge. Naturally some men have a stronger urge than others: it is a matter of the glands and some men have such a slight urge that control is easy. With most men the urge is so strong that at times something must come away, either in a nocturnal emission, a so-called 'wet dream' or by his masturbating, by playing with the penis until the sperm is squirted out. Here too you have an enormous amount of waste. Why should there be such a terrific waste? Why should there be such a need and such a pleasure in the release of the sperm? I am giving it here from a completely materialist view-point and nobody can deny these facts.

Now there are some people who say that all is created by a Supreme Intelligence or God who, as many will tell you, created man in his own image, exactly the same in all his parts. Others of course will dodge this by saying that only the 'spiritual' part of man is like God's: but all of them will tell you that there is a power of 'freewill' given to man by which he can decide to do a thing or not do a thing, that he has the power to choose. So he has, to a certain extent, but only to a certain extent. That can be proved at any time with any person.

Now getting back to the purely materialist view: why should the sexual urge grow as it has? It has, they say, evolved. Over many millions of years changes have come by a living being adapting itself to the world. Those that were most suited to conditions that existed were better fitted and so lived and produced offspring, from plant to animal to human. Those offspring that were more like their fathers and mothers in their suitability to conditions lived and produced offspring themselves. Those that were not like the parents in the ways necessary to survive, died out and of course that type died out.

The earliest form of life is of a single cell and we find the single-celled life in the algal vegetation, that is the green scum that forms on ponds and other stagnant water.

Every cell of your body has a basic similarity to this single cell and one can trace its progression from lower to higher forms. These cells grow by dividing in the centre and each half grows to make two cells where one was before.

The theory of evolution is that in an eternity of time, vast ages so great as to be hard to understand, just as the vast distances in space are hard to understand, small changes occurred due to a being adapting to the conditions that existed. These conditions, like everything else, are changing; and the beings that can change and adapt to fit the conditions, are the ones that survive. So the single cells came to be more organized into plant life. Then into animal life and then into human life.

Your body grows in exactly the same way as the single cells; each cell of the body divides to grow as does the single cell. There are other known factors besides the main one of a being adapting itself to conditions. There are changes due to chemical change and due to radiation. A true scientist will tell you that there are many things not yet known and that there are some facts which are hard to fit in, so the theory is possible of change and, indeed is changing.

Now some men say it is all the work of a Creator, the Supreme Intelligence, God; all-seeing, all-knowing, all-wise, almighty. That also is a theory into which some facts are hard to fit. If you say there is an outside mover, why should there be such waste, such stupid waste?

We have to say that there seems to be a force working. It has been called 'Blind Nature'. We just cannot know, the ordinary man at least

cannot know. He may blindly believe this or that but he cannot know. The Buddha said that indeed it is possible to know, and to know for sure, but it is only by a special way of knowing, by training and control of the mind.⁶

As to 'Blind Nature' working: there is a possibility, and this is not actually the Buddha's teaching though it is not against that teaching. He did say that there are other beings in other worlds, not other worlds like this perhaps. Not little blobs of mud going round one of the smallest suns, but other ways of being. That we shall come to later. It would be possible that other beings could interfere and make changes using the material here at hand. The Buddha did speak of 'Creator Gods', NOT all-powerful, NOT all-seeing, NOT all-wise, NOT almighty.⁷

The Buddha said there is something more than these different theories as to how you came to be here at this time and place.⁸

You should not believe this, blindly; nor should you disbelieve this blindly. You can say: 'Well, maybe' or you can find out for yourself.

He taught that a man and woman must come together, must copulate, for there to be birth. In addition it must be the mother's season. In addition to this there is a third factor, there must be present a being-to-be-born.⁹

Well, what is that being? The materialist will tell you: 'Oh no, there's no such thing, it's all a matter of the genes, the essence of the father and mother and nothing else.' They say that because people have different genes, then they are different and that is all there is to it. The genes, of which each cell contains many from each parent, are a pattern of factors from the parent. This is putting it a little simply but it is enough for this purpose. Some of them will say that it is also a matter of early impressions of childhood and upbringing that make a difference.

One thing we have to consider is that two, sometimes more, of the mother's egg-cells may come to maturity at the same time and become fertilised by the father's sperm. Then you have more than one born at the same time. Take the case of twins. They can be very different in appearance and the materialist will tell you that is because they have a different pattern of genes. In some cases they can be what are known as identical twins having the same pattern of genes.

Yet identical twins can be very different in character, even though as small children they were so alike that they could not be told apart. They may have been dressed alike, as some parents do with twins, and brought up in exactly the same way. Yet at an early age they showed strong differences in character. Why?

They do change in appearance as they get older. How you react to things is caused by your character, and the way you react to things changes your character, and that changes your appearance, slowly.

It is part of the change that is going on all the time. The being-to-be-born and the other conditions all had to be together. In your case the being-to-be-born became you. That is the Buddhist teaching and I believe it. I can say more, I can say I know it. That does not mean that you know it and it does not mean that you should believe it. You would be very wrong to believe it. You would also be very wrong to dismiss it as fancy before investigating it fully.

Now what were you as the being-to-be-born? You were not the same as you are now any more than you are the same as the little baby that was just born. Indeed you are not quite the same person who began reading this paragraph. You are changing ever so slowly all the time; and the change comes about largely due to the way you react to things. So we can say that whatever happens to you has no importance whatsoever, only how you react to what happens to you is important.

Now why should you react to a thing in a certain way and another person react to it in a different way? In the broad sense everybody reacts in a somewhat similar way to happenings: stick a pin in a man who is not expecting it and he will jump. Pinch a man and he will feel pain. Here is where differences come in: one man will fight and another man will flee. One man will try to hit you and the other will run away. It may be the bigger and physically stronger man than you who runs and the smaller and weaker who fights. There is the very rare man who will do neither but ask calmly: 'Now why did you do that?' Why the differences in reaction? Due to what was reacted to in the past. Those tendencies were built up in past lives and in this life up to now. The being-to-be-born had the tendencies you were born with and it is just tendencies that are reborn, not a person, though those tendencies do carry memory. As the being-to-be-born you found the right conditions, that is the conditions suitable to the tendencies, the father and mother coming together at the right season for your mother and with the right conditions for you, and so it was there that you were reborn; there and not in another womb.

Take this as an example: suppose there were a room composed entirely of many thousands of small magnets and through the open doorway you threw a small steel ball. Which magnet would it stick to? It would depend on several factors, one would be the force with which you threw it in: another would be the strengths of the different magnets: another would be the angle at which you threw it. There could be several factors which would determine to which particular magnet it held.

Now looking at it in this way, and noting that your tendencies are often fighting each other; it depended on your tendencies and more especially on the one that was uppermost at the time of your death. In one sense, your parents chose you; in another sense; you chose your

parents. They provided the means for you to be reborn. You owe them a great debt. There are many things wrong with this world, but there are worse ones you could be in.

The being-to-be-born was in one way very different from what you are now, it had no sense-organs and no brain to work with. There is something more than the brain which is, after all, only a sort of machine-tool. Now what is it that uses that machine-tool? The spiritualists, the theists, will say: 'Oh God made you and put you in your mother's belly.'¹⁰ If so, it was because of craving, of God's not being fully satisfied with things as they were before Man was made. That is obvious. To Buddhists it is obvious that such a condition could not exist. We say that craving based on delusion is the Creator and that you made yourself. The pattern of your tendencies is changing ever so slowly all the time and if you had a different pattern you would have had different parents. One thing we say is that you can channel the change, though you cannot stop and turn round and go the other way immediately. You cannot go down at once or up at once. Little by little the pattern is changing and you can control the change little by little, to master that change and not let that change master you.¹¹

The Buddha said: 'Mind is the forerunner, mind is chief, everything is made by the mind. If you purify your mind and act with a good mind, only good can come to you. If you act with a bad mind, trouble will come.' And he said: also: 'Do not think: "Good will not come to me", the water-pot is filled drop by drop. Do not think: "Bad cannot come to me", drop by drop the waterpot is filled.'¹²

You, yourself, your 'personality', ego, Soul, are just a bundle of tendencies, changing all the time and you can control that change. You can also, by a special method, change yourself so much that you get above the self, to something that does not change.

People talk about dying and going to Heaven: but think, if you were to die, as die you must, and go to 'Heaven' with all your thoughts, fancies, conceits, prejudices, well, it would hardly be 'Heaven' would it? And if you die and go to 'Heaven' without your thoughts, fancies, conceits, and prejudices, then it wouldn't be 'you' would it? So how can 'you' go to 'Heaven'?

Now this bundle of tendencies did not happen by chance, nor are you like some clock-work machine put together by the desire, the craving of some unknown 'God'. This bundle of tendencies, all that you mean when you say 'I', is an ever-changing pattern which only you can change, and you are changing not by what happens to you but, and it is worth repeating, how you react to what happens to you.

It might be better to say particles which make up tendencies. Just as electrons, neutrons, protons, mesons, make up an atom and the differences in the pattern of their arrangement makes the difference in elements, such as hydrogen, oxygen, lead, gold, so the difference in

pattern makes up the different particles of tendency. Two or more atoms make up a substance when they come together to form a molecule. In the laboratory you can put two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen together to form water, and you can then take them apart to form their original atoms of hydrogen and oxygen.

In the same way the particles of tendencies make up the tendencies in you, because of their pattern, and the pattern makes up your 'personality'. You can, slowly, rearrange the particles to make a different 'personality' a different 'you'. But to make the big change, to get above 'you' requires a special method.

Now you may agree with most of this and still say that when you talk about your 'Soul' you mean that which is behind your 'ordinary self' and that by purifying yourself you can get to 'Heaven' which you imagine as something that is permanent, unchanging and happy.

You would be right, up to a point; you can indeed by getting rid to some extent of greed, anger and ignorance and gaining some degree of thought for others, Metta and wisdom, get to a much more desirable state, a 'Heaven' if you like to call it that. There is only one trouble, 'Heaven' does not last forever. To gain the true unchanging you have to get higher still, and then of course you will be completely different from what you are now: not even another person but something more than a 'person'. We shall come to that, too. What is it that continues, or rather that gives the illusion of a continuing 'you'? For you know that in spite of the fact that you are a flux, changing all the time, you are still 'you'. You are quite sure that when you say: 'I'll see you tomorrow', the 'I' and the 'you' will be if not quite the same tomorrow, at least mainly the same.

One can get a faint idea, though of course it does not hold completely true in all respects, by thinking of 'the little black box' that aeroplanes carry. The plane may be shattered to bits by an explosion but usually 'the little black box' is recovered and there is the whole record of the flight up to the time of the explosion. Very often from this the cause of the explosion can be found.

So does your character, with memory, persist through your lifetime and through all your lifetimes though it itself is changing all the while also. Why, then, you may ask, do you not remember everything fully? For the same reason that few people would be able to remember exactly what they had for breakfast last Thursday week. You are also blinded by your ideas of size and time: but I think we should leave that for the next chapter.

Now just as when the pattern of neutrons, mesons, electrons, etc. changes so do the elements change so that we can, for instance, turn lead into gold, so when the pattern of your tendency particles changes so do the tendencies, and then of course so do you.

One of the early teachers of psychology, William James, said, one hundred years ago, in his 'Talks to teachers on psychology': 'We are spinning our own fates, good or evil, and never to be undone: every smallest stroke of virtue or of vice leaves its ever-so-little scar. The drunken Rip van Winkle in Jefferson's play excuses himself by saying: "I won't count this time". Well, he may not count it, and a kind heaven may not count it, but it is being counted none the less. Down among the nerve-cells and fibres, the molecules are counting it, registering it and storing it up to be used against him when the next temptation comes. Nothing we ever do is, in strict scientific literalness, ever wiped out.' Now that is very true except for one thing: he says: 'never to be wiped out', but it can indeed be wiped out, and that is yet another thing we shall come to later. However it can be wiped out and you are changing all the time without actually wiping things out but if you take thought and really try, you can wipe out anything completely, by a special method.

So, to sum up: your body is composed of cells which are growing and dying and growing all the time. Every moment there are cells dying in your body and growing. Your mind is changing much more rapidly since you cannot concentrate on one thought only, unless you have trained the mind, for more than a second or two. So you, yourself, the great 'I am', are just a changing thing, changing every second. Think over that one when you talk about 'I', 'Me', 'Mine', 'Myself'.

CHAPTER 2

What do you know?

You've some idea now of who and what you are. You'll have a better idea if you think about how you know things. If I say: 'How do you know?' it can mean in what way do you know things, and that is the meaning here. It can also mean: 'Where did you get that information?' which is a very good question you should always ask to yourself and to others. When you were a tiny child not yet able to reason, they pumped information into you and you swallowed it down like mother's milk. When you were older and went to school, parents and teachers spouted information at you and most children swallow it down like mother's milk. Even adults of all ages get a flood of information daily from newspapers, television, radio, politicians and preachers and a lot of them swallow it down like mother's milk. They are enslaved by information and as the poet Ezra Pound said: 'Amid the slaves learning slavery'.¹ For quite a lot of this information is untrue and especially designed to make you a slave.

You are wrong if you believe any of it blindly. You are just as wrong if you disbelieve it blindly. What should you do? You should all the time ask the question: 'How do you know?' and not accept the easy answer. For instance the adherents of a certain great religion will tell you: 'We know this is true because it has prophecies that came true.' Are, then, Karl Marx, Lord Tennyson and Victor Hugo, who made prophecies that have come true, God Almighty? Another thing, in the book of that great religion there are other prophecies that just didn't come true.

Believe nobody. Certainly not me. Certainly not the Buddha: he said not to:² but at the same time he said to investigate, to study with reason, to find out for yourself.

So how do you find out for yourself? In just the same way that you first found out things as a baby. There is this difference, that as a baby you had an undeveloped body and brain and you did not have the knowledge and experience to compare one thing with another and so to reason.

You are, we have said, a machine, made up of different parts, and those parts are changing all the time. In the first chapter it was said that those parts worked together to make 'you', an almost imperceptible speck in the infinite universe and yet to you the most important part of it. How does it hold together, this changing flux that you call 'I'?

Firstly, here is what the Buddha said of the origin of 'you'. Not the very first beginning, mind you. That is something that you as an ordinary human being are just not able to know, and in any case there are no words to explain it.

'Incalculable is the beginning of this round of rebirth': said the Buddha.³

And when a monk insisted on knowing the unknowable he was told that he was like a man pierced by a poisoned arrow and who, when a physician and surgeon was brought to extract the arrow, demanded to know first of what material the arrow was made, of what was the barb made, of what feathers it had, the name of the man who shot it, his caste, from what town he came and so on. Before all this information could be collected the man would have died.

The Buddha pointed out that there is a way to gain super-knowledge and to end suffering and this is what he teaches.⁴

Because of the wish to know the very beginning, and the impossibility of knowing this 'very beginning', men, as did the early primitive peoples, make up stories and create 'God' in their own image.

There must, they think, be some 'big fella man' who made the world just as they themselves make things: and as they wish to live forever, then their God must live forever. He could not have made the world and them and then just gone and died on them. That would be terrible.

Others, unable to accept the stories, fall back on 'blind chance' and just leave it at that.

The Buddha taught 'A Middle Path' between Eternalism and Annihilationism and showed the way to find out for oneself.

Well, then, what did he say about the origin of 'you'?⁵

It is difficult, but try not to keep on thinking of yourself as an unchanging 'I' or Ego or Soul.

Due to ignorance (of the four truths and the eightfold path and there is a special chapter on these) and to the delusion that you are an unchanging 'Person', conditioned by this, a pattern was formed, in one sense your 'Character' or the card that programs the computer you call 'I': and this it was that 'came over' into the mother's womb in your present life. Conditioned by this pattern, these tendencies, is consciousness. Conditioned by this consciousness, the mind-body-spirit complex grew. Dependent on this mind-body-spirit complex are

the six points of contact with reality, the six bases of the five senses and the mind. Dependent on these is contact or impression. Dependent on impression is feeling. Dependent on feeling is desire (desire to have and desire not to have). Dependent on desire is clinging to ideas or things. Dependent on clinging to is becoming. Dependent on becoming is rebirth in a future life, the next, and dependent on rebirth is old age and death.

And so round and round goes the merry-go-round.

The Buddha said of this: 'Profound is this Dependent Origination and profound does it appear. It is through not understanding, not penetrating this law that this world resembles a tangled ball of thread, a thicket of sedge or reed, and that beings do not escape from the round of rebirths and from suffering.'⁶

The 'pattern' has been formed by your actions of body, speech and thought in past lives and is being changed all the time by your actions of body, speech and thought.

There is no single, abiding 'you'.

Take the illustration of a surfboard rider. It has become a very popular sport and even where there are no suitable beaches most people have seen pictures of it.

A man takes a board and swims with it out to where a huge wave is forming. At the right moment he puts the board in position and stands on it, balancing, and the force of the wave takes him, if he is skilful, rapidly right to the shore.

The wave he is riding seems to be a body of water moving towards the shore. Actually it is no such thing. It is a force affecting the ocean and the wave is not from moment to moment composed of the same drops of water. And these drops of water are not from moment to moment exactly the same.

Very little learning and very little thought enable one to understand that.

It is rather more difficult for us to understand that the man on the surfboard is not, from moment to moment, composed of exactly the same particles. Neither his body nor his mind, nor, indeed, his 'self' or 'Soul'.

Let us go back to when 'you' first entered this world from your mother's womb.

The 'pattern' was there, the consciousness was there and the body was there, all momentarily changing of course.

You grew up conditioned by how you reacted to what happened to you. You had, as all animals have, an inbuilt time-clock geared to the sun and the moon and the planets and the seasons of this particular galaxy. Some people retain this time-sense more than others: we have all lost it to a great degree since we came to rely on watches.

In any case, all our ideas of time and space are conditioned by our not very perfect points of contact, the senses.

As a very small child you crawled across the floor, a pygmy in a land of giants, and gained your ideas of size from observing things in relation to the size of your body.

As microscopes and telescopes have been invented and perfected, acting as extensions of our senses, our horizons have extended and so our ideas of time and space have become just a little clearer. But time-space could be just one thing and could be circular. Something we are contacting at just one small point.

You snip off a piece of your finger-nail and it may go hurtling through the air. How do you know that in that small fragment there are not millions of galaxies with, on some of the planets, people arguing about 'God' and making war for 'a fistful of dust'?

How do you know that you are not on a planet making up the very tiniest part of a fragment that an ever-so-immense giant has just cut from his finger-nail?

So, really, what do you know? What *can* you know?

Our points of contact with reality are the six sense-bases, taking mind as a sense, and all we can know, in the ordinary way of knowing, depends on the impressions we get from these.

They all act in much the same way so let us consider one, the sense of sight.

When you look at a tree, for instance, what happens? There certainly is an object and to that we have given the name 'tree' in English. In addition there must be light, and the eyes and the retina, the network curtain at the back of the eye, and the optic nerves and the brain.

The light strikes the object and is reflected from it in waves or particles (sometimes it acts like waves and at other times like particles) and if your eye is in the right position it catches these in the lens of the eye and they are thrown onto the screen, the retina at the back of the eye where the image of what is there appears upside down.

Using a magnifying-glass in a room with less light than there is outside and holding a piece of white paper at the proper distance behind the glass, you can catch the image of what is outside on the paper, and of course that is how photography works.

The retina is composed of numerous nerve endings, and the vibrations of the light, differing as to different colours and shadings, cause chemical changes there and these are transmitted as motion, in a coded pattern, along the optic nerves, if you are using both eyes, to different centres in the brain, one on the right and one on the left.

There the motion causes another chemical change and these are transmitted, again in coded patterns, to yet another nerve-centre and

there another chemical change takes place and you 'see' the object, the tree in this instance, where? In the brain.

Now a young baby does not know whether that tree is near or far, 'big' or 'small'.

As it grows up and experiences touch and 'measures' the tree and other things in relation to the size of its body, it forms a concept, an idea, of what is a 'tree' and of how big is that particular tree you, in this case, are looking at and how far from you it is. It is helped in this by discussions as to objects and trees and the general agreement of others as to what is a 'tree'.

The process is ever so much more complicated than that. As a modern scientist explains it:

'Some speculative glimpses of neuronal operation can be achieved by taking into account the fact that many almost synchronous synaptic excitatory bombardments are essential for causing any cell to generate an impulse and itself thus to contribute to the further spread of neuronal activity. For an effective spread of activity, each neurone must receive synaptic activation probably from hundreds of neurones and itself transmit to hundreds of others. One is thus introduced to the concept of a wave-front comprising a kind of multi-lane traffic in hundreds of neuronal channels, so that the wave-front would sweep over at least 100,000 neurones in one second, weaving a kind of pattern in space and time in a way that Sherrington, with his rare poetic insight, has likened to the operations on an 'enchanted loom'. Furthermore, there is a great deal of evidence to show that a particular neurone may participate in the patterns of activity developing from many different sensory inputs.

'It may help in this way to think of the nervous system as an enormously complicated telephone exchange, constructed from ten thousand million unitary components or nerve cells, but, of course, operating in a way that is very different from a telephone exchange because of the necessity for summation of information at each relay.

'Presumably, it is this necessity for summation that gives our brain its great ability in correlation of the data that comes in by the enormous number of channels from any one sense organ, for example, in about one million separate nerve fibres from each eye; and also the correlation of the information that comes in from different sense organs such as we have when we are using our eyes and our sense of touch to guide and control our movement, or when we correlate something that we see with something that we hear.'

In the middle of the last century, in another field, the Germans, Otto Weininger and Kraft-Ebing, the Scotsman, Braid, and the Frenchman, Charcot, laid the foundations for the work of the

Austrian, Sigismund Freud, who made great advances in finding out 'what makes you tick'.

Slowly, patiently, logically, the scientists have advanced the frontiers of knowledge, but since they do have to work by logic they can get thus far and no farther.

The Buddha had given a method that is 'not able to be deduced by mere logic'.⁸ It is not a matter of discarding logic.

It is a matter of transcending logic, and that can be done with safety and surety, only by one way, and that way was taught by the Buddha.

One of the modern scientific writers⁹ points out the puzzle set by electrons, which sometimes behave like particles and sometimes behave like waves. He asks: 'How could you match those two aspects?' . . . that requires not calculation but insight, imagination — if you like, metaphysics. I remember a phrase that Max Born used. He said: "I am convinced that theoretical physics is actual philosophy."

'Max Born meant that the new ideas in physics amount to a different view of reality. The world is not a fixed, solid array of objects, out there, for it cannot be fully separated from our perception of it. It shifts under our gaze, it interacts with us, and the knowledge that it yields has to be interpreted by us. There is no way of exchanging information that does not demand an act of judgement. Is the electron a particle? It behaves like one in the Bohr atom. But de Broglie in 1924 made a beautiful wave model, in which the orbits are the places where an exact, whole number of waves closes round the nucleus. Max Born thought of a train of electrons as if each were riding on a crankshaft, so that collectively they constitute a series of Gaussian curves, a wave of probability . . . Whatever fundamental units the world is put together from, they are more delicate, more fugitive, more startling than we catch in the butterfly-net of our senses.

'Werner Heisenberg gave a new characterisation of the electron. "Yes, it is a particle," he said: "but a particle which yields only LIMITED INFORMATION". That is, you can specify where it is at this instant, but then you cannot impose on it a specific speed and direction at the setting-off. Or conversely if you insist that you are going to fire it at a certain speed in a certain direction, then you cannot specify exactly what the starting-point is — or, of course, its end-point.

'That sounds like a very crude characterisation. It is not. Heisenberg gave it depth by making it precise. The information that the electron carries is limited in its totality. That is, for instance, its speed *and* its position fit *together* in such a way that they are confined by the tolerance of the quantum. (Planck had shown that in a world where matter comes in lumps energy also comes in lumps or 'quanta'.)

'This is the profound idea: one of the great scientific ideas, not only of the twentieth century, but in the history of science.

'Heisenberg called this "The principle of uncertainty". In one sense it is a robust principle of the everyday. We know that we cannot ask the world to be exact. If an object (a familiar face, for example) had to be exactly the same before we recognised it, we would never recognise it from one day to the next. We recognise the object to be the same because it is much the same; it is never exactly like it was, it is tolerably like. In the act of recognition a judgment is built in — an area of tolerance or uncertainty. So Heisenberg's principle says that no events, not even atomic events, can be described with certainty, that is, with zero tolerance. What makes the principle profound is that Heisenberg specifies the tolerance that can be reached. The measuring-rod is Max Planck's quantum. In the world of the atom, the area of uncertainty is always mapped out by the quantum.

'Yet "The Principle of Uncertainty" is a bad name. In Science or outside it, we are not uncertain; our knowledge is merely confined within a certain tolerance. We should call it the "Principle of Tolerance". And I propose that name in two senses. First, in the engineering sense. Science has progressed step by step, the most successful enterprise in the ascent of man, because it has understood that the exchange of information between man and nature, and man and man, can only take place with a certain tolerance. But second, I also use the word passionately about the real world. All knowledge, all information between human beings can only be exchanged within a play of tolerance. And that is true whether the exchange is in science, or in literature, or in religion, or in politics, or even in any form of thought that aspires to dogma.

'Karl Friedrich Gauss, studying the fact that there is always a "margin of error", devised a "curve", a graph showing within what latitude there could be error. Within those limits of tolerance we can be certain, but we can never be *absolutely* certain of anything.'

