

SEVENTH WORLD OF CHAN BUDDHISM

BY

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A complete intermediate-level review of the origins, psychology
and practice of Southern School Zen Buddhism

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PREFACE

This book must be read slowly - I can't emphasize this too much. Please take your time - not just because the style in which it's written is such that if too much is read at one sitting the sentences turn to mush, but because hurrying is so counter-productive. Instead of a gradual, unified expansion, there is just an unsatisfying jumble of parts.

Books about religion may be entertaining or not, but they are never novels. It isn't somebody else's life we're reading about. It's our own. Even the historical development of Chan can provide useful lessons if we take the trouble to relate the many tales of trial and error, of mistake and correction, to our own individual lives.

If you want to get started with an actual Chan practice, you can follow the instructions given in Chapter 10 as you read the long historical passages of the first section. Likewise, if you want to begin learning Chan psychology, you can also leave-off the history and turn to Chapter 5.

I've tried to present a fair account of modern Chinese Chan Buddhism, an account which wouldn't be offensive to those who practice other forms of Buddhism or be rejected as being too unorthodox or "western" by those who practice the many varieties of Chan. I expect complaints.

I hope that I haven't been mean-spirited just as I hope that those who object to my ideas or the way I've conveyed them will be constructive in their criticism.

When free of meanness, dissension is beneficial. Americans like to recall how Republican Abe Lincoln once commented upon the way that his Democrat opponents constantly argued amongst themselves. "They are like alley cats that fight and caterwaul all night long." Said Abe, adding, "The trouble is that next morning we discover that what they were doing was making more Democrats."

For those parts that are inaccurate, absent, ambiguous or offensive. I apologize. I can only hope that in the course of voicing differing views and corrections, we make more Buddhists.

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PART I: ORIGINS

CHAPTER 1

INDIA

*You Gods who abide here and who belong to all men,
Extend your shelter to us and to our cows and horses.
- Rig Veda*

It was around 5,000 B.C., give or take a millennium, that the many tribes of prosperous Caucasian nomads who loosely inhabited the Danube River Valley of Eastern Europe coalesced into a single, identifiable people. Unified by the attractive force of a common language, known today as Proto-Indo-European, and solidified by a common aggressiveness (if not hostility) towards outsiders, these semi-civilized people had bred their way out of the stone age into an astonishing era of organized warfare and civil advancement. They were mostly tall and blonde, and such genetic differences as there were between them and the smaller, darker, Mediterranean peoples they encountered were amplified by diet. For, aside from some farming and fishing, they tended huge herds of cattle and sheep and had all the milk and meat necessary to maintain height and strength. Their animals, at once the cause of their mobility and the provision for it, yielded wool and leather for cold weather clothing and shoes and, as they constantly moved to greener pastures, furnished them with transportation in the form of litter, sled and cart-pulling oxen.

Their greatest art - perhaps their only one - was their language. They loved to sit around fires under the stars and, enlivened by honey beer, tell and listen to wonderful stories of love, adventure and war. Marvelous poems were gracefully carved out of their splendid language; and so great was their appreciation of the glorious lines that frequently they blinded the bards who memorized them to keep the fellows from straying out of earshot.

As their population increased, so did their requirements for land. They fanned out taking their cattle, sheep and language with them. Too powerful to be stopped, they simply went wherever they wanted to go; and they brought to their relations with other men that same refinement of taste and delicacy of feeling that would characterize their Viking descendants. Whenever they encountered a superior civilization, which was usually always the case, they hacked it to pieces. No sweet-lipped vegetarians, they were meat eaters and killing came as naturally to them as a smile.

But once they bit off and chewed a hunk of culture, some of them would settle down to digest and assimilate it.

They learned quickly. Whenever they chose to occupy a town they had razed, they efficiently rebuilt it; and as soon as they got their hands on a few saddled horses they became expert equestrians. Having mastered this latter discipline, they became a swift as well as unstoppable Wehrmacht. (They never forgot the debt they owed the horse.) They also learned to sail.

Great clans of these nomads moved gently into unpopulated areas of interior Europe and cruelly into coastal or riparian cities. Time, isolation and the absorption of words from the languages of the various peoples they subjugated altered their speech. As the centuries and the miles passed between their branchings, they came to call themselves by different names. They were the Germans whose Norse gods Tiw, Woden, Thor and Frigga are yet commemorated in our Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, and whose language differentiated into Gothic, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Dutch and ultimately English. They were the Slavic peoples whose language became Russian, Ukrainian, Macedonian, Czech and Polish. As Celts they invaded the British Islands where their language became Gaelic, Manx and Welsh. As Hellenes they sacked the cities of an already ancient Aegean civilization, took from the vanquished their system of writing, adapted it for their own speech by adding vowel symbols to it, and recorded their precious language, Greek. They went down into the Italian peninsula where their language became Latin and eventually, through the efforts of Imperial Rome, Portuguese, Spanish, French, Rumanian, and Italian. They were the Persians and the conquerors of Afghanistan.

It was around 1500 B.C. that they demolished the immaculate cities of the Indus Valley and, crossing that boundary of the then known world, began to trek across northern India, singing their Vedic hymns and calling themselves Aryans which in their language, there called Sanskrit, meant 'aristocrats' or 'nobles.' (They always thought of themselves as noble: Erin, Iran and Aryan are cognates.) The small, dark and peaceful Panis and Dasas farmers they met and conquered gaped at these strange tribes who held their language and their cows so sacred.

The Aryans gaped, too. In fact, the people they encountered in India gave them a culture shock from which they would never recover. It was not simply a racial trauma.

They had encountered small, dark people before but they had killed them and taken their lands and property without prejudice; and nubile women - no matter what size or color - were routinely appended to their caravans. What shocked the Aryans was the religion these people practiced.

The gods of the Aryans were lion hearted, sun-delighting, manly fellows who appreciated all nature for what it was - the exquisite setting for adventure. They had little taste for the blood of their devotees, being propitiated more by the sacrifices of individual valor than by the easy rituals of multitudes. A mere few dozen of them were able to provide all that moving warriors required: good weather, plump women and grass, beer and victory. There was Indra, warrior god whose weapon was the thunderbolt. There was Agni, god of fire who imbibed Soma, their divine intoxicant; and Savitri, god who excited and inspired. There was Rudra, the wild god of storms, poisons and medicines. And over all there was Varuna, who, as god of gods permeated all space, decreed the natural order (rita) of things, and marked the unremarkable extent of the Aryans' excursion into metaphysical arenas. The Aryan religion was not a vehicle for salvation. The gods were regarded as powerful parents, brothers or friends. They made the world the wonderful place that it was and surely would have been insulted to think that anyone sought to be saved from it. And no one, mortal or divine, countenanced such nonsense as reincarnation. When the Aryans killed a man, they expected him to stay dead.

