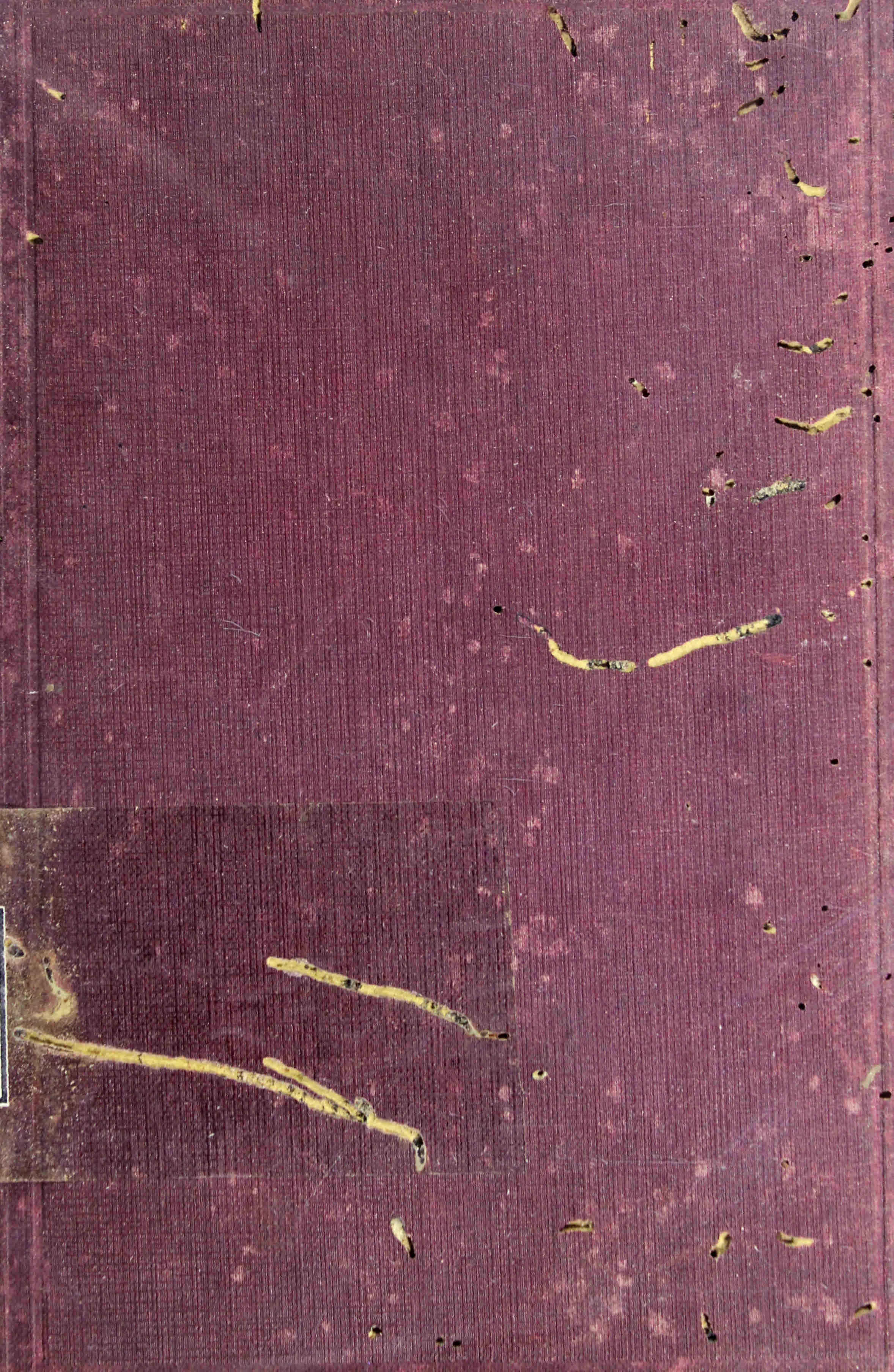






# THE BUDDHA'S GOLDEN PATH

A MANUAL OF PRACTICAL BUDDHISM  
BASED ON THE TEACHINGS AND PRACTISES OF THE  
ZEN SECT, BUT INTERPRETED AND ADAPTED TO  
MEET MODERN CONDITIONS

BY

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## PREFACE

THE writer first came in contact with Buddhism some thirty years ago. As a missionary of the American Board stationed at Foochow, China, he naturally took early opportunity to visit the great Kushan Monastery which was located in the mountains near by. Many times afterward he visited Buddhist temples, but had no particular interest in them until five or six years ago. At that time he was deeply interested in Christian mysticism and by his readings came to have some acquaintance with Buddhist mysticism. Having opportunity at just that time to make a trip to China and Japan he took advantage of it to become better acquainted with institutional Buddhism. From that time on his interest has deepened, and he has devoted much time to its study, both historically and philosophically. In 1923, and again in 1925, he visited China, having in mind especially the very interesting work of Dr. Karl Ludvig Riechelt at his Christian-Buddhist monastery near Nanking.

In 1928, upon reviewing his knowledge of Buddhism, he felt that he had a fairly comprehensive knowledge about Buddhism, but was deficient in acquaintance with its experiential side. With this deficiency in mind he made yet another trip, to Japan, and during the eight months that followed, mostly spent in Kyoto,



he had daily opportunity to become intimately acquainted with the inner life of Buddhism as revealed in its monasteries and temples.

I am glad of this opportunity for acknowledging with gratitude the generous kindness of many Japanese friends and instructors. To Professor Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, the eminent Buddhist authority and Sanskrit scholar, whose early work, "Outline of Mahayana Buddhism," and latest work, "Essays in Zen Buddhism," have been my constant companions; and for his personal friendship and instruction. To Rev. Taiko Yamazaki, Dean (*Roshi*) of Sho-ko-ku Temple, who generously permitted me to join his monks for the regular evening meditations, who guided my practice of "za-zen," and who bestowed upon me, although somewhat out of the regular order, the insignia of a monk-novice.

To Rt. Rev. Daiki Katsuhira, Abbot of Monju Temple in Matsui, for instruction and encouragement. To Rev. Ekai Kawaguchi, of Tokio, the accomplished Tibetan monk and scholar, who first influenced me to become a Buddhist myself. To Rt. Rev. Sokatsu Shaku, President of the Ryomo Association of Zen Temples, for wise advice and generous encouragement. To Rt. Rev. Ryn-jo Fukuhara, Acting Head of the Jodo Sect, of Choin-in Temple, Kyoto, for instruction as to the deeper significance of the Armitabha doctrine. To Rev. M. Hino, of Kyoto, sometime Dean of the Theological School of Doshisha University and lecturer at the Imperial University and Otani Buddhist University, for introductions, translations and many kindnesses.



There are many things in the following pages that these eminent men will doubtless disapprove, and it may seem presumptuous for me to mention their names in this connection, but I am sincerely grateful to them for their kindness, and beg of them to bear in mind the object of writing this book—namely, to offer a manual of practical Buddhism that would be useful to modern English-speaking people.

One of the outstanding facts of the day is the surprising interest in Buddhism on the part of scholars and thinkers in Christian lands, which is yearly becoming more and more apparent. To thinking people Buddhism appeals as being eminently rational, practical and full of promise. They turn to it with expectancy, but are often discouraged and lose their interest as they see it illustrated by the lazy monks and dirty temples of Oriental lands; or they become baffled by its voluminous literature and its many sects with their widely divergent practices and teachings. They do not appreciate that Buddhism is not primarily a religion or a philosophy, but is simply a rational and practical way of life.

To what or to whom shall these sincere inquirers as to the essentials of Buddhism turn for instruction? The earlier books were not very helpful, because they were so often written by those who were not fully informed themselves and were more or less prejudiced against it; to add to the difficulty the earlier books were largely based on the Hinayana type as revealed in scriptures written in Pali, which give an incomplete understanding of the riches of the later Mahayana



experience. The books now appearing, having had access to the Sanskrit texts of the Mahayana, are very much better. There are many interesting descriptive and historical books about Buddhism, and books comparing Buddhism and Christianity, that are well worth reading. There are now available the translations of about seventy per cent. of the Pali texts, but only about twenty per cent. of the Sanskrit. The most important of the later scriptures are still locked up in ancient Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese versions that, having been copied for over a thousand years by hand, are very corrupt and obscure. Of these untranslated texts, probably the most important is the "Avatamsaka Sutra." It contains over fifteen hundred pages of Sanskrit, and is said to be the grandest religious document ever written, not only because of the profundity of its metaphysics, but for the warmth and emotion of its spiritual fervour. But for inquirers these ancient Indian texts offer baffling difficulties and discouragements because of their prolixities, unfamiliar names and obscure symbols and ideas. What such inquirers need above all else are competent teachers who can speak English, but those who are both competent and can speak English are very, very few.

A few years ago the writer offered a suggestion for the establishment in either China or Japan of a hospice where interested English and American scholars might meet suitable Buddhist scholars for their mutual enlightenment. Professor James B. Pratt in his recent book, "The Pilgrimage of Buddhism," on page 748, refers with commendation to the plan. Suitable men



are available to carry out the plan if some interested person would provide the means.

But even such an institute as the above would advantage only a few scholars, while there are to-day very many sincere inquirers who would be totally unable to make the expensive journey or to take full advantage of the opportunity after they got there. What such need is something simple but comprehensive that would reveal the essentials of Buddhism and point out and explain the steps of the Golden Path in a systematic way, so that without further ado they could begin, even in their own homes, the Buddha's Inner Way to Enlightenment and Peace of Mind. To meet such a need was this book written.

DWIGHT GODDARD..

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VERMONT, U.S.A., 1929.



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# THE BUDDHA'S GOLDEN PATH

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

WHILE Buddhism has nothing dogmatic to offer, it does ask of the beginner that he free himself from all other dogma and superstitions. He must come to the study and practice of Buddhism with an entirely free mind. This is no easy thing to do by one who has been brought up from childhood in an atmosphere of Christian dogmatics and who, consciously or unconsciously, believes a lot of things as axiomatic which are not at all so. Buddhism is, first of all and last of all, an experience that each must interpret for himself, and to do so rightly one must start with a clear mind. As the Path unfolds it brings enlightenment and an ever-clearing spiritual insight. One must, from the very beginning, think humbly, carefully and truly, lest he deviate from the true path. All that Gautama asked of his disciples was, that they be "honest and straightforward men."

Gautama lived in India at a time when it was filled with abstruse philosophising on the part of scholars and extreme superstitions on the part of the more ignorant,



against both of which he protested. Nevertheless, there were many things that were commonly accepted which Gautama took for granted without necessarily endorsing or asking his hearers to accept without themselves being convinced of their truthfulness. Such things as karma, reincarnation and Nirvana were accepted in India centuries before Gautama's day; Gautama accepted them, but filled them with a new and richer content of meaning. Other things, such as the being and nature of God, the immortality of the soul and any self-conscious life after the death of the body, he warned his disciples against, because they were unprovable and their discussion tended to dissension and unrest of mind. In general he warned his disciples against accepting any ideas, even from him, that could not be examined and proved by their own observation and experience. He especially warned them to be on their guard against the common habit of logical exclusion: a thing must be either this or that. Gautama was too keen a thinker to be taken in by that. He insisted that there were many ideas that were neither this nor that, or were both this and that.

One of the current conceptions which Gautama accepted in a general way, but which he developed and interpreted (and the great Buddhist philosophers after him still further interpreted), was the cosmological conception of the universe. In Gautama's day the universe was thought to be divided into more or less separate kingdoms—such as the physical plane in which we consciously dwell, below which was a plane of animal life, below that a plane of vegetable life, below that a



realm of demons, and still lower, a realm of “hungry demons.” Above the physical plane was conceived to be a world of “devas,” superhumanly fortunate and happy and free, and above that a world wherein dwelt the gods. Between these different planes there was supposed to be a constant, never-ending transmigration.

Such a naïve cosmology as this, in our more scientific age, is seen to be unconvincing and improbable; and yet it is not entirely false. For our day we must interpret it in a more scientific way that can be tested by our enlightened experience and logic. Our interpretation is this: There is but one universe, that in its totality is all-inclusive, harmonious, unlimited and inscrutable. This Wholeness can be thought of with the Buddhist philosophers as Dharmakaya, the body of Truth; or with Laotsu as Tao, the Universal Spirit. We cannot see back of it a transcendental personal God, because that is irrational. Let us call it Ultimate Principle, because that includes all in a rational and unified sense.

This Ultimate Principle, coming within the range of our observation, is seen to be a synthesis of two lesser principles: a principle of integration that draws and holds things together; and a principle of differentiation that tends toward creative expression in infinite particularity. In Sanskrit words the active aspect of the Dharmakaya is called Prajna; Prajna is the synthesis of Karuna and Jnana; Karuna, love or compassion, represents the unifying principle; Jnana, intellection, represents the differentiating principle. They are not two separate principles, they never operate alone or separ-



ately, their unity is inscrutable; but, discriminated, they are capable of endless permutations and expression. From these two aspects emanate other lesser principles that are each in its own way separative or unifying. This realm of principles, separative in aspects but harmonious in essence, is called the Spiritual Realm. The spiritual principles become further differentiated into mind, thinking and thought, and we have the world of living ideas, the Psychic Realm. These vital ideas tend to express themselves into subject and object, and forms with consciousness, and with perception, and with sensation, and objects with less and less of mind: bacteria, crystals, molecules, atoms, protons and electrons, and æther. This plane we call the Physical World, or, if we discriminate the planes, we may speak of self-conscious humanity, the animal world, the vegetable world, the microscopic world of bacteria, the atomic world of infinitesimal protons and electrons moving in a hypothetical æther. But these knots of electrical energy demand a prior conception of points of space, instants of time, and movement, all of which are primary modes of thinking—that is, they are the ultimate expression of the principle of intellection. Given the self-nature of the Ultimate Principle as the perfect synthesis of Integration and Disintegration, to express itself it must move, and, once moving, we have point-instants, which under the influence of the integrating principle will be drawn endlessly into more and more complex groups that, by action, reaction and interaction, will involve toward freedom on the physical plane, toward meaning on the psychic plane,



and toward identity on the spiritual plane. There are thus two circles of creative activity apparently moving in opposite directions, but inextricably interweaving the ever-changing pattern of actuality, and both at last emerging from and disappearing into the self-nature of the Dharmakaya.

There can be, however, but one Ultimate Principle, one all-inclusive, harmonious Wholeness, that is, here and now and always has been and always will be. There may be endless changes, appearances, processes and purposes going on, but they are all within the self-nature of the Dharmakaya expressing itself according to the Ultimate Principle. The whole Dharmakaya is thus on the point of a needle. There is but one Reality, this Ultimate Principle, all else is appearance and relativity. Looking backward through our discriminating senses and intellect we see a visible, tangible universe; looking inward we see that all is Mind, all is Ultimate Principle. The Golden Path leads us inward to a self-realisation of this Supreme and Ultimate Identity.

Perhaps it is unnecessary to speak of this in this introduction, but most of the readers of this book will probably have been brought up in a mental environment of Christian dogmatics in which the ideas of a Divine Creator and Law Giver and the eternal life of a self-conscious soul are so prevalent that it seems to the writer as almost a necessity to here call it into attention and question. Have faith, then, in your intuitive mind. The intellectual, discriminative mind is competent to deal with objective criteria that can be weighed and counted, and is therefore useful for one's



success, health and happiness; but the intuitive mind, by its ability to identify itself with the relations of a more spiritual order, thereby cognises a higher Reality with which its true self is identified.



## CHAPTER II

### PRINCE SIDDHATHA GAUTAMA

THE life of a founder of a great religion is always interesting; so much does the personality of Gautama enter into Buddhism to make it attractive and convincing that one is tempted to devote much space to a careful and detailed biography, but as this book is designed to be a manual of practical Buddhism for modern Westerners who are already somewhat acquainted with his story the temptation will be resisted. If, however, some reader would like further information about his life he is urged to read E. J. Thomas's "Buddha in History and Legend," published by Kegan Paul. Dr. Thomas is trained in the modern technique of historical and literary criticism, and, having an extensive acquaintance with original sources, is competent to write a trustworthy account.

As this book is designed to be an interpretation of Buddhism to meet modern conditions, and not to reproduce with exactness the primitive teachings of the Agamas and Nikayas, or even of later Mahayana scriptures, those who wish to know more about Buddhism are referred to the original sutras and to the increasing number of scholarly books about Buddhism that are now appearing.

Prince Siddhatha Gautama was born in Kapilavastu, in Northern India, in 533 B.C., of a long line of princely



ancestors on both sides. In person he was exceedingly attractive, athletic, sympathetic, intelligent, but rather more serious and thoughtful than common. He married happily when young, had only one child, who afterward became a disciple but did not come to any especial note. Being impressed that his surroundings were not conducive to the highest life, at the age of twenty-nine he left his home and family, with all its comfort, wealth and social rank, to follow the life of a wandering ascetic, vowed to poverty and meditation. He first studied under two very able teachers, but was dissatisfied, and then joined a group of five ascetics, with whom he lived for five or six years in increasingly severe rigour, until at last, when near death, but still "at sea" mentally, he decided to change his course of life. He took food sparingly; and sitting one night under a tree, he vowed that he would not leave it until he had attained "enlightenment." Gradually during the night the solution of his intense but chaotic thinking since boyhood cleared itself and assumed a coherent, rational and satisfying system. With it came a new and compelling vision of the meaning and value and purpose of life and a definite path to its self-realisation.

For forty-five years thereafter he moved about his native country, teaching, persuading, winning converts and gathering his disciples into companies of monks and nuns. He died in 483 B.C., honoured and beloved by all. He has been called by many names—The Buddha (the Enlightened One), Shakyamuni (the Sage of the Shakya tribe), Tathagata (He-who-has-thus-



attained). The last is the name by which he commonly referred to himself. His followers often referred to him, because of his serene, affectionate and exceedingly wise nature, as the Blessed One. The following appreciation of him, said to have been spoken by a distinguished Brahmin of his own day, is quoted by Professor Pratt in his recent book, "The Pilgrimage of Buddhism":

"The venerable Gautama is well-born on both sides, of pure descent . . . is handsome, pleasant to look upon, inspiring trust, gifted with great beauty of complexion, fair in colour, fine in presence, stately to behold, virtuous with the virtue of the Arahāt, gifted with goodness and virtue, with a pleasant voice and polite address, with no passion of lust left in him, nor any fickleness of mind. He bids all men welcome, is congenial, conciliatory, not supercilious, accessible to all, not backward in conversation." ("Digha Nikaya.")

To illustrate his kindheartedness: He went out of his way to meet a scavenger whom he had been led to believe was sincerely and earnestly desirous of becoming his follower, but who hesitated because of his low caste. The Blessed One welcomed him with the simple words: "Come, Bhikhu." On another occasion he found one of his disciples discouraged; the words that went with his smile were: "Be of good cheer, Tissa; I to counsel you, I to uphold you, I to teach you."

But beside the sympathy and kindness of his lovable nature he possessed an extraordinary mind, one of the greatest in the history of philosophic thought. In fact, his personality was as nearly in perfect balance,



probably, as is possible under physical conditions: a splendid physique, abounding sympathy and a mind that never failed. To illustrate how perfectly balanced were wisdom and kindness in his nature, we quote another incident: When the Blessed One was begging his food one day, he was repulsed by a householder with bitter, abusive words. Calmly he replied: "Friend, if a householder sets food before a beggar but the beggar refuses to accept the food, to whom does the food then belong?" The man replied: "Why, to the householder, of course." The Blessed One asked: "Then if I refuse to accept your abuse and ill-will, it returns to you, does it not? But I must go away the poorer because I have lost a friend."

In all the long story of the Buddha's life there is no record of an ill-advised word, or the doing of an unwise act because of his warm heart; his good judgment was unfailing and was never warped by sentiment. His mental and spiritual insight was seemingly unclouded and unlimited, but while it was his great mind that gave him his comprehension of highest truth, it was his great heart that led him to devote his life to save from sorrow all who had ears to hear. One of the wisest of his disciples said of him: "Deep is the Tathagata, measureless, unfathomable as the ocean."

Many a time he refused to answer direct questions, and because of it threw himself open to the charge of ignorance, that he could not answer, but all unperturbed he would reply that the question could not be answered by a simple Yes or No; often he declined to answer because the answer would involve something



that could not be known or could not be proved—as, for instance, the being or nature of God. Again and again he urged his disciples to avoid any speculation or discussion about things that were essentially unknowable, because such discussion tended to dissension and unrest of mind; conditions which were prejudicial to the search for knowledge and peace of mind. He cautioned his disciples again and again: “Do not accept what you hear by report, do not accept tradition, do not accept a statement because it is found in books, nor because it is in accord with your belief, nor because it is the saying of your teacher.” During the long years of his instruction there was an ever-changing procession of inquirers and disciples coming to him for instruction, but to the end (one of the last things recorded was the question put to his disciples, if any one had any doubt or question to ask) he patiently explained, and appealed to reason, asking only that they have open and thoughtful minds.

The teaching of Gautama was directed almost entirely to the discernment of highest mental values and to persuade men to seek and accept only the highest. Because external things were transient and unsubstantial and led to suffering, they were of less value and significance than the inner visions of the mind; his whole heart and mind, therefore, were directed to these mental states, seeking to discriminate between the good and the bad, and to develop and strengthen those that tended toward emancipation and clarity of insight. The Golden Path is essentially a method for attaining mind-control.



Some teachers have called Gautama a teacher of morality; he is rather a teacher of the wise way of living, for his emphasis was always on the wisdom aspect of life rather than on its external morality, because to him morality and sin were simply the wise and the foolish ways of living. He did not think that men needed a code of ethics so much as they needed an enlightened mind. Sin was little talked about by Gautama because he disbelieved in any personal God, or in any such thing as the soul as an entity having eternal life; therefore there could be no such thing as any legalistic relation between them, or any idea of guilt or penalty or reward. What the Christian thinks of as sin that calls for judgment, Gautama thought of as ignorance and foolishness that needed enlightenment and sympathy.

In attaining the wisest way of life, Gautama warned his disciples against both asceticism and self-centred indulgence. His was a Middle Way, a path that led through wise restraint of desire, through thoughtfulness as to values and through concentration on the highest. The teaching of Gautama is far from being pessimistic: it starts to be sure from a discouraging view of external objective things, but his Path leads inward to the highest and best that the mind of man can conceive—final unity in Buddhahood.

From the Pali scriptures it is evident that the immediate disciples of Gautama and the early Buddhist Sangha failed to grasp the full implications of the Master's teachings. They stopped at the mental enlightenment of Arahathood, although undoubtedly



many an early Arahat unconsciously knew the spiritual identity of Bodhisattvahood. It was left to the great Masters of the Mahayana to fathom the deeper truths of his teachings and to interpret their richer implications. But even when reading the profound metaphysics of the great Mahayana sutras one has a feeling of regret that the Master himself is not present "to discourse on this highest truth."

Remember, Gautama's teaching was not a closed and finished system of philosophy that could be handed down to future generations for study; it was not a system of ethics concerned with outward behaviour, although it involved suggestions for behaviour; it was essentially a mental discipline that would lead to enlightenment and spiritual experience. Any follower of his was at perfect liberty to interpret his experiences in philosophic terms, but these varied philosophies were not essential Buddhism. True Buddhism lies in the attainments of the Golden Path, and that can best be carried from mind to mind without the intervention of words, by pure act and the spirit of the act. The Zen summation of the Buddha's teaching is something like this: It is a method of mind-control that leads through the restraint of physical desire, the encouragement of thoughtfulness, the practice of mental concentration, to a self-realisation within one's inmost nature of highest truth. Let us turn now to a consideration of this Golden Path.



FIRST ADVENTURE  
THROUGH RESTRAINT OF PHYSICAL  
DESIRE TO EMANCIPATION



### CHAPTER III

## THE FIRST STAGE—RIGHT IDEAS

BEFORE one commences a journey or an adventure he generally has three things in mind—an idea where he is going, why he is going, and how he is going to get there. That is, back of all action there is mental consideration that finally settles on a few appropriate ideas. It is these ideas that give form and direction and energy to the action.

Our present interest is a consideration of the wisest and best way of meeting the problem of life, or, changing the figure, it is a consideration of the best path to follow in making the journey of life. This involves an understanding of the meaning and purpose of life, a discrimination as to facts, and a judgment as to relative values. As we have already seen, Gautama had one of the finest minds that man ever had; he never let his heart swerve his mental judgment as to the wisest course of action. He had his own ideas, arrived at after careful consideration, but his natural confidence in those ideas never let him force them on other people; he always urged his disciples to think for themselves and to exercise their own judgment. All he asked of them was an honest, observing and thoughtful mind. He made suggestions, but he had no intention of imposing them on his disciples by authority; they were to give them consideration and, if they seemed rational, to accept them on their own volition. The chief char-



acteristic of his leadership was its sympathetic encouragement of independent thought, and the chief characteristic of his system of thought was its persuasive rationality. Therefore we naturally expect, and are not disappointed to find, that the first step of his method is a consideration of the problem, and the selection of a few "right" ideas as a point of departure, as a guide to the direction, and as strength and encouragement for the journey.

He first asks his disciples to look about them on the external world, to try to understand its meaning and significance, and then to formulate for themselves their conclusion in a few definite ideas that they themselves feel to be right and of first importance. At the beginning he does not expect his disciples to have a complete philosophy of life; all he asks of them is to have two or three mental conclusions that appeal to them as "right." Later on they will add to the number of their ideas and be better able to arrange them into a system; the very following of the Path is a training in the development of the mental faculties that will inevitably lead them to a clearing of insight, to enlightenment and to an ever-increasing confidence and peace of mind.

To encourage them, however, and to aid them in getting a start, he tells them of his own experience and the ideas that had impressed him. The first thing that had impressed him was that in all the world nothing was fixed, everything was in process of change and growth, or decay, or rearrangement; that is, everything is transient and unsubstantial. Second, that while some things and conditions were fortuitous and aroused



feelings of satisfaction and happiness, other things were distinctly unsatisfactory and awakened feelings of unhappiness, or sorrow, or pain. Even conditions and things that at first gave satisfaction and pleasure sooner or later would change, and then they too would lead to dissatisfaction or unhappiness, and often to actual suffering. That is, everything, because of its impermanence, leads to suffering. Third, all this process and ever-changing appearance followed some great law of sequence. Gautama summed up these observations in what he called “a chain of dependencies.” There were twelve of them, but there might have been nine or twenty, because they are endless and never had any beginning.

(1) Sickness, old age and death depend upon birth. (2) Birth depends upon conception. (3) Conception depends upon grasping. (4) Grasping depends on desire. (5) Desire depends on sensation, perception, etc. (6) Sensation depends on the senses. (7) The senses depend on organised life. (8) Organised life depends on single-cell life. (9) Single-cell life depends on vitality. (10) Vitality depends on phenomena. (11) Phenomena depends on energy. (12) Energy depends on “ignorance.”

A consideration of this chain of dependence led Gautama to see that there was one link that was different from the others—namely, the fifth. Grasping depends upon desire, and desire depends on sensation, perception, etc. All the other links are automatic in their action, they follow from their inherent nature, but the link between grasping and desire, Gautama recognised, was relatively weak, because it was depen-



dent upon the human mind and, therefore, in a measure was under man's control. If man's mind and its habit of reaching out after anything and everything that it happened to desire could be brought under the control and restraint of a thoughtful, concentrated mind, then the inevitability of suffering would end right there. Grasping depends upon desire, so if desire can be controlled or gotten rid of there will be no grasping. Now the question is, how to control desire. He already had observed that desire was awakened by previous mental states of sensation, perception and consciousness; he recognised that if he could control these mental states, then desire might be effectively controlled. Therefore a successful way of life must be, first of all, a method of mind-control. For the time being outward conditions, however unpleasant they may be, must be borne and ignored in the interests of mind-control.

Now, how to do it was the problem. He analysed carefully the mental processes that led up to desire and saw that there was an invariable sequence: (1) Idea; (2) resolution to act; (3) an impulse to talk about it; (4) an impulse to act quickly and the easiest way, which involves the danger of acting unwisely and unkindly; (5) reaction due to environment; (6) reaction due to mental habits. Gautama saw that to act most wisely two precautions were necessary: first, one must take time and pains to recall all the circumstances and conditions by the careful use of the discriminating mind, then to consider available ways and means; second, to concentrate the intuitive mind on the result of the dis-



criminative thinking. The temptation is always to act impulsively without due consideration of the circumstances, means available, end to be attained, and reaction on self and others. Consideration of the above led Gautama to formulate a definite rule of life: first, to try and get a clear understanding of all the circumstances that call for action; second, to definitely make up his mind whether to act or not to act; third, to avoid everything in outward conduct that would impede wise and efficient action; fourth, to secure the most favourable environment, both external and mental; fifth, to take plenty of time to secure a clear and definite idea as to end and ways and means; sixth, with this preparation to concentrate the whole mind on the task in hand. Gautama tried out this sequence in his own life and by it attained the end he desired—namely, emancipation from suffering, enlightenment and peace of mind. He often referred to himself as the Tathagata (He-who-has-thus-attained).

