

THE BUDDHA

AND HIS PATH
TO SELF-ENLIGHTENMENT

RONALD FUSSELL



THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY

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SELF-ENLIGHTENMENT



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A First Introduction to Buddhism

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To
THE VENERABLE BHIKKHU KAPILAVADDHO,
English wearer of the Robe and Teacher of the Dhamma,
in gratitude

THE FRONTISPIECE

The artist responsible for the Frontispiece, Mrs. Christmas Humphreys (Hassuko) has vividly expressed the concept of the Buddha as the Teacher of all beings, the Enlightened Guru at the centre of life who guides the inner Guru whom we must all find, and the finding of whom is Enlightenment.

This remarkable drawing to my mind greatly enhances the message of this book, and my thanks are due to her for it

R.F.

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“’Tis even as a border town, having strong walls and six gates . . . with a wise and prudent gate-keeper. Thither should come from the East swift twin messengers, asking for the lord of the city . . . he sits in the midst of the crossways. And they twain, having truthfully delivered their message, should regain their way. And other twain messengers should come from the West . . .

“. . . The town is this body ; the six gates are the six senses ; the gatekeeper is mindfulness ; the messengers are calm and insight ; the lord is mind ; the message is Nibbana.”

(Samyutta-Nikaya. iv. 194.)

PREFACE

MANY who have read Mr. Christmas Humphreys' *Buddhism*, specially commissioned for the Pelican series and first published in 1951, have described it as too advanced for a first introduction to Buddhism. With this objection Mr. Humphreys cordially agrees for, as he points out, he was asked to compress the whole field of "Buddhism" into 75,000 words, and the result could not possibly be "simple". There seems, therefore, a need for a new introduction to Buddhism, based on the Scriptures of the Theravada or Way of the Elders. With these basic principles, which are common to all schools of Buddhism, well in mind, the reader can with greater advantage choose from the enormous range of Buddhist works available those which seem the most useful for further study.

I was therefore asked by the Council of the Society, as leader of the Group at present studying the Theravada, to draft such a work, and to incorporate into it my previous work, now out of print, *The Buddha's Path to Self-Enlightenment*. In the new book an attempt has been made to convey something of the spirit of the Founder of Buddhism and something of the content of his teaching and it is hoped that many will find in it the beginning of a life interest.

But although the teaching has been explained as far as possible in simple language, its truths remain profound, and even startling to western readers, and it should not be assumed that the meaning will be easy to grasp at once.

This book should be of use to parents, for parts of it could easily be read to or by children. Thus, in addition to the life of the Buddha, the Four Noble

Truths and the Five Precepts have been illustrated by Buddhist stories. Other chapters might serve as a starting-point for years of study, for it has been well said, "There are no deeper truths of Buddhism; there is only a deeper understanding of its truths."

Many sections of the teaching are, of course, touched on only briefly, but these can be followed up in more advanced books or in the translations of the original Scriptures. There is a wide range of Buddhist literature on sale, and for members of the Buddhist Society, London, there is the use of the books in the Society's Library. The Bibliography at the end of this book will give a number of suggestions for further study.

INTRODUCTION

“He was not for an age but for all time.”

IF you had been born in northern India a long time ago—nearly 2,500 years—you might have seen in the early morning, when the shadows were still cool, a tall, dignified man coming into your village. He was dressed in a saffron coloured robe, and wore sandals. He carried a bowl between his hands, and as he came to the doorway of each house or hut the mother of the house would come out and place in it cooked rice or vegetables. He did not speak, but the people who met him bowed before him, for his face was so calm and clear and there seemed to be a golden light about him. Those who gave him food felt that he brought a blessing to their houses and they were happy throughout the day.

If you had followed him you would have seen that he went into the forest, or to a hermitage, if there was one in that district, and that there he ate his meal and drank water. After this he would sit and meditate deeply for several hours and then in the afternoon people would come to him with questions—monks, merchants, householders, kings and rich people. He never refused to see anyone, although he sometimes said that because they were so wicked they would not be able to come to see him.

This man was sometimes called Gotama, his family name; sometimes he was referred to as Sakya-muni, the Sage of the Sakya clan; more often he was known as the Buddha, which is a title meaning the Perfectly-Awakened One, and it is by this name that he is generally known today.

When he taught, his disciples learnt what he said by heart until they were word-perfect ; then they taught it in their turn to their disciples. The teaching was not written down until three or four hundred years after the Buddha's passing, but today the whole of the written version is available in English.

People often came to the Buddha in great sorrow and he would comfort them, not by saying that it might be worse, still less by claiming that he could make things better for them. He said, "Your sorrow is caused by your own wrong actions, arising from your own ignorance. I will teach you how to remove that sorrow for yourself. But you must work hard." Some of his listeners did not like this advice and left him. Others found a wonderful happiness, and many of them joined his Brotherhood.

So valuable was his teaching that it later spread to Ceylon, Burma and Siam, to China, Japan and Tibet, and even to Greece and Western Europe. Today, all over the world men are studying his words and trying to live as he taught, and many are finding that to live as he said indeed brings happiness.

THE BUDDHA AND HIS PATH TO SELF-ENLIGHTENMENT

CHAPTER I.

LIFE AS A PRINCE

“Each man’s life the outcome of his former living is.”
The Light of Asia.

IN northern India 2,500 years ago a baby was born. He was born like any other human baby and his father and mother were very fond of him. His father was the king of a small state : nowadays we should call him a prince or rajah. He was King Suddhodana of the Sakyan family and belonged, like everyone else in India, to a caste ; it was the caste of the Kshatriyas, or warriors and rulers, so the baby belonged to this caste too. Their family name was Gotama and the name chosen for the new-born son was Siddhattha, meaning “Fortunate”, so he became Prince Siddhattha Gotama of the Kshatriya caste and the Sakya clan.

After a week, Siddhattha’s mother died, but a devoted foster-mother was found in his aunt, who was the King’s second wife. It was she who brought him up as a baby. This was not Siddhattha’s first birth on earth ; he had been born many times before, as you and I have been. But thousands of years before, in the time of the previous Buddha, he had made a vow. The vow was that in time he, too, would become a world-teacher. From then on he had striven to grow in wisdom and to build noble qualities into his character.

Now, at last, had come the life in which he would have the great opportunity, in which his success or

failure would affect every being on the earth and untold beings living in other worlds.

The King, as was the custom, asked his wise men (astrologers and soothsayers) to foretell the future of the child. They foretold good fortune as this would please the King, but some were more than usually impressed by what they could see in the stars. Finally there came a holy hermit named Asita who lived on a hill outside the capital. It is traditional in India for everyone to pay reverence to holy men and so the King held out his son as though to bow to Asita. But Asita, with an insight deeper than normal, recognised that here was no ordinary baby. "Great King," he said, "it is I who should bow before your son." At this the King was astonished and asked Asita to explain. "Thy son," said Asita, "is one of those rare men born only at long intervals. A great choice lies before him. He may become a supreme world-ruler, with kings under him, or he may become perfect in wisdom and the holy life and become a Buddha. Truly, O King! I think thy son will become a Buddha." With this King Suddhodana saw to his amazement that Asita's eyes had filled with tears. "Why do you weep?" he asked. "I am old," replied Asita, "and I shall not live to see the glory of thy son's achievement, nor hear his words of wisdom." So he went back sadly to his hermitage on the hill.

The King thought deeply over these words. To him there was no difficulty in the choice, but he did not see it as Asita did. To him there was glory in the thought of his son as ruler of all India and perhaps of an Empire beyond, whereas the life of a hermit was mean, and poor in comparison. His son should not choose this if *he* could help it, and dreams of his son as a King of Destiny began to fill his mind from then on. The choice in any

case could not be made yet ; it would have to be made by Siddhattha himself when he grew up.

In the meantime the child was brought up as a royal prince. As soon as he was old enough, the best teachers were found to educate him, and when he became a boy he learnt to take part in athletics and to use arms in company with his royal cousins, the sons of the King's relatives who ruled other states.

Siddhattha loved all these things and was good at them. He often astonished his teachers, for he seemed to know his lessons before he was taught. At athletics he could hold his own with the best of his cousins. The King, his father, had no need to be ashamed of him on that score and the boy's intelligence and strong character pleased him greatly.

At times, however, Siddhattha's mind went deeper than his ordinary lessons. He would sit alone, thinking about the meaning of life and puzzling over that very curious question that we all ask ourselves, "Who am I? Who and what is this curious being that I call *myself*?" Many of us ask it, particularly when we are young, but it seems unfathomable and we give up without finding the answer to what is perhaps the most important question we can ever ask. Siddhattha was going to be one of the very few men who solve this problem entirely by themselves. That is why he is so greatly honoured.

One day, for example, his father took him out to watch the Spring ploughing ceremony. At this ceremony the King and some of the nobles took part and drove the oxen when the first furrows were ploughed. This was thought to bring good luck to the seed when it was sown. Siddhattha had his own attendants and they sat with him at the side of the field. Proudly he watched,

first, his father drive off the royal gold-decorated plough, then the nobles with their ploughs with silver ornaments, then the farmers following with the everyday ploughs. But Siddhattha saw also how the oxen had to drag at the heavy wooden yokes, how the attendants goaded them, how the farm workers had to run and drag stones out of the way, how the labour made them sweat in the heat. When the time came for feasting, his attendants went off to help prepare the feast. Siddhattha was glad to be alone. He found an apple tree to shade him from the fierce sun and there he sat alone, thinking over the day's incidents. So deeply did he ponder that he began to meditate, that is, his thoughts became concentrated until he forgot his surroundings, but seemed doubly alive within his own mind. When the attendants came back to find him, they missed him, but after a search came on him seated cross-legged under the apple tree. So deep were his thoughts that he did not hear them even when they called him, until, coming out of his meditation with a sigh, he went with them back to his father. The King was anxious to know where his son had been, and when he heard the servants' story he was worried, for he also noted the serious mien of the little prince and remembered the choice that he would have to make. Years afterwards, almost on the threshold of his great search, Siddhattha was to remember this experience and use the knowledge it gave him.

Another incident of his early life shows the trend of his character. In the Spring, when the snows melt, the great swans fly over from the plains to the deep mountain lakes of the Himalayas. Devadatta, Siddhattha's cousin, fired with his bow at the leader of one of the flocks. The arrow struck the bird in the wing and the swan came fluttering to earth, but it fell slowly and, as it chanced,

fell in King Suddhodana's palace garden where Siddhattha was walking. Siddhattha was overcome with compassion for the wounded and suffering creature and walked fearlessly up to help it. The bird allowed him, so gentle was his touch, to ease out the arrow and to place healing herbs on the wound. The Prince placed it on the lake in the palace grounds intending to keep it until its wing should be healed. Devadatta, hearing what had happened to the swan, sent messengers to claim it, but Siddhattha sent reply, "You did not kill the bird, but only its swift flight. I will not give it up." Devadatta would not accept this and again sent messengers this time with a more peremptory demand. The King heard of the dispute and, fearing that it might become serious, ordered the matter to be tried by his council of wise men. The case came up and on the appointed day some argued this way and some that until finally the eldest of them spoke. "Devadatta strove to take away the bird's life," he said, "Siddhattha gave back its life. He who gives life is more worthy to own the creature than he who takes its life away. Even the gods cannot give back life when it is lost." This argument seemed so convincing that all agreed and the right to own the swan was given to Siddhattha. But Devadatta was not satisfied and nursed a bitter envy in his heart. This feeling, too, was to affect his conduct later in his life. Siddhattha kept the swan only till it was healed and strong again and then released it, watching it mount in great circles as it felt its power renewed, and then wing farther and farther into the distance to seek its fellows in the Himalayan lakes.

The King still had in mind what the hermit had prophesied, so he made plans to keep his son from the sorrowful side of life. He had three palaces built. The

first was a winter palace, built solidly of wood and lined with cedar. The second was for the burning heat of the summer ; it was built of solid blocks of marble and was cool and shaded within when the land outside was parched with heat. The third was for the torrential monsoon rains. It was built strongly of bricks with a roof of blue tiles. Each palace had its garden ; cool lotus-ponds in the summer garden, sheltering trees and covered walks in the winter garden, and dry inner courts and roofed verandahs in the garden of the monsoons.

By the King's orders, too, no servant was kept in any one of these palaces who was elderly or who had any illness, and no-one was allowed to talk of any sad subject ; of death or the loss of dear ones or any kind of unhappiness. In this way he hoped to keep the thoughts of his son away from serious subjects. " Yet who shall shut out fate ? " The Prince had the same mind that had been his through the long search of many lives. The insight that he had developed in that mind saw through the surface of people's lives and he yearned to know how all men lived, the world over.

This seriousness was reported to the King and he was worried. With less insight than his own son possessed, he still thought it was possible to control destiny from the outside. Being King, he was not easily persuaded that he could fail in anything. So, in secret council, he told his fears to his ministers and asked their advice. The best they could offer was to suggest that a princess should be found whom Siddhattha could marry. For he was now eighteen, which is the age of marriage in India, where people grow up quickly. They thought that a wife would be a tie and that, once married, Siddhattha would have to stay at home for fear of making his wife unhappy.

So a great festival was arranged with a prize for the most beautiful noblewoman—the prize to be awarded by Prince Siddhattha himself. Each girl was to come before the King's son and each was to receive a gift, but the most beautiful was to be given the prize. At the same time the crafty ministers watched the Prince's face for any sign of his own feelings. No doubt each one hoped that his own daughter might win the prize and perhaps become the Prince's bride.

But they seemed doomed to disappointment. The young Prince sat with great dignity and seriousness under a domed canopy of state, apparently unmoved by the grace of the girls in their brightly-coloured saris. To each one he gave her gift, but no response other than this showed in look or gesture. Finally—the very last—came Suppabuddha's daughter, Yasodhara. The gifts in fact were already given and yet she came forward confidently. "Is there no gift left for me?" she said. The Prince now looked up and those who watched saw him start as he looked on her. "The gifts indeed are gone," he said, "yet take this gift as the prize for the fairest I have seen to-day," and, untying a great string of jewels from around his neck, he clasped them, as the custom was, around the girl's waist, and she, blushing, ran back to her friends. Years afterwards, when, as the Buddha, Siddhattha explained his own life to his disciples, he told them that Yasodhara had been his wife in many lives before and that it was their actions and their love in these other lives that had inevitably brought them together again this time.

King Suddhodana was delighted with the success of his ruse and forthwith sent messengers to Yasodhara's father to ask her hand in marriage with his son. But even kings and princes have to bow to tradition.

Yasodhara, too, was of a royal family, and it was the tradition of the Kshatriyas that a bride must be won in open contest by feats of arms. Some people thought that Siddhattha was too gentle and studious to excel in such a contest but a day was appointed and the royal cousins came to challenge him, for they, too, were in love with Yasodhara's beauty. There was Siddhattha's cousin, Devadatta, who was considered the best shot with a bow: there was Nanda, the swordsman, and Arjuna, the finest horseman. All these came to the contest and many others, and Yasodhara was troubled, for she loved Siddhattha and yet could hardly imagine him overcoming so many renowned competitors.

But, in fact, Siddhattha showed himself the best of all. He snapped the bow they gave him and called for a stronger one. With this he sent an arrow farther even than Devadatta. He beat Nanda at the sword-play by cutting through a tree-trunk so cleanly in one great stroke that at first people thought his blade had turned, but as the trunk began to topple their disappointment turned to cheers. On his famous white horse, Kantaka, he beat the others at racing and at horsemanship, till they began to grumble that if only they had a horse like that they could beat *him*. Then an untrained stallion was brought, black and fierce and dangerous. None could even mount on its back except Arjuna, but when Arjuna tried to urge the stallion round the arena, in mad rage it turned and gripped his heel and dragged him to the ground. It was only by the promptness of the attendants, who rushed in and drove off the horse, that Arjuna's life was saved.

Now the judges debated whether it was worth risking Siddhattha's life, but before they had time to veto the event, Siddhattha had walked into the arena and ordered

the attendants to cast off the ropes. The stallion stood trembling in rage and fear but Siddhattha walked up to it and stroked its neck and muzzle. His calm mind and his compassionate feelings seemed to quieten the beast. It gradually calmed down and stood still. Siddhattha turned it so that its shadow no longer fell in front, for he could see that it was even alarmed at its own shadow. He talked to it for a few moments and as its fear subsided so did its rage. Then, lightly leaping to its back, he rode it quietly around the arena. After the suspense, so great was the relief and enthusiasm of the crowd that they rose and cheered to a man. There was no doubt as to who was the victor.

King Suddhodana went ahead with the marriage preparations and at the ceremony presented the newly-married pair with yet another splendid palace to show his joy in this development in the life of his son. Even more careful precautions were taken to ensure that no hint of sorrow should mar their happiness. The grounds of the palace extended far and wide; so far that the King hoped his son would never wish to go beyond the walls, and he gave secret orders to the keepers of the gates that they were not to allow even the Prince to go beyond them.

But now that Siddhattha was married he had more dignity and independence. As a dutiful son he did not disobey outright the orders of his royal father but he petitioned the King for leave to travel beyond the boundaries of his estates and see the outside world and the King was wiser than to refuse. He realised that an open clash of wills might be the end of his control over his son, so he consented immediately. At the same time he gave very special orders. He sent messengers instructing the villagers that their Prince was going to

visit them and that they were to prepare to receive him with all honour. The streets and huts were to be newly cleaned and decorated, all were to take holiday and wear their best clothes. Above all, the sick or very old or injured or blind and maimed people were to be hidden away until the Prince had gone. In this way he hoped to avert the worst. Prince Siddhattha had never heard of illness, of old age and death and had never seen an injured or deformed man.

So everything was as pretty as a picture-book when Siddhattha was driven out through the villages in his travelling chariot by Channa, his charioteer. Unfortunately, the world is not as pretty as a picture-book, though in some ways it is far more wonderful. People who try and pretend about life instead of finding out what it is really like get some nasty shocks sooner or later. In this case it was through his father that one of these shocks happened to Siddhattha. For, as the chariot was drawn slowly up the village street, among cheers and thrown flowers, an old, dying man whose brain was feeble and who had forgotten all about the King's orders, came tottering out of his hut to beg food. All he could realise was that he had just woken out of a sleep and that he was hungry. Here was a crowd of people and so he started to beg. Before the horrified villagers could bundle him back into his hut again Siddhattha saw him and in profound amazement turned to Channa full of questions. "This is an old man", explained Channa. "You mean", said the Prince "that in time all men—and women—become like this. How long does it take?" "Some sixty or seventy years," replied Channa. "And shall I become like this, and my father and Yasodhara?" inquired Siddhattha still further. "All men now living will become like this—if they live so long," replied

Channa. "Drive home", ordered Siddhattha, "I have indeed learnt much this day." So they went back to the palace sadly, and for many days Siddhattha remained deeply pondering; so much so that even Yasodhara could hardly cheer him or persuade him to talk. Of course, the King was told of what had happened and he was much distressed, but still he could not use force over his son. He realised that this would be useless. So, when Siddhattha asked for permission to go into the villages with Channa again, the King could not refuse. This time they were going, not as the Prince and his attendant, but in disguise as a pair of students who might be travelling or sight-seeing and to whom nobody would pay special attention.

When the morning came and the Prince and Channa walked into the village, the work of the place was going on as usual. They watched the village blacksmith perspiring over his anvil as he beat out a sickle blade and tempered it. They stood looking while a jeweller, seated in front of his shop, patiently fitted tiny stones into a wrought-gold necklace. They came on a whole street—the Street of the Dyers—where brilliantly-coloured cloth hung out in the sun from hut to hut to dry. A warm, appetising smell attracted them to the bakers' huts and they joined in the queue of people waiting to buy and eat the hot, spicy cakes. Crowds mingled and chattered and chattered in the market-place and seemed happy in their life.

Then, from one of the men standing there, came a cry and he clutched his throat and fell writhing in the dust. A crowd gathered round and the Prince and Channa pushed through them. Before anyone, Siddhattha ran to help the man. He lifted the gasping head and supported it on his knee. He passed his hand over the

fevered brow, for it was a fever that had stricken the sufferer.

Channa was aghast. He grasped Siddhattha's arm and tried to drag him off. "Mind what you are doing, Sir," he said. "You, too, may catch the fever." But the Prince was too astounded to heed. "Why does he gasp so, Channa?" he asked. "It is the plague-fever", Channa replied. "Leave him or you too may catch the infection." Just then the man's wife and son came running up with a physician and a stretcher and relieved Siddhattha of the sufferer and carried him home while his wife followed sobbing and shrieking.

Siddhattha and Channa walked off slowly while Siddhattha continued his questioning. "Explain this to me Channa," he commanded. "It is an illness Sire," explained Channa. "This may come on any man. Bad water to drink, or bad meat, or tainted fruit may cause it, or the infection may come from another person who is ill. When a man has caught it there is no knowing whether he will recover or not." "And might I catch such a thing—illness—as you said?" asked Siddhattha very seriously. "Yes, indeed, Sir. That is why I tried to drag you away, for which I hope you will not think me ill-mannered." "No," said the Prince, "indeed, your thoughts were all for my safety as I well could see. But tell me. What is the end of such an illness, if a man should not recover?" "Then he will die, Sir." "Die! What means that strange word?" The idea of death had never been mentioned to Siddhattha before.

"Look! My Prince," said Channa suddenly.

Siddhattha looked and there, towards the river bank, wended a funeral procession. The mourners paced slowly as they passed, so that Siddhattha was able to observe closely the still figure on the bier, how his face

was fallen and his eyes closed and the deathly pallor of his countenance. The bearers paced with him to the burning-ground while the widow followed, beating her breast and wailing.

This was the third and greatest of the problems that Siddhattha found in the world. Closely he questioned Channa as to its significance, "Shall I, too, and my father the King, and my wife Yasodhara, become like this man?" "Yes. Death is inevitable, and comes to all," replied Channa. "And what then?" questioned Siddhattha. "Then there is heaven or hell according to a man's deeds, and after a period of bliss or suffering he returns to earth again in a new body and begins this weary pilgrimage all over again."

Siddhattha was very silent after he had heard this and returned home and pondered it for many days. For it seemed to him that a man, however proud his titles might be, even if he were King, was not really free, but was at the mercy of strange forces that ruled over him. A longing and a resolve to find freedom from such forces began to grow in the mind of Siddhattha. But first, it seemed to him, he must find out more about the mysterious nature of man and his strange-seeming destiny. He could see, at any rate, that the love and affection of man and women had under it an underlying sadness, for did not the King still mourn the death of Queen Mahamaya, Siddhattha's mother? Did he not also worry continually lest Siddhattha himself should leave the court life so that the succession would be broken? Did not Yasodhara fear to lose her husband in this way? Surely people were making a mistake to be satisfied with a life that seemed, when you examined it, to be so full of worries and fears and suffering. And all of them, Siddhattha felt, were so helpless about it.

They went on thinking and doing the things that made the very sorrow from which they were suffering all the time.

It is recorded that about this time, when visiting the city, Siddhattha met one of the hermits who had left the life of the world to follow the holy life. The calm, dignified mien of this man impressed Siddhattha. He walked looking neither to the right nor the left, taking no notice of the busy throng around him. There was an expression of purpose in his face and yet it was not the hurrying purposefulness of worldly men, but was full of serenity.

About this time, too, news was brought to Siddhattha, as he was walking in the garden of the palace, that his wife, Yasodhara, had borne him a baby son. "This is another fetter," exclaimed Siddhattha, for he realised how these family ties were the closest bonds to hold him from his purpose. Now, the Indian word for a fetter is "rahula" so the name given to the baby was Rahula, and as Rahula he was always known.

Siddhattha had, in the worldly sense, all that a man could wish for. He had bodily health and beauty, possessions and great position, a loving and lovely wife, and finally, what so many men desire, a son of his own. He was no outcaste beggar, seeking to escape from life and the lesson of his example is so much the greater. To his profoundly searching mind even this great happiness was but a prison. There was no final satisfaction for him in it. His mind had already glimpsed higher values and when he left wife and child, as he presently did, it was because he sought freedom for them as well as for himself; a way of freedom that might be taught to all mankind.

We ourselves sometimes feel, even when happy, that

there is a curious unreality about life. When a great sorrow comes the whole world seems broken in pieces. This realisation had come to Siddhattha in an even more vivid form, although he, as yet, knew little of personal sorrow. But he was a man of such sympathetic imagination that he could understand it in the lives of others.

So the decision was made and the act followed. On a night of full moon Siddhattha aroused Channa and commanded him to saddle Kantaka. Quietly he walked the horse over the flower beds so as not to arouse the sleepers in the palace. For a moment he stood deliberating whether to take one look at his sleeping wife and son. Then, afraid lest the sight might weaken his resolve, he passed on to the gates. These were opened quietly and then, with Channa mounted on another horse beside him, they galloped the night long away from the city. As dawn came they dismounted. Channa begged to be allowed to accompany his master but Siddhattha refused. "Not yet is the homeless life for you, Channa," he said. With that he took off his princely jewels and ornaments and handed them to Channa, and, with a sweep of his sword, cut off the long hair that was a sign of nobility. With a heavy heart Channa cantered off, leading the now riderless Kantaka, to take the message that his master had now entered the homeless life, while Siddhattha watched him unmoved, his heart full of the deep resolve of his quest.

Later, after his enlightenment, Siddhattha, now the Buddha, described his decision to His disciples or Bhikkhus in the following way: "There are two quests, Bhikkhus—the noble and the ignoble. First, what is the ignoble quest?" And he explained that if a man only values and chooses and tries to possess things that must

sooner or later change and die, he will make himself unhappy.

“Secondly”, he said, “What is the noble quest?” And he explained that the noble quest is the wisdom and goodness of a holy life that alone bring happiness.

“Yes, I myself, too,” he went on, “in the days before my full enlightenment, when I was but a Bodhisatta, and not yet fully enlightened—I too, valued only things that must change and die in time. But the thought came to me :—Why should I not pursue instead the happiness of the holy life which leads to a life beyond this life of sorrow ?

“There came a time when I, being quite young, with a wealth of coal-black hair untouched by grey and in all the beauty of my early manhood, cut off my hair and beard, put on the yellow robe and went out from my home on Pilgrimage.”