But the Dasas farmers were sedentary folk who did not crave a warpath's endless sunny days. Laboring long hours under a broiling sun, they found their meaning in moonlight. This was the kind time, the time for joy and rest. Bound to the land in rhythmic embrace, they understood little beyond the references of animal husbandry. They saw the feminine earth and the masculine moon as the divine couple, the Cow and the Bull, the power and the law the power obeyed: Shakti and Shakta, Kali and Shiva. And so, for learning the sacred order to which their Mother Earth conformed, they looked not to the sun but to the sanctuarial moon. As many farmers still do, they numbered their days and marked their seasons by a lunar calendar and even took a lunar cue for determining the proper times to plant seeds into their beloved Mother Earth. They knew that the moon directed the tides of the earth to ebb and flow and that their women menstruated in unison (as still occurs today in small, close communities) according to lunar phase and were fertile, therefore, according to the same directive. And from the time of conception until the time of birth their offspring (as does everyone else's) required exactly ten lunar cycles to gestate. But they also saw, as any fool could see, that semen was the color of the moon and menstrual blood - that mysterious female product - was, especially when seen by moonlight, the color of earth. Further, they believed that the moon's attraction for the earth was as sexual as their attraction for their women; and, seeing the hopeless distance between the lovers, saw themselves as lunar stand-ins, clay agents of the argent moon. Though it was they who placed the seeds in the earth, it was the moon who inseminated their Great Mother Earth and caused the crops to grow. And just as the moon contained a mysterious inner force which caused it to wax and wane, die and three days later be resurrected, they, via that same interior force, would be reborn

from the womb of their Holy Mother Earth. Everything... their crops, their present and future lives, depended upon the union and the issue of the Moon Sire and the Earth Dam. Photosynthesis they took for granted.

To the sun-dazzled Aryans, this might have seemed peculiar but not, certainly, particularly offensive. What shocked them was the manner in which the common folk participated in the divine assignation. The natives, as lunar representatives, believed themselves ordained to deliver a god's ravishments and saw this embassy as no small responsibility. How could puny men carry such love as this? As all lovers are, in principle at least, inclined to do, they were eager to show that no pain was too much to bear... no sacrifice was too great to make to demonstrate this proxied devotion to their paramour. To prove that they were equal to the burden, they allowed their priests, at harvest time, to select someone to be, as it were, the representative of the representatives. They fattened him and treated him like the divine consort he was to be, and then, as the planting season was about to commence and it was necessary that the moon impregnate their mother earth, they roasted the fellow alive so that his screams might prove how very much pain they were willing to bear for love of her... or else they sliced him up, alive and raw, all to the same effect. Whipped up by the priests into an orgy of passion, they reveled in their loathsome foreplay. And when the moon-man was thoroughly dead and silent and could be prodded into no further terms of endearment, the priests distributed a portion, slice or crackle, to each farmer who rushed home to complete the coitus by sticking the flesh deep into his plot of land. The sacrifice, when properly made, assured a good crop. It worked every time.

The Aryans were, of course, appalled. It wasn't so much the atrocity - they were not tidy killers - it was the organized suspension of rationality, the human descent into taurian frenzy, the evaporation of individual identity and the wild, collective residua - a mob fornicating for the stars with the blood-semen of a neighbor's tortured flesh. To the Aryans, a simple lot, it didn't seem at all right. Other things that seemed amiss were the ubiquitous depictions of the divine couple. They had goddesses of their own and knew what goddesses should look like. Was not Dawn personified as the loveliest of women? But this earth mother was the ugliest female they had ever seen. "Kali" she was... "black"... black as plowed earth... black as moonlit blood... black as night, her special time. She was horrific, adorned with human skulls, mouth open, tongue protruding and dripping with the blood of man's carnivorous existence. And everywhere the Aryans looked - in temples, homes, town squares and roadsides - they found stone bull- phalli erected to service her. The farmers could not understand the Aryan's consternation. To them the phallus was a simple "lingam", a "plow". What could be more natural?

But if all this wasn't enough to give a sun worshiper nightmares, the natives were all obsessed with insane thoughts of rebirth and reincarnation, return and renewal. Death was only a temporary condition. (Why, if a warrior lived long enough he might kill the same man half a dozen times!) This was too much for the Aryans who, in the novelty of feeling both prudish and cerebral, ceased to be racially liberal. Clearly, these little, dark

and flat-nosed natives were literally lunatics... moon-mad and quite sub-human of a caste or kind that was untouchable at worst, and fit for dirty manual labor at best.

(The Divine Bull sadly looked down and slowly tossed his head, showing one crescent horn and then the other; while Kali, yielding and implacable, displayed a mother's love by ignoring the rebuffs and waiting patiently for the Aryans to take root and become farmers.)

Doubtlessly, the terrible power of the native shamans awed and intrigued the Aryan priests, the Brahmins, who, as notable impresarios of ceremony and masters of imitative magic, knew a good ritual when they saw one. Time and again they had demonstrated the extent of their skill. Regularly, in one memorable extravaganza, they even orchestrated the sexual intercourse of their queen with a sacrificed, dead horse. (With liturgical showmanship like this, it is no wonder that the Brahmins would eventually have all India at their feet and liking it.) But though the horse ceremony was inspiring, the extent of its vicarious participation was limited to individual arousal, ingenuously if not ingeniously resolved. Kali's priests, however, officiated at cosmic fornication, brutally and collectively actualized by all, except one, of the communicants. The Rig Veda sang pretty hymns to lovely Dawn. But in Kali's choir, screams of orgiastic ecstasy saluted the divine form. This competitive challenge could not be long ignored.

There was, however, another form of native worship that fascinated the Aryans. Here and there, from the Ganges River valley and delta to Burma and as far east into South China as they cared to explore, they encountered ascetics... men who disdained the society of their fellows to explore a solar system that existed within their individual bodies. Yogis they were... who drew the moon-fluid back into themselves and experienced the extraordinary bliss of orgasm without ejaculation. Though impoverished and emaciated, they were yet the extravagant hosts of some mysterious, inter-cranial satyricon; and their serenely smug expressions confirmed that behind their eyes there was indeed a divine union being consummated. These yogis were fearless, supremely self-controlled, indifferent to cold, heat and pain and oblivious of even the necessity to breathe regularly. They were strange men with even stranger powers. And power, of course, was something the blonde observers could understand and thoroughly respect.