Gautama recognised, of course, that there was a difference in the relative value of desires—some were relatively good, like hunger and the desire for children, and some were relatively bad, like gluttony and sexual lust. But because the good shaded into the bad so imperceptibly he became convinced that all desire must be held suspect and be kept under the strictest surveillance and control. That desire was the cause of evil was no new thought in India in Gautama's day; what Gautama taught was that all desire is suspect. Others said, because some desires are good, and because desire



is the mainspring of action and effort, therefore take a chance, hazard your fortune; perhaps this is a good desire and then you will be glad you took the risk, and even if some bad result follows we can meet it when it comes; at any rate we will have this immediate gratification, and whatever may happen it cannot be worse than the present suffering. Thus they "kid" themselves. But Gautama was wise enough to see the dangerous fallacy of such reasoning. Desire is the cause of suffering, therefore restrain desire. Desire has its roots in the mind, not in outward circumstances: therefore train the mind, take time to think it over, to guard oneself, to prepare for action; then act only in the wisest and kindest manner, erring, if one errs at all, on the safe side—that is, on the side of wisdom. When one is hungry it is necessary to eat, but eat only good and wholesome food and in limited quantity, only sufficient to satisfy the actual needs of the body; any more than that, the desire for more simply because it tastes good, must be resisted: the desire for it is bad, it leads to suffering. Even love for wife and children must be held in check lest it endanger one's spiritual progress. Gautama left his wife and child for the homeless life of a monk; Jesus and St. Francis never married.

Further thought and observation might easily attain other right ideas, but Gautama came to the conclusion that these minimum ideas were sufficient to begin the inner adventure to spiritual peace. Following the Path he outlined would bring a habit of physical restraint and mental thoughtfulness that would naturally lead



to clearing insight and enlightenment as to relative values and wise ways for attaining them, but, for a beginning, these few are sufficient. The Golden Path inward is not like a path outward that must be taken step by step, this first and that afterward; this Path is toward an inner state of mind-control. There is an advance toward a goal, but the goal is an ever-receding ideal of enlightenment and spirituality. The Path must ever be re-begun and re-followed, not from the original starting-point, but always from one's present attainment and capacity; and then followed toward an ever new and widening and clearing freedom and ideality.

Gautama summed up these observations and conclusions in what is generally known as the Four Noble Truths. I reproduce the translation as given in Thomas's "Life of Buddha":

"These two extremes, O monks, are not to be practised by one who has gone forth from the world. What are the two? That conjoined with the passions, low, vulgar, common, ignoble and useless, and that conjoined with self-torture, painful, ignoble and useless. Avoiding these two extremes, the Tathagata has gained the knowledge of the Middle Way, which gives sight and knowledge, and tends to calm, to insight, enlightenment, Nirvana.

"What, O monks, is the Middle Way which gives sight. . . ? It is the Noble Eightfold Path, namely, . . . This, O monks, is the Middle Way. . . .

"(1) Now this, O monks, is the Noble Truth of pain: birth is painful, old age is painful, sickness is painful,



death is painful, sorrow, lamentation, dejection and despair are painful. Contact with unpleasant things is painful, not getting what one wishes is painful. In short, the five 'bundles' of grasping are painful.

“(2) Now this, O monks, is the Noble Truth of the cause of pain: that craving, which leads to rebirth, combined with pleasure and lust, finding pleasure here and there—namely, the craving for passion, the craving for existence, the craving for non-existence.

“(3) Now this, O monks, is the Noble Truth of the cessation of pain: the cessation without a remainder of that craving, abandonment, forsaking, release, non-attachment.

“(4) Now this, O monks, is the Noble Truth of the way that leads to the cessation of pain: this is the Noble Eightfold Path—namely, right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This is the Noble Truth of pain.”

Please remember, these right ideas that are here summed up by Gautama (the fact of suffering, the cause of suffering as rooted in desire, the ending of suffering by the ending of desire, and, finally, a suggested method for mind-control, for rooting out and ending desire) are not to be accepted simply because Gautama recommended them, but only if they make convincing appeal to one's own mind as being eminently true ideas.

These Four Noble Truths have often been over-emphasised by Western scholars because of their imperfect acquaintance with the deeper and more



essential truths that Gautama also taught. Because the Four Noble Truths assert the universality of suffering as the beginning, and of Nirvana (which they often translate as “nothingness”) as the end, Western scholars have often charged Buddhism with being pessimistic. The truth is quite opposite—by its teaching that suffering can be left behind in an encouraging advance toward highest values of Supreme Wisdom and Spiritual Identity. The fact is, the Four Noble Truths, while they are eminently useful in providing a starting-point for advance, are quickly left behind as being what they are, only a finger pointing to the Golden Path.

The Golden Path is, then, the essential feature of Buddhism, and it is around that that all else gathers and is unified. It is far more than a simple list of words: it is a formula thought out and tested and vouched for by probably the wisest man who ever lived. It is more than that, through it shines forth the truth, the vitality and power and virility of supreme wisdom and the patience of compassion.

#### STAGES OF THE GOLDEN PATH

Right Ideas  
 Right Resolution  
 Right Speech  
 Right Behaviour  
 Right Environment  
 Right Effort  
 Right Mindfulness  
 Right Concentration



Of these the first two form a starting-point for the adventure. Then follows three having to do with outward conditions, and then three having to do with inward conditions. The immediate goal is to attain perfect control of the mind; with this control all individualised desire can be, and will be, rooted out and ended. The more remote goal is the ending of all dissatisfaction and suffering, through the attainment of Perfect Enlightenment, Perfect Wisdom, Perfect Compassion, Perfect Equanimity. The ultimate goal is to attain Nirvana, Perfect Identity with the Buddhahood, which is the "Suchness" of the Ultimate Principle.

This mingling of the discussion of the Golden Path as a whole and the discussion of the First Stage of the Path in one chapter is inevitable, because the Golden Path is the Fourth Noble Truth, and the Four Noble Truths are the First Stage of the Golden Path. Now let us proceed to the discussion of the Second Stage of the Path.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE SECOND STAGE—RIGHT RESOLUTION

PLEASE recall that the two primal principles are differentiation and integration. The mind is motivated by both—that is, by thought it tends toward discrimination and expression in particularities; but by emotion and aspiration it tends toward sympathy, compassion and identity. Naturally in an undisciplined mind there will be a constant wavering and indecision, hence the importance of mind-control. The natural motions of the human mind are an alternating succession of sense concepts, desires, visions, doubts, courage, fears, etc. There takes place within the mind some sort of sifting and accommodation that finally results in a predominant desire and ensuing action. What that action shall be is conditioned by a number of things: There are the inherited balance of mental and physical faculties, especially of the endocrine glands; the nature of the physical and social and religious environment enter in; and one's vivid experiences, especially during childhood, by predispositions and prejudice, very largely influence one's predominant desires. At the time of Gautama, and still in a large part of the world, these conditions were thought of under the symbol of "karma." Later on we shall speak more at length about karma. Here we will only say that in all Oriental thought, besides one's own actions, the actions of an immemorial past, not only of one's physical ancestors,



but of one's mental and spiritual ancestry as well, enter in to predetermine one's state, both physical, mental and spiritual. Unless the mental glands and faculties are exceptionally out of balance, as in insanity, one still has more or less control over his mind and the expression of the mind in outward acts and behaviour. Much depends on where one's centre of gravity lies. If one predominantly and habitually leans toward physical values, sensual delights, comforts, excitement, it means that his centre of gravity is "low down" in the physical plane and his acts will generally be in accordance with physical values—that is, lustful, indulgent and egoistic. If his centre of gravity is in the "higher" plane of mind, he will be predisposed to look lightly on physical comfort and generally decide on actions that will give mental pleasure. If, however, his centre of gravity is "high up" in the spiritual plane, where thoughts of "me and mine" are largely overpassed, he will naturally make up his judgments according to altruistic and unselfish and sympathetic ideals. The object of the Golden Path, and especially of the first and second steps of the Path, is to elevate one's centre of gravity on to the highest spiritual plane, where the tendency to right action, as far as it lies within one's control, will be strengthened and guided.

The mind must register some judgment, some paramount desire, some controlling conviction. Happy the man whose dominant ideas are right ideas, and who is no longer buffeted hither and yon by the winds of lust and passion and egoism, or befogged by illusions of ignorance and false ideas, or the puppet of an unpro-



pitious karma. Such right judgment when buttressed by faith and aspiration and goodwill is Right Resolution. Happy the man who is so far master of himself, who has sufficient mind-control, to register a Right Resolution.

To arrive at an ordinary decision, such as crossing a river, is simple as compared with the one now before us, which involves one's moral and spiritual destiny. Decisions as to external action are often simply the adding up of pros and cons and the striking of a mental balance; but when one comes to the choice of a moral path, one of which leads outward to the hazards of success and failure, wealth and poverty, pleasure or discomfort, and the other (a strait and narrow way) that leads to an inner and purer life-process of mental freedom and spiritual peace, the choice becomes complex and fateful. It involves a consecration and devotion that searches one's very depths. It is not simply dedicating one's strength to a different but familiar course of action; this involves a "conversion," an about-face, from familiar habits and customs and natural instincts. Hitherto one has been facing outward, using his instincts, his strength of body, his wits, his discriminating mind, to meet the challenge of external circumstances and combinations of numbers and weights and positions that must be faced and over-balanced by superior numbers, greater weights and more advantageous positions and more skilful arrangements. But now the path leads inward toward unknown difficulties and unknown hazards. To be sure, the old life was replete with suffering, the



path was often very difficult and wearisome, but it was familiar.

Nevertheless, the difficulties within one's own mind are not to be ignored: the lusts and passions aroused by memory, by fancy and imagination, they are often more to be feared than are the sights and sounds of the external world. Suppressed inward desire for indulgence is even worse in its effects than is actual physical indulgence. Within are the incessant urge of wrong habits, temperamental weaknesses, proneness to go the easy way; and within are the reactions of fear, worry, hatred, avariciousness, envy, pride and egoism, all massed against the one who aspires to win inward to the heights of mental control and spiritual peace. In fact, by comparison, these outward difficulties that we once thought to be so difficult and dangerous seem to lose much of their fearsomeness; they have already begun to take on an appearance of mirage and illusion.

Against these new difficulties, however, the old armouries and defences are of no use. The soul aspires to the adventure, but the "old man" hesitates because it is all so contrary to the old values of health, privilege, power and position—from long experience he fears their power and seductions. Then there are the unknown hazards of poverty, unselfishness and defencelessness. Will he be able to meet the demands of incessant physical restraint, concentrated thoughtfulness, genuine goodwill and sincere unselfishness? To decide to follow the Golden Path may mean, and it probably will mean if followed with sincerity, a flying in the face of public opinion, outraged conventions and



disturbed privileges, monopolies and vested rights. It will arouse hatred because the crowd fears and hates independent thought and action. The vulgar crowd despises the deserter and the renegade and the quitter. Recall to mind the public sentiment during the Great War: the general acceptance of the forced draft, the intense anger expressed against the expression of opposing opinion, the vindictive persecution of honest pacifists, some of whom were imprisoned on indeterminate sentences, to lie in gaol for years after the war was over because there was not enough public sentiment to effect their release. During that time of war hysteria the whole sentiment of the Press and the Church was "to stand by the Government." The Government took as much pains to control public sentiment as it did to raise armies and mass ammunition. All the forces of religion, the economic order and the courts will be arrayed against the man who chooses his life's pathway contrary to established custom and convention.

To follow the Golden Path may mean the erection of barriers between one and the familiar friends and the happy associations of youth; it may mean a break in their friendship and companionship. And all for what? The dream of an ideal life to be lived, perhaps, in solitude and loneliness, trusting to an untried, faintly marked trail that leads into an unknown future.

But the decision must be faced. A little time for quiet, concentrated thought, a little courage, a little faith, a little sincere goodwill toward all animate life, a humble giving up of self, keeping steadily in mind



that life is transient, it leads toward suffering, its values are unsubstantial, illusory. The new Path is certainly reasonable, it seems to lead toward some good end, and it carries with it a radiant promise of light and peace. Faith, hope and courage are smilingly waiting to go with one. Resolution says, Yes. Lo! the external world seems evanescent, its importance fades into shadow, and ahead and inward the pathway clears and the difficulties fade away. It is the beginning of a new life process, a new venture spiritward full of promise and blissful peace. We are already out of the bay; there comes flooding in the tide and the swell of an illimitable ocean. The very air is fresher, because it no longer blows over cities and swamps, but comes laden with the ozone of the ocean. This refreshing breeze comes from the spiritual abundance of the undifferentiated Ultimate. It comes to all alike without distinction, but it is only to him who faces inward that receives its strength and its benediction. The Golden Path is already justified. All hail, the adventure!



## CHAPTER V

### THE THIRD STAGE—RIGHT SPEECH

HAVING made the great resolution to follow the Golden Path inward toward freedom and enlightenment and spiritual peace, the pilgrim must first bring clearly before his mind the important obstacles and hindrances that will beset his way—to the end that he may be on his guard and prepared to meet them so that they shall do him no harm nor unduly delay his adventure. These hindrances lie in three groups: the lusts of the bodily senses, the illusions of the mind and the infatuations of selfness. All of these lie in the domain of the conscious mind, and to meet and control them one must have a superior mind-control. This is what the Golden Path to mind-control provides.

The processes of the mind are an ever-flowing stream that, from the angle at which we are now considering it, is comparatively inert until the mind attempts to stop it and isolate particular ideas, feelings, and appearances. Then follows discrimination, desires, grasping and action. It is in this discrimination of the sense-concepts of ideas and of egoism that trouble begins and is seated. As long as we are existing on the physical and mental planes discrimination is necessary, but it quickly runs into evil, and the more we can restrict it the less we will be moving with the differentiating current and the more we will be moving toward unity with the integrating current. The mental pro-



cesses, exactly like the physical processes, are an ever-changing growth or decay; that which is at the present instant is different from that which has just passed and from that which is just coming. To attempt to take a "snapshot" of it (by trying to formulate a precise idea of it) is bound to give an inaccurate impression of it, because truth is neither this nor that; truth is not static, it is a living thing, a process, and to try and express it in idea, words, behaviour or selfness is to do violence to it. This is the reason why Gautama places this early emphasis on Right Speech.

If one is trying to gain mind-control, he must at the very beginning resist this tendency of the mind to talk too much. It is dangerous because it is the most besetting and subtly deceiving and fundamental hindrance to mind-control there is. Express one's fleeting thought in words and one has gone a long way in actualising it in form and influence, which in all probability will not be its true form nor highest influence for good. The faculty of speech is most useful and wonderful. By it one can transfer and share his thoughts and emotions with another. To think, in itself, is wonderful, but to transfer thoughts to another is still more so. Some animals have a limited power of speech, and their rank in a scale of evolution is correspondingly high. Ants and bees apparently do not have the power of speech, but they have another faculty that in a way is better—namely, a sensitiveness to the swarm mind. This is better in one way, because each more truly perceives the mind of the swarm and responds to it without question, thus insuring better



co-operation and team work, but it is less valuable in that it seems to fix habits beyond change. The human mind, on the other hand, having the power of speech can exchange ideas and store them up in books, thus permitting a constantly increasing and available store of ideas to add to those obtained by one's own experience, all of which tends to the development of individuality. Nevertheless, the power of speech carries with it certain very serious limitations and disadvantages. We have already spoken of the fact that words very seldom fully or accurately express an idea; besides this, when one is talking he cannot easily think. If one wants to think, and to think carefully, he must stop talking; because of this one should ever hold the faculty of speech under strict attention and control. All too often when one is talking the conscious mind is "switched-off" and the motivation comes from the subconscious levels where the lower bodily instincts have their seat, and then one talks foolishly or worse. Because man has a sociable nature, he is eager to be sociable, and the easiest way to be so is to talk; hence he is tempted to talk too much and to speak agreeable words rather than true words. Even when one's words are censored by the conscious mind its attention may be lax, or bad states—such as anger, hatred, jealousy, fear, covetousness or egoism—may dominate it, and again speech runs wild and foolishly. Talking stimulates these bad states of mind—egoism, pride of intellect, sense of power—it exaggerates differences and minimises likenesses.

Again, because talking inhibits calm thinking, it



feeds on its own substance; that is, one often begins to talk quite mildly and dispassionately, but before he knows it he has run off into heated, angry, or untrue words, that when he began he had no intention of uttering. How often does a man have to apologise and say: "I did not think what I was saying"? Speech is terribly liable to excite one to unwise acts. Many a soul is hurt by the unconsidered words of a thoughtless moment. Many a fight begins in a dispute of words over a trivial matter. Many a crowd is stirred to mob violence by the wild oratory of a fanatic which reacts by its excitement and cheers to still more inflame the speaker and cause him to still further lose control of himself.

Companies and crowds stimulate talking, and not only excite the speaker to lose control of himself, but the speech, by inhibiting independent thought on the part of the listeners, leads them on to a unity of emotion that, being free of thoughtful control, runs wild in applause and action that is often more foolish than wise. This is especially true, at great conventions and congresses when the crowd have in the beginning a more or less unified mind. On such occasions a well thought-out written address will often fall flat, because the audience is not there to think, they are there to be stimulated and unified to some scheme or plan of the leaders. Orators are rightly called "spell-binders." Audiences crave emotional stimulants and are impatient with thought. Then comes the "star speaker," the orator of the day. In the intoxication of the crowd and the occasion, his ego swells with pride and words



flow forth tumultuously, not words of truth and soberness, but words of heat and passion. In the great athletic games, it is the roar of applause that spurs on the players to excessive effort, and it is the jeers and taunts of an unfriendly crowd that causes them to lose their heads and fumble. The impassioned words of a great revivalist brings crowds to the "mourners' bench," but "few there be that are saved." The popular preacher loves to hear himself pray and discourse, but afterwards the audience say: "Words, words, words," and go away hungry for the bread of life.

The same is true of social gatherings. They hate silence and their own thought, so they must be entertained, or they chatter (idle, foolish chatter), gossip, slander, extravagant stories, inane jokes, boasting and idle repartee. The one who can talk most entertainingly, not most wisely, is the honoured guest. The same is true in conversations between individuals. They hate to sit in silence: it is so stupid, they say. It has been said that the only safe test of a contemplated marriage is for the couple to be able to sit in the same room for an hour without speaking; if they are mutually pleased and satisfied the marriage is safe; instead, how often courtship is a rapid fire of silly, inane, chatter, words of affection and endearment that are exaggerated and ill-considered, being prompted by the occasion. When these words run low, then off to some entertainment, or joy-ride, or party, or game, anything to avoid silent thought.

Distrust and fear of the tongue was voiced by the Christian James, who was thought to be a fellow-mem-



ber with John the Baptist and Jesus of the semi-Buddhistic sect of the Essenes. He wrote:

“But let every man be swift to hear but slow to act. . . . If any man thinketh himself to be religious while he bridleth not his tongue, he deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain. . . . So the tongue is a little member and boasteth great things. Behold how much wood is kindled by how small a fire. And the tongue is a fire: a world of inequity among our members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body and setteth on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beasts and birds, or creeping things, and things in the sea, is tamed and has been tamed, by mankind: but the tongue can no man tame; it is a restless evil, it is full of deadly poison.”

To the pilgrim on the path to mind-control speech is to be feared and avoided above all else. Why? Because it is transient and fleeting, it easily and quickly leads to excess and sorrow, it has no substance of its own, it inhibits free, unimpeded thought and concentration of mind, it flames up and spreads like fire, and soon gets beyond control. It is all these things because it is allied with the current that is running outward toward differentiation and particularity and is ever getting farther and farther away from light and truth and unity and peace.

The emphasis of the Golden Path is always on the Middle Way. Speech has its proper use, its proper time and place, but because of its very nature it must be strictly guarded and controlled. Buddhism does not teach perpetual silence, it only urges Right Speech.



What then is Right Speech? Well, first of all, on all occasions it should be limited and restrained; words should be spoken quietly and deliberately with no exaggeration of meaning, emphasis or emotion. It should be confined between individuals and small groups, and entirely avoided in large companies and crowds, where the laws of mob psychology are too great to be faced with impunity. Even in small companies it should be confined as far as possible to question and answer, as was the habit of Socrates, Gautama and Jesus. Avoid monologues; they so easily run into egoism and domination. The only good end of speech is to set other people to thinking so that they can more surely act wisely and kindly.

In a later chapter we shall refer more in detail to the correct use of words; here it is sufficient to say that words should truly fit the idea intended to be expressed. Give the hearer a fair chance to understand the meaning one is trying to express, and, above all else, “speak the truth in love.”



## CHAPTER VI

### THE FOURTH STAGE—RIGHT BEHAVIOUR

THE next way in which the cosmic urge to differentiation tends to express itself is in acts of outward behaviour. Most ethical religions have found it necessary to pronounce prohibition against certain particular classes of acts; these commandments, or "taboos," in the main are much alike: not to kill, not to steal, not to commit adultery. Gautama in his teachings did the same, but differed from the others in his way of presenting them and in his method for avoiding such acts. In presenting them to his disciples, Gautama offered them as suggestions that were to be considered in a rational way, and if found wise were to be adopted and observed, that is, they were in no sense commandments that were to be obeyed because of his authority; they were injunctions that were to be considered on their merits. Gautama named five of them that he considered important for all his followers to observe: not to kill, not to commit adultery, not to steal, not to lie, and not to use intoxicants. Then he added another five that he thought it important for his monks and nuns to observe, who were by the nature of their vocation under a more advanced discipline. In this chapter we are to consider only the first group.

As we have already noted, in Gautama's mind there were no categories of evil, sin and guilt. These have meaning only as related to conceptions of a legalistic



relation between a personal God and an eternal human soul, all of which Gautama denied. In his mind everything, including the human being, was in a process of development from a lower stage to a higher stage that would in the long last culminate in one supreme, all-inclusive identity, the Buddhahood, which to our more scientific minds is more often thought of as the Inscrutable Ultimate Principle.

In Gautama's mind there was nothing like a self-conscious soul considered as an enduring or immortal entity. There was only a unified "stream of consciousness" with no substantiality but its relative and transient unity. Each act was but the outward appearance and manifestation of inward mental states, and every action was dependent on some prior mental state, or idea, or inclination, or aversion, or "ignorance," which in turn were dependent on some earlier experience, act or environment, and these were dependent on some still more remote karma, and so on with no beginning and no ending. Each and every act, therefore, is unmoral; it may be either wise or foolish, kind or unkind, but it is equally "noble" with every other act, because, viewed from the standpoint of an unfolding process from ignorance to Wisdom, from matter to Spiritual Principle, each act marks a certain stage of advancement from mental bondage to spiritual freedom. A bad act indicates a lower degree of advancement, and the actor is to be pitied and helped but not to be rebuked and penalised; a good act indicates a higher degree of advancement, and the actor is to be congratulated, but not to be praised or rewarded.



But each mental state, inclination, desire, aversion, because of its transiency, has its own value and weakness, which, in the interests of the general advance, must be controlled and used co-operatively to the best advantage possible. 'Therefore the spirit which prompted Gautama to offer his injunctions for right behaviour was one of sympathy and consideration and helpfulness. About its suggestions there was nothing whatever of a command by authority: there was no "thou shalt not" to them. To be sure they were negatively worded—not to kill, not to commit adultery, etc.—but the spirit of them was entirely positive: to cherish kindness toward all animate life, to restrain the animal passions so as to gain a free, honest and thoughtful mind.

This ever-changing conscious-self reveals several well-marked characteristics that condition action—namely, an instinct toward self-preservation, an instinct toward reproduction, an instinct toward self-aggrandisement of physical power, mental pride, comfort, pleasure, excitement, etc. Each has its proper place and use in the unfolding drama of life, but each easily runs off into wrong uses and excesses that must be restrained and controlled if higher progress is to be achieved. These injunctions are related to this task. Concerning the positive side of these injunctions we shall have more to say later on; in this place we shall speak only of their more negative aspects.

The first of Gautama's injunctions was: not to kill. According to general Buddhist belief this is a very broad injunction; it includes not only wilful murder



but the wilful taking of any sentient life. In our day it often seems advisable to slay noxious insects, vicious animals, animals suffering from painful or incurable disease or accident, and, in general, wherever wisdom and kindness unite to enjoin such a course; but through the centuries the general interpretation of this injunction in Buddhist circles is of a very sweeping nature. Each sentient being, as truly as each human being, is on its way to Buddhahood, and to slay it interrupts its present opportunity for advancement toward enlightenment. Moreover, the attempt to slay inspires in the victim fear and horror that tend to awaken anger and hatred and a desire for revenge; all of which, even in an animal mind, must be overcome and outgrown before it can register an actual advancement. On the actor's part the impulse to slay is always prompted by some lower motive: to save one's own life, revenge, anger, discomfort, and often because it makes one feel bad to see another suffer and it is easier to put it out of misery than to care for it, and often simply because we do not like it, like killing a harmless snake. Remember these injunctions are for followers of the Golden Path; followers of a more worldly path will have another code, so if there is any doubt as to the advisability of killing or not killing it might safely be left to them. To take another's life is to enhance one's egoism and to darken one's vision of a kinder and a more unitive existence. To commit such a wilful act is to lay up an evil karma that must be expiated somewhere and sometime. The instinctive urge to self-defence is a form of selfishness that checks the develop-



ment of a budding unselfish spiritual sense of sympathy and compassion and unity. To advance spiritward is to advance in the direction of unity and identity, and to do it one must inhibit and get rid of any lower urge to the contrary. Under every circumstance followers of the Golden Path should think first of another's welfare and interests, and be willing to sacrifice one's own comfort and even safety for another's well-being.

Concerning the taking of life for the pleasure and excitement of hunting and fishing very little needs to be said; even hunters and fishers themselves, when the passion of the chase is over, have little heart to defend their course. There may be excuse for the taking of life when there is a plausible reason for it, but there can be no excuse for the taking of life from mere sport. That is murder, and there is always a nemesis dogging the steps of a murderer.

Even in the face of hunger, the injunction holds. Hunger is the natural call of the body for sustenance, and animal flesh is a concentrated form of food that is well adapted to satisfy hunger, but the taking of life to gratify hunger involves an unkind and unsympathetic act that ought under every circumstance to be avoided. Slaying for food generally means, however, not so much meeting a necessity as it is the gratification of the desire for an appetising food. That is, one's fancy is to be gratified at the cost of another sentient being's life. The eating of meat is also open to the serious charge that many obscure diseases follow the practice. It is certain that constipation and rheuma-



tism have this practice as at least one of the causes, and until governments instituted their present rigid laws for the inspection of meat there were frequent epidemics that could be traced to the eating of diseased meat. Whether the eating of meat influences the temperament of the eater is a much discussed question. Are races who depend largely on vegetables and grains for their food characteristically more friendly, thoughtful and peaceable than are the meat-eating nations? Are races who depend largely on meat for their food more energetic and dominating? It often seems so, and it does appear to brutalise and excite the eater and to deaden his spirituality and his sensitiveness to another's interests. Meat is certainly not a hygienic form of food; it is nasty, disgusting and decays quickly.

There is no necessity for eating meat, anyway, for Nature furnishes an abundant supply of milk, eggs, many grains, corn, nuts, oil, fruit and vegetables of many kinds, root, leaf and seed-bearing. The body seems to be especially adapted to grow healthfully on a vegetable diet. The only criticism that is commonly brought against it is that it does not provide the requisite strength for the harder kinds of labour, but this can perhaps be explained and obviated by a better "balancing" of the diet. There is a science of dietetics these days that offers assured recommendations for the right proportions of fats, proteins, carbohydrates and minerals, all of which can be secured by the wise choice of vegetable foods.

There is a comparatively new word that is being increasingly used of late—symbiosis. It is from two



Greek words meaning sympathy and life. It is used to connote a scientific hypothesis that Nature favours those species of animals that practise symbiosis, and slowly weeds out those species that violate it by slaying and eating other animals; that is, Nature favours "cross-feeding" rather than "in-feeding." By cross-feeding is meant the reciprocal feeding on the spare products of another and partnering kingdom—as, for instance, bees and flowers; man and his dairy herds and field crops. There is much evidence to show that from an evolutionary point of view, carnivorous species disappear before herbaceous species. Whether this is universally true or not, it is certainly a more spiritual view of evolution than is one based on a narrow view of survival, meaning survival of the physically strongest, which calls for a "nature red in tooth and claw." For these reasons our modern ideas are a perfect endorsement of the recommendations of Gautama that followers of the Golden Path, ought not to eat that which calls for the killing of any sentient life; and if the killing for food is unnecessary, then certainly killing for any other reason is doubly wrong. It might be said that if there is no killing of dangerous and noxious animals they would soon overrun the earth, as tigers and snakes once did in India. But let us not worry; Nature has her own ways for protecting and furthering her own ends, and as progress spiritward is one of them we might leave it to the interaction of cosmic laws to do what exterminating is necessary. At any rate, if killing is to be done, let it be done by worldly-minded men and not by followers of the Golden Path.



In these modern days of civilisation and culture one would think that the wickedness and foolishness of war would be outlawed and a thing of the past, but, alas! it seems as though the wholesale murdering of men in battle was still looked upon as an honour rather than a shame. The fruits of science seem stultified by their use in war, mightier warships and cannon, more rapid-firing guns, more powerful explosives, deadlier gases. All honour to Gautama that he stood firm against the settlement of disagreements by warfare and forbade his monks to ever become soldiers. Only Quaker Christians stand<sup>2</sup> with Buddhists in this Roll of Honour.