Science, then, has gradually advanced to the beginning of the Buddha's teaching, and at the same time has, it appears, reached the limits of its own knowledge, since in finding that 'we can never be *absolutely* certain of anything' the true scientific method fails. It was the Buddha who first gave the scientific method: 'What being present is this absent: what being absent is this present?'¹⁰

To progress farther, as did the Buddha, to 'transcend mere logic' is to go beyond mere science: one now goes backward or follows the Buddha's method and goes forward to complete and certain knowledge, a way of knowing that is 'above mere logic'.

CHAPTER 3

So where are you?

It has been shown that 'you' as a single, persisting, undivided entity just do not exist: but because you are a pattern, a changing pattern, and because you can, to some little extent, control the change, you are still 'you'.

So what are you really made of? You are composed of five groups (and they also are changing groups and not persisting things) that make up the mind-body-spirit complex. They are: body, feeling, perception, the formative tendencies (the 'pattern'), consciousness.¹ The Buddha approved what Sister Vajira, a woman disciple, said: 'Just as when the parts are rightly assembled we speak of a "cart", so when the five groups are rightly assembled we speak of "a person"'.²

So where are 'you'?

This must always be borne in mind when we speak of 'rebirth' because it is so easy to fall back into the idea 'I am' and the ego does so want to 'live forever'.

If the Buddha had stopped here it would have been a teaching of Annihilation, but he taught that there is indeed 'something more' which, though it is attainable, is so far beyond anything that can be explained in words, since it is beyond words themselves, can only be stated in negative terms. He averred, very solemnly:

'There is a condition where there is neither the element of extension, the element of cohesion, the element of heat nor the element of motion, nor the sphere of the infinity of space, nor the sphere of the infinity of consciousness, nor the sphere of nothingness, nor the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; neither this world nor a world beyond nor sun and moon.

'There, I say, there is neither coming nor going nor staying nor passing away nor arising. Without support or mobility or basis is it. This indeed is the end of suffering.

'That which is Selfless, hard it is to see;
Not easy is it to perceive the Truth,
But who has ended craving utterly,
Has naught to cling to, he alone can see.

'There is an unborn, a not-become, not-made, not-compounded. If there were not this unborn, not-become, not-made, not-compounded there would not here be an escape from the born, the become, the made, the compounded. But because there is an unborn, a not-become, a not-made, a not-compounded, therefore there is an escape from the born, the become, the made, the compounded.

'In him who depends there is unsteadiness, there is no unsteadiness of the independent; when there is no unsteadiness there is tranquillity; when there is tranquillity there is no turning towards; when there is no turning towards there is no coming and going; when there is no coming and going there is no passing away and arising; when there is no passing away and arising there is neither a here nor a beyond nor anything between them. This indeed is the end of suffering.'

But there is no 'you' who enjoys that complete tranquillity and 'you' don't 'go' anywhere. 'You' has been transcended.

Before leaving 'you' behind meanwhile, let us consider another point in how the machine works. The great illusion of 'I' has been with you longer than you think. It's part of the 'pattern'. There is no 'vital principle' in a man, an animal, a cockroach, a computer or a cabbage, but you really do want one in man and the illusion is remarkably hard to get rid of.

Just as, when a baby, you gained your ideas of size and time from the six bases of contact with reality, so you gained the idea of what it all means.

And just as your knowledge of time and space can be only partial and imperfect, so also your knowledge of what it all means can be but partial and imperfect.

And it is all geared to the illusion of 'I' as a separate being that, you feel, just must exist in some form or other 'for ever'. Yes, even if you 'throw the baby out with the bath-water' and, repelled by the stupidities of the various religions, assert that there is nothing at all, in your secret heart you feel there **MUST** be 'something'; which is why most 'Rationalists' are so taken up with 'Spiritualism' or 'extra-sensory perception' or 'strange coincidences' or 'unaccountable happenings', etc. Even those who set out to disprove them have some lurking belief, which they do not acknowledge to themselves, or they would not bother to spend time on these things.

So here is the 'I' that wants to live on, yet is only a changing pattern in a so-obviously changing world; and the only way it can remain 'sane' is to become insane. Frustrated at every turn it has to build fantasies of some sort or other.

That is in most cases. There are a few, a very few, who will, unafraid of any Man or 'God' or 'Devil', unafraid of themselves, look with clear eyes at reality and attempt to find a way out.

Fewer still have found that way and still fewer have followed it to the end.

The brain, as a machine, makes its judgements on the inputs of information. A baby touches something soft and pleasantly cool and at once tests it further by the sense of taste. If it likes the thing, desire and clinging rise and it will want more. It touches something very hot and withdraws its hand quickly since that is a reaction built in during its long ages of evolution. A man does the same but with more information from past experience in his present life, and here feeling, mental feeling, can take over and inhibit or even change round the physical feeling.

Take the case of Cranmer.

Just over 400 years ago (in 1556) Thomas Cranmer was Archbishop of Canterbury and in favour of the Reformation then building up in England. He made a statement to this effect. The Church put pressure on him to withdraw the statement and he signed a recantation. However, when ordered to make his recantation publicly he refused to do so. He was arrested, tried for heresy and then sentenced to be burned at the stake, which meant being burned alive in public.

A stake was driven into the ground, to which he was tied at the ankles and round the waist. Faggots of wood were piled round him and set alight. The intense heat would be enough to make any man writhe in agony, yet Cranmer calmly held his right hand out into the surrounding flames and said clearly: 'This is the hand that signed the recantation. Let it burn first.' There were many witnesses.

It is the mind that translates feeling as 'Pleasant', 'Painful' or 'Neutral' and it is clear that Cranmer did not at the time feel pain.

Take a more modern instance. A few years ago, in protest against a cruel and oppressive government, which was supported by a certain great foreign power, some Vietnamese 'Buddhist' monks publicly poured petrol over themselves, set it alight and sat immobile as they burned to death. Photographs taken at the time showed them making no movement. Obviously they felt no pain.

Actually there is (or was, since it has probably been stopped by the communists, who have abolished so many other nasty customs) a sect of Chinese 'Buddhists' whose monks proudly walked round exhibiting five white scars on their shaven heads to show that they had been able to sit motionless in a hypnotic trance while five lighted candles set on their heads burned slowly and steadily till at the end they burned the scalp. As with the Vietnamese monks, they were acting against the teaching of the Buddha.

We 'see' things with our eyes but the actual seeing is in one of the nerve-centres of the brain. Certain diseases and certain drugs can cause chemical changes which derange the brain temporarily and one 'sees' what is not there and can also 'hear' what is not there. Certain

'transcendental' practices, one of which is breathing fast and furiously to hyper-oxygenate the blood (and there are others), can have the same effect by affecting the purely physical nervous system. A blow on the head can make one 'see stars'. Hypnotism, whether one is hypnotised by another person or is self-hypnotised, can affect the system and make one 'see', 'hear' and 'feel' what is not there.

One of India's great exports is the professional 'Guru'. These men, of whom there is one in almost every village in India, Indonesia, and other Asian countries, are 'promoted' by themselves or friends or at times Westerners who see a deal of reflected glory and some money in the business and they then travel abroad, those 'fortunate' ones who have been 'promoted', to the golden lands of the West, making, some of them, huge fortunes by a sort of 'fraudulent spiritualism'. Their hysterical Western followers will be mentioned in a later chapter. A few Westerners do derive some temporary solace and benefit. The trouble is that it does not last.

Having read this far, it is certain that you are not one of those who plod witlessly from the cradle to the grave. Indeed it is unlikely that you are one of those who would say, in the words of Louis MacNeice in 'Lines to Bagpipe music':

'It's no go the yogi-man
it's no go Blavatsky:
all we want is a bank balance
and a bit of skirt in a taxi.'

You may be at the solid commonsense 'no-nonsense' point and that's not a bad point to be at. You may be fiddling with fantasies of some sort.

You may be a rummager who thinks he is a 'seeker'. You may have noticed a man who is looking for something he has mislaid and goes to a desk, pulls open a drawer, not necessarily the top drawer, rummages round inside, slams it shut, pulls open another at random, rummages round inside that one and goes through all the drawers, some more than once, and possibly misses out on one drawer altogether, and then gives up, feeling that the article isn't there. It might easily be in the first drawer he opened. That's rummaging, and the 'spiritual rummager' does the same kind of thing, often doing a grand tour of most of the 'isms'.

The true seeker does not abandon his search until he has methodically examined every drawer fully, or has found something he is not afraid to test and which stands up to all tests. Naturally, if he finds that it doesn't, he will continue his search elsewhere.

There is certainly a 'you', a continually changing 'you', who may or may not take the path of the no-longer-you of ultimate and abiding tranquillity.

Meanwhile what this 'you' does determines what happens to you and for how many years, or millions of lifetimes, you flounder in the morass of delusion. There are some who wander in a jungle unaware that there is any way out at all. It would be possible for you to get into that state since you could, unless you have made some progress on the right path, forget whatever you now know. There are others on a wrong path that will lead them back into delusion even deeper. There are those who are aware that there is a right path but do not take it. There are some on the right path and whether at the very beginning or quite far ahead are for some reason or other making no further progress. There are others on the path who are making steady progress. Once having reached a certain point you would never turn back.

If you are on the right path you will experience at times longer or shorter periods of unalloyed happiness. If you cling to these, you lose them. They can be a hindrance if you cling, as all clinging is a hindrance. You must transcend them. The right path is long and steep but described by the Buddha as: 'Lovely at the beginning, lovely in the middle and lovely at the end'.⁴

In all this, where are *you*?

CHAPTER 4

What Buddhism isn't!

In the next chapter a start will be made at last on what the Buddha taught, but here is yet another chapter to clear the ground, and this is necessary. Also in this as in preceding chapters there's quite a deal of what the teaching really is.

There have been several books and a lot of magazine articles with the titles 'What Buddhism is' and 'What is Buddhism?' and some of them have stated things as 'Buddhist' that are by no means so.

NOT A CRUTCH

Some people have crutches and really need them: some have crutches and don't need them at all. One should not kick away a man's crutch: he will either fall and hurt himself or grab another crutch. One may try to get the man to see whether he can do without the crutch and if so to discard it.

This book may have already kicked away a few crutches. If so, well it did not set out to do just that. It does hope to deter those trying to use Buddhism as a crutch. It would be better for them to become Christians.

Jesus Christ said: 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.' The Buddha said: 'You yourself must make the effort: even a Buddha can only point out the way'.² He said further: 'By your own striving, gain the highest goal'.³

NO SECRET DOCTRINE

There are those who try to make all sorts of mysteries and to teach that there was a 'secret doctrine' 'handed down by word of mouth' by some mythical patriarch on his death-bed to his nominated patriarch, who in turn whispered it to the next and so to the present day. The same old story of crafty men posing as priests necessary to hold a secret teaching and, naturally, having power over the simple followers. At their worst such 'priests' become wielders of power living fatly from the poor and making them virtual slaves: at their best

they are spiritual brokers seeking commission from both sides: ^ahigh seat in 'Heaven' for bringing men to 'God' and a fat living here for bringing 'God' to men.

How alien this is to the teachings of the Buddha can be seen when one considers what the Buddha said:

'Thieves and priestcraft are associated with darkness: the teaching of a Buddha and the sun are associated with light.'⁴

'I am not a teacher with a closed fist, holding something back, but a teacher with an open hand.'⁵

On one occasion he said, of a large group of monks: 'All here know the teaching fully'.⁶

And he gave the parable of leaves in a forest, saying the leaves he had picked up in his hand were the truths he had taught and facts that could be known were like the leaves in the whole forest in number: but that the truths he had taught were those that would enable the hearers to gain complete enlightenment and to know full truth while those he had not taught would not do so, and that is why he taught in full only those truths that would enable a man to gain complete enlightenment.⁷

NOT LAMAISM

The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'Lama' as: 'A Buddhist priest of Mongolia or Tibet'.

'Lamaism' is the religion prevailing in Tibet and Mongolia, being Buddhism corrupted by Sivaism and by Shamanism, or spirit-worship.

The teaching of the Buddha mixed with Sivaism and therefore by then not purely 'Buddhist' did not begin to spread in Tibet until twelve hundred years after the Buddha. There it mixed with the petty magics of the local priests and became Lamaism and very certainly not 'Buddhism'. The Lamas were indeed priests and made slaves of the common people, practising all sorts of abominations and tortures in the land they held as a fief from China, until the communists marched in and mercifully liberated the people. The head Lama ran away to India with some of his followers and an immense fortune in gold and jewels and now holds out his golden begging-bowl to gullible Westerners.

NOT A RELIGION

Taking 'Religion' in its original Roman meaning of 'awe of the Gods', Buddhism is certainly not a religion. In all things we should define our terms so that we are not talking at cross-purposes and so that we ourselves know what we are talking about. In the modern meaning we may take 'Religion' as 'Belief in, recognition of, or an awakened sense of, a higher unseen controlling power or powers, with the emotion and morality connected therewith.'

This definition certainly does not apply to the teaching of the Buddha, though some people would like to make it do so.

NOT RITE AND RITUAL

Needed by most men, rite and ritual are always associated with religion just as it is with the most childish superstitions and with certain mental diseases.

The compulsion of some children to step on every crack in a pavement, or not to step on any crack in a pavement, the compulsion of certain psychotics to touch every fifth post, or whatever, the touching of certain fingertips with the fingertips of the other hand as in certain Eastern religions, making the sign of the cross by some Christians, bending the knee at certain words by others are allied to the touching of wood or the crossing of fingers to avert evil. All are manifestations of subconscious fear and the invoking of help from 'unseen powers'.

There is none of this in the teaching of the Buddha, who classed addiction to rite and ritual as a hindrance.⁸

NOT ZEN: NOT SOKA GAKKAI

Perhaps I should here define 'Buddhism' as the teaching of Siddhattha Gotama as preserved and enshrined in the Pali Canon. Every teaching is as time goes on perverted into various cults and religions by those who are either ignorant or out for personal gain or both.

The teaching of the Buddha was also distorted and this distorted version was taken to China six hundred years after it had been originally given. Translation changed it further. This form was taken from China to Korea after yet another three hundred years and from there two hundred years later, that is eleven hundred years after the Buddha, to Japan, where it again lost in translation.

In the Buddhist practice of mindfulness certain phenomena may manifest but they are mere by-products, a hindrance if one clings to them. The states of mind these were associated with were termed in Pali 'Jhana', which became in China 'Ch'an' and interested the Chinese very much. In Japan it became 'Zen' and was taken as the highest point of the teaching, which by then was very much different from the original.

All sorts of sects and cults stemmed from this, one of them founded eighteen hundred years after the Buddha by a religious reformer named Nichiren. From this again yet another cult sprang in 1930 which called itself Soka gakkai. It spread rapidly and is now militant and political and became the third strongest party in the Japanese legislature, according to the Encyclopedia Americana.

These have been given merely as examples; much the same has happened elsewhere. In Tibet, where a changed teaching was introduced and translated into Tibetan twelve hundred years after the Buddha, much the same happened.

Some of these sects and indeed one great 'Buddhist Fellowship' have been infiltrated and virtually taken over by the Intelligence Agency of a certain Great Power. Most of these have become non-Buddhist and some so much the opposite of the teachings of the Buddha that they are anti-Buddhist.

NOT 'YOGA' OR 'MEDITATION'

In India twenty-six centuries ago there was a teaching of 'Yoga' that has not progressed since those days because it had already progressed as far as possible.

The 'export variety' of 'Yoga' seldom reaches the heights of the old-time teachers and quite a lot of it is sheer nonsense and, in some cases, harmful. The word 'Yoga' comes from the same ancient root as the English word 'yoke' and the idea was 'to join the soul with God'.

When he was, as he put it, 'a mere Bodhisatta', which means a person seeking enlightenment, Siddhattha Gotama went in turn to study under the two greatest Yoga masters or 'Gurus' of his day. Both acknowledged that he had advanced as much as they had, but to both Gotama declared that this did not give complete enlightenment.⁹

He realised that complete enlightenment could be gained only by using thought to its utmost until one could rise above mere logic. Alone he finally found a way which he showed was 'the only way' to gain full enlightenment.¹⁰

This practice is often called 'Meditation' but does not fit the dictionary definition of that word. There is meditation at the very beginning of the practice but the practice is to get away from meditation.

The Buddhist practice is in two stages and the preliminary one, which is easy to do and helpful and healthful in all ways, is the 'Development of Tranquillity' and is allied to meditation. The second stage is the 'Development of Insight' and both these will be given in full later in this book.

NOT A MERE PHILOSOPHY

Buddhism has often been referred to as 'not a religion but a philosophy' but does not really fit any of the dictionary definitions of 'philosophy' except in part.

Nor is it 'a way of life'. It does have, and call for, a sound moral basis, and a moral life that can be accepted by almost any religion. Indeed the moral teachings of most religions are very much akin.

However, the Buddhist teaching has a far greater reach than morality and without assuming a God or any supreme being or 'First Cause' asserts morality as a way to live this life with integrity and from that to progress to something very much higher.

NOT SENTIMENTALITY

The great Chinese philosopher, Lao-Tzu, who was nineteen years younger than the Buddha, said in his 'Tao-te-ching' that simple yet profound teaching: 'Heaven and earth are not ruthless; to them the ten thousand things are but as straw dogs'. Indeed, as he saw, 'Nature red in tooth and claw' knows no pity. Only man has compassion: the worst man has a little, the best man a great deal. The weak man creates a 'God' to pin his compassion on and to 'save' him. The strong man tries to save himself, and others if he can, or at least to alleviate their misery. The man who is both strong and intelligent seeks a way out of the mess we are in, a way for himself, but with the understanding that a way found is an indication to others that a way can exist.

Compassion must be allied with reason or it degenerates into sickly sentimentality that spurs a man to pick out and 'save' a maggot from a bucket of filth, not realising that his action pushes down and injures a hundred others.

'The wise men of the world
spend most of their time
undoing the harm done
by the good men.'

NOT VEGETARIANISM

When certain Hindu sects tried to 'take over' Buddhism they attempted to turn it into a sort of vegetarian society. This had already been attempted by a certain group in the Buddha's own time, with the help of one of the Buddhist monks, Devadatta.¹¹

They had agreed that 'people esteem austerity' and had formulated extra rules for monks which Devadatta presented to the Buddha, who rejected them. The main rule rejected was that monks should be forbidden to eat meat. When the Buddha refused to accept these, the good vegetarians attempted, unsuccessfully, to assassinate him.

There is more than one instance recorded of the Buddha having himself accepted meat and it is interesting to note that one of these occasioned the first recorded instance of picketing.¹²

At one time the Buddha was staying in one of the most powerful kingdoms of the India of those days when the minister for defence, second only in power to the king, had the idea of visiting him to hear his teaching. The minister was an adherent of Jainism, a religion demanding strict vegetarianism among other things. The name 'Jain' meant 'Conqueror' and they hoped to 'Unite with God' by conquering

human passions. The minister, Siha, mentioned that he intended visiting the Buddha and was dissuaded by the Jain priests who told him he must not do so lest he be enticed away. Siha said finally that he was no child and decided to make the visit. He did so, was struck by the Buddha's doctrine of reason and asked to be accepted as a lay-follower.

Knowing that the Buddha would eat meat he sent his servant to the bazaar to buy beef after inviting the Buddha and his followers to a meal next day.

The Jain priests heard of this and were furious and joining hands blocked the crossroads and told the crowd that they had thus collected that Siha had been enticed by the Buddha and that the Buddha had expressly ordered an ox to be killed for the meal.

It is interesting to note that the Buddha had laid down a condition on which he accepted Siha as a follower. That was that as others would follow Siha and become Buddhist, it would mean that the Jain priests would lose much support and some might starve. Therefore, he said, he would accept Siha only on condition that Siha continue to support the Jain priests with food and clothing as before.

After the meal, the Buddha was asked about meat-eating and mentioned, as he had on other occasions, that his monks were not to order anything to be killed, not to kill anything themselves and not to eat anything they even suspected had been especially killed to provide food for them.

Admittedly this is rather difficult for some folk to understand. It is a question to some extent of where one draws the line. One cannot live without killing something and if one commits suicide one kills oneself and in addition many other living organisms.

A long-time fanatic vegetarian like the late Adolf Hitler can be responsible for the torture and death of many tens of thousands. Using leather or anything of animal origin is the same as eating flesh in its being a cause of death of the animal or fish, or bird. A vegetarianism which condones the eating of cheese is illogical. Cheese is made by killing calves and using the rennet made from their stomachs. It is also used in making other preparations eaten by vegetarians.

The Buddha made the position and viewpoint quite clear in two discourses.

It had been said that the eating of meat was 'Unclean' and he responded:

'Taking life, beating, cutting, binding others, stealing, lying, fraud, deceit, pretence at knowledge, adultery: this is uncleanness and not the eating of meat.

'When men are rough and harsh, backbiting, treacherous, without compassion, haughty, ungenerous and do not give anything to anybody: this is uncleanness and not the eating of flesh.

'Anger, pride, obstinacy, antagonism, hypocrisy, envy, ostentation, pride of opinion, companionship with immoral folk: this is uncleanness and not the eating of meat.

'When men attack living beings either because of greed or hostility, and are always bent upon evil: this is uncleanness and not the eating of meat.

'Abstaining from fish or flesh . . . all the various penances performed for immortality, neither incantations, oblations, sacrifices nor observing seasonal feasts, will cleanse a man who has not overcome his doubt.

'He who lives with his senses guarded and conquered, and is poised in the Law, who delights in uprightness and gentleness, who has gone beyond attachments and has overcome all sorrows, that wise man does not cling to what is seen and heard.'¹³

Taking another facet: the 'Great Doctor', Jivaka, asked the Buddha whether it were true that, as some had reported, animals were especially killed for him.

The Buddha replied: 'Jivaka, those who say: "Animals are slaughtered on purpose for the recluse Gotama and the recluse Gotama knowingly eats the meat killed on purpose for him", do not say according to what I have declared, and they falsely accuse me. I have declared that one should not eat meat if it is seen, heard or suspected to have been killed on purpose for a monk.

'Jivaka, in this Doctrine and Discipline, a monk resides in a certain village or suburb with a mind full of lovingkindness, pervading one direction first, then a second one, then a third one, then a fourth, just so above, below and all around, and everywhere identifying himself with all, he pervades the whole world with mind full of lovingkindness, with mind wide, developed, unbounded, free from hate and ill-will.

'Being invited for a meal, no such thought arises: "How good would it be if I should be offered such meals in future". That monk has no craving for the meal, does not brood over the matter and has no attachment to it: on the contrary he contemplates the miseries in connection with material food, and having possessed himself of wisdom pertaining to the finding of a way to Freedom, he eats the meal. Has he caused ill-will towards himself or another? . . .

'Again, the monk lives with a mind full of compassion, of joy in the gains and attainments of others and of equanimity, directed respectively, first in one direction, then a second one, then a third, then a fourth, just so above, below and all around; and everywhere identifying himself with all, he pervades the whole world with mind full of equanimity, with mind, wide, developed, unbounded, free from hate and ill-will. He causes no ill-will towards himself or another.

'Jivaka, a householder who has had an animal killed to provide food for a monk, performs an improper action, does wrong.'¹⁴

NOT SELFISHNESS

If it were not that the accusation of 'Selfishness' has now and again been levelled at the Buddhist idea of 'Freedom', it would seem incredible that that thought should arise in anybody who had even the slightest idea of ~~the~~ teaching. However, it has been said and a Brahmin accused the Buddha himself of 'saving only the single self'.¹⁵ The Buddha showed him that it was quite the opposite.

The Buddhist teaching is to transcend self entirely and to begin by understanding that 'Self' just does not exist as an abiding entity.

In the process, as the Buddha pointed out and as the thoughtful can see from the discourse on the eating of meat quoted above, others are helped immeasurably. And as the Buddha said elsewhere: 'A man himself mired in a bog cannot pull others out, but it is possible for one who has extricated himself to do so.'¹⁶

FREAKS, FRAUDS, FANTASTS, FANATICS

Publius Virgilius Maro said, two thousand years ago: 'Mundus vult decipi'. 'The world wishes to be deceived' and people really do. Not content with deceiving themselves (and it is extremely difficult not to deceive oneself), they will even pay people to deceive them. There is no really clear line between freaks, frauds, fantasts and fanatics. There are some differences but they are more of degree than of kind and some men have qualities of two or more or even of all to a greater or lesser extent.

Since quite a few of them claim to be 'Buddhist' or that their teaching is 'the same as Buddhism', the strong assertion must here be made that as a doctrine of reason and common-sense, the teaching of the Buddha has nothing to do with 'Gurus', 'Lamas', 'Swamis', 'Boy Gods', 'Living Buddhas' or any of the money-makers now living comfortably from the donations of the gullible and hysterical.

Let it be further asserted that anybody who asks one cent or even hints at it, even 'to defray expenses' for any 'spiritual' teaching, proves thereby that he is a 'phoney'.

This does not of course preclude the acceptance of donations for an orphanage, for instance, or for the education of children or for hospitals or medicines or any such cause.

It is just that a real 'Teaching' can not be bought or sold and a real teacher of the supramundane can not ask a cent for his teaching.

Whoever attempts this in the name of 'Buddhism' is anti-Buddhist and those who prate of 'Adi-Buddhas' and 'see auras' and

indulge in other fantasies of unbalanced minds are most certainly non-Buddhist.

NOT CHANTING

People living in primitive states, very close to nature, such as the Indians in the rain-forests of South America, associate themselves completely with their surroundings and become one with all of nature, which can be a very good thing.