And then, after years had passed and the Aryan invaders had completed their conquest of northern India and settled down to become country squires, they became apprentices of that mystic power, students of that new theology which explained without solar hegemony the politics of divinity.

Much about them changed. As hostile, aggressive nomads, they had organized their society around simple tribal formats: chiefs, councils of elders, generals, priests, warriors, craftsmen, and so on. It was the kind of flexible class structure that moving, militaristic societies require, the flexibility being mandated by the need for men of lower rank to rise and take the place of killed or wounded commanders. Dreams of dynasties

fade quickly in early morning body- counts. And, though the young sons of leaders may indeed have inherited the stuff of leadership, veteran fighters are disinclined to audition their talents. In order to have mature heirs to his power, a chief must survive for at least two generations - even as his sons must survive for one; and longevity seldom accrues to the pugnacious or the transient. Their society must, therefore, allow for movement in the ranks.

Priests, on the other hand, can live a long time. They can have many sons who, especially in societies in which language is loved but writing unknown, are able to spend their years of draft exemption safely memorizing that holy writ which only their fathers know and can teach. The Aryan priest class defined and owed its existence to hereditary privilege. Yet, since they were mortal men and in times of defeat would be regarded by the victorious as prime candidates for slaughter (being so ill suited for more constructive employment) they readily deferred to their warrior kings and carefully maintained their subsidiary or auxiliary positions. But though secondary, their rank was nonetheless important. Priests alone can read in planetary alignment or goat entrails those indicators of impending disaster or auspicious circumstance which are so vital to command decisions. They also comfort the maimed, eulogize the fallen, inspire the weary and generally help to sustain a high level of morale by delivering their gods' sanctifying blessings upon each campaign.

But when fighting nomads build houses and settle into more or less peaceful domesticity, changes must occur in their societal status quo. As slave-taking conquerors the Aryans constituted an elite leisure class. Thorstein Veblen - that eminent observer of this class of unemployed achievers, anticipates their altering requirements: "Chief among the honorable employments in any feudal community is warfare;" notes Veblen, "and priestly service is commonly second to warfare. If the barbarian community is not notably warlike, the priestly service may take the precedence with that of the warrior second." And sure enough, though the warrior class ranked first during the years of the Aryans' militaristic expansion, the priest class began its assault upon that station when generals became gentry.

For it was then, after those agrarian preoccupations with death and rebirth and the phases of the moon had at last entered the warrior imagination, that the native religion could issue its seductive challenge. The new heroes would be those who were victorious on interior fields of battle. Thus did Aryan chieftains become spiritual yeomen who happily fought under the aegis of kingly (raja) yogis.

What they learned was wonderful. The new teachings, a collection of inspired essays composed over many years by various masters, were called the Upanishads (knowledge acquired 'sitting near' a master). Though contrary to the doctrinal spirit of the Vedas, they were nevertheless accepted as a suitable addition to the sacred lore. That mysterious and impervious force that renewed the moon and earth was now identified:

Tat tvam asi! Thou art that! So thundered the Upanishads to ears that had never so much as heard a rumor that man was one with god and could realize his own divinity.

To intelligent, rational men who had seen visions of gods and goddesses and knew that what they had seen was real, the Upanishads explained that all spiritual essences, in gods and in men, were but manifestations of the One, the Absolute, ground of all being. In this One all opposites were united - spirit and matter, light and darkness, male and female. The absolute was both the power and the law that the power obeyed, the Shakti and Shiva whose consummated union could be experienced in the human breast. For this One was indeed apprehensible. Through simplicity, humility, non-attachment, a steady gaze that turned inward to its Source, and, of course, lots of priestly instruction in the necessary skills, the One could be experienced as indescribable and liberating bliss.

The Brahmans immediately recognized in the confusions of such revelations their opportunity to effect a switch in the social order of precedence. To accommodate the new teachings, they quickly reorganized the Vedic pantheon, moving minor deities, such as Vishnu, into the foreground and identifying major deities, such as dangerous Rudra, the ruddy one who was made white from the ashes of so many burnt offerings, with the more versatile Shiva. They even enrolled Kali in a finishing school and beauty spa so that she could acquire table manners and a new luscious figure and debut as the beautiful Parvati.

What they did next is unrivaled in theocratic history. Although in the Rig Veda the term 'brahman' meant prayer, a calling out to god, (hence those who called out - the cantors and the priests - were brahmans) they now proclaimed that the One god of which all other gods were manifestations, was named, coincidentally enough, Brahman. Brahman, then, was not only the prayer and those who recited the prayer but it was also the one to whom the prayer was addressed. The word was god and theirs the voice that spoke it! Brahman was the Absolute, the ground of being and godhead; and, though ordinary citizens had a portion of this divinity within themselves as abiding spirit or Atman, the Brahmans, as special vectors of this divine spirit and force, were Brahman in the flesh! They were gods whose earthly manifestation was intended, for mortals, to be instructive and, for themselves, to be the last stage of a launching sequence that would send them to eternal life among their brother stars.

They supplemented their sorcery handbooks with a new compendium of ethics, word-magic and ritual, the Brahmanas. And they dictated into the sacred record those revelations which established themselves as divine beings whose word was law, whose bodies were inviolate and whose presence at all ceremonial events in every individual's life was indispensable and well worth the fee they charged.

The Upanishads, then, not only facilitated an expansion of religious consciousness but, as interpreted by the Brahmans, also provided for transitions and stratifications in the social order; for as the Brahmans interpreted the new teachings, the cause and effect

doctrine of Karma meant nothing less than rebirth that was positionally contingent upon performance: the caste system.

The flexible social structure previously enjoyed was thus replaced by a rigid edifice. Only the King (Rajah), whose office was now hereditarily fixed, lived elsewhere. All other members of society fitted into this new complex. The Brahmans, as gods, naturally occupied the penthouse. The Kshatriyas (warrior class) lived very well in the upper stories. The Vaishyas (artisans, merchants and tradesmen) were at ground level while the Shudras (peasants and slaves) labored in the basement. Under the foundation, and crushed by it, were, of course, the Pariahs, the untouchable outcasts.

The Karma doctrine happily relieved the high-born of any of the onerous burdens of noblesse oblige. Mistreatment of the wretches who occupied the bottom of this social structure was actually consonant with the divine intent. Low birth was an act of divine punishment and no responsible upper-caste member of society cared to thwart the obvious will of god. And who would complain? The mistreated wretches supposed that in their previous lives they had been nobles who had sinned and had incurred thereby the punishment of their present, lower-caste birth. And, pain being an expiatory necessity, the more abuse they received, well... the sooner they would be reborn into a higher caste where they could assist, similarly, those of lower rank. Karma had a way of making everyone feel good about himself.