The second of Gautama's injunctions had to do with wrong acts committed under the instinct of self-propagation—not to commit adultery. Again we wish to remind our readers that it was not a specific act that Gautama had in mind by this injunction. Of far more importance to him was the state of mind that prompted such acts—sex desire and lust—that must be controlled in the interests of advancement spiritward. Gautama accepted the ethics of his day, but recognised here, as elsewhere, progressive degrees of chastity as his disciples advanced from lay men and women to monks and nuns, and from that to Arahats and Bodhisattvas. The ethics of his day in India looked lightly on sex intimacies if conducted without public scandal, something that might wisely be accepted and ignored. While Gautama accepted this loose custom for worldly people, he recognised that it was not suitable for his disciples, so he urged upon them a stricter observance:



if unmarried they were to restrict sex relations to the unmarried, and, if married, within the bounds of marriage, which in his day was polygamous. For his monks and nuns he instituted a still higher code: they were to live a strictly celibate life, of which we shall speak in a later chapter. Here we need only to refer to the reasons why unrestrained lust interferes and inhibits mind-control, which is the goal of the Golden Path.

In the first place, let us look at sex matters in an entirely unprejudiced manner. Sex intercourse has three aspects: first, it is a natural necessity for procreation and the continuance of the race; second, men and women are so constituted that occasional indulgence is almost a necessity for their physical well-being, for without it there is a gradual increase of physical and nervous tension that is unwholesome, and results in restlessness, inability to concentrate, unhappiness, and other more serious morbid conditions of the body and mind. It is true that these pathological conditions can be largely minimised by an earnest concentration of mind and heart on some engrossing interest. This is called sublimation, and it works out very well in most cases. The third aspect is the spiritual aspect; in it the union of two congenial, affectionate natures is rewarded by an experience of increased mental power and freedom, and a revelation of spiritual delight and rapture. Sex union is Nature's power-house for the transformation of spiritual energy into mental and physical results. It is the natural mechanism for the manifestation of the Principle of Differentiation on the



mental plane in ideas and on the physical plane in forms and activities. Thus we see that all three aspects are manifestations of the outward-going process—namely, propagation, relief of tension, transformation of spiritual energy into mental and physical effects. Now, if one is concentrating their attention on an effort to progress inward toward enlightenment and spiritual unity, they can wisely restrain, and even omit, sex relations altogether.

Gautama by his injunction did not ignore these values, he only draws the attention of his disciples to the Middle Way—that is, to the wise and kindly restraint of the sex passions within the limits of reason. And in this he was very wise and consistent, for he more than any of his followers probably knew by experience both the results of free indulgence among the dancing girls of his father's palace and the extreme denials of the ascetic life. He knew by experience how easily sex passion flames up by careless conduct and exposure to temptation and, once inflamed, how imperious its demands become. He knew how it blotted out for the time all thought and purpose and ideals opposed to it, and how it consumed and wasted nervous energy by its excess. He knew that nothing (except possibly speech) interfered so successfully and completely with free, unprejudiced thinking as sex thoughts, sex dalliance and intercourse. Nature made it so to insure its biologic ends. His injunction was designed to limit it to its proper time and place and to keep it under strict surveillance of the mind, until, as the mind became enlightened, its indulgence could be



omitted altogether. Of the celibate life of the monks and nuns we shall speak later.

Now a word as to why it is wise to restrain sex thoughts and sex indulgence when one undertakes the adventure of the Golden Path inward toward mind-control. It is because sex interests are so subtle and insistent and exclusive and dominating. When one yields to them, as he often can, wisely and honestly, he thereby shuts the door to other thoughts and interests. He is no longer free to think, to choose, to decide otherwise. Sex interests, also, inspire excessive emotional states that hold over long after, often to determine and nullify one's ideals and resolutions. For very good biologic reasons intercourse, which is the very acme of mutuality, carries with it, if normal, a strong emotional state of gratitude and loyalty and devotion to one's sex partner, which in itself is good provided that it does not dominate and exclude other better or higher mental and spiritual impulses, which it often does. Especially is this true in the case of the man. After normal intercourse there follows an extreme lassitude and weariness and satisfaction that is then followed a little later by a renewed feeling of strength and purpose and zeal that is especially directed towards his sex partner. This is as it should be, for by it the woman is assured of care and protection and support during the long months and years of confinement and child nurture. But in illicit relations other emotional states follow, or are likely to follow: disgust, remorse, discouragement, exhaustion and weakened ideals and purposes. Both these states,



whether the good or the bad, interfere seriously with one's ability to follow the Golden Path to mind-control. Especially does it interfere when one's sex partner is out of sympathy with one's mental and spiritual ideals, and her desires and pleadings and influence are added to his own sense of gratitude and loyalty to lead him astray from the Golden Path. Again Gautama shows his good sense by his injunction to the Middle Way of restraint and thoughtfulness. In case one's sex partner is equally earnest to follow the Golden Path, what is the wise attitude to hold toward the question? The answer to that can be better given in a later chapter. Let us pass on now to the other injunctions.

The third injunction—not to steal—relates to the temptations prompted by the instinctive will-to-self-aggrandisement. As in the foregoing, Gautama's interest was not with what is technically known as theft, but was with the state of mind that prompted it—namely, covetousness. The injunction covered not only theft of objects but included the whole range of inordinate desire. His disciples were to avoid even wanting anything that did not belong to them, and, more than that, they were to avoid wanting anything but the very simplest and most necessary articles of clothing and utensils. One suit of cast-off clothes, a begging-bowl, a razor, a toothbrush, were considered sufficient property for a monk. To desire things keeps the mind weighted down to the physical plane. It exaggerates the habit of discrimination and relative values, makes one discontented with that which he has, and makes him desirous for things as compared



with imponderable values of ideas and principles. Riches have fetters and burdens that voluntary, sincere poverty is free from. If anyone is dependent upon things, if his happiness depends on his getting possession of things, his freedom to leave the lower plane for a higher is immensely circumscribed. Gautama wanted to release their minds from this bondage in order that they might be free to seek a higher. There must be no excess baggage for a pilgrim on the Golden Path. Jesus had the same idea in mind when he said to the rich young man: "But I say unto you, give away that which thou hast and come take up thy cross and follow me." To this end Gautama made the cornerstone of his Brotherhood of monks the strictest poverty. They were to beg for each day's food and were never to accept gifts of money. They were to work if they had a chance, but were to take their pay in food and clothing, never in money. Even the Brotherhood as an organisation was only to receive necessary gifts for their shelter and sustenance, monasteries and fields. If gifts were insufficient, or nothing was forthcoming, they must go hungry, but they must never steal or take anything that had not actually been given them.

On the other hand, he taught his laymen that giving gifts to the monks was an opportunity to develop their own higher resources and to lay up merit, an opportunity for which they should be grateful. Thankful giving is the very opposite of stealing in its effect on the mind and spirit of man. The one depresses and deadens, the other quickens and makes alive. The one



beclouds the mind, the other frees it of limiting and obscuring fetters.

The injunction not to steal, in Gautama's mind, covered many things not included in the command, "Thou shalt not steal." That command is specific and definite. Gautama's injunction, on the contrary, is broad and inclusive. Many a merchant and manufacturer holding a virtual monopoly can legally charge excessive prices and get rich quick, but looking at it as an avaricious state of mind, he is stealing just as much as a highwayman or bandit. A lawyer, a doctor, an undertaker, can legally take advantage of his client's necessities and overcharge, but, looked at as an avaricious state of mind, if he were a Buddhist he could not do it, because it would be taking that which did not rightfully belong to him, or would not be freely given him if all the facts were known. Grafting in politics is stealing, even if it does come under some general head of "commission" or "gift." So is it stealing when a hired labourer, or a servant, or an official, gives only partial return for his wages. If one is seeking to follow the Golden Path he cannot do such things, because they are prejudicial to his success in attaining mind-control (by their insidious beclouding and obscuring of one's sense of another's rights and interests). The Golden Path leads to sympathy and compassion and co-operation with one's fellows; to take from another what is not freely given is a movement in an absolutely contrary direction and is motivated by an avaricious and covetous mind. If it is "more blessed to give than to receive," it is infinitely better to give than to steal.



The lower, unconscious instinct to self-aggrandisement must be controlled by the conscious mind, until the object of its desires and graspings are seen to be what they truly are—transient, painful and empty of real value.

The fourth injunction is not to lie. To lie and to deceive is prompted by an aspect of the will-to-live, a fear of bodily danger or discomfort, but it is resorted to far oftener as a defence against danger to one's mental integrity and safety, and as a kind of self-aggrandisement to one's mental and emotional pride. Stealing is an effort to enhance one's will-to-power, lying is an effort to enhance one's will-to-importance. A very common form of conceit is the so-called "white lie," which is something uttered or implied in deference to conventionality, or courtesy, or desire to escape disagreeable consequences. There are many utterances that are untrue that are not lies, because a lie always involves intent to deceive. A novel or the drama are not lies. Intentional deception is bad, because it creates a false situation in one's favour and against another's interests, that must for ever after be buttressed by further untruths. It creates a situation that carries with it grounds for worry and fear and dislike and ill-will. It is a most insidious and clinging hindrance to one's inward progress toward mind-control. Many an otherwise good man or woman would scorn to tell a definite, deliberate, specific lie, but who habitually deceives by choice of words and manner of speaking and behaviour. One can just as truly tell a lie by keeping silence as by speaking. A lie always has an inward purpose to de-



ceive. Sometimes that purpose is out-and-out selfish and crass, at other times it may be plausible and disguised and remote, but the injunction not to lie covers them all. This is far from excusing bluntness and discourtesy. Many things better be left unsaid in the interests of kindness, but there is always a wise and kindly way of speaking the truth in love.

A common failure to observe this injunction is by merchants who misrepresent the value or quality of their goods. They are often guilty of both deception and stealing by so doing. A lot of deceiving goes on in modern society under the name of politeness and a selfish desire to entertain and be gracious and pleasing, but all deception, in whatever form, serves to impede progress inward toward mind-control. By its very falseness and unreality it cumbers the path with hindrances and unnecessary difficulties. We have already noticed and discussed the evil of thoughtless speaking, and with it often goes the added danger of deception. It is so easy to deceive when talking. One does not think at such a time and the words are motivated by subconscious or unconscious mental moods, sensuous desires, dislike, fears; very often words are unconsciously coloured by ulterior motives, by some selfish interest or some cheap desire to flatter or please. But wilful deception always produces unstable conditions that ever after call for thought and worry. If one can control their words and speech, much of the tendency to deceive will disappear. And much more will disappear when we come to discuss, as we shall in later chapters, the true nature and relative values of things, ideas and principles. But until



this inward knowledge of true values is attained, one must consciously and continually restrain one's tendency to deceive. There are many dangers that beset the Golden Path inward, but none are more subtle than this very tendency to deceive.

The fifth injunction is designed to keep the mind free from external and artificial stimulants and opiates. It is usually worded not to drink intoxicating liquors, but, as usual, the Buddhist interpretation of it is far wider and more inclusive: it is made to include all stimulants, opiates and stupefying or exciting drugs or drinks. It forbids the use of anything that tends to befuddle or to forfeit the control of one's mind. How can one advance toward mind-control when at the same time he is using things that forfeit 'mind-control? In Gautama's day the use of drugs and stimulants and anæsthetics for medicinal purposes was unknown; probably if he had known of that phase of the healing art his good sense and kind heart would have led him to modify the extreme application of the injunction. There is a grave danger, however, in their indiscriminate and too free use for that good purpose. Some doctors use whisky and brandy freely in their practice, others will use none, and the advantage or disadvantage is not evident enough to decide on a general rule. In such a case, the injunction should hold—not to use them. All such stimulants and opiates carry with their use a certain habit-forming power that is to be feared and avoided wherever possible. Even mild and seemingly harmless stimulants and quieting potions like



tea, coffee and tobacco are to be sparingly used and the desire and habit kept under strict control. Even with the use of the mildest of them the desired effect is only transient and there follows a reaction that more than balances the good effect. Mind-control must not be given over by the use of external things; it must be kept in the control of the higher faculties and powers of the mind itself if progress inward is to be attained.

Of the evil effects of the use of stimulants and drugs little need be said, they are so obvious; no one defends their use to that extent. But the evil has its beginning in the mild use, and it is the mild use that must be avoided if the excessive use is to be avoided. Once the habit is started it is increasingly difficult to end or even to control; and even their mild use is prejudicial in its effect on the effort to obtain efficient mind-control.

But there are other stimulants and drugs than those material things that are sold over the counter. There is the careless exposure to the tempting and exciting influences of sex companionship, dances, automobile joy-rides, petting parties; there are the exciting sex-novels, the absorbing detective stories that so-called great men love to read for "relaxation"; there are movies, radio, newspapers and the drama, all of which are patronised largely for their value in feeding the restless mind, something "to take up time," to engross attention, to distract the mind from sober thought and truthful reflection and the quiet rest that the mind really needs after the work of a busy day. If one is sincerely seeking to follow the Golden Path to mind-



control, every form of stimulant and opiate must be sedulously avoided.

In closing this chapter on outward behaviour, let us recall the fact that Gautama was less concerned with the outward act itself as he was with the states of mind that prompted and conditioned the act, but one ought not, and must not, let the outward act go unchallenged until the inner states of mind are brought under control. One must first of all, by determined will-power, seek to control his outward acts. Success in this effort, through memory and habit, will in a large measure weaken the habit-tendencies of the subconscious instincts, but the full control of them cannot be attained until one gives attention to the direct control of the inner states of mind, which will be discussed in a later chapter.

Gautama asked of his disciples no vows, no promises; he avoided even the appearance of exercising authority over them; he simply appealed to their good sense and their honest purpose to avoid low and unworthy acts, so that they later might devote their whole attention and strength to the attainment of the more ideal. If one fails in any particular, it is no sin for which one should be punished: it is simply an unwise act whose consequences one must bear and out-live. But those consequences are very serious, for their "seed" is stored in the Psychic Mind, there to condition, through habit-tendencies and karma, the following life of the one who commits the foolish act, and to further condition the lives of the innumerable others who shall later share in the formative effects of his



karma. This is true in a measure of all desires, thoughts and moods if they are consciously cherished, but is particularly true when these inner thoughts, moods and desires are expressed in outward acts and behaviour. Therefore, first of all one must seek to avoid all ill-advised and unkind acts of outward behaviour.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE FIFTH STAGE—RIGHT VOCATION

IN our modern days, when economic competition is so keen and relentless and our whole civilisation based on material values, the importance of the Fifth Stage of the Golden Path is often overlooked. Any vocation is considered to be “right” if it provides a fair living, and it is very desirable if by it a man becomes rich. In the old days of India, social castes were clearly marked and were unchangeable. Brahmins were a semi-noble, priestly and scholarly class; there was the soldier class, followed by farmers, craftsmen, merchants, labourers, and “outcastes” last. In China it was easier to pass from one caste to another, but honour was strictly graded: scholars, farmers, craftsmen, merchants, soldiers. In both India and China something of social scorn was visited on such occupations as barber, actor, innkeeper, ferryman, butcher, leather-worker, scavenger, thief, gambler. Gautama, to his honour, set his face firmly against all caste distinctions. He welcomed sincere disciples from any caste impartially. Upali, the barber, came to high honour because of his faultless memory; Ambapali was a courtesan who was very generous to the Brotherhood; Angulimala was a fierce bandit, but became noted for his sincere humility; Saraputra was a very learned Brahmin; but they were equally honoured by the Buddha. Nevertheless, it was quite in keeping with his conduct to include in his



teachings this item of "Right Vocation." When they became his disciples, Upali, Ambapali, Angulimala, Saraputra, must forsake the old life to live a new life more in keeping with their new purpose.

One's vocation largely conditions one's mental and spiritual attitude towards others, and toward life in general. Even religious teachers easily yield to the natural effect of the "cloth"—to become smug and complacent and egoistic. It is very easy for a butcher to become callous to the sight of blood and suffering; for a gambler to become reckless; for a stockbroker to become deceptive; a soldier, heartless; a trader, dishonest; a rich man, conceited, selfish and self-indulgent. Against all these dangers of vocation, Gautama uttered his warning. Some callings must be ruled out altogether: soldier, butcher, hunter, fisherman, keeper of a house of prostitution, an entertainer who caters to the passions of people, a gambler and a dealer in intoxicants and drugs. Then there are other callings on the borderline that offer special temptations to quick profits—like an innkeeper who lets rooms to guests of doubtful character, theatre managers who offer questionable plays, keepers of dance-halls, and any other calling that caters to, or is tempted to cater to, the weaknesses of human nature for personal profit. There was one vocation that stood high in Gautama's estimation—the life of a celibate monk or nun—and of this we shall speak in a later chapter.

To follow the Golden Path with sincerity and exclusive attention calls for the greatest care and self-denial. Many a man employed in a respectable calling finds



himself exposed to some particular temptation: a little deception, a little shutting of the eyes, a little injustice or hardness of heart, and the road to quicker profits is assured. Perhaps the urge comes from one's employer, or one's wife, or one's friend. Satisfactory employment is often hard to find and hard to keep; others are dependent upon one; what shall one do? Often one tries hard, desperately hard, to bear up against temptation, knowing that to yield will bring worldly success and along with it spiritual shame and failure. All honour to the man or woman who chooses humble employment and narrow circumstances because with them he can be honest with himself.

In this, as in all the stages of the Golden Path, the first demand is for restraint, but with restraint comes enlightenment, insight and spiritual peace. Ambition and greed are great incentives to worldly success, but with such success follows a failing and atrophy of the more ideal and spiritual impulses. There is something inspiring in the ringing words of Shakespeare: "Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition, for by that sin the angels fell." What, after all, are the temporary riches and indulgences that the world has to offer when compared with the enduring values of insight and joy and peace which the Spirit offers at the end of the Golden Path? The words of Jesus have a true Buddhist ring to them: "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden . . . take my yoke upon you and learn of me . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

You may think that we have wandered a long way



from our subject, Right Vocation; not at all. If heavy-hearted, with a family dependent, you are out of work, or are called upon to give up an unsatisfactory position, you will better appreciate the difficulties of this stage of the Path. It is indeed steep and rugged and difficult; be of good cheer, there is a beautiful stretch of road just ahead, but to attain unto it one must be as free as possible of all entangling circumstances. Having "Right Employment" makes the journey much easier and happier.

Rightfully included under this heading is the subject of environment in general. Where, and in what manner, should we most wisely live? The broad answer is, that one should so condition his daily life that he can most easily follow the Golden Path. That is, one should avoid anything and everything that tends to enslave and tie him down to the things of the world—its multitudinous activities, engrossments and pleasurable excitements. If one lives in a fine house in "just the right neighbourhood" it probably means an excessive expense and a constant temptation to live up to, or beyond, one's means. "To keep up with the Joneses" will probably be a constant, besetting urge. One thing leads on to another: the house must be painted and re-decorated, and, to keep up appearances, a new set of furniture is needed; and then the rug doesn't match. Then, when it is all fitted up, they must entertain, and that means new dresses, and return calls, a new car, go somewhere, and so on indefinitely; with the inevitable result of worry and weariness, and increase of necessity to add to one's income. Then



there is the reaction of one's mind and spirit: dissatisfaction, increasing dependence on external things for one's comfort, pleasure and peace of mind.

Under such circumstances how can one happily follow the Golden Path? It calls for self-restraint, thoughtfulness and concentration on the highest ideals of the spirit. And consider the effect on one's children, whose habits are being formed and whose ideals are taking shape. Far better an inexpensive home among poor people, where there is daily opportunity for sympathy and a surplus of means with which to express it. What if it is narrow and inconvenient and inartistic? Where love and self-denial are, there the ascent of the Golden Path is made easy. When someone commiserated St. Francis on his life of poverty, he replied: "But my Lady Poverty is so beautiful." That is it. With every severance of ties to material things and the ending of dependence upon the transient and empty values of the world, one's possessions and enjoyment of the riches of mental freedom and spiritual joy increase. It is easy to understand, therefore, why Gautama himself lived the homeless life and recommended it to his disciples. When a tramp, who was boiling coffee in an old tomato can on a smoky fire by the roadside, was asked why he did not go to work and earn money for a more comfortable living, he replied: "Why, governor, I'm free. I own the world; I can go anywhere; I'm a multi-millionaire." That is far more than many a rich man or woman, in a palatial home, with unlimited means for self-indulgence, can say, chained as they are to business, to engagements, to



expensive families, and to their own selfish desires for comforts and luxuries and indulgent habits. But, again, the Middle Way is to be preferred. Far better is a life of limited means, where there is the necessity for honest labour and self-denial and the friendly co-operation of wife and children; where kindness and affection and hope and courage and faith are its wealth and its beauty.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SIXTH STAGE—RIGHT EFFORT

HITHERTO the stages of the Golden Path have been more or less connected with external things of speech, behaviour and environment, but now we are to turn our backs to the external world and, facing inward, seek to gain control of the more inward states of mind, where the cosmic urge to differentiation is more generalised.

Gautama is credited with suggesting six ideal states of mind, or virtues of perfection, that are usually called the Paramitas. They must be well established if one is to succeed in Right Effort in attaining mind-control. They are as follows: (1) Goodwill and a spirit of charity (*dana*); (2) a spirit of obedience to the injunctions concerning good behaviour (*sila*); (3) a spirit of humble patience in well-doing (*kshanti*); (4) a spirit of untiring zeal (*virya*); (5) a spirit of concentrated attention (*dhyana*); (6) a heart of wisdom (*prajna*).

In a previous chapter we called attention to the fact that Gautama was less concerned with external speech and acts than he was with the subconscious mental states, emotional moods, instincts, impulses, which prompted and conditioned the words and acts. We have now to note that all these subconscious moods, instincts and impulses, likes and dislikes, attractions and aversions, thirsts, lusts and desires, are themselves dependent on other and higher states of mind that are



more under the control of the conscious mind. The present stage of the Golden Path is concerned with the task of getting these higher states of mind into control.

The first of the Six Paramitas is the precept to cherish a general state of good-will and charity. This will express itself in kind words and charitable acts. The opposite injunction would be to avoid ill-will, the clinging to wealth and pleasure, selfishness, covetousness, avariciousness, resentment, injustice and unkindness. Thus obedience to this precept will make it easier to carry into effect all the injunctions previously discussed concerning good behaviour. It does so by first controlling the intermediate and more particular unconscious moods, instincts and impulses. Good-will, charity, unselfishness, are all expressions of a higher and more inclusive idea of sympathy, and of the still higher spiritual principle of compassion.

The principle of good-will will prompt one not only to be kind-hearted, but it will prompt one to express his kind-heartedness in almsgiving of money, food, clothing, etc., in the giving of more spiritual gifts, sympathy, explanation of the Dharma, sharing one's pleasures, and even giving one's own life. Gautama taught that gifts for the support of the monks and nuns were especially meritorious, because it enabled the monks to devote all their time to the realisation of the Path to Wisdom and Peace. What greater kindness can there be than to help a brother man on the upward path to Enlightenment? The highest generosity is generosity of spirit, that understands and sympathises.

The second precept is to cherish a humble and will-



ing obedience to the precepts for good behaviour mentioned in the Fourth Stage of the Golden Path. One is to recognise their value in the effort to live a good life and to attain an efficient mind-control. It must be second nature to him to be kind to all animate life, to be pure-minded in all sex relations, to avoid all covetousness and avariciousness, to speak and think the truth in love, and to sedulously avoid everything that tends to weaken mind-control. This precept calls upon him to cherish a love for all good thoughts, so that he will instinctively choose the good as a motive to action. To clear the mind of doubt and uncertainty as to whether a particular impulse to act is good or not, it is well to get into the habit of putting to oneself the test question before every act: "Is it wise and kind?" Every mental impulse, and its expression in act, should meet both these values. We may think, upon reflection, that it would be wise but not kind, or kind but not wise. Then give it further consideration until a solution can be discovered and decided upon that will satisfy both requirements. But, when in doubt, perhaps it is better to err on the side of kindness. Fortunate the boy or girl who, from childhood, has had in parents and friends examples of those who have thus held the impulse to action under wise control. But if one has been unfortunate in this regard, the way is now open for him to establish in himself such an example of wisdom and kindness.

The third precept is to cherish a spirit of humble patience. This is, for most people, a very difficult thing to do, for the tendency to self-assertion, egoism, pride,



and impatience with everything that trespasses against one's selfish interests or comfort or nerves is very besetting. But once the spirit and habit of patience is attained, there is nothing like it to make easy the road to wisdom and kindness and their expression in good behaviour. No one, or at least very, very few, are incorrigibly wicked and egoistic. If one, by his habitual words and acts, may seem so, it is more often than not that his pride has been touched, and he flames into anger and impatience on the spur of the moment. With a humble state of mind and a spirit of patience the tender spot of irritation will be avoided and a more normal state of mind will be recovered. Ill-health, lack of success, overwhelming evils and difficulties naturally discourage one, but a general spirit of humble patience will bear one up until they are over. Humble patience always carries with it a spirit of forgiveness; when one is misunderstood or cruelly treated, it is humble patience that upholds one and, better still, disarms one's enemy and makes of him a friend. In pain and sickness it is patience that best co-operates with Nature's healing art, and when the end of life draws near, it is patience that makes the passing bearable and beautiful.

The fourth precept is to cherish a mental state of zeal and industry. Its opposite is slothfulness, a wavering mind, discouragement, indifference to the value of mind-control, to the fruits of thoughtful meditation and spiritual concentration. Many, many people would be good if they could be good without too great or too prolonged an effort. It is a foolish thing to think or say that following the Golden Path is a lazy man's



sport. Let such an one try to do it even for one hour. Let him try concentration of mind, without permitting the intrusion of vagrant thoughts, for five minutes. To follow the Path with sincerity will call for the clearest conviction as to its object and value, the firmest purpose and resolution to follow it to the end, and the most earnest zeal and courage and patience and persistence.

When the physical adventure of climbing a high mountain is a group affair, the zeal and strength of some will, by their very example and contagion, carry the laggards along; but the adventure of the Golden Path is at first a solitary task: one is almost wholly dependent on his own resolution and zeal. There is encouragement, however, in the budding thought that one's own effort and faithfulness, by their example, will be a means of strength and encouragement to others who are following after. It is by the experience of overcoming difficulties and hindrances, the greatest of which are within one's own self, that one frees his own Buddha-nature for sympathy and compassion toward others. We have said that at first the adventure of the Golden Path was a solitary task, but as the pilgrim advances he more and more "connects" with other pilgrims, and their paths unite in mutually helpful companionship, until toward the end they become one in fact. One's weakness, another's strength; one's faith, another's weariness; one's courage and zeal, another's faint-heartedness; they are one and the same in the common Buddha-nature.

Right effort includes zeal in every activity and task



of life, knowing no easy or hard, pleasant or disagreeable, for oneself or for another; in the suppression of unworthy thoughts, the cultivation of all good purposes and impulses; the suppression of egoism and the development of self-control to its highest efficiency. Above all, it calls for a determined effort to attain a true understanding of the order and end of life.

The fifth precept is to develop and cherish a habit of concentrated attention in perfect faith and courage upon whatever we are thinking or doing. Every thought and act is a manifestation of Buddha-nature; by concentration we open and free the channels of our nature to give it free course. In our moments of thoughtfulness we ought not to fall into the lazy habit of erratic and shifting thought, moved by every passing mood and whim and desire, but we ought to think truly and steadily and clearly to some definite and satisfying conclusion, and, having reached it, to rest upon it quietly and confidently. Especially should we direct our thinking to an effort to understand the true meaning of life, and, finding it, concentrate our attention upon it in perfect faith and courage. That is to fulfil this precept. It is like an electrical engineer: he first seeks to secure a clear understanding of the fundamental laws of electricity; then he wisely makes all his further experiments and projects to conform to the fundamental principles. Thus, recognising the fundamental characteristics of life—their transiency, their painfulness, their lack of substance and the crucial part that desire plays in them—one should then concentrate all his efforts to control his life in accordance



with these fundamental and assured facts. This can best be done by following the Golden Path to mind-control. Let us, then, concentrate all our thought, our attention, our effort, to its adventure, holding fast to gains already made, avoiding bypaths that lead to error, concentrated and steadfast in the midst of this world of turmoil and change and unrest and indecision.

The sixth precept is to cherish "a heart of wisdom." Wisdom does not mean vast knowledge and great erudition; wisdom is insight into reality, intuitive understanding, seeing things as they truly are, appreciating the highest and best at its true value. A heart of wisdom understands and appreciates the relativity of body, mind and spirit, the universality of cause and effect, the transient, unsubstantial nature of the conscious-mind, but in patient faith concentrates his attention on the unchanging reality of the Buddhahood. Enlightenment comes from thus concentrating on this highest truth.