However, they, quite naturally, acting more by instinct than by reason, imagine all their fears and frustrations and wishes as being external to themselves and create gods, devils and spirits either benevolent or malevolent. These they placate or conjure up to protect them by rituals accompanied by hypnotic chanting which is common to the 'religions' of all primitive peoples. Though 'civilised' man has come a very long way from the very primitive savagery of his early evolutionary stages, he still has the same, perhaps more, fears, frustrations and wishes and unless very advanced still dare not face them within himself and so still creates gods, devils and spirits which he conjures up to 'save' him or to placate them and in some cases still resorts to rituals and, in some cases, accompanied by hypnotic chanting. It seems still to be a need for many men.

The Buddha spoke against chanting in public and pointed out that chanters and listeners alike could be taken up with the sound and lose the sense.¹⁷

Chanting in concord as a means of learning, to impress Rules, etc., on the mind, was condoned.

NOT 'AN OFFSHOOT OF HINDUISM'

Many years ago a Westerner who was ignorant of the teaching of the Buddha and evidently ignorant of Hinduism, wrote of Buddhism as an offshoot of Hinduism and the Buddha as a Hindu reformer. Over the years he has been slavishly followed by others and there are many who blindly accept it because they 'read it in a book'.

It is clear from discussions the Buddha had with philosophers and 'religious teachers' of his day that there was a very great number of beliefs freely stated and as freely disputed, some of which professed to follow the old Vedic teachings, some of which ignored these and others which opposed them.

The Buddha in 'The Discourse of the Supreme Net'¹⁸ showed that there were sixty-two of these 'views' and that there cannot be more than those he classified. They are all there, existentialism and all. He showed that they all fall under the two heads of Eternity-belief and Annihilation-belief. He said: 'There are other teachings, profound, difficult to realize, hard to understand, tranquillizing,

exalted, not to be deduced by mere logic, subtle, comprehended only by the wise.' (From Discourse above.)

He gave a way to attain wisdom and know for oneself.

Hinduism is a later development of the old Vedic teachings.

NOT A 'CARGO CULT'

In the days, not so long ago, when Australian traders and civil servants lived luxuriously in Papua New Guinea with many of the country people existing at near starvation level, some of these latter people noticed that a telephone or cable message brought rich cargoes to the white foreigners.

It was magic.

If only the right formula were used they, too, could get these rich cargoes. Some of the more primitive fixed boxes to trees and posts and sent 'messages' for luxury goods. Certain of their leaders worked up a cult which began to grow and spread and though it did not bring the expected cargo it did begin to become dangerous to the rulers and was one of the factors in bringing Independence to the country.

The ancestors of the Westerners, not so long ago when one considers the age of mankind, acted in much the same manner.

Even to-day there are many 'cargo cults' in the West. Any 'religion' that promises rich rewards, either mundane or supra-mundane, either now or 'hereafter' by an easy evasion of responsibility, or a 'happy ending' by 'faith' or 'good works' or both without the added effort of changing oneself completely, is a 'cargo cult'.

'As ye sow, so shall ye reap' is completely true, but can only be completely true by the working out of deeds and results and that requires more than one lifetime.

The Buddha taught a sound, commonsense 'world-view' and a proven way out of the mess we are in.

NOT MIRACLE-MONGERING

George Bernard Shaw said that a miracle requires two persons: One to perform it and the other to believe it! Miracles only happen when there's nobody to check the facts, which is why 'virgin births' (attributed by later 'followers' to the Buddha, to Jesus Christ and to others) always happen, as do the other 'miracles' in the distant past.

The Buddha spoke strongly against miracles and marvels, even the possible marvels:

'There are three sorts of marvels which I have made known to others . . . walking on water as if on solid ground . . . etc. . . . completely reading the thoughts of others . . . and the marvel of education . . . the first two I abhor and repudiate. What is the marvel of education? . . . a monk teaches "Reason in this way, do not

reason in that way. Consider thus and not thus. Get rid of this disposition, train yourself and remain in that". This is the marvel of education . . .'¹⁹

There are, indeed, marvels, things that excite wonder and are most unusual. You know how the mind works and under certain conditions can 'see' or 'hear' things that are not there.

Chambers's dictionary defines 'miracle': 'An effect in the physical world which surpasses all known human or natural powers and is therefore ascribed to supernatural agency'. We can say that what is not understood becomes a 'miracle' and performed by some 'God' who must have wanted to perform it (as He must have wanted to create man if the old myths were true) and this 'want' showed Him unsatisfied with things as they were and as much a slave to desire as the men who made Him.

For a 'miracle' there would be no possibility of finding out how it was done, so a dead end results.

If we classify the unknown as 'supernormal' we have the incentive to find out why.

And whatever would be the use of a 'miracle' since you yourself cannot do it and it leaves you still enslaved by space-time?

There are supernormal things that have sometimes in the past been classified as 'miracles' by the ignorant: walking on water for instance. That can be done. Proof? The proof, and that's the only valid proof, is that you yourself can do it. If you wish. Personally I cannot see the point of such petty magics and abhor them as the Buddha did. It is stopping to play games on the way to Freedom and making it possible to be caught again in the net.

Want to know how it's done? Read on to the end of this book and you'll know. But you'll probably be disappointed. Though you have the ingredients, it isn't a cookbook recipe.

CHAPTER 5

The Buddha and his teaching

'Buddha' (pronounced boodh-a) is a title and not the name of a person and is derived from the root 'budh' meaning 'to wake'. There have been Buddhas in the past and will be others in the future who are 'fully self-enlightened Buddhas', able to discover the liberating truths and to preach them universally.¹

The fully self-enlightened Buddha whose teaching is in the present age, Siddhattha Gotama, is spoken of as 'The Buddha' and in future ages, after the teaching has completely disappeared and dark ages have ensued, another such Buddha will arise.²

There are never two fully self-enlightened Buddhas at a time. 'At no time is it possible that, in one and the same universe two fully self-enlightened Buddhas should arise together, neither before nor after the other.'³

Even when there is in the world no knowledge of such a supreme Buddha's teaching, it is possible for a man to discover the truths and the way to gain full enlightenment and to win complete freedom and therefore to be a Buddha, and such are referred to as 'Silent Buddhas' who are not able to teach universally.⁴

Those who gain enlightenment by following the way pointed out by the Buddha are known as Arahats and this title was also used by the Buddha of himself as well as of those who had gained full enlightenment and he pointed out that the difference was that a Buddha discovered and taught the way after gaining full enlightenment himself and the others followed that way to gain enlightenment.⁵

He also spoke of himself and his Arahats as 'Tathagata', which is an idiom, as is evident in its use elsewhere in the Canon, corresponding to the English idiom 'gone for good', one who will never return.⁶

And: 'While this body persists, men and gods will see me: when this body has gone to dissolution, neither men nor gods will see me again'.⁷

When Siddhattha Gotama gained Buddhahood he was 35 years old and he wandered India for the next 45 years teaching and many

joined him in an Order of monks while many more became lay-disciples. He died at the age of eighty.

How do we know that the Buddha existed and how do we know what he taught?

The first part of that question is answered well enough by comparatively recent archaeological discoveries, among them the pillars set up by the Emperor Asoka, himself a Buddhist, who reigned only three hundred years after the Buddha taught.

The teaching was given in Pali, which is allied to Sanscrit, and both derived from that ancient language which was also the parent of most European languages of today.

Now the word 'monk' is as close a translation as possible of the word 'Bhikkhu' but a Buddhist monk did not undertake any vows but only voluntarily-accepted 'Rules of Training'. A Bhikkhu could live alone or with others in groups without any disciplinary 'Abbot', and a monk was, and is today, free to leave the Order and, if he wishes, live as a Buddhist layman without any stigma. He has no authority over lay people and would be breaking his Rules were he to attempt this.

Monks did undertake certain duties, the main one, naturally, was to practise the method of gaining enlightenment which is also freely open to laymen. A monk has, and should devote, more time to the practice.

Another duty undertaken by monks was preaching and some learned the discourses by heart.

Although the Canon was written down more than two thousand years ago, there are still some 'reciting monks', 'living books', in Asia, and although Pali is now 'a dead language', at a great Synod held in Burma by all the predominantly Buddhist countries in 1954-56 the Canon was recited from memory and monks from Cambodia and Sri Lanka and other countries were able to converse in Pali.

One monk, the Venerable Vicittarasarabhivamsa in Burma recited the whole of the Pali Canon, and with a perfect grasp of words and meaning was able to compare one part with another. When you remember that the Canon is approximately eleven times the volume of the Old and New Testaments comprising the Holy Bible of the Christians, this seems impossible and you would be forgiven for doubting it. This was in 1954 and I am not sure whether the venerable is still there. However, you can, if you go to Burma, find those who can recite considerable portions, proving it to yourself.

Naturally it is a special way of learning, just as there is a special 'way of knowing', not sitting down and learning the whole thing by repetition.

The Great Synod mentioned in Burma in 1954-56 was the sixth since the passing of the Buddha, held from time to time to iron out

small variations lest they develop into big ones. There were very few such in different countries, it was found in this latest Synod, and these were really negligible as far as meaning was concerned. There were a few slight differences in pronunciation as between countries, which is natural, and in one case a link of a chain of reasoning had been dropped by one country but it made no great difference.

The Buddha's teaching can be proved by any man or woman of intelligence who will follow the practice by the method given by the Buddha which is set out in this book.

It should be understood that it was all given in the forty-five years during which the Buddha taught and was not, of course, given in the order set out here. The teaching was also always given as 'a gradual teaching' and suited to the audience. Nothing was held back, but the capacity of the hearers in understanding differed. One could quote here an old Jewish work, the Midrash Raba, a commentary on the Fifth Book of Moses: 'And the word went forth throughout the world, and the word was to each one as he had the capacity to receive it: to old men and men and youths and babes and women, the word was to each as each had the power to understand it.'

IMPORTANT WORDS ON WORDS

Words were created by men, and are still being created, as very useful servants in communication but have tended to take over and become the masters of men. Some men are more enslaved by words than others. Words, like everything else in this world, are changing and many people get stuck with words and take the sound for the sense. Many, too lazy to think and to express themselves clearly, go around with a pocketful of clichés that as often as not do not fit exactly into their allotted slots.

The Buddha taught in a language that differed in some respects from the languages of today and to a people who differed in some respects from modern man. This must be considered though we should not make too much of it.

Although a word-for-word translation would make no sense, ideas can be expressed in almost any language. The main point to be borne in mind, a very important point indeed, is that everything is a matter of degree, and this was better understood in the Buddha's time. It is no difficult matter to understand the meaning from the context and where the meaning might not otherwise be clear the Buddha made it quite plain in many a simile and as he gave explanations and discourses suited to his audience over so long a period, saying the same thing in many different ways, his meaning is unmistakeable.

Apart from this, the fact that a word covers the whole range has some advantage since certain people feel pain, for instance, more deeply than others, depending on their physical make-up: and to

some people certain things are painful, mentally, that are not so to others, depending on their conditioning.

And many people use words incorrectly, as the word 'mad' in the following, where both use it out of its ordinary meaning:

When an American girl says: 'I'm mad about my flat' she means: 'I am annoyed and frustrated because a tyre of my auto. (motor-car) has lost air pressure'. When an English girl says: 'I'm mad about my flat' she means: 'I am overjoyed because I have very suitable rooms (an apartment) to live in'.

And there's a story well worth repeating that shows how two people of the same country can attach different meanings, and use what amounts to a different language.

A rather staid professor at a well-known university was laughed at by his friends who told him that he never went out, didn't know what he was missing and knew nothing at all about life. One of them gave him the telephone number of a young sex-kitten who would be able to teach the professor something. After a great deal of thought he telephoned and the girl was glad to have a night out with him. They dined and they wined and did the usual things and he enjoyed himself thoroughly and did learn something.

As he was taking her home in a taxi she snuggled up to him and said: 'Say, perfesser, how about youse givin' me a dimend bracelet ay?'. He hesitated a moment and then replied: 'My dear, a concatenation of extraneous circumstances proves completely inhibitory'. She looked blank and exclaimed: 'Eh! What? Say, I don't *get* it!' The professor replied: 'Exactly, my dear'.

I had an incident in my own case. I am usually a rather cheerful person and some friends who were travelling mentioned that I was a very gay person. A young man in the group made it his business to become acquainted and travelled to see me. He was most disappointed to find that I was not 'a boy like that' after all.

Then there are the pseudo-philosophers like Mr. J. Krishnamurti who make a good living out of starry-eyed followers of the vague and misty by using words as Humpty Dumpty did in Lewis Carrol's book: 'Through the looking-glass and what Alice found there'. "When *I* use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less!"

Since words are but poor, weak tools and not fully efficient, we should use them as carefully and precisely as possible in our efforts to communicate.

The Buddha said of a man who has become free from all attachments: 'He may say "I" or "Me" or "Mine" but knows just how much words are worth, is not enslaved by them and is merely conforming to common usage in order to communicate'.⁸

THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT

Using a simple, colourless chemical compound, one could paint a picture on a wall which, when dry, would be invisible but would show up on a photograph. There can be many things which exist here and now in our presence which cannot at all be contacted due to the very limited range of our senses, and the still limited though wider range of extensions of our senses made by modern engineers. People with a very fine attunement of mind may be able to 'feel' and 'see' them, and fantasists can wildly imagine all sorts of things that do not exist anywhere at all but in their own minds and if one may paraphrase: 'The mind works in a mysterious way its wonders to perform.'

It has been mentioned that at the beginning of the Buddhist practice certain phenomena may become apparent and that these are mere by-products, not to be clung to since clinging makes them a hindrance.

These phenomena are also evident in the 'Meditation' exercises of certain 'yoga' practices. One of the phenomena is the feeling of levitation, of rising in the air and floating. One does not actually do this though the body may sway. Some Western groups experience this and afterwards, influenced by their own not very stable minds, swear that they actually rose in the air and floated around. Then there is the common experience of 'leaving the body' and being able to see the body as it lies or sits while the seeing part (and this has given rise to the belief in a separate 'Soul') looks on from above. Certain quite ordinary people, knocked unconscious by a motor-car, for instance, or in a coma due to disease, have had the experience.

This is not the place to go into a lengthy explanation but you will understand the quite mundane reason if you follow the practice.

Here, also, we must steer a middle course between blind belief and blind disbelief. Here, also, we must consider how our minds work to know things. As we have seen, chemical changes in the brain are necessary to translate impressions from our senses into 'things we know'. Even if the actual real things are not there, a chemical change caused by drugs or by blood-pressure changes resulting from physical practices can produce the erroneous impression, visionary and insubstantial, of something that appears to really exist. Here, also, we must remember that no 'god' can save us and no evil spirit can harm us unless we ourselves make the conditions for help or harm.

And above all we have to preserve a sane and balanced attitude, remaining alert and awake, using logic to its uttermost but understanding that logic may be transcended and that at least there is the possibility of a way of knowing that is 'above mere logic', going step by careful step from the known to the unknown.

THE THREE BASIC FACTS OF LIFE AND THE SPLIT SOUL

There are three basic facts connected with existence and the formula is: 'All compounded things are impermanent, all compounded things are therefore a cause of suffering, all things whatsoever are without a permanent undivided "Self" or "Soul".'⁹

Any thinking person can see the truth of the first proposition, that everything we can perceive with our senses and our minds is a flux, a process of change, and therefore with our mental and physical equipment we can contact nothing that is at all permanent; our senses and our minds are themselves part of this flux. There are a few, however, suffering from a multitude of scattered delusions, and those destroying portions of their brains by alcohol or drugs who imagine that they do.

In reality everything is burning and the Buddha stated this: 'Monks, everything is burning. And what is this "everything" that is burning?

'The eye is burning, visible objects are burning, eye-consciousness is burning, also whatever is felt as pleasant or painful, or neither painful nor pleasant, that arises with eye-contact as its essential support, that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of craving, with the fire of hate, with the fire of delusion; I say it is burning with birth, ageing and death, with sorrow, with lamentation, with pain, grief and despair.'

He went on to say the same of the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and, further:

'The mind is burning, ideas are burning, mind-consciousness is burning, mind-contact is burning.

'When he understands this he finds aversion in these things. When he finds aversion, passion fades out. With the fading of passion he is liberated . . .'¹⁰

As to the second proposition, there are quite a few who say that after all they are sometimes very happy. You are probably not having fun now: but do you ever really have fun? You do only if you are completely obsessed with what you are doing: so completely aware of it that you are unaware of yourself.

Mostly when you are 'enjoying yourself' you are only trying to keep your mind from dwelling on reality.

Shelley saw this with deep insight when he wrote of 'That unrest which men miscall delight'.

All the time the 'fun' is taking place there is, in the back of the mind, the realization that death, quite possibly a painful death, is grinning just around the corner: and there is the fear of 'what dreams may come' after death. The 'fun' is just a not fully successful attempt to stifle those fears.

Just as the most devout theist has his odd moments of nagging doubt, more or less quickly stifled, so does the most devoted atheist have more or less quickly stifled moments of doubt of what he believes. The stronger the doubt they have, the stronger the reaction and the louder the denial that they do doubt at all. Religion and atheism are both attempts to allay fears. Since the latter is so often associated with some belief in the efficacy of one or another plan to save humanity, both are really 'cargo cults', the desperate and unreasoned clinging to some not really provable belief that 'God' or 'Socialism' or 'Communism' or 'Man's innate goodness' will, at some not easily specified time, bring changed conditions under which we shall live in health and happiness and plenty, living happily ever after like the prince and princess in the fairy-tale. Both are, meanwhile, temporary, convenient and not altogether useless crutches to help the individual bear himself in the present most unsatisfactory conditions. More temporary are drugs, alcohol, pop music, tobacco and, in books or on stage or screen, pornography, science-fiction, adventure stories, sentimental love stories; even 'good books' and 'good music'. All are really plasters on the wounds of life since none of them are really cures. They are the more harmful the more they enslave.

Again it is all a matter of degree. The Buddha declared:

'Happiness I declare to be two-fold, according as it is to be followed or avoided. When, in following after happiness, it is perceived that bad qualities develop and good qualities diminish, then that kind of happiness is to be avoided, but when in following after happiness it is perceived that bad qualities diminish and good qualities develop, then that happiness is to be followed.'

Take music for instance. It is not at all wrong to alleviate present suffering if it is not used just as a screen between you and reality, and especially if it gives hope and encouragement to gain in strength.

Some of the early ballads did give some education and a feeling for humanity. To a higher point went some of the classical music such as Beethoven's sixth and ninth symphonies. That is very different 'music' from the doleful sentimental songs of weaklings and, worse still, the music of hysteria simulating the sex orgasm and, in descending scale, the shouted repetition of words and phrases showing a regression to early childhood; and early childhood tends to be cruel, violent and very irrational; and leading, this music, to the beat, beat, beat simulating the sound of the mother's heartbeats as heard by the embryo in the womb, a further regression, the ultimate in the flight from reality. Music is the reflection of the music-makers and their willing audiences.

It is all very certainly, not happiness.

Now of what is changing momentarily and is clearly unhappiness, how can we say, this is 'I', 'Me', 'Mine', my 'Eternal Soul'?

Anything permanent could not be perceived at all by you because your body and your mind are changing moment by moment. Yet all are, consciously or unconsciously, seeking a permanence. Therefore people wish to imagine 'an immortal soul' that is, somehow, unchanging. What then is your 'Soul', your 'Ego', your 'Self'? It is not the final, indivisible part of a person. Just as, in comparatively recent years, scientists split the atom, formerly thought to be the smallest possible particle of matter, so, more than twenty-five centuries ago, the Buddha split the 'Soul' and showed that it is just a compound of the following:¹²

- (1) The body.
- (2) The feelings.
- (3) Perception: the faculty of mind which makes known external objects.
- (4) The tendencies which make up your character: your 'pattern'.
- (5) Consciousness.

Is your body permanent or changing? Of course it's changing and therefore a most unsatisfactory thing. Can you see yourself without your body or your body without you? You may think you can, but wait till we come to the end of this particular chapter.

Are your feelings permanent or changing? Of course they're changing. When you feel 'sweet and reasonable' and loving you are hardly the same person who can get very angry. Can you see yourself without your feelings, without any feelings at all?

Is your perception permanent or changing? It's obvious that you do not perceive things now as you once did.

Are your tendencies, that make up the 'Pattern' or your character permanent or changing? You know that they can change.

Can you see yourself without any perception? Or without any tendencies?

What about consciousness? Is it permanent or changing? You don't look at things at all in the same way that you used to. Can you see yourself without any consciousness? Of course you can't, there wouldn't be any perception or consciousness to see with.

If you are not fully convinced, prove it this way.

Take off all your clothes, preferably in the early morning when your thoughts are more clear, and look at yourself in a mirror, steadily, critically, as though you were looking at somebody else. Then imagine yourself, as well as you can remember, as a small child. How obvious it is that you are not the same person. Then imagine yourself as you age, as you will be, if you live long enough, as a very old person, decrepit, with, very likely, some of your faculties

already gone and the others going. Yet another person, surely, than the one you now are.

Then, if you are able and you still dare, try to undress your mind, taking off the rosy ideas which you have of yourself and look at that critically, comparing it with the mind of the small child, now dead, whom you once spoke of as 'Me'. And understand that if you become very old there will be quite a different mind 'not the same yet not another'. The change is a continuing one and is so fast that even when you say 'I am', the person who says 'am' is not quite the same person who said 'I'. And because of all this, because you are slipping and sliding away from all you hold dear, and because all you hold dear is slipping and sliding away from you, there is nothing really satisfactory.

Can, therefore, any of the five divisions into which the 'Self' has been analysed, be the Soul? No. What then is left? Only the ?

AND THE ?

The ?, it is obvious, is not anything you can think of as yourself.

'It is extremely difficult', said the Buddha: 'to see that which is without a Self: it is not easy to perceive the truth. Only the person who has ended craving utterly, who has nothing to cling to, he alone can see.'¹³

The body and mind then, what most consider as 'Self' or 'Soul', can not exist apart but can be split as above into ever-changing parts. If you consider the 'Soul' as 'an immaterial, immortal, unchanging spirit' inhabiting the body, as some people think of it, then how can it be affected by the mind or body? If it were, then it, too, must be changing and so not really 'immortal'. Drugs and disease can affect the body and the mind and so would affect 'The Soul' if this 'Soul' could be affected by what you (as mind and body) do.

On the other hand we can repeat what the Buddha said: 'There is an unborn, a not become, a not-made, a not-compounded'.¹⁴

Nobody can tell you what the ? is. Only you can tell you what it is, and only by going to see for yourself. And when you really find out fully, there will be no you to tell it and no you to tell it to. That may sound nonsense to you, but never again now will you be able, fully and without doubting, to believe in that very materialist 'Heaven' that most folk have believed in. And never again can you believe in that big lie that some folk have tried to tell themselves, that death ends all.

CHAPTER 6

A final farewell to 'you and me'

There are a few points to make in order to round off the discussion of 'Self' or 'Soul' as a separate, continuing, unchanging individual. First let us make a distinction between 'reincarnation' and 'rebirth'. The first is generally thought of, particularly by certain Hindu sects, as a 'Soul' or 'Atman' or 'Divine spark' or 'Breath of God' inhabiting body after body until it unites with God. Rebirth, as used by Buddhists, is thought of as a sort of force or 'pattern', ever-changing, that 'descends into the womb' under the right conditions and under the right conditions becomes an ever-changing person. Here we are considering human birth though the same pattern may be born in an animal womb. One sect of Theosophy, a Western cult developed mainly from Hinduism by a Russian, a Mrs. Blavatsky, thinks that there is a sort of evolution of the 'Soul' and that it can go from an animal into human form but never the reverse.

This is not the teaching of the Buddha, who said that there are many conditions worse than the human and that a man may be reborn in any of these, including the animal, as a result of his deeds.

The Buddha mentioned various types of animals and said: 'a foolish person, formerly hankering after tastes, committed unskilful actions on that account and is reborn as one of these beings . . .'¹

He mentioned this and other 'woeful' states and also many 'blissful' states both in other worlds than this as well as in this world.

He said: 'men have deeds as their own, they are inheritors of their deeds, deeds are their matrix, deeds are their kith and kin and their deeds are their support. It is their deeds that classify men'.²

When asked by a monk to give an illustration, he gave several metaphors, based on this world naturally, and at a later date the literal-minded took these as actual instances.

Can rebirth be proved? Yes: but just as a proposition in higher mathematics can be proved to a child, by first educating the child and teaching him mathematics. It can, in another way, be proved, by yourself to yourself.

In the here and now it cannot be proved: there is no proof but a deal of evidence. Look around you.

And nothing else makes sense. Consider a man born blind. Is it his fault that he suffers, or his parents' fault or God's fault? There are certain diseases contracted by a parent due to bad actions that result in blind children, but not all blindness is a result of such by any means and we cannot say 'The parents' fault'. If you say 'God made me' then why was the child born in a state of suffering? Hardly the act of 'A loving Father'? We say it is the result of his deeds in one or more previous lives.

Of course you can say: 'It's nobody's fault: just blind chance.' Then, if this were so, Macbeth would be right:

'Life . . . is a tale told by an idiot,
full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.'

NOW WHY DID YOU DO THAT? THE SIX MOTIVATIONS

When you speak of motives you can say, in the ordinary sense, there is just one big motive, the profit motive. It all stems from craving, desire, whether it be weak or strong. 'The will to live', 'the will to grow' and 'the will to create' are motivated by desire, the profit of the ego. In all struggles, whether they be more or less violent between two individuals or wars between peoples, right up to the past 'world wars' and the future one in which the preliminary skirmishes have already begun and for which the peoples are already being 'softened-up' and conditioned for by another artificially-induced world 'depression', there is the profit motive, either the profit of the ego or the profit of a small group of international money-spinners.