The Brahmans quickly capitalized on their new position. No longer mere singers, divine or otherwise, they were able to impart divinity to the actual words they spoke, to utter syllables that were intrinsically powerful. Since each incantation was not only a divine utterance but divinity, itself, it reasonably followed that if a Brahman wanted to harm someone he simply stuttered while reciting a prayer at one of the fellow's ceremonial occasions. If he felt particularly vengeful, he delivered a line backwards. And if sufficiently provoked, he resorted to the omission of an entire stanza! (The ensuing calamity is terrible to contemplate.) On the other hand, if a Brahman wanted to bestow a blessing, he simply rendered the proper prayer with perfect elocution. Good diction fetched a high price.

Brahmans were also able to huckster themselves as brokers of every man's apotheosis, an even more lucrative profession. According to the Brahmanic prospectus, a lower-caste investor was unconditionally guaranteed to be born a Brahman at his very next incarnation. There was always room at the top for anyone who cared to make financial sacrifices.

Thus did Brahman wives and Brahman children owe their high standard of living to the enunciation of Sanskrit syllables. Thus did the glorious Upanishads give rise to fraud and voodoo. And thus did the Brahmans construct Hinduism's eternal triangle: karma (conduct), caste (reward or punishment for that conduct), and reincarnation (the means by which the reward or punishment was administered). This triangle was the

Brahmans' scepter. With it they could indulge themselves with the obliging Earth and make a cuckold sign whenever they saw the outraged Moon.

Among the Kshatriya were men who considered the Brahmans idiots.

As they interpreted the new teachings, a person needed no priests to tap directly into that mysterious inner force. He could accomplish the connection by himself through the not entirely simple expedients of either self-knowledge or self-conquest.

The self-knowledge or discriminating (Samkhya) philosophy was the most intellectual rendition of indigenous religious thought to be given formal expression during the years of theological development. Founded by the legendary sage, Kapila (for whom, as it happens, the city of the Buddha's birth, Kapilavastu, was named), Samkhya called that mysterious inner force or spirit the Purusha and identified it as the one eternal or sacred being. In opposition to this was matter, Prakriti, which was ephemeral and profane. Man's essential problem was that he tended to be ignorant of his true, sacred nature and identified instead with his material incorporation into the impermanent cosmos. The things of the ego and the flesh, falling into this latter category, were the troublesome things; and involvement with them sullied and obscured the Purusha and kept a man in ignorance. *Neti! Neti! Not this! Not this!* came the philosophical admonition whenever a man foolishly saw his existence in terms of his earth bound, mortal self. Earthly life, being the unsatisfactory and impure experience that it was, had to be relentlessly subjected to the discriminating intellect's scrutiny until all its profane preoccupations were safely culled and discarded.

Raja Yoga, the complementary method of Samkhya salvation, further disenfranchised the ego and the flesh while guiding the gaze inward until, at last, the true self was recognized and liberated from its confining darkness. Then, peace and joy in magnitudes indescribable, would be experienced.

But the Samkhya path to Nirvana was not a boulevard. By knowledge, then as now, the Samkhya meant knowledge of philosophy and logic rigorously applied. A thorough grasp of metaphysics was prerequisite. By discrimination, the Samkhya meant uncompromising search and destroy forays into the terrain of even egoistic whim. And the yogic discipline was not the fifteen minutes twice a day stuff of householders. It was retreat to an ashram and effort expended during every conscious moment. These demands would have been sufficient to narrow the path to single file; but what constricted it and steepened it even more, making it even less usable to the ordinary spiritual soldier, was the Samkhya's atheistic approach to the sacred. There were no gods, no statues, no stirring myths, no hymn-sings for the devoted, no Saviors whose recounted deeds excited the popular mind. There were, in fact, no heroes of any kind to tighten, with evangelical zeal, the spiritually slack.

The other method of salvation, the way of the self-conquerors (Jaina), had heroes to spare. If we follow Joseph Campbell's enviable Masks of God, Oriental Mythology, we find such tantalizing (from a Buddhist point of view) Jain savior-figures as Rishabhanatha (Lord Bull) who "enjoyed as a young prince the pleasures of the court" only to "renounce the world and give himself up to the practice of austerities" and achieve "illumination beneath a banyan tree in the park." Other saviors assisted the Jains in "reaching the other shore" of salvation and in attaining Nirvana. There was Lord Parshva, (eighth century B.C.), another Kshatriya prince who left a life of luxury at the age of 28 to pursue the self-conquering path and who, while experiencing perfection for the first time, was assailed by demons, darkness, cyclones, etc., but nevertheless remained "absolutely unmoved." Thousands, including Parshva's royal family and the wife he had abandoned, were converted to his Way as he preached the fourfold discipline that would lead all out of sorrow to the safety of the distant shore.

Disquietingly familiar as all of this is to us, it was doubtless refreshingly new to the intelligent folk of northeast India in the eighth century, B.C.

The Jain's gospel must surely have seemed vehicularly sound to many upwardly mobile members of society for, according to the Jains, there were only two castes: householders and monks. For householders, the basic rules of conduct forbade gambling, lying, stealing, harming living things, consuming alcohol or other intoxicants, and extra-marital sexual activity. In addition, householders were expected to refrain from accumulating excessive property and possessions and to support the monks, the former requirement being a fortuitous solution to the latter. Monks were further required to abjure all domestic or social relationships including, of course, those of a sexual nature. For monks, absolute solitude was essential to the pursuit of perfection.

As to kind, the rules seemed reasonable; but as to degree of application, they presented some problems. For example, while ahimsa (causing no harm to living things) obliged Jains to be vegetarians, that same rule also proscribed any eating or drinking after sundown and before sunrise lest in the dark one should swallow an innocent insect. It also prohibited bathing since, while submerged, one might drown one's innocent lice and so on. The simple act of walking became an occasion of great distress for in the course of setting one's foot down an innocent ant might interpose itself between sole and ground. The price of even the tiniest failure was excruciatingly high. Jains believed in karma the way no one before or since has entertained that pernicious notion. One false move and a Jain could find himself committed to rebirth as a snowflake or a pebble or a fleaand try working your way up from those abysmal depths! Eons of miserable existence were required before a soul again attained male human birth and the chance to free itself from the endless round of reincarnations. (Since women were incapable of conquering themselves, they were not permitted to train for the ultimate, solitary assault upon the high reaches of salvation. They could become 'nuns'- which even today is an all too frequent euphemism for 'housekeepers.' But if they were very good females they were

sure to be reincarnated as males.) Jainism was clearly not for everyone. Yet, people flocked to join it.