Wisdom is the "suchness" of the Buddhahood. Wisdom is of itself the Ultimate Unifying Principle. Wisdom is both the "Dharmakaya" and "Prajna"; that is, it is both the harmonious unity of truth and its radiation in creative energy and gracious compassion. If one has a heart of wisdom he has within himself both serenity and activity; he holds himself serene, confident and unperturbed, so that through him this gracious compassion and creative activity may radiate freely and untransformed to all sentient life. Wisdom does not so much call for self-activity as it does for serenity, confidence and selflessness in the midst of the



assertiveness, confusion and discouragements of this world of change and illusion. Wisdom constrains one from impulsive thoughts or words or acts, either of elation or discouragement. He is not called to assume an exaggerated responsibility for the evil of the world, neither can he remain entirely inactive and unconcerned, but, cherishing a heart of wisdom, he should be humbly ready to do whatever comes to his hand to do in a wise and kindly manner, for it is Prajna that works through him to its own good ends.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE SEVENTH STAGE—RIGHT MINDFULNESS

THE Pali word for the Seventh Stage has a root meaning of both recollection and thinking—that is, it carries the meaning of thoughtfulness based on memory, recollection. Another commentator urges that the word means true cognition. If the former meaning is preferable, it would read: recalling all of one's experiences, sensations, perceptions, consciousnesses and ideas derived from them, and thinking them over to seek out their true and unitive meaning and significance. If the latter interpretation is to be preferred, it would read: to discover the true art of thinking, and, following it, to arrive at ever higher truth. In either case the end to be attained is the same: to find the true meaning of existence. To word it negatively it might read: to avoid all selfish, false, irrational ways of thinking; to avoid wasting one's attention on illusions, superficial differences and trivial discriminations; and seeking to avoid especially the hindrances of ignorance, greed, fear, hatred and infatuation. Positively, it means to seek in one's thinking the true and essential facts and to consider them in their universal and unitive aspects.

The value of Right Mindfulness is based on sound psychological principles. Whatever we think about, there is an accompanying judgment and the awakening of a desire for its realisation, or of an aversion to it.



A good thought awakens the desire to express it in some good act; a bad thought awakens a desire to express it in act also, but the mind at once involuntarily tries to rationalise its doubtful aspects so that its evil will be obscured, or, at least, will bear the semblance of goodness or desirableness. Then comes the act itself, then memory of the act, the beginning of habit, and its record in character and karma. Thus it is seen that while desire springs from thought it is at first relatively weak, but after it is expressed in act its power is increased tremendously by memory and habit. The best place to control this chain of dependence is while it is still in the form of unexpressed thought, or, better still, to so attain mind-control that the thought itself is automatically rejected before desire is awakened.

Right Mindfulness means to see things “under the aspect of eternity”—that is, free of all limitation, distortion and vagueness of time, desire, prejudice and self-interest. True thinking enables one to see things in their true colours of emptiness, transitoriness and painfulness, and, therefore, fundamentally unsuitable for us and not to be desired and grasped after. It means seeing things “*tathabhutam*”—that is, truthfully in their essential nature.

What is thinking? Thinking, like all the processes of nature, can be best understood under the analogy of nutrition, digestion and assimilation. The lichen and fungi are low forms of existence that have the power of capturing respectively mineral particles and oxygen that, by digestion and assimilation, they utilise for growth. These low forms of life thereby themselves



become nutriment that is suitable for the next higher forms of life. This goes on, step by step, until in man the sense organs have the power of transforming physical stimuli into mental concepts, which in their turn are a convenient form of nutriment for the growth of more complex thoughts and ideas. Sense concepts must be masticated, digested and assimilated by recollection and mindfulness. The purpose and discipline of this Seventh Stage of the Golden Path is to provide the necessary time and attention to think things over, to digest all the rich harvest of life's experience, and thus to discover true values and meaning without bias of desire or prejudice or fear.

The Buddhist understanding of knowledge classifies it into three grades: first is the knowledge that is based on appearances; second is knowledge based on careful observation and discriminative thought; and third is knowledge of things as they truly are in their essential reality. The first is called accommodation knowledge; it is imperfect, deceptive, erroneous and generally excites emotion. One thinks he sees a snake in the path, impulsively cries out and jumps aside. The second is called relative knowledge; one has time to think about it, to compare and classify; the imagined snake proves to be only a harmless piece of rope, which excites no emotion. The third is called true knowledge; it is seeing things apart from their qualities, and into their essential nature.

The Golden Path is a method of mind-control designed to get rid of the illusions of accommodation knowledge and to develop the capacity for true



knowledge. All desire includes an element of self-deception. We desire things because we think they will give us satisfaction, which they never will, at least not permanently. Having desired them we become attached to them, and resent the coming in of any later ideas or circumstances that will limit their appearance of attractiveness. We do not want to be disillusioned; we instinctively avoid anything in the way of criticism or investigation because we fear that our dream will be shattered. And yet it is the part of wisdom to always be ready and willing to investigate, reconsider and meditate upon, but it takes strength of character to do it honestly and patiently.

In the first place, what is necessary for clear, true thinking? Is it not to so free the mind that it can function as nearly perfectly as possible? That means to get rid of, to abolish, to end, everything that hinders or impedes or obscures or distorts its free functioning. There are three groups of hindrances: the lusts and passions and desires of the body and its senses; the evil tendencies and morbid moods and illusions of the mind and its mental processes; and the infatuations, pride of selfness, will-to-power; and will-to-comfort, and the inborn tendency to look at things solely in reference to egoistic interests. All of these hindrances must be restrained, eradicated and abolished before clear thinking can be fully attained.

All the stages of the Golden Path are designed to the attainment of enlightenment, but this Seventh Stage is particularly intended to attain Right Mindfulness. During the centuries a great many methods have



been suggested and different techniques developed. In Hinayana Buddhism great stress has been laid on the more negative ways of anticipating and excluding desire, such as meditating in a graveyard or before a half-decayed corpse; the purpose is to effectively press home the feeling that all life is impermanent and has its disgusting aspects, thus lessening one's pride of life and desire for unrestrained indulgence. But this is, at best, only a negative kind of Right Mindfulness; there are more positive ways which give ground for more confidence than even the most insidious evil desires, and thoughts and acts may be controlled and gotten rid of.

First of all is the importance of developing a habit of quiet thinking and meditation, and this can be greatly aided by obtaining a suitable environment—freedom from irritating concerns, noise, confusion, interruptions, and with it time for mental digestion and assimilation. Some situations so excite, irritate, engross one that clear thinking is wellnigh impossible. A second aid is the development of a mental habit of avoiding discriminative thinking. The more natural habit for the pragmatic success of life is to think discriminatively, and the scientist must certainly do so, but for meditative purposes a mental habit of unitive thinking is necessary. One must now seek for the spiritual aspect—that is, their unitive aspect, their likenesses and identity. The reason for this is that discrimination is moving away from spirit and unity toward an ever-increasing multiplicity and particularity. Truth and reality have their abode in unity, harmony and inclusiveness. In Right Mindfulness one



should get into the habit of always facing inward toward life's meaning and spirit.

To illustrate this, one may begin by thinking of one's mother, of all her lovely and lovable traits; then one's thoughts should turn to other mothers, to animal mothers, to motherhood in general: its self-abnegation, its loving patience and hope and forgiveness; then one will quite naturally think of the Great Motherhood of the All-Inclusive Dharmakaya. Or, again, one may begin by thinking of rain, the gently falling rain, giving its refreshing strength to great and small alike in perfect disinterestedness and generous bounty. Then think of the drops merging into rivulets, brooks, streams, great rivers, and finally flowing into the great ocean from which the sun had lifted them long since. Then how natural it is to think of Buddhahood from which all derive and all return. Or yet again, one notices a leaf or twig turning to meet the sun's rays; a moth seeking the light; a bird singing for joy in the warmth and abundance of summer; an animal faintly perceiving the source of its comfort, and grateful therefore; a human conscious that it is himself that is warm and comfortable and that he can command it, and conscious of a feeling of sympathy and compassion for all animate life; all are facing toward the primal source of life and mind, and all are alike moving toward the same beneficent fulness of life in the Buddhahood.

The old records speak of fifty-two kinds of meditation, all of which are designed to control and eradicate desire by lifting the thoughts from the empty and transient things of the empirical world up to the more



unitive values of spirit and reality. During the first seventeen believers were to practise meditation on the empty aspects of things by which they would be freed from the illusions of the senses. During the following thirteen they were meditating on the transient aspects, by which they would be freed from the illusions that things are of enduring entity. From thirty to forty-two they were to practise meditation on the "middle," or "dharma," aspect of things, by which things seem to be held together as particulars. With this stage there comes the beginnings of enlightenment, wherein ignorance begins to give way to true knowledge. And from the forty-second to the fifty-second they were to meditate on the unitive likeness of all things, including their own conscious minds, in the unity of the All-Inclusive Dharmakaya.

"The later philosophers of Mahayana Buddhism have unified these many meditations into a system of three, each of which may be considered from three or more standpoints. The three are: Emptiness, Transiency and Middle. On the physical plane, true thinking separates out in its consideration of an object all those elements and attributes and qualities that serve to particularise it which the mind can conceive. There will then remain of the object simply nothing, it is empty, void. Then, considering the group of elements, attributes and qualities which have been segregated, one notes that they are in constant flux and change, that there is nothing that is permanent, neither form, nor weight, nor colour, nor hardness, nor anything. That is, all these particulars are characterised by transiency.



Now, what is it that held this “nothingness” and this group of transient particulars together? This Middle is the law or truth or dharma of its nature. In itself it is empty and transient exactly as the other two, but is more easily seen to be of the nature of mind. But as we try to think how a dharma can unite particular qualities to “nothing” so as to make of it an object, we are forced to the conclusion that in the first there must have been something overlooked: an essence which is inconceivable, to be sure, but as “mind” it must be something—that is, something inscrutable; so the first “nothing,” which is universal in all things, is both nothing in the realm of physics and something in the realm of mind. Likewise the second group, transient particulars, if analysed and followed back, are also seen to be mere appearances and manifestations of mind; so we are forced to the conclusion that there is “mind-only.” As we are now considering these things only from the physical standpoint, we will postpone the consideration of them from the standpoint of philosophy until a later chapter, and at this place merely emphasise the fact that any particular thing, including our own conscious self, is empty and transient, but in essence is of the nature of mind only.

In the earlier chapter on Right Views we saw the necessity of gaining a few right ideas as a basis for a Right Resolution from which to start on a first adventure toward true knowledge. The naïve ideas of childhood and ignorance had to be overpassed and truer ideas had to be gained. The childish illusion that life was made up of the myriad, myriad things of earth in



permanent and substantial existence had to be transcended by careful thinking, and the truer idea that these myriad things were only appearances and manifestations in an endless process of becoming, had to be attained. This gain was relatively truer than the accommodation knowledge of childhood, but it is relative knowledge, after all, for we have not yet attained an insight into the true and essential nature of things. Now, after honestly following the Golden Path thus far and learning something of the art of thinking, we are in a better position to gain higher knowledge of the true meaning and value of existence. But we have come to the limit of the intellectual mind with its powers of discrimination and logic; we must now turn to some more promising faculty, if there be such, if we are to attain more perfect enlightenment.

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## CHAPTER X

### EIGHTH STAGE—RIGHT CONCENTRATION

IN the last chapter we saw that if the mind gave careful heed to its thinking the apparent knowledge of childhood would be found to be based on unreliable premises—namely, on ignorance, illusions, desires, prejudices and infatuations. Careful thinking and meditation would bring to one a more satisfactory kind of knowledge, based on observed relations of the phenomenal world. This relative knowledge is as far as the intellectual mind can carry one, and for all practical purposes it is far enough, but the human spirit refuses to be entirely satisfied with it; it feels intuitively that there is a deeper reality than the empirical mind can fathom. This religious and spiritual yearning of the soul for something that is permanent, peaceful and real can never be wholly satisfied even with the most careful and honest discursive thinking. The soul desiring earnestly an anchorage beyond the storms and tumult of waves of this world of sense experience and mental processes, and finding the intellectual mind incapable of satisfying it, is at a loss where to turn next. Gautama comes to the rescue with the Eighth Stage of the Golden Path—Right Concentration. Gautama says: Restrain the thinking mind which you have found incapable of bringing you to the truth of reality, put it aside for the time being, and you will discover that you possess a finer faculty that *is*



capable of revealing fundamental truth. This finer faculty—the intuitive mind—functions differently than the thinking mind: the latter must have sense-concepts and ideas to work with, and even then it can only arrive at relative truth; but the former has a finer power of mystical identification by which relative truths are merged and unified until their differentiations are lost in the inscrutable harmony of Truth itself. The thinking mind is motivated by the principle of intellection—that is, of differentiation—while the intuitive mind is motivated by the principle of unification.

Using the analogy of nutrition, the thinking mind for its nutrition calls for the concepts of empirical experience, desires and discriminations, and from the digestion of them it gains suitable material for its intellectual needs and mental growth. The intuitive mind, in turn, for its nutriment can use the more complex ideas and ideals of the thinking mind as well as empirical concepts. Thus the process of thinking precedes the process of intuition, just as sense experience precedes intellectual thinking. The intuitive mind cannot assimilate the crude particles of sense stimulation any more than the stomach can assimilate directly particles of minerals and elementary substances. They must first have been digested and assimilated by lower forms of life and have been thereby transformed into complex cellular structures that are suitable for human nutrition. But the intuitive mind is not limited and confined for its nutriment to the advanced conceptions of the intellectual mind; any conscious experience can be



concentrated upon and its significance understood (not necessarily, however, in concrete symbols and words) and appreciated. What is the message of the wind? of a storm at sea? of desert sands? of washing dishes? of toothache? of existence? of mind-only? All are suitable material for the intuitive mind; accept them as nutriment, digest and assimilate their essence, and the new and renewed spiritual insight and joy will be—what it will be.

Or, changing the analogy, using the thinking mind is facing outward, using the intuitive mind is facing inward. The practice of concentration, therefore, is quite different and opposite from thinking, and the ~~results~~ results of concentration are different, very different, but more enlightening and convincing. To gain this absolute knowledge, one must first gain the use of the intuitive mind and its power of spiritual insight, and this can only come through the right use of concentrated attention. This does not mean concentrated thinking upon verbal syllogisms and philosophic propositions, far from it, on the contrary, they should be excluded and forgotten. The real meaning of concentration is far more inclusive than glorified thinking, for it includes for its material all the experiences of the soul, its subconscious instincts, its sense experience, its mental moods and processes, its intellectual thinking, its unconscious bodily metabolisms, its feelings and emotions, its acts and behaviour, its labour and play, its idealisms, its aspirations, its visions; all, all must be brought into a composite complex and into the service of the intuitive mind. We must forsake the familiar



ground of conscious mentation, and, in faith, venture into the unknown darkness of true reality, whatever that may be. Concerning the metaphysical and philosophical aspects of concentration we shall have more to say later on, suffice it to speak here only of its more practical aspects that lie on the borderland of body and mind.

In the first place, to practise Right Concentration does not necessarily mean the intense and prolonged vigil of the ascetic. One should concentrate, in the meaning of the Eighth Stage, on every task and interest of life as they come to one's attention. In thinking, the task is to distinguish truly, and to select wisely, the things that ought and must be done. Plan the activities of the day, and then concentrate attention and effort on each task in turn. Remember each task is equally "noble," each is an expression of the Buddha-mind; put into it your best attention. Self-directed and concentrated attention is the secret of efficiency and power and insight.

When it comes to the proper time for thinking, give that the same honest and concentrated attention. But thinking is so conditioned and limited by one's ignorance, desires, moods and infatuations, that it is often very unreliable. After one has thought as carefully and as truly as he can, he should take time to concentrate his attention on the result of his thinking, to see if it is confirmed by his intuitive insight. And when the time comes to act, to behave, one should quietly and attentively concentrate, if the act is to be most wisely and effectively done, upon the act or



behaviour itself, avoiding all yielding to impulse, moods or dishonesty, avoiding nervousness, frittering away strength and labour by inattention and ill-advised movement and effort.

But one should not wholly confine himself to this simple pragmatic application of concentration. Each follower of the Golden Path should reserve every day some time for the practice of mental concentration as an exercise in mind-control designed to strengthen the unitive aspect of one's personality—that is, to ally himself with the unitive principle rather than the differentiating principle. We are naturally very changeable and unsystematic both in mind and thought. We ~~waver~~, go from this to that putter, fritter away time and opportunities and material and labour. A little time every day for quiet sitting and definite concentration of attention, merely as an exercise to strengthen mind-control, is time well spent.

We have said that the intuitive mind is a different faculty from the intellectual or discriminative mind; it is also located in a different place in the body. The thinking mind is located in the head and brain, while the intuitive mind seems to be located in the back part of the abdomen in the solar plexus, the large ganglia of nerves near the base of the spine. This must be kept in mind when it comes to the practice of concentration as an exercise. For such an exercise one should select a secluded place where there will be as little interruption as possible, or anything to awaken, distract or excite attention and draw the mind away from the task in hand, which is to attain control over self-



directed attention. Let the place be not too bright nor too dark, too warm nor too cold; take a position that will bring the body firmly in its seat, chest well forward, head well back with chin in, eyes half-closed and resting on the floor two or three paces to the front; keep alert and wide awake. If one can do so, sitting crossed-legged on a cushion or rug folded so that the back is two inches higher than the front has proved to be the best position for the longest periods of concentration without fatigue or sleepiness. If this proves to be painful to the back, one may sit against a wall with, possibly, a small cushion in the small of the back, but effort should be made from time to time to lean slightly forward from the wall so as to gradually strengthen the back and thus to maintain a better position. If crossing the legs brings pain after a time, or that position proves to be impossible, a low seat should be found with a straight back or none at all; cross the feet so that the legs are opened, so that one is not tempted to fidget or move about. Part of the exercise is to obtain control of the body as well as the mind; to this end sit perfectly quiet, avoid moving the head or any loud breathing or coughing or sniffing. Let the right hand lie in the palm of the left with the thumbs touching, or let the left hand clasp the fingers of the right, and resting easily against the lower abdomen. As for the breathing, some masters make a good deal of certain "yoga" methods, but ordinarily it is sufficient to breath regularly and moderately slowly, with attention (as far as one gives attention to it) to the out-breathing, the in-breath will take care of itself, and to



think of them both distracts too much attention. Practise abdominal breathing rather than chest breathing, keeping pressure or "power" on the lower part of the abdomen. This can be occasionally practised by leaning forward as you breathe out and leaning back as you breathe in, with a slight pause between breathing out and breathing in. This habit has the added advantage of drawing the blood away from the head and brain and forcing it to the abdomen and the solar plexus. If the mind wanders, as it probably will at first, it is a help to concentrate the attention on the out-breathing and to count ten or twenty; repeat it until the mind becomes quieted again. If one has a rosary, use that ~~instead~~ instead of counting. Then resume the definite concentration. As for length of time devoted to the exercise, that is immaterial: with some it will take longer than with others to secure a state of mental quiet before one is able to profit by the exercise. A longer period is generally better than a number of shorter periods. Monks often become so controlled that they can sit thus for hours without any great difficulty, but for beginners and lay-devotees a half-hour to two hours every day will be found beneficial. If one becomes tired or painful after a little, it is permissible to change position slightly, or cough if necessary, and after an hour to get up and walk about or take exercise for five or even ten minutes, but do it quietly, keeping the mind controlled. If there are two or more practising this "za-zen" together, and that is always mutually helpful, the leader should give a signal so that all will relax together and keep perfectly still together. The



quarter-hour and hour on a quiet clock will serve the same purpose. It may be found wise at first to take five or ten minutes for some such exercise as the following designed to gain self-control. Think : Now I will watch my out-breathing while I count ten or twenty; now I will cross my right foot over my left while I count twenty; then I will cross my left over my right; now I will try to listen with my left eye; now by my right foot; now I will try to see with my right ear while I count twenty. Be careful not to hurry, the slower the better. This may seem foolish, but remember we are trying to gain self-control in order to transcend the normal way of mentation. If doing foolish things will help, then we will do foolish things; but are they so foolish after all? How about the fingers finding the proper keys on a piano? Or the eye turning toward a sound? This is an exercise where we can use will-power to concentrate on a definite act without regard to the usual thinking judgment; this definite act is the act of concentrating. The secret of successful concentration is to be able "to let go" of everything that hinders it: ignore and forget troubles, comfort, pains, noises, draughts of air, mosquitoës, irritations in nose or throat, seductive ideas, time for supper, the house afire, everything but a concentrated mind; yes, let go even the aspiration and faith to succeed, just zestfully, doggedly, patiently keep at it.

When one feels that his mind is quiet and well under control, one can wisely begin to call to mind some conclusion that has come during the previous stage; not to think about it, not to go over the pros



and cons of it, but using it as it were for a stepping-stone over which to advance to a higher awareness or deeper insight. For instance, all things are transitory, pain-producing, empty—they are not worth grasping after. My own personality is one of them; it is not worth clinging to. These myriad things are all manifestations of mind, mind only is worthy of attention. I wonder what mind is? I will concentrate on mind. Mind! Let go of all discriminating thoughts; it is an intuitive answer that you are seeking; it may come in some most unexpected way, as colour, or fragrance, or pain in the foot, or just an indescribable conviction that it is a great, free, wonderful Allness. Probably nothing ~~will~~ come while your mind is busy anticipating it; remember it is not information you are seeking, it is to unify your nature with mind-nature. When you succeed in doing that you will realise what mind is, because yourself is mind. But it is not an easy thing to do, and then your answer may not come now; it may come to-morrow when you are focussed on washing dishes, or next week when you are concentrated on chopping wood. It does not matter if the answer never comes, it is a good thing to concentrate, do it faithfully and patiently. You do not have to be urged to be entertained and your mind distracted by some pleasing and captivating motor ride or dance; why should it be such hard work to just concentrate your mind on your true nature in order that you may grow to be True Nature?

Do not expect any remarkable thing or emotion to happen, especially at first. While a Sanskrit word for



the Eighth Stage (*samadhi*) is sometimes translated Rapture, and there is often, especially to the more advanced, occasional strange effects, visions, ecstasies and raptures, the real goal of concentration is not the attainment of special psychologic and self-hypnotic states, but it is first to attain a clearer and stronger degree of mind-control, and second to attain a clear and convincing enlightenment and spiritual insight. Even if rapture comes, it is to be controlled and excluded just as the opposite state of discouragement and doubt is to be controlled and excluded. The exercise is successful if it enables one by it to control and to better restrain the evil tendencies of the mind, and to see things more truly as they really are.

If we succeed even in small measure, we have to that extent unified our lives with the Divine Life, we have opened our natures to the inflow of the Divine Principle and its Unifying Spirit. When we are thinking, our interests are in the Differentiating Principle of Intellection, the result of which is outward expression in thought, words and acts; but with concentration we have shifted our interest and attention to the Unifying, Identifying Principle. It is not what we consciously get out of it that matters, but the sincerity and the earnestness and the patience that we put into it in our effort to realise its unifying Wholeness and Harmoniousness. And, we repeat, what we do get out of it that is worth while will be of the nature of enlightenment and insight. There will accompany it, to be sure, a corresponding measure of satisfaction and peace, but that must be transcended. And when the Supreme Light



and Realisation breaks through in full Enlightenment there will follow a tide of emotion that is unspeakable, but even that must be transcended by Perfect Equanimity.

In a later chapter we shall discuss Concentration as practised by Zen monks, and at that time will speak more in detail about the “Absorptions” and “Holy States” of this Rapture, but here we limit ourselves to it as a discipline. Keep in mind, however, that while the goal of the Golden Path is mind-control, the goal of Buddhism is “Self-realisation within one’s inmost consciousness of highest truth,” and that will come, when it comes, through Right Concentration.



SECOND ADVENTURE  
THROUGH RIGHT MIND-CONTROL  
TO ENLIGHTENMENT



## CHAPTER XI

### RIGHT IDEAS

WE have now arrived at a shoulder of the hill and can pause a moment and look about and enjoy the view. Very fair and beautiful are the fields and forests below, but they seem less substantial than before we started, more like a mirage or a dream, and less seductive, too. Even our own bodies seem different; they seem more as though they belonged with the fields than to our true self. It is a queer feeling. Sometimes after a storm the sun breaks through the clouds and a rainbow appears. The bow and its prismatic colours seem objectively real, but it is filmy and thin, and the appearance lasts but for a few minutes. We accept the rainbow as the mere appearance of the sunlight projecting itself through the moisture-laden atmosphere and against the dark clouds, but having no substance in itself. Now everything objective, including our own bodies, takes on something of the same filmy texture, and the differences between hills and forest and fields and houses and people and our own bodies seems little and of no importance. They take on a common aspect as we recognise them all to be merely manifestations of ideas and natural laws, appearing for an hour, then disappearing and something different taking their place.

Turning our eyes from the familiar objective appearances, we see our path entering the dark shadows of



mind, but still leading upward; no, not exactly upward, it seems more like a cavern at first that we are to explore, inward. We have come by a path—distinct, extending from there to here—stage by stage. Now there is no path exactly, or, rather, it is all path. It calls and Leckons us to follow—not here to yonder, but just here, just to adventure right here. And time seems different, it is all now; and space, it is all here, and we can pass from now to then, or here to there, instantly; and then it is here and now again. What is gone and what is to come are no longer separated by duration—they are now, the present, and always will be now. Our guide is still the Golden Path; we feel certain that we are still to trust it, not as before, going from landmark to landmark; but how are we to go? Why, just trust it to guide is, that is all.

As we look about us it is all strangely unfamiliar, and yet it is familiar, too. But instead of hills and trees and birds and people there are filmy ideas of hills and trees and birds and people all about us, moving, changing, growing, dying. Ideas are very curious; they do not seem to have extension nor bulk; they mingle and pass through the same place at the same time. They are more fluid and expansive. And, most curious of all, they have a way of grouping themselves into propositions and laws and truths. Some are very beautiful, and some very kind and cheerful and strong and wise. There are some bad and vicious ideas about, but fortunately they are not many, and they seem to have a hard time surviving, because public sentiment is against them. The only way they can survive at all is because



of a good side that they all seem to have. If they were all bad they could not possibly survive under the circumstances of the mind-world. You see, it is like this: everything is translucent, you can almost see right through things, so that there is less call for anything or any one to be deceptive, or to cling to words and passions and lusts. Why should they, when everybody can read everybody's mind and thoughts and feelings?

The Golden Path calls us by this second adventure to explore this strange world of mind. As in the first adventure we must have a few Right Ideas from which to start. You will recall on our first adventure we looked about us and selected four that seemed most important: Because every objective thing was in a never-ending process of change, it is of itself transient, pain-producing, empty; secondly, desire seemed to play a most important part in keeping up the round of pain; therefore, restrain desire. And to do that the Buddha suggested the Golden Path to mind-control which, following, has brought us to where we now are. In the course of the first adventure, when we came to the Seventh Stage, we perceived a number of additional ideas that seemed even more important, and that seemed to push the first four somewhat into the background. These new ideas we may condense into two: (1) Every objective thing is merely the appearance or manifestation of mind under the conditions of the physical world. (2) In the case of our own personality, the mind of which we are manifestation is seen to be inscrutable. With these in mind, let us look about us in this strange but familiar land. The first thing that



strikes our attention is that ideas are always continually changing, sometimes revealing affinities with other ideas and sometimes revealing friction and infelicities. In other words, ideas are just as transient, pain-producing and unsubstantial as physical appearances are. The second thing that attracts attention is the presence of a similar law of causation or sequence—one idea or proposition is logically dependent upon another, exactly the same as physical phenomena follow one another causally. A third similarity is the presence of a like chain of dependence. This time we will state it in the reverse order and use mind terms instead of physical terms.

(12) From mental energy arise mental phenomena.

(11) From mental phenomena arises the principle of mentation.

(10) From the principle of mentation arise the processes of mentation.

(9) From the process of mentation arises the differentiation of thinker, thinking and thought.

(8) From the differentiation of mentation arises the Universal Mind (*Alaya-vijnana*).

(7) From universal mind arises the mortal mind (*vijnana*) and the sense-minds—eye-mind, ear-mind, etc. (*manas*).

(6) From sense-minds arise sense-concepts.

(5) Certain concepts have an affinity for certain other concepts, from which fact arise affinities (*spermatikoi logoi*) and mental desires.

(4) From desire arises a grasping and mingling of concepts.



(3) From the mingling of concepts that have an affinity for each other arises mental conception.

(2) From mental conception arise new ideas.

(1) New ideas become old ideas that lose their force and pass away.

As on the physical plane so on the mental plane, the controllable link is the sixth. Sense-concepts can be controlled and revealed in their true light. The way to do this controlling is precisely the same as on the physical plane; for even there we found that the best way to control evil acts and behaviour and bad mental moods was to control the concepts and desires that awakened them. The only difference now is that the expression of desire in acts and behaviour seems of relatively little importance, for now we see clearly that acts and behaviour are merely the projection and manifestation—the shadow of mental ideas—cast upon the physical background.

The fact and life of sense-concepts is now seen to be of far greater importance than acts, for it is these very concepts that lead to desire and grasping and new ideas. We ought, therefore, to clearly understand just what a concept is. A sense-concept is the go-between, the bridge, between the physical appearance and the mind. The eye looks at a tree and conceives it to be green, to have leaves, to be tall. This awakens a desire, to rest under it; then follows grasping and act. Now, this desire rests on an insecure and illusive foundation, for one cannot truthfully say that the tree is tall, has leaves and is green; all one can truthfully say is that it appears so. The tree is not cut up into static bits that



way: it is an ever-changing process of growth conditioned by the idea, tree. The object, tree, is only a name for certain manifestations of mind shadowed against the background of the physical world, and the sense-concepts are the effort to glimpse the changing process, growth, into mental terms. Its effort to do this gives an entirely false idea of tree, because tree is not an objective bundle of qualities, but is a process of appearances motivated by mind and only recognised imperfectly by the senses and the sense-minds. But the minute the concept is formed the trouble begins, for the inadequate concept gives a false impression which awakens in the mortal mind a desire or aversion to it, and a grasping after it, or a hatred for it. Then the act is recorded by memory in the Alaya-vijnana, beclouding its purity and thereafter conditioning the pure rays of mind-energy as they pass through it, breaking them up in what appear to be objects, but which are really only appearances of an ever-changing process of mentation. Thus it is concepts that precede act and karma, and keep alive the never-ending succession of desire, grasping, act, karma. To make it clearer let us look at it on a larger scale.