It is in all things, even in such things as Art, though here it is in a lesser degree, whether it be the ego's profit in expressing itself or the mercenary one with an eye to sales.

Desire, craving, is the parent of all motivation, said the Buddha.³

If a 'God' had made the earth it would have been because He was unsatisfied, craving for something, and indeed this is how the idea of a 'God Almighty' arose in that very powerful being who thinks he is 'Almighty God'. It was explained by the Buddha:

'At one time or other, after the lapse of many ages, this world-system comes to an end. This kind of time exists. When the world-system is destroyed, beings have mostly been reborn in the plane of radiant spirits, and there they live, made of mind, feeding on rapture radiating light from their bodies, dwelling in air, occupying glorious positions. Thus they remain for many ages.

'At one time or other, after the lapse of many ages, this world-system begins to re-evolve. This kind of time exists. When this happens

a God-plane appears, but it is empty. At that time some being, either because his span of life comes to an end or his merit from previous deeds is exhausted, falls from that radiant spirit-plane and is reborn in the God-plane by spontaneous apparitional birth: and there he lives, as he did in the spirit-plane. Thus does he remain for many ages.

'Now there arises in him from dwelling there a great length of time alone, unsatisfactoriness and a longing: "Oh! Would that other beings might come here." And then, because their span of life had expired or their merit had become exhausted, other beings fall from the radiant spirit-plane and arise in the God-plane as companions to him. They live as he does there. So they remain for many ages.

'Then the one who was first reborn thinks to himself: "I am the Supreme God, God Almighty, The Conqueror, the one who cannot be conquered by others, surely All-seeing, All-powerful, the Ruler, the Creator, the Excellent, The Father of all that are and all that are to be. I have created these other beings, because awhile ago I thought: 'Would that they might come'. Thus on my mental aspiration, these beings arise in this Heaven"'.⁴

The Buddha then goes on to show that the first being to arise is of longer life and when others fall from that plane and are reborn as men, some of them already having accepted the 'God's' opinion of himself, may practise one or other form of concentration and have a faint memory of a previous 'Heaven-existence' and so the idea of an 'Eternal Almighty God' arises.

This view is held by many Western mystics and has been strikingly set forth by Wordsworth in 'Intimations of Immortality':

'Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God who is our home.'

Breaking craving down into its parts, the Buddha further showed that there are only six motives, six springs of action, for whatever you do. He also showed that in all actions there are those in which bad qualities diminish and good qualities develop and these are the skilful acts; and those in which good qualities diminish and bad qualities develop, and these are the unskilful actions.⁵ Morality is, really, a matter of intelligence.

The six motivations should be repeated again and it should again be mentioned that some little repetition of what has been written earlier in this book is necessary to stress the points.

The three skilful motivations are: 1. Altruism, thought for others and not for yourself. 2. Metta to all beings whether they have helped or harmed you. 3. Wisdom, clear-sighted intelligence.

The three unskilful motivations are: 1. Desire, covering the whole range from a faint desire to lust for things. 2. Anger, covering the whole range from a faint aversion or ill-humour to mad rage. 3. Delusion, covering the whole range from ignorance of the true facts of life to utter delusion.

Everything you do and say and think is motivated by one or more of these, and to the degree that one or more of the first three is present, so is the action skilful in that degree. To the degree that one or more of the latter three is present, so is the action to that degree unskilful.

There is no such thing as 'sin' and hardly even 'good' and 'evil', only skilful and unskilful actions.

Everything that you do is according to the pattern that is you, a pattern in space-time that is ever-changing; a pattern that has been formed by everything you have done in the past and is being formed by all that you do now. It is this pattern that is reborn and that attracts to itself happier or unhappier conditions according to its formation.

Here one could, perhaps, think of this pattern as the 'Soul' so long as it is remembered that the pattern is changing all the time, is never, from moment to moment, exactly the same, and that you can channel the change, can change it little by little until it becomes a quite different pattern. You can do it by putting forth energy in a planned and willed effort. The Buddha said there are four right efforts and these will be given in the next chapter.

You may ask: 'What is it that plans and wills?' The answer is not: 'A separate soul'; and here you can see that a man can plan and will things that he knows must bring future unhappiness to himself and others. When a slave to tobacco begins to give up the addiction, the 'withdrawal symptoms', chemical changes, make him irritable; and so does the onset of certain diseases due also to chemical changes. He does things then that he would never do when healthy and happy. What plans and wills is not a single, undivided entity but the pattern itself, the character tendencies that are carried over, as on a recording tape as it were, all that has been reacted to in the past, and which comes into consciousness given the right conditions for it to do so.

'The mind grows by what it feeds on' and by deliberately shutting out some thoughts and giving play to others, which is the extent of 'free will', one can master those petty cravings for power in a dissolving world.

You can master them for greater happiness here in this world and the future in other worlds, better than this but still changing and

therefore unsatisfactory; or you can eliminate these cravings completely. 'Rouse yourself by means of yourself: control yourself by means of yourself' and 'You yourselves should make the effort, the Buddhas only point out the way'.⁶

There are two questions you may ask: about remorse and about crime and punishment.

Is the man who does the deed the same person as the man who experiences the result of the deed? The Buddha said that to say he is, is one extreme, and to say he isn't, is the other extreme and that the truth lies in the middle.⁷ A man is the inheritor of his deeds (Kamma) and the deeds become part of him by affecting his character. In many places this is stated and the Buddha asserted strongly that to his own knowledge people were reborn in happy or unhappy states as a result of their deeds.⁸

When you die and, unless you become an Arahant, are reborn, the being reborn is just as much, and just as little, 'you' as the baby you once were. The difference will be due to what you have reacted to and how you have reacted.

Take the case of a small child who loses a leg in an accident. He will grow up into a very different being but he will still be minus a leg. One can note that no 'faith-healer' has ever had enough faith, or been able to induce enough faith, to grow a new leg on others or himself. Only spiders can do that.

If an unworthy act be performed, whatever the act, and later, after feeling genuinely sorry for that, confessing it openly, not in secret, and training himself so that never again will he do such things, a person can be completely free of remorse and, indeed, should never feel any, being in that matter, a different person. A really immoral man can feel free from remorse but not completely so. He may push it out of his conscious mind but it's on record within him, and to his ultimate suffering.⁹

There is an interesting story which illustrates much of this and so is given here at some length as it is also the subject of a special discourse given by the Buddha.¹⁰

THE MURDERER WHO BECAME A BUDDHA

I've used the word 'Buddha' in the title for emphasis: 'Buddha, an awakened one; Tathagata: one who has gone for good'; and 'Arahant' were used equally of the Buddha and those disciples who had attained 'Nibbana', the 'Deathless', the permanent state of complete serenity.

At a time when the Buddha was staying in the realm of King Pasenadi of Kosala, there was a bandit, a terrorist really, who was 'bloody-handed, bent on death and destruction, merciless, who ravaged whole districts'. There was a custom among such bandits

of taking the little finger of a person they killed and drying it to wear as a sign of prowess. This particular bandit had enough to wear a whole garland of fingers and was given the name of Angulimala, 'Finger-garland'. When he was in a district people would not travel along the roads except in groups of thirty or forty and even then he attacked them and despoiled them and killed.

The Buddha set out alone along a road where Angulimala was reputed to be and though farmers and others tried to dissuade him, telling him of Angulimala, he still persisted in travelling.

When the bandit saw a monk alone on that road he was very surprised, knowing that people would have warned him of the danger, but determined to kill him.

He set off after him swiftly with that intention but though the monk appeared to be walking slowly, Angulimala was not able to get close enough to attack. This was done by an act of psychic power of the Buddha.

Angulimala was the more surprised and stood still and shouted: 'Stand still, monk, stand still'. The Buddha replied: 'I am standing still, Angulimala, now you stand still'. The bandit said: 'I thought you recluses were dedicated to truth. Why do you say you are standing still when you are walking and tell me to stand still when I am already standing still?'

The Buddha then said: 'I am standing still because I have laid aside all weapons and harm no living creature: you are travelling to an unhappy state because you are taking life'.

He then taught Angulimala who realized that he was in the presence of somebody of a superior nature and, throwing down his weapons, he begged to be admitted as a monk.

The Buddha immediately accepted him and said: 'Come, monk' and took him along with him.

The whole point is that the Buddha saw that Angulimala had it in him to realize the truth.

In due course they arrived back at the monastery. Meanwhile, the people of the city, the capital, had staged a demonstration outside the king's palace, demanding that he get rid of Angulimala. The king collected five hundred soldiers and set out on the mission. Passing the monastery he called in to pay his respects to the Buddha and informed him of the mission, saying that he was doubtful of success.

The Buddha asked the king what he would do were he to see Angulimala as a genuine monk. The king said he would pay respect to the monk, but when the Buddha pointed to Angulimala sitting nearby with head and beard shaved and wearing the yellow robe and told the king that there was the bandit, King Pasenadi was afraid, but on being reassured offered his support to the monk.

Later, Angulimala, walking in the city for almsfood in the morning, saw a woman who was ill and in difficult and dangerous labour, unable to give birth. He thought: 'How impure and unsatisfactory is this life' and pondered on this. On his return he mentioned it to the Buddha.

The Buddha said: 'Well, Angulimala, you can help the woman by saying to her: "I am not aware of having intentionally deprived any being of life since I was born." By this truth may there be well-being for you and the unborn child.' (See the heading: 'Prayer' for this 'Act of Truth'.) Angulimala was shocked and asked the Buddha how he could say that since he had murdered so many. The Buddha told him: 'Then, Angulimala, say to the woman "... since I was born of the noble birth ..."' Angulimala did this to good effect.

Later still, he was walking for almsfood in another quarter when people realized who he was. They threw stones and sticks at him and he returned to the monastery bleeding, with his almsbowl broken and his robe torn. The Buddha said: 'Endure this, noble one. You are experiencing here and now the ripening of those deeds. Otherwise you would have suffered thousands of times worse things for many thousands of lives.'

Then Angulimala, concentrating his mind in private, experienced the bliss of freedom and having become an Arahant made this solemn declaration:

'He who was formerly negligent but afterwards becomes diligent, illumines this world like the moon freed from a cloud.

He whose evilly performed deeds are closed by what is skilled, illumines this world like the moon freed from a cloud.

Irrigators lead water. Fletchers shape arrows. Carpenters bend wood. The wise control themselves.'

It is not a case of weighing good and bad deeds in the scales. It is a case of changing oneself so much that one is really a different person, with different character tendencies.

As to crime and punishment, it should be understood that by far the greatest crime is war and all who engage in it in any way or who condone it for any reason are equally guilty. And war inevitably brings its own punishment, even to those stupid money-spinners who are the ones who initiate wars and by subtle propaganda persuade greater fools to fight in them.

The teaching of the Buddha is that a soldier, however he may try to rationalise his fighting, must have the intention to wound and kill and when body breaks up and he is reborn it is in a most unpleasant state.¹¹ And it will avail him nothing to say: 'I did it for my parents', or for 'King and country', the result will be the unhappy state.¹²

And: 'Though one should conquer a million men in battle, the man who conquers himself is the Great man.'¹³

'PRAYER': THE 'ACT OF TRUTH'

The Buddha taught that it is of no use to pray to any 'God' to help one. There was a custom at the time that when a man died his friends and relatives would gather and pay priests who would say prayers for the departed, praise him highly and 'speed him heavenward'. The Buddha said it would be of no use casting a huge rock into a deep pool and with joined palms praising it and saying: 'Rise up, good rock, float ashore, good rock!' And in similar manner it was of no use praising a man who had been a killer, a thief, a slanderer, one given to bad sexual practices and so on and expecting that to help him to heaven. Conversely, if a man had led a good life, nobody could keep him, when reborn, in a low state.¹⁴

He also pointed out that if a man wished to cross a river brimful of water and had no boat or bridge and no means of getting to the other side, it would be of no use praying to the further bank to come over for him.¹⁵

Certain prayers may appear to be answered; for instance there is the case where something is lost or mislaid and people have sat quietly and prayed to a certain Saint who is entrusted with the finding of lost articles. After a while they remember where the article is. The quietened mind finds the article and the Saint gets the credit.

The meaning of 'Prayer' is important for prayer is merely an earnest wish that is usually but not necessarily addressed to one who has, it is supposed, the ability to make that wish come true. The word is from the Latin 'precarius' (obtained by entreaty), and the Romans were realist enough to use the same word (our modern 'precarious') for uncertain and insecure. They derived the word from 'precor', meaning both to entreat and to wish for. So prayer is a sort of very fervent wishful thinking and asking for something. And Turgenev was pretty right when he said: 'Every man's prayer reduces itself to this: "Almighty God, grant that twice two be not four"'.¹⁶

There is no prayer in Buddhism, and if you say that you have heard 'Buddhists' pray, well you have also heard 'Christians' say things that Jesus Christ never taught.

There is a Pali word: 'Saddha', which has often been translated as 'Faith'. It means, literally, 'setting one's heart upon' and has been used by the Buddha to mean 'credulous'.¹⁶ It has also been used in a good sense for that fervent feeling a man may have for a truth which he has tested and proved.

In Buddhism there is what is closely allied to prayer, an earnest wish or 'Act of Truth' and this it is that Angulimala used.

Having said that, it is necessary to say more, to explain it and to issue a warning.

The Act of Truth consists in making an earnest wish, fervently, that a certain thing should happen and allying this to something

intimately connected with yourself that is indisputably true. Then you visualise, you 'see', in imagination of course, the desired result but must not visualise the steps leading to that result, just the result itself. Having done this with a concentrated mind, confident in the result, you then put the matter out of your mind. If you can do this, it works.

BUT: there's an old Greek saying: 'The Gods will give you whatever you want . . . at a price.' The Act of Truth is remarkably potent but requires a concentrated mind and it has died out in the world to a great extent with the weakening of the resolute courage that is necessary for the clear-seeing and the telling of truth at all costs. With the weakening of the courage necessary for shouldering one's own burdens and responsibilities, the Act of Truth has degenerated into slavish prayers or petitions to supposed Divine Beings for 'ever-present help in time of trouble'.

To the old-fashioned 'materialist', earnest wishes based on and made the more earnest by an appeal to Truth itself may sound fanciful and superstitious; yet that will only prove him really vulnerable to the epithet 'old-fashioned' since painstaking work by several teams of scientists have had results that at least point to the possibility of proving the truth of psychokinesis, the action of 'mind' on 'matter' at a distance.

' . . . take life from before your eyes, fool, as one lifts a hand and you will see unearthly radiance rimming your grimy coat.'¹⁷

Any man can prove the efficacy, but should be very careful that there is a high moral motive (and greed for Self is immoral), otherwise there can be danger in obtaining one's desire at a time when one no longer desires it, and that has proved, at times, calamitous. This is shown very well in the folk-lore of most peoples where the man who gets his wish finds that it brings disaster.

And many a man who has said: 'I'll be damned if I do it' and then does it, damns himself for a period in actuality. Indeed, benediction, the speaking of good wishes, and malediction, the speaking of bad wishes, of cursing, have been used by almost every man who ever lived. The ancients had a sure instinct which has been almost lost in the mad whirl of the modern world, of the potency of these. Though an Act of Truth can change outside circumstances, it the more quickly and the more surely changes the one who wishes.

In all this there are several things to consider: one is, as mentioned, the mind must be a concentrated one, another is that such types of mind are stronger in some people than in others. Yet another is that, as those studying 'para-normal phenomena' are beginning to see, there is a sort of 'battery' which is stronger at times, weaker at times.

Above all, common-sense must be maintained. It's no use going round thinking that everything one wants is available by wishing. The Buddha had pointed out: 'Effort is needed for attaining. Just as if a clutch of eggs were not fully sat upon by a hen, it would be no use that hen wishing: 'Oh that my chicks would break forth and be safely hatched'. They just wouldn't. The eggs have not been fully sat upon, fully warmed, fully brooded over. So a man must be attentive and put forth effort'.¹⁸

CHAPTER 7

The Four Truths and the Eightfold Path

The Buddha pointed out that arising from the two extremes of belief in eternity and belief in annihilation, there were three views or opinions fully enquired into, considered and discussed by religionists and philosophers.¹

One was that everything was due to what a person had done in the past. Another was that everything was due to the creation by a God. This is the view of the Judaeo-Christians and most other religions. 'I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and I create evil: I the Lord do all these things.'² The third view is that everything happens by blind chance.

Clinging to one of these opinions, people are whirled round for ages in the maelstrom of existence and do not seek a way out. The Buddha showed a 'Middle Path' and a way to follow it. He said that there is indeed a real reality and that all the various religionists had part of the truth only, and were like the blind men who examined an elephant and had their own views as to what an elephant really is.³

'The people who hold all sorts of views are blind, unseeing. They do not know the profitable or the unprofitable. They do not know what is Real or what is Unreal'. He then gave the parable of the blind men. The ruler of a petty kingdom assembled several men who were born blind and who had not previously known of an elephant and had one presented before them. They were sent in groups to examine the beast. To one was presented the head of the elephant, to another group its ear, to another its trunk, to another its tusks, the leg, the tail, the tuft of hair at the end of the tail.

They were then asked what an elephant was like. Those who had been led to the head answered: 'An elephant is like a pot'. Those who had observed only an ear said: 'An elephant is like a winnowing basket'. Those who'd felt the tusks said: 'No, it's like a plough-share'. Those who knew only the trunk exclaimed: 'A snake'. The group who'd felt the leg were sure it was a pillar. Those who'd felt the body said: 'It's like a granary'. The group which had felt just

the tail said: 'A pestle', and those who'd been presented with the tuft of hairs on the tail were just as certain an elephant was like a brush.

They argued until some shouted that the others were stupid and that they, having realized 'elephant', were completely right. They even came to blows on the matter and fighting began.

Those religious folk who've contacted part of reality are just like the blind men who contacted part of the elephant, said the Buddha.

All this would mean nothing had not the Buddha given the way and the method to follow that way, so that one can know for oneself.

In what follows there may be a few things that you 'don't go along with'. That's quite all right so long as you don't feel that you *should* believe them. Forced belief is worse than no belief, unless the 'force' is the later understanding that forces the belief. Should there be such, you can make the mental, or spoken for that matter, reservations, so long as you do not just dismiss it but consider these things, think about them a little from time to time, argue with yourself about them and consider the possibility at least that they just might be true.

You will notice that 'one-pointedness of mind' is spoken of as concentration. The method of attaining this is given later. There must be some initial wisdom and some initial concentration and these can be, and must be, developed to follow the path and the following of the path develops them. The completely scatter-brained cannot follow the path.

'There is no concentration for him who lacks wisdom;
nor is there wisdom for him who lacks concentration.
In whom are found both concentration and wisdom —
he, indeed, is close to Nibbana.'⁴

The whole teaching of the Buddha is of a way out, a way to perfect tranquillity, and that it begins with the four great truths: that this continued existence is suffering: that there is an origin of this suffering: that there can be an extinction of this suffering: that there is a path leading to the extinction of suffering.⁵

'And what is the truth of suffering? Birth is suffering, decay is suffering, death is suffering, the five groups of existence connected with grasping are suffering.

'What is the truth of the origin of suffering? Through the formative tendencies (forming the pattern, the character) which are conditioned by delusion, consciousness is conditioned. Through this consciousness the mental and physical phenomena, the material body and brain, are conditioned. Through the mental and physical phenomena the six bases, the five senses and the mind, are conditioned. Through these six bases contact with reality is conditioned. Through contact feeling is conditioned. Through this feeling, this sensation, desire is conditioned. Through desire clinging is conditioned. Through clinging

the process of becoming is conditioned. Through the process of becoming rebirth is conditioned. Through birth decay, sorrow and death are conditioned. This is the truth of the origin of suffering.

'And what is the truth of the extinction of suffering? From the utter fading out and extinction of delusion comes the extinction of the formative tendencies; from the extinction of the formative tendencies, the extinction of consciousness; from the extinction of consciousness, the extinction of the mental and physical phenomena; from the extinction of the mental and physical phenomena, the extinction of the six bases; from the extinction of the six bases, the extinction of contact; from the extinction of contact, the extinction of craving; from the extinction of craving, the extinction of clinging; from the extinction of clinging, the extinction of the process of becoming; from the extinction of the process of becoming, the extinction of rebirth; from the extinction of rebirth, the extinction of decay, old age and death. Thus ceases the whole mass of suffering.

'And what is the path leading to the extinction of suffering? It is just this eightfold path: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.'

The path is eightfold and was explained in full detail by the Buddha.⁶

THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

He showed that the eight parts are not to be taken separately but 'revolve round each other'. In each case 'Right' is defined. He begins with the end-point of the path, Right Concentration. 'What is right concentration? It is right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness. Whatever one-pointedness of mind is accompanied by these seven components, this is called right concentration.'

As to this, right understanding comes first. And how does right understanding come first? If one realises that wrong understanding is wrong understanding and that right understanding is right understanding, that is his right understanding.

'And what is wrong understanding? To hold the view that there is no result from generosity, no fruit or ripening of deeds well done or ill done, that this world does not really exist, that no other world really exists, that there is no benefit from mother and father, that there are no beings arising in other worlds without the instrumentality of parents, that there are not existing those who have realised by their own super-knowledge both this world and a world beyond and who are living rightly, following the right course. This is wrong understanding.

'And what is right understanding? It is two-fold. There is right understanding that is good and brings good results but yet has some

blemishes and so ripens to clinging. It is the opposite of wrong understanding but has still elements of self and thought of self.

'There is the perfect right understanding that goes beyond this, that has no blemishes, that has wisdom, the faculty of intellect, the component of enlightenment that is investigation into things and is free from thoughts of self. This is perfect right understanding.

'And what is wrong thought? Thought for pleasures of the senses and the mind, thought for ill-will, thought for harming. This is wrong thought.

'And what is right thought? It is two-fold. There is the right thought that is good but has still some blemishes, it is thought that, though good, ripens to clinging. It is thought for others and not for self, thought for metta to all, thought for harmlessness. And what is right thought that is free from blemishes?

'Whatever is reasoning, thought-conception, thinking, an activity of the inner speech through the complete focussing and application of the mind in developing the noble path.

'And what is wrong speech? Lying, slanderous speech, harsh speech, gossiping. This is wrong speech.

'And what is right speech? It is two-fold. There is the right speech that ripens to clinging and has blemishes, though it is good, that is speech free from lying, free from slander, free from harshness, free from gossip. And there is the perfect right speech. The same but free from all self and by one who is of noble thought.

'And what is wrong action? Harming living beings, taking what has not been freely given, wrong enjoyment among the sensual pleasures: that is wrong action.

'And what is right action? It is two-fold. There is the right action that ripens to clinging and has blemishes even though it is good. It is abstaining from harm, action that does not take what is not freely given, that is not wrong enjoyment among the sense-pleasures; and there is the right action that is free from blemishes, that is perfect. It is the right action as above and with action that is a part of the eight-fold path in developing it.

'And what is wrong mode of livelihood? It is trickery, cheating, gains by flattery, fortune-telling, false representation, rapacity for gain upon gain. This is wrong livelihood.

'And what is right livelihood? It is two-fold: it is the opposite of that wrong livelihood as above and is livelihood that does not harm others, and that is right livelihood that though good has blemishes and ripens to clinging. Then there is the perfect right livelihood that is following the path fully.

'Whoever puts forth effort for getting rid of wrong understanding, for the gaining of right understanding, that is his right effort.

Mindfully he gets rid of wrong understanding; entering on right understanding he abides in it mindfully. This is his right mindfulness. Thus these three things circle round and follow after right understanding, that is to say: right understanding, right effort, right mindfulness.

'Whoever puts forth effort for the getting rid of wrong thought, for the gaining of right thought, entering on right thought and abiding in it mindfully, that is his right effort and his right mindfulness. Thus these three things circle round and follow after right thought, that is to say: right understanding, right effort, right mindfulness.

'Whoever puts forth effort for the getting rid of wrong speech, for the gaining of right speech, that is his right effort. Mindfully he gets rid of wrong speech, mindfully he enters on right speech and abides in it. That is his right mindfulness. Thus these three things circle round and follow after right speech, that is to say: right understanding, right effort, right mindfulness.

'Whoever puts forth effort for the getting rid of wrong action, for the gaining of right action, that is his right effort. Mindfully he gets rid of wrong action, mindfully he enters on right action and abides in it. That is his right mindfulness.

'Whoever puts forth effort for the getting rid of wrong mode of livelihood, for the gaining of right mode of livelihood, that is his right effort. Mindfully he gets rid of wrong mode of livelihood, mindfully he enters on right mode of livelihood and abides in it. That is his right mindfulness. Thus these three things circle round after right mode of livelihood, that is to say: right understanding, right effort, right mindfulness.

'And as to this, right understanding comes first. And how does right understanding come first? Right thought proceeds from right understanding, right speech proceeds from right thought, right action proceeds from right speech, right mode of livelihood proceeds from right action, right effort proceeds from right mode of livelihood, right mindfulness proceeds from ^{right} effort, right concentration proceeds from right mindfulness, right knowledge proceeds from right concentration, right freedom proceeds from right knowledge. In this way, the learner's path is of eight parts, the perfected one's path is of ten parts.