CHAPTER II.

THE SEARCH

THERE were two reasons why Siddhattha had left home to go on his quest. One was that he wanted to be alone to give all his thought and energy to it. The other was that he wanted to find a teacher. In India, from ancient times there have been men, both wise and holy, who practised and taught the science of the mind (yoga), and Siddhattha thought that one of them might help him.

Most stories of quests and searches end with a discovery of buried treasure or a lost city or a strange civilization, but this quest was to take Siddhattha into the mind itself. He discovered at the end of it the greatest secrets that the mind of man has ever known. He came in the end to be a fully-enlightened man, free of all ignorance, complete master of himself, a man whose every act and thought was right, whose every word was true. He discovered a new world just as surely as the explorers who first sailed across the Atlantic from Europe; but the new world that Siddhattha discovered and lived in ever after was a world within himself.

There were six long years of search and struggle before him, however, ere he was to come to the end of his quest. Travelling now on foot he came to the city of Rajagaha ruled over by King Bimbisara. He had exchanged his princely robes for the robe of a monk, and began to get his food by begging it from door to door. He had no difficulty in getting it, for something of the prince still showed in him and people were impressed. It was when he came to eat the food that

difficulty arose. When he had left the town and sat down to eat the meal under a tree, he felt revolted by the mixture of scraps and half-warm food. Then Siddhattha reflected to himself, "For the great purpose of finding freedom from suffering and old age and death have I undertaken this life. Am I to be deterred by the first obstacle? This food, unsavoury as it is, serves the good purpose of keeping this body alive that I may pursue my search. Let me eat, therefore, with this purpose in mind." So thinking, he began to eat, and not only did he then overcome the feeling of sickness that the food had caused him, but never again was he distressed at eating the food put into his begging-bowl.

Now it came to the ears of King Bimbisara that a new ascetic, who made a great impression on people, had come to the city. The King accordingly sent messengers to inquire who he was and what was his search. To his surprise the news came back that this was none other than Prince Siddhattha of the Sakyan family, and that his quest was to find the secret of freedom from suffering and old age and death. The meaning of the quest puzzled King Bimbisara not a little. As a worldly man it was beyond his understanding. But the royal birth of the searcher impressed him, so that he offered to Siddhattha to stay in the city and promised food and lodging as long as he liked. No doubt the King expected to share the renown of having so remarkable a man in his city. But Siddhattha refused this; he wanted to be free to wander in search of a teacher and he was afraid of the ties that any obligations might cause.

Although he had not yet achieved his object, his compassionate character came out at this time.

On one occasion Siddhattha met the herdsmen

bringing goats and sheep for a sacrifice to be made by King Bimbisara. Siddhattha could see clearly that this was wrong and so he followed the herdsmen to the temple, carrying, so it is said, a lamb with an injured foot on his shoulders. There he spoke, out of his deep compassion, of the suffering of all living things so that the King and the priests were ashamed and set the bound animals free.

In those days in ancient India there were many teachers of religion who took personal pupils and taught them all they knew. Siddhattha now heard of one Alara Kalāma, famous for his knowledge and attainments, and to this teacher he went. Let the story continue in his own words: "A pilgrim now, in search of the right, and in search of the excellent road to peace beyond compare, I came to Alara Kalama and asked if I might stay with his disciples and study his teachings." Alara Kalama invited Siddhattha to stay and study with him. Siddhattha worked hard and soon knew the teaching by heart so that he could say it from memory and the commentary of the elder disciples as well. This mere lip-recital was not enough for Siddhattha, however, and he practised the discipline and mind-training of the teaching until he had developed powers as wonderful as those of Alara Kalama himself.

Alara Kalama was delighted to have such a hard-working and clever disciple, and offered Siddhattha to make him a teacher and to let him have half his disciples for his following. But Siddhattha knew that, although Alara Kalama had taught him a lot, his teaching did not lead to freedom from old age and death and all the suffering of mortal life. And so, in Siddhattha's own words, "I was not taken with his Doctrine but turned away from it to go my way."

Siddhattha then went to another teacher of great repute—Uddaka Ramaputta—and the same events happened. He diligently learned the teaching until it was word perfect ; then practised all that he had learnt, and finally won to as great knowledge as the teacher himself. Uddaka Ramaputta also offered to make him an equal and to give him half the disciples as a following, but Siddhattha, realizing that this was not yet the very highest knowledge, left even this great teacher to continue the quest alone.

There was held to be no dishonour or disrespect in thus leaving a teacher if a disciple wished, and no true teacher would try to hold a seeker back.

Now Siddhattha was left with the problem of carrying on his search alone. There were men in India then who thought that they might win freedom from suffering by torturing their own bodies. Not knowing what else to do Siddhattha began to follow their practices. He lived in wild and desolate places, in dangerous forests and even in burial grounds. He neglected his body and let his hair grow long and matted. He starved himself of food. At one time he lived on one millet seed a day until he became so thin that the bones of his backbone stood out like a knotted rope and the skin of his stomach sank in like a sagging tent-wall.

He practised breath control, holding his breath until there was a great roaring in his ears or until sharp, burning pains shot through his chest. His eyes, he says, at this time sank so far in his head that they seemed like water at the bottom of a deep well. And yet, at the end of years of these terrible sufferings the great secret that Siddhattha was seeking still eluded him. No-one had yet found this secret though many were searching for it.

At the same time people admired men who could go through these tortures and really believed that wisdom would come as a result of them. So, when Siddhattha finally settled in a place called Uruvela in the country of Magadha, five disciples came and joined him, and looked after him as disciples always did their teacher.

They found a quiet place in a bamboo grove beside a broad, smooth-flowing river, with a good bathing-place, and a village close by where they could easily beg food. Two or three of the disciples would go out each day and beg food for the rest and those whose turn it was to stay with Siddhattha were taught by him all that he had learned so far. They needed, indeed, little food, for they continually fasted and practised austerities.

But there came a day when even Siddhattha's great strength of will and body could endure no more. During meditation he fell down in a dead faint and might have lain there until he died, for he was too exhausted to rise or move. But it so happened that a goat-boy was passing with his flocks and he saw the fallen figure. Realizing that here was a man fainting with exhaustion, yet not daring to touch the person of a holy man, the boy brought up one of his she-goats and squeezed some drops of milk from her udder into Siddhattha's half-open mouth. The warm milk had a wonderfully reviving effect on him and he was able to sit up. The practical lesson at once went home to his mind. He realized how his weakened body had hindered rather than helped his search. He saw that a healthy, strong body was necessary to enable a strong, unclouded mind to put forth its utmost effort, and with these thoughts in mind he asked the goat-boy for a dish of the goat's milk to revive him further.

But the caste system ruled in India then. The boy drew back. "Holy Sir", said he, "I must not give you the milk in this way. The touch of my low-caste hands would defile your lips. It would be a crime." But Siddhattha made answer, "There is no caste except the good or bad characters that are made by men's deeds. Your deed was good in giving me the milk, so you are of good caste to me. Evil deeds make evil men and good deeds make good men. Go, now, and bring me some more of the milk." The boy was delighted at these words and ran to fetch a dish of the finest milk he had. This so refreshed Siddhattha that he was able to sit and meditate more clearly than he had done for many a long day.

And as he sat there, at the edge of the forest, until it was dark, there came travelling along the road a band of entertainers. They were singers and dancers and as they travelled they sang to pass the time away. Siddhattha heard them and it seemed to him that there was a message for him hidden in the song. It was about the stringed instrument called a lute, and the words of the song said that the strings must not be overstretched nor allowed to go loose or the music would be spoilt. This so impressed Siddhattha that he resolved to give his body proper care and attention from then on.

The village people, of course, knew about him and it so happened that a young wife, Sujata, who had just had a son, was so pleased about this that she had prepared a special meal of the best cooked rice and milk to give to him. She offered it, saying, "May you be as successful in obtaining your wishes as I have been." And Siddhattha did not refuse or ignore the meal but accepted it gladly, and felt the benefit of it at once in a greatly strengthened body and mind.

He now returned to his former practice of begging his food every morning. Going into the village with his bowl, he took what the people gave and made his meal before settling down to his meditation for the day. He soon became strong again and his body became of a good colour, but as to the five disciples, they were disgusted. All the great merit which they hoped would come from the ascetic practices now seemed thrown away. "This Siddhattha of the Gotama family", they said, "has gone back to a life of ease and comfort. He has become luxurious."

So the whole five of them refused to live as his disciples or to look after him any longer. They were sure he would not gain any religious fruit in his new course.

But they were wrong, and Siddhattha was right. So far from having failed in his quest, Siddhattha was on the point of reaching it. Meanwhile he had to go on alone.

The spot at which Siddhattha finally achieved the goal of his quest is still known, and may be seen to-day after twenty-five centuries. Outside the town of Gaya, at Buddha Gaya, in northern India, by the banks of the river now known as the Phalgu, is a huge memorial of sculptured stone. In the courtyard still stands the descendant of the very tree—the Bo tree—under which he sat when enlightenment finally came as the fruition of all his search

It was towards this tree that his steps took him twenty-five centuries ago and as he reached it, calmly but solemnly he resolved, "Even should this blood dry in my veins and all this flesh waste away, from this seat I will not rise till success is mine ; till I have penetrated the meaning of all this sum of ill ; till I have found the

way out of Samsara, the world of birth and death and change, to Nirvana the unborn, unchanging, uncomplex and undying.”

With this great resolve in his heart and with utter and complete concentration of mind, Siddhattha sat through a night of full moon. At first he penetrated the levels of thought that his old teachers had taught him. As each level was mastered and his mind knew it fully and completely, so he passed on to the next. But he did not stop where they had stopped. While he still realised that there was the possibility of further attainment, there he sought beyond, making the utmost effort of which he was capable with all his trained and powerful will.

At length came a realisation that is best described in the Buddha's own words, spoken long afterwards of one of his own disciples who likewise attained the goal:—
 “By rising at every point above the realm of ‘Neither-Perception-nor-Non-perception’ I developed and dwelt in the extinction of feeling and perception. When I had seen this by understanding, my Defilements were shed. Mindful I moved in this attainment; and, moving with mindfulness in this new attainment, my vision of the old qualities now extinguished and changed, told me that all of these *were* not, but came to be, and made themselves known by coming to be. So, without any leaning to those qualities or aversion from them, without dependence on them and without being enamoured of them, I lived detached and separate with heart untrammelled. I knew now that there was no further refuge beyond, nor was it to be found in growth.” (*Anupada Sutta* III of M.N.)

The exceedingly wonderful quality of Siddhattha's achievement was that he, the only man to do so in this world-era, had achieved it alone, and therefore was he

known from then on as the Enlightened One, the Buddha, the Supremely Enlightened One, Samma Sambuddhassa, as the Holy One, Arahat Supreme.

“To describe Him aright is to describe aright one who has risen to mastery and perfection in Noble virtue, in Noble concentration, in Noble perception, in Noble Deliverance.”

As the dawn of the next day came, it shone no more on anything of the man Siddhattha Gotama, but on One who had passed beyond human measurement; in whom all human failings and ignorance had ceased, who saw the truth in all things, whether in men's hearts or in the great universe; who had become, to use His own words about the nature of the Arahat, “deep, immeasurable as the great ocean.” Under the Bodhi-tree in the dawn sat a Buddha Supreme, such a being as only comes to this earth once in many thousands of years.

Now, however, arose a problem. Knowing the depth of his own enlightenment and the reality of his own freedom, he could see more clearly than before the depth of men's ignorance and self-enslavement. There was no compulsion for him to teach other men; indeed there was no longer any power in the universe that could compel him to do anything. Doubt arose in his own mind as to the ability of men to grasp what would be to them a very difficult teaching; a truth that had only been won after the severest struggles.

The Buddhist teaching is not easy for a man to grasp at first. It means not only long and careful study but obedience to rules of life, for it is out of a good life that the strength and the insight come to progress on the path.

The Buddha saw what long weary years it would take him to teach and found a brotherhood of monks. He

saw how men of other sects would oppose and attack him and how even his own disciples would sometimes fail and act foolishly. He saw also that those who were offered the opportunity of learning the teaching, and refused it, would bring suffering on themselves. He could, even then, have passed away from this world for ever, but the great compassion in his heart made him feel how lost in their ignorance men were, how they wandered without a guide and often brought great misery on themselves.

He then looked into the minds of men, using his supernatural insight. He described it to his monks as looking at a pond of water-lilies ; some of them were near the surface and some of them had risen right out of the water. In other words, some men had spiritual minds and would understand his teaching, and others were near to the same level although they had not reached it yet.

So he made the great decision—to give his knowledge forth to men—and he uttered these words :—

“Nirvana’s doors stand open wide to all
With ears to hear. Discard your outworn creeds !
The weary task ahead made me forbear
To preach to men my Doctrine’s virtues rare.”

(*Majjhima Nikaya*. 1.171.)

This was the great decision which has changed the lives of millions of men who would never have been able to find the way of freedom from sorrow by themselves, but who, by strong efforts, can now tread that way by the use of the Buddha’s teaching. In spite of the great troubles in the world to-day, which sometimes seem worse than they have ever been before, we may be glad that we live in a Buddha age, for we need not be bound by suffering if we will make the effort to tread the Buddha’s path.

CHAPTER III.

LIFE AS A TEACHER

FOR nearly forty-five years, Siddhattha, now the Buddha, was to travel the plains of India, teaching, answering questions, founding his Sangha, or Order of monks, and leaving his message so profoundly impressed on men's minds that it has spread over the world from that day to this.

At first he rested under the tree in that quiet wood of Uruvela. After the long, weary struggle within himself peace had come with victory, the peace of an unshakable calm, the knowledge of complete certainty. After resting for a time, he walked a short distance, for he was still physically weary, and sat down near the edge of the village under a tree where the goat-herds sheltered while they watched their flocks in the heat of the day.

While he sat there, a Brahmin (or man of the priestly caste) happened to come by and, little realising to whom he was speaking, asked the Buddha one of those questions that clever men loved to discuss. "Gotama!" said he, rudely (for this was the Buddha's family name), "What makes a man a true Brahmin?" The Buddha overlooked the slight, but his mind now had the quality of piercing to the root of any question and at once he answered the Brahmin in a *gatha* or verse:—

"The Brahmin who has put away all evil,
Has put off pride, is self-restrained and pure,
Has learning, follows out the Holy Life,
He alone has the right to be called Brahmin,
He nothing has to do with worldly things."

It looks as though the Brahmin had an uneasy

conscience and by this high standard was not all that a Brahmin ought to be, for he went away muttering to himself, "This ascetic Gotama knows me, this ascetic Gotama knows me." Many men after this were to find that in the ascetic Gotama was a mind that could penetrate every thought to the very root and show up any falsehood.

Next came two merchants passing by and, being men of humbler mind, did not trouble the Buddha with questions, but were moved to reverence by his calm and majestic bearing and the impression of utter serenity that showed in his face. So, bringing him presents of the best food they had, they asked him to accept them as believers in him. These two merchants, although moved by their feelings rather than by their understanding, became the first followers of the Blessed One.

Then he decided to go to his old teacher, Alara Kalama, and give him this new knowledge. But news then reached him that Alara Kalama was dead. Next he decided to go to his other teacher, Uddaka, but when Gotama asked for news of him he learned that Uddaka too had died only the previous night.

Finally he thought of the five ascetics who had once been his pupils. These, he thought, would have keen minds and be able to grasp a new and by no means easy teaching.

Here are the Buddha's own words, handed down and recorded in the *Majjhima Nikaya*:—"Again I asked myself to whom first I should preach the Doctrine and who would understand it quickly. The thought came to me that there were the five Almsmen who had served me so well in my struggles to purge myself of self; suppose I choose them to be my first hearers? Wondering where they were dwelling now, I saw with the eye

celestial—which is pure and far surpasses the human eye—those five Almsmen dwelling at Benares in the Isipatana deer-park. So, when I had stayed as long as pleased me at Uruvela, I set out on an alms-pilgrimage for Benares.

“On the highway from the Bo tree to Gaya, Upaka the Mendicant, an Ajivika, saw me and said ‘Reverend sir, your faculties are under control, and your complexion is clear and bright. To follow whom have you gone forth on pilgrimage? Or who is your teacher? Or whose Doctrine do you profess?’ Him I answered in these verses :—

“All-vanquishing, all-knowing, Lo ! am I,
 from all wrong thinking wholly purged and free.
 All things discarded, cravings rooted out,
 —whom should I follow !—I have found out all.
 No teacher’s mine, no equal. Counterpart
 to me there’s none throughout the whole wide world.
 The Arahāt¹ am I, teacher supreme,
 utter Enlightenment is mine alone ;
 unfever’d calm is mine, Nirvana’s peace.
 I seek the Kasis’ city, there to start
 my Doctrine’s wheel, a world purblind to save,
 sounding the tocsin’s call to Deathlessness.

“But Upaka was unimpressed.

“‘According to your claim, sir,’ said Upaka, ‘You should be the Universal Conqueror.’

“And the Buddha replied :

‘ Like me, those conquer who the cravings quell ;
 by conquering bad thoughts, I’m conqueror.’

(But still this was too much for Upaka to accept).

“When I had thus answered, Upaka the Mendicant, saying, ‘Maybe, sir’, and shaking his head, took a different road and went his way.

¹ Holy one.

“In the course of my alms-pilgrimage I came at last to Benares and the deer-park of Isipatana, in which were the Five Almsmen. From afar the Five saw me coming and agreed among themselves as follows : ‘Here comes the recluse Gotama, the man of surfeits, who has abandoned the struggle and reverted to large meals. We must not welcome him, nor rise to receive him, nor relieve him of bowl and robes. Let us just put out a seat ; he can sit on it if he wants to.’

Something, however, in the mien and presence of the approaching Buddha had a strange effect on the scornful Five.

“But, as I drew nearer and nearer, those Five Almsmen proved less and less able to abide by their compact ; some came forward to relieve me of my bowl and robes ; others indicated my seat ; while others brought water for me to wash my feet. But they addressed me by my name and by the style of reverend. So I said to the Five Almsmen: ‘Almsmen, do not address the Truth-finder by his name or by the style of Reverend. Arahāt all-enlightened is the Truth-finder. Hearken to me, Almsmen. The Deathless has been won ; I teach it ; I preach the Doctrine. Live up to what I enjoin and in no long time you will come—of yourselves, here and now—to discern and realize, to enter and to abide in, that supreme goal of the higher life, for the sake of which young men go forth from home to homelessness on Pilgrimage.’

Said the Five Almsmen, “Reverend Gotama, the life you led, the path you trod, and the austerities you practised—all failed to make you transcend ordinary human scope and rise to special heights of discernment of the truly Noble Knowledge. How now shall you rise to those heights when you eat your fill, abandon the

struggle and revert to ordinary living? To which I made answer, 'Arahat all-enlightened is the Truth-finder. Harken to me, Almsmen. The Deathless has been won; I teach it; I preach the Doctrine. Live up to what I enjoin and in no long time you will come—of yourselves, here and now—to discern and realize, to enter on and to abide in, that supreme goal of the higher life, for the sake of which young men go forth from home to homelessness on Pilgrimage.'

"A second time did the Five Almsmen repeat their words to me; and a second time did I return them the same answer. But when they repeated their words yet a third time, I asked these five whether they agreed that I had never heretofore spoken like that; and they admitted that I had not."

The Buddha repeated his claim yet a third time and at this he succeeded in convincing the Five. From this exchange and from the behaviour of Upaka it will be realized how high was the level of independence of mind in India at the time. It was quite in order to challenge a teacher as to his claims, to question his teaching, and to go elsewhere if one thought fit, as in fact Siddhattha had himself previously done. Obviously, it was at the same time necessary to train one's understanding to be able to recognise the true teaching from the many false ones, for there were charlatans in India then as there are in the world to-day.

Another interesting point to notice is the Buddha's reference to himself, in an impersonal form, as "the Truth-finder" (*Tathagata*). This was an indication of his achievement, that he had passed beyond the level of an ordinary man.

The Five now organised themselves into a little community with Gotama as their teacher, arranging that

some would get food while others remained to listen and learn.

“In the course of receiving this teaching and instruction from me those Five Almsmen—being themselves subject to rebirth, decay, diseases, death, sorrow, and impurity—saw peril in what is thereto subject, and therefore sought after the consummate peace of Nirvana, which knows neither rebirth nor decay, neither disease nor death, neither sorrow nor impurity; and there arose within them the conviction, the insight, that their Deliverance was now assured, that this was their last birth, nor would they ever be reborn again.”

These five ascetics were the first five Arahats that appeared in the world.¹

Now while the Blessed One was staying in the deer-park at Isipatana there came to him other young men. Some of them brought friends and relatives, like young Yasa, who first became a Bhikkhu and then brought his father; his mother became a lay-follower. And then came four close friends of Yasa's, who were so impressed by the change in him and by what he had obviously achieved and by his praise of the Buddha that they too, joined the Sangha, or brotherhood of Bhikkhus.

In this way the followers of the Blessed One came to number sixty Bhikkhus, but the Buddha would not let them stay there with him all the time. “Go forth,” he said to them, “and make known the Teaching, which is excellent in its beginnings, excellent in its progress, and excellent in its goal. Proclaim the perfect life, pure and holy. There are in the world beings not altogether

¹ The word Arahāt means “Holy One”, but this has a precise meaning in Buddhism. It means one who has trodden the Holy Path to the end, who has freed himself from all the fetters of humanity, who has achieved “the Deliverance that comes of wisdom.”

blinded with the dust of passion and desire ; and if they do not learn my Doctrine they will perish. They will listen to you ; they will understand.”

These sixty were the first Buddhist missionaries. One such disciple, Punna, is famous for having chosen to go to the country known as Sunaparanta, for when the Blessed One heard this he spoke to Punna as follows :—
“They are a fierce and violent race, Punna, in Sunaparanta. If they were to abuse and revile you there, what would you think ?”

“I should think, Lord, that the good folk of Sunaparanta were really nice people, very nice people, nice people indeed, in that they forbore to strike me.”

“But if they strike you ?”

“I should think, Lord, that the good folk of Sunaparanta were very nice people indeed in that they forbore to pelt me with clods.”

“But if they did pelt you with clods ?”

“I should think, Lord, that the good folk of Sunaparanta were very nice people indeed in that they forebor to cudgel me.”

“But if they did cudgel you ?”

“I should think, Lord, that the good folk of Sunaparanta were very nice people indeed in that they forbore to knife me.”

“But if they did knife you ?”

“I should think, Lord, that the good folk of Sunaparanta were very nice people indeed in that they forbore to take my life.”

“But if they did take your life ?”

“If they did, Lord, I should think that there are disciples of the Lord, who have trained themselves to face death calmly. That is what I should think ,Lord, that would be my thought, Blessed One.”

“Good indeed, Punna. With such a command of yourself, you will be able to live with the folk of Sunaparanta.”

With grateful thanks to the Lord for what he had said, the reverend Punna arose, took his leave of the Lord with deep reverence, and after putting his bedding away properly, departed, bowl in hand and duly robed, to beg his way to the Sunaparanta country, to which in due course he came and there dwelt. Before the close of his very first rainy season, Punna had gathered round him five hundred disciples of each sex, and had realized the Three Knowledges. Time came when the reverend Punna passed away, and the Bhikkhus came to the Lord to ask what future awaited him and what his destiny would be.

“Instructed, Bhikkhus, was the young man Punna ; he readily embraced the Doctrine and its corollaries ; he gave me no trouble doctrinally. He has passed to Nirvana.”

Thus spoke the Lord. Glad at heart, those Bhikkhus rejoiced in what the Lord had said. (From the *Majjhima Nikaya. Sutta 145.*)

In the meantime, the two merchants, Tapussa and Bhallika, the first men in the world to call themselves the followers of the Buddha, had, in the course of their journeying come to Kapilavastu. There they told everybody that they had seen Siddhattha, the son of their king, at Uruvela, and that he had actually become, as had been prophesied, a very great religious teacher in the world, an Awakened One, a Buddha. They had news, too, that he would soon be coming to Kapilavastu.

When the Buddha had sent out his first sixty Bhikkhus to preach his Doctrine, he himself left the deer-park at

Isipatana, and, turning southwards to the Magadha country, at length came back to Uruvela. Here he met another teacher, Kassapa, who had his own following of hermits. This teacher listened to the Doctrine of the Buddha and studied it. Having studied it he was so impressed that he asked Gotama to accept him as a disciple. He later proved such a diligent disciple that he became one of the foremost Arahats of the Buddhist Sangha.

Now the Buddha turned his steps towards Rajagaha to keep his promise to its king, Bimbisara, that when he had found the Truth he was seeking he would come and share it with him and his people. In a bamboo-grove outside the city he stayed and taught, and the king and his people accepted his teaching and it became the religion of the country. And the king presented the bamboo-grove to the Buddha, together with a Vihara, or monastery for the Sangha to live in during the rainy season.

The two most famous disciples of the Buddha are Sariputta and Moggallana and this is how they came to be his disciples. Near Rajagaha lived a famous religious teacher named Sanjaya, together with two hundred disciples and pupils. Among them were two great friends, then named Upatissa and Kolita. So keen were they that they had already learnt all that Sanjaya could teach them. They had a further aspiration—to reach a state beyond the power of death. And these two friends were so fond of one another that they made a mutual promise that either would share what he found with the other.

One morning, as Upatissa was passing down the main street of Rajagaha, he saw a strange ascetic going from door to door, begging for food. Something in the

demeanour of the man so impressed Upatissa that he drew nearer and watched him. This ascetic walked as one in perfect control of mind and body ; every movement was precise and dignified and from his face shone a look of unshakable serenity. Upatissa was attracted to him, but it was not good manners to interrupt an ascetic when he was begging his alms, so Upatissa followed him until he had finished and was about to walk out of the gate at the end of the city street. Then Upatissa spoke : “Pardon me, Reverend Sir,” said he, “but I have been so struck by your air of knowledge and of calm that I would be grateful to know more of you or of your teacher.”

“I can soon tell you that brother,” replied the ascetic pleasantly. “My teacher is a great ascetic of the Sakyan race.”