From the chain of dependencies you will see that the origin of mental phenomena is mental energy. Prajna, the Sanskrit word for it, is the undifferentiated activity of the Ultimate Principle: it is like the shining of the Great Sun on all alike. This inscrutable Ultimate Principle first appears as the mingled principles of integration and differentiation. For our present interest the aspect of differentiation, or intellection, is the more



important, for from that proceeds successively the principle of mentation, the processes of mentation, the dividing into mind, thinking and thought. The Universal Mind is called the Alaya-vijnana: it is like a storehouse and a clearing-house for the records of acts and ideas. In itself it is immaculate and inactive; it is like a cinematograph film. Through it, as through a screen, or lens, the white light of Prajna, which is the energy aspect of Perfect Wisdom, is broken up into principles, truths, laws, propositions, as the Alaya-vijnana, with its memory store of concepts, acts and ideas, condition it. These differentiated rays of Prajna now appear on the physical plane as Vijnana, the mortal mind (or the unity of the included sense-minds, or manas). These sense-minds (manas) are active, discriminative and differentiating, and their concepts, unified in the Vijnana, are stored in the Alaya, where, ever after, they condition the emerging rays of mental energy that motivate ideas.

Thus we can see (i) the energy of thought is always pure and disinterested, but its projections, brought about by the screen of the Alaya, are particularised. The sense-minds are the trouble-makers. If they can be disciplined and controlled, the screen of the Alaya and the Vijnana is bound to become less clouded and correspondingly clear. Hence the immense importance of the Golden Path to mind-control.

It may make it clearer if we refer to the analogy of the storm-waves on the ocean. The water is naturally smooth and peaceful, kept so by the great underlying principles of gravitation and inertia. By come the



wind and the tempest, caused by temporary and varying conditions of heat and moisture in the atmosphere. The wind catches up the particles of water against the pull of gravity, lifts them for a little, then they fall back, but in falling, by inertia they go too far, then up again where the wind catches them and pushes them still farther; and so on until the wind subsides and the great principles of gravitation and inertia gradually bring quietness again.

So in the mind. The ocean is the Alaya-vijnana and Prajna is the great underlying principle. The little sense-minds, stirred into action by lusts and passions and mental moods, blow over the ocean and cause waves to ruffle its surface and becloud its face. When the manas are restrained and controlled the Alaya and Vijnana gradually become clear and peaceful again, and the rays of Prajna shine through unimpeded and pure. But meanwhile these wavelets on the Alaya are conditioning acts and habits and character on the physical plane. These stored-up' wavelets are what is usually called karma. They have been collecting since beginningless time into karma of individuals, karma of families and karma of nations and races. It is inconceivably complex. What is a man's karma? It is a grand composite of racial, national, family and individual karma, each reacting on all the rest. It is entirely impossible to trace its balances in detail, but in the long run it deals out substantial justice to all concerned. In the last analysis the way karma is changed for the better or the worse is through control or lack of control. Prajna is purity itself, and the Alaya is pure, but the Vijnana and



the manas must be continually watched and controlled. And the best way of controlling them that has ever been devised is the Golden Path, which was thought out by the Buddha and by it "He-thus-Attained."

These are the conditions of the mind-world, and it is the task of the second adventure to carry this method of mind-control into the very fastnesses of the mind-world itself. If we succeed in following it to the end, we gain enlightenment, spiritual insight, peace of mind and in the long last identity with the Buddhahood, which is the inscrutable Ultimate Principle. Let us to the Adventure and its task.



## CHAPTER XII

### RIGHT RESOLUTION

KEEP in mind the Right Ideas we have selected in the previous chapter : (1) Concepts, desires, ideas are transient, lead to dissatisfaction and error and have no substance; (2) to grasp and cling to them is to court dissatisfaction and mental pain; (3) to end mental pain one must get rid of concepts and desire; (4) the way to do it is to follow the Golden Path.

In the first adventure we considered the reasons for and against following the Path, were convinced by them and made our resolution, but now we see that ideas, reasons and all the thinking processes are very unreliable and shadowy. There is no sense, therefore, we see now, in talking about the advantages and disadvantages and considering them logically and pragmatically. That does not mean that Right Resolutions are no longer necessary, but as a guide in selecting them logical reasons are no longer convincing, they are evanescent, deceptive and shadowy. We now have a better way of ascertaining their true value. At the beginning of the first adventure we appealed to the mind, but now we have lost faith in the thinking process and have gained faith in the direct cognition of mental concentration. We now appeal to the spirit. We do this because we are convinced that the whole thinking process, being based on the discriminative concepts of the sense-minds, is unreliable and deceptive. We



must transcend discrimination if we are to test discrimination. This can be done by appealing to our intuitive mind as outlined in an earlier chapter. We will no longer ask, Why should we make a resolution? Instead we will concentrate our mind on Right Resolution, and be guided by the result. By concentration we mean transcending the thinking mind and bringing into use our intuitive mind. We do this not by intense thought, but by sincere effort to identify our mind directly with the truth itself concerning Right Resolution. We want to learn the truth about it by actually becoming it ourselves. How can we best do this? Keep in mind that we want to transcend discrimination. To do that we must avoid placing ourselves in opposition to it, and seek to identify ourselves with it. Gautama is reported to have said: "All the means that can be used as helps toward doing right avail not the sixteenth part as much as the emancipation of the heart through love." We will get free from the bondage of the discriminative mind just as fast as we can fill our hearts with love and compassion for all animate life. As we leave the discriminative life behind we move toward a unitive life, and the intuitive mind brings us insight to attain it most surely and truly. As we gain enlightenment there is less temptation to use it selfishly, for with it comes ever more clearly that we are one with all animate life. We more and more appreciate that we cannot become happy and peaceful alone, we must first have the feeling that as far as in us lies we desire to share our happiness and peace with everyone else. Moreover, we must try to be single in mind, so that



through us the pure rays of the Divine Nature may pass undifferentiated and unclouded. Right Resolution! That means the unifying of all the currents of our life into one full tide of purpose, and that of sincere good-will to all without distinction. Right Resolution. That means the ending of wavering and vacillating, the increase of steadiness and patience in wise kindness. Right Resolution! It means the ending of discriminations and choices and all their accompanying unrest and indecision; it means the quietness and peace of a contented mind.

In our first adventure we turned our backs on the familiar external world, and in faith and courage faced inward to the unfamiliar values of mind. Now, being in the mind-world, and seeing how unreliable thinking is, we turn our backs on concepts and mental desires and ideas, and face toward the still more unfamiliar spiritual ideals and spiritual principles. This, too, has its fearsome aspects; this, too, will arouse opposition and censure, but in faith and courage the venture has its call and charm. From the first adventure we gained a deeper insight into truth, a lessening of the fever of life, now, if successful, we are to become truth. It is now no question of doing something to gain something; it is simply to hold our minds steady, cherishing good ideals, and letting truth accomplish its own ends in us. We want to over-pass the discriminations of the senses and mortal mind, to attain an awareness of undifferentiated truth. But to do so we must forget ourselves and the little silly comforts and luxuries of life, and its irritating pains and sorrows, and keep in



mind only the pure oneness of Buddhahood, which is the inscrutable Ultimate Principle. It is not for us “to make” a Right Resolution to this effect; it is for us to submit to having it make us. It is as though a turning was going on in us—a re-solution—and from it was appearing a new and more gracious life, calm, serene and peaceful. We are still living in the world of distracting sights and sounds and smells, but it makes all the difference in the world whether one’s centre of gravity is in the physical world, or in the mental world, or in the Spiritual World. As for us, we will follow the Golden Path to the journey’s end!



## CHAPTER XIII

### RIGHT USE OF WORDS

IN our first adventure this injunction was worded Right Speech, but in this second adventure we have left the external world, with all its speech, acts and behaviour, behind, and are now concerned with the mind-world. In the mind-world we have already noticed that there are still evil and unwise things to be guarded against in the shape of sense-concepts and desires, but they do not have the seductive power they formerly had when they were reinforced by the physical urges of sense-delight, mental thrills and selfish pride. We know now that it was not an actual power; it was only imaginary as in a dream, but it often seemed real enough. Now we see these concepts and desires in their real nature, transient, pain-producing and empty, and not at all worth grasping. Why should we desire them and cling to them? In other words, we have already attained a measure of enlightenment, and with it comes a corresponding measure of mind-control. When we were worldly minded the more obvious negative aspects of concepts and desires seemed dangerous, but now, when we see them as they are—only appearances—they seem less dangerous, and that aspect can now be ignored. With this loss of appeal on the part of the negative aspects, the more ideal aspects come out correspondingly clear and attractive. In fact, these adventures might well be designated as: first, the



adventure to control evil states of mind in the interests of good behaviour; second, the adventure to gain ideal states of mind. Later on we still shall have another adventure, at that time on the spiritual plane, when we shall be interested neither in evil states of mind nor in good states of mind, for we shall have over-passed both and will then be interested simply in expressing the spiritual nature, which, in itself, is beyond good and evil. But at present we are interested in the attainment through mind-control of the more ideal states of mind. That is why we word this third injunction, Right Use of Words.

To begin, let us say that words are a necessary, but clumsy, contrivance for bridging the gap between our own thought-world and the thought-world of other people through the mutual exchange of ideas. If we had no way of doing this we would be very badly off indeed. There would be some compensation, for evil ideas would not have the wide circulation they now have and mass movements would be more limited, but neither would good ideas and movements. In a former chapter we dwelt on the dangers of ill-advised speech—it inhibited free and independent thought, it magnified evil moods and exalted self-pride—and we warned against it. To control these dangers the warning was wise and necessary, but now we will discuss the right use of speech and especially the right use of words. In the first place, resort to words and speech should be strictly limited. It is written: “There are two ways for a Buddhist, to speak wisely or to keep silence.” We could not well get along in our busy, practical, social,



mental and spiritual fellowships without words, and yet how often they lead us into trouble, practical, social, logical and spiritual. The mind is often in slavery to words. Gautama likens the too free use of words and speech to a silkworm spinning his thread and by it enwrapping himself in a prison-like cocoon. How often we hear the excuse: "I did not think it wise or right, but he talked me into it."

There are other ways of expressing ideas besides the use of words. The ants and bees get along fairly well without words. Bees seem to possess a faculty for sensing the "hive-mind" directly and responding to it in co-operating activity. Ants have a very keen sense of smell, and use it in some way to exchange information. Birds and most animals have rudimentary speech by which they get along with very little talk. Both our material life and activities and our logical thought have become so vast and complicated and so dependent upon words they almost seem a necessity, but perhaps if we looked at the matter more wisely, we would have to admit that on the whole it would be a good thing if life was less intense, complicated and sophisticated. It has often been suggested that if our minds were only a bit stronger we might read thought directly simply by looking into each other's eyes; on the whole that would be a good thing, for it would tend to simplify life and expedite mutual understandings. In a sense, and a limited measure, we already have such a power, and telepathy is a generally accepted fact. Then there are pictures, the movies, for instance, and the first alphabets were ideographs. Then there are other ways,



the lifting of the eyebrow, a soft whistle, a sigh, a handclasp, a caress, a frown or a smile will often express more than words.

Words in themselves are powerless to express ideas, words in a foreign language, or unknown words, are meaningless; there must first be a common acquaintance with them. After all, words are but a finger pointing to an idea; a card index numbered would serve the same purpose. Then, again, we never have exactly duplicate word meanings, some words have five or six or even more quite different meanings. The great difficulty in translating from one language into another is the difficulty of finding words that exactly correspond. For instance, in the Greek there are five words that are all translated by our one word, love. In Sanskrit there are very many words for the shades of meaning involved in thought, ideation, knowledge, cognition, etc., while in English there are comparatively few. Then, to make a bad matter worse, because of relative ignorance words are used very carelessly or understood very wrongly, giving entirely wrong impressions. Often people use deceptive words purposely, "weasel words," or technical words, after the habit of some lawyers and doctors, simply to impress or deceive. In truth, words are so inadequate that we may wisely resort to their use very sparingly. This is particularly true when we come to express emotion; in deep emotion we dislike to use words, and, instead, press the hand, or sigh, or cry in sympathy. In one's religious life the deep conceptions are quite inexpressible. When we come to express ideals and great truths there is



always something left unsaid, or inadequately said, that is essential. Of highest truths words can never adequately express the full content of meaning. Lesser minds, clinging to the pointing finger of words, never get beyond words and discriminations, but wise men, passing beyond words and descriptions, keep silence. Hence the great importance of using words sparingly and keeping words and meaning as nearly identical as possible. Nevertheless, even with the greatest care, great truths that have been directly visioned and experienced, and have been explained to others through words, take on added and different meanings with every repetition until they little resemble the original experience.

The only clear idea is an experienced idea, and that is often impossible to express in words, as, for instance, a favourite perfume, or a toothache, or beauty or goodness. This leads naturally to the statement that there are other ways to express ideas than either words or gestures—namely, to bring in contact with the same experience, or with some pure act, as, for instance, if a man is cold, bring him to the fire; if hungry, feed him; if you want him to understand beauty, get him to watch a changing sunset or the rising moon; if pain, wait until he suffers; if you feel sympathy and charity, it is always better not to talk about it, but to express it in some pure act and “let not the left hand know what the right hand doeth.” That a man may understand truth and goodness, bring him into the presence of truth and goodness.

Discriminations of thinking and thought and



thought about end with the Alaya-vijnana, the Psychic-mind. Above that there is no differentiation, and to understand what is beyond—truth, goodness and beauty—one must contact them directly with no intervention of senses, or of thinking, discriminating mind, or taint of desire, or self-pride. The sage was right who asserted, “to know is to love,” for with enlightenment comes sympathy, with perfect wisdom comes perfect compassion.

In Mahayana Buddhism the self-realisation of truth without the intervention of words is a cardinal teaching. A wise spiritual teacher can best instruct a disciple by the discipline of work, begging, silent meditation and concentration, or by the pointing finger. Concerning this self-realisation of truth more will be said in a later chapter, at this place we only refer to it to make clear the fact that as one moves (as we are moving) toward truth and compassion, that words will more and more fail to express meanings. Language, words, even ideas, must be over-passed—they are limited, defective, deceiving, prejudiced—while reality is perfect, whole, infinite, inscrutable.

More and more as we gain spiritual insight will we be satisfied to point to Truth, to Prajna, Karuna, Bodhi, Jnana and to the Golden Path that leads thereto. Stages will come and must be passed one by one, each for himself; but with every hindrance overcome, every grace added, every ideal reached, there will be clearing insight, greater sympathy, until at long last, with mind pure and undefiled by selfness, with heart overflowing with love, we, too, will have “attained.”



## RIGHT IDEALS OF CONDUCT

ON the first adventure this stage was largely concerned with outward behaviour, but in this we are more concerned with the states of mind that condition behaviour. In the earlier adventure we saw that it was certain subconscious instincts and sense experience that awakened desire, which, in turn, awakened grasping and prompted to acts and behaviour. We found that desires could best be restrained by mind-control over the sense-concepts. Later, as we came to realise that there were no physical acts or experiences but what themselves were transient, pain-producing and empty, these concepts lost their appeal, and the desire for them was correspondingly lessened. We found also that by establishing a wise habit of restraint over all desire we could almost entirely avoid bad behaviour.

This second adventure, however, is within the mind itself, and the emphasis is transferred from outward acts to the inner states of mind that condition them. Sense-concepts are very largely coloured and conditioned by one's mental moods. There are bad moods that accentuate the discriminations of the senses, and there are good moods that help one to judge things more truly and wisely. The bad states of mind are: fear, worry, ill-will, hatred, lust, doubt, pride and infatuation. The corresponding good moods are: courage, good-will, confidence, purity and humility.



In all discriminative thinking we oppose these good and bad states, but in truth they are only relative aspects of the same mental process. Unconscious bodily instincts for self-defence and the propagation of the species are good from one point of view and may be unwise from another, so the sense-concepts that come from the various experiences of sense-activities may be good under some circumstances and ill under others, but they are alike as being the source of desire and ideas and grasping and acts. But the mind can welcome or reject this raw material of concepts as it pleases, and will do so according to its moods. If one is fearful and worried he reacts to experiences one way, but if he is courageous and full of serene faith he will react in quite a different way. What seem to be "giants" to one state of mind are negligible to the other, and can be ignored. So it is when the mind is filled with hatred; one is then inclined to see and magnify and grasp at certain things and to react with bitter violence, which, if the mind was filled with goodwill, the very same things would be seen in quite a different light and the reaction would be friendly. So it is with lust: if the mind is pure, it pays little attention to, or ignores altogether, things that would otherwise lead to impure thoughts and desires. If a man is doubtful of his path, he goes forth haltingly and with fear, but if he have confidence in the path, if he have faith in it, that if followed to the end it will lead him to the desired goal, he goes forth with confidence until he reaches the goal; in confident faith he presses forward, undeterred by minor difficulties and uncertain-



ties. If the heart is humble and recognises that its self-conscious mind has no lasting or infallible value, it ignores, or reacts against, many things that pride and conceit desire and grasp after.

It thus becomes the part of wisdom to cherish good states of mind—good-will, purity, courage, confidence, humility and wisdom. If a man cherishes good-will he will not hate another even if he is treated badly, nor will he do him harm. If a man is pure in heart, he will see no evil, hear no evil, think no evil; the incentives to lust, gluttony, debauchery or excesses of any kind will lose their power, and he will go free where otherwise he would be overborne by the rush and power of temptation. If a man is truly courageous, he will not be afraid, nor will he react by violence. If a man is humble-minded and 'wise-hearted, or humble-hearted and wise-minded, he will pass unscathed through the fires of temptations to be covetous and avaricious and deceitful, neither will he endanger his manhood by resorting to the use of drugs and strong drink.

As one moves inward he must be doubly careful of his speech; he must ever be on his guard, not only against lying directly, but against habits of exaggeration and boasting, "double-tongue," slander, bitter and censorious and angry words, proud and conceited words. Such words come very easy to undisciplined tongues, but mental states of kindness, good-will, generosity, honesty and humility will prevent one from uttering them.

Another besetting temptation that it will be wise to



guard against is one's proneness to yield to the lure of comforts and luxuries. They are often very innocent and harmless in appearance, but are very seductive. How often one hears the remark: "I do not see why I should not have these things if I can afford them." As if, forsooth, there were not other dangers beside financial ones. After the death of Gautama, the rules and regulations for the conduct of the monks and nuns increased very fast, and among them were five that were very ancient and were universally ascribed to Gautama himself. They were counted to be so important that they were generally added, in the case of the monks and the nuns, to the five original injunctions for Right Behaviour which we have already discussed. These additional ones are as follows: (6) Not to use perfumes or unguents; (7) not to attend entertainments; (8) not to use soft beds; (9) not to eat between meals; (10) nor to acquire, possess or use, money or other precious and valuable things. On the surface these things may appear unimportant, but to a disciple who is honestly and earnestly seeking to follow the Golden Path to its end these injunctions are very wise and necessary. The monk's life, in which he turns his back upon ambition and greed and indulgences that are costly and require effort and labour and money to acquire, runs very easily and quickly into sloth and slumber; this tendency must be guarded against rigorously, for while the monk's life is simple and inexpensive, it is, if it is to be lived truly, very strenuous and exacting, and will require his full attention and untrammelled thought. Nothing undermines one's



high purposes and devotion to ideals so persistently and so unobtrusively as luxuries, entertainments and wealth. Looked at in their true light they are a spiritual danger, and should be guarded against accordingly.

Still another special danger to higher mind-control lies in the desire for sexual indulgence. The earlier injunctions restricted lay disciples to the ordinary sexual relations, but now, for more advanced disciples, he adds a stricter interpretation: they are to give up all sex relations, and thereafter to live a strictly celibate life. The relations of marriage are so intimate and involve so deep an emotional reaction there is an almost irresistible urge to please one's sex mate even at the expense of one's highest ideals. If one purposes to attain the highest mind-control, there is nothing else to do but to separate. If the man and wife are equally sincere in their Buddhist devotion, this can be arranged very easily and satisfactorily, for each would be keen to help the other spiritually, but if one is selfish and worldly, the break may involve serious difficulties, especially in these days when the family is the unit and the wife and children are economically dependent upon the husband. Most wives will resist such a separation desperately, relatives and friends will freely express disapproval, and even the law will side with the wife. They will not understand nor appreciate the need for it; but, nevertheless, it is vitally important, if one is to gain the goal of enlightenment and spiritual peace, that he be free from all entangling alliances. Happy the man or the woman to whom the call comes



to follow the Golden Path when he is unmarried, or who has a wife (or husband) willing to meet his wishes, and who has financial means sufficient to provide for the other's support. Such a separation, or no separation, will often be a turning-point in a pilgrim's progress, thereafter to advance to greater heights or to lose ground. Again recall the acts of Gautama and St. Francis and Jesus. The latter said: "If any man come unto me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." A good wife, truly honouring her husband, will desire to aid his spiritual progress, even at great cost to her own comfort. If she is a truly brave and devoted wife, she will encourage him in his course, and, instead of receiving aid from him, will work herself to aid him in his noble purpose. He will need all the aid and sympathy he is likely to get, for the change will be very difficult for him to endure. To live the celibate life successfully is impossible if there remains very much taint of hidden desire. A man shut up in gaol lives a celibate life, but it is often disastrous to his health of body and mind. But for a monk cherishing good states of mind, faith, courage, purity, earnestness, steadfastness it is possible; his devotion will sublimate the instinctive sex urge and make it a powerful aid to his success.

The propagation of the species requires sex relations, but that can be safely left to the worldly minded, for it is beyond dispute that serious evils follow a too great increase of the world's population. If the very few



idealist monks wish to practise celibacy for reasons of spiritual development there can be no valid reasons against it on that score. The hygienic reasons against their doing so appear to be reasonably safeguarded by their concentration of mind on pure idealism. The testimony of the centuries of religious history seems to be unanimous in favour of celibacy as a prerequisite to the highest spiritual culture; nevertheless the experience of the ancient world should not be final as applying to our modern conditions. Each age should re-examine such questions for itself. Our modern conditions bring with them a far different attitude toward sex relations than obtained in the less scientific ages gone by. All will admit that an absorbing "grasping" after sex relations is distinctly prejudicial to growth in spirituality, but, also, absolute continence often results in an abnormal and morbid development of character. Perhaps now, with our more accurate knowledge of the hygienic value of restrained sexuality, and the more general knowledge and use of contraceptives (by which the added difficulties of children to the household life are avoided), it may well be imagined that an extreme inhibition against all sex relations, may be found to be unwise and unnecessary, provided, of course, that both the man and woman are alike sincere and earnest in their faith in, and their devotion to, the Golden Path. This may be an open question in the future, but up to our present light the injunction that all sex relations be avoided by monks and nuns seems sound and necessary.

To be successful, however, as we have said above, the monk must attain good states of mind. How to



attain them, therefore, is of great interest and importance. In the first place, the only reliable aid lies within one's own mind, for these moods and mental states are themselves dependent on still deeper conditions of mind and spirit. Bad states of mind come from discriminative thinking and yielding attention to the seductions of transient, pain-producing, empty appearances, while the good states come from looking at things and life truthfully. One must not be deceived by appearances, by the glamour and tinsel of things, nor the glitter and sparkle of exotic life. He must review over and over again the fundamental fact that everything is transient, pain-producing, empty. Even one's cherished self-consciousness is transient, pain-producing, empty; he must remember that his sense-concepts and desires are especially transient, pain-producing, empty. He must review over and over again that other fundamental fact—that his empirical self is exactly the same as all other physical things, merely appearance and manifestation of mind; he must learn to call them brother sun and sister moon, brother horse and sister bird, brother tree and sister flower. And he must continually recall to mind that his true, essential self is one with the true, essential self of all the myriad, myriad things of heaven and earth, and with the myriad ideas of mind; that they are all one in the undifferentiated, inscrutable wholeness of Buddhahood. These thoughts will awaken sympathy in his heart and will clear his mental insight to see the beauty and value of these ideal states of mind; and not only to recognise their beauty and value, but he will become aware that they



are of the “suchness” of the Buddha-nature, and, therefore, inherently his own true nature, to be realised and utilised by him just as soon as he rids himself of the lower hindrances and opens up his spiritual capacity to receive them. We, therefore, should seek earnestly and steadfastly to attain to these ideal states of mind, in full confidence when we have thus attained that our outward behaviour will correspond with them as shadows follow the sun.



## CHAPTER XV

### RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

IN an earlier chapter we spoke of the vocations and professions that it was inadmissible for a Buddhist to follow, and the environments that were prejudicial to one seeking to follow the Golden Path. In this chapter we are to consider the environments that are advantageous.

If one is honest in purposing to follow the Path, he ought to arrange his home with that end in view. It should be simple and inexpensive, plainly but comfortably furnished. The meals should be vegetarian, serving plain but wholesome food in limited quantities. Clothing should be simple and no more than is needed. When a new garment is required, it should be of good material and well made, but not extremely stylish, for it is to be used until worn out. No additional garments should be purchased simply to keep in style, or for unnecessary changes due to fashions. The home should be provided with a room for quiet sitting, where members of the family can retire and be sure of quiet. It is good to have regular hours and daily tasks, each member of the family, even small children, should be responsible for certain tasks and for the care of their own room. These lessons of orderliness and system for all that is done should be begun very early in life. No servants should be employed if it can possibly be avoided, simplifying the needs until the family, by co-



operation, can wait upon themselves. All unnecessary things, cosmetics, jewellery and things worn simply for show, should be avoided. It is not necessary to have everything the markets afford or that magazines advertise. Remember, desire for things is the beginning of evil, and the very first step of the Golden Path calls for its restraint. The possession of things brings slavery to them, and the more one has of them the more trammelled he is. Neither is it necessary or wise to be continually on the go. Entertainments, lectures, concerts, afternoon-teas, ball games, motor-car rides, reading of newspapers and story magazines, are all seemingly harmless, but all inhibit quiet personal thinking and self-control. The Golden Path leads to mind-control, and it is foolish to seek for mind-control and at the same time to surround oneself with comforts, excitements and allurements just to pass away the time. The nature of the home environment has much to do, perhaps more than anything else, with the progress one will make along the Path.

In this connection something should be said about the spiritual atmosphere of the home. Where both husband and wife are sincerely in earnest in following the Golden Path, home habits and customs can easily be arranged to foster mutual mind-control and spiritual growth. But when one is in earnest and the other not, it is a very difficult thing to arrange. There will be innumerable cross-currents of conflicting desires and purposes, misunderstandings and irritations. If one of them would like to live the Buddhist life and the other, while not caring to do so, is quite willing to do all he



or she can to meet the other's wishes, there will probably be more or less friction, but still not more than can be borne by patient forbearance.

But when the wife has "ideas of her own," and looks upon her husband's purpose without sympathy or respect, then the troubles begin. He likes a quiet, simple home; she likes show and company. She is always manœuvring to get something better than she has. She is unhappy and nagging until she gets what she wants—a finer house in a better neighbourhood, the house redecorated and more "tastefully" furnished, which generally means more expensively furnished. He likes simple vegetarian meals, she prefers and insists on providing, especially when company is present, expensive meats and fancy desserts. Even when they are alone, she provides meat for herself, and its mere presence on the table is irritating and separative. He likes quiet evenings at home, she is unhappy unless going somewhere or entertaining, and he, of course, in spite of his principles and desires, must often go with her. He is burdened by some uncongenial work or profession, but she is continually spurring him on to earn more; other men do it, why can't he? She is perfectly willing that he should have all the dreams and vagaries and fads he pleases, so long as it does not interfere with "the expression of her own personality." Then come the more or less frequent disputes, bickerings, recriminations, bitter words, heartbreak.

What is to be done? Shall he give in and submit, or shall she? If she does, it will probably be under protest and without trust or sincerity. If she could do it



with confidence in his judgment and sincerity all would be well, but generally it is otherwise, and the spiritual strain remains. Shall he give in? That would be easy, all he has to do is to conform to her ideas of a happy life. But is it wise to give in? Is it wise for anyone to give up their spiritual ideals for the sake of avoiding friction? No, it is not wise. There are only two things that can be done. Either to bear the burden, trusting in the merits of the Golden Path to bring one safely "to the other shore," or to insist on a separation. The conventional idea in American religious circles is that incompatibility of temperament is not sufficient ground for a divorce, but surely there is nothing in law or religion that compels two people who are unhappy together to live together? Happy the man, under these circumstances, who is financially able to give his wife a satisfactory independent financial support. In India, China, Japan, the laws and customs make it easier for a wife to return to her ancestral home, but here the difficulty is very great. Her pride, her standing, her good name is endangered; she will resist to the limit. But if a man is to follow the Golden Path with any hope of success, such a situation as outlined above must be changed.