'As to this, right understanding comes first. And how does right understanding come first? Wrong understanding is worn away in one of right understanding; and those various evil, unskilful things that arise conditioned by wrong understanding are worn away in him; and various skilful things, conditioned by right understanding, come to development and fruition. Wrong thought in the same way is worn away in one of right thought . . . wrong speech is worn away in one of right speech . . . wrong action is worn away in one of right action

. . . wrong mode of livelihood is worn away in one of right livelihood . . . wrong effort is worn away in one of right effort . . . wrong mindfulness is worn away in one of right mindfulness . . . wrong concentration is worn away in one of right concentration . . . wrong knowledge is worn away in one of right knowledge . . . wrong freedom is worn away in one of right freedom; and in all these, those various unskilful things that arise conditioned by the wrong modes are worn away in him; and various skilful things conditioned by the right modes come to development and fruition.'

In this, as in everything, all is a matter of degree and right understanding grows by degrees as does right concentration. It may be said that knowledge that binds to this transient and illusory world is wrong knowledge and that the greatest freedom one can have in this world, if it is of this world, is wrong freedom; and right freedom is freedom from impermanence and illusion. Right livelihood in this is more than just the right way of earning a living, though it includes this, it is also the right way of living.

It is a matter of gradually getting a deeper and deeper understanding which ends in right knowledge and right freedom. Right knowledge is full knowledge of the impressions received by the senses and the mind and their interaction as they really are, and this results in right freedom, where one is entirely free from any desire for that which is changing, impermanent and illusory.

One must begin with some understanding in order to wish to understand more, and as one proceeds all these things work to produce fuller and deeper understanding, if one persists, until the final goal is reached.

THE FOUR RIGHT EFFORTS

'Herein he puts forth desire, strives, stirs up energy, as it were stretches forth his mind and resolves that the evil and unskilful states which have not arisen in him, shall not arise

. . . . that those which have arisen shall be put away

. . . . that those good and skilful states which have not arisen shall arise in him

. . . . that those good and skilful states which have arisen in him shall persist, shall not be confused, but made to become more.'

CHAPTER 8

Who can follow the Path? Hindrances and helps

There is, it must be stressed again, nothing hidden or secret in the Buddha's teaching. The Path and the method were explained in full detail with nothing held back. Anybody at all may attempt the Path, though some, due to their make-up, may require more preliminary training and may take longer to reach the goal.

Naturally an idiot or one of very dull intellect cannot begin to grasp the matter and when the venerable Kassapa tried to teach such a man he was told that though he brought ten torches he couldn't enlighten such as were blind.¹

In another case the Buddha did not explain either the Path or the method and this was in a long discourse to a young householder.² He merely 'pointed the way to Heaven' by giving the moral teaching very fully. It should be explained that, as most religions teach, there is more than one Heaven. Compare:

'I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth;), such an one caught up to the third Heaven.'³

The Buddha showed that these 'Heavens' exist and that they are temporary states and that there is something beyond the highest 'Heaven' and the highest 'God'.⁴

The young layman was quite content and asked no questions. Had he done so he would have been taught more. For its description of the moral teaching the discourse is given in an appendix. In this book the Path and the Method are given. There may be some who will follow the Path.

FOUR CORRUPTING INFLUENCES: FIVE HINDRANCES: TEN FETTERS

Some of these overlap but they are given here as they are very necessary to understanding and appear in many discourses, though in each case only one reference is given for each.

There are four corrupting influences.⁵ These are obsessions: the obsession with sensual pleasure, the obsession with the idea of an 'Eternal Soul', the obsession with mere opinions, the obsession with delusion. These obsessions cause clinging and the thought is not free.

There are five hindrances and their banishment is necessary at the beginning of the practice of the method.⁶

'He banishes sensual desire, he stays with mind free from sensual desire, he cleanses his mind from sensual desire.

'He banishes ill-will, he stays with a mind free from ill-will, with goodwill and compassion towards all living beings he cleanses his mind from ill-will.

'He banishes torpor and languour, he stays free from torpor and languour, with clear perception, with watchful mind, with clear comprehension, he cleanses his mind from torpor and languour.

'He banishes restlessness and worry, staying with a mind free from restlessness and worry, with mind undisturbed, with mind full of peace, he cleanses his mind from restlessness and worry.

'He banishes sceptical doubt, staying free from doubt, full of confidence in the good, he cleanses his mind from doubt.

'When he realizes that these five hindrances have been banished from his mind, gladness springs up within him and joy arises to him in this glad state, and thus rejoicing all his body becomes calm, and being thus calm he enjoys happiness, and being thus happy his mind becomes tranquil within.'

It should be understood that to attain this state is a matter of practice and, as in all things, there are deeper and deeper degrees attained. It should also be understood that it is necessary for some degree to be attained at the very beginning of the period of practice and, further, that the state of mind is, at the very beginning, only temporary and is upset when one goes out again into the whirling world, but that some of the calm remains and with continued practice becomes more and more stable until it becomes permanent when the final goal is near. This will be clear in the method of the practice of the path, as will the method of 'banishing'.

THE TEN FETTERS

There are ten fetters that bind to this world and to the 'Heaven' worlds.⁷

The five that bind to this world are: belief in an unchanging soul; sceptical doubt; clinging to rite and ritual; sensual craving; ill-will. In the above, 'sceptical doubt' is really 'blind disbelief' and blind disbelievers always have some perplexity of mind.

The five fetters that bind to the 'higher' worlds (all temporary states) are: craving for fine-material or 'spiritual' existence; craving

for immaterial or 'higher spiritual' existence; conceit; restlessness; delusion.

TO GAIN THE GOAL

The eight thoughts of a superman

'I shall declare the discourse on "The eight thoughts of a superman".

'This doctrine is for one whose wants are few, not for one whose wants are many; for the contented, not for the discontented; for one who practises seclusion, not for one who is fond of society; for one who is energetic, not for one who is indolent; for one who is setting up mindfulness, not for one who is heedless; for one who has composure of mind, not for one whose mind is confused; for the wise, not for the unwise; for one who is free of the hindrances, not for one who delights in sensual pleasures and delights in the things that hinder spiritual progress.

'Herein, one wanting little does not wish: "May I be known as one wanting little; may I be known as contented; may I be known as practising seclusion; may I be known as energetic; may I be known as one setting up mindfulness; may I be known as composed; may I be known as wise; may I be known as one free from the hindrances." '8

The four bases of psychic power

These are also known as the four roads to psychic power and they may be used, and must be developed, either consciously or unconsciously, for the gaining of extrasensory or supernormal power. They have been so used but that is not the purpose for which they were taught, the purpose is to gain the end of suffering, the final goal of the Path.

'By whomsoever the four bases of psychic power are neglected, by them also is neglected the noble way that goes on to the utter destruction of suffering. By whomsoever the four bases of psychic power are undertaken, by them also is undertaken the noble way that goes on to the utter destruction of suffering.

'What are the four?

'He cultivates the basis of psychic power of which the features are intention together with the co-factors of concentration and effort of will.

'He cultivates the basis of psychic power of which the features are energy together with the co-factors of concentration and effort of will.

'He cultivates the basis of psychic power of which the features are directed consciousness together with the co-factors of concentration and effort of will.

'He cultivates the basis of psychic power of which the features are investigation together with the co-factors of concentration and effort of will.'⁹

One must have a strong desire to carry this through, which is intention, and proceed at all costs with energy, concentration and investigation into things.

Even if one does not carry it through to the end, the mind is broadened, deepened and strengthened and the will made more firm.

Their cultivation is necessary for the destruction of the passions which are rooted in craving, since it is necessary to understand these and with understanding follows their fading out.

'For the full understanding, the utter destruction, for the abandoning, annihilating, for the decay of passions, for the utter passionless ending, giving up and renunciation of passions, these four conditions must be made to grow.

'For the full understanding and destruction of anger and malevolence, hypocrisy and spite, envy and grudging, deceit and treachery, obstinacy and impetuosity, conceit and pride, mental intoxication and heedlessness, these four conditions must be made to grow.'¹⁰

The five controlling faculties

'So long as Insight has not arisen, just so long is there no stability of the four other controlling faculties, there is no abiding steadfastness of the four other controlling faculties. But when Insight has arisen, then there is stability of the four other controlling faculties.

'Just as, so long as the peak of a house with peaked roof be not set up, so long is there no stability of the roof-beams, there is no abiding steadfastness of the roof-beams. But as soon as the peak of a house with peaked roof is set up, then there is stability and abiding steadfastness of the roof-beams.

'In the same way so long as Insight has not arisen, so long is there no stability of the other four controlling faculties. But as soon as Insight has arisen there is stability and abiding steadfastness of the other four controlling faculties. Of what four? Of the controlling faculties of Confidence, Energy, Mindfulness and Concentration.

'In him who has Insight, Confidence is established as a matter of course; Energy, Mindfulness, Concentration are established as a matter of course.'¹¹

The five powers and the seven links of enlightenment

These 'five higher spiritual powers' often mentioned in the discourse are the same as the five controlling faculties, except that it is when they become unshakeable, as in one who has attained, that they are then 'Powers'.

The seven links of enlightenment appear in the method and will be fully described therein.

In all of this, and it cannot be stressed too often as some Japanese sects teach the opposite, it is all a matter of degree. 'The training is gradual: there is no sudden enlightenment'.¹²

A Discourse giving the method of gradual training is given in the appendix for those who wish to study it.

In the above, one word 'Confidence' has sometimes been termed 'Faith'; but it is not blind faith, rather the confidence you have in a man that he can do something you know he is well fitted to do and has the character to do. The word has some idea of enthusiasm and could almost have been translated as enthusiastic faith.

There must be some degree of confidence and some degree of wisdom or else one would never begin the practice. As one progresses they both increase and insight develops.

CHAPTER 9

Of monks and men and the rules of training

Since Buddhism is not a 'Church' or 'A religious Society' and very much a do-it-yourself duty, monks have no authority over laymen and cannot officiate at such things as births, deaths and marriages. There is no such thing as an ordained monk and there are no 'priestly duties'. A monk's duty is to follow the Buddha's path to its goal, and he should also learn the doctrine to teach it to other monks and to laymen when requested by them. It is possible for a layman to preach to a monk.¹ A monk must not take any part in politics for any reason and may not witness entertainments, shows, military manoeuvres and such like. He may not handle money.

In modern days, many rules are broken, which only means to say that there are very few monks but many wearers of 'the yellow robe'. It became so bad in Burma a few years ago that young people spoke derisively of the latter as 'Tat wah', 'The yellow army'.

Breaking of rules did not begin in modern times and the Buddha had said:

'A man who is undisciplined and deceitful does not become a monk by shaving his head. How shall he be a monk who is full of desires?'

'There are many impostors who wear yellow robes but are of evil nature and uncontrolled . . .'²

In order to join 'The Noble Order' of monks, no previous learning is required as there is, for instance, for priests and pastors of certain Christian sects.

The word usually translated as 'Monk' is 'Bhikkhu', which means 'Beggar', and it is true that a monk must live by what is freely given as alms. However, he may not ask for anything at all so does not 'beg' in the usually accepted sense of the word. Since generosity is a Buddhist virtue, he, provided he follows his rules of training, is conferring a benefit by offering himself as a worthy object.

When the Buddha began his teaching, various ascetics and laymen followed him as disciples. As the number grew, and since there was no distinction made as to class or caste, it was necessary to make rules and thus the Order of monks came into being. At the beginning the Buddha, on a few occasions, admitted some to the order by simply saying, 'Come, beggar!' Later it was necessary that the entrant have his alms-bowl and robes and some layman to promise support as to food, clothes and medicine in case of need. The robes could, and preferably should, be of cleaned cotton rags sewn together.

A monk is not 'under vows' and may leave the Order at any time. In such case there is no great stigma attached to him though he has admitted failure in his resolve to follow the path more intently than can a layman. Better a good layman than a bad monk; and the Buddha pointed out:

'Even though he be gaily decked, if yet a man cultivates tranquillity of mind, is calm, subdued, destined for the final release and of pure conduct, laying aside harm to all living things, he is a noble man, a recluse, a monk.'³

A monk who has left the Order may rejoin provided the body of monks in a monastery will accept him.

There is no 'Head of the Order' or single monk with authority over the others and all matters should be settled by the assembly of monks.

Here there is a point which has puzzled some Western scholars. The Buddha had said that he 'would not hand over the Order even to the two chief disciples'⁴ but also that he did not consider himself as 'leader' of the Order,⁵ and the venerable Ananda, the Buddha's constant attendant, had proclaimed: 'There are many hundreds of leaders in this teaching'.⁶

Leadership is handed over by the assembly of monks and a leader is a spokesman for the assembly by general consent and becomes a leader by the respect and veneration in which he is held by the others.

It is much the same in small communities where a man of some character and attainment is consulted and his advice often but not necessarily taken. Quite a different thing from 'Our Great Crass Leader', who has, in very many cases, by low cunning, dishonesty and devious ways, gained the leadership of a political party and of the country.

There is one case where there is respect and deference to a monk from others, and that is from one who is younger in years or has joined the Order later than another, to whom he then shows respect. This was in accord with the custom of the period and still holds.

There is an interesting account in the Vinaya of six Sakyan nobles. The Sakyas were a great clan whose leaders were chieftains rather than kings and the Buddha was the son of a Sakyan chieftain. The Sakyans were of the warrior caste, the leading caste at that time, and were reputed to be very proud and haughty.

The six nobles, one of whom was a chieftain, left together to join the Order, among them Ananda, who later became the Buddha's constant attendant.

They took with them on their journey a man of low caste, a barber who was their servant.

They divested themselves of their jewels and bundling them up gave them to the servant, Upali, telling him he could keep them for his own. Thinking the matter over, Upali thought that if he returned with the jewels, a rich man, he might be suspected of foul play and attacked, so he hung the jewels on a tree, hurried after his masters and begged to be allowed to go with them and join the Order.

They agreed and then asked the Buddha to allow Upali to join first, saying: 'We Sakyans are proud. This barber has been our servant for a long time. Please let him join the Order first and we shall then respect him and so our Sakyan pride will be humbled'; and the Buddha agreed.

Laymen build monasteries and these are, or should be, handed as a gift to the Order. In modern days there are in some cases individual wearers of the yellow robe who consider that they 'own' the monasteries, though their rules of training forbid this.

A 'monastery' built for an individual monk, really a shelter in which to sit or to sleep, must not be more than twelve spans in length and seven spans wide; say 9 feet by 5½.⁷ As the monk does not use the shelter for any other purpose than for the practice of the development of Insight and for sleeping, this is all that is needed.

'There are ten essentials which should always be reviewed by one who has given up the wordly life. What ten?

'He should always consider and think over the fact that having joined the Order he has no more any caste. His very life is dependent on others. What he should do is of a different character from that of laymen. He must consider whether he has a clear conscience as to his virtue. He should consider whether the wise members of the Order consider him to be virtuous. He should always remember that with all pleasant and dear to him there is inevitable change and parting. That of deeds, of mind, speech and body, is he moulded, they are his kinsmen, they are his inheritance, they are his mould: whatever act he performs, be it good or bad, of that shall he be heir. He should consider how he passes his days and nights. Whether he delights in solitude. Whether he has gained faculties transcending the normal, the attainment of noble wisdom, of insight, so that when questioned

by his fellows in his last days his mind shall be unperturbed. On these things must he constantly reflect.’⁸

THE RULES OF TRAINING

How one becomes a Buddhist and how one becomes a monk

The Pali Canon is the three ‘baskets’ or collections:

The Suttapitaka, the Discourses, mostly to monks but some to lay people.

The Vinayapitaka, the Rules for monks including the circumstances that gave rise to the rules.

The Abhidhamma or philosophical and psychological description of the universe and the teachings based on this.

The following, except where numbered references are given, is from the Vinayapitaka.

Since there is no clinging to rite and ritual, a non-Buddhist becomes a Buddhist merely by reciting, three times usually to make it solemn and certain, the formula:

‘I place my full confidence in the Buddha.

I place my full confidence in his teaching.

I place my full confidence in those who are following the teaching to its full.’

He undertakes five precepts which are by no means commandments but rather ‘rules of training’ and he attempts to observe these always. The five precepts are those given above in ‘The Teaching in Brief’.

A layman occasionally takes on himself the following of three more precepts, for certain holiday periods, changing the rule pertaining to ‘sexual conduct’ to one of observing complete chastity, and combining the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth precepts of a novice into three.

To become a monk, a layman must first become a novice and the Buddha had instituted a rule that a novice must wait four months to obtain full monkhood.

During that period he was instructed by a preceptor in the training.

This is one rule which has fallen into disuse, thereby making the wearers of the yellow robe a mockery in some countries.

There have been cases of Westerners, quite ignorant, who have gone to an Asian country, been at once admitted as novices in a monastery and a week later accepted as full monks and afterwards have gone round boasting that they were ‘fully ordained’.

A layman, to become a novice, obtains the consent of the monks in a monastery, which, provided the applicant seems able and willing, is readily given.

He presents his robes and his head is shaven, he is dressed in his robes and undertakes the rules of training.

He undertakes the following precepts:

Abstaining from killing anything with the breath of life.

Abstaining from taking what is not freely given.

Abstaining from all sexual matters.

Abstaining from telling lies.

Abstaining from taking drugs or intoxicants.

Abstaining from taking food after midday.

Abstaining from dancing, singing, playing music and witnessing shows or entertainments.

Abstaining from adornments, scents and beautifying unguents.

Abstaining from using luxurious beds.

Abstaining from accepting money.

There are two hundred and twenty-seven rules of training for a monk and the first seventy-five of these apply to a novice. These seventy-five are mainly rules of deportment and of conduct to be observed to make it possible for a group to live together in harmony and to move among the laymen in accepting alms-food so that the Order will be respected. They also include rules that prohibit the harming of living things.

A novice may be expelled for breaching any of the first five of the precepts he has undertaken and also for speaking in dispraise of the Buddha, the Teaching or the Order and also for clinging to false views in spite of being taught otherwise. Naturally if he acts and feels like this he should leave the Order.

Of the rules, which apply to monks, four entail loss of monkhood. They are: Indulging in any form of sexual activity. Stealing. Killing a human being, or inciting to suicide. Boasting of having supernatural powers.

The other rules are, like the first seventy-five, mainly on matters of dress and deportment and living together in harmony.

The breaking of what are regarded as the more serious rules entails a meeting of all members of the Order in the district and the monk is required to confess, publicly, and admonished and his confession and promise to keep the rules in future accepted. In what are regarded as lesser offences, he merely confesses to a group of fellow-monks and makes the same promise.

A monk who consistently breaks the rules and refuses to reform is to be shunned by the others; and the laymen, seeing this, soon withdraw their support and he has perforce to leave the Order as he cannot obtain the requisites of food.

The Buddha preached a Middle Path between 'sensual indulgence, low, coarse, vulgar, ignoble, unprofitable; and self-mortification, painful, ignoble, unprofitable' so self-mortification is not the basis for the rules. The bare minimum of behaviour is stated to

remind monks that the ideal is of 'the homeless wanderer' and that the holy life is ascetic, but not extremely so.

WHAT GOOD DO THEY DO?

There are those, in the West particularly, who think of monks as lazy people who join an Order to dodge their responsibilities. They think that monks should go around 'doing good' such as teaching school or practising medicine. If he is in the Order, the rules of training forbid his practice of, among other things, medicine. Better for him to remain a layman if he wishes 'to do good' in this sense.

If a man should become a monk and really practise the development of insight to its full, he is doing more good than he could in any other way.

'No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main.

'Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.'¹⁰

For the ordinary man of the world it is difficult to see that there is a link between all of life. This is not to say that 'all life is one': obviously it isn't; but that 'all life is linked', and in this sense what happens to one happens to all.

Thoughts of lovingkindness and thoughts of ill-will, according to their degree of intensity and concentration, influence mostly the one who thinks them, and also influence the whole of life, according to the receptivity of the individuals affected.

A monk practising the development of insight to its highest degree is influencing for good the whole world, including those who do not consciously know that he exists.

AND THE WOMEN

The Buddha had hesitated to allow women to 'go forth to the homeless life' though his aunt, who had cared for him after his mother's death when he was yet a child, had begged that she and other women with her be allowed.¹¹

He finally agreed and an Order of nuns came into being. They had much the same rules as for monks and in addition there were new rules for each Order to govern the behaviour of members of each Order towards members of the other.

The Order of nuns died out in troubled times some centuries later and as there was no organised body to revive it, it could not be re-instituted, just as if the Order of monks dies out it cannot be revived.

The Buddha's hesitation was quite natural. Women were not the mere chattels that they were in other civilisations but traditionally

had not taken part in the philosophic discussions that were part of that culture; they were not trained in the martial arts and had not the strength and ability to survive in lonely places among wild beasts and wild men in a comparatively sparsely populated country; in those days women were more emotional than men and the doctrine is one of applied reasoning.

Among women there were brilliant exceptions — to mention three of these:

There was the good and clever Queen Mallika who could discuss the doctrine and was much brighter than her husband, King Pasenadi of Kosala.¹²

There was Sister Dhammadinna who after becoming a nun had taught many lay-folk. The Buddha had said that as Dhammadinna had taught on a difficult question, so he himself would have taught.¹³

There was the nun Soma who, on being asked how she, a mere woman, could possibly hope to achieve, calmly replied: 'In this doctrine and discipline, the matter of sex does not arise'.¹⁴

And there were quite a few others.

CHAPTER 10

How to perform 'miracles' in three easy lessons

(a) *Preliminary explanations and comments*

Oh, yes, you actually can learn to perform 'miracles'. You can, if you wish to 'sit down and play games at the foot of the hill', go round mending spoons by magic; at least that'd be better than the inane bending of spoons by a stage-magician, which doesn't help anybody but the stage-magician and the income tax department; but before you begin to become excited, wait a moment, pause to consider.

The lessons are easy but the training isn't.

Did you wake up this morning? To wake up, to really waken, that is what the Buddha taught; to snap out of the half-dream that begins when you think you wake up in the morning and begin to dress, dreaming of something else. When you are fancying all the time, you are just dreaming, so you are not really awake. Are you quite sure you're not still going round in a dream?

Only a very small part of the brain is used by the ordinary unawakened man. An almost equal part is often fighting against the part being used, and the major part is dormant, brooding on something else.

The brain is capable of infinitely more than the ordinary man dares to think. The ordinary person, you, can, once fully awake, perform 'miracles', not dream about them; can know all there is to know, not dream about it. There is no 'Divine Grace' in this, no need for 'initiation', no need to hold a candle and look into a mirror. Indeed these playthings are themselves dreams and hindrances. To wake up from this sleep, which is in some ways sounder than the sleep in bed, you have to shake yourself awake, and you have to continue to put forth energy in order to prevent yourself from nodding off to sleep again. Once you are really awake, fully awake, there is so much of aliveness that you won't ever go to sleep again.

Why, then, doesn't the ordinary man wake up? Largely because he doesn't care. He is inhibited by all sorts of fears, many of which

he dare not acknowledge to himself. This has been part of his conditioning in early childhood, in earlier lives also: and, too, he has been conditioned so that he just doesn't believe in his own powers.

Forget the fairy-tales

Very small children of every race and every nation in every age, love fairy-tales. They act as a buffer against the hard facts of life. The child comes up against hard reality and finds that it is indeed very hard, and the fairy-tale allows him to escape for awhile and he uses it as a crutch until he gets used to the idea that the world is not so easy as mother's arms.

However, a lot of children don't grow up. Their bodies do but not their minds. The crutches become so much part of them that they cannot bear to walk alone; so fairy-tales they still must have.

This is as true of some 'Buddhist' people as of all others. They want 'miracles', they want lovely stories, they want a loving Buddha to pour down rays of 'Compassion' and assure them that they'll be all right 'By the Grace of the Triple Gem' or whatever.

Or they want a 'Meditation Master' who will hand them out titles of 'Attainment' like a professor handing out a B.A. or a Doctorate.

That is not what the Buddha taught and not what the Buddha did.

But now about you. Can you bear to throw away your crutches? All of them? Can you throw away the idea that when you read a 'good book' or listen to 'good music' you are improving yourself? You are not, you know, you're only reading yourself to sleep or listening yourself to sleep. Can you throw away the idea that 'God', any god or Saint or whatever, can help you when you're in trouble and get you out of the mess you've made for yourself?

Can you throw away the leaning on a 'Teacher' who either consciously or unconsciously hypnotises you? Can you throw away the 'Yoga' or whatever that you use to consciously or unconsciously hypnotise yourself with? Can you throw away the worries that you use to boost your Ego? Yes, indeed, that's just what they are, ego-boosters.

Can you throw away the desire to be somebody else? Can you throw away the day-dreams in which you *are* somebody else? Or in which you are a bigger and better 'you'? Can you forget all the conceits and fancies? Can you forget the fairy-tales? All those are part and parcel of fairy-tales.

There is a way, there is only one way.

THE METHOD IN BRIEF

The Buddha said that if you could give up one thing he would guarantee that you would gain complete freedom and never more

come to rebirth. That one thing, he said, is craving in any of its manifestations.¹

The method, the training for this, is quite long.

In a very few instances only the moral teaching, which leads to a temporary 'Heaven', was given, since it was to those who could not or would not attempt the practice, but almost all of the Buddha's talks and discourses were on the way out of suffering and the method of following that way.

The full practice was given in two very long discourses which were similar except that one was longer than the other and with more detail.²

Most of this teaching was given to monks but also was given to some laymen. Some laymen followed the practice and some laymen attained the final goal.