“And what is your Master’s teaching ?” asked Upatissa eagerly, thinking he might find out not only the secret of this monk’s inner attainment, but also of that state beyond death that he and his friend Kolita were seeking.

“I am only a novice, a new-comer into the Sangha of the Blessed One,” replied the ascetic modestly. “I do not know all the teaching yet, but if you only want to know the essence of it, I will try and give you that in a few words.”

“That is what I want, brother,” said Upatissa quickly. “Tell me that. Why waste words ?”

“Very well, then,” said the ascetic. “Listen.” And he repeated these words.

“How all things here through Cause have come,
He hath made known, the Blessed One.
And how again they pass away,
That, too, the Great Recluse doth say.”

Now Upatissa had trained himself hard in acute

perception of truth. Also, between two minds which are in sympathy there is often communicated more than the actual words appear to say. In one blinding flash of insight there now burst on Upatissa's mind the central truth taught by Gotama, that conditions of cause and effect follow each other ceaselessly throughout our lives and indeed through all of existence. He saw at the same time the second half of the truth, that if only we can control the causes which produce all this, we can likewise control the effects. Since all that comes to be in this way must always, by inevitable law, come to an end, it can only be some state beyond this process that can truly be called the "deathless." Upatissa saw at the same time that there was indeed such a state and realised that Ashvajit, as the strange ascetic was called, had placed the key that he had been looking for in his hands. And he said to Ashvajit : "If this is the doctrine you have learned from your teacher, then indeed you have found the state that is free from sorrow, free from death, the state of the Sorrowless, the Deathless, which has not been made known to men for many ages." Then, with great gratitude, he left the ascetic who had thus enlightened his mind, and went off to find his friend Kolita and bring him the great news that they had found what they had so long been seeking.

Kolita now saw Upatissa approaching and was as impressed by his air of serenity and joy as Upatissa had been by that of Ashvajit.

"Why, brother, how clear and shining your face is !" he said, "Can it be, brother, that at last you have found the 'Deathless' ?"

"It is so, it is so, brother," was Upatissa's glad reply. "I have found the 'Deathless'."

"But how, brother, how ?" asked Kolita eagerly.

Then Upatissa recounted to his friend all that had happened while he had been away, and he repeated to Kolita the four-line stanza which the ascetic of the serene countenance had recited.

And Kolita, too, saw the truth in a flash, that the Deathless is that which never has arisen in this world of sights and sounds and scents and tastes and touches and ideas, and, because it never has so arisen, therefore cannot die or come to an end.

So these two friends, with happy and grateful hearts, went forthwith to the Buddha and asked him to take them into the Sangha so that he could be their teacher instead of Sanjaya. They were accepted by the Buddha and became such diligent disciples that in time they were often allowed to teach in his place, and have gone down in history, under the new names they took of Sariputta and Moggallana, as the outstanding leaders of the Sangha.

Now many young men of good families, whether they were already studying under a teacher or not, came to join the Sangha of Gotama. So much so that the people of Magadha grew alarmed at the effect it would have on them and on their families. So a complaint was brought to the Buddha that so many young men were leaving home for the homeless life that the families would be broken up and the daughters would no longer find husbands. And the Buddha heard and considered this complaint and accordingly made a new rule that no young man was to leave home to join the Sangha without first obtaining permission of his parents or, if his parents were dead, of his nearest living relative. This rule is still found in the Vinaya or monastic rules of the Sangha to this day.

King Suddhodana at last heard of the presence of his

former son, now Gotama the Buddha, in the nearby state of Rajagaha, and, longing to see him at least once more before he died, sent a messenger asking that his son might come to visit him. But when the messenger arrived in Rajagaha and asked for the Buddha he was directed to the bamboo grove, and when he came there he found a circle of Bhikkhus and lay people sitting in perfect silence while the Buddha taught them his Doctrine. The messenger could not rudely interrupt so he quietly joined the circle and sat with the audience. But what was this? As he listened, all the worry and anxiety of his life seemed to lift and a great sense of freedom and of peace took its place. He saw how futile and unhappy most of his life had been. He almost wept to see where true happiness lay and that it could at last be really obtained. So by the time the Buddha had finished discoursing the messenger had forgotten the message that had brought him hot-foot from Kapilavastu. He only knew that he must remain with this wonderful Teacher and hear more of his words. So he stayed and lived with the crowd of lay-disciples and attended every discourse which the Buddha gave.

King Suddhodana waited impatiently for many days and then sent another messenger, but exactly the same thing happened to him. Then a third messenger was sent; nor did he return. Altogether, nine messengers were sent and all so fell under the spell of the Buddha's message that their former lives became of small consequence in comparison. Then Yasodhara, Gotama's wife, sent messengers in her turn, but again none of them returned. Now the King remembered a man, Udayi, who still lived at the court and who had been a boyhood playmate of Siddhattha. Thinking that the other messengers had indeed delivered their messages but that

the Buddha had ignored them, King Suddhodana asked Udayi to go and to appeal to Gotama in the name of his father and his wife and of all his old friends, saying that they wished to see him once more.

Udayi, thinking perhaps that some magic had been used to compel the other messengers to stay, stopped his own ears with grass before he entered the assembly who were listening to the Buddha on that day. So he was not brought under the spell of the Buddha's Doctrine but remembered his message, and, when the discourse was finished, went and respectfully saluted Gotama and delivered it. The Buddha agreed that he would indeed come and visit his father and his wife and his old friends, and so Udayi hurried back with the great tidings.

King Suddhodana, who was used to state and pomp, expected his son, now that he was so famous, to come in pomp, at least at the head of a band of monks, with attendants and so on. So he sent out his best elephants with retainers on foot in the royal livery to conduct the Buddha to the palace. And Yasodhara also, who was overjoyed at the thought of seeing her former husband again, could not wait but ordered her litter and had the bearers carry her out to the city gate to be the first to meet him. But as they were carrying her along the city street to the gate, she saw ahead of her a yellow robed ascetic, walking from door to door, bowl in hand to beg his food. His very movement made a great impression on her, so dignified and calm and stately it was. Then she realized it was indeed her husband—Siddhattha—but strangely changed, so that she felt an awe of him that she had never felt before. Determined to greet him, she stepped from her litter and bowed to the ground as he passed upon his silent way, his eyes fixed on the ground.

But King Suddhodana was filled with anger and humiliation at the news that his royal son was begging his food from door to door in his own city, and this news brought him out. Ordering his own chariot, he drove furiously through the streets. There came the Buddha on foot, with a crowd following him. The king ordered his charioteer to pull up and himself stepped down with hot words on his lips.

“Was it for this you left home, my son!” he burst forth, “to come back a beggar! You have disgraced me! When did any of your race and lineage do such a thing? When did a Sakyan beg his food like a common beggar?”

The Buddha’s answer made his father stop in surprise. “Indeed, my father, this is the custom of my race and lineage.” “Your race and lineage have always been kings,” said the father, “None of them has ever acted thus!”

“That is true of my earthly lineage,” replied the Buddha again, “But now it is not of them I speak, but of the race of the Buddhas of all time to whom I now belong. They, indeed, have always acted thus and so it is meet and right that I should do the same.”

And now the king, perforce, walked along by his son’s side, while the crowd followed, hushed at the spectacle. And the Buddha began to tell his father of his Doctrine—that great treasure—which he had gone out to seek and which he was now bringing home for them all to share. When they had reached the Palace, the court came and sat listening to their former Prince, with Yasodhara in the forefront. Amazed, they heard for the first time of the incomparable peace of Nirvana and the Way leading thereto. They realized, many of them, how empty and sorrow-fraught were their lives. They glimpsed a release, like prisoners glimpsing freedom, sweet beyond

compare. This teaching, coupled with his god-like demeanour, so impressed them that the King himself, and Yasodhara and Rahula, his son, and many of the court became his followers from then on, and the people of Kapilavastu also began to learn his teachings.

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE AS A TEACHER—*Continued*

UNTIL his death at the age of eighty, the Buddha travelled the plains of North India on foot, leading the life of a Bhikkhu, teaching, founding the order of the Sangha, helping those with difficulties and meeting teachers of other sects.

Here is an excellent description of his daily life taken from the Bhikkhu Silacara's book : *A Young People's Life of the Buddha*.

“Except during the rainy season he very seldom stayed more than a day or two at any one place. And during the rainy season of each year, he generally lived at the Bamboo Grove or Veluvana Vihara at Rajagaha that had been given him by King Bimbisara, or else at the Vihara of Jetavana near Savatthi in the Kosala country, which had been presented to him by a very generous supporter of the Buddha and his Sangha whose name was Anathapindika.

“He rose early each morning before dawn, and, after making his toilet, sat down and engaged in meditation for some time. Then, when daylight was fully come, he used to put his robe on carefully over both shoulders, and taking his alms-bowl in hand, go out to the village or town near which he happened to be staying at the time, and with his eyes fixed on the ground, pass from door to door, waiting for, and accepting in silence, whatever the charitable might put into his bowl. Sometimes he went out on this round for alms by himself ; sometimes he went accompanied by a body of his disciples who passed along in single file behind him, their bowls

in their hands also, and with the same modest and subdued demeanour. Occasionally, when begging alone, some supporters to whose door he came, would invite him to come in and eat his meal in their house. Such invitation he usually accepted, taking the seat that had been prepared for him, and partaking of what was put in his bowl by the people of the house, who meantime had taken it from him and filled it with the best of everything they had. Then, after finishing his meal and washing his hands, he would speak to those present about his doctrine, telling them about the benefit and advantage of doing good and the disadvantage and harm of doing evil, both now and in the future, and then he would rise and go back to the place where he happened to be staying at the time. There he would sit quietly waiting in a rest-house or under a tree nearby, until all the Bhikkhus living with him at the time, had finished their meal also ; and then he would retire to his own chamber where he would wash his feet, coming out again afterwards to give an address to the Bhikkhus who meanwhile had assembled together in order to listen to him, and to exhort them to be diligent in learning the Doctrine and practising the Discipline, so as to attain to a realisation of Nirvana here and now in this present life.”

By the time the Buddha was eighty years old he had travelled over much of India, had founded many monasteries for the Brotherhood and had gathered around him a band of famous disciples. The two chief disciples were Sariputta and Mogallana, whom we have already mentioned. But there is another, named Ananda, who, although he was not so clever, is remembered for his great personal devotion to the Buddha and because of the great sorrow he felt at the Buddha's death.

In the rainy season, when it was difficult to travel, the Buddha and all his disciples used to settle down in some convenient village, and there they would stay until the rainy season was ended. In the Buddha's eightieth year the place chosen was the village of Vesali, where many of the monks had friends and relatives, whilst the Exalted One stayed in the village of Beluva.

As soon as he stopped to rest a severe illness attacked him, causing great pain and making his followers afraid that he was going to die. But he decided that he must give final words of encouragement to his Brotherhood, and made such a great effort of will that the sickness and the pain left him for the time being. And he robed himself and sat out in the fresh air on a seat that had been put for him in the shade of the house.

Then Ananda went and bowed to the Buddha and sat down at the side of him and he told the Buddha how upset he had been to see the Buddha's illness—so upset that his body felt weak and his eyes had filled with tears—and he asked the Buddha then and there to give the disciples some final teaching before his death.

“Ananda”, replied the Buddha, “I have already taught you all I can. I have held nothing back from you. I have taught you all I know. I am now very old and ill—too ill to lead you any longer. I am only free from pain when I concentrate my mind and forget my body. Therefore rely on the Truth I have taught you and rely on nothing outside of that. So shall you go forward in the light of your own understanding.”

Again Ananda expressed his sorrow at the approaching death of the Buddha, but the Buddha said to him, “Have I not always taught you, Ananda, that it is in the nature of things to change and die? If this be true we must expect separation. If this be true, it is not wise to

just gone through, the water was perfectly clear. He took up water in his bowl, marvelling as he did so, and returned with it to the Buddha.

Then a young man of the Mallian family named Pukkusa came by and after talking with the Buddha and being taught by him, Pukkusa presented two robes of cloth of gold. The Buddha accepted them and said that one should be given to him and one to Ananda. But when Ananda placed the Buddha's robe round his shoulders, it seemed to go pale, for a golden light was shining from the Buddha's body. Then said the Buddha, "There are two occasions, Ananda, on which the colour of the skin of a Tathagata becomes clear and exceeding bright. One is on the night when he first becomes a Buddha and the other is on that night when he passes away. And now this night, Ananda, at the third watch of the night, in the Sala-tree grove of the Mallian people between the twin Sala trees, the utter passing away of the Buddha will take place. Come, Ananda! Let us go on to the river Kakuttha."

"Even so, lord!" said the venerable Ananda. Now the Exalted One with a great company of the brethren went on to the river Kakuttha; and when he had come there, he went down into the water and bathed and drank. And coming up out again on the other side he went on again to the Mango Grove.

And when he was come there he addressed the venerable Chundaka and said, "Fold, I pray you, Chundaka, a robe in four and spread it out. I am weary, Chundaka, and would lie down."

"Even so, Lord!" said the venerable Chundaka, in assent to the Exalted One, and he folded a robe in four and spread it out.

And the Exalted One laid himself down on his right

side, with one foot resting on the other ; and calm and self-possessed he meditated, intending to rise up again in due time. And the venerable Chundaka seated himself there in front of the Exalted One.

When he had rested, the Buddha walked on with Ananda while the brethren followed till they came to the twin Sala trees of the Mallas. These two trees were exactly alike in size, shape and growth and between them was a ceremonial seat used by the chiefs of the Malla clan.

When they had come there, the Buddha asked Ananda to spread a robe over this seat with its head to the north, and when this was done the Exalted One laid himself down on his right side, with one leg resting on the other ; and he was mindful and self-possessed.

Now the twin Sala trees were covered with flowers although it was not their season for flowering and these flowers dropped and sprinkled over the body of the Buddha as he lay there.

But the Exalted One addressed Ananada and said, "The twin sala trees are all one mass of flowers out of season and these drop on and sprinkle the body of the Tathagata. But, Ananda, it is not thus that the Tathagata is rightly honoured and revered. The brother or the sister, the devout man or the devout woman, who carries out all their duties and obeys the rules of the holy life—it is he or she who rightly honours, reverences, venerates, holds sacred and reveres the Tathagata with the worthiest homage.

"Therefore, O Ananada, be ye constant in the fulfilment of the greater and the lesser duties, and be ye correct in life, living according to the Rules."

Now the venerable Ananda went into a meeting-hall that stood by, and stood leaning against the lintel of the door, weeping at the thought : "Alas ! I remain still

but a learner, one who has yet to work out his own perfection. And the Master is about to pass away from me—He who is so kind.”

Now the Buddha asked for Ananda and was told that he was weeping. And then the Exalted One sent a brother to fetch Ananda and Ananda came and bowed before him and sat at one side.

Then the Exalted One said to the venerable Ananda as he sat there by his side : “Enough, Ananda ! Do not let yourself be troubled ; do not weep ! Have I not already, on former occasions, told you that it is in the very nature of all things most near and dear unto us that we must divide ourselves from them, leave them, sever ourselves from them. For a long time, Ananda, have you been very dear to me by acts of love, kind and good, that never vary and are beyond all measure. You have done well, Ananda ! Be earnest in effort and you too shall soon be free from sorrow.”

Then the Buddha praised Ananda to the Brethren, saying how he had always known how to deal with visitors who came to see the Tathagata ; also that the Brethren were always made happy when they visited Ananda or when he was teaching them.

Then the Buddha sent Ananda to the Malla people to inform them of his approaching death, and Ananda went to the council hall and told them and the Mallas were sad at the thought. They decided to go to the Sala grove to pay their last respects to the Buddha, and Ananda could see that there were so many of them that it would take all night if they were presented to the Buddha one by one. So he arranged for them to stand in family groups and presented a family group at a time, saying : “Lord, a Malla of such and such a name, with his children, his wives, his retinue, and his friends,

humbly bows down at the feet of the Exalted One.”

And after this manner the venerable Ananda presented all the Mallas of Kusinara to the Exalted One in the first watch of the night. Now there came a wandering holy man named Subhadda who had heard of the approaching death of the Buddha. He was anxious to speak to the Buddha and asked Ananda if he might do so. He asked three times and Ananda, who knew how tired the Buddha was, refused him admittance. But the Buddha overheard the conversation and called out and told Ananda to let Subhadda come to see him. And Ananda did so.

Then Subhadda asked the Buddha about the teachings of various teachers that he had heard. The Buddha said, “Do not trouble about which is the most correct of their teachings. I will teach you the best way of all,” and he taught Subhadda the teaching of the Noble Eightfold path. Subhadda was so impressed by it that he asked to be allowed to enter the Brotherhood. There was normally a waiting period of four months but in this special case and because he could see that Subhadda would learn quickly, the Buddha told Ananda to admit him at once. This was done and Subhadda made quick progress and soon reached the level of an Arahant.

Then the Exalted One spoke again to the venerable Ananda, “It may be, Ananda, that in some of you the thought may arise, ‘The word of the master is ended, we have no teacher now!’ But it is not thus, Ananda, that you should think. The Truths and the Rules of the Order, which I have set forth and laid down for you all, let them, after I am gone, be the Teacher to you.”

Then the Buddha called the Brethren and asked them if any one had any doubts as to the teaching, for it would be his last chance to ask the Teacher face to face. But

there was not one who had any doubt. So all were silent. Then Ananda said to the Exalted One, "How wonderful a thing is it, Lord, and how marvellous that in this whole assembly there is not one who has any doubt as to the Buddha, or the Doctrine, or the Path, or the Method."

"You have said this in the fullness of your faith, Ananda," said the Buddha. "But I indeed know that even the most backward of these five hundred brethren is converted, will never be born in a state of suffering and that all will finally reach Enlightenment."

Then the Exalted One spoke His last words, "Behold, now, Brethren, I exhort you to remember, 'All things that are born must die. Work hard for your own freedom from sorrow.'"

These were the last words of the Tathagata.

Plunging deeper and deeper into his own mind in profound thought, his consciousness passed finally beyond the limits of the human world.

When the Exalted One died, an earthquake with great thunder burst forth and many of the Brethren wept and were dejected. But the venerable Anuruddha exhorted them not to weep but to remember their Master's teaching. And he and the venerable Ananda spent the remainder of the night in religious discourse.

Then the venerable Ananda informed the chiefs of the Mallas that the Exalted One had died, and they robed his body like a king of kings and burnt it on a king's funeral pyre. The ashes were sent to eight kingdoms and in each kingdom a cairn was built over the ashes they had received.

PART TWO—THE TEACHING

CHAPTER V.

KARMA AND RE-INCARNATION

“All that we are is the result of what we have thought. It is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. He who speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him as a shadow that never leaves him.” (*Dhammapada V.2.*)

THE Teacher had at last passed away ; the teaching remained. As the Buddha himself said : “He who knows the Doctrine knows me ; he who knows me knows the Doctrine.” There was to be no regret and no wavering in the wise disciples. They were to follow in the footsteps of the Teacher along the Path to the goal of Enlightenment. We, who live in a Buddha age, that is, when the authentic teaching of a Buddha still remains in the world, have, too, the opportunity of learning the Doctrine and following the Path that his own disciples trod.

As a basis and framework for understanding the scope of the teaching it is necessary first to grasp the meaning of the law of Karma and the doctrine of Re-incarnation. The word “Karma” means action, and the law of Karma is the moral or ethical law by which every action of every man produces its due and just results.

As Sir Edwin Arnold says in *The Light of Asia*,
“It knows not wrath nor pardon ; utter-true
Its measures mete, its faultless balance weighs ;
Times are as nought, to-morrow it will judge,
Or after many days.”

This moral law is an expression of the nature of

Reality itself. There is no personal God who intervenes to reward or punish. Each man has made his own character and destiny. Each man obeys the law whether he wants to or not. Thus in the *Dhammapada* we read :

“Think not lightly of evil (saying) ‘It will not come near me.’ Even a water-pot is filled by the falling of drops of water. A fool becomes full of evil even if he gathers it little by little. Think not lightly of good (saying) ‘It will not come near me.’ A wise man becomes full of goodness even if he gathers it little by little.” (Verses 121/122.)

And again :

“Neither in the sky nor in the midst of the sea nor by entering into the clefts of mountains is there known a place on earth where, stationing himself, a man can escape from the results of his evil deed.” (Verse 127.)

The seed of Karma is sown in the mind. It consists in the decision or volition that leads to action. A knowledge of the working of the mind is therefore of supreme importance ; hence the Buddhist emphasis on mindfulness and mind-control.

These action-producing decisions in the mind have two results. First, they affect character, since a man is more than likely to choose a line of action that he has followed before. In fact, character is built entirely of these habit-patterns which are themselves built of past thoughts. When this is realised, character may be re-formed by work at the mind level and this work constitutes the Sixth Step of the Noble Eightfold Path.

Secondly, results in outer circumstances accrue to the doer of good or bad deeds. These results (known as *Vipaka*) are the payment of a debit or credit from the past. They are the end of a process—the particular

account is closed. Because you have good Karma it does not necessarily make you any better; because you have bad Karma it does not necessarily make you any worse. In other words the results of Karma are ethically neutral. But your reactions to circumstances now are vitally important for the future. As you think or act now you start a new process for which the account, large or small, will be rendered in the future. At the same time you build your character. The Buddhist, therefore, takes care of the present and lets the future take care of itself. As he cannot alter the past he does not waste time regretting it.

If, when illness or disappointment come to you, you hold to the truth of the impermanence of things while striving to keep your mind peaceful and balanced, the illness or disappointment will in due course go (change), but the greater peace and strength of mind will remain. Many people, when in trouble, act foolishly, blaming others, excusing themselves, refusing to face facts. They are thus making more trouble for the future. Part of the trouble is muddled-mindedness, for it is essential to think correctly and clearly in order to act rightly. Morality begins with truth, and mental confusion (often typical of the criminal) is itself a form of suffering.

The Buddhist realises that all that we get we have earned. He therefore puts the blame or credit where it belongs—on himself—and thus eliminates one source of wrong action. When good fortune comes he is not carried away but realises that this too will pass, and takes it calmly. When it does pass he is not full of regrets. He knows the nature of things and is confident in the justice of the Law. He knows that no effort is wasted and that patient perseverance, however long it may take, will succeed in the end.

If we think only of a single life-time this law may not seem apparent but the world seems full of injustices. Good people have a hard time ; rogues often get by easily. Some of the most patient and selfless people have weak bodies and ill-health, while others, who are entirely selfish, are strong and healthy. Children are born with the most varied gifts or defects or deformities. People who are themselves honest are cheated by the dishonest. The whole picture appears most confusing.

But it is no longer confusing when we assimilate the law of Karma to the teaching of Re-incarnation. Many lives have we lived, acting with greater or lesser ignorance, probably committing at one time or another most of the crimes in the calendar. Results take time to mature and ripen only when conditions are suitable. We are heirs to an unknown legacy from a far past. When this is understood the details of the pattern of life fit together, and it is possible to see the reign of law in the moral realm as in any other.

Nor should the onus of past Karma daunt us. As we now transform our minds and characters, the effects of past actions, when they come, will have less power over us. There is a story of a robber, converted by the Buddha, to whom the Teacher said : "When your evil deeds come to meet you they will say, 'This is not the man we knew'. And they will pass you by".

This does not mean that we can go scot-free. But it does mean that with the insight and discipline of a trained mind the "evil" (which is in any case relative to our sense of values) is faced in a very different way and the inner suffering is minimised.

As for the way in which Re-incarnation takes place, this is often over-simplified and superficial. The subject is profound and needs very careful study. It necessitates

a thorough knowledge of the complex being we call our "self" and of how it "continues to be" from moment to moment. There is in fact a continual flashing forth of consciousness from a passive, or potential, condition, to an active expression. This happens so quickly that we are no more conscious of the details than we are of each frame or "still" in a film. That is to say, we are not normally conscious of it, but we may come to know it by mind training.

As consciousness awakens, observes, experiences and chooses from moment to moment, and sinks back, equally momentarily, to the passive level, so a kind of re-incarnation in miniature takes place. This goes on throughout our waking life. When we sleep there is temporarily a complete withdrawal into the passive aspect of mind. When we "die" there is a somewhat longer interval before active life is resumed. The awakening to active life is dependent on the renewal of the physical basis of mind at conception, but, in fact, consciousness is continually reborn in a never-ending process.

Re-incarnation and the law of Karma, then, give us a wide and valuable framework within which the other aspects of the teaching and the shape of our own lives may be seen in perspective. It is a vast picture, and bewildering at first, but with persistent study and practice the outlines become clear and the teaching becomes a workable, practical plan for every aspect and every moment of daily life. When conviction of these principles comes a man can work from life to life in patient certainty of ultimate success, undaunted by the passing appearance of things, content that all is well while he does his utmost in the present. He realises what a tremendous power is in his hands if he wills to use it.

The story of Pandita, the seven-year-old novice, illustrates both the effect of past Karma and the power of a trained mind. In his previous life, Pandita, although a beggar, had had the great opportunity of entertaining and giving alms to the Buddha himself. It was said that the Buddhas were particularly merciful to poor men and when Pandita had no one else to entertain, the Buddha took pity on him and accepted an invitation to come to his house.

As a result of this, Pandita, when his turn came to die, was soon re-born of a mother who was a lay follower of the Buddha. At his naming ceremony the monks were invited to a meal at the house and the mother decided in her heart that if ever her son wanted to enter the Order she would not stand in his way.

Pandita was early drawn to the Buddha and the Brotherhood and at the early age of seven asked his mother if he could take the Robe. She gave her consent.

He became a novice under Sariputta who taught him, to begin with, a simple meditation, suited to his age, on five of the constituents of the body, of which there are thirty-two in all.

On the next morning Pandita accompanied the Elder into the village, carrying his bowl and spare robe, on the round for alms. As they passed along, the little boy looked round at what was going on. He first saw men digging ditches and asked what they were for. "They are to guide water into the fields", explained Sariputta. Then they passed a carpenter's shop, and again came a quick question. "They are shaping wood into furniture and tools and all sorts of things." Finally they saw fletchers heating their arrows over the fire and straightening and sharpening them, and once more Sariputta explained. Pandita walked on for a time in silence.