In the sixth century B.C., Jainist ranks swelled under the dynamic leadership of another Kshatriya nobleman who preferred the purgations of asceticism to the sumptuous board of his family's home. An adept of heroic accomplishments (hence his name, Mahavira... Great Hero), he proselytized with particular success. And Jainism, bleak and frightening as it was, became a formidable movement.

A few members of the Vaishya caste also managed to involve themselves in religious matters. Inclined to see things from a materialistic point of view, these merchants proclaimed that all metaphysical speculation was bunk. They developed the Charvaka and Lokayatika schools which asserted that this world was the only world anyone was ever likely to know and this life was the only life anyone was ever likely to live and a person would have to be a damned fool not to take the cash in hand and spend his profits on his pleasure. To them, unsecured promises of future payment had the same degree of reliability in religion as they had in business. But hedonism, then as now, requires a man to be able to afford all his pleasures and, if able to afford them, not to exhaust their delightful novelty. Boredom is ever the enemy of extravagance. Both schools of thought were largely unattended.

Those people who could or would not leave home and hearth behind to experience fires in their bellies and sun and moon fusions in their brains, had to remain in their towns and villages and, as means of securing the good life, choose between the voodoo of the Brahmans, the dry intellectualism of the Samkhya, the fear and loathing of the Jains, and the human sacrifice of the Shudras and Pariahs. For them, life continued without an awful lot of spiritual hope.

Until, of course, in the year 563 B.C., in northeast India, there was born to King Suddhodana and Queen Maya of the Shakya Clan of Aryans, a blonde son whose eyes were "as wide and as blue as the lotus" (Suvarnaprabhasa Sutra). The royal pair, whose family name was Gautama, named their heir Siddhartha, "All-prospering." Thirty-five years later he would claim another identity: The Awakened One. The Buddha.

We know very little about him. He was an only child. His mother died soon after his birth and the aunts who raised him spoiled him as doting aunts invariably do. "I wore garments of silk and my attendants held a white umbrella over me..." he is said to have confided, "and my perfumes were always from Benares."

Writing had probably not yet come to the kingdom. Beyond the hunting, drinking, singing, dancing, and uninhibited lovemaking of life at court, there was little for an introspective youth to learn. In what by this time must surely have been the fashion of Kshatriya princes everywhere, he grew tired of all the fun, so that when, at nineteen, he married his cousin Yasodhara, he doubtless was as jaded as a Turkish pasha and as bored.

As H.G. Wells reconstructs Siddhartha's situation, "A great discontent fell upon him. It was the unhappiness of a fine brain that seeks employment. He felt that the existence he was leading was not the reality of life, but a holiday - a holiday that had gone on too long."

Beyond the palace gates, sitting immovably in distant ashrams, were those yoga masters who knew how to end the picnic.

But as we have seen, Samkhya truth was not the kind that could be casually acquired. Training demanded undivided attention and the young prince had, at that time, other matters to attend to. As his father's only son, he surely felt obliged to produce an heir. However, after years of marriage, he and Yasodhara were still childless. Leaving court to enter an ashram was unthinkable.

We can imagine the pressures mounting against him - his wife's tears, his father's questions and advice, his friends' taunts. Finally, in their tenth year of marriage, Yasodhara delivered a son. Free at last to pursue his spiritual journey, he got up in the middle of the night, entered his wife's bedroom, kissed her and the baby good-bye, and walked out for good. He was twenty-nine.

Mounted on his favorite stallion, Kantaka, and accompanied by his faithful servant, Channa, he rode to the edge of the forest, stripped himself of his jewelry and regal garb and, instructing Channa to return his horse and the last of his material possessions to the palace, walked alone into the darkness.

He entered an ashram and spent several years mastering Samkhya philosophy and the techniques of Raja Yoga; but, still intellectually and spiritually unsatisfied, he departed. He then encountered a group of ascetics whose austerities exactly balanced his former life of luxury and, being impressed by their simplicity and zeal, decided to join them. He began a series of dangerously long fasts. When he nearly died of starvation, he decided that deprivation was as senseless as surfeit and pledged himself to a code of moderation. He abandoned asceticism and began to eat, in amount and variety, all the food he needed. And when his strength had fully returned and savior-history continued to repeat itself, he sat down under a fig tree saying that he would not get up until he had found a solution to the human dilemma.

While watching Venus rise as the morning star, he experienced satori and at last understood the cause and cure of human strife. Though devils naturally appeared to tempt him and the earth of course shook, he remained absolutely unmoved. He got up, named his way and his truth the Aryan Path, the Noble Middle Way, and began his forty-five year ministry. He was at the time thirty-five.

We can see him clearly... an Apollonian figure strolling barefoot through the marketplaces... a prince in homespun clothes, sleeping in the grass.

In 483 B.C., at the age of eighty, he died. His death was caused by eating either poisoned mushrooms or tainted pork. The record is unclear and no one now knows for certain which it was.

There is even less certainty about the specifics of his message. Not a syllable of his truth was written down in his lifetime.

Nor when it finally was recorded, was it done so by anyone who had witnessed a single word of all that he was alleged to have said. In fact, the Buddha's teachings were allowed to roam free for hundreds of years before, in 80 B.C., in distant Sri Lanka, their wild descendants were finally corralled in print by the Pali Canon.

CHAPTER 2

CHINA

*How wonderful! How mysterious!
I carry wood! I draw water!
- Anonymous Dao poet*

Of all the world's ancient civilizations, China's is the youngest. This is somehow surprising to westerners who tend to think that China's ancient kings reigned contemporaneously with tyrannosaurus rex. But bones, pottery and other artifacts incontrovertibly countermand the dictates of sentimental supposition.

Such archeological evidence as there is in China reveals that prior to 25,000 years ago its sparse populations were proto-caucasian, the blue-eyed Ainu of northern Japan being thought to be a remnant of these early inhabitants. Then, for reasons unknown, these ice-aged occupants disappeared from Chinese soil; and there is no record of anybody at all being there until mongolian people from Siberian regions - with their narrow, snow-glare adapted eyes - began to descend into China about 10,000 years ago.

The immigrants were very tough people. They had been bred for survival, having become an identifiable race of men when, in times ancient to themselves, they had been geographically isolated by ice. Culturally they had also been snowbound, for they found in the conditions of their isolation few occasions for refinement. Hardship, by way of temperatures that plunged annually to -70 degrees Fahrenheit, had siphoned off the froth. The stock that remained was strong and indelicate.