The practice itself can hardly be changed and very little change can be made in the method, but the manner of undertaking it can, and in modern times must, be very slightly varied and explanations are needed.

In very few cases did the Buddha give a brief method since this cannot be followed unless one has to some extent got rid of cravings. This simple and concise method was given to two different people but both of these had, as the Buddha knew, become to some extent free from desire.

One was to a monk who, as he told the Buddha, was 'a broken-down old man, aged, far gone in years, come to life's end'. The other was to a wandering ascetic who had a premonition of his approaching death.

In both cases they succeeded in attaining the goal.³

This method is to live entirely in the present, to be aware, fully aware, of what is seen, heard, smelt, tasted, touched or thought as it is happening, and to be aware of nothing else at all. In other words, of knowing things and not thinking about them.

'Then, thus must you train yourself: in the seen there will be to you just the seen, in the heard just the heard, in the imagined just the imagined, in the perceived just the perceived. Then, as you will have no "thereby", you will have no "therein". As you will have no "therein", it follows that you will have no "here" or "beyond" or "midway between". That is just the end of suffering.'

That is just to say that you are merely being completely aware of things and not thinking about them, not letting the mind run on.

It cannot be too strongly stressed that a moral attitude is necessary, otherwise danger may ensue. Before giving some comment and explanation which may be helpful in making the practice possible for a busy person in today's world, here is a discourse given by the Buddha to a layman, an accountant, which sets forth the gradual training.⁴

THE GRADUAL TRAINING

An accountant said that when he got a pupil he gave him a gradual training beginning with simple arithmetic and asked whether there were such gradual training in the Buddha's teaching.

The Buddha replied that yes, indeed, he taught in such a way as to the actual training of a monk when he joined the Order.

The learner is first enjoined to follow the precepts and the rules of training, to be of good moral character.

He is then taught to 'guard the doors of the senses and the mind', and in seeing a material shape with the eye he should not be entranced with it nor follow the details lest covetousness and dejection and unskilled states of mind should flow in. So he lives, controlling, guarding and achieving control over the organ of sight: and similarly with the ear and sounds, the nose and smells, the tongue and tastes, the body and touches, and the mental states.

When he is guarded as to the doors of the senses and the mind, he is then taught to be moderate in eating, to reflect carefully on what he is doing as he eats, not eating for pleasure, or for indulgence or personal beautification, but taking just enough to maintain life and health and with the thought: 'In this way I am crushing out old feelings and will not allow new feelings to arise'. Then there will be subsistence, blamelessness and living in comfort.

As soon as he is thus moderate in eating he has the further discipline. During the day and the early part of the night he, while pacing up and down or sitting, is intent on vigilance in cleansing the mind of obstructive mental states.

And lying down in the middle part of the night, in the lion posture, on the right side, the legs very slightly bent, the right knee resting in the hollow of the left knee and the left foot on the right foot,⁵ mindful, clearly conscious, reflecting on the thought of getting up again in the morning.

(Quite naturally he will fall asleep and other thoughts will come in, but he trains himself when he perceives such thoughts to be mindful and vigilant.)

Then in 'the last watch of the night', in the very early morning, while pacing up and down or sitting, he is taught to cleanse the mind of obstructive mental states.

As soon as he is practised in being intent on vigilance, he is taught further to be mindful and clearly conscious. That is he is conscious only of what he is doing and does not think about it nor allow his thoughts to travel in circles round it. He is to act with clear consciousness, with full attention and awareness of what he is doing whether he is approaching or departing, looking ahead or looking round, carrying something or eating and drinking, chewing or savouring, whether he is obeying the calls of nature, whether he is walking,

standing, sitting, asleep or awake, talking or being silent. He is conscious of it, aware of it, without thought about it or arising from it.

When he has gained some mindfulness and clear awareness, he is given further training. He is told to find a secluded spot, either in a forest, on a hillside, in a glen, at the foot of a tree, in a cemetery, anywhere where he can be alone and not likely to be disturbed. After returning from alms-gathering and having eaten he is to sit down cross-legged, holding the back erect, having made mindfulness rise up in front of him he begins the practice leading to Insight.

(Comments on the 'cross-legged position' are given later in this chapter.)

The accountant then asked the Buddha whether all the monks so trained and instructed attained the unchanging goal, nibbana. Oh no, the Buddha told him, some attain it and others do not. The accountant asked why some did not and the Buddha asked him: 'Do you know the way to the city of Rajagaha?' 'Yes', said the accountant, 'I know it very well'. He was then asked of two men who enquired the way of him, whether they would both certainly reach the city, being carefully instructed, or might one reach it and the other go astray.

The accountant said that one might go astray but that would be because he had not followed the instructions. 'I am only the shower of the way: what can I do about it if he takes the wrong path?' Just so, the Buddha told him, the Tathagatas are only showers of the way.

THE MIDDLE PATH IN THE PRACTICE

The practice begins with morality, which is very clearly defined, and there is no middle path between skilful and unskilful, though one does not have to be a saint to begin the practice, otherwise there would be no need of the practice.

The next step, of guarding the doors of the senses and the mind, is usually a long and slow process, but one does not wait to achieve perfection before going on to the other steps.

Here something of the bodily postures should be explained.

In the sitting posture it was usual to sit cross-legged with the legs tucked under the body. This was the most comfortable and best-balanced position and still is for many Asians, though today, after a few generations sitting on Western-style chairs, some find it not comfortable.

And it just does not matter one whit.

If that position is uncomfortable for you, as it was and is for me, then it is the wrong position.

The reclining position was usually on the right side and in some cases mentioned as 'foot resting on foot' and in others as 'his feet, one in the curve of the other'. Usually the cheek is pillowed on the right

hand and the left hand resting along the body. With the left leg slightly bent, the hollow of the right knee resting in the hollow of the left, the left foot fits over and into the curve of the right.

This was a comfortable position and you would probably find it so: but if you don't, no matter at all, so long as you are not sprawled out anyhow.

The spine should be as straight as possible (though there were hunchbacks who became Arahats) and the only thing is that the position must be composed and comfortable. The body and the mind must be composed, alert, intent but not tense. If the body is not at ease, then the mind is not at ease and if the mind is not at ease, concentration cannot be achieved.

For the modern Western person, a comfortable chair in which one can sit straight, with body erect and legs loosely crossed at ankles and hands loosely folded one on the other on the lap is a most suitable position.

The chair should be an armchair since it is possible at a certain stage of the practice that the body may sway, or you may begin to nod off to sleep, wake with a start and find yourself on the floor. You have more confidence in an armchair.

There is no rite and ritual and these have been classified as a hindrance, so that those people who try to sit in 'the double lotus position' and hold their hands in a peculiar way are going against the teaching of the Buddha.

In beginning the practice you must beware of overstrain. There is a middle path here. Take an analogy: a man with a faulty heart and very badly out of condition may be told he should take some exercise. One extreme is to do nothing at all, and he doesn't live long. The other extreme is to rush into violent unaccustomed exercise and he doesn't live long. The middle path is to take gentle exercise, increasing it gradually until he is fit again.

You can, as regards the practice, say: 'Yes, must try it some day' and the 'some day' doesn't come. Or you may rush into it and try too hard too suddenly and get nowhere. You would weary the mind and build up a resistance by too strenuous and too prolonged sessions. If you can only snatch moments now and then, at least some benefit will come to you.

It was very well shown in the case of a young monk who had been very luxuriously brought up by his exceedingly wealthy family and had left to join the Order. He had been well-known for his playing of the sithar, a stringed musical instrument. He walked up and down on rough ground for hours practising mindfulness in walking and his feet became sore and bleeding.

The Buddha spoke to him and asked: 'Sona, were you not a famous musician among your friends for your playing of the sithar?'

On being told yes, that was so, the Buddha asked Sona whether, when the strings were too slack, he could get any sort of good tune and Sona said no, he couldn't. Then, asked the Buddha, could he get a good tune when the strings were too taut? Sona said no, he couldn't.

'Even so, Sona,' said the Buddha, 'too much output of energy conduces to restlessness, too feeble energy conduces to slothfulness. Determine upon evenness in energy'.

Sona followed that instruction and gained enlightenment.⁶

Another thing to consider is that it is better, but again not absolutely necessary, to choose a period for practice at the same time every day. Our minds work in a rhythm and it is a little better if we establish a rhythm in this. On the other hand, the few moments now and then are better than nothing.

The practice should be begun in a quiet place at a quiet time, where there are no strong smells or bright lights. And one should not be exposed to strong impacts on the senses just before the period of practice. The whole idea of the preliminary training is to close off all stimulation.

There is a very good story which though not in the Canon could quite possibly be true.

An elderly monk, famous for his learning, had never done any practice and decided to do so. He went to a monastery where the monks were reputed to be arahats and was told by a young monk how to begin. He was told to consider an abandoned termite-hill in which there were six holes and which was inhabited by a lizard which he wanted to catch. He was told: 'If you chase him he will go into one hole and out through another, and you would be continually chasing him round and round. The only way to catch the lizard is to stop up five of the holes and wait at the sixth. There you may catch the lizard as he goes in or comes out.' The monk was then told that the termite-mound represented the mind and the six openings, the five doors of sense-consciousness of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching and the mind-consciousness. By closing up the first five and waiting at the door of mind-consciousness one may catch the lizard of reality.

To do this one finds as quiet a time and place as one can, makes oneself comfortable in order to close as far as possible the door of touch-sensation and hearing; a place where there are no bright lights so that the sense of sight is not stirred; a place where there are no strong odours. It may here be remarked that the use of perfume or incense at the time can make the practice more difficult. One begins some little time after eating and does not eat foods that may 'repeat', in order to avoid tastes. This is for the special practice of concentration.

For the practice of mindfulness, which is very necessary, you may, and indeed, should, use any time and all times. For instance, in

eating you should practise mindfulness in chewing, savouring and swallowing the food, being aware of these in sequence and being aware of nothing else at all at the time. You do NOT think about it in words or 'make a mental note', the idea is to practise full awareness of what is happening at the time it is happening. This is a very necessary step towards gaining pure concentration.

When you have eaten it is good to have a period of meditation or contemplation, and this is the only meditation that one has in the practice. This meditation or contemplation is awareness that the food is being digested and then contemplating the changes it is going through, an example of the impermanence of all things, thinking how it will be so completely changed and finally passed out of the body, the bulk of the intake, in a form which you most certainly would not wish to eat.

AWARENESS

It is possible to look at a scene or a picture, or to listen to music, without either thinking about it or it sparking off a train of thought. In that case you just know it, are absorbed in it, are merely aware of it. In being aware, as in the above case, of chewing, or, in the practice of concentration, of being aware of the breathing, you are aware in this fashion and you train yourself in this awareness. You are fully mindful of what you are doing at the time of doing it, without any thinking of or about it, without any emotion at all, just aware without putting it into words in your mind.

It is a slightly different thing when you consider the sequence of the food, after eating, up to its final elimination. In that also you are fully attentive, fully aware, but you are meditating, contemplating, and words are formed even if not uttered. In both cases you have clear comprehension and do not allow a degeneration into dreaminess or into self-hypnotism.

Whilst sitting in the practice, should you feel drowsy you should stand up and commence the walking practice. In this you walk very slowly and steadily over a distance of fifteen to twenty paces approximately on a floor or, if outside, on level ground. You look neither to right nor left but straight ahead and, with the spine erect and the head slightly bent, your gaze will be no farther than the length of the course you are walking. To preserve mindfulness and balance you walk flat-footed and in turning at the end of the course, on which you are walking up and down, you do not just swing around but lift up the foot slowly and steadily, turn it to the right and set it down flat-footed, then follow it with the other foot and so on until you are facing the opposite direction and walking back along the course, all the time being just aware of the movements and not thinking around them or making mental notes of what you are doing.

In all this you do not swing the arms either in walking or turning. In all of the practice it is better to have a quiet period before commencing, with no loud sounds or bright scenes.

CHAPTER 11

(b) The development of tranquillity

To say to an excitable man when everything seems to be going wrong: 'Calm yourself!' is likely to cause an explosion.

Calm, tranquillity, serenity is like everything else a matter of degree and can be attained and deepened and made part of oneself only by training, by self-training. This training requires knowledge, the knowledge of the immensities of time-space in which we, as individuals, are such insignificant specks, and knowledge of the method. And the training is gradual.

The beginning, given in the previous chapter, is a preliminary training just as the development of tranquillity is a necessary preliminary training, in most cases, for the development of insight.

It all begins with awareness, mindfulness which gives full concentration, that one-pointedness of mind that is then used to pierce the veil of illusion hanging between us and reality.

The mind is made at one with itself, free of all internal conflicts.

It may be well here to consider why any practice should be done at all, what the purpose is. From the beginning right up to the end-point it is a practice of concentration starting with watching one's thoughts as they rise, persist for the merest fraction of time and die to be replaced by others in a seemingly endless stream and one gains a full understanding of impermanence. One cannot immediately become aware of every fleeting thought in this constant stream. One has to begin, at odd moments, to catch stray thoughts and see how a particular thought has arisen and how and why it gives place to another. After some practice it becomes easier. It is at least something that can be done by a man too full of affairs to do the full practice.

Since you now see that everything is unsatisfactory due to impermanence, you, unless you still believe that 'when you're dead you're dead', want a way out, a real way out, and you will begin to realise that the only way out is by transcending ego. If you are able to do only this first part, the development of tranquillity, and regard it as an end in itself, well it does pay high dividends. In merely mundane matters it gives more alertness, more efficiency and greater calm. It

also gives a state of mind that may one day lead to better things. The mind becomes free of internal conflict, tranquil and serene.

It will help in the practice if you have some idea of the interconnectedness of all things. It has been pointed out that nobody, man, god or devil, can hinder you or help you unless you yourself make the conditions. It is no contradiction to say that indeed you are being helped and that what you are doing in this practice is helping others . . . helping them much more than they can be by the efforts of the 'do-gooders', who too often, though not always, are hindering themselves by acting out of ego and building up that ego, and harming those they try to help by proffering that help unwisely. In any case, putting a plaster over leprosy does not cure leprosy, which can only be cured by the willing co-operation of the leper and the doctor who knows the cause and cure.

To explain a little: (i) All is interconnected and what happens to you, and your reactions to happenings, has an effect on all others be it to ever so slight a degree: and what happens to others and their reactions to happenings similarly affects you. (ii) Although we at present inhabit a small, almost insignificant blob in the web of the universe, nevertheless we are human and have the potential of becoming greater than any 'God' we can create, and we have reached this state and remained in it up to the present because we have made the conditions, and the conditions entail the potential of being helped. In this, 'potential' should be remembered; for it is only potential. A single cotton-seed has the potential of becoming a suit of clothes. Knowledge, time and effort are required to produce suits of clothes; they do not grow on trees. (iii) The help that we can receive and that we can give is general and not particular; it is not helping particular egos but helping us and all others to transcend the ego, to rise above it to something more splendid and wholly satisfactory.

So the first part of the practice is the cultivation of tranquillity, developing tranquillity and making the conditions for rising to something much more splendid than tranquillity. That, in doing this with concentrated thought, it is having a beneficial effect directly as well as indirectly on others is the answer to those who think that only by physical action in the offering of palliatives can one help suffering humanity. 'It is not possible for one himself in the bog to pull out others: but it is possible for one who is on firm ground to do so.'

Since we all, to some extent at least, understand that though we want peace and serenity, it is not obtainable here in this life, we try to gain tranquillity by various means even when we are trying to drive out one pain by stupidly giving ourselves a different suffering. We are here and now, we can look forward to old age and death unless we end in some more sudden and violent way or are cut off by one or other unpleasant disease. You cannot 'get away from it all' by

opting for 'an easy death', because the death of the body is not the death of 'you'. The formative tendency particles, the pattern, the real 'you', though changing all the time are a continuum and carry character and memory even where that memory does not come fully into consciousness. Even in this life some people leave the hurly-burly for 'a quiet country place' to 'get away from it all' and only succeed in taking it all with them.

The gaining of real tranquillity is not just temporary 'escapism' as is the escape into fantasy by various means. It is the seeing of a way of escape from a very unpleasant state, a way of escape that may help and will not harm others, that is safe and certain, that must be taken by oneself by one's own efforts and will be taken only by those who wish to and who are prepared to make the effort.

If you were to lead a very young child from a fiercely burning house you would not sit with him and attempt first to teach the nature of fire and attempt to reason out the Cause of the Very First Fire that ever was. You would try to save him and, naturally, yourself and to warn those others you were able to.

If in one corner there were a bar with people drinking who laughed at you, and one man were to say: 'She'll be right, chief, anyhow have a cancer-stick and a beer before you go' you would not stop to argue. Sober and sensible people would already be leaving, and having warned all you could, you also would try to escape, not into fantasy but into freedom.

Now here is the method. The first thing to do is to banish as far as possible flurry and worry and thoughts of mundane things. They will keep cropping up of course: that is natural. Spend a little time on the contemplation of the impermanence of all things. Then breathe in and out slowly, regularly, rhythmically, as deeply as possible. Concentrate on being aware of the breath as it comes in and down and up and out and practise being aware of this to the complete exclusion of everything else. If you have been living a 'normal' life you will find this rather difficult to do at first until you've had a deal of practice. Today it seems only some quite young children and a few artists have the capability of complete absorption.

At the beginning, with most people, a matter of seconds after the attempt, the mind is wandering onto other things. If, as is very likely, this happens with you, then completely disregard what is a very natural phenomenon and return to the being aware only of the breath as it is inhaled and exhaled.

Keep on returning to this concentrated awareness of the breathing, quite without any emotion, as soon as you realise that the mind is wandering.

Do not go on from here in the practice until you have gained

some little degree of absorption, but when you feel you have gained just a little you can go on.

All this is just a preliminary getting ready for the actual practice and here there are several things to mention.

As you are no doubt aware, the mind can attend to only one thing at a time though our living, especially since the industrial revolution, has become more and more complex so that the mind is continually switching attention from one thing to another and back with a great and tiring rapidity that is the cause of much stress and strain resulting in a significant factor of mental and physical disease. Even this preliminary practice will give benefit in health and ability.

Our living has trained the brain to neglect and in some cases to shut out matters that are not vitally important at the time since we are attending to matters in this life that we have been taught to consider more important. We undergo many petty discomforts all the time and are using a deal of energy in order that these may be suppressed and not come into full consciousness. Now when we begin the preliminary practice as above we may become aware of such things. For example there might be a slight itch on the cheek. You give this a brief awareness and go on with the attention to breathing. Should it persist you keep on breathing as before but consciously switch full awareness to the itch until it goes. If it does not but becomes intolerable, then rub it, but in so doing be fully aware of the hand coming up, rubbing, returning to its position on your lap, just impersonally as though you were watching the movement of an actor on a screen. In the above, realise that this is a sensation, a feeling, that has arisen from a cause, that is impermanent, that will disappear.

It is important in this that you do not think in words, that is do not formulate in your mind the words 'I am breathing' or any such thing: not even the word 'breathing' at this stage. This is a training in awareness and concentration, a preliminary training. And do not, while being aware of the breathing, concentrate on the tip of the nose or on the tip of the toes or on any other portion of the anatomy anywhere in this practice. Nowhere did the Buddha give such advice.

In this part of the practice, the preliminary training in awareness, one learns just to maintain awareness. Later on, while maintaining the awareness, one uses it to gain full insight by investigation, using the sharpened intellect; here one merely observes, knows.

Words here, since they have associations, can hinder and inhibit the awareness.

THE JHANAS AND POSSIBLE ACCOMPANIMENTS

Jhana (jharna) has been mentioned in chapter four. This refers to special 'states of consciousness' that arise in the early part of the practice, though some people may not experience them until later.

Since you may experience these states at an early stage, it should here be explained what they are, how they arise and what is their value.

Associated very often with these states of consciousness are unusual phenomena. These are sometimes confused with the states of consciousness and the word therefore is sometimes applied to the phenomena. These phenomena may be the 'seeing' of things that are not really there, or the 'hearing' of sounds, the 'hearing' and 'seeing' being due to internal chemical changes. Since mind and body and spirit are not separate but changing parts of a changing thing, what happens to one part affects all.

These sights and/or sounds may be experienced early in the practice and in some cases are not experienced at all. It is a matter of the basic emotional make-up. Whether you experience them or do not experience them is not of importance and you should neither wish to experience them nor wish not to. If you do experience them, then you should in this part of the practice merely observe them, be aware of them, concentrating on them without any emotion of any sort.

If you attempt to cling to them or, indeed, to cling to the states of consciousness, then they will be, on account of your clinging, a hindrance to further attainment.

They are signposts on the way, at most, and if you are bound for a city and stop to drool over a signpost, however beautiful and exciting it may appear to be to you, then you will never reach that city.

It should be pointed out that the visions one may see at the beginning can, in some cases, be frightening but are neither harmful nor dangerous to one of balanced mind.

Such 'visions' if experienced can be much more vivid and realistic than those 'seen' in dreams but are of much the same type and have much the same cause. As mentioned, we see things due to chemical or what are akin to electrical changes in material cells due to nerve excitation. In memories, in dreams and in such visions elements are added from the material already stored in brain-cells of the individual. To some extent, too, the first seeing of an object is influenced by past experiences stored in brain-cells and, though there has been no scientific work done on this up to now, obviously elsewhere for memory to come over from previous existences.

Due to this individual pattern 'every portrait is a self-portrait' and all that an individual does or says is according to the pattern of the individual as is all he thinks and senses. As William Blake put it: 'The tree that the fool sees is not the tree that the wise man sees'.

The 'states of consciousness' and the sights or sounds sometimes but not always accompanying them are not confined to this Buddhist

practice but also can occur in various 'Yoga' practices or some of those most un-Buddhist Zen practices or in various heightened mental states due to drugs or disease.

Take one actual case which has occurred to quite a few people doing this practice or some of the Hindu practices.

It takes the shape of an immense giant head with flashing teeth and eyes and looks quite real.

A proud mother with baby in her arms calls on a friend or relative to come and see the little dear. The baby, with no sense of proportion yet developed, suddenly has its whole field of vision filled by a huge head and hears loud rumbling noises as the head exclaims: 'What a little darling: mother's eyes and daddy's nose . . .'

The baby is either shocked into silence or bursts into loud frightened wails. The incident is soon forgotten but the 'photograph' is still there and may be brought to the surface.

Bringing such things to the surface is like clearing dirt and lumber from a living-room.

Should you be one of those who experience such phenomena and persist with the practice you are most likely to 'see' various colours, red, green, blue, gold, etc., and these will gradually become more 'pure' and you will see a pure colourless light that is intense but not blinding while the visions will usually give place to one shape, an egg shape. Meanwhile you have probably seen 'people' at various times, some of whom you recognise and others you do not, and finally you may see 'God'. If you are a Buddhist you may see the Buddha (that is if you've been brought up as a Buddhist), or if as a Christian you may see 'Christ' or 'Almighty God', whilst a Hindu may see Brahma or one of the lesser dignitaries. These are all, men and gods, subconscious portraits made by the self of the self.

The above-mentioned phenomena should not, according to many Hindu and other sects, be ever discussed but kept as a secret between Guru and disciple. One reason sometimes given for this, not the real reason, is that if a disciple is told what he might expect then he may think he sees the thing because it has been suggested to him.

One could say to those who have 'seen the light', 'well, you ain't seen nuthin' yet'. For all these things are mere temporary states of consciousness and their more temporary manifestations. They are not the end-point that some religious sects think them to be but something to be transcended. And when your God goes with you it is only a manifestation of yourself with at least some of your idiosyncrasies and stupidities. When you get above this you are greater than any God.

There are eight states of consciousness, the first four connected with the mundane and material and four connected with the fine-

material or supra-mundane. It is possible to attain the final goal without ever experiencing these jhanas.²

It should be noted that these states of consciousness are attained only after an initial degree of concentration and when thoughts connected with desire and hate and delusion are not present.

The states of consciousness are given below although they are not consciously practised until after the practice of the development of tranquillity. They are given here also since they may occur in some form in the earlier practice.

Having put away unskilful thoughts and ideas and gained concentration, then, detached from sense-desires and evil states of mind, one attains to and abides in the first of these states of consciousness, which is accompanied by thought and reflection and the joy and rapture born of detachment.

Then by calming down thought and reflection, by persisting in concentration, one attains to and abides in the second state of consciousness, devoid of thought and reflection and accompanied by rapture and joy born of the serenity of one-pointed concentration.

Then by the fading of rapture one attains to and abides in the third state of consciousness and remains with equanimity, mindful and clearly conscious, and experiences fully that joy of which it can be said: 'Happy indeed is he who has equanimity and mindfulness'.

Note that all along one is clearly conscious and mindful and does not lapse into day-dreaming or self-hypnosis.

Then by putting away all joy and pain, all happiness and sorrow, one attains to and abides in the fourth state of consciousness, which is free from pain and pleasure, a state of pure mindfulness brought about by equanimity.

Then by passing completely beyond perception of form, by the cessation of sensory reactions, by not attending to the perception of variety, one attains to and abides in the sphere of the infinity of space, feeling: 'Space is infinite', which is the fifth state of consciousness.

Then having gone completely beyond the sphere of the infinity of space, feeling: 'Consciousness is infinite', one attains to and abides in the sixth state of consciousness, the sphere of the infinity of consciousness.

Then having gone completely beyond the sphere of the Infinity of Consciousness, one attains to and abides in the seventh state of consciousness, the Sphere of Nothingness, feeling: 'Nothing exists'.