Then he turned to the Elder and, prostrating himself, asked for permission to return to the monastery. This the Elder gave, taking his bowl and robe himself.

The thought that filled Pandita's mind was, "If these men can do these things with water and wood and the shafts of arrows, why cannot I likewise train my mind." So he was hurrying back to meditate. He went straight to his cell, sat down and brought to mind the meditation that the Elder had taught him, concentrating as hard as he could.

Now the Buddha had seen clairvoyantly what was happening and he saw that Pandita might reach Nirvana even in that breakfast hour, providing he were not interrupted, but he also saw that the Elder might return soon from the village. So the Buddha walked to the gate of the monastery and, when the Elder returned, asked him a series of questions that delayed him.

In the meantime, Pandita, by his concentrated effort, had won through to Nirvana. Then the Buddha called the monks together and told them of the success of the seven-year-old novice, and ended with this verse: "Irrigators lead the water, carpenters shape wood, fletchers make straight their arrows, wise men train their own minds."

CHAPTER VI.

THE THREE SIGNS OF BEING

I. IMPERMANENCE

AFTER his Enlightenment, the Buddha's understanding was beyond that of normal human thought. Of such a one it can be said that he truly sees things *as they are*. But in teaching men he had to use the words and ideas of human minds. He did not try to describe Enlightenment or Nirvana, therefore, since they cannot be put into words, but he began his teaching by pointing out certain common mistakes in men's thinking—mistakes so deep-rooted that we are hardly aware of them. For those who could grasp the meaning of this lesson he offered a way of self-training that leads to the same Enlightenment as he had gained. It is like a doctor who points out faults in posture or in habits regarding food that are causing ill-health. When these are removed a return to good health begins. The patient can then be further helped by exercises, medicine and diet. We look on good health of body as normal and are rather ashamed of being ill, but from the viewpoint of the enlightened man all ignorance is a form of disease, all ignorant human beings are a trifle mad.

The Buddha's method of healing ignorance is based on the fact that a man's understanding depends on all that he is, of body, mind and character, and that he can change the nature of his knowledge by changing himself. Words, books and ideas are not enough. So the Noble Eightfold Path, as we shall see later, is a complete training for life. Dr. Johnson once said to a foolish

questioner, "Sir! I can give you an argument, but I cannot give you an understanding." The Buddha, on the other hand, says, if not in these words, "Become what I am and you will know what I mean, and here is the way to do it."

So his teaching begins with the Three Signs of Being, which point to three mistakes we make in our thinking and therefore in our actions. Some of this we already know, but nobody has followed it out to the end as the Buddha did.

The First Sign of Being is the impermanence of life. Usually, when we notice this fact, it is only to regret it. Milton, already aware of it at twenty-three, wrote:

"How soon hath time, the subtle thief of youth,

Stol'n on his wing my three-and twentieth year."

Tennyson, looking on the *happy autumn fields* felt "tears from the depth of some divine despair" when he thought of "the days that are no more." It is strange that so much happiness has this undertone, but it is we who create it. We should not feel the sadness of impermanence if we were not trying to hold on, to fix things, to resist change or shut our eyes to it. Since the effort to fix things is useless anyway, it seems sensible to change our attitude and to try in a new direction. And we can begin to get rid of the old, false attitude by learning to see that change is not only a fact, but is true of everything and at all times.

We are used to seeing the birth, growth, old age and death of men and women. Strangely, we rejoice over the beginning of this process and grieve over the end of it, as though the former were good, the latter evil. But one grows out of the other and is produced by it. They are only stages in a continuous process so perhaps our view is wrong or too limited.

Every year we see the spectacle of the seasons and the life of trees from bud to leaf-fall. When we read history we see that nations and empires are born, grow, decay and die. Geologists can trace the birth and growth of a river valley from a trickling rill of water to its full-developed stage as a river estuary. Even mountains, that grew when the earth was cooling, have been wearing down ever since. Astronomers will tell you of the life-histories of planets, suns and solar systems. To return to ourselves, the very cells of our bodies are continually being born, while others die.

It would be wiser, then, to look on this world as not fixed but flowing, just as our blood is always flowing. If this were to cease we should die, and perhaps the same is true of the world. Yet, do not accept this or any other statement without testing it. Think it out for yourself and if you are satisfied that it is reasonable, accept it. That is the Buddhist way. The Buddha told his own disciples not to believe anything because he said it, but to find out its truth for themselves. Even when you have accepted any part of the teaching as probably true, re-examine it in the light of further knowledge or experience and so travel with your eyes wide open. But when you do see a truth for yourself it must be accepted whether you like it or not. So, if change be the law of life, we must accept it and not try to resist it. And accepting it will take the sting out of it. We make our own sorrows by seeking for something permanent where it does not exist.

Not only is this attempt to fix the flow of life a mistake, but the way we habitually think about things is a mistake. We divide the flowing, moving world into little sections or parcels, give each a name and think of it as a separate thing; then we imagine that all these things have a

separate existence. When we cut and bend and fix wood into a certain shape we call it a ship and think it has some abiding reality, but in fact all the ships of more than a hundred years ago have disappeared. The most permanent "thing" is the word "ship" itself.

If you were passing a builder's yard and a friend said to you, "Look at all those houses!" you would think he was being facetious. Yet when the house is built there is no more in it than those materials arranged round an empty space. A dog, or a cat, or a spider, has no such idea of a house although he may be in it. The idea is in the human mind. It is useful for practical purposes but has proved an obstacle to the understanding of truth. When the materials of the house are taken down again the house no longer exists. So Reality cannot be one of these things that can be taken to pieces. We shall not find it in the world of things and must look elsewhere. This is the practical lesson in the teaching that all *things* are impermanent.

2. SORROW.

The second Sign of Being points to something in our experience that grows out of our wrong attitude in respect of the first; that is, out of our attempt to fix things in a flowing universe. Certain things have given us pleasure in the past, so we try to get more of them and hold on to them. Certain other things have given us unhappiness, so we try to avoid them or remove them. This is called in Buddhism "desire and aversion" and is the force that, until we master it, drives us on from one experience to the next. It is like hunger or thirst and so its Pali name is *Tanha* (thirst). Now thirst springs from a feeling of discomfort and the desire to

allay that discomfort. All our desires are like this, said the Buddha. They start from some discomfort—the feeling of something lacking—and we search for what we think will fill the aching void. If we do not get what we want the void continues to ache. If we do get it, the desire or hunger becomes satisfied and for a time ceases to exist. The pleasure of anticipation has gone and we often feel disappointed. To go on eating after we have had enough is painful. “But we get hungry for the next meal,” you may say. Yes, and in many cases this awakening and satisfying of desires is all that makes up life, which is not a very noble level.

Many things that we hope will give us pleasure are disappointing when we get them, or bring some penalty or liability, like the three wishes in the fairy tales. It sounds nice to have a lot of money but if we get it we may find that it brings us worry in deciding how to use it, or we may be led to act foolishly. The rich man begins to wonder if his friends value him for himself or for his money, and this is another form of mental sorrow. And there is always the fear of losing what we have, whether it be possessions or some beloved person. So, when we are honest and look closely into what we call happiness we find that it is a kind of mirage in the mind, never fully grasped, never complete, or, at the best, accompanied by the fear of loss.

There are two meanings to Dukkha. It means the obvious sorrows and suffering which we experience in the pain of an illness, but it also means the continual sorrow which we make for ourselves while we are ignorant, helpless human beings. This is the illness itself. As a famous Buddhist Bhikkhu (Ledi Sayadaw) has expressed it: “It is a state of peril, without peace, security or blessing.”

This state is the helplessness of the ignorant man. The Buddha spoke of the noble qualities of the man who treads the path, and these are an indomitable will and control of his own mind. These noble qualities enable a man to control his life instead of being at the mercy of forces which he does not understand.

Although the condition of impermanence is in the world without, the suffering of Dukkha is in our own minds. Because we are ignorant our minds serve our feelings, and we desire a whole host of things while hating what stands in our way. Ignorance, hate and desire are called in Buddhist teaching the Three Fires and one aspect of Nirvana is the going out of these Three Fires. They are also known as the roots which keep us growing in the Sangsara or ignorant human world. There is no human being who has not to some extent these three fires in his mind.

When we determine to tread the Noble Eightfold Path we begin to replace the old motive of desire by a new motive of our own—the search for liberation. As we continue to tread this path, the Three Fires become transformed into wisdom, detachment and love. Only such a mind can see things truly as they are and only by such insight can we come to freedom.

Meanwhile, the Three Fires are kept going by our clinging or attachment, yet not only is it impossible to cling on to things and people but the very attempt makes continual sorrow in our lives.

3. THE ILLUSION OF SELF, OR THE ANATTA DOCTRINE.

“A false self in the midst ye plant and make
A world around which seems.”

(Light of Asia.)

The most central problem in our lives is the problem of "self". It is extremely difficult to understand what precisely it *is* and yet it is present in all that we do and think. The Buddhist teaching on this point is by many thought to be the most important part of the teaching. Certainly, understanding of it gives the key to the Doctrine as nothing else can do.

Once again the Buddha was aiming at clearing away wrong thinking, which here consists in taking for granted that there exists a permanent self in man. But when we examine our minds and bodies we find that all of which they are made up is constantly changing. If, for instance, we decide that the body is our self we must agree that in due course this self will die. Yet the Buddha himself said that it were better to do this than to look for the self in the feelings or the mind, which do not keep a fixed state even from moment to moment but are changing constantly.

When we look within we may say with the philosopher, David Hume, "When I try to find self I only come on some particular perception." There are many different moods and feelings and attitudes in each of us, so in one sense we have not one self but hundreds. We are never in all our parts all present at one time. It is like a meeting where different people get up and speak in turn, and then are not heard for a long while. As life goes on some members leave the meeting for good and new ones come in and join it.

You cannot, if you see the truth of this matter, separate a man from his thoughts. He is the thoughts themselves. You cannot separate a man from his feelings. He is those feelings. You cannot separate the man from desire or ignorance. The truth is that whereas thought and feeling, ignorance and desire are all at work,

it is impossible to find a “thinker” apart from them.

The Buddha once said to a man who came to him in great distress of mind because he had been seeking the truth of the holy life and had not found it :

“Therefore, Bahiya, thus you must learn : In the seen, there can be only what is seen ; in the heard, there can be only what is heard ; in the thought, there can be only what is thought ; in the known, there can be only what is known. For, Bahiya, thus you must learn ; Since, Bahiya, for you, in the seen there can be only what is seen, in the heard what is heard, in the thought what is thought, in the known what is known, therefore you, Bahiya, are not here. Since you, Bahiya, are not here, therefore you, Bahiya, are neither in this world, nor in the next world, nor betwixt the two. This alone is the end of suffering.”*

A modern teacher has put the truth into very similar words : “Fear comes into being when there is division between the thinker and his thought ; when there is no thinker then only is there no conflict in thought. And again : “The thinker is a fictitious entity, an illusion of the mind.” †

These statements are bound to come as a shock to many who read them for the first time. But we should remember that this is a spiritual path where the so-called “truths” of the world may prove untrue. Is not the central problem of all spiritual teaching the problem of “unselfishness.” Yet many people find to their sorrow that all ordinary attempts at unselfishness end in a failure. Things do not turn out as they expect. The reason for

* *Dhammapada* Commentary to verse 101. Harvard Oriental Series Vol. 29.

† *The First and Last Freedom*. J. Krishnamurti. P. 231.

this is their basic error in thinking about a self that is to become unselfish. They are providing a further field of activity for the very thing which they are trying to get away from, and are apt to become more selfish instead of less.

Buddhism presents the solution of this problem as a method of untying knots in the mind, not as becoming something more, even "more unselfish." It is the cure of a falsity in our thinking, although in this case the mistake, being mixed up with desire, is stronger. The Buddha taught that the self never did exist. This does not mean you lose something, for it was never there, but it means that you see the truth of the matter. When the truth is seen it may be carried into practice and so freedom may be won, for the self is the creator of all our sorrow. As the Buddha said, "The self is a cruel master." "If this be true", you may say, "it is difficult to understand how nearly all people can be wrong on such an important matter." Let us look, then, at some other ideas that are commonly held. Most people believe in the solidity of the matter which they touch and see. They look on this world as a solid lump of such matter whirling through space. But the expert, the physicist, now tells us that he finds at the heart of matter only whirling particles of energy. There is motion *without a moving body*. It is we who create in our minds ideas of solidity and hold to them as the truth.

Similarly, as already described, we put materials into certain patterns to suit us, like a house, a bridge, or a railway station and then think that these are real things. In fact they are only a temporary arrangement of material, itself in a state of flux.

Here, then, is a way of thinking which is useful in the daily world but which does not work when it tries to

deal with spiritual truth. It tries to fit truth into its old patterns and so destroys it, for truth is living and moving and ever new whereas our usual thinking lies along grooves created from past habit.

It stands to reason that the exploration of the spiritual world must mean the entry into unknown territory. If you were given the old ideas you would be no better off, so you must let some of the old ideas go. Since we have tried to fix these ideas, and especially this idea of self for so long, the spiritual adventure may seem like a loss of self, but that is the very thing we want, for that alone is freedom from all sorrow.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

“The First Truth is of *Sorrow*. Be not mocked !
Life which ye prize is long-drawn agony :
Only its pains abide ; its pleasures are
As birds which light and fly.”

(The Light of Asia.)

HAVING pointed out in the Three Signs of Being some of the mistakes that we make in our ordinary thinking, the Buddha then summarised, in his teaching of the Four Noble Truths, the great force of desire and its working. The Four Noble Truths begin with the Noble Truth of Sorrow which is the second of the Signs of Being, but this now leads on to a statement of the cause of sorrow in our lives.

“The Second Truth is *Sorrow's Cause*. What grief
Springs of itself and springs not of Desire ?
Senses and things perceived mingle and light
Passion's quick spark of fire.”

(The Light of Asia.)

This is not said in any sense of despair, but so that we can pass beyond this sorry state of things. The Third Noble Truth is a clear statement that as sorrow has come to be through a certain way of life, so by altering that way of life it can be brought to an end.

“The Third is *Sorrow's Ceasing*. This is peace
To conquer love of self and lust of life,
To tear deep-rooted passion from the breast,
To still the inward strife.” *(The Light of Asia.)*

The Fourth Truth is the way by which this may be

done. It is the Noble Eightfold Path, by following which we may eliminate the Three Fires, and, with growing calm of mind and insight cross over the stormy ocean of Sangsara. This is dealt with in the last section of this book. Meanwhile here are four Buddhist stories illustrating the Four Noble Truths.

I. THE FIRST NOBLE TRUTH. THE STORY OF KISA GOTAMI.

There was once a rich man who had a great hoard of gold, but he kept it hidden and made no attempt to use it for fear of losing it. One day, to his horror, he found, on visiting his hoard, that it had all turned into ashes. The gold had been the only joy of his life, so when this was gone he took to his bed as though seriously ill and refused all food.

A friend who heard that he was ill came to visit him and asked about the illness. On learning what had happened to the gold, he said, "Your wealth was no better to you than ashes for you made no use of it, but I will tell you a plan. Take it to the market-place. Spread your mats like a dealer and heap up this pile of ashes as though for sale. There may come by there a person who has the spiritual eye and who will see that these ashes are in reality gold."

The rich man did as he was bid. He hired a place in the market and spread his mats and heaped the ashes as though for sale. And when his friends said to him, "These are ashes. Why do you offer ashes for sale?" he answered, "I offer my goods for sale."

After a time a poor orphan girl named Kisa Gotami came by, and stood looking for a time at the ashes. Then she said, "Sir, why do you pile up gold and silver for sale in this way?"

“Will you take some of that gold in your hand and give it me,” asked the rich man. Kisa Gotami did so and as she gave the ashes to him in her hand they turned to gold again.

The rich man realised that Kisa Gotami had the eye of spiritual knowledge and could see the real worth of things, so he decided to give her in marriage to his son. They were married and in due course Kisa Gotami had a baby boy and she was very happy. But while he was still a baby he caught a fever and died.

Kisa Gotami carried the dead baby in her arms to all her neighbours asking them for medicine, but they only said, “She is out of her mind, poor thing,” for they could see that the baby was dead. At length Kisa Gotami met a monk begging his alms in the village and she asked him also for medicine for her baby.

The monk replied, “I cannot give you medicine for your baby, but I know a doctor who can.” “And who is that, Sir?” asked Kisa Gotami in great joy. “It is the Sakyan teacher, known as the Buddha.”

So Kisa Gotami, having inquired of him where the Buddha was dwelling, walked there quickly with her baby, and, without waiting for a proper introduction, went to the hut where the Buddha was resting and called out, “Lord and Master, give me the medicine that will cure my boy.”

The Buddha could read her mind and he saw that she was capable of spiritual understanding. So he said to her, “You must fetch me a handful of mustard-seed.” This Kisa Gotami eagerly promised to do. “But”, went on the Buddha, “The mustard-seed you are to bring me must come from a house in which no one has died, and from a member of a family in which no one has died.”

Poor Kisa Gotami now went from house to house

asking for the mustard-seed, and the people pitied her and offered it to her willingly. But when she asked, "Has a relative of yours ever died in this house?" They answered, "Alas! the dead are many but the living are few. Do not remind us of our grief."

Kisa Gotami, becoming at last weary and hopeless with her impossible task, sat down at the wayside, watching in her grief the lights of the city as they were lit, burnt for a little and then were put out again. At last she thought to herself: "How selfish am I in my grief! Death is common to all."

Then Kisa Gotami felt calmed in mind and so, first having her dead baby buried, she returned once more to the Buddha. And Buddha said, "Not from weeping nor from grieving will any one obtain peace of mind. He who seeks peace should draw out the arrow of grief. He who has drawn out the arrow will become peaceful. He will overcome all sorrow and be blessed."

Kisa Gotami joined the Buddha's Order and found great comfort in his teaching.

The First Noble Truth is the Truth of Sorrow.

2. THE SECOND NOBLE TRUTH. THE STORY OF THE MEAN BRAHMAN.

Once there lived at Savatthi a Brahmin named "Never-give", because he never gave anything to anybody. He had an only son of whom he was very fond and one birthday he wanted to have a pair of gold earrings made for this son. But because he was too mean to pay a goldsmith to make them, "Never-give" took some of his own gold and beat out the earrings himself. Because of this his son was given the nickname of "Burnished Earrings."

When "Burnished Earrings" was sixteen he had an attack of jaundice. His mother, of course, wanted to send for the doctor, but "Never-give" said, "Wife, if I send for a doctor, I shall have to pay him some of my hard-won rice as a fee ; you care nothing about the loss of my wealth." "But you can't leave him without a doctor," said his wife. "What are you going to do?" So "Never-give" decided on a plan. He went to visit various doctors whom he knew as if he were just calling in for a chat. In the course of their conversation he said, "By the way, what do you usually prescribe for jaundice?" He pretended he was only casually interested but, in fact, he made a great effort to remember what they told him about the bark of certain trees, various herbs, and so on.

When he reached home again, he bought some of these as cheaply as he could, mixed them and boiled them up and made a medicine for his son. But in spite of this, his son grew worse and worse until he seemed about to die. "Never-give" was so frightened at this that he at last called in a doctor. But the doctor took one look at "Burnished Earrings" and said to his father, "I am too busy this morning ; send for some other doctor." He then turned and left the house.

"Never-give" realised by this that his son was at the point of death, and that the doctor did not want to treat a hopeless case. He was greatly upset but the next thought that came into his head was a mean one. "People will come to see him," he thought, "and when they come into the house they will find out that I am a wealthy man." Then his meanness overcame his love for his son. To avoid people coming into the house, he carried his son out and laid him on the terrace.

On that very day, early in the morning, the Buddha

had been sitting meditating and after his meditation, filled with great compassion, he looked over the world with the eye of a Buddha to see whom he might help. He saw the boy "Burnished Earrings" lying ill on the terrace of his house where his father had placed him. He saw that at this moment of approaching death he could help the boy to attain a happy future existence and, through him, could help his father also.

So he entered the town of Savatthi with his monks for alms and then made his way to the house of the Brahmin. The Brahmin's son was lying with his face turned to the wall of the house, but, with inward vision, he saw the golden radiance of the Buddha's presence. Knowing himself too weak to arise and go to the Buddha he made a mental act of belief in the Buddha. The Teacher, reading his mind and seeing this, said, "He has done enough," and he returned to the monastery.

"Burnished Earrings" died with this strong act of belief in the Buddha still in his mind, and the result of it was that, as he died, he was reborn, as though he had just woken up from sleep, in the land of the gods.

His father, on the other hand, having had the body of his son cremated, was overcome by grief and remorse. He went every day to the burning-ground and gave himself up to great grief, crying out from time to time, "Where are you, my only son?"

His son, who was now a glorious being in the land of the gods, looked down and saw his father, and, seeing that his grief would never have an end, decided to help him. So, changing himself into the likeness of a boy again, he went and stood near the burning-ground, where his father would be sure to see him, and began weeping and wringing his hands.

The father came there again in the morning and,

seeing another person also lamenting, asked him why he was weeping. "Burnished Earrings" replied that he had a chariot of solid gold but that it had no wheels, and that he was weeping because he wanted a pair of wheels. Now the Brahmin had repented of his former meanness ; also this youth reminded him of his lost son, so he said, "I will gladly give you a pair of wheels, of any kind you like to ask for."

"Very well!" said the youth. "You have promised to give me any sort of wheels I want. Give me the sun and the moon for wheels. With these I shall have a fine chariot indeed."

"You must be simple-minded", replied the Brahmin, "to ask for something that you know you can't get."

But the youth said to him in return. "Who is the greater simpleton ; I who ask for what I can at least see in the sky ; or you who ask for what no longer exists?"

Hearing this the Brahmin thought to himself, "What this youth says is sensible." And he replied. "Youth, what you say is true. It is I that am the greater simpleton of the two that weep. Like a child crying for the moon I desired a son that is dead and gone. But tell me, who are you?"

The youth replied, "I am he for whom you weep, your son, whom you yourself buried in the burning-ground. I come from the land of the gods."

"By what good deed, then, did you attain that happiness?" asked his father. And his son told him how, on the point of death, he had seen the Teacher, the Buddha and had made an act of belief in him, bending down in mind with clasped hands.

As the father heard these words his whole being was filled with joy. "I too," he burst forth, "will go to the Buddha this very day and will seek refuge in him with believing heart."

“Do so,” replied his son. “Take refuge in the Buddha, the Teaching and in the Order of Brethren. Also learn from him the Five Rules and obey them. Also give of your wealth to the monks as alms.”

The Brahmin agreed to do all this and his son vanished. Then joyfully he went straight to the monastery and invited the Buddha with his monks to take a meal that day in his house.

The Buddha accepted the invitation and, the Brahmin, returning home, told his wife of the impending visit and she began arranging a meal for her visitors. When the Buddha came, the Brahmin himself waited on him.

After the meal came the right time for asking questions. Many people always came to these meetings. Some came to hear the wise words of the Buddha, but some came hoping that some question would be asked him that he would be not able to answer, or that someone would defeat him in argument.

The first question the Brahmin asked was, “Sir Gotama, are there any that have been reborn in the land of the gods without giving alms to you, without rendering honour to you, without hearing your Teaching, without keeping fast-day, simply by making an act of faith?”

“Brahmin, why do you ask me?” was the Buddha’s reply. “Did not your own son tell you that he had been reborn in the land of the gods by his belief in me?”

“When was that, Sir Gotama?” asked the Brahmin.

Then the Buddha related the whole incident that had happened at the burning-ground. Many people did not believe, this, so the Exalted One summoned “Burnished Earrings” from the land of the gods to bear witness. He came looking like a god himself, great in size and radiant with light. The Buddha asked him how he had

earned this good fortune and "Burnished Earrings" told them how his thoughts had turned to the Teacher at the moment of his death. The people were deeply amazed and filled with joy. Then the Teacher said to them, "Our thoughts it is that make us do things both good and bad. A pure thought always brings happiness. An evil thought brings sorrow."

The Second Noble Truth is the Truth of the Cause of Sorrow.

3. THE THIRD NOBLE TRUTH: THE STORY OF THE CONVERSION OF THE BANDIT "FINGER-NECKLACE."

In the wild forest outside Savatthi there lived a robber named "Finger-Necklace" because, from every person he had killed, he had cut off a finger and had made them into a necklace. He showed no mercy to any living creature and had raided whole villages and left them desolate. The news of this terrible robber came to the ears of the Buddha, who was staying at Savatthi in Jeta grove in the park given to him by Anathapindika, a rich nobleman of Savatthi.

Early the next morning the Lord, duly robed and with his bowl in his hand, went into the city for alms and on his return, after his meal, first put away his bedding and then, with robes and bowl, set out on the road to the robber's stronghold. As he drew nearer to "Finger-Necklace's" country, the herdsmen and the ploughmen and travellers who passed him all said, "Don't go that way, Sir! It will take you close to the stronghold of a terrible robber. Bands of ten, twenty, or more people have been taken captive by him before now."

But, without a word, the Lord held on his way, although the warning was repeated two or three times.

The robber had look-outs posted and, at length, one of them reported to him that a solitary monk was making his way towards his camp. "Finger-Necklace" marvelled greatly at this, but, thinking the monk might be a spy, determined to kill him. So, armed with sword and shield, bow and quiver, the robber followed on the Lord's trail. But the Buddha saw him, and, using supernatural power, made the robber unable to catch up with him although he was only walking at a steady pace. "Finger-Necklace", who was so fleet of foot that he could even overtake an elephant or a deer running at full speed, began to quake with fright. So he stopped and then shouted to the Lord to stop too.

"I have stopped, 'Finger-Necklace'; you stop too." was the Lord's reply. The robber felt there must be some hidden meaning in this, so he called out again to the Lord. "You say you've stopped and yet you march ahead. I cannot move and yet you tell me to stop. How is it then that you have stopped and I have not?"