It can be no surprise, then, that their gods were not the effete divinities of tropical surplus - those bored and precious deities who languish, grape in hand, among the nymphs and fauns of sylvan settings. These hardy people dwelled far north of Eden's luscious vales; and perdition in such places does not come by way of talkative and wily serpents. The gods of arctic regions are gods of weather and seldom do they rest.

Perdition came in disorienting blizzards, in floor ice that prematurely thawed, in smothering snow drifts, in sleet that drenched a furskin garment and guaranteed frostbite or death.

Unexpected changes in the weather were people's sorest tests and trials; and if they were improperly prepared for alteration or severity, they would fail, simply and finally. The unforgiving climate had no appellate process.

And since their lives depended on it, they studied the testimony of wind and cloud, raindrop and snowflake, looking always to the four cardinal directions from where the evidence came. These were the gods to whom they prayed; and they understood perfectly that they would be saved or damned according to the quaternary will.

In dreams and reveries, or in times of extreme distress and grievous need, or even in moments of great peace, sitting by their fires at night, they could see the gods of the four horizons appear as mysteriously as the aurora borealis and ride their splendid horses across the frozen stars.

And also, during the long nights of their nomadic sojourns, they revered the north god's emissary, Polaris, and the Great Dipper that rotated around it nightly to mark the hour even as it rotated around itself annually to mark the twelve months of the solar year. They watched its nightly wheeling in the clear skies of clement weather and saw in its entrancing spins the ribs of a great protective umbrella. It was their compass, clock, calendar and benediction.

The only being they recognized as supreme was the sky itself that spanned the four horizons and embraced their anxious world. And so the immigrants descended into China in nomadic waves, following their herds and culturally traveling very light. Not much about them was commendable until, around 2,200 B.C. their society suddenly burst with art and artifact of a quality worthy to be called Chinese.

Mesopotamia was a well-traveled adult of 2,000-plus when China was born.

The locale of this cultural efflorescence was a northern plain through which the Yellow River flowed. There, in a landscape colored by ocher dust carried down from Mongolia in wind and water, the settlers found the paradise necessary to begin a civilization.

The river was the umbilical cord that provided their embryo community with all the nourishment it needed: fish, waterfowl, clay, transportation and, in that arid region, water itself. Surrounding fields of wild grasses provided fodder for their animals and cereal grains for themselves, while nearby forests yielded game, fur bearing animals, nuts, lumber and firewood. They settled in and called themselves the Hua (prosperous) people. Before long they were domesticating cattle, pigs, sheep, dogs, goats and chickens and were employing the potter's wheel to fashion their crockery.

Perhaps the millennia spent upon bleak tundra recesses or in dark, dense pine woods predisposed them to regard with special reverence the gold and verdant plains and to see as religious mysteries the gorgeous changings of deciduous trees and perennial plants. The idea of cyclic return entered their consciousness, never to depart. Whatever waxed, would wane. Whatever flowed, would ebb. Whatever bloomed would wither. And they intuited accurately that the phase of decline or demise was integral to the process since it engendered,

in its concealed vitality, a new moon, a new tide, or a new blossom to replace the one that was passing away. The Hua people felt with awe the seasonal throbbings and touched with wonder the pulses that were surely divine. Gods and the occasions for worship were everywhere.

There were gods in trees and gods in stones. Mountains were gods as were the creeks that rippled down them. There were gods in glades and gods in seeds and there were even gods in the amazing objects that craftsmen made with their own hands.

At first, people regarded all things merely as repositories of benignant or malignant energy. One pot might contain great quantities of good energy while another pot - quite similar in appearance - might be virtually impotent, or worse, might be loaded with an evil force. (Four thousand years removed from these people, we can feel a secret sympathy. We, too, know which persons, places or things jinx us and which always seem to make Fortune smile in our direction. We all have our sacred charms and lucky sweaters.)

But gradually, the luck or energy contained in a tree or mountain was personified. People began to believe that the mountain was inhabited by a kind of genie, a creature that was not simply empowered to help or hinder them in fulfilling their desires but that sometimes had desires of its own.

One god who definitely had desires of his own was the river; and this god, by any measurement of godhood, was a very great god, indeed. But unlike the gods of the four directions who usually provided alert devotees with signals of their intentions, the god of the river was singularly uncommunicative; for though the people scanned the waters for a sign, they could find none that heralded his plans.

The Yellow River rose in the mountains of Tibet and, falling from those heights through narrow gorges, became a monstrous gouge that dug up tons of the Mongolian loess deposits that gave it its name. Once burdened with this yellow silt, the river meandered languorously from one flat horizon to the other... for most of the year. But each summer, sooner or later, when distant Himalayan snows began to melt, the river, its tributaries engorged, would become violently aroused and without mercy would inundate the land. People's lives and livestock, homes and granaries would be swept away in angry torrents.

And whenever such disaster was impending, the Hua men, infected with the Orient's peculiarly virulent machismo, would decide that the river god was becoming testy because of an obvious lack of good sex. The cure for this ailment being found (where else?) in the sweet flesh of a timid girl, they quickly selected a pretty virgin, decked her in fetching clothes and launched her upon a raft into the roiling waters. Then they waited for the river god to consume her in lascivious gulps and prayed that when his passion was spent he would withdraw to his bed and let them withdraw to theirs.

Through the ages, year after year, the Hua were obliged to place the burden of their civilization's survival upon the frail shoulders of a trembling girl. Nobody could think of a better way to cope with a randy river.

(Nobody, not even down to modern times, has found a better way. Due mainly to centuries of foolhardy engineering projects which attempted to contain the water by building up the banks but succeeded only in containing the silt and building up the bed - at some points it is 70 feet above the plain - in 1931, from July to November, the river flooded 40,000 square miles. A million people drowned or died from disease and famine. Eighty million were left homeless.)

(The river's prurient ways have, incidentally, inscribed themselves upon the Chinese idiom. Where westerners use the color red - scarlet particularly - to indicate passion and rampant lust, the Chinese use yellow to the same effect.)

With no godless technology available to protect them, the Hua became understandably obsessed with winning friends and influencing spirits. The affections of gods were clearly not to be trifled with. People had to find out where they ranked in the divine popularity polls.

Hindsight was as infallible a judge to them as it is to us. A man whose flocks multiplied upon a certain mountain believed himself to be favored by that mountain's god just as a man who happened to break his leg while walking over the same terrain knew to a certainty that his relations with the mountain could use some improvement.

Was there a way of determining in advance, i.e., before a journey was started or before a flock was moved, how the proprietary spirits would respond to the intrusion? You bet. A medicine man or shaman could tell, for a nominal fee, of course.