Then having gone completely beyond the Sphere of Nothingness, one attains to and abides in the eighth state of consciousness, the Sphere of Neither-perception-nor-non-perception, the sphere of the cessation of perception.³

Then through intuitive wisdom one's attachments wear off and one is completely free, though this complete freedom may be attained without experiencing the four last states of consciousness.

It should be noted that these states of consciousness are temporary states during the practice and may be regarded as higher steps, one following the other. They are gained by the practice and are a result of the practice. They can become firmer as the practice is continued.

IS A TEACHER NECESSARY?

To some people at a certain stage a teacher can be helpful, one who has practised long and who can answer questions. If certain phenomena manifest it is helpful to have somebody who can discuss these with you.

That is not to say that a teacher is really necessary. You need a little understanding of your own and you need to develop that understanding, and that can be done without a teacher. If you have no understanding, the best teacher will find it more than difficult to help you, and it is better in any case to have no teacher at all than a bad teacher, one who does not understand at all but thinks he does.

If anybody claims to be able to help in any way other than by answering questions or by helping you in discussion to get a better grasp of the matter, he is a 'phoney'. So also is one who makes any charge or accepts any money for teaching.

MAKING TRANQUILLITY TO BECOME

That is a translation of the exact words of the Buddha and gives perhaps a clearer idea than 'development of tranquillity'. A clear and tranquil mind is absolutely necessary for one-pointed concentration, without which the second part of the practice cannot be successfully followed.

Here it should be stressed that there is nothing magical or mystical in the practice. We are living here and now in this world and the practice is a practice to transcend this world.

Just as the states of consciousness are, at the beginning, temporary, and we come back to the workaday world, so do we lose to some extent in everyday life the exalted state of Metta, of loving-kindness, in its highest degree as it may be attained in the practice given below. But all these states become firmer and more lasting as we progress.

For some it may be difficult to hold these thoughts of goodwill to all beings even for the time of practice. If you find it impossible, then desist, none of the practice is for you.

Everything is a gradual becoming, a system of training 'brought about by oneself', and as in all training one learns as one goes on.

The practice here is to gain complete Metta, devoid of all mere sentimentality, leading to its highest degree, complete tranquillity. You must not exclude anybody or anything at all nor must you pay special attention to anybody at all by singling a person out for special lovingkindness. If you think: 'I'll practise Metta to everybody but that so-and-so who was nasty to me the other day for no cause', or if you think: 'I'll radiate Metta especially to that very beautiful person who seems to like me too', you are not doing this practice.

The practice is to banish thoughts of sense-desire and then bring into consciousness thoughts of Metta, complete lovingkindness, amity, friendship for everything that lives, without exception. Imagine that you are beaming out this thought, radiating it like a light from a lighthouse, in front of you to all infinity. Then imagine the beam of Metta swinging round to the right, to behind, round to your left, then below, then above, till everything in every direction to infinity has been covered and suffused with your thoughts of well-wishing.

In this you are not thinking of yourself as doing it, just being aware of the thoughts going out.

Then you take it a step higher, with the thought that all beings are to be, should be, helped and wishing, willing, that they should be helped. The help here is the help to friendship and peace with all that lives and breathes, and the help in the advancement of all beings. This is radiated in the same way as before.

Then in the same way you radiate the thought of joy in the fact that beings are helped and in the gains and attainment of others in their advancement.

Then you take this to the highest level, radiating the thought of complete tranquillity for all sentient beings, radiating this, too, in all directions to infinity.⁴

Since all things are interconnected and since thoughts can have great power, especially as they are concentrated, you are doing more good than if you were to go out to give some physical help. Naturally you give physical help and sympathy and practical assistance to individuals whenever and wherever the occasion arises.

This practice will bring help and tranquillity to yourself, but that is not the reason for the practice. It will give you better 'luck' in this life and a better rebirth. It will not give you complete emancipation from the round of rebirth. For really complete concentration and power and complete emancipation, the practice of insight is required, and the foregoing practice is a preliminary to make the practice of insight possible.

CHAPTER 12

(c) *The development of insight*

It is assumed that you have mastered, to some little extent, the two previous 'lessons', that you have carefully read the two previous chapters and have tried the preliminary practices. If so you will not find this so very difficult. If not, you'd better do those first unless you wish to be like a toddler attempting to run a race.

The Buddha had said that his teaching, wrongly grasped, is like sword-grass wrongly grasped, it cuts the fingers.¹ He also said that it is like the sea, deeper the farther you go from the beach.²

This practice is the only way out of this slave-life and in addition to some attention to the preliminary practices there should be some meditation on the ten fetters, the four roads to psychic power, and the five controlling faculties.

In addition one must know the five practices for controlling thoughts.³

'In his devotion to the higher thought, from time to time the learner must apply his mind to five practices. What five?

'When a certain mental image comes and through dwelling upon such there arise in the mind evil, insalutary thoughts connected with craving, connected with hate, connected with delusion, then the learner must from that mental image engender in mind another mental image connected with what is salutary; and in this way from a former mental image engendering another connected with what is salutary, the evil and insalutary thoughts will disappear and go to decay, and with their disappearing the learner will become settled, calmed, one-pointed, concentrated. Just as a competent builder or builder's apprentice will, with a slender peg, knock out, move and dispose of a thicker one, so the learner will engender in mind from that which filled it before, another mental image connected with salutary things.' (The mind is always busy with thoughts, is never free from thoughts, and if, during the practice, the mental image, for example, of another person, a sexual object, should arise and persist, one may take advantage of the fact that thought is always flowing and that all thoughts are associated with other thoughts.

One could lead the thought to consider that person growing older, becoming wrinkled, weak, decaying and dying and the beautiful body being eaten by maggots. From that taking the thought to the consideration of the impermanence of all things, oneself included.)

'But if there should still arise thoughts connected with desire, with ill-will, or with delusion, the learner should consider the wretchedness of these thoughts, how fertile in suffering they are, and these thoughts will die away and the learner will become calm and one-pointed in mind and concentrated. (That is to say that with some, such thoughts will keep arising in spite of the efforts made and if so one should think of how nasty they are, that one would hardly wish to see them on a screen viewed by an audience of one's friends and acquaintances who knew they were one's thoughts: and one should consider how they may cause one suffering.)

'But if these thoughts should still arise and persist in spite of this, the learner should turn away his mind from regarding these thoughts, should by an effort of will concentrate on more worthy thoughts of a completely different nature. Just as a man might turn his eyes away from something he did not wish to see and look at something more pleasant.

'But if though turning away from these thoughts they should still continue to arise, the learner must bring these thoughts to subsidence by degrees. Just as a man running swiftly might say to himself: "But why am I going so hurriedly? Suppose I go more gently." And then, going slowly, might say: "Why am I moving? Suppose I stand still." And then, standing, might say: "Why am I standing? Suppose I sit down." Then, sitting down, might say: "Why am I sitting? Suppose I lie down." And with that does, indeed, lie down. Thus a man may gradually, from more vigorous ways, come to more gentle ways.

'But if this does not succeed, the learner must conquer these thoughts and constrain the mind by a strong effort of will. With teeth clenched and tongue pressed against palate he should put forth a strong effort of will and by main force conquer and subdue the mind. Just as a powerful man, seizing a weaker man by the head or shoulders, by main strength overpowers him, so should the learner by effort constrain the mind so that the thoughts of craving, hate and delusion will disappear, and with their disappearing the learner will gain calmness, will become settled in mind, will attain to one-pointedness and concentration. Such a learner is called a master of the methods and ways of thought: for whatever thought he wills, that he thinks, and whatever thought he does not will, that he does not think. He has hewn down the lust of life, burst the bond, made an end of suffering.'

But can man exert his will? Through the ages there has always been an argument as to whether man has really 'a will of his own' or is

the mere puppet of conditions. In the last century most men believed that we certainly could exercise our wills, and Henley could write: 'I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul', though Byron pointed out:

'Men are the sport of circumstances when
the circumstances seem the sport of men.'

Recent discoveries seem to point to man being the victim of his genes and any chemicals he ingests, but all is not yet known and the truth lies, as it usually does, in the middle.

Man has a will, and, like other faculties and powers, it can be trained and strengthened by exercises as above.

THE ACTUAL PRACTICE OF INSIGHT

The practice which follows need not, and in fact for most people cannot, be done in a single 'sitting', nor, even though you have done the preliminary training, will you necessarily gain full concentration at the beginning. That will come with much practice.

You do not wait the days, or months or years, for full concentration in order to go on from one step to the next.

Having begun and being determined to persist, you go as far as you can at one 'sitting' and then you may either, next time, commence where you left off or start all over again. That is a matter for your own common-sense to decide.

One extreme is to rush through carelessly and the other is to stick at one step, feeling that that must be mastered in full before proceeding. Those things that are not very clear at the beginning will become more clear as you go on and the practice has usually to be done many times before certain things are fully understood.

Depending largely on yourself, your type of mind, and it is easier for the more simple and less sophisticated, the earnestness with which you apply yourself and the previous training you have had in concentration and also on outward circumstances, such as worries and disturbances, it will take a longer or shorter time to gain a high degree of concentration.

In the world today we have 'instant coffee', 'instant tea', 'instant milk', 'instant take-away meals' and some sects offer 'instant salvation' and those foolish people who work for war seem bent on offering 'instant death'. But as the Buddha pointed out: 'There is no sudden enlightenment'.⁴

Naturally, at the beginning of this practice, even though you have done the preliminary training, your attention may wander, thoughts may come in, your attention may be distracted by other things, you may even forget that you are supposed to be aware only of your breathing, you may find yourself day-dreaming or thinking of some matter that affects you in everyday life. That is quite natural

at the beginning. Remember that your mind has been running on in this grasshopper fashion for a long time and you are only now beginning to train it: so do not be perturbed. Above all, do not fall into the trap of blaming the mind; just calmly turn the mind back to full attention to the breathing.

As in the preliminary training you make yourself comfortable, not tense but intent, and begin by paying full attention to the breathing to the exclusion of everything else.

At first you may think in words while doing this but later full awareness develops and you 'know' without words. Now as has been said there is nothing magical, mystical or mysterious about awareness or about breathing or about the practice; quite the opposite. The training in becoming aware, of full comprehension, unfettered by words or the slowing-up process of formulating them, is not by any means illogical. It does become supra-logical, using logic to rise above mere logic. There are slight changes in the body and these are steps on the way to better health, both physical and mental.

One becomes concentrated on a particular thing to the exclusion of everything else and may seem to be in a trance-like state, but it is a state of heightened consciousness and one is fully aware and awake. You are, to some degree, out of space-time and so neither space nor time exists for you at that period, though you are still 'there' and are aware and awake in a somewhat different sense.

The following is taken from three different discourses given by the Buddha on the subject.⁵

Because of this and because of the necessity of explaining it in a way that can be understood by people in the busy modern world, men and women who have so many other things to do, there is a deal of repetition. The repetition is necessary also to stress important points. I have tried to keep it to a minimum.

Another thing, you have done some of this in the preliminary practice and are here doing the same thing but on a slightly different level, and you are combining it with a higher practice.

Here you adopt the same postures of the body as before. You pay full attention to the breathing and it is better and easier if you breathe deeply, slowly, evenly, calmly. You may think: 'I am breathing in a long breath. I am breathing out a long breath'. Imagine your breath coming in slowly and going down as deeply as possible, to the pit of your stomach if you can; then going out as slowly until all the breath is exhaled, and keep up this breathing as long as possible. You are tying your imagination to your breathing. It is important not to strain, not to try to breathe more deeply than you comfortably can. If the breathing becomes more shallow, you think: 'I am breathing in a short breath; I am breathing out a short breath'. All the time you

are clearly conscious of what you are doing and concentrating to become conscious of nothing else.

It should here be explained that at the beginning, and at the beginning of every period of practice, at every 'sitting', you will commence by thinking as you breathe, but later you will gain awareness and be mindful and aware of the breathing without words, without the lower type of thought that formulates and uses words.

And you do not here watch your thoughts. It is in going about your everyday life, or when you are just sitting doing something else that, when thoughts arise, you become aware of their rising, of their momentary persistence and of their passing away to be replaced by other thoughts, so that you see the cause of the thoughts, how they are interconnected and how impermanent all things are. It is one thing to know impermanence in your mind, in thought, and another to be fully aware of impermanence.

Having obtained some degree of concentration on breathing, you now, in this practice, should experience the first four states of consciousness mentioned, remembering that you may not experience any of the phenomena mentioned, nor do you try to think of them. If you do experience such you regard them dispassionately, quite without any emotion. You will be able to understand the early 'visions' if such appear, as mainly early childhood impacts. Should you 'see' colours do not try to cling to them or hold them but concentrate intently on the centre, breathing calmly as when you began.

If at any time in the practice your breath should become very rapid, stop and carry on for awhile with the walking practice as given. Then return to the sitting posture.

Having established yourself in morality and banished the five hindrances and become guarded as to the doors of the senses and gained a degree of concentration, you will be free from sensual pleasures and hindering thoughts and attain the first state of consciousness where there is still thought-conception and meditation but it is born of detachment and filled with rapture and joy.

Then after putting away thought-conception and meditation, calming them down by concentrated attention and awareness of the breathing, gaining tranquillity and one-pointedness of mind, you attain the second state of consciousness, free from thought-conception and meditation, born of concentration and full of rapture and joy.

Then rapture fades away with continued concentration and you attain the third state of consciousness, of pure equanimity in which you are mindful and with clear comprehension, fully aware without thoughts, and experience a sense of heightened pleasure which is known only to those who have attained this far.

Then after all pleasure and all pain, all happiness and all sadness have gone, you enter the fourth state of consciousness, of pure mindfulness and awareness brought about by equanimity.

Your mind is then tranquil, purified, cleansed, flawless, free from defilements, supple, ready to act, firm and imperturbable.

You then really understand and use your mind to pierce the veil of illusion: you realise that the body is composed of the four basic elements of extension, cohesion, heat and motion, it springs from father and mother, it exists on account of nutriment, it has the nature of impermanence, is fragile and certain of destruction; and so also is the consciousness which is connected with it, which depends on it.

PERFORMING MIRACLES

You can then go on to gain complete freedom or you may meanwhile perform what most people would regard as 'miracles'. If you do this you may still be able to gain full emancipation but you are running a risk. You will not attempt to use any such powers unless you still have some desire; and desire, as the Buddha pointed out, is never satisfied.⁶ You could easily entrap yourself.

Now just as a 'Guru' or 'spiritual teacher' who takes any money at all for his teaching thereby proclaims himself a fake, so you, if you attempt to use any supra-normal powers gained by this practice for any selfish ends, can join those ranks and end up in a much worse state than you began and can lose the ability.

'Selfish' here means any attempt to perform petty 'magics' to enhance your own finances or your own reputation or your own ego; you have to be very sure of all your motives. Many a man thinks he is acting in a purely disinterested way when all the time at the back of his mind is the desire to shine among his fellows, or even to shine to himself.

Only if you are completely free from greed, hate and delusion can you be absolutely sure that in using any power you would be acting rightly; and if you are free from these it is most unlikely that you will attempt to use any powers. Especially is this so if you have a really deep-seated realisation of the impermanence of all things.

'There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy' and you may completely disbelieve the possibility of any such powers as the Buddha described. You are quite right if you disbelieve them if they are not true for you; you would be quite wrong to believe them though they are not fully true for you.

What are these 'powers' the Buddha mentioned?

(i) It is possible to produce from the body other identical mind-produced bodies. Such bodies are also impermanent.

- (ii) It is possible to become invisible and visible again.
- (iii) It is possible to pass through solid matter; to float in the air; to walk on water as if on dry land.
- (iv) It is possible to be clairvoyant and clairaudient; to see and hear things happening elsewhere.

It is possible to finish with this world entirely and gain complete freedom, the only real freedom. There are no words to explain what this freedom is since it is so entirely apart from this universe. You may, since you have not gone to see for yourself, say that this is mere fantasy or that it is just complete annihilation. That is up to you. It is indeed the annihilation of the ego and so extinction of all that exists for you at the present. You can say further that since it is the extinction of 'you' and all that 'you' now 'know', of all that exists for you, that all here written is just sheer nonsense. That is also up to you. Nobody can prove it, only you can prove it to yourself in the manner shown.

Indeed it might be better if you did not play around with the idea of these 'powers'. They were taught by the Buddha and were not forbidden to the monks though the Buddha himself said that he was 'averse to miracles',⁷ as he saw danger in them.

Here it may be again explained that some of the experiences mentioned above in the special states of consciousness, both the mental and physical feelings and the phenomena do not always come in the early part of the practice and some do not become apparent at all to certain people. Nor when they do happen are they always in exactly the sequence given as regards phenomena: that is in the early stages of the practice. You may get 'flashes' at the beginning; and only after you have, by repeated practice of concentration, attained a degree of one-pointedness of mind will the states of consciousness be experienced fully and in sequence.

You may at the early stages have flashes of intuition, telepathy and other experiences, and that is why it has been necessary to mention these.

THE GAINING OF FREEDOM

In order to gain complete freedom, to become an Arahāt = one who has got free from the four corrupting influences and is a Tathagata = one who has gone for good, the practice is carried on more fully and more intently.

There are four higher states of consciousness as described in chapter eleven and you may experience these here or later.

Here a word of warning is necessary. None of this practice is at all dangerous in itself, quite the reverse. It is helpful and healthful to mind and body. However, in experiencing the special states of consciousness there are two things to note. It has been mentioned

that certain phenomena may manifest though with many people they do not. Where they do, only in some cases are they likely to be frightening, such as in the case of the giant head given as one example of what has occurred to more than one beginner. If the mind is not unstable and if anything unusual appears, it will be understood as something thrown out by the mind and even where not at the time understood will later be seen plainly for what it represents. Forewarned of the possibility of 'seeing' something unusual, you will regard it as what it is.

The other thing to note is that if you experience the latter four states, and these can be extremely helpful, you may appear to be in a trance and actually will be in a state of suspended animation for a period.

At the beginning such periods, during which health and vigour flow into you, not from any 'God' or 'Powerhouse' remember, are very short and there is no need to take any precautions.

Later it would be possible for such periods to extend to, at most, seven days. You will be able to nominate the length of these periods.

If these periods begin to extend in duration for more than a few minutes you should, in order to avoid confusion and worry to others, inform a friend of the possibility or leave a prominent 'Do not disturb' note explaining that you are well and healthy.

If you wish to gain full insight you go through the following practice. You will already have attained quite a degree of morality and of concentration in the practice of tranquillity. You now concentrate on the breathing as before and take up the same bodily postures. If your life and work entail a great deal of sitting down you spend more time on the practice of walking, whereas if you are on your feet a lot in ordinary life then you spend more time in the sitting posture for the practice.

'This is the only way', said the Buddha, 'for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and misery, for the destruction of pain and grief, for winning the right path, for the attainment of nibbana, the four arousings of mindfulness'.

'What are the four?'

'Here a monk lives contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly conscious and mindful, having overcome the covetousness and dejection that are in this world; he lives contemplating feelings in feelings; consciousness in consciousness; he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects.'

The Buddha in this discourse, 'The arousing of mindfulness' and in others, particularly in the 'Mindfulness in breathing', explained the practice fully.

It is to train oneself in full awareness of the breathing as given earlier to attain full concentration and awareness and to follow this

by using it to become fully aware of, to realise as it truly is, the body in relation only to the body, realising the body as it actually is. Then in the same way being fully aware of the feelings as they actually are by the same one-pointed concentration understanding the feelings in relation to nothing else but the feelings. Then the consciousness in relation only to the consciousness and finally the mental objects, in relation only to mental objects.

You do not do this all at once but do what you can when you can and how you can. What follows is from different discourses and quotations are from the three mentioned above (at reference 5) and you take from all that follows what you can see as particularly suited to your advancement.

'Mindfulness of in-breathing and out-breathing, if developed and made much of, is of great fruit, great advantage. It brings to fulfilment the four arousings of mindfulness. The four arousings of mindfulness, if developed and made much of, bring to fulfilment the seven links of enlightenment; the seven links of enlightenment, if developed and made much of, bring to fulfilment freedom through wisdom.'

Having chosen a quiet spot and sitting in a comfortable posture you breathe as mentioned and the Buddha gave the simile of a clever turner or turner's apprentice who knows when he is turning long and when he is turning short, not thinking around it but being concentrated and aware of what one is doing.

You then breathe in and out, determining to experience the whole of your body. Although the breath does not, as air, go through the whole body, its effect does. By being aware, very clearly aware, of the breath as it is inhaled and exhaled, you are aware of the pressure on the nerves which is carried through and influences the whole body.

'Whenever one is mindful of breathing in this way, training himself to inhale and exhale whilst being aware of the body, or is calming down the bodily activities, at such a time he is dwelling in contemplation of the body, full of energy, clearly conscious, mindful, having overcome the covetousness and dejection that are of this world.'

You then experience the whole body, that is you are fully aware of the body without at all considering it as 'your' body, without any emotion at all, just as, for instance, a motor-mechanic might be aware of a motor-car, knowing its composition and capability and its parts without having to think about them. You know the body as a body and you know it in relation to external factors influencing it. You know how it is composed, how it is being built up all the time and is decomposing all the time.

OR you are just aware of how the body is disposed, that is of its appearance whether it is in a sitting position or standing or lying down or moving.

OR you just realise, are merely aware of, the fact that the body exists, are thus mindful of the body and of nothing else. Thus you are not clinging to the body and not clinging to anything else in the world.

You are able then to tie in with the breathing the awareness of calming down the bodily activities and you train yourself in this.

Then you are able wherever you are to be fully aware. In going forward or in going back, in looking ahead or in looking round, in dressing and undressing, in bending or stretching, in walking, sitting or lying down, in speaking, in remaining silent, in falling asleep, in waking, in eating, drinking, chewing, savouring, in defecating, in urinating, you apply clear comprehension, full awareness of what you are doing as you are doing it.

Thus you live contemplating, being aware of, the body in relation to the body.

And further, you reflect on the body enveloped by the skin and full of impurity from the soles of the feet up and from the crown of the head down, thinking: 'There are in this body: hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidney, heart, liver, membranes, spleen, lungs, bowels, intestines, mesentery, faeces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, solid fat, liquid fat, mucus, synovial fluid, urine'.

Just as if there were a bag with different kinds of grain in it, wheat, rice, millet, maize, you could see it and be aware, quite unconcerned, of the different kinds of grain.

Then you may reflect on a dead body which must rot and stink, become decayed, a skeleton, the bones becoming detached, finally falling to dust; that this very body you always thought of as 'Mine' will go the same way.

You then contemplate feelings in relation to feelings.

Now here it may be explained that the practice begins with the full mindfulness of, concentration on, attention to, awareness of, the breathing, but it does not end there.

In sitting and in periods of walking you begin with the breathing and of course when you go on you still breathe regularly. In walking you go on to being aware of the foot as it comes up, goes forward, goes down, presses the ground and the other foot coming up and going forward and so on.

You then, in both cases, of sitting and walking, have periods of contemplation, of investigation, in which impersonally, without emotion and without thought wandering, you consider the body just in relation to the body, feelings in relation to feelings and so on.

There is a third part of the practice where you bring the absence of emotion, absence of personal feeling, complete concentration, complete awareness of what you are doing as you are doing it, into daily life.

You, like most others, are very probably often an actor acting to an audience of you, though most people remain unaware of this.

You will reach a stage of seeing yourself 'going through the motions'. Then the motives and the need for play-acting will go, more or less gradually, as 'personality clinging' goes and you will pass through to complete freedom.

How do you contemplate feelings in relation to feelings?

You understand that feelings, sensations, are part of the changing complex that you think of as being yourself. You direct your attention to these. When you experience a painful or unpleasant or neutral feeling you are fully aware of the feeling, you train yourself to perceive the feeling as impersonally as possible. When you experience a pleasant physical feeling you are fully aware of it, knowing that you are experiencing a pleasant physical feeling that has arisen from a cause, that will pass away as all things pass, and you are fully aware of that experience and of nothing else, being just aware of it and not thinking around it. Similarly when you experience an unpleasant physical feeling and similarly when you are experiencing a physical feeling that is neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

You do the same when you are experiencing a mental feeling that is pleasant, or unpleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant. You are fully aware of it without thinking about it.

So you also are aware of feelings whether they are from within or from outside yourself and you are aware of the factors that cause them and of how they fade away and disappear.

OR you may just remain fully aware that feelings exist, with the mindfulness, the complete awareness of the fact that 'feeling is there'.

And how do you remain contemplating consciousness in relation to consciousness?

In the following it is better to give a translation of the Buddha's own words as given in the discourse on the setting up of mindfulness.

Here a monk knows the consciousness with craving as with craving; the consciousness without craving as without craving; the consciousness with anger as with anger; the consciousness without anger as without anger; the consciousness with delusion as with delusion; the consciousness without delusion as without delusion; the shrunken state of consciousness as the shrunken state; the distracted state of consciousness as the distracted state; the developed state of consciousness as the developed state; the undeveloped state of consciousness as the undeveloped state; the state of consciousness with some other mental state superior to it as the state of consciousness with something mentally higher' (You are a body-mind-spirit complex. So what is 'Spirit'? It is consciousness with something mentally higher. A rough analogy may be given. An ordinary piece of steel has no appreciable property of magnetism unless and until it has been

magnetised, when some at least of its particles have been aligned. In periods of intense absorption the mind is concentrated and whether this comes from devotion to or enthusiasm for something good or bad 'the spirit shines forth', though the 'bad', the unskilful, brings its own adverse results. The Buddhist practice is to give complete one-pointedness of mind by complete concentration and various 'properties' accrue); 'the state of consciousness with no other mental state superior to it as the state of consciousness with nothing mentally higher; the concentrated state of consciousness as the concentrated state; the unconcentrated state of consciousness as the unconcentrated state; the freed state of consciousness as the freed state; and the unfreed state of consciousness as the unfreed.