And the Lord answered him, "It is true to say that I have stopped for I do no violence to any being. But you have never stopped destroying life." "Finger-Necklace" was so ashamed of his wicked deeds when he heard these words from the Lord's own lips that he threw his weapons down the steep side of the mountain and, prostrating himself at the Buddha's feet, renounced his evil deeds for ever and pleaded with the Lord to admit him as a monk into the Brotherhood. The Buddha's reply was short and to the point, "Almsman, follow me," he said. The use of the word "Almsman" meant that "Finger-Necklace" was accepted as a monk in the Order and so the robber followed the Lord as his attendant on the return journey. At this very same time, in the city, a huge crowd had surrounded the King's palace, shouting

that the King must do something to stop the wicked deeds of "Finger-Necklace."

Now the King thought he would get advice on this problem from the Buddha, so, next morning early he drove with his attendants to the gates of the Jeta grove. There they dismounted and walked to the Lord's lodging. "What is the matter, Sire?" asked the Buddha. "Is there trouble with King Bimbisara or with the Licchavis or with any other kingdom?"

"No trouble at all of that sort, Sir. But in my realm there is a dreadful robber whom I cannot capture, and the people are so terrified of him that they are besieging my palace demanding that I should deal with him." And the King related all the evil deeds of the robber.

"If now, Sire," replied the Buddha gently, "you were to see this 'Finger-Necklace' with his hair and beard shaved off, in the yellow Robe, as a Pilgrim who kills not, steals not, lies not, eats but one meal a day and leads the higher life in virtue and goodness, what would you do to him?"

"Sir, I would salute him, or would rise to meet him, or would invite him to be seated, or invite him to accept robes and other things he needed, and I would give him the defence, protection, and safeguards which are his due as a monk. But it is next to impossible that one so wicked and evil should reach such great virtue as to be accepted as a monk by the Lord."

At that moment the reverend Angulimala was seated quite close to the Buddha, who, stretching forth his right arm, said: "This, Sire, is Angulimala!" (Finger-Necklace).

The King, at this, was in such great alarm that he was struck quite dumb and his hair stood on end. Seeing this, the Lord said: "Fear not, Sire, fear not. There

is here no cause for fear.” So the king’s fears and alarms abated ; and across to the reverend Angulimala he went, saying, “Is your reverence indeed Angulimala ?”

“Yes, Sire.”

“What, sir, was your name before you were given this nick-name ?” “My father’s name was Gagga, Sire, and my mother’s was Mantani.”

“Be of good cheer, then, Gagga, son of Mantani, I will see that you are provided with all things that you may need.”

But the reverend Angulimala had taken the vow to live out of doors, begging for alms and wearing only cast-off rags from dust-heaps. So he declined the King’s offer, for he already had his three robes.

Then the King went across to the Lord Buddha, and after salutations, seated himself at one side, saying : “It is wonderful, Sir, it is marvellous, what a tamer of the untamed the Lord is, how he overcomes what no-one else can overcome and controls those that seem beyond control. Here is a robber whom I could not control with cudgel and sword ; but without either the Lord has subdued him.” Then the King excused himself on the ground that he had a great deal of business to attend to. And the news went round that Angulimala had become a monk.

Now, although he had on the monk’s robe, there were some who still had a great hatred for Angulimala and, one morning, when he had gone into Savatthi for alms, he was hit by a clod flung by one man, by a club flung by a second, and by a piece of a broken pot flung by a third, so that he presented himself before the Lord with his bowl smashed, his robe in tatters, and his head cut and streaming with blood. Seeing him drawing near, the Lord said to Angulimala : “Endure it all,

monk, endure it all. What you are suffering now is the harvest of past deeds which might otherwise have kept you in the torments of purgatory for many a year, yea, for hundreds of years.”

By great effort Angulimala finally achieved the happiness of freedom from sorrow, and then, in deep joy of heart, he uttered this verse :

“With neither club nor sword our Lord tamed me.

My name is “Harmless” though I harmful was.

Wise men guide their own lives towards the truth.”

The Third Noble Truth is the Truth of the Ceasing of Sorrow.

4. THE FOURTH NOBLE TRUTH. THE STORY OF YASHAS, THE YOUTH OF BENARES.

Soon after the Buddha began preaching, there lived in the city of Benares a youth of noble family named Yashas, the son of a rich merchant. He had seen for himself the meaning of the suffering of life and his mind was deeply troubled about it. One night he got up secretly and went quietly out of the house and stole away to the Buddha to ask for his advice.

The Blessed One saw Yashas, the noble youth, coming from afar. And Yashas approached him and exclaimed : “Alas, what distress! What troubles!” The Blessed One said to Yashas : “Here is no distress ; here are no troubles. Come to me and I will teach you the truth and the truth will clear away your sorrows.”

And when Yashas heard this his heart was comforted. He went into the place where the Blessed One was and sat down near him. Then the Lord preached to him of love and right-living. He explained that all the things we want in the world do not bring us happiness, but

often make us do wrong and feel unhappy, and he explained the Path that leads to freedom from sorrow.

Yashas began to realise the truth of this and it brought comfort and peace to his mind. He found that his eyes were opened to the truth of things and first of all he looked at himself, at the rich robes and jewels he wore and his heart was filled with shame.

The Teacher, knowing his inward thoughts, said : “Though a person be ornamented with jewels, the heart may have conquered the senses. The outward form need not be a prison for the mind. The body of a monk may wear the robes of the Order while his mind is thinking of worldly things.

A man who thinks of the things of the world is a worldling, even though he lives as a holy man in the forest, while a man may go about in the world and yet have a mind full of holy thoughts. There is no difference between the layman and the hermit if both have learnt the lesson of unselfishness.”

Seeing that Yashas was ready in his mind to enter on the Path, the Buddha said to him : “Follow me!”, and Yashas joined the Brotherhood. Having put on the yellow Robe, he received the ordination. While the Lord and Yashas were discussing the teaching, Yashas’ father passed by in search of his son ; and, in passing, he asked the Blessed One : “Pray, Lord, have you seen Yashas, my son ?”

The Buddha said to Yashas’ father : “Come in, sir, you will find your son ; and Yashas’ father became full of joy and he entered. He sat down near his son, but his eyes were covered and he did not recognise him ; and then the Lord began to preach. And Yashas’ father, understanding the doctrine of the Blessed One, said :

“Glorious is the truth, O Lord ! The Buddha, the

Holy One, our Master, sets up what has been overturned ; he reveals what has been hidden ; he points out the way to the wanderer that has gone astray ; he lights a lamp in the darkness so that all who have eyes to see can discern the things that surround them. I take refuge in the Buddha, our Lord, I take refuge in the Doctrine revealed by him ; I take refuge in the Brotherhood which he has founded. May the Blessed One receive me from this day forth while my life lasts as a disciple who has taken refuge in him.” Yashas father was the first lay-member who joined the Order.

When the wealthy merchant had taken refuge in Buddha, his eyes were opened and he saw his son sitting at his side in yellow robes.

“My son, Yashas,” he said, “your mother is full of lamentation and grief. Return home and restore your mother to life.”

Then Yashas looked at the Blessed One, and the Blessed One said : “Do you wish your son to return to the world and enjoy the pleasures of a worldly life as he did before ?”

And Yashas’ father replied : “If Yashas, my son, finds it a gain to stay with you, let him stay. I see that he has become delivered from the bondage of worldliness.”

When the Blessed One had cheered their hearts with words of truth and righteousness, Yashas’ father said : “May the Blessed One consent to take his meal with me together with Yashas as his attendant ?”

The Lord, having donned his robes, took his alms-bowl and went with Yashas to the house of the rich merchant. When they had arrived there the mother and also the wife of Yashas saluted the Blessed One and sat down near him.

Then the Buddha preached and the women, having

understood his doctrine, exclaimed : “Glorious is the truth, O Lord ! The Buddha, the Holy One, our Master, points out the way to the wanderer who has gone astray. He lights a lamp in the darkness, so that all who have eyes to see can see the truth. We take refuge in the Buddha. We take refuge in the Doctrine revealed by him. We take refuge in the Brotherhood which has been founded by him. May the Blessed One receive us from this day forth while our life lasts as disciples who have taken refuge in him.”

The mother and the wife of Yashas were the first women who became lay-disciples and took their refuge in the Buddha. Now there were four friends of Yashas belonging to the wealthy families of Benares. Their names were Vimala, Subahu, Punyajit, and Gavampati.

When Yashas’ friends heard that Yashas had cut off his hair and put on yellow robes to give up the world and go forth as a monk, they thought : “Surely that cannot be a common doctrine, that must be a noble renunciation of the world if Yashas, whom we know to be good and wise, has shaved his hair and put on yellow robes to give up the world and go forth into homelessness.”

And they went to Yashas and Yashas addressed the Blessed One, saying : “May the Lord give a teaching to these four friends of mine.” And the Blessed One preached to them and Yashas’ friends accepted the Doctrine and took refuge in the Buddha, in the Teaching and in the Brotherhood.

The Fourth Noble Truth is the Way to the Ceasing of Sorrow.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FIVE RULES OF THE BUDDHIST FOLLOWER

YOU may remember that in the story of the mean Brahman, his son who came back to help him made him promise to keep the Five Rules. These are rules of good conduct for the layman who, while living in the world, wants to follow the teaching of the Buddha.

The first rule of conduct which the follower of the Buddha takes is as follows :

I undertake the rule of training to refrain from injury to living things.

In the Pali language of the Buddha this is written as follows : *Panatipata veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami.*

Once there were two neighbouring kingdoms, part of whose common boundary was a river that supplied the peoples of both lands with water. For many years they had lived in friendship, but one summer there was a long drought. The farmers used the water of the river to water their fields and save the crops, but still the drought went on until the water was no more than a mere trickle and there was not enough left for both countries. Then, when they went down for water they came to blows, and then each side sent for more of their friends to help them until there were large bands on both sides waiting with arms in their hands. This state of affairs came to the ears of the kings of the two kingdoms, and both of them, thinking to protect their own people, summoned an army and set forth for the bank of the river.

News of an impending battle was brought to the Buddha

and he at once set out on foot for the river-bank where the two armies were encamped. When he arrived he sent for the two kings and their ministers, who came and saluted him and sat down before him, waiting for him to speak.

“Tell me,” said the Buddha, “which of these two is the more valuable, the water flowing in the river yonder or the blood which flows in the veins of your two peoples?”

“There is no question, Sir,” they replied at once. “The blood which flows in the veins of our people far outweighs in value the water of the river.”

“Oh! foolish kings!” then answered the Lord, “To waste that which is much the more precious in a quarrel over something of far less value. For I can see that if you begin this battle streams of the blood of your two armies will be poured out on the earth and wasted, while at the end you will not have increased the water in the river by one drop.”

At this the kings and their ministers were ashamed and, thanking the Buddha for his counsel, withdrew from his presence after agreeing to meet and settle their dispute peaceably. A treaty was drawn up by which the remaining water was shared out, and it was not long before the rains came and there was enough for everybody.

This rule, however, means much more than not killing one's fellow-men. It means to avoid killing or injuring, as far as is possible, all living beings, from man down to the insects.

The Bhikkhus, who were and are trained to think of every movement they made, are careful to avoid stepping even on insects. It is said that if a monk treads, even accidentally, on a snake, it is the monk's own fault, for

if his mind had been tranquil and filled with love, the snake would have known and kept away from him.

Sometimes the monks go off in groups or alone and live for a period in lonely places in the mountains or the forests. Here they may meet wild bears and elephants and even tigers, but they never take weapons. Since the monks are trained to sit quite still and silent the animals sometimes come close up to them, but rarely attack them.

Animals are always affected by a man's thoughts and feelings, and can tell if a man is afraid of them by their sense of smell. The monks have often saved their own lives and those of their companions by calmness of mind in the face of danger. One man was even picked up by an elephant and expected to be dashed to the ground, but he had the self-control to repeat the Three Refuges (I take refuge in the Buddha, in the Teaching, in the Brotherhood), and the elephant set him down again unharmed. Another man saw an elephant coming towards him, and stood quite still, repeating the salutation to the Buddha. (Hail to the Lord, the Holy One, the All-enlightened Buddha.) The elephant slowed up, touched him on the breast with his trunk as though in greeting, and then, turning, crashed off through the jungle.

One group of two monks and a guide were caught in a narrow cutting in the mountains and saw a line of elephants coming. The head monk made the others sit by him and touch his robe while the elephants came on. He chanted the Three Refuges and a great peace came over their hearts. The elephants stamped by only a few yards from them but never harmed them.

Today, in the caves of the mountains, where the monks sometimes live, the bears, which are dangerous to other

people, come sniffing round for scraps like dogs and, when they are a nuisance, are shoo'd away like dogs. This fearlessness and friendliness with the animal people is one of the happy results of living the life of harmlessness which is part of the Buddhist path.

The second rule of conduct which the follower of the Buddha takes is as follows :

I undertake the rule of training to refrain from taking that which is not given.

In the Pali language it is written as follows :

Adinnadana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami.

King Ajatasattu, while still a prince, determined to steal the kingdom from his father and, in order to accomplish his theft, was led into the further crime of murder. Although he obtained the kingdom in this way the crime had a bad effect on his mind, so that, when he had the opportunity of hearing the Buddha preach, his mind was clouded and he was not able to understand as well as if his life had been blameless. So he lost something of greater value than his kingdom, for knowledge of the truth depends not only on a keen mind but on right conduct.

Stealing may be not only of money or possessions, but of such things as another person's time or interest or help, or it may be of honour or position. Thus the Buddhist does not take "that which is not freely given" nor does he take anything under false pretences.

Theft takes place because people are attached to things they want. They do not see that it is better to be free from this attachment. One woman managed to convert a whole band of thieves because she had learnt the lesson of not being attached to her possessions.

This woman's son, who was named Sona, became a

Bhikkhu, and learnt the verses by heart so well that he was allowed to preach before the Buddha himself. His mother, who was very proud of him, asked him to come and preach to her, and when he consented she had a pavilion built for shelter from the sun where she could sit and listen. On the day that she went to hear the sermon a band of thieves, having learnt of her plans, broke into her house. The leader of them, however, went to the pavilion to watch her and stood near her with his sword ready, meaning to kill her if she left for home while the robbery was in progress. Now, a maid-servant had stayed behind and, when she saw the robbers she ran as fast as she could to her mistress to warn her of it. The first and the second time her mistress simply said, "Do not bother me now", but when the girl interrupted her a third time, she said, "Go and tell them to take all they want. I have something better to do." And she composed herself to listen to the rest of the sermon. The leader of the robbers was so impressed at this that he confessed and begged her forgiveness as soon as the sermon was over, and then went to her house and made his companions return all they had taken. The whole band were converted and asked to join the Brotherhood.

The third rule of conduct for a follower of the Buddha is: I undertake the rule of training to refrain from sexual immorality. In Pali it is: *Kamesu micchachara veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami.*

In the reign of King Pasenadi Kosala there lived a poor man who had a very beautiful wife. One day the king saw her and fell madly in love with her. He determined to get her for himself at all costs and to do this thought out how he could bring about the death of

her husband. He first of all gave the man a post as a servant in his household, hoping that he would commit some fault for which he could be sentenced to death. But the man was obedient and honest and the plan did not work.

Then the king gave him what he thought was an impossible task. He ordered him to go to the country of the Nagas (that is, dragons), and obtain from them water-lilies and red earth, and moreover ordered him to return by his (the king's) bathing-time. The poor man went hastily to the country of the dragons. On the way he met a hungry traveller and shared his meal of rice with him. When he arrived at the bank of the river where the dragons lived, he threw the remains of his rice into the river as a gift to the fish. Then he made this appeal: "O, honourable Nagas! I have been sent by King Pasenadi Kosala to beg from you water-lilies and red earth. If you will grant me this boon I will, in return, give you the merit I have gained by sharing my meal with a hungry traveller and giving the remains to the fish in this river."

The King of the Nagas appeared to him, disguised as an old man, and granted him what he wanted. The poor man took the water-lilies and the red earth and hurried back to the palace. But King Pasenadi Kosala, fearing that he might be successful, ordered the door of the palace to be closed before bathing-time. When he found that he could not get in, the poor man placed the water-lilies and the red earth on the threshold of the door and cried aloud until there was a crowd of people round him to witness that he had indeed carried out the King's commands.

That night the King was lying in bed thinking of the woman he wanted when a terrible moaning sound filled

the palace so that his hair stood on end. A second, a third and a fourth time he was awakened by this uncanny noise, and in the morning he called the Brahmins to explain it. They, not knowing what it was, made out that some god was angry because no sacrifice had been made to him and ordered the King to make a great sacrifice of all kinds of living creatures.

But it happened that the Queen, Mallika, was a lay-follower of the Buddha, and she could see the ignorance and superstition of the Brahmins. She rebuked her husband for believing them and told him that if he wanted to know the true explanation of the terrible sounds he had heard he must go and ask the Buddha, who would tell him truly.

Accordingly, the King ordered his chariot and the Queen went with him. They drove to the park where the Buddha was staying and then proceeded to the lodging where the Buddha lived. The Queen introduced her husband and he related to the Buddha his experience during the previous night.

The Buddha explained that in the time of the previous Buddha-Kassapa, many thousands of years before, there had lived four sons of wealthy merchants. They had all been frequently guilty of the sin which the King was now about to commit, that is, of taking by force other men's wives. When they had died they had fallen to Avichi, the lowest and most terrible of the purgatories. Now they were trying to show their remorse and to warn King Pasenadi. It was their moaning that he had heard in the night.

On hearing his guilt uncovered the king was ashamed and, realizing the terrible risk he was running, resolved nevermore to set his heart on another man's wife. He gave orders that the victims collected for the sacrifice by

the Brahmins were to be set free and as for the poor man and his wife, they were sent home again loaded with presents.

The fourth rule of conduct which the follower of the Buddha takes, is as follows :

I undertake the rule of training to refrain from falsehood.

In the Pali language this is written as follows :

Musavada veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami.

THE STORY OF KING UDENA AND HIS TWO WIVES.

King Udena used to give eight pieces of money every day to his Queen, Samavati, so that she could buy flowers for her apartments. The Queen always sent the same servant-girl, named Hunchback (Khujjuttara) to buy the flowers. Khujjuttara was in the habit of going to the gardener's house and of buying flowers with four pieces of money, keeping the rest.

One day, however, Sumana, the gardener, obtained permission to entertain the Buddha to a meal, and it was after the meal, when the Buddha was preaching, that Khujjuttara entered the garden. She stayed to hear the sermon and was converted. She then felt ashamed of stealing the money and of lying to her mistress so she spent the whole of it that day on flowers.

When Queen Samavati saw the heap of flowers, she exclaimed, "Why! The gardener has given us twice as much for the same money. Has the price of the flowers been halved?" Then the whole story came out, for Khujjuttara confessed everything. Instead of being angry with her, the Queen asked her to repeat the Buddha's sermon, for she had long wanted to hear his teaching. Accordingly, all Queen Samavati's ladies were called, and Khujjuttara repeated to them as well as

she could all that she had heard. Not only did she do so this once but she regularly went to hear the Buddha and came back and repeated his words each time, for the Queen and her ladies were not allowed to go out alone. The teaching had such an effect on them that they all became devoted lay-followers of the Enlightened One.

Now the Queen longed to see the Teacher and to show reverence to him, and Khujjuttara suggested that, as they were not allowed to leave the palace, and as at that time their apartments did not have windows on the street, they should make holes in the walls so that they might see the Lord when he passed and might throw flowers into the street as a sign of reverence.

But King Udena had another Queen whose name was Magandiya and who was jealous of Samavati. She saw the holes in the walls and made out to the King that a plot had been made by Samavati to kill him, and showed him the holes as proof of her story. But the King refused to believe her and ordered the holes to be filled in and windows to be made: for he believed what Samavati told him.

Then Magandiya felt a great hate for the Buddha and hired ruffians to follow him and his monks about the streets, reviling and abusing them as thieves and false teachers. Ananda suggested to the Buddha that they should leave that city and go elsewhere, but the Lord replied, "If we go to another city and men revile us there, where shall we go then, Ananda?"

"To yet another city, Reverend Sir."

"If men revile us there, where shall we go then?"

"To still another city, Reverend Sir."

"Ananda, one should not speak thus. Where a difficulty arises, there should it be settled. Only in those circumstances is it permissible to go elsewhere.

But who is reviling you, Ananda?"

"Reverend Sir, everyone is reviling us, slaves and all."

"Then, Ananda, I am like an elephant that has entered the fray. Even as it is the duty of a war-elephant to stand up to the arrows which come from every side, so is it my duty to withstand patiently the words spoken by wicked men."

So saying, He preached the Law in the following verses :

"Even as an elephant engaged in battle withstands
arrows,

So also must I bear abuse, for most men are wicked.
It is a tamed elephant they lead to battle ; it is a
tamed elephant which the King mounts ;
It is the tamed that is best among men ; he that
endures abuse patiently.

Excellent are mules which are tamed, and well-bred
Sindh horses

And great elephants of the jungle ; but better yet is
the man who has tamed himself."

When the Buddha had thus preached the Law, he said, "Ananda, be not disturbed. These men will revile you for only seven days, and on the eighth day they will become silent." And it proved as the Buddha said.

When Magandiya realized that she could not drive the Teacher away, she thought out another plan. She first had eight live cockerels sent to the King as a present and suggested to him that Samavati should cook them. Samavati, of course, refused, for she had taken the rule to avoid taking life. Magandiya then asked the King to test her by telling her to cook the birds for the monk Gotama ; but this time Magandiya sent cockerels that had been already killed. This time Samavati agreed to cook them as they were already killed. Then Magandiya

turned to the King and said, "You see that Samavati's affection is already given to another." But still the King would not believe this.

Finally, Magandiya, in her rage of jealousy, hid a poisonous snake in the hollow sounding-board of the King's lute and stopped the hole with a bunch of flowers. The snake escaped when the King was in Samavati's apartments, and the King finally believed that Samavati was indeed trying to kill him.

He took his bow and strung it, intending to execute her and her attendants on the spot. Samavati remained quite calm and so stood before him, commanding her ladies to stand in single file behind her. The arrow, aimed at her heart, was shielded by her love and, instead of piercing her breast, returned to the king. He was amazed at this and convinced of her innocence. So impressed was he by her calm conduct in the face of accusation and even death that he also became a follower of her Teacher.

The man or woman who is truthful can face accusations calmly.

In the Buddha's teaching, all our speech must be carefully guarded, for it is a very powerful force and can influence other people.

Not only lying but tale-bearing must be avoided, and saying things to hurt people or making things appear different by putting them in different words so as to get our own way. This is by no means easy, so the Buddha teaches that at first we must watch ourselves to see what we are doing with the words we use. This is called being mindful of speech. It is a good start to learn to describe things accurately and without exaggeration.

The fifth rule of conduct taken by a follower of the

Buddha is : I undertake the rule of training to avoid intoxicating drinks.

In Pali this is as follows : *Sura-meryaya-majja-pamadatthana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami.*

The Buddhist does not take intoxicants or drugs except in an emergency because they spoil his self-control, interfere with his reason and prevent him getting nearer to the truth of things. Indeed they are more likely to take him away from the understanding of truth. In addition, they may damage his nervous system or even his brain, and they are sure to put him into bad moods when he will do foolish things.

There is a story of a monk who thought that it was not so wrong to get drunk as to commit other crimes, for, he thought, it would only harm himself, not other people. But when he was drunk he became like a madman, and murdered a man in order to run off with his wife. Strong drink, therefore, is to be avoided, as it may lead to other wrong actions.

This brings us to the Buddhist path. The Buddha went on a long quest and found a wonderful treasure of truth. We can all follow him, although in a sense we have to go alone and find our own way. It is his advice and guidance that makes this journey possible. It is a wonderful thing to follow the route that some explorer has mapped out and to recognise the landmarks that he has described.

All explorers need to be strong and to have cool heads and self-control, and spiritual exploration is a much more worthwhile way of living than running after "enjoyments" without thought of anything else. A man who feels he is doing something important with his life is happier than aimless people. The Buddhist path takes the whole of a man's time and therefore he who treads it has always this purpose in mind.

All the problems that come in life are sooner or later solved on the Buddhist path. It is like setting out on a long voyage, when little things do not seem to matter so much. If you are camping for the week-end, a heavy shower of rain may spoil your pleasure, but if you are setting out to sail round the world, the heaviest storms are weathered calmly, for you know that they are to be expected. It is in this spirit that the Buddhist journeys through life.

He who wants to go on this path will find in time a group of fellow-voyagers. Their companionship is one of the best things he can ever find. For, though some will begin and then give up again, there will always be the few who will go on to the end.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

“The man who can repeat but little of the Teaching, but lives it himself, who forsakes craving, hatred and delusion, possesses right knowledge and calmness, clings to nothing in this or any other world, he is a follower of the Blessed One.” *Dhammapada*, Ch. I, V. 20.

“Enter the Path, there is no grief like hate,
No pain like passion, no deceit like sense.
Enter the Path ! Far hath he gone whose foot
Treads down one fond offence.”

(The Light of Asia.)

INTRODUCTION

“For, my friend, in this very body, six feet in length, with its sense-impressions and its thoughts and ideas, I do declare to you are the world, and the origin of the world, and the ceasing of the world, and likewise the Way that leadeth to the ceasing thereof.”

(Anguttara-Nikaya, tr. Woodward).

AT the centre of every religion stands the teaching of a Path or Way, sometimes obscured and half-forgotten, sometimes expressed in a beautiful symbolism, as in the Grail legends or the Quest of the Beloved of the Sufi and Hindu poets. Sometimes the symbolism has become confused with the life of an historical personage, as in the stories of Krishna and Jesus. But in spite of all obscurities some nucleus of truth makes its power felt.

This is because the truths expressed or veiled belong to our own hearts and minds. Unfortunately, the inner meaning has been too largely lost. The Quest of the Grail may thrill us as children, but later its awe and beauty "fade into the light of common day," to be irretrievably lost, because we have not the key to the symbolism.

In this age men must come to the knowledge of the Path, if they come at all, in the full light of understanding. Buddhism, as one great branch of the Wisdom-Religion that has endured down the ages, offers this understanding through its unusually clear and practical formulation of the Path, well described under its original name of "Truth and Discipline."