Shamans had the power to enter a trance and then, in that condition, to dispatch their spirits to a targeted deity. At this point, shamans divide into two classes; one, loquacious professionals (known to us today as mediums or spirit channels) who generally target deities according to the specifications of a particular client or to the demands of an assembled group; and two, retiring amateurs (known to us as mystics, contemplatives, or ascetics) who seek their gods for profoundly personal motives which have nothing to do with coin, fame, or power.

The professional shaman would contact the specified deity who, if kindly disposed towards his visitor, would enter the shaman's body and use his or her vocal chords to communicate with his human interlocutors.

Not everybody could become entranced. Shamans were very special people who had to be handled with considerable care and respect since the gods were so prejudiced in their

favor. (Unhappily, as we shall see, it was a prejudice that would often, in CIA parlance, terminate extremely.)

The population of spirits was soon greater, by many orders of magnitude, than the population of mortals. They were everywhere. And just when the Hua thought they could not squeeze another spirit into their land, air, and water, an army of ancestral spirits began to invade their domiciles.

For if a stone could house a spirit, was it not reasonable to suppose that a house could house a spirit?

In the Hua's ancient ordering of survival, family bonds were very tight. Huddled against arctic blasts they had come to appreciate each other's closeness and warmth not as figures of speech but as palpable necessities.

For so long as a man was a nomad, his spirit could not become intimately associated with a particular place. When he died, his remains could be anyplace at all. But when a man became a settler, he could likely be born, live, and die in the same cozy little building. His family could look at his bench and almost see him working there or look at his bed and almost hear him snoring. He would be buried nearby. So thoroughly could he become identified with his surroundings that it seemed inconceivable that his spirit, too, should not inhabit his home and that he could have just as many personal preferences as a mountain god. Maybe more.

Unfortunately, ancestral spirits were not necessarily nice to those who shared their addresses.

To be sure, a girl would fondly remember and pray to her dead mother whose gentle spirit would always be there to guide and protect her. But when, as a bride, this girl moved into her husband's home, she was alone and defenseless against any resident spirits who were inclined to be jealous and unfriendly. First, she likely would find an ogre inhabiting her mother-in-law's living body - a discovery she would share with the rest of the world's brides. But the Hua bride, unlike most others, could not find relief upon the death of her tormentor. The old lady's tenacious spirit would hang on demanding postmortem obedience and obeisance. And without proper propitiations and constant accident to her will she would become a spiteful poltergeist, causing food to be burned, utensils to be lost, knives to be broken, or more daughters than sons to be born. Lord! Best to keep the old witch happy.

Beyond the hierarchy of ancestral spirits within each home, there was, within each town, a hierarchy in the total ghost community. And a ghost gained status in this society according to the quality of the homage paid it by its descendants. If a ghost was embarrassed by its family's miserly lack of displayed affection, i.e., if it was dispatched to the hereafter without the furniture and appliances needed to maintain a proper household, it 'lost face', a rebuff which made it miserable and decidedly mean. Therefore, to insure that a ghost would

continue to use its influence to enhance and not worsen the lives of its kin, the living made a great show of their high regard for the dear departed. All kinds of costly items went into the hole with the loved one. Funeral expenses were a frequent cause of bankruptcy.

(In the later years of Hua prosperity, if the deceased happened to be of rich or royal stock and was used to being waited on and entertained, scores of living servants, poets, musicians and, of course, virgins and courtesans, where applicable, went into the hole, too, to keep the loved one eternally in the style to which he had become temporally accustomed.)

But filial sacrifice did not end with the funeral. It was necessary to fete the ghost upon anniversaries of the auspicious occasion of his birth. Since all of his descendants were obligatory guests, birthday parties for the dead could easily keep living families hungry and in debt.

In order to maintain good relations with the dead, it was necessary to consult them, to get their advice and learn their preferences. Ghost-talk, to the entrepreneurial shamans, became a growth industry; for a surprising number of people who had been sullen or uncommunicative in life turned out to be absolutely gregarious in death. Ancestral spirits always had a lot on their minds.

And so, in those early days of religious development, every community bristled with imps, nixies, pixies, fairies, genii, ghosts and spirits of every creed and denomination.

As each area's airways became clogged with squadrons of destructive spirits and shaman interceptors, the Sky's suzerainty became a matter of some urgency. This supreme spirit and god above gods not only contained all other spirits but could, if it so desired, direct them. And it was high time, indeed, to charge it with maintaining some kind of order.

Just as a man whose flocks multiplied upon a mountain was believed to be favored by that mountain's god, a man whose tribal leadership brought prosperity to his people was believed to be favored by the great leader, the sky god.

But then... the more such a leader and his tribesmen thought about it... the more 'favored' seemed insufficient. 'Fathered' was deemed closer to the truth.

And so the sky, the fate-decreeing god above gods, using as his medium of insemination the comestible pearl-white seeds of a wild grass - known to us as Job's tears - proceeded to impregnate a human female who was and remained a virgin. Their offspring, not noticeably inconvenienced by the impediment, burst into the world as a human male. So began the Xia Dynasty, (2000 - 1500 B.C.) the first of China's three ancient ruling families.

The Son of Heaven was naturally more than just a head of state. He was a pontiff, a bridge between earth and sky, an arbiter of conflict between flesh and spirit, and a mediator between man and all other gods. He alone possessed the majesty to confront his father and

demand, or, perhaps, respectfully request, that his peers, the lesser gods, be forced to cooperate in providing for the commonweal.

The Xia Son of Heaven and his royal heirs never succeeded in becoming more than titular sovereigns, functioning far more as shaman-priests than kings. For any tendency towards strong central government or true monarchy had been inhibited by the lay of the kingdom.

Xia communities were strung for miles along the river like beads upon a strand. They could easily be plucked, individually, by even small raiding parties. Defense against a marauder's hit-and-run tactics was, and could only be, a local matter.

And as the Hua prospered, their fierce, semi-civilized cousins - horsemen from the north and from surrounding nomadic tribes - had indeed begun to raid their farms and ranches, carrying off their women and possessions.

Tribal chieftains raised a militia and did what they could to take the battle to the enemy. But the Hua were stationary targets, while the raiders were moving targets, and this unfair advantage frustrated the chiefs and made them contentious. Therefore, as noblemen are wont to do, they raided each other in order to replace the women and property they had lost.

The Son of Heaven continued to raise his arms and beseech his father to straighten out the mess, but the sky simply did not care to get involved. By 1500 B.C. it had disowned its sons completely. With only bards to tell the story, the Xia's dynastic period ended in calamity.

But the age of literacy was on its way and from out of the scribbles of legendary time, one clear line began to be drawn: the mighty Shang dynasty came forward to make its considerable mark.