'Thus he remains contemplating consciousness in relation to consciousness.

'And how does a monk live contemplating mental objects in relation to mental objects?

'Here a monk remains contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the five hindrances.

'How does a monk remain contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the five hindrances?

'Here when sense-desire is present a monk knows: "There is sense-desire in me", or when sense-desire is not present he knows: "There is no sense-desire in me". He knows how the arising of the non-arisen sense-desire comes to be; he knows how the abandoning of the arisen sense-desire comes to be; he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned sense-desire comes to be.

'When anger is present he knows: "There is anger in me", or when anger is not present he knows: "There is no anger in me." He knows how the arising of the non-arisen anger comes to be; he knows how the abandoning of the arisen anger comes to be; he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned anger comes to be.

'When sloth and torpor are present he knows: "There is sloth and torpor in me."

'When sloth and torpor are not present he knows: "There is no sloth and torpor in me." He knows how the arising of the non-arisen sloth and torpor comes to be; he knows how the abandoning of the arisen sloth and torpor comes to be; he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned sloth and torpor comes to be.

'When restlessness and worry are present he knows: "There is restlessness and worry in me", or when restlessness and worry are not present he knows: "There is no restlessness and worry in me." He knows how the arising of the non-arisen restlessness and worry comes to be; he knows how the abandoning of the arisen restlessness and worry comes to be; he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned restlessness and worry comes to be.

'When doubt is present he knows: "There is doubt in me", or when doubt is not present he knows: "There is no doubt in me." He knows how the arising of the non-arisen doubt comes to be; he knows how the abandoning of the arisen doubt comes to be; he knows how the abandoning of the arisen doubt comes to be; he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned doubt comes to be.

'Thus he remains contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the five hindrances.

'And, further, he remains contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the five aggregates of clinging.' (Note: these are sometimes referred to as the five groups of clinging or five groups of existence or parts of the 'Soul'.)

'How does a monk remain contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the five aggregates of clinging?

'Here a monk thinks: "Thus is material form, thus is the arising of material form and thus is the disappearance of material form. Thus is feeling, thus is the arising of feeling and thus is the disappearance of feeling. Thus is perception, thus is the arising of perception and thus is the disappearance of perception. Thus are the formative tendencies, thus is the arising of the formative tendencies and thus is the disappearance of the formative tendencies. Thus is consciousness, thus is the arising of consciousness, thus is the disappearance of consciousness".

'And, further, a monk remains contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the six internal and six external sense-bases.

'How does a monk live contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the six internal and the six external sense-bases?

'Here a monk knows the eye, knows visual forms and knows the fetter that arises dependent on both; he knows how the arising of the non-arisen fetter comes to be; he knows how the abandoning of the arisen fetter comes to be; he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned fetter comes to be.

'He knows the ear, knows sounds and knows the fetter . . .

'He knows the nose, knows odours and knows the fetter . . .

'He knows the tongue, knows tastes and knows the fetter . . .

'He knows the body, knows tactual objects and knows the fetter

. . .

'He knows the mind, knows mental objects and knows the fetter that arises dependent on both; he knows how the arising of the non-arisen fetter comes to be; he knows how the abandoning of the arisen fetter comes to be; he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned fetter comes to be.

'Thus a monk remains contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the six internal and six external sense-bases.

'And, further, a monk remains contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the seven factors of enlightenment.

'Here when the enlightenment-factor of mindfulness is present the monk knows: "The enlightenment factor of mindfulness is in me" or when the enlightenment-factor of mindfulness is absent he knows: "The enlightenment-factor of mindfulness is absent", and he knows how the arising of the non-arisen enlightenment-factor of mindfulness comes to be, and how perfection in the development of the arisen enlightenment-factor of mindfulness comes to be.

'When the enlightenment-factor of investigation of mental objects is present he knows: "The enlightenment-factor of the investigation of mental objects is in me"; when the enlightenment-factor of the investigation of mental objects is absent he knows: "The enlightenment-factor of the investigation of mental objects is not in me"; and he knows how the arising of the non-arisen factor comes to be and how perfection in the development of the arisen factor comes to be.

'When the enlightenment factor of energy is present he knows: "The enlightenment-factor of energy is in me"; when the factor is absent he knows: "The enlightenment-factor is not in me" and he knows how the arising of the factor comes to be and how perfection in the development of the arisen enlightenment-factor of energy comes to be.

'When the enlightenment-factor of rapture is present he knows: "The enlightenment-factor of rapture is in me"; when the factor is absent he knows: "The factor is not in me"; and he knows how the arising of the factor comes to be and how perfection in the development of the arisen factor comes to be.

'When the enlightenment-factor of tranquillity is present he knows: "The enlightenment-factor of tranquillity is in me"; when the factor is absent he knows: "The factor is not in me"; and he knows how the arising of the factor comes to be and how perfection in the development of the arisen factor comes to be.

'When the enlightenment-factor of concentration is present he knows: "The factor of concentration is in me" and when the factor is absent he knows: "It is not in me"; and he knows how the arising of the factor comes to be and how perfection in the development of the factor comes to be.

'When the enlightenment-factor of equanimity is present he knows: "The enlightenment-factor of equanimity is in me" and when the factor is absent he knows: "The factor is not in me"; and he knows how the arising of the non-arisen factor comes to be.

'Thus he remains contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the seven factors of enlightenment.

'And further, a monk remains contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the four truths.

'Here a monk knows: "This is suffering" according to reality; he knows: "This is the origin of suffering" according to reality; he knows: "This is the cessation of suffering" according to reality; he knows: "This is the path leading to the cessation of suffering" according to reality.

'Thus he remains contemplating mental objects in mental objects internally, or he remains contemplating mental objects in mental objects externally, or both internally and externally. He remains contemplating the origination of mental objects or contemplating the dissolution of mental objects, or both how they arise and how they disappear. OR his mindfulness is established with the thought: "Mental objects exist" just to the extent necessary for full knowledge and mindfulness, and he lives independent and clings to nothing in the world. Thus a monk lives contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the four truths.

Truly, whoever practises these four Settings up of Mindfulness in this manner for seven years or even (ardently) for a week, then one of two results may be expected by him; highest knowledge here and now or, if some remainder of clinging is yet present, the state of non-returning.

'Because of this is it said: "This is the only way for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and misery, for the destruction of pain and grief, for realising the right path, for the attainment of nibbana."'

Note: See appendix for 'Highest knowledge' and 'Non-returning'.

The Discourse to Sigala

Although this was more than twenty-five centuries ago and in a different land, 'people is people and pigs is pigs' wherever they may be and 'human nature' hasn't changed really over the centuries. Naturally, such things as climate, environment and pressure of population, determine to some extent the manner in which people manifest their human character.

The civilisation of the India of that time was simple and not overcrowded. Customs were a little different but the basic morality holds good through the ages.

There was a custom of 'worshipping the six quarters', East, South, West, North, the nadir and the zenith, in order to gain the goodwill of 'spirits' or 'Gods' everywhere.

The Buddha, meeting a young man engaged in this worship, took the occasion to tell him how the 'six quarters' should be properly observed.

'When, young householder, the noble disciple has put away the four vices in conduct; when he performs no evil action in four ways; when he does not follow the six channels for dissipating wealth, he thus, avoiding these fourteen evil things, covers the six quarters and enters the path leading to victory in both worlds: in this world and the next. Upon the dissolution of the body, after death, he is born in a happy heavenly sphere.

'What are the four vices of conduct that he has put away? The taking of life, householder, is a vice and so are taking what is not given, sexual misconduct and untruth.'

Thus said the Exalted One and then the Master said again:

'Taking of life, theft, lies, wrong sexual acts:

To these four ills the wise ne'er praise award.'

'In which four ways does he perform no evil action? Actuated by craving one commits evil, actuated by anger one commits evil, actuated by ignorance one commits evil, actuated by fear one commits evil. But when the noble disciple is not actuated by desire, anger, delusion and fear, he, through these, commits no evil.

Thus said the Exalted One; and then the Master said again:

'Who led by craving, hatred or by fear

Or by delusion goes against the Law:

Even as the waning moon gets less and less,

So does his name and fame diminish thus.

Who never by desire or hate or fear

Or dullness puts himself against the Law,

His name and fame increase from day to day,
As in the brighter half the waxing moon.'

'What are the six channels for dissipating wealth which he does not follow? Taking intoxicants; loitering in the streets at unseemly hours; constantly visiting shows and fairs; addiction to gambling; association with evil companions; the habit of idleness.

'There are, young householder, six dangers in taking intoxicants: loss of wealth; increase of quarrels; susceptibility to disease; the earning of an evil reputation; indecent exposure of the body; impaired intellect.

'There are, young householder, these six evils in loitering in the streets at unseemly hours: he himself is unprotected and unguarded; his wife and children are unprotected and unguarded; he is suspected of evil deeds committed by others; false rumours fix on him; many are the troubles he meets with.

'There are, young householder, these six dangers in frequenting shows and fairs: he is ever thinking: "Where is there dancing? Where is there singing? Where is there music? Where are there theatrical shows? Where is there music of cymbals? Where is there playing of drums?"

'There are, young householder, these six dangers in gambling: the winner begets enmity; the loser grieves for lost wealth; he actually loses his wealth; his word has no weight in a court of law; he is despised by friends and associates; he is not sought after for matrimony since as a gambler he could not afford to keep a wife.

'There are, young householder, these six dangers in associating with evil companions: any gambler; any libertine; any drunkard; any cheat; any swindler; any man of violence is his boon companion.

'There are, young householder, these six dangers in the habit of idleness: he does no work, saying: "It is too cold; it is too hot; it is too late; it is too early; I am very hungry; I am too full."

'Living in this way he leaves many duties undone, he does not get new wealth and the wealth he has already, dwindles away.'

Thus said the Exalted One, and then the Master spoke again:

'"Dear friend" say your companions while you drink.
Let trouble come; they swiftly melt away.
'Who is a friend in every useful thing,
He is a friend who'll always stay by you.

Sleeping by day and prowling round at night,
Adultery, and brawling, doing harm,
Friendship with rogues, and stony-heartedness;
These causes six bring ruin to a man.

Who is of evil men comrade and friend,
Himself living his life in evil ways,
Alike in this world and the world to come
Such men fall deeply into woeful states.

Gambling and women, drink and dance and song,
Sleeping by day and prowling round at night,
Friendship with wicked men, hardness of heart,
These causes six bring ruin to man.

Gambling and drinking, chasing after those
Women as dear as life to other men,
Following the fools, not the enlightened ones,
He wanes as in the darker half the moon.

The drunkard always poor and destitute;
Even while drinking, thirsty; haunting bars;
Sinks into debt as into water stone,
Soon robs his family of their good name.

One who habitually sleeps by day
And looks upon the night as time to rise
Licentious and a drunkard all the time,
He does not merit rank of householder.

Who says: "It is too hot, too cold, too late!"
Leaving the waiting work unfinished still,
Lets pass all opportunities for good.
But he who reckons heat and cold as straws
And like a man does all that's to be done,
He never falls away from happiness.'

'Four, young householder, are they who should be considered as enemies in the guise of friends; a rapacious person, a man of words not deeds, a flatterer, a fellow-waster.

'The first is on four grounds to be considered an enemy in the guise of a friend: he is rapacious, he gives little and asks much, he helps you only from fear, he looks only for his own benefit.

'On four grounds the man of words not deeds is to be considered as an enemy in the guise of a friend: he tells you all the good he would have done for you in the past, he tells you all the good he will do for you in the future, he tries to gain your favour by empty promises, when the need for service arises he says how sorry he is that he cannot help.

'On four grounds the flatterer is to be considered an enemy in the guise of a friend: he agrees with you when you want to do wrong,

he dissuades you from doing right, he praises you to your face, he speaks ill of you behind your back.

'On four grounds the fellow-waster is to be considered as an enemy in the guise of a friend: he is your companion when you are drinking, he is your companion when you prowl round at night, he is your companion when you haunt shows and fairs, he is your companion when you are infatuated with 'gambling.'

Thus said the Exalted One, and then the Master spoke again:

'The friend who always seeks his benefit,
The friend whose words are other than his deeds,
The friend who flatters just to make you pleased,
The friend who keeps you company in wrong,
These four the wise regard as enemies:
Shun them from afar as paths of danger.'

'These four, young householder, should be understood as good-hearted friends: the friend who is a helper, the friend who is the same in happiness and sorrow, the friend who gives good counsel, the friend who sympathizes.

'In four ways, young householder, should a helper be understood as a good-hearted friend: he guards you when you are heedless, he protects your property when you are heedless, he is a refuge when you are in danger, when you have commitments he provides you with double the amount needed.

'In four ways, young householder, should one who is the same in happiness and sorrow be understood as a good-hearted friend: he tells you his secrets, he keeps hidden your secrets, he does not forsake you in trouble, he lays down even his life for your sake.

'In four ways . . . should one who gives good counsel be understood as a good-hearted friend: he restrains you from doing wrong, he encourages you to do what is right, he informs you of things unknown to you before, he points out to you the path to heaven.

'In four ways . . . should one who sympathizes be understood as a good-hearted friend: he does not rejoice in your misfortune, he rejoices in your prosperity, he restrains others who speak ill of you, he praises those who speak well of you.'

Thus spoke the Exalted One and then the Master spoke again:

'The friend who is a helper all the time,
The friend in happiness and sorrow both,
The friend who gives advice that's always good,
The friend who has full sympathy with you,
These four the wise see as good-hearted friends
And with devotion cherish such as these
As does a mother cherish her own child.
The good and wise shine like a blazing fire,
He who acquires his wealth in harmless ways

Just as a bee that gathers honey does,
As ant-hill grows apace his riches mount.
When the good layman wealth has thus acquired,
In portions four let him divide his wealth.
Able is he to benefit his kin,
Thus will he bind himself in friendship close.
One portion let him spend; enjoy its use;
Two portions to conduct his business well;
The fourth for time of need he keeps aside.'

'And how, young householder, does a noble disciple worship the six quarters?'

'The following should be looked upon as the six quarters: the parents should be looked upon as the east, teachers as the south, wife and children as the west, friends and companions as the north, servants and employees as the nadir, ascetics and holy men as the zenith.

'In five ways should a child minister to his parents as the east: "Having supported me I shall support them, I shall work for them, I shall keep the family tradition, I shall make myself worthy of my heritage, I shall make offerings in their name after their death."

'In five ways the parents thus ministered to as the east by their children show their compassionate love to them: they restrain them from evil, they encourage them to do what is right, they train them for a profession, they arrange a suitable marriage, at a suitable time they hand over their inheritance to them.

'In these five ways do children minister to their parents as the east and the parents show their compassionate love to them. Thus is the east covered by them and made safe and secure.

'In five ways should a pupil minister to his teachers as the south: by rising from his seat in greeting, by attending on them, by eagerness to learn, by personal service, by respectful attention while receiving instruction.

'In five ways do teachers thus ministered to as the south by their pupils show compassionate love for them: they train them in that in which they are well trained, they see that they hold fast their lessons, they instruct them in the arts and sciences, they speak well of them to their friends and companions, they provide for their safety in every way.

'The teachers thus ministered to as the south by their pupils show their compassionate love to them in these five ways. Thus is the south covered and made safe and secure.

'In five ways should a wife be ministered to by her husband as the west: by showing her respect, by being courteous to her, by being faithful to her, by delegating authority to her, by providing her with adornments.

'The wife thus ministered to as the west by her husband shows her compassionate love for him in five ways: she performs her duties well, she is hospitable to relations and the people round, she is faithful, she protects his property, she is skilled and industrious.

'In these five ways does the wife show her compassionate love to her husband who ministers to her as the west. Thus is the west covered by him and made safe and secure.

'In five ways should a man minister to his friends and associates as the north: by liberality, by courtesy, by service, by impartiality, by sincerity.

'The friends and associates thus ministered to by him as the north show their compassionate love to him in five ways: they protect him when he is heedless, they protect his property when he is heedless, they become a refuge when he is in danger, they do not leave him in his troubles, they show consideration for his family.

'The friends and associates thus ministered to as the north by a man show their compassionate love for him in these five ways. Thus is the north covered and made safe and secure.

'In five ways should a master minister to his servants and employees as the nadir: by assigning them work according to their ability, by supplying them with food and wages, by tending them in sickness, by sharing with them any delicacies, by giving them rest periods and holidays.

'The servants and employees thus administered to as the nadir by their master show their compassionate love for him in five ways: they rise before him, they go to sleep after him, they take only what is given, they perform their duties well, they uphold his good name and fame.

'The servants and employees thus ministered to as the nadir show their compassionate love for him in these five ways. Thus is the nadir covered by him and made safe and secure.

'In five ways should a householder minister to ascetics and holy men as the zenith: by affectionate deeds, by affectionate words, by affectionate thoughts, by keeping open house to them, by supplying their temporal needs.

'The ascetics and holy men thus ministered to as the zenith by a householder show their compassionate love for him in six ways: they restrain him from evil, they exhort him to good, they love him with a kind heart, they teach him what he has not heard, they clarify what he has already heard, they point out the path to heaven.

'In these six ways do ascetics and holy men show their compassionate love to a householder who ministers to them as the zenith. Thus is the zenith covered by him and made safe and secure.'

Thus said the Exalted One and then the Master spoke again:

'The mother and the father are the east.
Regard your teachers ever as the south.
Wife and dear children are the glowing west.
Close friends and your companions are the north.
All those who work for you the nadir are.
The zenith is the wise and holy men.

He who is fit to rank as householder,
These six quarters he should reverence.
Who is in wisdom deep and virtue strong,
Gentle in all things and intelligent,
Humble in spirit and amenable,
Such man to highest honour may attain.

He who has energy not indolence,
Unshaken though misfortune should befall,
Flawless in manner, with sagacity,
Such man to highest honour may attain.
Welcoming with kind words and friendly ways,
Liberal to all without a thought of self,
A guide most wise in counsel, fit to lead,
Such man to highest honour may attain.

A heart that's generous and speech that's sweet,
A life of service given up to man,
Showing impartiality to all,
Judging exactly as the case demands;
These are the ways that make the world go round
As does a linchpin in a moving cart.
These absent, parents never will receive
Respect and honour from their children due.
These are the ways that lead to eminence;
These are the ways that wise men rightly praise.'

Appendix 2 'Heaven' and 'Hell'

There are worse states of being than any in this world and there are those which are comparatively much happier and altogether more satisfactory. They may be regarded as 'Hells' and 'Heavens' but are, as is all in this world, impermanent.

Since 'in the long road of the past' we all have done both skilful and unskilful things, we cannot know of anybody, unless we know that that person has gained a high degree of enlightenment, in what condition he is reborn after death.

In considering these states we cannot judge 'distance' by the three-dimensional concept we have of this world. Some are 'closer' to us than others and of these one is a sort of 'ghost world' wherein beings are more sad than actually unhappy. Some more than others of these can 'see' us more or less dimly and where there had been a strong attachment, either of love or of hate, may try to communicate.

Few in this world of ours have any ability at all for such communication and this ability is often, though not always, associated with a somewhat deranged mind. It may also be pointed out that in the case of a spiritualist 'medium' there are often several factors, in some cases all working together, and of these the most common is fraud. There are clever confidence tricksters with no ability at all in 'mediumship' who can delude the gullible. There are some such who have a little ability in telepathy and are able to 'read the mind', the subconscious as well as the conscious, and tell the enquirer what will please him, what he half knows already, and then add the more that will make him happy.

There are 'mediums' with some little ability to contact 'the other world' who sometimes 'dry up' and then fake their results as they feel they should produce what is expected of them. There is the medium who though honest is 'picking up' your thoughts and wishes, is reading your mind without knowing it and projecting your past into the present. Finally, when a confidence trickster or joker dies he carries his tendencies, and what is reborn is the sum of his tendencies, and he may pose as your loved one who has 'passed over'. There are other factors also, so you can place no reliance on 'messages' from the dead. And one should not try to communicate. That only encourages clinging on both sides, with harmful results.

What one may do if one wishes is make offerings in the name of the 'dear departed' and from this only good can result. Naturally if you make this a rite and ritual you are binding yourself and that is harmful.

In Asia there are many who have been taught that there is such a thing as 'transference of merit'. The idea is that they perform a worthy deed and then 'share the merit' or even 'transfer all the merit'

they would gain from this with or to a particular person or, in some cases, all beings. Though the performance of a worthy action is good and the wish not to benefit by it personally is also good, the idea is wrong since, as the Buddha said: 'No man can purify another'.¹ What any person does, in body speech or thought, is what helps or hinders him. We create our own tendencies and are reborn according to those tendencies and cannot receive 'merit' from another's deed.

However, the making of offerings works like this:

A parent has died and a son or daughter either makes donations to charity or may light a candle and place near it a glass of water, a small dish with fruit or other food on it and perhaps a vase of flowers and make the wish: 'As this is offered in the name of my parents, may they be aware of it, may they appreciate it and so profit by it, and may all beings be happy.' Since all beings are to some extent interconnected, some good comes of this. For it to have a strong effect for good, there must be the following conditions:

The being or beings in the 'ghost world' must be present (and the parents may be among these); the beings must 'see', be aware of, the deed; they must appreciate it as something good that is being done. This can then spark off a response in them that will lead to them being reborn into this or a happier world.

Such acts are often performed on the anniversary of the birthday of the deceased parents or on some other anniversary of an occasion on which they shared in mutual happiness. The inhabitants of any world are not there as a 'punishment' or as a 'reward'. They are there because of some degree of clinging and past deeds having formed that pattern of tendencies. Those who have had strong bonds of attachment are more likely to be present, to be 'close to' each other on anniversaries of shared events. The act, though it takes advantage of clinging, does not, unless it is performed with the thought of clinging, perpetuate the clinging but helps to release the bond so that both may make progress.

Appendix 3 The Degrees of Higher Knowledge

By following the Buddha's teaching in the practice of mindfulness and concentration one may attain higher and much more satisfactory states even in this present life.¹

There are ten fetters and if you overcome the three lower fetters of belief in an unchanging soul; sceptical doubt (blind disbelief); and clinging to rite and ritual, you have 'entered the stream of nibbana, are firmly established and destined to full enlightenment'. You may, of course, attain higher stages almost at once or you may take more than one lifetime but you will never slip back.

If in addition you overcome, in their grosser forms, the fetters of sensual craving and ill-will, you will return only once to this world.

If in addition you have completely overcome these fetters you will reappear as a spontaneously manifesting being in a 'Heaven' world and without returning from there will attain nibbana.

If you overcome all fetters, eradicate all defilements, so reaching perfection, you have laid down your burden, are no longer fettered by any tie to any form of existence and have been liberated by your wisdom. You (only of course it is no longer 'you') have become an arahat.²

WHAT IS AN ARAHAT LIKE?

Not being an arahat, I cannot tell you what an arahat is like. Nobody but an arahat could tell of another person whether or not he had attained. The Buddha said that one might live some time with an arahat and not know that he was one.³

Nevertheless, using the standard of the ten fetters, one can often tell of a person that he has not attained. Using the same standard, one can get at least some idea of an arahat.

In one respect he would be like Browning's concept of the revived Lazarus:

'Discourse to him of prodigious armaments
assembled to besiege his city now
or of the passing of a mule with gourds;
'tis one.'

Being already, in one sense, out of the world, he would not take part in the 'getting and spending' of the world and so could not exist in the world today for very long unless there were special conditions.

In the Buddha's day a monk was looked after by his fellow-monks when he had been declared by the Buddha to be an arahat or when he lived the type of life an arahat might be expected to live. Those lay people who were reputed to be arahats were similarly cared for by relatives or friends.

There are few, very few indeed, 'Buddhist' monasteries in Asia today where that repute would be given and a monk cared for accordingly.

You would know how extremely difficult it would be to gain such repute and such care in the West.

So if you become an arahat, that arahat would not remain here very long. Nor would he, could he, care.

At the same time an arahat by the very fact of his concentrated thoughts of goodwill, not to any person in particular but to all beings impersonally, would be helping the world while he remained here.

Naturally, an arahat would know he was an arahat, but a man might think himself one and be mistaken.

Appendix 4 How should you not?

Being reborn is such a dolorous thing,
worse than the first birth in timeless, spaceless void.
Now ask you: 'Void of what?' and echo says
in answer: 'What?'
How should she not?

Here in this age I am not dead;
there is no death.
How should there be?

Holding on with the mind's hands,
having no other as yet. Being unborn
how should I have?
Bulges forming to roots,
swellings climbing to shoots,
to from this stone form plant,
and flower to horse and man;
man trampled, man triumphant,
man made God.

Since all things fall,
how should not God fall back?
Back to begin his dolorous climb again,
joyless because all joy has died, almost:
there is no death.
How should there be?
In this still summer air the birds
having no breath of wind sing not loud as yet;
await the darkening sun, the thunder-clap, the rain,
heaven's new shining,
for joy to spring again.

But now God is not in Heaven,
is past His Heaven,
has climbed above the Gods;
at last secure because no longer God;
has found the peace that needs no angel's choir.
How should you not?

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