The Path is a symbol of inner spiritual growth and in due course the aspirant realises that he is the path which he treads. Sooner or later he must go forward in complete self-reliance and become that inner Reality which he is and yet which at the same time he seeks. The difference between the several formulations of the Path is mainly one of emphasis, yet this can be of vital importance, just as slight differences in daily habits can vitally affect a man's health. As Lao-Tzu says, "The sage deals with great things while yet they are small." In such a great undertaking it is more than ever important to cut down error to a minimum. To many thinking people the Buddhist formulation of the Path appeals because it seems likely to avoid most of the aberrations into which travellers on other paths have strayed. Emphasis is laid from the outset on complete self-reliance, for reliance on any other person will inevitably become a barrier to the goal.

Each man, therefore, becomes his own interpreter, taking the hints which are the best that anyone else can give him, and working them out in experience until he

has worked them into the fabric of his life. These chapters are offered in that spirit. Taking the known map, I have tried to prospect a little way ahead, and am writing down a few memoranda for my own and others' guidance. It is not all familiar country; some way I have walked and am sure of the road. But beyond where I have walked myself, I have perhaps glimpsed the mountains and seen a glint of sunlight on some landmark that is placed for guidance, and so far I can say the map seems true.

One sets out sometimes on a day's walk, having first read the guide-book and studied the map. How difficult it is to find out exactly what the directions mean, but this is only because they are unfamiliar, and the difficulty makes half the fun of the excursion. When we have followed the directions and found the way, how obvious it is. At the end of the day our impression is very different from the bare bones of guide-book detail, and far richer. We want to tell someone else about it, but we realise the futility of words; "You must come with us," we say, "and see for yourself."

It is in that spirit, too, that this book is written. It is an invitation to join in a journey whose fascination has no equal on this earth. "A perilous one!" you may think. Well, he who counts the cost is bound by his arithmetic. Let us admit at the outset that determination is needed, though not without the balancing grace of kindness and a sense of humour. Those who travel this Way are ever a little intolerant of convention, for the hope that is in them is the hope that has known despair and found a way beyond it. Their right to that hope is their reliance on nothing but what they know to be true. Though they understand and sympathise with human weakness, do not ask them to condone it. Their

greatest joy is for others to join them ; their greatest sorrow the sight of endless millions bound to the wheel of birth and death.

The Path begins on the homely levels of our daily life, but it may be trodden to great heights. All depends on you. The directions are given in the Teaching, all the directions you need, and if they are not clear as yet, you will see more as you climb higher. It is as true now as ever it was that "Buddhas do but point the way." Each man must make the journey for himself.

So, in concluding with the wonderful Buddhist invocation of "Peace to All Beings," let us intend the peace that comes of strenuous achievement, the Peace of Nirvana, and that will be Peace indeed.

I

RIGHT UNDERSTANDING OR RIGHT VIEWS

"Ye who will take the high Nirvana-way,
List the Four Noble Truths."

The Light of Asia.

In all ages and races men have been uneasily conscious of their fundamental ignorance of the real nature of the world they live in. Unknown forces surround them, and they have always feared the apparently malevolent operation of these forces and wooed the benevolent, personifying them as gods, demons, or angels, and seeking to propitiate, appeal to, or master them for their own ends. We little doubt that Fetichism and Black Magic are the product of an ignorance that is at best childish and often evil. But are we in much better case ourselves? One doubts it on seeing the modern

Insurance company advertising "Peace of mind and plenty of money at age sixty," for a monthly premium. Not until we step out of this vast hinterland of the human mind, with its jungles of ignorance and superstition, into the light of assured knowledge shall we gain freedom. For understanding is ever the light-bringer, and the darkness we fear is but absence of the light.

So the teaching of Buddhism begins, not with dogmas that are themselves mysteries, but with a fact of universal experience, that life as we know it here is suffering. When men and women came to the Buddha for help in their troubles, he led them to see for themselves the universality of human suffering, not that they should give up in despair, but as the prelude to a better understanding of the meaning of life. For it is possible to see a gleam of hope even in suffering itself. The man who is absorbed in seeking worldly satisfaction will never reach higher knowledge, for it cannot be found without strenuous search and determination. It is possible that suffering itself, like the goddess Mnemosyne in Keats' *Hyperion*, stands as guardian and mistress of some higher understanding. Suffering is the price of our entry into life, and every advance exacts its cost. The child must leave home, with grief on both sides, in order to gain freedom, but he returns in due course as an equal, richer in experience and with a respect for his parents that comes of understanding. If the child cannot face the ordeal, or the parents bar the way, he becomes a prisoner, for freedom must be won to be possessed.

Here, then, is nothing unnatural. The lesson is repeated in a hundred different ways, and perhaps our right way is to learn the lesson, not to escape from it. If we adopt this attitude, what do we find? First of all, suffering, which may be taken to include boredom and

dissatisfaction, and even "love's sad satiety," leads us to knowledge of a quality of human life that is universal. This is to go from experience to deduction from that experience, which is in accord with the scientific spirit of Buddhism. This quality, which is as universal as suffering, is the quality of impermanence. Nothing we know remains. "Impermanent are all compounded things," and the very elements of man's own being and character are included.

So, to the suffering and despairing, who sought light and help, the Buddha would point out that all men begin by basing their hopes of happiness on a life whose elements are as shifting as the sands of a river-mouth. Life is suffering—because life is impermanent. No man can stay the passage of time however happy his life may be. Time, like an omnipotent policeman moves us all on willy-nilly. This ceaseless passage of time is so obvious a quality of our lives that we take it for granted. Within this ceaseless movement, all things we know are born, grow, decay and die, and we along with them. Even our happiness has this undertone of sorrow. If we are seeking for Truth, this must be recognised, whether we like it or not. Some truths are unpleasant at first sight. But if we give up because of the unpleasantness, we shall not get far. And the first impression of anything new is not always to be trusted. So let us "walk on."

This first step is fairly obvious for anyone who is willing to face it, and on the path of Truth progress depends largely on willingness, but for the next we must accept the Buddha's analysis. So much faith may be asked of you. But it is not blind acceptance of some dogma that will never be demonstrated. It is in the same spirit as we may accept the statement of any recognised authority, or the diagnosis of a specialist, as

one worthy of full consideration. The full light of reason may be brought to bear on the Buddhist Teaching, and every test of experience made. There is no loss of self-reliance in accepting the guidance of a man who has proved his wisdom and the greatness of his character. Nor can even the Buddha do more than guide. As he himself said, "The Path must be trodden by each man alone ; even Buddhas do but point the Way."

The Buddha found that the basic cause which keeps alive this process of continual change and continual personal suffering is man's belief in his own existence as a separate being, and his consequent search for the satisfaction and happiness of that separated self. Yet this profound and often passionately-defended conviction of self-identity is no better than a belief or theory, for, said the Buddha, it is impossible of proof. There is no unchanging substratum discernible in this thing we call our "self." The physical body we take to be so real lasts less than a century. Our emotions are but a stream of feelings and images ; our minds but a stream of thought. Character changes with the years ; there is no permanency in us. Yet every human personality looks on itself as an independent entity, and this false belief that has been called "the great heresy" is the root-cause of suffering. Admittedly, it is a convenience of daily life. We still talk of the sun rising and setting because it is simpler so, but we all know the earth itself revolves. Unfortunately, we are still naïvely credulous where our own person is concerned. For this "I-theory," when held as absolute fact causes desire for happiness in the impermanent, and therefore desires an impossibility.

"Well," you might reply, "Is the alternative suicide ?" No, but something a little more subtle and profound, as we shall see later. There is a way of transcending the

“I-centred” life that is not annihilation. Freedom from the flux of becoming is attainable, and the consequent peace of that freedom.

Sooner or later (and here Western mystic and Eastern sage are in accord) the man advanced in spiritual unfoldment reaches a critical stage. There comes to him the opportunity to pass “the Cosmic intelligence test” by which he may enter into union with Reality. In all formulations of the Perennial Philosophy—to employ the useful term which Aldous Huxley revived—the goal of man’s life is stated to be this union. Of Reality itself the Buddha declined to speak, it being foolish to try to express Reality in words. “The Tao that may be named is not the true Tao.” The experience of the man who achieves that union he called Nirvana, which is the end of life as we know it, but is not annihilation. We are this Reality already; “Thou art Buddha” it is stated in *The Voice of the Silence*. The only difference between an enlightened and an ignorant man is that one knows his true Nature, the other does not. So this Path might be called the way of Self-discovery, remembering that we now speak of a “Self” which is commensurate with the One Reality, though it is at the same time the Reality immanent in our “self” and all other “selves.” Having realised this ultimate mystery of life, having removed the many illusions veiling Reality,

“He has worked the purpose through,
Of what did make him man.”

(The Light of Asia.)

This is the goal of our deliverance, for this only is Nirvana, the ending of suffering. The possibility of this deliverance is the third of the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, of which the first two are suffering and its cause. Before the feet of the man who awakens to the

strange enigma and the amazing possibilities of his existence stretches the Path of Self-Realisation. It must be undertaken in full consciousness of all that it implies. Without this, progress to the end is not possible.

Many complex philosophies have been built on this simple substratum of Truth, but this is enough for our purpose. Let us see how one of the wisest men who ever lived on this earth worked out in practice, for our guidance, a way of life based on it. For, in Buddhism, the Fourth Noble Truth is a Way of Life, that is also a Way of Becoming. In living this life the man so changes himself that his old ignorance dies away, his old follies cease, and insight into Truth grows with the years. From being a passive and helpless struggler with forces he did not comprehend, he becomes a clear-sighted master of himself and of his destiny.

2. RIGHT RESOLUTION OR RIGHT MOTIVES.

“Earnestness is the path to the Eternal. Thoughtlessness is the path to death. Those who are earnest will never die. Those who are thoughtless are as if dead already.” (*Dhammapada*, V. 21.)

Having considered, absorbed and digested the Teaching so far, having glimpsed something of its fundamental truth with his intuition, having realised that it accords with much of his own common-sense reasoning about life, the man who is in earnest wants to begin to put it into practice. This is natural with new enthusiasms, but it is necessary to realise the magnitude of the undertaking. It is a task requiring many lives of endeavour. One has to make a start sometime and there is no better opportunity than now. But it is wise to look on the first endeavours

as but the testing stages of character and understanding. Progress will be made; no effort is wasted. But it may be necessary to make several fresh starts, and to revise the exact data of knowledge and its application before venturing on the main highway. Truth may be simple in definition, but the application in practice calls for an endless variety of interpretation in the shifting circumstances of life. The traveller will have to learn to be as adaptable as nature, and as patient. In the working of spiritual laws many levels of increasing subtlety will be perceived as he advances, and contradictions will appear, only to be solved by some higher synthesis of understanding.

It is not easy to define the scope of the undertaking, for it must include this ever-widening horizon, but some attempt may be made, and, however inadequate, serve as a basis for reflection and a standard for reference. We have referred before to the goal of man's life as union with Reality. Man, although a limited, imperfect, suffering, ignorant being, yet stands in intimate relationship with Reality itself. However distorted that relationship may be it is never severed, and so the Path might be called the technique of Right Relationship. Wherever a man stands in unfoldment, whatever mistakes he may have made, it is possible for him to find this right relationship of inner harmony. Indeed, the mistakes may lead him to it, for they are the plainest proof that a law has been broken. This Right Relationship, when it has been achieved, does not mean an immediate end of suffering, for it cannot mean perfection at once, but it does mean fulfilling the law of our being and thus travelling by the road that is best for us. This has been expressed in the East in the doctrine of Dharma, which is at once the man, his duty, and the Way which lies

ahead for him. If fulfilled, it means that that man lives his spiritual life to the full.

So Right Resolution is the determination to carry out a complete reorientation of character in conformity with the truth one has accepted. Less than this is not enough, for our actions are the proof of our beliefs, and if we are not prepared to put a thing into practice, we do not believe it, and should not delude ourselves that we do. The simplest practical way of acknowledging the One Reality is to acknowledge the oneness of life, although vast consequences follow from this simple statement. The important thing to remember is that it is a fact and not an ideal of impossible perfection. Man's misery and ignorance are due to his having tried to jettison such facts and get along without them. But the nature of things does not change in conformity with our desires, and hence consequences follow which we do not expect. So the man who is seeking Truth must bring his life into conformity with this principle. All living things draw their life from a common source, and all have an equal right with him to work out their own salvation. One result of accepting this fact is that the Buddhist acknowledges no enemies. All beings are entitled to their place and function, and if they seem to do him harm the wrong is in the relation between him and them, and can be remedied by deeper understanding. When he sees this brotherhood of all beings united in common suffering, he will begin to feel the birth of compassion for that suffering, and compassion is, in the Buddhist life, the great complement of wisdom.

It is not easy to accept this vision of the suffering of a world which seems at times so fair. And yet when we look around we see, even in the beauty of spring, how many are dying, how many more suffering from

incurable diseases. We see disappointed affection or frustrated hopes making life bitter to others, and the beauty of the world seems a mockery. Gradually, as we grow in years and experience, this vision widens if we are not wilfully blind. Looking still deeper beneath the surface of life, we follow out the train of events in the lives of people we know, and we see how even a happy ending may prove but a bad beginning; how a slight weakness may twine about a man's character and ruin it; how parents may sow the seeds of their children's downfall; how the promise in so many charming young people seems to go to waste. If this vision is forced upon us by events, and we have not the strength of character to cope with it, we may become pessimistic cynics, echoing Shelley's cry:

“Ah! Woe is me, winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year.”

This is to see but half the picture and the darker side at that. If we look deeper again, we shall see here and there a character emerging purified and sweetened from its personal tragedies, freer because of them and more ready to help others. We shall realise that that which dies and suffers is but the impermanent, and there is something that rises phoenix-like from the fires and goes on. But the most valuable inner practice is to see the inescapable fact that in this life suffering predominates, and to accept this fact. Acceptance has an effect only to be proved by experience. Our common attitude is rather to run away or to reject such an idea, but this leaves us where we were. It does not alter the fact, nor does it allow us to alter in relation to it. When we accept, an inner adjustment of growth can take place and the spring of compassion gushes forth in response. This, strangely enough, brings its own form of liberation. In

itself it is a healing and peace-giving emotion. At the same time we are led to seek the goal elsewhere than in that which is of its nature transient and unsatisfactory. "Suffering, yes we have accepted it, we will not run away from it, but will do all we can to alleviate or mitigate it. But, at the same time, we are looking beyond it. We feel we are growing up, are more masters of ourselves, and can walk on with more confidence."

Now the question may arise as to whether nearly all mankind *can* be wrong, and whether we are not setting out on a fool's errand, or at best a quixotic adventure, instead of the sober certainty of assured Truth. Let us, then, take as wide a view as possible and consider how mankind stands in regard to this Teaching. Imagine some intelligent spectator coming to study this world from another planet, like Dante visiting the Underworld with an intelligent Virgil as his guide. He would be told, "Here are beings who have free-will, moving in a world of Law. They do not know the nature of the world as yet but may learn it. They are not forced to do so, but from time to time those who have learned the lesson come forth to teach them, and their Teachings are collected and preserved in books. But the people learn mostly from experience and, of course, take a long time and make many mistakes on the way. Their understanding, even of the Teachers, is very limited, and they prefer to follow habitual ways of thought. To do otherwise means study, discipline and change, and few of them like these things, especially the last. Whilst they learn slowly, however, they do learn thoroughly." This is a fairly detached, fairly accurate picture of the world, and we may see that the state of the world is what might be expected in the nature of things.

It is an Eastern tradition that into this world of

ignorance the Buddhas come by natural law to teach a Way to freedom for those who will listen. All the acts of such an enlightened man are said to have symbolical meaning. Whatever the degree of historical authenticity of the scripture from which the generally-known life of Gautama was taken, there is no doubt of its symbolic value as an epitome of the psychological growth of a spiritual man. Because of his make-up, more than normally aware of the keenness of artistic and sense delights, he is happy at first in a kind of adolescent paradise. But the shock of the reality of suffering awakes him and, again because of his make-up, affects him deeply. This does not show on the surface for some time, but an inner adjustment takes place. The lesson, inevitably, is repeated, and against this stern intrusion of reality, the bliss of a sense world is realised as utterly false. So the man sets out to face the truth and find the meaning of this life into which he has been so strangely plunged. The man Gautama set forth, imbued with compassion for the sufferings of all humanity, and having solved the meaning of the enigma, became the Buddha, the Enlightened One, and returned to teach others the Way to the Liberation he had found for himself.

To the man who is trying to express the oneness of life some form of service usually begins to appeal. Here a caution is necessary in balancing ultimate and temporary aims. He should remember that the final goal for all beings is this same union with Reality of which we have spoken. To help people in this life is good, but to help them on to the goal is the greatest good of all. If he is wise he will see that no-one can alleviate all the sufferings of the world. There is here a huge and complex process of growth which must to a large extent work out to its appointed end. It was in being before

he came into it and before he was conscious of it. It will go on through unending time. Meanwhile it is wise to consider how much is within the scope of his powers to accomplish, and to work well at that in peace of heart, rather than to beat helplessly on the bars of law-governed Destiny. Since he must go on and grow with this world process, the greatest contribution any man can make is to travel the Path to liberation steadfastly. In this way he will be helping his fellow-men more than by any other. Inevitably, as the inner re-orientation of character takes effect, he will become a teacher of the way to the same inner peace, bliss and understanding that is slowly dawning in himself. And since it is incumbent on each man to travel the Path himself, he can do no more than this. So the man who begins to struggle upwards towards the heights begins to fulfil the ideal of Mahayana Buddhism, that of the Bodhisattva or World-saviour, beautifully expressed in the following passage from "*Self-realisation of Noble Wisdom*" (A translated version of the Lankavatara Sutra):

"Before they had attained self-realisation of Noble Wisdom they had been influenced by the self-interests of egoism, but after they attain self-realisation they will find themselves reacting spontaneously to the impulses of a great and compassionate heart endowed with skilful and boundless means, and sincerely and wholly devoted to the emancipation of all beings."

Here we touch on a depth of mystical experience only to be understood in the process of becoming. Buddhism includes mysticism, although it does not set the mystic in a place apart. It teaches us to include his vision and experience in finding Enlightenment in daily life. As Aldous Huxley has said, "For the fully enlightened, totally liberated person, Samsara and Nirvana, Time and

Eternity, the Phenomenal and the Real are essentially one. His whole life is an unsleeping and one-pointed contemplation of Reality in and through the things, lives, minds and events of the world of becoming." (*Perennial Philosophy*.)

These are the heights, and yet where each one of us stands now, with the smallest possible beginning in true living, he may glimpse their immanent splendour. "A single step," said Lao Tzu, "may begin the journey of a thousand miles." As the inner reorientation takes place, as he finds an inner peace beginning to permeate his mind, and as he grows stronger in knowledge of the truth, so this knowledge, peace and purpose begin to affect the lives of those around him. Just as he becomes more skilful in dealing with his own mistakes, and realises that patience and understanding are essential, so he carries these qualities over into his dealings with others. When people see his goodwill they are more than likely to respond, and his goodwill is based, not on emotion but on insight. It is directed will and not feeling, and remains constant. As a matter of common-sense he eschews irritation at temporary failure, for there is unending time before him and no failure is absolute. He knows that the law is unerring and therefore just. He accepts his failures as valuable lessons, for in no other way could he learn to make the necessary re-adjustments. With the greater calmness of mind this attitude brings, he is able to see things more clearly for what they are. So, understanding helps practice to be accurate, and practice tests and clarifies understanding. He has made a beginning, taken the first important step and is learning to travel like the pilgrim described in another scripture, "With the patience of one who fears no failure, courts no success."

Finally, the Right Motive for the Path-treader may be summed up in the words of Lao Tzu, "First get Tao for yourself, then get it for others."

3. RIGHT SPEECH

"Speech causing no annoyance, truthful, pleasant and beneficial . . . is called the austerity of speech."

Bhagavad-Gita. Ch. 17. V. 15.

"Then said Mahamati to the Blessed One, 'Why is it that the ignorant and simple-minded are given up to discrimination and the wise are not?' The Blessed One replied, 'It is because the ignorant cling to names, signs and ideas'."

Self-Realisation of Noble Wisdom.

Right Speech is of great importance, first in learning to know our own minds and secondly as a perfect example of how the moral life not only includes mind-training but leads on to insight into truth.

When talking, a stream of energy passes through the mind, and as one must talk to someone else, cross-currents are set up with their characteristic ripples of thought and feeling. Talking helps to cut the grooves of habitual thought which tend so strongly to confine us within the limits of "habit-energy," and much talking precludes calm and concentration of mind. Speech is a creative force modifying our own and other peoples' minds, and as "all we are is the result of what we have thought," our use of speech must be a question calling for the deepest consideration.

It has been said that there are two ways for a Buddhist, "to speak wisely or to keep silent." To speak truth is more than to state facts, for it takes into account the

effect on the person to whom one is speaking. In this connection the use of the word "austerity" in the above quotation from the Bhagavad-Gita is highly significant, for it is positive in its attitude. Austerity is often thought of as purely negative and restrictive, but when it is so in practice it defeats its own ends, for life seeks ever to be positive and creative. The ideal speech is speech that promotes goodwill as well as conveying truth. A vow of silence is not the goal, although it might be considered a justifiable temporary expedient to teach self-control. It is certainly understandable that some men have resorted to extreme measures to acquire command over this faculty, for it is one of the hardest of all to control, and success in this direction is success indeed. "Control of speech is yoga," said one commentator, no doubt out of the depths of bitter experience.

When we come to examine speech carefully, one of the things which strikes us sooner or later is its extreme inexactitude as a means of communication of ideas. The more we strive for precise definition, the more it eludes us. Words are but written or spoken symbols of ideas, and the symbol may mean something different for different people. Again, our ideas of things are but symbols of the things themselves. In addition to this, when we realise to what an extent emotional bias colours shades of meaning, we may wonder, not that misunderstandings occur, but that any common basis of agreement is ever reached. That this is so is largely due to the limited area of general experience, and the well-defined grooves and patterns along which thought moves.

When used, speech should be kind, helpful, accurate and under control. Results show if it is otherwise. The world is full of strife ; speech more often adds to than diminishes it, and it is usually the speech of the man who

is sure he is right. It is hard to relinquish one's own opinion; yet until this can be done here is an eternal barrier to peace, for here stands the ego with its separative outlook. Opinions are notoriously cheap, but to create peace is a work of art worthy of the artist in life, and very rarely is any opinion worth the cost of ill-feeling. So the wise man yields, knowing the limitation of every personal outlook and knowing, too, that "the truth is great and will prevail." Peace and good feeling will in any case help understanding, strife only muddles it. On the other hand, to know how to be silent is to know how to be unobtrusive rather than to imitate the Trappist, for a conspicuous and obstinate silence is no silence at all. "The middle way" of balance is a golden rule in speech as elsewhere.

To put an idea into words is at once to limit it and give it objective existence. It becomes more vivid and has a life of its own, so that it can pass into the minds of others and there take on new forms. A man's daily speech forms a kind of cocoon of thought-forms and word-forms around his mind, and adds yet another refracting medium to distort his already imperfect apprehension of Reality. This is why those who wish for insight must reduce words to a minimum, speaking only as necessity demands and within the limits of the above principles. To talk gives obvious and immediate satisfaction, of a kind. The care, patience and self-sacrifice of strict control are hard and *seem* poorly rewarded. In fact, they are richly rewarded. But one must have faith to begin and endurance to wait for a time, for the greater results are necessarily slow in maturing. One advantage of so doing is the greater mental calm which will accrue. Words are stimulating, sometimes even to the point of intoxication. They

disturb the mind, whereas only a tranquil mind is able to assess a situation accurately. Both on this account and because of its inaccuracy, speech should be handled by the Buddhist with the respect accorded to a high-voltage current, or any other force that can be both powerfully useful or dangerously destructive if misused.

However, speech is our main channel of communication between man and man and as such has its value. But, again, as in the case of the electric current, the Buddhist conserves it to the best advantage, for no one's energy is limitless. All our energies are but delegated powers and it is up to us to use them wisely.

For all their inaccuracy, our words can reflect tones of feeling to which others are quick to respond. Thus often we give ourselves away when we would rather not. Some irresponsible people will use speech spitefully to injure others' feelings. Many use speech as a means to satisfy their desires, arguing or cajoling others into doing what they want. Nearly always there is a strong personal bias, even if this be unknown to us and purely a subconscious tendency. Even when we try to eliminate the personal factor, it must to some extent remain. But goodwill, a real desire "to speak the truth in love," will equally affect the subtler undertones of speech and, given reasonable restraint, will go far to make one's words not only harmless but affirmative of unity. The harmony, the point of balance between extremes, is sought by this attitude, which is in turn the expression of the inner harmony we are striving to build up. Obviously, the "sloppy" good-will that agrees with everybody is not intended. Obviously, too, one will see the error of the inhuman logic that leaves out love and can end in vivisection or cruel punishments. In these cases the root cause is not the logic but something warped in the

character of the perpetrators. Right Speech is more than the mere logic of words. It does not stand alone, but depends on the compassionate attitude developed in conjunction with the other stages of the Path, and here may be seen the close interdependence of all the links.

In due course, speech is superseded. It is too clumsy to convey the inner life. Thus, as a man progresses, he naturally tends to speak less because to speak is to step down from the direct seeing into Reality. He cannot tell others of these things unless they know of them already, and if they know already there is very little need of speech for communication. He realises at this point that he can best teach others by what he is, and that real inner progress must show forth without any striving after effect. The clearest proof of the existence of a spiritual world is the lives and characters of the great Teachers who draw their being from an inner source of whose grandeur we have little conception. As a man awakens spiritually he begins to hear in great art and music echoes of this same world, and to realise that the minds of the artists and composers glimpsed this level, too. He sees that Truth is revealed all about us if we begin to open our eyes. Speech is not only in words.