Is a man warranted, under these circumstances, in seeking a separation from his wife? An answer to this depends on the distinction between rights and morality. A wife has certain rights which law and custom protect, but it is immoral for a man deliberately to continue to subject himself to conditions that endanger and stifle all impulse to what he conceives to be the noblest



life. It is not cowardice, it is not running away from difficulties, it is true bravery to seek to avoid, or end, all entangling alliance with the conditions that tend to drag one down. A true wife, seeing her husband's purpose to rise spiritually, will sympathise with him and in noble self-abnegation will do all she can to aid him in the effort, even to consenting and aiding him to a separation. To some readers the foregoing may seem to be unnecessarily blunt and unsympathetic and discourteous to woman's point of view. Perhaps it is, but it is well to remember that in America ladies have been deferred to to such an extent that they often claim it as a right and forget the respect that is inherently due to men. American culture in this respect has much to learn from the rest of the world, but learned it must be if America is ever to advance spiritually, and especially is this true if the advance is to be made along the Golden Path.

In an earlier chapter we have spoken of the Buddha's interest in the vocation of monk and nun. That, to him, provided the ideal setting for the effort to attain mind-control. In its old and typical form it may not prove to be ideal to our modern conditions and ideas, but it will be of advantage at any rate to present it as it has been lived by Buddhist monks for 2,500 years. Besides his intellectual ability, the Buddha was a very clear-headed and practical administrator, and the ways and means that he decided upon for his monks and nuns to follow have been followed successfully to this day. Not by all, of course, for there are variations and innovations and slackness everywhere, but in places



the life of Buddhist monks is very much what it was millenniums ago. The Buddha lived in India, where it was hot and dry most of the year, and life in the open was possible and comfortable, so the Buddha and his monks lived an itinerant life in the open, sleeping wherever night found them—under a tree, a shed, or in some hospitable home. In the morning they went into the villages begging their food for the day, and then spent the rest of the time in quiet meditation, or on the road conversing with those they met about the Buddha and his Dharma. But in India there are about three months of a rainy season, when it is impossible to move about or sleep in the open, so they would gather in some centre where hospitality was offered them and where there were people enough to feed them. Very early, seeing this need, some rich or powerful friend would present the Buddha a park and erect thereon a suitable house to shelter his monks during the rainy season. Here the monks would gather, and, during the life of the Buddha, would listen to his teachings, tell him their experiences and troubles and seek answers to the questions that had baffled them. When the rainy season came to an end, they would scatter by ones and twos, often going long distances, sometimes finding a satisfactory refuge in some foreign city, or in the depths of the mountains and forests, never to return.

As their numbers increased and difficulties arose, the Buddha would make rules and regulations for their control, and after his death more rules were added until there were some 250 for the monks and 300 for the



nuns. During his life he was the final arbiter of disputes, although he often refused to be so. He was an ideal Master, wise, patient, steady and kind. There was an entire absence of authority or formality. Each could come or go as he pleased, and order was maintained by common consent. After his death there had to be arranged more definite rules for administration, but from the beginning to to-day the typical Buddhist monastery is the freest, easiest and most democratic place in the world. Hospitality is granted to all without distinction for a few nights at least and under restrictions. Itinerant monks can always find shelter whether it is a monastery of their own sect or not. Members are admitted, up to the capacity of the place, upon giving proof of sincere earnestness and personal character. Abbots are chosen, characteristically, by vote of the monks, although there are wide variations from this due to the nature of the foundation and local reasons and traditions. A good abbot will often rule as long as he continues to live, but more often there are frequent changes, and the retired abbots will form a kind of unofficial group of advisers. The abbot has charge of the property, often with very little supervision; he has charge of the spiritual teaching also, although if it be a large monastery this latter office may be deputed to an associate; he also appoints, upon consultation with the monks, to all the minor offices and posts. These latter hold office only for six months or a year, the office going by rotation to all monks sooner or later, if they are fit to be trusted with the duties, so that each in turn becomes acquainted with all the duties



and administration of the institution. But all, including the abbots, wear the same clothes and eat the same food as the monks. Of course, nowadays there are many variations from this, and some wide variations, but in general Buddhist monasteries the world over are very democratic and communistic, and all have the same atmosphere of simplicity, quiet comfort and peace.

The monks go to bed early, but are called very early, often by three or four o'clock, and the day is filled by periods of service, dusting the altars, service in the kitchen, keeping the grounds tidy, working on the estate or garden, begging in the city and periods for meditation and religious services. Even when a monastery has accumulated wealth, the form of begging is often kept up as a religious discipline. The meals are very simple: a very light breakfast, a full midday meal, and at four or five a lunch. The food is vegetarian, except perhaps fish, and in some sects meat occasionally, but this is not considered to be at all right by most. But everywhere the amount of food is strictly limited, and the variety. The clothing is the simplest. In the beginning it was cast-off garments, but now it is only theoretically so, but the quantity is strictly limited. They have almost no personal property: a book or two, perhaps an image, their rosary, a razor, a toothbrush and a comb, and a little nest of five bowls which has taken the place of the primitive begging-bowl. All, including their extra garment, a towel or two and a blanket, can be easily carried on their pilgrimages. But, search the world over, a happier, more



contented, peaceful lot of men it would be hard to find.

Some cynically say, "They are a lazy lot of beggars," but that is not altogether true. As a rule they are sincere, up to their light, in their effort to follow the Path. Much depends on the abbot and the traditions of the monastery; if he is earnest and capable, his monks will be. Of course, the monk's life has its own besetting temptations, but it also affords the ideal and necessary conditions for following the Path. There is no especial advantage in a large institution; on the contrary, the best results seem to be found in the isolated hermitage where two or three monks are quietly and inconspicuously living a true life of self-restraint, industry and meditation. They are free from the constant irritations of the home and secular life, an unsympathetic wife, noisy children, bondage to some tiring, uncongenial work and the ever-present urge to give up the discipline and effort and do as others do. In the quiet hermitage they can arrange the hours and occupations to secure the best results, and offer the world an example of quiet, cheerful, thoughtful, kindly and inexpensive living that will be an influence for the highest good to all who come to see them or who hear of them. They are free to show personal sympathy, charity and hospitality; they have time to teach the boys and girls, to explain the Dharma to older people, and at the same time themselves to be definitely advancing along the Path. All the above is just as true for the nuns as for the monks.

In America there is a confirmed opinion that the



greatest good one can do is to get rich and bestow large gifts of money on hospitals, colleges, libraries and other charitable institutions, leaving individual cases of want to them. This is not a wise nor a kindly opinion, for after all is said and done, while such things add to the 'comfort and efficiency and the outward welfare of the community (which has its own value) they do little to awaken and stimulate a good life. In the first place, the amassing of great wealth is probably never entirely without a measure of injustice to those who have been forced to contribute to the wealth, which the return in charity does not entirely balance. Moreover, the moral reaction on those who are benefited by this wholesale, impersonal charity is never very good; it tends to stimulate selfishness and acquisitiveness and stifle gratitude. It is impossible to help others morally by such means. Even the most active and best organised charities cannot reduce the sin nor the spiritual hunger and apathy of the world. Since unhappiness depends upon inner conditions, even the most favourable change in external circumstances cannot make any essential difference. For spiritual need and apathy there is nothing like personal sympathy and personal example, and these can only be rendered by one who is himself living the good life: a simple, self-denying, thoughtful, kindly, peaceful life. The true Buddhist monk and nun presents this perfect example, and for this reason their existence among men is of the highest value.

One may ask: If all turn to the celibate life of monks and nuns, who will do the work of the world and raise up families? Well, most of the great prob-



lems of the world, war, pestilence and poverty, are caused by surplus populations, while lack of work is the most serious of all. Little harm and much good will result if a few of this surplus population decide to follow the Golden Path untrammelled by the world's feverish rush and intensity for wealth, power and excitement. The good example of these few, and there will never be very many, is well worth to society many times what it will cost.



## RIGHT MENTAL IDEALS

IN Chapter IX. we discussed the Six Paramitas as ideals for right effort in attaining mind-control. Later Mahayana metaphysicians, in interpreting the deeper implications of the Buddha's teachings, added four more. In the chapters just before this, where we discussed some advanced ways for attaining mind-control, one may quite naturally get the impression that the only end in view is one's own advantage. It is true that the result of attaining mind-control is an increased mental insight and enlightenment, the content of which will be discussed in the chapter following this, but we must anticipate a little by saying that one of the dangers of increased insight and enlightenment is a temptation to use the intellectual power it gives to egoistic and selfish ends. It was to guard against this danger that the four later Paramitas were added. We will appreciate better after we have read the following chapter that enlightenment and compassion go hand in hand. If we were facing and moving in the other direction—that is, as the scientist does—we would be passing toward increased differentiation and discrimination; but, as we are advancing inward toward spirit we are steadily transcending differences and attaining unity. As one advances along the Path he must more and more keep in mind that mind-control is not authority from without, but is a gradual freeing



of the mind from limiting fetters and hindrances into a recognition of universal likeness and identity. Keeping this in mind will make clear the appropriateness of these additional Paramitas. We will begin, however, by reviewing the first Six, to show their connection with the Ten.

(1) CHARITY (*dana*).—In the first adventure this was interpreted as an ideal of generosity with one's means and helpfulness. Now we begin to see that it calls for much more than that—namely, it calls for the sharing of one's every effort and merit, and even life itself, in sympathetic, unselfish kindness.

(2) MORALITY (*sila*).—This no longer means simply obedience to the moral precepts as to outward conduct, but it is now seen to include the getting control of the bad states of mind by habits of constant reliance on good states of mind, and the never-failing expression of those good states in wise and kindly behaviour.

(3) PATIENCE (*kṣhānti*).—One is to be patient when things go wrong and one is imposed upon by ignorant and selfish men; one is never to get excited or irritated, but, on the contrary, is to try all the harder to express forbearance and kindness. Moreover, he is to practise patience, when within his own mind the lower instincts and desires keep reappearing, by never getting discouraged and never tiring in constantly renewed efforts to transcend them.

(4) ZEAL (*virya*).—This ideal prompts one to never tire in well-doing; not because one's zeal will redound to one's own spiritual wealth, but in order, by the accumulation of insight and merit, to be the better



able to help others. It prompts one to be ever active and earnest in promoting good-will among men.

(5) CONCENTRATION (*dhyana*).—This ideal prompts one to avoid distractions and the scattering and disturbance of one's efforts by a constant effort to keep the mind focussed on the thought or the action then in mind. It prompts to calmness and equanimity of mind and unperturbed kindness of heart. In a deeper sense it prompts to the constant recognition of highest Wisdom as being one's own true self.

(6) WISDOM (*Prajna*).—This prompts to the constant effort to open up the mind and heart to Supreme Wisdom. One is not to think and plan and act too much by one's own intelligence, but to be willing to be guided and strengthened by Wisdom itself, for it is *Prajna*, the active aspect of Ultimate Principle, that is working through one to its own good ends.

(7) TACTFULNESS (*upaya*).—This ideal prompts to the wise use of expedients to gain true ends. Nothing is to be gained by force or haste or deceit, for the true end is not to get another to do as we want him to do, but to awaken in him a good purpose and desire. It is not what one does that is important, but it is the spirit that one radiates and the way one goes about it that signify. The greater mind-control one has the wiser he will be, and the greater store of skilful expedients will be at his command, and the kinder will be his spirit.

(8) Vows (*pranidhana*).—This prompts one to devote all one's thought and strength to expressing highest Wisdom for the enlightenment and salvation



of all the world. This ideal resolution carries into effect the increasing sense of one's unity with all human life. It is founded on both an enlightened mind and a compassionate heart. It expresses one's willingness to give up, if necessary, one's immediate nirvana in order to be able to do more in the way of storing up merit and placing it at the disposal of others, thereby aiding others to advance with one spiritually.

(9) STEADFASTNESS (*bala*).—This ideal prompts one to carry into effect the preceding by strengthening one for the requirements of the task. It is no easy thing to plan one's life in such an unselfish, sacrificial way, and there will be many evil influences from without, and discouraging thoughts and moods within, to hinder the fulfilment of the vow, but patient, zealous steadfastness, based on one's sense of unity with all and faith in highest Wisdom, will overcome them all.

(10) PERFECT INTELLIGENCE (*Jnana*).—This ideal prompts one to the radiation of highest Truth. One is not only to be intelligent and truthful himself, he ought to radiate Truth and Wisdom. One can do this by a concentrated effort to truthfully comprehend all things, and to be ever ready to elucidate and explain their true and ultimate nature. The radiation of highest Truth and Wisdom is not something that one can do of himself; it involves one's co-operation and effort in the way of attaining unfettered mind-control, but radiation itself is from the Buddha-nature within.

It may come to some that these Ten Paramitas are very much alike, and in a sense they are, for as one moves inward all things draw together—thinker,



thinking, thought and thought about—keep drawing closer and closer together, until they are truly one thing. The Ten Ideal Paramitas can be stated in one inclusive precept: The control of one's mind by highest Wisdom and Kindness. In an earlier chapter we remarked that following the Golden Path was at first a solitary task, almost wholly dependent on one's own initiative and resolution. Then we later discovered that others were ascending the same path, and we found a measure of companionship and mutual encouragement. Now we are beginning to see that there is a great cosmic principle moving in its direction, and that with every advance things are increasingly working together to one's advantage. And there is the highest encouragement in the thought that all the Bodhisattvas and Buddhas of the past, present and future have attained the goal of perfect Wisdom and Peace by the very path we are now following. Moreover, the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas who have thus attained the goal, by the very self-nature and "suchness" of their achievement, are radiating compassion and sympathy and helpful means for one's success. By their Pranidhanas their merit redounds to the necessities and advantage of all sentient life, and especially of those who are sincerely following the Golden Path. One increasingly becomes conscious of their fellowship as they themselves are sympathetic and helpful to others. Their radiation of compassionate helpfulness is the same as one's grateful recognition of it and reflection of it in Right Ideals.

The ground for the special belief of the Jodo and



Shinshu sects is found in this fact. Their characteristic is "Salvation by faith in the transcendent merits of Amida's Great Vow." Amida, after myriads of rebirths, had attained the highest stage of Bodhisattvahood, but refused to accept Nirvana until he was assured that all sentient life would ultimately share it with him. This faith in Amida is expressed by the repetition of the phrase, *Namu Amida Butsu* (I place my trust in Amida, the Buddha of boundless Light, of endless Life and measureless Love). It is Amida's Perfect Merit and his Perfect Self-sacrifice that saves all who place their trust in him. It is their faith in Amida that buoys them up to Right Spirit and Right Effort, thus providing the proper condition for rebirth in the Pure Land.



## RIGHT MINDFULNESS

IN an earlier chapter we referred to three kinds of knowledge: accommodation knowledge, relative knowledge and true knowledge. In our practical life we have found that relative knowledge was sufficient for one's success and comfort; it deals with name and form and appearance. One's empirical existence is dependent on these things, and relative knowledge is one's guide. One's mental existence is dependent on psychic laws and logic, and for this careful consideration is required; here relative knowledge is necessary. But the human heart refuses to be confined to these two planes of existence, and dreams of, yearns for and intuits a freer life of spirit. To reach this spiritual plane of existence and meet its conditions requires a deeper and truer knowledge than a knowledge of relations can provide; it calls for a truer awareness of the substance underlying appearances and discriminations that will supply a satisfying basis for cosmic and religious life. This perfect knowledge cannot be knowledge about something, it must be an immediate awareness of the Divine Suchness, and to attain it one must exercise a different kind of cognition than for the other kinds. One must, in a measure at least, identify himself with this highest truth. To do this one must first get rid of all separating barriers of illusion and ignorance, prejudice and egoistic assumptions. He must



identify himself as far as his capacity permits with Reality itself. If his empirical, conscious mind is an entity this cannot be done, but if it is only a passing manifestation and appearance of Reality it is at least conceivable that such an identity can be accomplished. But how? Gautama proved by his experience that such an identity could be established by the faithful following of the Golden Path. To do this one must first follow the path of right behaviour; then the path of right thinking; and finally, one must follow the path of right concentration on the union itself.

We have seen that conditional truth requires observation and discrimination and logical inference, but transcendental truth requires a new kind of cognition. Conditional truth is understood by its differentiations and discriminations, but transcendental truth is void of such differentiations—it underlies all phenomenality and all appearance, in it all contrasts and particularisations are merged into a harmonious wholeness—if understood, it must be intuited from within. Strange to say, it is by this very relative knowledge of conditional truth that we are led to this higher knowledge; we are led to it not by verbal demonstration but as if it were a finger pointing the way. Let us review a little and see if we can detect which way the finger is pointing.

Thus far the Golden Path has brought us to a stage where we recognise: (1) That all things, including the empirical self, are a flowing, interlocking, never-ending process whose transient appearances are without substance in themselves; (2) that this vast system of pro-



cesses, and all its transient appearances, is simply a manifestation of mind; (3) that all mental phenomena, tropisms, instincts, sensations, perceptions, concepts, ideas, thoughts, moods and ideals are also processes whose passing phases are transient and empty; (4) that all mental phenomena are manifestation of higher spiritual principles; (5) that all spiritual principles are manifestations of two—Wisdom and Compassion; (6) that Wisdom and Compassion are manifestations of a single undifferentiated and inscrutable Ultimate Principle; (7) that this inscrutable Ultimate Principle is the all-inclusive, harmonious Wholeness of All.

Right Mindfulness consists in recognising these facts, or, rather, this ultimate fact, in everything one senses or thinks about or concentrates upon. The myriad, myriad things of heaven and earth are manifestations of one Mind. The myriad things of mind are manifestations of one Ultimate Principle.

If we look at this inscrutable, all inclusive Ultimate Principle from different angles, we name it: Dharmakaya—the Body of Dharma; Tathagata-garbha—the Womb of Truth; Prajna-paramita—the Vitality of Dharmakaya considered as the great Mother; Bodhi-citta—the Heart of Wisdom; Buddhahood—the Source of the universal Buddha-nature; Nirvana—the state in which all individuation is overcome; the Void—where is Suchness, but no differentiation.

If we follow the different manifestations as they diverge or converge or interweave on the many planes of existence, we would have some such lines as the following. These lines are often baffling, appearing



and disappearing, interweaving and separating and merging. The change of one word will often send one off on an entirely different line; remember it is a process we are following, not a chain of entities. The Divine Elan-vital expresses itself wherever an opening is found, and at the same time, it is the same Divine Elan that draws all things together wherever union is possible. There is, in fact, no things, no lines, only an incessant process of actuality. But let us venture a few of these "lines": Prajna, Bodhi (wisdom), Jnana (truth), principles, laws, propositions, ideas, concepts, sensations, instincts, tropisms, etc. Again, Prajna, Bodhi-citta, Alaya-vijnana (the cosmic mind), the intuitive mind, Vijnana (discriminative mind), manas (sense-minds), nerve-ganglia, etc. Or, again: Prajna, Karuna (love, compassion), sympathy, charity, sex love, and all the attractions on the different planes of life, and all the attractions on the plane of atoms.

If we move in the other direction we have Prajna, point-instants and vibration, "knots of energy," atomic constellations, molecules, matter, mono-cells, cell-colonies, organisms, plants, animals, humans, living ideas (Arahats), spiritual ideals (Bodhisattvas), spiritual principles (Prajna), the Ultimate Principle (Buddha). All these lines, passing and repassing, weaving and interweaving, are in never-beginning and never-ending process of becoming; it is action, reaction and interaction, in eternal recurrence, and passing through plus infinity to minus infinity, and from minus infinity to plus infinity; the many uniting in the inscrutable, ineffable One, only to emerge because of the self-nature



of the Dharmakaya expressing itself in infinite multitudinousness. But this action, reaction, interaction is not by chance or by accident, but by a great principle of causation that is inherent in the Ultimate Principle's Suchness. Prajna, which is the name given to the gracious activity of the Ultimate Principle, first appears as the combined principles of integration and differentiation, or, in other words, of Compassion and Intellection. Looked at as a process of emerging it is analysis; looked at as a process of unification it is synthesis. But these two principles are never entirely separate, the endless permutations of interaction of these two primal principles is the full and adequate explanation of all phenomena and all mental processes, of all ideality, all spirituality and all unity in Buddhahood. The pure white light of Prājna immediately separates into multicoloured rays of spiritual principles, psychic principles, principles of life, and of physics; at some early point comes the differentiation of thinker, thinking and thought, and these take on appearance and form as Cosmic Mind, individual mind, sense-mind as the process of individuation goes on. The shadows of these multicoloured rays passing through the varying media of each successive plane fall on the conditions of the physical plane and appear as ideas and concepts, or as organisms, or as objects. But at the same time, the principle of integration is drawing them together; there is another process running in the opposite direction; atoms appear to be uniting into molecules, into living cells, into colonies of cells, into organisms, plants, animals, humans. At the same time woven into it and



holding it together is an unfolding process of mind, in which tropisms are followed by instincts, by sensations, by perceptions, by consciousness, and when the increasing complexity of physical form appears to reach a limit, these mental appearances appear to go on unfolding and uniting into living ideas that group themselves into some astral forms of mind that are stored in the Cosmic memory of the Alaya-vijnana and thereafter condition the rays of Prajna and, as they fall on the conditions of the Physical Universe, to appear as fate and personality and karma. Again the integrating principle begins to unify them by aspiration, ideals, faith, devotion, sympathy, compassion, until in the Universal Mind, Bodhi-citta, Prajna-paramita, all at the long last are merged into one serene and blissful union. But these successive appearances, as if they were definite processes, going and coming, are really only one process, the obverse and the reverse of which we think to be two processes. There is but one Cosmic Principle, one Divine Elan-vital, one unified and undifferentiated Whole. In considering these "chains" and "lines" do not pick flaws in them; we freely admit they are not scientific statements of fact; they are only pictures and images of the universal and ever-changing stream of appearances as Prajna's rays radiate and cast their shadows on endlessly different backgrounds. They are only pictures and images as Prajna's love draws them back again to their home in the Dharma-kaya. Nothing is real and permanent but the Ultimate Principle itself.

Right Mindfulness consists in so adjusting our men-



tal processes that they shall register truly as to conditions, and seeking by the attainment of perfect mind-control to avoid all limitations and hindrances and illusions of body, senses, intellect, memory and intuition. It consists not so much in grasping and storing knowledge and erudition as in opening up doors and windows to let "an imprisoned splendour" shine out. Right Mindfulness thus brings one to see these fundamental truths and aspects of reality, and from them to intuit the one final Truth, the Ultimate Principle.

This is as far as the thinking process will take us; to really make the truth a part of oneself, one's only recourse is to pass over thinking and the logical balancing of pros and cons, and the discriminations of this and that, pass over all the successive steps and interweaving lines and chains, and concentrate the intuitive mind on the final fact of an All-Inclusive Ultimate Principle. Underneath all is a universal essence of inscrutable mind; all particularity is but a transient manifestation of inscrutable mind; all finite dharmas uniting universals with particulars are but expressions of inscrutable Mind. There is nothing outside of Dharmakaya; all appearances are but transitory rhythms of its own suchness. On the point of every needle and in every microscopic animalcula is the whole Dharmakaya manifested. It is foolish, then, to try to trace and to follow each successive step of its endlessly unfolding process; the wise thing to do is to concentrate the intuitive mind on the All-Inclusive Actuality of it and let its Ultimate Principle accomplish in one what it will accomplish. Thus Right Mindfulness points the way



to Supreme and Perfect Wisdom. To attain it one only needs to concentrate his intuitive mind upon it as unhampered, undimmed, as his attainment on the Golden Path makes possible. It may come gradually through enlightened insight, or it may come in a flash of glory, but when it comes it will be in accordance with one's capacity to receive. Let us, then, patiently, humbly, but zestfully and with all good-will seek to open up our mental capacity to permit it free course; and this can only be done by the practice of concentration.



## RIGHT CONCENTRATION

IF we recall what was said in an earlier chapter we will remember that reference was made to certain hindrances that must be overcome before one could hope for success in attaining mind-control. The first group of hindrances were connected with the body and senses which clamoured for indulgence and comfort and thrill. The second group were those connected with the mind that thirsted for excitement and the allurements of captivating illusions. The third group were the hindrances connected with infatuations of one's selfness. We will now consider this last group.

The ego or soul or self-conscious mind as an enduring, substantial entity is the most difficult of all illusions to get rid of. This is especially true when we come to the practice of concentration, for that discipline is directed to the transcending of all differences and distinctions in an effort to attain a sense of oneness, and that cannot be done so long as we cling to the idea that "I" is separate from the Whole. In fact, it cannot even be successfully done so long as we cling to the idea that one's conscious, thinking mind is one's highest faculty for understanding reality. So long as we cling to the discrimination of thinker, thinking, thought about and thought, the conception of thinker transcends all else in importance and, therefore, it is easy to think



of it as an independent and enduring entity. But when we recall the reasons that convinced us that our true self is neither the thinking mind nor its "stream of consciousness," and that the true Self transcends all distinctions of thinker, thinking and thought, then are we again convinced that the ego or conscious-self is transient, pain-producing and empty, an illusion that is not worth desiring or grasping or clinging to. Nevertheless, one's inherited instincts and habits of self-pride and self-enhancement are so ingrained and so strong that it is exceedingly difficult to get rid of these egoistic hindrances to full concentration.

An aspect of this group of hindrances is connected with one's spiritual aspirations. Long after we think our egoism to have been brought under control, we find it reappearing under the subtle form of religious faith and aspiration. What is religious faith? It is commonly thought of as an attitude of belief and trust in some higher power, or personalised ideal, upon which we are dependent. An especially deceptive form of this is when it is linked with the symbolism of personal love and loyalty, as in those religions like Christianity and Vedantism that personalise the Deity and think of their relations to him in legalistic terms of sin and forgiveness. Its most insidious form is when it is linked with the symbolism of sex imagery of the Divine Lover and the human soul as his beloved, as in some types of Christian mysticism and the Chaitanya cult of Radha-Krishna. All of these carry with them a differentiation between the one who has faith and the One upon whom faith is resting. As we have seen, this



is an illusion, because as we transcend thinking we transcend all discriminations in an intuition of a Supreme Unification. A better definition of faith (*bhakti*) is, it is the intuition of spiritual unification and spiritual identity. A true attitude of faith is the merging of aspiring trust and the glad yielding to its unifying power. One's aspiring faith is identical with the gracious compassion of the Dharmakaya as radiated by Prajna.

There is something tremendously captivating, however, in the thought, "It is I that is going to experience this identity and enjoy its raptures." Again and again one will find it necessary to restrain such thoughts. One will begin by saying, "No, it is not 'I' that will know its enjoyment, but Buddhahood." But by that seemingly innocent statement, one is still repeating the dualism, "I" and "Buddhahood." Herein lies the final task of concentration considered as a discipline: to eliminate every last trace of that seductive "I." This task is sometimes overlooked by different sects even among Buddhists themselves, but the Zen Sect have sedulously and loyally set themselves to the task of transcending every last trace of egoism and at the same time attaining "a self-realisation within one's inmost consciousness of highest truth." The Pure Land sects hold before themselves the ideal of being reborn in the Pure Land; the Tendai believers pore over their sutras to the end that "they" may attain Supreme Enlightenment; and the Shingon devotees practise their mantras and mudras and secret rituals that "they" may experience the ecstasy of union with Vairocana. But the



typical Zen monk tries hard, sometimes desperately hard, to eliminate every trace of egoism. He sits quietly at his za-zen, concentrating on his "koan" and seeking to identify himself with it, but asking for no favour of thrill or magic or reward. He believes it to be wise and right to concentrate, therefore he concentrates, and that is the end of it. For him it is sufficient, whether at za-zen or working in the garden or taking his turn at the services before the altar or out begging, to concentrate quietly and serenely on the task in hand. For the time being, and that is all the time we know anything about, the task is Buddha, it is Buddha doing the task. He tries not to think or say, "I am Buddha," he simply tries to actualise the fact—Buddha!

One of the great Zen Masters, while still a novitiate, was troubled by lack of any convincing realisation of intuitive truth, so he retired to a lonely hermitage and there set himself to a humble life of loyal concentration. He gave up any further thought of tangible realisation; he thought that perhaps his nature was such, his karma such, that he was unworthy of it, but he knew that he could practise his za-zen faithfully and do his work cheerfully, and so he did them. One day, as he was working in the garden, a little stone flew up and, hitting a bamboo, made a queer little noise. Suddenly, like a flash, the whole truth of mind-only was revealed in a vision of glory. He had attained the goal. Thus Gautama, himself, after years of asceticism, sitting quietly under the Bo-tree, received Supreme Enlightenment. What was it? No one can say. It was wholly and finally convincing, but it was inscrutable.



To attain this goal—"self-realisation within one's inmost consciousness"—Zen Masters have developed a particular practice called za-zen. The word has no meaning in itself; it is the Japanese effort to pronounce the Chinese word, *Chan*, which is the Chinese effort to pronounce the Sanskrit word, *Dhyana*, meaning concentration. The purpose of these periods of concentration is to discipline one into the habit of avoiding the use of the thinking mind and get into the habit of using the intuitive mind. The amount of time given to the practice of za-zen varies in different schools of Zen Buddhism. Theoretically there should be periods of za-zen every day, but in fact the practice is increased during certain memorials of the Buddha, and lessened at other times, and omitted altogether at still other times. The most intense and prolonged concentration is naturally during the week of the anniversary of the Buddha's own enlightenment—the first week in December. At that time the monks get very little sleep, being called at 2 a.m. and not retiring until 10.30 p.m., except on the last night, when they keep up concentration all night. The time is commonly divided into periods of three hours, with intermissions for relaxation and partaking of food.

The room that is used for this purpose is the sleeping-room of the monks. It is commonly a building about forty by sixty feet, with an altar in the centre—to Maha-Kasyapa, or some other saint noted for his spirituality. Along both sides is a raised platform about eight feet wide, which is divided by mats three feet wide, each of which is the sleeping place of a monk.