Words divide only too easily and arouse opposition. People resent being talked into things. The best speech is in wise and pure acts. Like children, people are ever prone to imitate, and unconsciously all are seeking a better way. Even one's opponents will learn from good actions, for skill is always admired and copied. So by what a man is, he tends to elevate his surroundings and lead imperceptibly to a better way of life. Such Right Speech, whether in words themselves or in the actions that speak louder than words, is a recognition in fact of the oneness of life, for in removing discord and pro-

moting goodwill and harmony, a man will reduce the illusion of separate "I-ness." He will begin to learn in practice to what extent this same "I-ness" and his speech are commensurate. Realising how false the conception is, and how it is fabricated and bolstered up by wrong attitudes of mind, he will discover in practice how peace flows in to the extent that the "I-concept" is weakened and discarded. The field of speech is most valuable in this connection, as it is so intimate to our inner world of mind and to our relations with other people. As self-centredness is the cause of so much harm and misery, to remove something of self-centredness from our speech is a great step, and will prove by the greater peace of mind that results how far peace of mind and egotism are enemies. The lesson may then be carried into other fields.

Words are, in truth, but an abstraction from the wholeness of life which is Reality. We build a world of words—artificial, subservient, limited; and all about us is life—real, greater than we, ever-changing. There is unending conflict between the two, and this is not removed until we accept the limitations of speech and seek for Reality outside the net of words.

4. RIGHT ACTION

"Helplessly is everyone driven to action by the qualities born of nature." *(Bhagavad Gita.)*

"We all must live the truth we know and prove it by experience, or else we are destroyed by it, instead of being healed."

(Invisible Anatomy—Dr. E. Graham Howe.)

The spiritually aspiring man comes sooner or later to

the stage where he realises that he is bound to the life of cause and effect for a long time to come. His past *kamma* is working out now. Inevitably he is creating more day by day. He cannot suddenly jump clear of the process but must work within it. The question is, how to work and live on, and yet move towards freedom. Right action is the answer to this problem.

Thomas Henry Huxley once compared man to a whirlpool in a river. The form appears fairly constant, if we observe from a distance. But on closer examination we see that the water of which it is composed is pouring in above, passing round and pouring out again below. It is much nearer truth to consider man as such a vortex of forces than as a solid, fixed form. When we begin to consider our own nature, we realise that this process is indeed a true picture. Somehow it has been set going, the machinery wound up, as it were, though how it began is pure speculation. We *are* certain, however, of the here and now, of the conditions in which we find ourselves, and as there is a certain inevitability about them we had best work with and not attempt escape from them.

The secret of Right Action is in the way in which we use our forces and faculties. Morality exists in all religions, but in Buddhism it is approached in a strictly utilitarian way. Cause and effect by strict law guide Buddhist thinking. There is no question of "sin" with a sense of guilt, only to be cleansed by some mediator. There is a pointing to unwise action and its results, or wise action and its results. The worst a man can think himself is a fool, and at any moment he can set about correcting his folly and wiping out its results by right living. What we do is judged by its effect on ourselves and others. These are two-fold, and we may take either a short or

a long-term view. The short-term view is the beneficial result to ourselves and others of Right Action in making life happy, peaceful and secure. But, obviously, within the framework of the philosophy we have accepted, this can be but a temporary and partial good. It can be, at the most, a lessening of the sorrow of life, a peace amidst pain. The long-term view, and the more important, is that Right Action promotes Right Understanding, helps us to free our minds from the illusion of "I" and so opens the way to final enlightenment. The attitude to be aimed at is the wise use of powers because they are there to be used, yet, without benefit to "self." Since "self" is a heresy against the wholeness of Truth, to be self-centred is to put the part before the whole and the less before the greater. Yet both "self" and "others" are aspects of the One Reality, and until we have learned better it is wiser to treat them as equal, not seeking to injure one's "self" any more than one seeks to indulge it. Goodwill to oneself is likely to produce goodwill to others. This is the balance or the "Middle Way" of Buddhist thought which runs as a principle throughout the Path.

Its rules are embodied in the Five Precepts and are directed against :

- (1) Taking life
- (2) Taking what is not freely given
- (3) Uncontrolled sexual desire
- (4) Lying
- (5) Stupefying the mind with intoxicants or drugs.

These will be found on analysis to be infringements of the rights of one's own or other people's persons or property. The goal is Harmlessness, based not merely on the feeling of brotherhood, but on the conviction that life is one. Forgetfulness of this truth and infringement of it in action has added immensely to the sorrow of life.

The Buddhist, therefore, will have no part in war or the making of arms ; no part in "sport" that involves killing or injury or in the making of its adjuncts, from rifles to fishing rods ; no part in the liquor or drug trade, whether the latter be called medicine or not ; no part in sex except as an expression of love, and no part in the falsification of truth as far as lies within his powers.

For we know that these things begin in the mind and have their worst effects in the mind in perpetuating the wrong thinking that breeds them. We have seen recently in the war how hate propaganda was used as one of the most potent weapons of destruction. Now nations are faced with the problem of men who have carried over into peacetime the training of the war-mind. Sooner or later the vicious circle must be broken, and it is only on the basis of a far-reaching philosophy that this can be done, for not otherwise will it be worth a man's while to make the effort. On the Buddhist Path, philosophy and psychology are intimately related. What a man believes becomes in practice what he is. So the Path is one of an enlightened psychological technique for gaining and keeping balanced health of mind and body, based not on health as an end in itself but on a philosophical outlook commensurate with his spiritual stature. As Dr. Graham Howe has said : "Our gain must be a consequence, not a purpose of our striving."

Sport that involves killing can only be a practice of those who are both idle and malicious. That often such people can be quite kindly in other directions is but proof of the muddle of their thinking. Seeing this, we can understand the verse in the *Dhammapada*, "Watchfulness is the path to Immortality, and thoughtlessness the path to Death. The watchful do not die, but the thoughtless are already like the dead."

Drink and drugs cloud that precious reason on which alone we can rely for guidance in our passage through this world of *samsara*. The Buddhist appeals to reason at all times as his guide. If that guide be confused by liquor or drugs, how can he hope to find the right path? There are enough difficulties and thorny problems in the way. It is not the part of wisdom to add to them.

In the question of sex, love must be the guide in the most intimate of human relationships. The Path begins on homely levels. Since we have been seeking for right relationship both with inner Reality and with other people, much may be learned here, and celibacy is not an absolute essential of progress, although possibly necessary for certain stages. Much of right relationship may be learned in marriage, where self-sacrifice is always called for and one learns to understand the rights of others and to balance them with one's own needs.

Stealing, in the Buddhist code, is expressed as taking that which is not freely given, implying that there are subtler degrees of stealing than taking material goods. We must avoid being subtle thieves of other people's time, energy, goodwill or freedom, whilst accepting gladly all help, interest, love and opportunities which are willingly and wisely given.

Lying, likewise, has its subtler overtones. Shades of personal bias creep in. Indeed, we are never free from them. The best we can do is to reduce our falsehood to a minimum. Frankness, sincerity and goodwill are the qualities to esteem, and these make for right growth. No sudden perfection is possible, and yet it is well to remember that all thoughts passing through our minds modify that mind, and "drop by drop is the pitcher filled."

Thus we might sum up this aspect of the Path as

moving through self-discipline to self-mastery, and so to the freedom of willing service. At an early level life is realised as a conflict with other beings who are inimical to our own life. Later, with more intelligence, it is seen as a business proposition, a matter of getting as much as we can out of life, a profit-and-loss account. Even this is not an inspiring outlook, and breeds continual worry and vexation, as we feel that we are not getting as much as we should like, or as much as other people. By the very nature of our being we are never satisfied at this level of life. As at first we know no other, we can but go on seeking, driven by our desires in a round of continual frustration. Finally, after long-endured suffering, we reach out to the seemingly intangible truths as taught by the great Teachers of the race, and to our dawning astonishment they prove realities far stronger than material facts.

In due course a new quality of life emerges. The aspirant, now, can no longer consciously break the law of love, for he senses the spiritual darkness that is in such actions, or rather in the mental tendencies they inculcate. He finds instead that a greater harmony and beauty begin to manifest in all his circumstances. Not only has he reduced the pain and evil-causing tendencies to a minimum, but his regenerated mind has gained a spiritual quality of creation. Like the Artist, he can see Truth in new ways and express it in new forms. So far he has been toiling to learn the technique of his art; now he is master of it. But in this case his medium is not painting or music; it is life itself. Again, just as the musician has to train himself to hear the inner message and then to express it, so the spiritual aspirant has to seek the guidance of the inner life and follow it. Gradually the artist achieves his essential message,

perhaps creating new forms in so doing. Gradually the spiritual man finds the essential purpose of his life and ceases to imitate others, relying on the integrity of his own vision. The infinite pains the artist takes are not pains to him; absorbed in the task of portraying his vision perfectly, the details are not irksome, for he sees through them his vision emerging into expression. So the beauty and reality of the Path "take over," as it were, from the misery and failure of self-centred existence.

When in due course this attitude begins to be achieved, it brings with it the first glimpse of the way of Liberation. Every moment becomes significant; even failure becomes as interesting as a problem of orchestration or harmony to a composer, of design to a painter. It is almost a truism in art that the very limitations of the form become creative opportunities for the artist. Every problem of life can become such a symbol of opportunity to the aspirant, and failure only incidental to greater experience.

The artist, however, is rarely completely unselfish except in his devotion to his work. The selfless life which becomes creative and life-giving has been expressed by Lao Tzu under the symbols of "water" or "the valley spirit." Water seeks its own level; it is the symbol of acceptance, of "not avoiding the laws of cause and effect." By its nature it can rise through the help of the sun's warmth into the upper air where it moves with the winds. Later it falls to the earth, to permeate hard rock, feed the rivers, nourish plants, and so mankind. If there is an obstacle, it waits patiently till it has sufficient depth to flow over the obstacle, and then with gentle persistence in the course of thousands of years it wears it away. Always seeking the lowest place, it always returns to its source, and so uniting into streams and rivers it replen-

ishes the great oceans. Yet water cannot be compressed ; it is as hard as diamond to a blow and has been known to deflect a heavy shell fired from a battleship. This is a symbol of the humility and yet the endurance of the spirit.

In life as in art, the finest school is the workshop. As the French say, "En forgeant on devient forgeron." There is a certain quality of touch or knack which a workman acquires in the use of his tools and in no other way. He cannot explain it in words, but he knows what to do and how to do it. The artist can very rarely tell you how he does it, but his touch is sure. By taking part in life, by testing experience, and by willingness to learn, we too may acquire the spontaneous sureness of touch that appears effortless because it arises from perfect control. When, instead of touch, we speak of tact, we mean the same spirit of Right Action expressed in the relationship of daily life.

It is necessary to remind ourselves continually that the goal is still beyond us and perfection in any one stage is not to be expected until all the others are equally perfect. When that is achieved, the goal will be reached and the path trodden. The Buddha expressed what our attitude to the Path should be in comparing it to a raft which might be used to cross a stream. He pointed out the great value of the raft for the actual crossing, but said that no sane person would carry the raft on his back after reaching the farther shore. So, no part of the Path, not even the last step itself, is our goal. Even Right Action is not an end in itself but mainly valuable in assisting Right Understanding. As a deepening insight into the real nature of the world of *samsara* grows within him, a man will be in corresponding measure liberated from his clinging to the Wheel, and thus perpetuating

its endless round of suffering. "One thing alone I teach," said the Buddha. "Suffering and the ending of suffering."

5. RIGHT OCCUPATION

"Regard the constantly changing, moving life which surrounds you, for it is formed by the hearts of men."
(Light on the Path.)

It was pointed out some years ago by Aldous Huxley in *Ends and Means* that there is no such thing as having no philosophy of life at all. Ultimately action depends on belief, and the only choice which exists is that between a good or a bad philosophy. The mind of man ever seeks some explanation of life and ever seeks to justify his own outlook. The most hardened self-seeker will sooner or later tell you that he *believes* the only sensible thing to do is to get the most out of life, and that it is on this belief that he bases his conduct. Other people, he will tell you, are only fools or hypocrites. It follows that what we really believe is most important, and the best criterion of our real convictions is the way we live. So when we have satisfied ourselves of the claims of Buddhist teaching to truth, let us look at ourselves and see where we fall short in practice.

For instance, we unceasingly relate the good and evil of our lives to the "I" concept, which, though it may be but a concept or even a theory, is most persistent. It is no use trying to throw it out forcibly. Modern psychology has familiarised us with the working of the subconscious and the reaction that is likely to follow such violence done to oneself. A new criterion and a new focus must be built slowly and gently but with

determination. We are working with a delicately balanced, complex instrument and damage to that instrument means delay. Time must be allowed for continual inner readjustment to take place as new ways of life are attempted ; and rest, peace, periods of withdrawal and great patience are necessary. Given these, and testing each step carefully and relating it to the experience of oneself and others, the force of the subconscious will be with and not against us.

The precepts of morality in Buddhism, as in other great religions, are not arbitrary rules based on expediency. They are based on the nature of Reality itself and are shaped by a philosophy drawn from that Reality. Before we gain the necessary insight ourselves, we will, if we are wise, accept the guidance of One who has, by his character and Teaching, proved his claim to that insight. So we make a beginning by bringing our daily lives into conformity with the Precepts. To believe in a universal Law and to see the suffering of men's lives is to know that laws have been broken. Therefore our heartfelt gratitude should go out to Those who have devoted their lives to showing us which way happiness lies and how to avoid the misery of ignorant wrongdoing. Yet Buddhism seeks no earthly paradise as a goal. A community which observes the precepts will obviously be one in which peaceful living, courtesy in daily life, security of person and goods, sincerity and self-control will obtain in large measure. The peace of mind which will result is the nearest we come to happiness in this world, and is an inestimable advantage, yet it is to be considered more as a valuable aid to the spiritual life than as an end in itself. For we must ever remember the fact of impermanence, and look on life as pilgrims look on the country through which they pass ; the more beautiful

the better, but the pilgrim never forsakes his quest to turn aside and live in it.

The broad outlines of right occupation for the householder or man living in the world will be fairly clear already, following as they do the five precepts of moral training. It is, in any case, for each man to work out his own code, and satisfy himself that his occupation is right. If his will is behind the matter, he is certain to achieve it in time. But if his will is not set in that direction, he will never achieve it in spite of all the teachers the world has ever had. We see to-day a world in which the teaching certainly exists but the will is lacking to give it effect.

What is there missing to prevent knowledge being turned to good account? Why do so many men realise there *is* the good life, respect those who have lived it, and yet make so slight a beginning themselves? The answer is, first, that our highest knowledge is but a slight lessening of the darkness of our ignorance, which is universal and profound. Those who doubt the Buddha's estimate of this ignorance may study for corroboration the analogy used by Plato in the *Symposium*. Men are there described as slaves chained in a cave so that they can only see the interior walls. A light from behind them casts shadows thereon, and from time to time people pass the entrance bearing vases or other objects so that the slaves can see their shadows. Arguing amongst themselves they decide that this is all of reality, and they make up systems of thought about these "realities." This was Plato's picture of the abysm of human ignorance. He goes on to say that occasionally one of the slaves broke free and found the sources of the light and the objects that caused the shadows. But when he told the others about it, they mocked him and drove him away.

So we take our shadows for realities, and when we hear of a life beyond them we do not understand how to reach it ourselves or what its living implies. This lack of a clearly defined way to freedom is our second barrier, and this the Path to Self-Enlightenment is designed to surmount. A change in the practical details of our lives with this purpose in mind can, by changing us as knowers, help to enlarge the scope of what we know. Motive is most important and is an underlying influence in the working of Karma. Thus general rules can be laid down for right occupation but we learn to apply them more intelligently as we understand that we are using them for a still higher purpose.

As Francis Thompson said :

“All man’s Babylons strive but to impart
The grandeur of his Babylonian heart.”

Just as all levels exist within a man potentially, so the societies he creates express those levels of existence outwardly. According to his inner life, he will gravitate to the place that is natural for him. The rules of Right Occupation are for those who would live the spiritual life. These rules in practice will lead to the expression of that compassion which is the essence of “heart-wisdom.” They are but signposts for the Way, and are to be accepted or rejected after full consideration. They are not imposed in any sense, but a man may not call himself a Buddhist unless he does accept them, nor can he expect the fruits of the Path unless he follows it.

The ideal society would be based on the fundamental spiritual purpose of man’s life and seek to foster it. Our modern western societies express the aggressive separateness of the logical mind. The aspirant seeks to withdraw himself from this level as far as possible and rise about it to the level of a unifying outlook. So he

would not choose such an occupation as a butcher or trader in alcohol. He would not take part in business which consists in unfair trading, and as most forms of competition involve this to some degree his path would not be easy. He would avoid influencing others by advertising in any of its forms for his object is to help all men to think for themselves. No book, nor play, nor picture which exploits sex would have his support. Hence he would be to some extent in conflict with society. Society as we know it is a crystallisation of the average, so it is inevitable that the man who is striving beyond the average will experience this conflict. But since he is attempting to pass from aggressive exploitation of other beings to a more unselfish way of life, the conflict is not of his making, and will be overcome in due course when he finds his right place. Our society is not all of Reality. In Reality the spiritual man has his place, and an important one, and as long as he is one-pointed and does not waver from his purpose, sooner or later this fact must influence his environment. His work is valuable even if success is not obvious, but success lies in maintaining the inner attitude of equanimity and goodwill. As his scale of values alters, he will be less tied to ordinary standards and will be able to judge success differently. He will come to see people differently too, and may find among the humble and unnoticed far more reliable friends than those who make a great stir in the world.

The culmination of Right Occupation is in the life of the monk, whose place in the society of men is a matter for urgent consideration in the West to-day. The monk stands first as a symbol of that life beyond to which all worldly life should tend. Secondly, he should be possessed of certain qualities of mind which alone entitle him to this position. Detachment, tranquillity and

compassion should be his, so that he pours out into the mind-world a stream of purifying thought, helping others to pierce through their illusions to see the truth. He is thus a teacher of the Way, whether he uses words, and whether he is known as a teacher, or not. He is the link between the seeker and Nirvana, representing the one who has pledged himself finally and irrevocably to the quest.

Recognising the value of the monk's life, many societies in all ages have given him a recognised place together with the special protection that he needs. They were, it is almost needless to say, ages in which life was based on a fundamentally spiritual philosophy. When the members of such a brotherhood are living the spiritual life they are bound to receive recognition and respect. When they taught truth and visited the sick and lived simple lives, the value of their inner life was known by its fruits. Only when such an order seeks worldly power or possessions, and thus the inner life degenerates, do its members bring about their own downfall.

In Burma, even now, the man who enters the homeless life is known as "the great glory," and it is considered an honour for a member of an Indian family to give up the world for the life of the spirit. Our Western civilisation is perhaps unique in the world's history in providing no place for such men, and yet the need is there. Men are still aspiring to a spiritual life, and to a "beyond" that shall lead them out of the life of the world. The lack of a place for the follower of the Path is as detrimental to a society as it is an increase of hardship for the aspirant himself.

There may, however, be some advantage in the clearing away of old forms that has taken place. The life of the spirit has to prove its value by creating anew,

and in so doing is tested and purified until the clear essence alone remains. To have been through such a struggle in such an age means to have found an added inner strength and poise.

Yet it is to be hoped that a place will be found for the homeless ones who are seeking a higher level of truth, not first and only a physical habitation but a place of respect and recognition in men's minds. This task is for those who follow the Path to-day ; it is their privilege and opportunity to prove, by the teaching and by their lives, the truth which they serve, so that spiritual meaning may return to life. Then the place of the homeless one will be understood and accorded to him.

The most widespread criticism that has been levelled against the monk or mystic is that he is an escapist, fleeing from the hard realities or the ugliness of life and seeking shelter in seclusion to cultivate the delights of meditative ecstasy. There is truth in this. In the *Lankavatara Sutra* a warning is given against "succumbing to the bliss of the *Samadhis*," and attachment at this high level is a great, perhaps even greater, mistake than at any other. All things have their place ; all experiences can be used. But to seek any, even the loftiest experience as an end in itself, is failure, even though temporary. Some natural contemplatives have justified the charge of escapism. As with so many other mistakes, the remedy is balance. The contemplative life should inspire and guide the active life, whilst the active life should be the testing-ground and corrective of the dangers of indulgence in the bliss of contemplation. When this balance is sought, the resulting life of action will be an expression of the inner life, and so will be of great value to others. Such a man is entering into a deeper relationship with reality, and since "ordinary life is very Tao" (that is, is

an expression of Reality itself) he is entering more deeply into the life of his fellow men, into the life of the community. The greater the consciousness, the greater, not the less, will be its response. Though he may withdraw from petty and superficial activities, at higher levels he gives far more than other men can do. It is at times of great suffering, when crises come or problems seem insuperable, that we turn to such men, and contrasted with their guidance, their inner peace, their conviction of realities, all other men we know are but the blind leading the blind.

The spiritual seekers of the West must work out their own salvation. The problem will not be satisfactorily solved by going to an eastern country to find sanctuary. If the inner life be strong enough it will in time produce its effect, and crystallise out in the formation of groups living together for the sake of practising the homeless life and following the Path more intently. We stand where we do by the working of Kamma and must build on what foundation we have. It is fully in accord with the spirit of all Buddhist teaching "to work out our own salvation with diligence."

6. RIGHT ENDEAVOUR

"Within yourself deliverance must be sought,
Each man his prison makes."

(The Light of Asia.)

This stage is the beginning of the mind-control section of the Path. Attention to the details of outer life must in due course give way to realisation that mind is pre-eminent, for the mind which knows and the things it perceives cannot in practice be separated. In fact, we

must come to understand that our very world is mind-created. At the beginning of the *Dhammapada* we read: "All we are is the result of what we have thought, it is founded on our thoughts and made up of our thoughts."

Even an elementary knowledge of psychology will acquaint us with the fact that all we know of any "external" object is a bundle of impressions in our own mind from which we proceed to construct and then objectify an image. The table we see before us is, when analysed, a construction which we make up out of the various components of shape, size, colour, and texture, to which may be added the sense impressions of touch. Thought is the only thing which the mind can perceive. In Buddhist teaching the one Reality is also known as Universal Mind. Our human mind is but a partial, feeble reflection of its nature, but even so, that reflection is strong enough to create a world of its own which it takes to be real—for a time. But when it tries to grasp the things of this self-created world, they prove to be illusions. The apparent reality in them is not inherent, but is conferred by the mind itself. It is as though the directed attention of our minds brings to life those ideas on which it is focussed, just as the beam of light in the projector brings to life the figures in the film strip.

Immersed in such an illusory world, men are rarely conscious even of their own ignorance. But when they begin to study these questions deeply, they realise that the discriminating mind is inadequate. Another faculty must be called into service, for how can a discriminating mind stand back to consider itself? The following quotation is from *Self Realisation of Noble Wisdom* by Dwight Goddard, based on, and in large part a translation of, the Lankavatara Sutra.

"Transcendental Intelligence rises when the intel-

lectual mind reaches its limit and, if things are to be realised in their true and essence nature, its processes of mentation, which are based on particularised ideas and discriminations of judgment, must be transcended by an appeal to some higher faculty of cognition, if there be such a higher faculty. There is such a faculty in the intuitive-mind, which, as we have seen, is the link between the intellectual mind and Universal Mind. While it is not an individualised organ like the intellectual mind, it has that which is much better, direct dependence on Universal Mind. While intuition does not give information that can be analysed and discriminated, it gives that which is far superior—self realisation through identification.”

As this Path is trodden, inner changes of attitude and understanding will take place, and instead of seeing oneself moving as a separated entity through a space filled with a collection of other objects, animate and inanimate, the world will be realised, as Sir James Jeans has expressed it, “much more like a great thought than a great machine.”

It is possible to train the mind in any direction whatsoever. This is the great fact in which lies the promise of our salvation. When, as the Buddha said, we have learned how the knots of our bondage have been tied, we may, by reversing the process, untie them and step free. To return to our mind-world, a change in the nature of the knower will obviously mean a change in the nature of the world which he perceives. As Blake said: “A fool sees not the same tree which the wise man sees.”

Right Endeavour, then, is the endeavour to seek freedom from an illusory world-process by rightly directed mind-control, having first realised the extent to which this is self-created. In the Buddhist system of

mind training all mental states may be classified in two groups ; freedom or bondage-tending respectively, and all practice is aimed at four objectives ; one, to remove bondage-tending states of mind which already exist ; two, to prevent the arising of further bondage-tending states of mind ; three, to strengthen the freedom-tending states of mind which already exist ; and four, to encourage the growth of freedom-tending states of mind. Thus, every action, thought or word during the day may add its quota to the achievement of our liberation. As has been stressed already, bondage means the creating or strengthening of the illusion of a separated self, and freedom is freedom from this self and all its tendencies.

When dealing with specific thoughts, we shall find that opposition and attention only tend to make them grow stronger. The atmosphere in which they wither away is one of simple neglect. Success is far more likely to be achieved by turning away to something else than by angrily struggling with the undesired thought. For, as has already been pointed out, the mind's attention itself confers a new lease of life on the thought to which it turns.

The mind is powerful and has the force of desire behind it. Careful self-discipline is necessary to acquire control, but obviously as long as our minds are not under control we are at the mercy of the endless forces of thought and desire which surround us. Perfect self-control at every moment of the day is not to be expected at once, but a daily period of quiet thought is possible to everybody when the mind can be calmed and events looked at in this mood of equanimity. At such times, the happenings of the day are seen in proper perspective and can be judged accordingly.

Since we live lives of action, this is our main field of

endeavour, and a very valuable one it is. "No man is free at the moment of action." At such moments we find it is our past thoughts which matter. They seem to take control and action follows spontaneously. Therefore, reflection on the causes of action and mistakes can first of all reveal the sequence of wrong thought which led to them, and can provide an opportunity to initiate new thought-trends for modifying our actions in the future. As we learn our own tendencies and discover their roots, we realise that thought and action are but two sides of the coin, and since thought is at the causative level, it is there that any change of permanent value must be made.

To give a practical example, supposing we have acted through jealousy of some other person's position, motivated by a feeling that we have had a much worse deal than he. Such a thought should be calmly scrutinised when it arises and then reviewed in the light of, one, our belief in a law-governed universe, in which each man is the dispenser of his own destiny; two, our dawning realisation that outer circumstances matter far less than the inner world of mind; and three, the freedom and bondage-tending classification aforesaid. Such a wrong thought-tendency will never be changed by *outer* circumstances. The wealthiest despots have often been the most jealous and suspicious of men. Nor does lack of possessions guarantee against possessiveness. As Milton said, "Though we take from a miser all that he hath, he hath yet one jewel left, his miserliness." The fault is in the mind, and the mind is ours to control. By such control we may gain freedom which is so much more than any possession, even the whole world. If we can so change our attitude and realise that no man may be counted rich except by what he *is*, and that jealousy and

like emotions but cramp the mind's growth, we shall long to be free from such evils at all costs. Jealousy will not only not bring us what we desire, but it will injure us into the bargain, and in a wise view it is seen as utterly worthless. It is such a careful evaluation of thought tendencies that can gradually eliminate the undesirable in the most effective way.