Next to the wall is a shelf and a locker and rack for the monk's possessions. The head monk, who has charge of the monks during devotions, has the seat of honour, and opposite him the one who has charge of the monks during work hours. A place is often reserved for the Master also, who occasionally, but not often, joins the monks at their meditations. The head monks do not usually sleep in this common room, each having his private apartment.

During the period of concentration the monks sit cross-legged, each in his own place, facing toward the centre, with their bedding folded for a cushion. First they chant the short Meditation Sutra; the head monk lights a tiny stick of incense to help him measure time, then he strikes his wooden clapper as a signal for commencing and they sit silent and motionless. After five or six minutes he rings a small hand-bell as a signal for concentration, which lasts for about ten minutes. Then he sounds the clapper for them to relax, if they wish to, for five minutes; then the bell, to concentrate for ten minutes more; then the clapper; and so on for an hour and a half. Then, without any different signal than the clapper, the monks are free to go out and walk about for five minutes, or sit at ease in their place, but they still keep silent, and if they speak do so in whispers. Then follows another period of an hour or an hour and a half. Sometimes the times are made somewhat longer—seven or eight minutes and fifteen or twenty minutes—but the regular alternation is kept up. At the close of the period, a monk beats a curious kind of tattoo on a wooden board at crescendo speed; then



they chant the consecration ritual, prostrate themselves, then bowing in respect to the brotherhood, to the head monk and to the second monk they quietly depart.

At certain times, sometimes once a day, sometimes oftener, at a signal from the Master in his distant apartment, the monks all, or nearly all, file out and wait silently at the door of his reception-room for each in turn to be received by the Master. All of this is very solemn and impressive, with much tinkling of bells, aroma of incense and prostrations. It is the Master's duty and privilege to guide these novices and monks into the "self-realisation of highest truth." This cannot be done by words of instruction, for, remember, the discipline is to train them into the use of the intuitive mind. So the experienced and competent Master has to resort to many "skilful devices" to awaken in the novice the "eye of wisdom," without resorting to words any more than is absolutely necessary. Many centuries ago they found the best means for doing this was the use of the "koan" and the "zan-zen"—that is, question (or problem) and answer (or intuitive reaction).

These koans are a puzzle, and to those who are not acquainted with their purpose and use most stupid and silly puzzles. There are hundreds of them—some say as many as 1,700—and the number gradually increases as the great Masters try out a new one and find it useful and successful. There seems to be a vague order to them, passing from easy ones to the more difficult, and each Master has his favourites. The koans are well



known and are repeated in the many books devoted to Zen, but, strange to say, the "answers" are never printed, but are considered to be secret and confidential between the Master and his disciple, to be transmitted only face to face.

When the novice enters the presence of the Master he prostrates himself in humility and waits for the Master to speak. The Master may give a few words of kindly advice and explanation and then give to the novice one of these koans to concentrate his intuitive mind upon. It may be, for instance, "The clapping of two hands makes a sound, what is the sound made by one hand?" Then the novice withdraws, returns at once to the zen-do and resumes his silent concentration, focussing his mind on this koan. The correct answer, when it comes, will not be in words from a thinker's mind, but will be an intuitive flash of insight that, perhaps, can be better expressed by some pure act. At the next opportunity to go to the Master, the Master may say, "What about your koan?" or simply, "Well?" Then the novice makes his reply, and the Master, if he be wise, will judge by the reply and be able to further instruct him, or guide him toward a better answer, or, if he thinks advisable, to do something to shock the novice or to shake him loose from old mental habits and awaken him out of his mental sloth to a new departure or renewed effort. Some Masters are very strict and even rough, not hesitating to strike their disciples, if they think that to be the best way to quicken their insight. Probably the novice has to return many times before he stumbles on an



“answer” that will satisfy the Master. The monks are not required to go to the Master every time he is ready to see them; often they have absolutely no idea of an “answer,” and if they go empty-headed the Master may scold them or even beat them in a kindly effort to make them try harder to find an answer. If the novice neglects to go to the Master for too long a time, however, the head monk makes it his business to force him to go, even dragging him along. This sounds brutal and unjust, but it is not as bad as it sounds, for there is no compulsion about it; the door is open, the novice can leave any time he wishes to, but so long as he stays he must try his utmost to profit by this discipline of za-zen. It is not considered proper to talk over one’s koan with the other monks, and so the novice must struggle on alone, desperately trying to gain an answer that will satisfy the Master. Often he thinks of his koan day and night for weeks at a time, for months, for years even, and then suddenly the answer flashes on his mind and he exclaims: “Why, of course, why did I not think of that before?” The Master smiles at him, and gives him another koan.

Sometimes a Master, if he thinks it wise, will advise a novice to go to some other Master, but usually the novices are expected to stay with their first Master for three years, then they are free to go elsewhere, and generally do so. Some monks are pleased to stay on for years at one monastery—five, six, ten—then one by one they are recommended or called or assigned to some smaller temple in the country where they may remain a lifetime. There are degrees of proficiency in the



monk's calling which are recognised by different coloured robes, bestowed by some Abbot or Master, and the ablest and most proficient, in time, become Masters and Abbots themselves.

The koan, of course, has no magical merit—it is only a means to an end—it only aids one to the attainment of mind-control and spiritual insight. Some monks boast of the number of koans they have passed, but there is no ground for it, any more than for priding oneself for the number of pills he has taken for different sicknesses. The wise Master can tell by the novice's replies what further guidance he needs from time to time. The effort to gain an answer to a koan trains one to depend more and more on his intuitive mind and less on his thinking mind, and with his success he gains the end desired—namely, enlightenment, spiritual insight and peace of mind. At first, and for a long time, perhaps, the only tangible reward for practising za-zen is a curious feeling of satisfaction that defies analysis, but is very real. It takes decided will-power to keep steadily at it, but when the periods are over there is an indescribable feeling of quiet satisfaction and peace of mind. Gradually this feeling lasts longer and becomes more pervasive. Long before one has any distinct reaction, or satori, as it is called, he is conscious of this subtle but satisfying and peaceful feeling.

The metaphysicians and psychologists, in describing the effect of the successful practice of za-zen, speak of a certain mental “turning” by which they attempt to describe this shifting of mental reliance or balance or



centre of gravity from the thinking mind to the intuitive mind. Often with this "turning" comes a very decided psychic experience; it may be a vision or a wave of spiritual uplift, from which, or after which, the subject feels quite different mentally. One who had experienced it described it to the writer as like a flash of lightning that suddenly illuminated the darkness and during which he saw everything in a new light. Before, he had been habitually conscious of doubt and uncertainty and indecision, but afterward he had gained a definite conviction and clearly understood the real nature of all reality which thereafter remained unshakable. Before, he had understood in an intellectual way the main principles of the Dharma, but afterward he was certain of them. Everything seemed to take on a new and clear reality, everything seemed to be just right and as it ought to be; and never after the experience had he a shadow of doubt about the truth of mind only, and that mind the Buddha-mind.

This experience is called Satori, and is not so common as to become commonplace, but all the great Masters have experienced it, and many of the lesser monks. But apart from this "turning," the great psychologists have listed a gradual unfolding of mental states, of absorptions and spiritual moods, concerning which we shall speak more at length in a later chapter. Za-zen is a queer thing: when you think you have it, you miss it. Modern Zen followers often make too much of the koan at the expense of "the quiet sitting." The more one practises it, the harder it gets and the more alluring it becomes. Perhaps it is this very elusive-



ness that increases one's determination to pursue it to the end. And what is the end? An inner realisation of perfect tranquillity. An unshakable but inexpressible conviction of highest truth.



THIRD ADVENTURE  
THROUGH CONCENTRATION OF  
SPIRIT TO TRANQUILLISATION



## RIGHT INTUITION

AGAIN we have come to an outlook, only this time it is an in-look, and, instead of familiar fields and forests and houses and people, we find ourselves not even peering toward ideas, but, sitting quietly, we wait expectantly for some transcendent light and some blissful and satisfying certainty. We know not what it will be or what it will reveal, but are content to wait patiently and cheerfully for its coming.

As a starting-point for our first adventure we decided upon Four Noble Truths: the fact of suffering, desire and grasping as the cause of suffering, restraint of desire as the ending of suffering, the Golden Path to mind-control as the way to restrain desire. This was the path to good external behaviour.

As a starting-point for our second adventure we decided upon two ideas: first, every individual thing on the physical plane is merely a manifestation of some corresponding idea on the mental plane; and second, our own conscious personality is also a manifestation of mind. This was the path to Right Mindfulness. Following the Golden Path from these Right Ideas, at the seventh stage we arrived at certain additional ideas—firstly, that sense perceptions, concepts, desires, grasping, acts, are all stored in a cosmic memory, the Alaya-vijnana, thereafter to condition all future manifestations and appearances; secondly, that all concepts and de-



sires and ideas are influenced by mental states and moods that, in turn, are under the influence of ideals and spiritual principles; thirdly, that while concepts, desires and ideas are discriminative in their nature, that spiritual ideals and principles are unitive; fourthly, that the discriminative concepts, desires and ideas can be controlled simply by ignoring discriminations and concentrating attention on the more unitive aspects of mind and spirit—namely, on spiritual ideals and principles. But to do that we must “turn” from the habitual use of the discriminative or thinking mind, which accumulates relative knowledge, and make use of the unitive or intuitive mind, which becomes aware of Real Knowledge or Wisdom. At the same time, if we are going to abandon discrimination in our thinking we must also abandon it in relation to the thinker, which is our own conscious personality.

This leads us to consider the difference between the thinking mind and the intuitive mind, and the different relations they bear to the conscious personality. The thinking mind is localised in the brain and serves to utilise the concepts derived from sense-experience by arranging, selecting, comparing and combining them, and by so doing to arrive at some judgment as to relative values and desirabilities as a guide to choice and action on the physical plane. It is the faculty that is especially designed to advantage the will-to-live and the will-to-power in the incessant reactions to external conditions and circumstances. It can also be used by its sensitiveness to logical and discursive relations for pure reasoning and philosophising. By these activities it raises the self-conscious ego to extraordinary heights of



knowledge and power, and at the same time it inflames one's egoism far beyond the degree with which it is stimulated by consciousness of mere physical strength. Now it is infatuated with intellectual pride and the consciousness of authority of mind over matter.

But the thinking mind has its limitations. Being designed to discriminate and compare, it carries with it the antithesis of self and not-self, and is totally unable to enter into the unitive values of spirituality, such as truth and goodness. It may come to the threshold, but it cannot enter in. For the mind to become aware of spiritual values a finer faculty is necessary, and it is provided in what is commonly called intuition. Its seat is not in the brain, but appears to be in the lower part of the spine or the large ganglia of nerves called the solar plexus. The discriminating mind functions through media of senses, nerves and brain; the intuitive mind functions by pure immediacy, by becoming identified with truth and goodness. To use the intellect there must be the differentiation of thinker, thinking and object of thought; to use the intuitive mind, thinker and object of thought must be unified into one, and thinking and thought must be unified into one experience—that is, intellectual consciousness must be transcended by a more direct and immediate cognition.

The result of this intuitive immediacy will not be in the nature of the definite ideas of the mind, but will be in the nature of assured but undifferentiated conviction, because it is based on the immediacy of identity. It is the concomitant of mystical experience, the human mind unified with Inscrutable Mind, the human ego integrated with Universal Life. The consciousness of



this identity is intuition. It is an immediate apprehension of Reality and, as such, is superior to all processes of thinking based on selected concepts of experience or on any conclusions of discursive reasonings.

At first this unitive experience will be attained only at rare moments of uplift and concentration, but will be wholly convincing and life-enhancing. As faithful practice develops one's capacity for Right Concentration, the frequency and duration of these high states of mind will be increasingly attained and become more illuminating.

When a certain moment is reached, suddenly something happens and one's whole life is changed. This mental "opening," or "turning," is called Satori. It is the point where Ignorance (which is the mental habit of discrimination) gives way once and for all time to Enlightenment (which is seeing things as One Unified Whole). "This condition is impossible to describe; it may only be hinted at in words and phrases. The world and consciousness are then seen to be one thing. Then the light of wisdom floods the whole nature with a glory that is impossible to describe, and the intellect is stilled in its activity by the awe and majesty and wonder that transforms the whole universe" (Bayard Elton, in *Buddhism in England*).

This awakening of mystical experience will be pervasive and inexpressible in words, but it will involve two things: a transcendence of discriminative thinking and a transcendence of self-consciousness, both becoming merged in the intuitive experience itself. This is Right Intuition.



## RIGHT VOWS

THE second stage of the Third Quest calls for Right Resolution. This will, naturally, be different from previous resolutions, inasmuch as we are now transcending conscious selfness. Under these circumstances, resolution takes on more of the aspect of devotion and self-abnegation and perfect trust. Christian mystics see it as the yielding of the soul in whole-hearted surrender to her gracious Lord; Hindoo mystics see it as bhakti, the glad response of the soul to the flute-call of her Divine Lover, Shri Krishna.

Buddhists, more rational and restrained, see it as the merging of selfness into the Perfect Wholeness of Prajna-Paramita, the Suchness of Buddhahood. In it we contact the highest cosmic vibrations and yield ourselves trustingly to them. Spiritual Insight gives awareness of one's identity with all True Reality; Spiritual Love draws us into the true expression of that Love by a great tide of compassionate self-giving directed toward all animate life. The Prajna-pull within us trying to rise above divisions into actual union with all; the Prajna-push within us trying to express that union in charity and sympathy toward all. Prajna creates not only the thing itself but the way by which it has been accomplished and will be consummated. This is Pranidhana, not a vow of words but a vow of selfness by which the unity and identity is accom-



plished. As one becomes aware of Spiritual Identity with Buddhahood, it is not of Buddhahood as a Transcendental Person or God, but as the unified wholeness of all, and thereby he becomes both increasingly aware of unity with all animate life, and increasingly compassionate and sympathetic and charitable toward all animate life. When this awareness and compassion become Perfect Awareness and Perfect Compassion then his personality is actually Buddha. Until that Perfect Unity is established one both aspires to it and yields to it by his Pranidhana, or Right Resolution.

It is not by luck or chance that we belong to an unfolding line of spiritual ancestry, but because we choose to belong to it by the sincerity of our Pranidhana. By it one links himself irrevocably to the consummation of true life. Body, life, consciousness, spiritual insight, Pranidhana identity, are not isolated phenomena connected with our conscious personality, but are appearances of a continuously unfolding principle which has been operating from beginningless time and has already brought us thus far toward unity, and will, if trusted, complete the union far beyond the limits of our transient, conscious personality. It is for us simply, humbly, cheerfully to meet the task of this Vow wisely, compassionately, up to our capacity.



## CHAPTER XXI

### RIGHT RADIATION

ON our first adventure, toward Right Behaviour, we discovered the necessity of restraining speech and being very careful not to let our mental moods beguile us into impulsive, censorious, angry, deceitful or malicious speech; not to permit oratory before crowds to dominate us; and not to let speech, either our own or another's, interfere with and supplant individual thinking and judgment.

On our second adventure, toward Right Mindfulness, we discovered the importance of the correct use of words, seeking to have them fit ideas as closely as possible, and to be truthful in meaning, content and balance.

On this spiritual quest we will have need to emphasise both these aspects—namely, the wise restraint of speech and the truthful use of words. As on this spiritual adventure we are trying to transcend differentiations and discriminations we shall have less use for speech and words than before, but there will still be a necessity for them in explaining the Dharma and persuading men to undertake the adventure of the Golden Path. We must be doubly careful, however, not to talk too much, not to use words carelessly or untruthfully, but in every way seek to speak the truth in loving-kindness.

But there is another aspect of speech that now comes



into prominence. Speech and words are used for the transfer of ideas from one person to another and they must be discriminative to be of practical usefulness, but, as we have already pointed out, there are other and more expressive ways for conveying information than words—namely, by pure action. There is still another way for the transfer—namely, by radiation—concerning which we will now speak. We are commonly aware of the subtle impressions we receive from people with whom we come in contact that cannot always be described in words but are most convincing. We frequently hear one say: “I do not trust that person,” or, “He gives me the cold shivers every time I come near him,” or, “Just to be near that person is a benediction.” When we pass beyond the noisy confusion of practical life and the disturbing confusion of many ideas in our mental life, we become conscious of finer vibrations all about us that are just as much to be reckoned with as though they were thunderings in our ears. Scientists are more and more becoming convinced that all physical phenomena can be described in terms of vibration—that is, in terms of points of space and instants of time and motion. On the psychic plane this is relatively true also, but as space and time have a different connotation they are to be understood in a somewhat different manner and degree. On the spiritual plane it is very different, inasmuch as the transcendence of differentiations leaves time and space behind. Still, there is rhythm in goodness, beauty and truth to indicate the presence of a finer order of vibration. And just as physical energy appears out of the



Void as vibration, so Wisdom and Compassion appear out of the same Void as rhythms of Spirit. As the longer "wave-lengths" of physical passions, sense-concepts, desire, grasping, egoism are "screened out," and the whistling, cat-calls and screeching of "static" are stilled, we begin to more and more realise the wondrous music and harmony of the finer spiritual radiations. Right Speech, therefore, for the pilgrim of the spiritual quest is Right Radiation.

We will refer to four sources of such radiations: First there is the spirit of kindness. As one turns the back on discriminations and faces toward unity and identity, his mind will be filled with enlightenment and his heart by an all-embracing love that will express itself in a mingled spirit of kindness and compassion toward all animate life. Love is the deliverance of the mind from its petty and selfish discriminations. But Love, to be "radio-active," must be purged of every trace of dross and selfish inclination and grasping and egoistic pride. There must be no "thirst" even of the noblest kind—not even the desire to bless and benefit. Love must be spontaneous, purified by spiritual insight of all its human passion and egoism, for there is no such thing as passionate kindness. There must be no favourites, nor any partiality, nor ulterior interests, nor any grudging; it must come as the natural radiation of a sincere mind and pure heart, intent only to express its Buddha-nature of Love. Just as the sun shines because it is its nature to shine on all alike, and on all without particularity, so let the pilgrim of the spiritual quest radiate kindness. Kindness is the first-



fruit of spiritual insight. It is the giving forth not of any self-produced substance that would be limited, it is of the very self-substance of Buddhahood—unlimited, irresistible, ever abounding, free from all ill-will and deceit. Nothing can withstand it, nothing can exhaust it, nothing can transmute it. Neither does its radiation fail of effect, no matter how resistant, how ugly, how selfish the soil upon which it falls may seem to be, for, after all, wickedness and ignorance is just as much Buddha as is purity and knowledge; sooner or later they must yield to its power. It is said in the “Majjhima Nikaya”:

“Wherefore, monks, however men may speak concerning you; whether in season or out of season, whether appropriately or inappropriately, whether courteously or rudely, whether wisely or foolishly, whether kindly or maliciously, thus, my monks, must you train yourselves: ‘Unsullied shall our minds remain, neither shall evil word escape our lips. Kind and compassionate ever, we will abide loving of heart nor harbour secret hate. And that person will we permeate with stream of loving thought unfailing; and forth from him proceeding, enfold and permeate the whole wide world with constant thoughts of loving-kindness, as the worldwide, ample expanding, measureless, free from enmity, free from ill-will.’ Thus, my monks, must you train yourselves.” (*Grimm's translation.*)

The second is the spirit of compassion. Kindness breaks down opposition, prepares the mind to receive, awakens a desire for friendship and intimacy; com-



passion is the forthgoing of selfness itself in an eager, sincere effort to achieve unity and actual identity. Compassion sends forth its rays to accomplish the work for which kindness has prepared the way.

The third is the spirit of sympathetic gladness. Gladness is the natural following of the successful radiation of kindness and compassion. On the physical plane, suffering was the natural and inevitable result of thirst, grasping and clinging to transient and empty things. On the spiritual plane, where there is no discrimination and no thirst, no grasping nor clinging, joy, gladness and peace are just as natural and inevitable.

The fourth source is a spirit of equanimity. As all inclination to profit or gain from the spiritual life is absent, there should be no excitement or pride of accomplishment, any more than the sun should feel excited and proud over its shining. True kindness, compassion, gladness, is free from all discrimination; there is only even-mindedness that is wholly calm and peaceful. Thus perfect equanimity—the radiation of quietness, serenity, peace—is the highest spiritual achievement.

These four sources of radiation are only relatively influenced by time and space. The graces of the Blessed Buddha still stream forth to bless the world and will stream forth. The true Zen monk, in his isolated hermitage, quietly but sincerely practising za-zen, working cheerfully in his garden and unconsciously radiating these four gracious influences toward all animate life, is a great gift to the world, than which there is none greater. Right Radiation is the very blossoming and



fruitage of the spiritual life; its fertile pollen, wind-blown and bee-carried, will reach souls whose capacity is ready to receive it and to respond to its stimulating fertility.



## RIGHT SPIRITUAL BEHAVIOUR

RIGHT physical behaviour consisted in behaving with propriety—not to kill, not to steal, etc. Right behaviour from a mental point of view consisted in living up to right ideals—to cherish good-will, to be charitable, to be pure in heart, to be abstemious. Right behaviour from a spiritual standpoint consists in controlling behaviour from a unitive motive—that is, separating all desire, grasping, acquisitiveness and selfish egoism from one's actions and thinking. As we advance spiritward differentiations lose their significance, and the moral precepts merge into each other until only two remain: to be kind-hearted and to act wisely, with no trace of egoism. The task, then, of the spiritual life is to attain to this standard, and it can be successfully accomplished if one habitually keeps in mind the essential oneness of all animate life. If one truly does this he will be willing to bear another's burden of ignorance—his grasping, his ill-will, his infatuations, and share, for the other's salvation, his own wisdom and merit.

If one is to seek the highest spirituality he must concentrate on the highest ideality. This was true on the physical plane when we were trying to control the more obvious desires of the senses; it was true on the mental plane when we were trying to control the illusive attractions of the mind; and now it is especially true as we see more clearly the real dangers of the



many little things that at first appeared negligible, but which now take on a greater significance and importance. Little things like dress, rich foods, jewellery, cosmetics, entertainments, flattery, the power that wealth gives and any selfish advantages, now come out into clearer light and reveal their innate seductiveness and danger to spiritual well-being. The difficulty, now, is not so much to behave properly as the world counts propriety, or to live up to one's own moral ideals, as it is to control the subtle and still insistent promptings of egoism. Right spiritual behaviour calls for sincerest humility and extreme selflessness. We cannot radiate kindness, sympathy and joy unless we ourselves are essentially selfless—that is, unified and identified by love with all animate life.

This unifying of the individual life with the life of others cannot be attained in one life nor under the conditions of the physical plane. There must be a gradual advance toward the Ideal, stretching over many incarnations, and into higher planes of existence, and involving more inclusive conceptions of personality. There gradually grew up a personalisation of these advancing stages of spiritual unity. When a monk attained a certain stage of intellectual insight known as Enlightenment he was called an Arahāt. As an Arahāt he was emancipated from the lusts and passions and illusions of ordinary men and would no longer be reborn in the physical world; his next incarnation would be on the psychic plane, where he would be freer for a more spiritual development. When an Arahāt had attained a certain stage of spiritual insight



he became a Bodhisattva. As a Bodhisattva he was free of the limitations of intellectual mind and ordinary mortality, and would no longer be reborn on the psychic plane as an Arahāt. Having attained so exalted a degree of spirituality, his life was characterised by Wisdom and Compassion. The old sutras speak of eight stages of Bodhisattvahood, in the last of which all limits of individuality are transcended, and he is ready for Nirvana and Buddhahood. But in that stage his wisdom is so great that he is conscious of all the sufferings of all animate life, and his compassion is so unbounded that he foregoes his opportunity to become a Buddha for the sake of all animate life—that is, all animate life is unified and integrated in his all-inclusive love.

But this personalisation of Arahāt and Bodhisattva must not be understood as individuality in the physical sense. Just as an earthly individual is the synthesis of billions of living cells, so the Ideal of an Arahāt living in the Pure Land of the psychic plane is the synthesis of unknown numbers of humanity, unified and integrated in his ideality. In like manner, the Bodhisattva Selfhood includes myriads of Arahāts in the harmonious unity and identity of his Perfect Love and Wisdom, and, at Nirvana, all Bodhisattvas lose their distinguishing marks in the supreme unity of Buddhahood.

We advance toward Buddhahood, but as we advance we leave our human individuality behind us and become progressively integrated with the more inclusive Arahāt Ideality, the still more inclusive Bodhisattva



Spirituality, and, finally, in the All-inclusive Reality of Buddhahood, and with every advance of integration will know an ever-increasing freedom and joy and peace.

Right spiritual behaviour is behaviour that is motivated by intuition of this Bodhisattva Ideal of Wisdom and Love.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

IN the second adventure we dwelt upon the environment as it affected the monk's mental freedom; in this third adventure we speak of those aspects of environment that affect his spiritual welfare.

The conditions of monastic life as they have been developed in Buddhism differ very widely from the conditions usual in Catholic monasteries. In the latter the principle of obedience is very prominent, while in Buddhist monasteries it is omitted entirely and the co-operative and brotherhood principle is most prominent. Buddhist monasteries are conducted as true communistic and co-operative brotherhoods, not only in economic matters, but also in social and spiritual relations as well. The monks have a voice, and often a controlling voice, in all matters, even to the selection of the abbot. Membership requires no vows of obedience either as to going and coming, or in matters of doctrine and belief. A Buddhist monk is always free to arrive as to his own conclusions as to truth in his own way and in his own time; no monk is ever coerced. The characteristic and essential element of spiritual existence is its unitive aspect: a thing is spiritual just as far as and just as much as it is selfless. Discrimination of you and I, your and mine, this and that, are transcended by an intuitive awareness and sympathy that is wholly spiritual. In Buddhist monasteries every effort is made



to create and maintain brotherly conditions and a spiritual atmosphere. There is the sharing of everything in common: shelter, clothes, food, labour, instruction, advice, sympathy and worship.

Buddhist monks, especially Zen monks, have a loving responsibility for each other's spiritual welfare and progress. They practise their za-zen together, because by so doing they encourage and help each other to greater zeal and steadfastness. They make labour, whether dusting the altar, cooking or serving the food, or working in the garden, or begging, a sacrament. Labour itself they perform in a spiritual way—that is, they concentrate their attention and thought upon the task in hand, because that, too, is Buddha. They try to do every task “in spirit and in truth,” as expressing better than words can do their own Buddha-nature. The same is true of their bathing, their conversations, chanting the sutras at the daily services before the altars. There is very little talking in a Buddhist monastery; the meals are eaten in silence, at labour there is very little said, and when they have occasion to talk they speak softly. The reason for this is that whatever their mind is fixed upon that is Buddha; it is, therefore, spiritual in nature and the mind must be free to give the task their best attention. There is another reason, also, there must be no loud or unnecessary talking to disturb their brother monks in their concentration.

The monks begin the day by a short period of za-zen, prefaced by adoration and an offering of respect for their chosen saint. Concerning these personalisations of spiritual principles more will be said in a later chapter,



suffice it to say here that early in his monk's life each novice chooses for himself one of the Bodhisattvas to be his especial patron; to him he offers daily adoration, in addition, of course, to the general adoration offered to Shakyamuni Buddha. The idea being that as his individuality merges into universal life it must first merge into some more general life as his special Bodhisattva before it finally merges into Buddha as Universal Life. Then comes the early breakfast, which is very slight and simple, and eaten in silence. The main meal of the day comes at early noon, generally by eleven o'clock so as to be over by noon. At this meal, while the food is of the simplest vegetarian character, it is abundant in quantity, but the meal itself is a sacrament. It is one of the most affecting parts of the monk's daily life and deserves a more extended notice than can be given here, but it will be described briefly.

At the sound of a bell the monks, each carrying his nest of five bowls and a small napkin, silently and seriously file into the dining-room, where they seat themselves according to rank and seniority on the outside of long tables which face each other, so that the monks whose turn it is to wait on the brothers may pass between to serve the food. Sitting quietly, with the palms of their hands together, and led by the head monk, they join in repeating a somewhat extended ritual, as follows :

1. To the Dharmakaya, the Inconceivable Suchness of the Buddhahood.
2. To Sambhogakaya, Vairochana Buddha, the Glorified Body of Bliss.



3. To Nirmanakaya, Shakyamuni Buddha, in his many bodies of transformation.
4. To Maitreya Buddha, the Buddha who is yet to come.
5. To all the Buddhas in all the worlds, past, present and future.
6. To Manjushri, the Bodhisattva of Highest Wisdom.
7. To Samantabhadra, the Bodhisattva of Purest Spirituality.
8. To Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva of Tenderest Compassion.
9. To all the saintly Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas.
10. To the Great Prajna-paramita, from whence comes all knowledge and all manifestations and all power, and whose Mother-love draws all things into one blissful Unity.

Then the following stanzas are recited :

For this meal, with all its strengthening virtues and pleasant tastes,

We offer our grateful thanks to Buddha and the Brotherhood.

We would gladly share it with all who are hungry and with all animate life.

When we consider whence this meal has come and how little we have accomplished,

How unworthy we are by virtue and merit to accept it,

We again resolve to follow the Golden Path toward restraint, enlightenment and sympathy with fresh zeal.

This meal is like good medicine; we partake of it as necessary for physical existence;

With grateful hearts we accept it as drawing us into



closer unity and fellowship with those who have provided it for us.

A little portion of food is offered with the following prayer :

As a token of my desire and willingness to share this  
food  
I now give a portion of it to all beings, past, present  
and future,  
And may they all partake of it.

Then the meal-time vows are said :

With the first mouthful I resolve to do away with all  
evil;  
With the second mouthful I resolve to practise all  
goodness;  
With the third mouthful I resolve to save all sentient  
beings;  
And may we all become perfect in the way of Buddha.

Meanwhile the waiters have silently served the food, and now they begin to eat. If they wish some more they wait patiently until a waiter approaches, when they place the palms of the hands together and move them slowly up and down; when they have as much as they want, or do not care for any more, they keep the head bowed until the waiter has passed. A monk must never accept any more food than he can eat, and when it is finished to the last grain the waiter brings some weak tea and fills the largest bowl. The monk then carefully cleans his bowls with his finger in this weak



tea, when he either drinks the tea as the sign of the humble saving of precious food, or he empties it into a pail which the waiter passes. The bowls are carefully wiped by the little napkin which each brings. The grains of offered food are carefully gathered up and spread on a clean place on the ground for the birds and other animals to eat.

Then the closing ritual is repeated, as follows :

The meal is finished, my physical strength is revived, I feel within me the strength of all the Buddhas, inexhaustible in space and time. OM MAHAVAMSA SWAHA.  
(*A Sanskrit benediction.*)

Then the monks rise and, still in perfect silence, file away. An hour of quietness follows, when the monks are free to rest or speak quietly with one another or study some favourite sutra. No newspapers or general literature is permitted within the monastery, and even much study of the sutras is discouraged by the Zen sect because truth is coming to one intuitively anyway, and perfect truth cannot be expressed in words. There is another slight lunch, generally about four o'clock, but no food is supposed to be eaten between meals.

After the early morning lunch the brothers scatter to their appointed tasks, to the careful dusting of the different altars, or the tidying up of the grounds. At about nine o'clock they gather in the lecture hall and proceed to the several altars to offer a short service of adoration. On certain days, especially during the sesshin periods, the Master gives them instruction. These occasions are opened by the Master offering incense



with much prostration and words of adoration to Shakyamuni Buddha, the Blessed One, to his own departed Master, and to the founder of the monastery. This is followed by a general recitation of a solemn Sanskrit Dharani accompanied by the notes of bronze bells and wooden gong. Then follows the reading in concert of some classical sermon or exhortation. To show the nature of these a favourite one by Hakuin is given.

All sentient beings are, from the very beginning, the  
Buddhas :

It is like ice and water ;

Apart from water no ice can exist ;

Outside sentient beings, where do we seek the Buddhas ?

Not knowing how near the truth is,

People seek it far away—what a pity !

They are like him who, in the midst of water,

Cries in thirst so imploringly ;

They are like the son of a rich man

Who wandered among the poor.

The reason why we transmigrate through the six  
worlds,

Is because we are lost in the darkness of ignorance ;

Going astray further and further in the darkness,

When are we able to get away from birth-and-death ?

As regards the Meditation practised in the Mahayana,

We have no words to praise it fully,

The Virtues of Perfection, such as charity and morality,

And the invocation of the Buddha's name, confession  
and ascetic discipline,

And many other good deeds of merit—



All of these issue from the practice of Meditation  
(*dhyana*).

Even those who have attained it even for one sitting,  
Will see all their evil karma wiped clean;  
Nowhere will they find the evil paths,  
But the Pure Land will be near at hand.

With a reverential heart, let them to this Truth listen  
even for once,

And let them praise it, and gladly embrace it,  
And they will surely be blessed most infinitely.

For such as, reflecting within themselves,  
Testify to the Truth of Self-nature,  
To the Truth that Self-nature is no-nature,  
They have really gone beyond the ken of sophistry.  
For them opens the gate of oneness of cause and effect,  
And straight runs the path of non-duality and non-  
trinity.

Abiding in the not-particular in particulars,  
Whether going or returning, they remain for ever  
unmoved;

Taking hold of the no-thought in thoughts,  
In every act of theirs they hear the voice of Truth.  
How boundless the sky of Samadhi unfettered!  
How transparent the moonlight of the Fourfold  
Wisdom!

At that moment what do they lack?  
As the Truth, eternally calm, reveals itself to them,  
This very earth is the Lotus Land of Purity,  
And this body is the body of Buddha.

(*Trans. by D. T. Suzuki.*)

Then the Master gives his instruction. His teaching  
is very unlike an ordinary lecture; there is no argument,



no reasoning, no apologetic; he simply repeats and explains the sayings of the Zen Masters of old. At the close of the lecture the monks repeat the Four Great Vows:

However innumerable are sentient beings, I vow to  
serve them all;

However inexhaustible my evil passions, I vow to exterminate them all;

However immeasurable the holy doctrines, I vow to  
study them all;

However inaccessible the path of Buddha, I vow to  
attain it.

On the various anniversaries appertaining to the monastery—of the founder of it, of the patron Bodhisattva and of the Buddha, the regular altar services are elaborated into impressive services. This is particularly so of the anniversaries of the Buddha's birth (April 8), of his Enlightenment (December 8) and of his death (February 15). On the latter occasion Abbots of high degree, in their many-coloured robes, gather and conduct the ceremony in person; the solemn dirge of deep-toned bells and chanted hymns, and fragrant incense and slow procession with bowed heads, back and forth, back and forth, before the great Buddha altar, makes an impression that, once seen, is never forgotten.

After these services the monks separate again, many going out begging to be gone all day, others working in the garden until dinner. The main period of za-zen comes after the afternoon lunch, and continues for several hours into the early evening. During the great



sesshin periods they often sit in concentrated meditation, except for the regular breaks for relaxation, for many hours. During the great period, during the week of the anniversary of Buddha's Enlightenment, they are in almost continuous za-zen from three o'clock in the morning until midnight.

The main period of za-zen opens with the repetition of a portion of the Meditation Sutra, and closes with a ritual of consecration that is repeated three times. Then, with much ringing of bells, sounding of wooden gongs, prostrations to the Buddhas and bowings to the Brotherhood and the head monk, the brothers retire to rest at a very early hour. Every day, very early in the morning and as the night shadows gather, a brother mounts into the bell tower and recites a sutra as the great bell booms out its deep-toned notes into the darkness and stillness of the night.

As the monks gain in spiritual insight and consciousness of the pure Buddha-nature within them, they see it in all animate life and especially in their brother monks, and it calls forth a great warmth of affection. No matter how diverse in natural ability or education or spiritual progress, there is among them a wonderful spirit of kindness and good-will and forbearance. One form that this mutual affection takes on is between an older and younger monk. Perhaps the older is attracted by the sincerity and promise of the younger, and at first tries to help and encourage him in his spiritual progress; the younger responds to the advances with gratitude and appreciation that gradually deepens into a true bond of spiritual fellowship, by which the younger



cares for the elder during the declining years of old age and feebleness. This merging of lives in friendship is of the very essence of the spiritual life, and is often beautifully illustrated among Buddhist monks. Together they watch the setting sun and the wild geese flying south, and listen to falling water and the 'wind and the frog's call and the evening boom of the temple bell. In them all they hear the Buddha's voice, and in quiet joy and serenity fall asleep in perfect faith that all is well.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### RIGHT SPIRIT

IN the corresponding chapter in the second adventure we described the Ten Paramitas, or Ideals of Virtue. In this adventure we are transcending mental ideals and seeking to attain spiritual unity. The approach to this Perfect Unity has been divided into ten stages, which merge almost imperceptibly into each other.

(1) Delight and joy as one emerges from the last clouds that hide the ineffable effulgence of the Dharmakaya and he fully realises the perfect Love and the perfect Wisdom that is Prajna. This emergence awakens perfect compassion and perfect wisdom, which is joy unspeakable.

(2) In this joy of perfect enlightenment and perfect compassion, where all is tenderness, purity and peacefulness, he radiates spontaneously streams of saving grace to all without distinction.

(3) With this radiation of blessedness there comes a still more perfect insight and a deeper awareness of the transiency inevitably following painfulness and emptiness of substantiality of all appearances; and a clearer awareness of the real nature of things eternally abiding in the Suchness of Dharmakaya. This clearer appreciation of the relativity between appearance and reality, inspires him to more earnest and faithful activity in the self-giving work of salvation.

(4) With renewed devotion and zeal in the work of



salvation comes a clearing understanding of all the hindrances that oppose it, and all the powers and skillful devices and truths and graces that are at his disposal to accomplish it.

(5) With the above clearing insight into the several elements of his task, and his complete understanding of all relative knowledge, there comes a transcending intuitive appreciation of identity with Absolute Knowledge—that is, he penetrates deep into the whole system of Reality; he understands how everything subsists in Tathagata-garbha and Bhutatathata and the Bodhicitta; he understands perfectly how it is possible that highest Reality, although it is essentially One, is able to manifest itself in a world of differentiations and appearances; that above all the billowing clouds and tangle of discriminations, and in them all, there shines the ineffable, inscrutable and eternal Light of Prajna.

(6) With the above perfected insight into both the world of appearances and the world of Reality, and the never-endingness of integration and disintegration, there arises and floods his nature a great tide of love and compassion. He re-consecrates himself to the task of self-abnegation and self-giving. He yields himself wholly to the principle of integration: that that which has emancipated him may, through him, emancipate others.

(7) Knowing all things, loving all animate life, devoting himself and all he is to those who are still entangled in the world of discriminations and whose minds are still clouded by many defilements, he boldly goes forth to give his all, to identify himself with all,



in perfect assurance that ultimately all will become Buddha. Knowing that he is now one with all the Buddhas, he humbles himself to become one with all animate life and to practise loving-kindness under all conditions, that they, with him, may come to realise their true Buddha-nature.

(8) Next he passes beyond all relative and discursive knowledge and suddenly awakens to a more immediate cognition by which all the elaborations of appearances, relativity and processes melt away into nothingness, and only the pure Suchness of Buddhahood remains. It is like a man in the waters, desperately struggling to reach shore, suddenly awakening to find all his effort and worry unnecessary because he is already safe across. It is like awakening from a bad dream to find that all one's "fright is only a dream. A great serenity and calm envelopes him in an all-inclusive peace. In the light of the new cognition, all the mysterious comings and goings, arising and passing, appearing and disappearing, of objects, experiences, desires, graspings, ideas and moods; all thinking, willing, acting, radiating, are but one activity with no causal or logical connection. There was no call for conscious striving to do good any more than there had been need for his feverish grasping after empty appearances. Everything is spontaneous, with no striving, no conformity to plan, simply perfect freedom and perfect peace.

(9) This absolute cognition, this supernatural identity of subject and object, is unfathomable and inscrutable to ordinary minds, but after this "turning" it becomes the natural estate of Bodhisattvahood. It is the con-



centration of perfect cognition, perfect spontaneity, perfect spirituality, perfect freedom, perfect Wisdom and perfect Love.

(10) With this stage the last shred of individuality as Bodhisattva that differentiates him from Buddhahood melts away: he has attained Nirvana.

Right Spirit consists, therefore, in consciously and humbly recognising, through the perfect cognition of enlightened insight, the all-inclusive, harmonious wholeness of Reality; and in perfect charity, morality, patience, zeal, concentration, wisdom, tactfulness, devotion, steadfastness and perfect intelligence blended into one perfect spirit of Wisdom and Compassion, without haste, without anxiety, without perturbation, but calmly and with equanimity, radiating the pure Self-nature of Dharmakaya which, as Prajna-paramita, is both creative Source and unifying Love.



## RIGHT MINDFULNESS

RIGHT MINDFULNESS, as it relates to the spiritual life, consists in looking at things in their unitive relations. The end, as far as this mortal life is concerned, is the extinction of all egoism—that is, the attainment of Nirvana. The word Nirvana is used in various senses: sometimes it is loosely used as marking the relative extinction of desire that comes with “enlightenment”; sometimes it is used to describe the passing of a true Buddhist saint; and sometimes it carries an absolutist meaning: the complete “burning out” after many incarnations, of all desire, of all ignorance, of all egoism and all distinguishing marks between self and others. In this absolute meaning it is perfect identity with Buddhahood. In this latter sense it is sometimes written Parinirvana. The Blessed One attained Nirvana at his experience of perfect enlightenment under the Bo-tree; he attained Parinirvana at his death.

Before one attains that absolute goal, there must be many, many rebirths and lives of utmost endeavour and sincerity. Meanwhile it is ever one’s task to concentrate with diligence and patience on highest truth as one has spiritual capacity to realise Highest Truth. There will be signs of progress from time to time that will encourage one to persevere, but they are not to be grasped after nor clung to, any more than one delays a



journey to embrace the milestones by the way. But the final marks of progress—blissful peace and equanimity—throw a clear light on the nature of Nirvana considered as synonymous with the perfect unity of Buddhahood. Sometimes it has been called, mistakenly, annihilation and utter pessimism. This is a grave error, for all Buddhism witnesses to its positive nature. Admitted that it marks the end of the finite conscious-self, but the ego is at best only a shadow, a transient appearance; the true Self is Buddha, and that is eternal reality. Nirvana marks but the passing of the shadow that the real identity may be revealed in its perfect nature. Blissful peace is but a foretaste of the Perfect Peace of the Suchness of Dharmakaya. Nirvana is to be realised, but only after the patient following, through many incarnations, of the Golden Path to its culmination in the identification of the particular life in the lives of the many, and in perfect, wise and sacrificial self-giving for the salvation of others.

Concentrate the mind, then, on this unity of all in the eternal and peaceful identity of Buddhahood; meet each task with zeal and patience; meet each suffering or difficulty or joy with equanimity and press on earnestly, patiently, wisely, kindly to the end. Zeal will awaken intelligence, intelligence will awaken wisdom, wisdom will awaken sympathy, sympathy will harmonise and unify the individual life with universal life. To the measure of this unselfish sympathy—one's life merging into the life of others—we shall have attained all we have the capacity to attain in this incarnation. We will not fear death, neither will we court death; for



while death is the ending of an older incarnation with its burden of an older karma, it is, also, the beginning of a newer incarnation with its better possibilities for advancement because, by our earnest and patient efforts to follow the Golden Path in this life, we have balanced off some of the old karma. Death, to be sure, marks the passing of our finite conscious life, but it is not the end of all life. Essential life is hid in the Suchness of Dharma-kaya. Its pure white light must pass through the "screen" of the Alaya-vijnana, wherein is stored all the conditioning factors of an immemorial past. The face of the Alaya, thus clouded and defiled, conditions the white light and sends it on multi-coloured to appear as the myriad forms of animate life, appearing shadow-like against the conditions of the physical realm. It was the foolish, ignorant, egoistic acts of other lives that had clouded the pure face of the Alaya and had thus conditioned our lives. We call these clouds and defilements our karma. It is our faithfulness in following the Golden Path that is now clearing this "karmic screen" of its clouds and defilements. The human personality was but the projection of the Ultimate Principle shining through this karmic screen to be manifested on the physical plane as a human personality. When, for any reason of changing physical conditions, this appearance was interrupted or came to an end, the karmic "idea" remains, and under appropriate conditions will again appear on the physical plane as another appearance of personality. Thus, there is reincarnation. The new self is not the old self, neither is it an entirely new self, but the nexus is not in the individual conscious-self of the



former personality, but is relatively in the changing “karmic idea” on the psychic plane and truly in the self-nature of the Ultimate Principle. The sun, controlled by the laws of the refraction of light, shines on the moisture-laden air and appears as a rainbow. A cloud cuts off the sun’s rays—there is no rainbow; the cloud drifts by—another rainbow appears. It is not the same rainbow and yet it is the same, because the law of the refraction of light remains constant and the sunlight is ever the same. Our shadowy conscious life will come to an end, but in the higher psychic world the karmic screen remains and the pure white light of Prajna shines on.

The acceptance of this fact—the transiency and unsubstantiality of the conscious human selfhood—is a most difficult thing to accept and to become adjusted to. The thirst for eternal life as a compensation for the suffering of this life is so pervasive and insistent that it is the last of the thirsts and graspings and clingings to be brought under control, but relinquished it must be if advancement along the Golden Path is to be attained. There is as much sense in a rainbow thirsting for eternal life as for a self-conscious human soul so to do.

“Just even so, ye monks, what is not yours that surrender! Long will its surrender make for your happiness and well-being. And what is it that is not yours? Body, monks, is not yours; sensation is not yours; perception is not yours; the activities of the mind are not yours; consciousness is not yours. Give them up, one and all! Long will their giving up tend to



your happiness and well-being!" ("Majjhima Nikaya," *Grimm's translation*.)

By our zeal and patience in following the Golden Path we are getting rid of the clinging desire for eternal life and are leaving a clearer karma to more favourably condition the lives that shall hereafter appear after its pattern. Herein lies the spiritual nobility of a true Buddhist life. Without regret it bears the conditions imposed upon it by the karma of uncounted preceding lives accumulated through unnumbered years, and honestly and patiently follows the Golden Path, thereby maturing and clearing the karmic record for the benefit, not of himself, but for the rebirths that are to follow after. Thus is one integrating his life with the lives of many others, past and present and future. "That they without us should not be made perfect."

In an earlier chapter we referred to three ways of looking at things, and said that these ways should be applied to the different planes of reality. When we applied them on the physical plane we saw that everything was empty of enduring substance, and everything that could be discriminated in them was seen to be changing and transient; but in them all was seen some law or truth or dharma that united the qualities and gave them temporary existence and a name.

When things are reconsidered as pure ideas on the psychic plane, we found that what we had called, under the first head, empty and nothing, strictly speaking, was not so, for how could its dharma hold particular qualities to "nothing" and make an object or an idea of it? The laws of the mind require that after all



conceivable elements and qualities have been removed from a thing, there must remain some essence, intangible though it may be, upon which qualities could be synthesised. The mental “something” that is “nothing” physically, must be, therefore, of the nature of mind, but be inscrutable. Moreover, as it underlies all things it must be universal. So everything has as its essence universal and inscrutable mind.

When things are reconsidered as pure idea in the light of the second truth of transiency, they, too, are seen to be something more than mere transiency. What was seen in the light of the first truth of emptiness was seen to be the universal aspect of inscrutable mind, in the light of the second truth transiency is seen to be inscrutable mind in its aspect of temporary existence or particularity. That is, the emphasis passes from mere transiency to a conception of true existence, even if it be only temporary. Emptiness and transiency are thus seen to be the positive and negative aspects of the same thing.

When things are reconsidered as pure ideas in the light of the third truth—of law or dharma—the emphasis passes from many finite laws, atomic attraction, chemism, physics, bio-chemism, etc., to more inclusive principles, by reason of which the universal aspect of inscrutable mind is united to its temporal and particular manifestation.

Now, as we come to consider things in their spiritual or unitive nature in the light of the first truth of emptiness, the mere fact that it is empty of physical qualities or tangible ideas drops out of sight in the



more significant fact that its essential basis is inscrutable mind. It is not only "something" inscrutable, it is "everything" that is inscrutable; it is Inscrutable Mind itself.

When things are considered in their unitive nature in the light of the second truth of transiency as temporary particular manifestations of Inscrutable Mind, there is seen to be no essential difference between universal and particular; both are Inscrutable Mind itself. When things are considered in their unitive nature in the light of the third truth of dharma, there is seen to be no essential difference between finite dharmas and general principles, for all are particularised aspects of one Ultimate Principle, the Dharma of Inscrutable Mind. Thus, in the unitive nature of the spiritual realm, the "empty" or universal aspect, the "transient" or particular manifestation and the middle or "dharma" aspect that unites them, are all one and precisely the same thing—Inscrutable Mind—only observed from different angles.

Through all physical appearances, mental processes and spiritual principles shines the white, pure light of Dharmakaya. Reality is just as much present in infinitesimal electron as in the cosmic principle of intellection. Ocean spray wind-borne, the waves of the sea, the ebb and flow of the tides, are the very ocean itself. In this sense, a wilful murder is just as noble as a kindly act of benevolence, for both alike are Inscrutable Mind in manifestation and all are unified in one all-inclusive Wholeness. Nirvana and Samsara (the world of life and death) are aspects of one and the same Suchness.



Viewed from the ultimate nature of the Dharmakaya, nothing is coming into existence and nothing is passing out of existence. Evil and ignorance, purity and wisdom, are simply "the east and west of one spiritual spaciousness." Therefore, Nirvana is not to be sought outside this world and its restless activities, for the world of appearance is Nirvana itself.

Now if we apply these truths to the religious conception of Buddha, what do we find? At his Parinirvana, Gautama had freed himself from all individuality and limitations; he had become both Void and All. He had become Inscrutable Mind in its aspect of Universality. Having been an historic personality, he was Inscrutable Mind in its aspect of Irradiancy. The Dharma of his life was Inscrutable Mind in its aspect of Unifying Love. The only Reality is Inscrutable Mind—Universal, Irradiant, Unifying, and whatever is Inscrutable Mind is Buddha.

There remains but one more conception that the intellectual mind can grasp and formulate. Even temporary existence is an illusion of mortal mind. The only reality is the homogeneity and peacefulness of Inscrutable Mind. Just as the radio receiving set is arranged to select from the air vibrations of a particular frequency and deliver them as audible music, so the human mind is designed to select through its several senses, stimuli of particular kinds and register them as sensation, perceptions, and concepts, which the thinking mind proceeds to weave together into objects and ideas objective to itself. But in the air there is no music and no forms and no temporary existants. All



is a homogeneous, pulsing Void. All is undifferentiated, Inscrutable Mind. Science traces objects back to phenomena, to knots of electrical energy that in themselves are groups of supposititious "luxtons" or primal units of light corpuscles moving in a hypothetical ether. Beyond is undifferentiated space and time and silence; it is minus infinity of the differentiating Principle of Intellection. At the other extreme is the plus infinity of philosophy, the mingled Wisdom and Love of the Integrating Principle. But the "line" connecting these is not a straight line on a Euclidean plane; it curves as on the surface of a sphere and returns upon itself at a point where plus and minus infinity meet in the homogeneous Self-nature of the Absolute. Intellectual thought is for ever tracing circles on the periphery of Reality, imagining them to be objective and discriminating them from itself. But Buddhism will have none of it; by true Mindfulness their unreality is perceived and in Right Concentration the mind turns from the surface to a radius that flies straight to the heart of Truth in the Dharmakaya.

Beyond this the intellectual mind cannot go, but to keep this highest truth in mind is the spiritual significance of Right Mindfulness.



## CHAPTER XXVI

### RIGHT CONCENTRATION

RIGHT CONCENTRATION as it relates to the spiritual life consists in focussing the mind, to the exclusion of all discriminative thinking and all egoism, on this Highest Truth: All is mind, all is Buddha. Perfect concentration cannot better be described than by a conversation between two notable disciples of Buddha. Ananda, noting the beaming countenance of the other, said: "Where have you been to-day, O Saraputra?" The latter replied: "All day I have been in concentration, and there never once came the thought, 'I am attaining it, I am experiencing it.'"

In earlier days much was made of methods and aids for attaining success, and, rightly used, these aids are a great help, but they need the presence of a Master to apply them. There remains for ordinary people, and especially in America where there are no Masters, the simple, sincere and humble purpose to faithfully, earnestly, steadfastly, concentrate the mind on the one supreme thought: "All appearances are illusion; there is mind only, that is Buddha." Concentrate on that thought and rest quietly. As one succeeds in spiritual concentration, with no taint of egoism, his individuality will be left behind and he will become unified in truth with the essential nature of the Dharmakaya. What its effect will be in his particular case remains to



be seen; it is enough that one continues earnestly faithful. Earnestly faithful! That does not mean simply being technically perfect in the practice of za-zen, it just as much means being earnestly faithful in washing dishes, working in the garden, bearing pain and misunderstanding and the hard things of old age; it means being earnestly faithful in the radiation of kindness, sympathetic joy and peaceful equanimity; it means keeping humble and selfless when either adversity or joy meet one, with never the thought: "It is I who am experiencing it."

Right Concentration involves the integration of many thoughts, purposes and aspirations, and inevitably leads toward higher states of spiritual freedom that will ultimately culminate in the long last in the inscrutable, ineffable peace and harmony of Buddhahood. The states of blissful peace that accompany Right Concentration are a foretaste of the perfect equanimity of the Buddhahood. Nevertheless, one ought not to seek, nor to hope, for some blissful emotion, much less for some ecstasy or magical thrill. If such come they should be received humbly and without perturbation, for the attitude of right concentration is of far more importance than any passing emotion—be it of fatigue or doubt or bliss. Only one emotional state is to be welcomed—serene, selfless equanimity. One is not to seek joy, nor to avoid it; one is not to fear misfortune, nor to be upset and discouraged by it. Take life as it comes—it involves chance and suffering at best—react as wisely as possible to it, be wise and kind and sympathetic and helpful as possible, but remain equitable.



Nothing hinders one from attaining such a state of perfection but what arises within one's own mind. Hence the value of mind-control.

As one attains attunement with the Ultimate Principle, he will gain a corresponding freedom from the entropy of impeding hindrances. In other words, emotions of bliss and peace will be in direct relation to the capacity for spiritual integration. The reason why an emotion of blissful peace is not to be striven for is because even to notice it (or to notice its opposite, weariness, doubt and discouragement) indicates that self-consciousness is still present and active and is still hindering perfect success. In extreme states of concentration there is often the appearance of physical unconsciousness, or its temporary atrophy. Saraputra was once asked: "How is it that you speak of both the transcendence of consciousness and the experience of bliss?"

Saraputra replied: "This precisely is bliss—that there is no consciousness."

We might speak at length of extreme states of mind that accompany successful concentration, but by so doing we would unintentionally make them appear as though they were of importance in marking the success of the practice—something to be desired and grasped after, which they are not. The goal of the Golden Path is not blissful peace, any more than at an earlier stage it was emancipation from lust or freedom from the illusions of the mind or from the infatuations of egoism. They each mark progress, emotions of bliss no more nor no less than the earlier sense of freedom.



There still remains the task to continue right concentration in spite of this last hindrance.

There remains to be said a few words about the full realisation of Highest Truth. It is called Supreme or Perfect Enlightenment. It is the goal of Buddhist experience. Its full realisation will not come gradually as the result of study and meditation, as the intellectual mind is satisfied; it will come suddenly as a result of unifying one's spirit with Highest Truth in right concentration. It will not come as the logical proof of a philosophical proposition: it will come as a revelation, carrying with it a rich enhancement of life and a vision that will satisfy beyond all question, and for ever after remain an unshakable conviction. It will be the absolute clearing away and ending of all ignorance, all egoism, all doubt.

The supreme enlightenment that came to Gautama as he sat through the night in perfect concentration was what made him Buddha. As in a flash he saw all the past and present and future, all the relations and processes and stages and culmination of an endless and beginningless and all-inclusive unfolding. He saw it all with "the eye of wisdom," but it could not be described in words. It was pure experience; he could point the way to the experience, but he could not tell what it was. It is that experience of Enlightenment that is the reward of right concentration. It behoves us, therefore, to be earnest and steadfast, not as an intellectual discipline, but as act and habit. The attainment of Enlightenment lies along that path, and the measure that will be ours will all depend on our capacity to



receive. If we faithfully follow that path we can do no more, and in the long last it will bring us to Enlightenment and its blissful peace.

Is it, then, a sheer matter of will? Yes and no. It does call for the strongest resolution and the most steadfast patience, but "will" is only another name for paramount desire; if one's supreme purpose is to attain Enlightenment, his concentration on Highest Truth will identify himself with Buddha, and by so doing all the abounding and never-failing resources of Buddha will be his very own.

But the conception of Enlightenment, Nirvana, Buddhahood, Ultimate Principle, Dharmakaya, are too coldly philosophical to serve as grounds for religious fervour to most people. For them there are other inspirations and support. There is the historic Gautama, whose followers called the Blessed One. Throughout a long life of wisdom and kindness he held the affection of his many disciples, and the memory of that life has been the encouragement of myriads of disciples ever since, and for ever will be. Gautama followed the Golden Path, and by it attained Enlightenment. So long as he lived his perfect example, his wise advice and unfailing spirit were the all-sufficient inspiration for his immediate disciples, but with his passing there was felt the need of a more definite guidance than memory. Thus the Dharma of his life and teachings became the priceless possession of the Brotherhood. The Dharma was Buddha glorified. With the passing of Gautama the brotherhood of monks drew closer together in spiritual fellowship, and shared each other's



strength and devotion. In the fellowship of the Brotherhood they felt themselves to be one with all the Arahats and Bodhisattvas and Buddhas of all the Buddha-worlds, past, present and future.

These three—Buddha, Dharma, Sangha—are really one in essence. For 2,500 years Buddhist monks the world over have repeated daily the solemn affirmation: "I take my refuge in Buddha, I take my refuge in the Dharma, I take my refuge in the Sangha."

But they were not to let this natural turning to Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, take the place of their own sincere and steadfast effort to attain Enlightenment. The Blessed One had warned them against this in his final words to Ananda: ". . . Therefore, O Ananda, be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye a refuge to yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the truth as a lamp. Hold fast as refuge to the truth. Look not for a refuge to anyone beside yourselves. It is they, Ananda, among my Bhikkhus (who do this) who shall reach the topmost height."

This mingling of self-effort in following the Golden Path and loving faith in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, with its reward of peace, has been the characteristic of true Buddhist devotees from the beginning and the world over. Do you think it sounds reasonable? Is it worth trying?