To strengthen and help our mind's progress it is a good plan to act as if the undesirable thought were no longer present. This seems in theory to divide the mind, but it introduces the use of will and can be proved to be a workable method. Probably the hardest thing to do is to react peaceably to a man who attacks you in word or deed. It is not so much the physical danger as the inherent egotism that feels utterly humiliated if it gives way in such circumstances. But *anyone* can give way when he is treated with courtesy and respect. Difficult circumstances are the really valuable ones. Moreover, to go through them is to realise how strong is the "I" and to value them as opportunities for coming to grips with this, our real foe. Anger grows tenfold if met with anger, but if met calmly it often ends quickly in a sense of shame which is stronger by contrast. It is the most illogical of all passions. At the moment of intense anger a man is no longer really human; he has become a destructive animal. (Even anger at the injustice done to others is not a state of mind which conduces to a right solution.) But in dealing with oneself, this mood of anger cannot outlast a calm analysis. Obviously, the two attitudes are antithetical, and at first the anger, if already a habit, is likely to brush all else aside. But with practice, all things can be achieved, and we can look at ourselves and say, "Who is it that is annoyed? What is the cause of this anger?" and so

on. Anger soon subsides and often is forgotten in the interest of discovering the cause. Afterwards, conscious of having avoided the probably foolish action that would have followed if anger had taken its course, we are glad that we observed such self-control. In addition, there nearly always appear other factors which we had ignored at the time.

All such difficult circumstances reveal more to us of ourselves than anything else can do. Moreover, to act towards other troublesome, suspicious, antagonistic people with goodwill is perhaps to help them to heal themselves of the mental ill-health of which these attitudes are the symptoms. All men have suffered wrong treatment themselves, and all bear the scars. Many people have had their childhood marred and their characters warped. We are striving for health of mind ourselves from a similarly imperfect past. Health of mind will spread to others as readily as wrong thought. In the degree to which we achieve it we may pass it on. In any case, the Path can never be trodden to the goal until all such wrong attitudes of mind have been superseded; therefore, however often we fail, let us freely admit the failure and go on striving.

Another method is to follow up the train of cause and effect which is likely to follow action or speech, remembering also the more enduring effects on character. Thackeray once summed up the creative effect of thought in the following words: "Sow a thought and reap an action; sow an action and reap a habit; sow a habit and reap character; sow character and reap destiny." When the action or thought has been reduced to its elements in the crucible of reasoning, there should be apparent the motive that is its essence, and by that we can judge its relative good or evil. When we know that in certain thoughts

or actions lies the seed of future pain and error, they will be hastily dropped, as we should reject food which we knew to be poisoned.

As was stressed at the beginning of the chapter, the discriminating mind itself will ultimately be superseded by a higher faculty of cognition, and all these practices are preliminary steps to remove those activities which keep undesired thought processes in being. It has been summed up with delightful symbolism in the following paragraph from the Lankavatara Sutra. "The discriminating-mind is a dancer and a magician with the objective world as his stage. Intuitive-mind is the wise jester who travels with the magician and reflects upon his emptiness and transiency. Universal Mind keeps the record and knows what must be, and what may be. It is because of the activities of the discriminating-mind that error rises, and an objective world evolves and the notion of an ego-soul becomes established. If, and when, the discriminating-mind can be got rid of, the whole mind-system will cease to function and Universal Mind will alone remain. Getting rid of the discriminating-mind removes the cause of all error."

7. RIGHT MINDFULNESS

"Though a man conquer in battle a thousand warriors ;
he who conquers himself is the greatest warrior."

(Dhammapada.)

"There is but one way, Almsmen, to purify creatures,
to pass beyond sorrow and lamentation, to shed ills of
body and mind, to find the right way, and to realise
Nirvana : it is by the fourfold setting-up of mindfulness."

(The Sermon on Mindfulness or Sati-Patthana-Sutta.)

In Mahayana Buddhist philosophy, one of the names

of the One Reality is Universal Mind. It has previously been explained that every being is in relationship with Reality and his consciousness is but Its reflection. To use an analogy, let us imagine the white radiance of Universal Mind as the centre of our being. At some distance from the centre and with a diminished radiance is our mortal-mind, as though this were the luminous surface of a lamp. It has five facets corresponding with the five channels of sense-impressions, and the activities of the personality are entirely bound up with the activities of these sense-minds, as they are called. As it has been expressed, the personality is nothing but the accumulated Kammic defilements on the face of Universal Mind.

Right Mindfulness embodies the methods for becoming aware of this state of things and thereby transferring our attention, and so our consciousness, from the surface, which is the personality as we know it, to the centre which is Universal Mind itself. This involves the cessation of discrimination but not the cessation of the perceiving faculties of the mortal-mind. This confers the ability to see things as they are, under the aspect of Eternity, without the distorting bias usually added by self-interest. It is not events in themselves which enslave us, but thoughts of good and bad, of gain and loss, of something added to or taken away from a personal debit and credit account. We come to see the emptiness of all Dharmas (phenomena) and so no longer cling to people or things.

The practice of Right Mindfulness, sometimes referred to as Right Recollectedness, is one of the most important sections of the Buddhist formulation of the Path. It was stated by the Buddha that if a man could practise this attitude consistently for seven days, he would by that alone attain Enlightenment. It commences with a careful scrutiny of the physical body, in an attempt to

achieve a pure objective contemplation of it without any interference by the memories, inferences, deductions or habits which normally stand in the way, and to hold the picture so attained as steadily as possible in the mind's eye whenever the fact of body is under consideration. When so considered, we see a form composed of solid and liquid matter in which air and other gases are mingled and heat is liberated to do work and protect. In other words, here is a form composed of the four elements. There is no more and no less justification for referring to this as "my" body than for referring to "my" garden. In both cases we may have put in a certain amount of work and consider that the results are due to our efforts. In both cases, however, we are using materials and forces that are not our own, and can only use them according to the laws which are inherent in their own nature.

We then pass on to a consideration of the more important functions of the body. Taking, for instance, the process of breathing, we observe that a certain set of muscles actuates the lungs. These are connected via throat and nose with the outside air and so air may be drawn into or expelled from the body. Behind this mechanism lies the succession of mental impulses which keeps it in operation. Two important conclusions may be drawn from looking at the body in this way. First of all, there is no more reason for saying "I go" or "I breathe" than there would be for a motor car to say "I go" when it moves as the result of its engines being set in motion by the driver. Secondly, if anything may be said to move at all, it is the mind itself.

A technique of thought has been evolved for teaching oneself this particular attitude, in which the term "I" is omitted altogether, and one forms instead the thought,

“There is movement,” or “There is breathing.” Most important of all, this can be applied to mental processes, pure and simple. Thus one can say when scrutinising the mind’s activities, “A thought of future enjoyment is arising, or is established, or is departing,” and so with all types of thought that may pass over the mind like clouds over the sky. A comparable exercise was taught in many monastic orders, in which the aspirant referred to himself in his thinking as “this person” or even “this sinner.”

All this is aimed at getting away from ego-centred thinking. It should not be assumed that success in this practice necessarily means the loss of self-identity in the sense of annihilation. To bear this out, let us consider two fairly general facts of experience. Our everyday speech is often very revealing in its relationship to inner experience. When referring to some moment of more than usual beauty or intensity, we often use such an expression as “I was lost in the wonder of the scene” or “I was lost in the beauty of the music.” If we make this statement in the form “the I was lost” we may understand it better in relation to our foregoing remarks, but no-one would suggest that at such moments there is any real loss at all. Indeed, they are often our most treasured memories. At the other end of the scale are many common forms of insanity, whose misery and delusion consist in the sufferer constantly dwelling in a narrow circle of thought centering around himself. Persecution-mania is perhaps the commonest of these wherein all other people are looked on as injuring or plotting against the subject. The cure, and the only cure, is to awaken in the sufferer’s mind some new interest which will liberate him from this agonising fixation.

It was, however, one of Freud's most shattering discoveries that the elements of insanity are in all of us, but are kept in reserve by a sense of balance and the restrictive influence of habitual modes of conduct. In those we call mad, some particular element of the mind has taken control and is dominating at the expense of the rest. As soon as there is any real spiritual growth, much greater forces begin to work through the personality, and the mind must undergo greater stresses. Growth necessitates a continual balance of forces which are as continually being thrown out of equilibrium. Even for his own sake, the spiritual aspirant would do well to concentrate on this valuable exercise of Right Mindfulness as one of the finest safeguards against many of the dangers that are likely to come his way. It has been said that the last and greatest of the fetters is pride. But pride can only grow as long as there exists a belief in a self of whom one can be proud. If a completely impersonal attitude can be achieved, or even if one can recognise the activities of the ego for what they are, dangers of unbalance may be dealt with and eradicated at their inception. When mistakes are made, as they will be, they are admitted, the results are weighed and the lesson is learned.

Right Mindfulness may be practised, and practised continuously, in respect of body, feelings, mind and mind-objects. It cannot be practised too assiduously, for it is one of the few qualities that is not spoiled by its own excess. It can be carried into every activity of daily life. Thus a man going to the station every morning may practise mindfulness on walking, following in thought the movement of muscles and limbs. A woman may practise mindfulness on her household duties. People who are subject to moods, as we all are

at times, will find the practise of mindfulness on feelings of great assistance in giving self-awareness, and thereby the detachment to deal with them and to avoid being led into uncontrolled action or speech. As concentration develops, thoughts may be observed entering the mind, growing in intensity, fading and disappearing. Mind-states may be known so that one is no longer immersed in them. This power of the detached observer is very great. After all the struggles to get rid of some wrong thought or wrong desire have proved futile, precisely because they are struggles, the technique of impartial scrutiny, like a wise and benevolent judge, without error and without blame, will often be found to give the longed-for release from the annoying fault.

Above all, the practise of mindfulness on breathing is very valuable. The Buddha himself said of it: "If cultivated and developed, mindfulness by breathing is very fruitful and profitable; it perfects the four bases of mindfulness, which, being perfected, perfect the seven factors of enlightenment, which, being perfected, perfect in turn Deliverance by comprehension." (*Anapani-Sati-Sutta. Majjhima-Nikaya. iii, 82.*)

The Seven Factors of Enlightenment, which grow one from the other as this quality of mindfulness is established and perfected, are :

- (1) Mindfulness itself.
- (2) The Power of Analysis.
- (3) Indomitable zeal for treading this path.
- (4) Satisfaction (contentment).
- (5) Tranquillity of body and heart.
- (6) Concentration of mind.
- (7) Poised equanimity.

This emphasises what we have said before about the training of the whole character which alone can awaken

the insight into things as they are. This vision is sometimes described as the “emptiness of all dharmas (phenomena)” in the sense that all things, people and events are moving processes, not static and fixed. This vision is not of a blank emptiness, although it may appear so intellectually. In the Lankavatara Sutra the state of mind of the enlightened man is described as “a love-filled imagelessness.” How this highest spiritual love may come to be allied with a vision of the non-reality of people and things is a mystery—yet a mystery to be expected. As Dr. E. Conze has well expressed it: “These doubts cannot be stilled by argument, but only experience can lay them to rest. It is foolish to expect too much advance information about spiritual states which one can perceive only from a distance, and to think too much about what is above one’s head. If, however, such advance information is given, then one must bear in mind that paradox and contradiction are inseparable from all statements that can be made about selfless behaviour and the state of self-extinction . . . These paradoxes cannot possibly be translated into the ordinary logic of common sense, because common sense is based on self-centred experiences which are here transcended. No service is done to the mysteries of the spiritual world by trying to flatten them out into the appearance of commonplace events.” (From an article “Selfless Love,” in *The Middle Way*, August, 1954.)

8. RIGHT MEDITATION

“Then, Lord, is it for the sake of realising the practice of meditation that the Brethren live the holy life under the Exalted One?”

“No, indeed, Mahali. It is not for the sake of this the

Brethren live the holy life under my guidance. There are other higher and more excellent things, Mahali, for the realisation of which the Brethren live the holy life under my guidance.” *(Digha-Nikaya.)*

Although Right Meditation is the final step of the Noble Eightfold Path, and is of inestimable value in the spiritual life, it is still wise to remember that even this stage is but part of the Path we are seeking to tread, and the goal therefore lies beyond. In the passage from the *Digha-Nikaya*, the opening of which is quoted above, the Buddha goes on to point out, as he always did, that his teaching was designed to enable man to achieve liberation from the evil of this life and for no other purpose. The *Lankavatara Sutra* likewise warns against the dangers of becoming attached to the bliss of meditation which may be but a sublime form of selfishness. However, all great spiritual men of whom we have knowledge have used some form of meditation practice, and the secret of Right Meditation must obviously lie in our attitude towards it rather than in the practice itself. Though at so lofty a level, it is a technique not for acquiring special powers, but for refreshing and deepening the source of our spiritual life, to enable us to live lives of Right Action to the full.

The experience of meditation may be compared with that of music. All the external conditions may be fulfilled but ultimately both are profound experiences taking place within the mind, and the inner co-operation and response is essential. The finest orchestra in the world may play one of the greatest symphonies, but if a man be exhausted, or greatly worried or ill it may mean nothing more to him than an irritating cacophony jarring on his overstrained nerves. Even with reasonably good

conditions, the magic will not always happen but seems to obey some unknown laws of its own. The preparations for meditation are fairly simple, but no guarantee can be given that the final result will be attainable quickly or easily. On the other hand, sometimes in the midst of troubles and great stress of mind the light may flash through to give help where it is sorely needed. Undoubtedly, regular practice will create and strengthen a channel to the "inner place" and make access easier.

Although hard and fast rules are dangerous, it is certain that health of mind and body is to a large degree essential before meditation can be practised. As regards the body, an easy, comfortable posture is advisable, and regular and gentle breathing. All conditions which tranquilise and purify the emotions are helpful, whether these be natural surroundings and beautiful scenery or devotion to some spiritual teacher or the lofty thought which accompanies great art or music. The main factors in using the mind are control and calm, and therefore a preliminary training in concentration must precede meditation proper. When practising concentration, it is a good plan to take a verse or phrase either at set times or whenever possible during the day, in order to serve as a landmark to keep the mind from wandering, and if this verse be from some scripture, the mind will be helped by its meaning. At this point concentration begins to merge into the spiritual activity of meditation. When all these conditions are fulfilled, one can but wait. A preliminary period of active effort is followed by the receptive and passive condition of meditation proper. Then will come the experience of waiting as though in the darkness, with the sure knowledge that dawn is about to break, and the light that one has awaited so long is perceived. It is well to remember at all times

that meditation is a quite natural activity, an enhancement of man's spiritual nature, indeed, but only in the direction of a quicker growth and not an abnormal one.

A room or a corner of a room should be set aside and used regularly at the same time or times each day. The early morning is a good time to seek the spiritual silence that will then remain as a background to the day's activities. With this background, and more especially when there comes the feeling of certainty in respect of one's daily return to it, the things of the day will no longer overwhelm and immerse one. In the peace of the evening the mind can be cleansed of these accumulations of worldly thought and feeling by a return to the silence.

A shrine, flowers or a picture may be kept in the chosen spot. An atmosphere of serenity and beauty is desired. This will come to be both in the mind and in the room itself, so that a return to the room will be a return to peace.

The body should be seated with spine erect and unsupported, legs crossed at the ankles, and right hand placed in left palm in the lap. The eyes may be closed or partly open, or, if an object be used, the eyes should gaze at it slightly off focus. Some people put so much effort into their concentration that they begin to concentrate physically, that is, they knot up their facial muscles. This is wrongly applied effort and must be relaxed.

When the body is erect and comfortable, steady, rhythmic breathing should be commenced. Breathe in to a count of seven, taking your time from your own pulse rate and filling the lungs. Again, no strain should be imposed and the breathing should be allowed to adjust itself gradually to a comfortable, calm rate.

While doing this, let the mind become absorbed in contemplation of the act of breathing until you are aware of nothing else. Begin, as in the practice of mindfulness, by following the process in thought, from lips to lungs. Gradually, as concentration is perfected, the mind will move with the breath and both will become steadier, gentler and calmer. The great thing is to ignore intruding thoughts until they cease to appear. These thoughts are like naughty little children who will do anything to get attention, but if you ignore them they will go away.

When this much control of body and mind has been established, the specific practice of the Four Jhanas may be begun. A Jhana is a state of meditation with its attendant effects on the mind and feelings. The First Jhana begins from concentration, and progress is due to a gradual perfection of each stage, which automatically, when it reaches a certain intensity, produces the next stage.

Here, in the Buddha's own words, is his description of his own progress in the Jhanas :

“Strenuous effort won for me perseverance that never flagged ; there arose in me mindfulness that knew no distraction, perfect tranquillity of body, steadfastness of mind that never wavered. Divested of pleasures of sense, divested of wrong states of consciousness, I entered on, and abode in, the First Jhana with all its zest and satisfaction, a state bred of inward aloofness but not divorced from observation and reflection. As I rose above reasoning and reflection, I entered on, and abode in, the Second Jhana, with all its zest and satisfaction, a state bred of rapt concentration, above all observation and reflection, a state whereby the heart is focussed and tranquillity reigns within. By shedding the emotion of

zest, I entered on and abode in, the Third Jhana, with its poised equanimity, mindful and self-possessed, feeling in my frame the satisfaction of which the Noble say that poise and mindfulness bring abiding satisfaction. By putting from me both satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and by shedding the joys and sorrows I used to feel, I entered on and abode in, the Fourth Jhana, the state that, knowing neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction, is the consummate purity of poised equanimity and mindfulness." (*Majjhima Nikaya. i. 21/22.*)

The qualities of the four stages may, from this, be analysed as follows :

1ST JHANA.

The body is tranquil, the mind is concentrated.

Reasoning (discursive thought) about some subject may still go on.

There is a sense of freedom from desires, from mental worries and agitation. This comes with a sense of relief. The ego-nature is temporarily transcended and one feels as when an aching tooth stops or a splitting headache is cured. It is, too, proof of the nature of the final freedom.

2ND JHANA.

Concentration becomes intense, without strain or effort, but, on the contrary, with a sense of lightness. Great joy and peace are experienced. Discursive thought ceases.

3RD JHANA.

The joy becomes tranquil. No longer is any emotion felt, but great tranquillity. This experience *is* and there is left but little sense of a personal self who is experiencing it. The duality of knower and known—the great problem of the dividing intellect—is almost superseded.

4TH JHANA.

This is the unitive experience, when there is neither knower nor known but, as it beautifully says above, "the consummate purity of poised equanimity and mindfulness."

In all our studies so far we have discovered certain critical and valuable aspects of life in what we have called relationship. Here we have the question of the relationship between this daily meditation of ten or fifteen minutes and the framework of our daily lives. Gerald Heard has pointed out that one may assess the level of a man's life by the criterion of the purpose for which it is really organised. It should never be forgotten that the mind we bring to the practice of meditation is the same mind that has been taking part in all the other activities of our day. Indeed, we may be ruefully conscious of it at the time, for as soon as we try to calm our minds, all kinds of interests and impulses which were temporarily in the background come to the surface. During the day, a succession of interests dominate the scene one by one, and we are so used to this outward-looking tendency that at first we find a change-over to a state of inner attention extremely difficult. There is, however, in each of us an inner life always in being, and it is quite possible that some people, indeed many, suffer nowadays from an over-accentuation of the outer life and the unbalance which results.

The lives of all great spiritual men have been lived in terms of great simplicity, this being at once the expression of their inner nature and the greatest pre-requisite for mental balance. So daily life may be organised to help greatly our meditation practice. A film or play may be comparatively innocuous in itself, but if too disturbing to the mind or emotions, it may be necessary to give up

this form of entertainment in the interests of the higher purpose. As the mind gathers strength and momentum it is less likely to require these temporary stimulants, for it becomes something like the gyroscope and resists any force which tries to shift the plane of its orbit. So mind-training will of itself bring about a re-ordering of life, and many disturbing factors will be automatically rejected. The greatest happiness we can know in this life comes from a calm and peaceful mind, and the achievements of this state will well repay the sacrifice of pleasures which are but distractions.

An attitude towards life which has been mentioned many times is found here to be of sovereign value. Both modern psychologists and ancient writers tell us that one great cause of mental ills is the inability or refusal to accept life as it is. Rejection of undesired experience means mental strain, worry and probable ill-health. Acceptance on the other hand will bring a condition of relaxation and peace. We reject because we want to cut reality down to the measure that suits us. The "I" wants to dominate the situation, a level of mind reflected in children's comic papers and most Hollywood dramas. Even in a film Hollywood philosophy cannot face an unhappy ending. In ancient Greek drama, on the other hand, the hero was often faced with some inescapable and bitter fate and could only triumph over it by the nobility of soul he showed in accepting it. This is much nearer to the real experience of life. By acceptance we acknowledge that Reality is greater than we can know, which is the way of humility, health and a sane practicality.

Within the framework of our circumstances we can introduce this valuable meditation practice. It does not stand alone. Action will be illumined by it. Misfortune

will be met with a true philosophy. There will be a happiness in life which is not the slave to circumstance. In joy of heart we shall be led to teach others. The years, that take so much away from us, will but prove the reality of this inner way that thousands of men have come to at last as the final end of suffering.

EPILOGUE

THE popular slogan, "Life begins at forty" is in fact an attempt to cover up the uncomfortable feeling which most people have when they reach middle age that the reverse is true. We have reached the crest of the hill and see before us no prospect but the descent into the immeasurable sea of oblivion—a descent that seems to be at a quicker rate than when we were growing up.

Not only ordinary people, but many thinkers and writers have deplored middle-age and old age with its approaching death. Few are the men who have found the spiritual path. But the fact that some have found it proves that all can find it. When we do we are no longer bound by the term of the body. What time takes away makes us but the richer spiritually, for it makes our vision of Reality clearer. We are progressing, not towards a deepening twilight of physical energies and mental faculties, but towards a "clearing insight" into an unchanging Truth.

Our later life is ideally suited to this. We tend naturally to be less active physically, to esteem quiet and reflection, to be more thoughtful. It is the way of happiness to work with our nature and not against it, and it can be a time of great opportunity—a re-dedication, not a mere postscript to a life. Sooner or later all other things will prove unsatisfactory. The earlier we enter the Path the wiser and happier we shall be.

THE GREATEST BLESSINGS AND THE DISCOURSE ON FRIENDSHIP (*Metta Sutta*)

The following short discourses might be learnt by heart or recited at suitable times.

THE GREATEST BLESSINGS.

Thus have I heard : On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at the monastery of Anathapindika, in Jeta's grove, near Savatthi. Now when the night was far spent, a Deva (angel), whose surpassing splendour lit up the whole of Jeta grove, came to the presence of the Blessed One, and, drawing near, respectfully saluted him and stood at one side. Standing thus, he addressed the Blessed One in verse :

“Many gods and men, longing for goodness, have wondered as to what are the greatest Blessings. Pray tell me what they are.”

And the Blessed Lord made reply :

1. Not to serve the foolish but to serve the wise, to give honour to those worthy of honour—this is the greatest blessing.

2. To dwell in a pleasant land, to have done good deeds in a former birth, to have right desires—this is the greatest blessing.

3. Much insight and deep learning, a complete training and pleasant speech,—this is the greatest blessing.

4. To care for father and mother, to cherish wife and child, to follow a peaceful calling—this is the greatest blessing.

5. To give alms and live righteously, to help one's relatives and do blameless deeds—this is the greatest blessing.

6. To cease and abstain from sin, to avoid strong drink, not to be weary in well-doing—this is the greatest blessing.

7. Reverence and lowliness, contentment and gratitude, the regular hearing of the teaching—this is the greatest blessing.

8. To be long-suffering and meek, to associate with members of the Brotherhood; religious talk at due season—this is the greatest blessing.

9. Temperance and chastity, a conviction of the Four Noble Truths, the hope of Nibbana—this is the greatest blessing.

10. A mind unshaken by the things of the world, without anguish or passion and secure—this is the greatest blessing.

11. They that act like this are invincible on every side; on every side they walk in safety and theirs is the greatest blessing.

THE METTA SUTTA, OR THE VERSES ON FRIENDSHIP.

Once some monks went up into the hills, intending to live in the caves and practise meditation in solitude. But there were tree-spirits there who did not wish to have men living near them, and who tried to drive the monks away by rolling heavy stones on them from above. The monks took the problem to the Buddha, who himself travelled to the spot and there made peace between them by preaching in the following words. This is a very famous chapter and is often recited at Buddhist meetings.

METTA SUTTA (From *Sutta Nipata* No. 8)

This is what should be accomplished by the man who is

wise, who seeks the good and has attained peace :
Let him be strenuous, upright and sincere, without pride,
(easily) contented and joyous ; let him not be submerged
by the things of the world ; let him not take upon himself
the burden of riches ; let his senses be controlled ; let
him be wise but not puffed up ; let him not desire great
possessions (even) for his family.

Let him do nothing that is mean or that the wise would
reprove.

May all beings be happy.

May they be joyous and live in safety.

All living beings, whether weak or strong,
in high or middle, or low realms of existence,
small or great, visible or invisible, near or far,
born or to be born,

May all beings be happy.

Let none deceive another nor despise any being in any
state ;

let none by anger or hatred wish harm to another.

Even as a mother at the risk of her life watches over and
protects her only child, so with a boundless mind should
one cherish all living things, suffusing love over the
entire world, above, below, and all around without
limit ; so let him cultivate an infinite goodwill toward
the whole world.

Standing or walking, sitting or lying down, during all
his waking hours let him cherish the thought that this
way of living is the best in the world.

Abandoning vain discussion, having a clear vision, freed
from sense appetites, he who is made perfect will never
again know rebirth.

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