This time the divine semen was carried in the egg of a wonderful songbird. A Shang lady ate the egg and gave birth to a new Son of Heaven, one who understood the value of protective shells. The Shang kings ushered in the age of bronze and gave their warriors thick hide battle dress and metal weapons, making them a vastly improved military force. They had chariots, too, that provided their archers with protected, mobile platforms.

The Shang Sons of Heaven presided over a different kind of realm. It was much larger, stretching all the way to the Yellow Sea, and far more populous. It called itself the Middle Kingdom and, modestly enough, what it considered itself central to was the rest of the universe.

Consolidating new lands that had been acquired through war and pioneering presented difficult but routine problems; the problems which confounded the Shang were those presented by lands within their original territories.

The Yellow River basin, being annually refertilized by the rich mongolian silts that were brought by summer flood and winter wind, was marvelously productive. In response to this generosity, the population had increased rapidly; and in response to this increase, huge chunks of forest land had been converted to farmland. As these farms extended into areas that were beyond the river's capacity to water them, the Shang devised irrigation systems. But, as more and more farms were situated farther and farther from the river, these rudimentary irrigation systems were disastrously insufficient.

Outlying farms depended entirely upon rainfall, and the only rains that fell upon the entire basin were the occasional tail-ends of storms in the China Sea. Hardy wild grasses, native to the area, had adapted perfectly to the climate; but the crops introduced by the farmers wanted a bit more in the way of pampering. The god of rain, a capricious and miserly deity whose niggardly ways had previously been a sore but manageable irritation, now became as wretched a troublemaker as the river god. And the river god had become even more incorrigibly concupiscent since the destruction of the forests had worsened the flooding problem by adding the run-off silts of soil erosion.

Fortunately, the supply of virgins, while not unlimited, was at least adequate for the rutting river's needs. But rain presented different problems. Difficulty with the river was as ancient as the Hua people, themselves. But rain did not become a problem until there was already in place an enormous number of shamans.

At the Shang seat of government, at the first indications of drought, a great rain dance was performed under the open sky. It was an appeal, not to the rain god - he had already proved obdurate, but to the supreme being, the sky, itself.

Led by the king, the living Son of Heaven and shaman extraordinaire, the people solemnly swayed, rhythmically imploring the great spirit to intercede on their behalf and command the rain god to do his job.

If no rain was forthcoming, the 'pity' ploy was used. The king slowly removed his robes and exposed his delicate body to the broiling sun. And if the sight of his son's sunburned body wasn't enough to make tears cascade down the divine cheeks and onto the parched earth, then, clearly, the spectacle was just not pitiable enough.

A surrogate for the king was chosen and in an attempt to raise the pityquotient a great fire was lit and the surrogate Son of Heaven was roasted.

But in the provinces, removed from the Heavenly scion's presence, the dance was choreographed differently. The people chose a shaman whose oracular talents had clearly

demonstrated divine affection; and during the public dancing and shaman stripping, they waited for the clouds to form. But if the sky remained a coldly indifferent blue, they lit a fire and, hoping that the pleas for rain might command more attention if they came from one of the gods' old, familiar throats, they proceeded to reduce the shaman population by one. Being favored by divinity had its occupational hazards.

If the loss of a favorite pair of vocal chords could not make the god lacrimose, nothing could.

Learning the divine will was the Shang king's singular obsession. How could he prevent the attacks of northern horsemen? What should he do to keep peace among the tribes? And why-oh-why did Heaven put too much water in one place and not enough in another?

Shamans from all over the kingdom converged at court to help the king discover clues to the divine intentions. But the shamans, who liked the pay and loved the attention, wanted a bit more in the way of job security. They saw it clearly in their best interests to devise a better way to reconnoiter the heavenly landscape.

Divination, using instruments that were more easily disposed of than their larynxes, was the obvious answer. Segments of turtle carapaces or sections of animal bones (the shoulder blades) were designated "yes" "no" or "undecided" and the shaman, after stating a given question, applied a hot poker to the bone or shell which, responding to the intense heat, cracked. If the targeted god was adamantly negative, the crack went directly to the "no" section. If, on the other hand, he was affirmatively inclined, the crack went directly to "yes". If he couldn't make up his mind or didn't particularly care to commit himself either way, the crack went to the undecided section. It was an ingenious solution; but it was also limited. For there were lots of questions that just could not be answered with a simple yes, no, or maybe.

And so the shamans drew little pictures on the bones to represent actions, numbers, or the names of persons, places and things.

Writing began, then, not as a means to record inventories, signify ownership, or to engage in any kind of commercial accounting; nor was it devised as a means by which men could accurately communicate with each other and have a permanent record of the messages conveyed. Had this been the case then more efficiency, clarity and uniformity of line would have informed the initial efforts. But this was not so. Writing, in China, began as a divinatory discipline. It was intended to be esoteric, as cryptic as the symbols of fortune tellers and astrologers are even today. The baffled ignorance of clients contributes greatly to any conjurer's mystique.

To complicate these literate beginnings, each clique of shamans had its own ideograms.

But many shamans, particularly the mystics who were unimpressed by courtly clients and their literate interrogations, continued in hallowed ways to communicate with the ancient gods. Women, in particular, cultivated a rare spirituality and, lost in blissful trance, acquired carnal knowledge of the four great directional gods. The god of the East, the direction from which the rains came, was the most important of their divine paramours. And, since such women were sure to command the attention of this master of the rain, they were frequently burned. Fire and white ashes became forever associated with the eastern god.

But the sacrifices of so many humans, animals, and objects of art and craft did little to lessen the burdens on the living. The floods, the droughts, the marauding northmen, the insatiable ancestors, the plethora of gods, the worsening intertribal wars, the confusing advice of conflicting divinations, and the corruptions which such quackery and fraud occasioned, all contributed to the Shang's collapse.

By the dynasty's fall in 1028 B.C., the population of spirits had put the airways into virtual gridlock. It was the kind of paralysis that made foreign invasion inevitable. Powerful westerners, the Zhou, swept in and cut their way through the traffic.

And, as the Xia kings came by way of the seeds that were so important to early farmers and the Shang kings came by way of the protected egg that answered militaristic needs, so the Zhou kings became the immaculately conceived sons of heaven by way of a god's footprint into which a Zhou lady stepped. The divine footprints would lead them out of the chaos.

The Zhou moved quickly to establish order. They replaced tribalism with feudalism, appointing their relatives to the vacant positions of defeated chiefs, and then enfeoffed both them and the chiefs that had been their allies. People were no longer members of a tribe: they were vassals. In the new system, the people belonged to the land; the land belonged to the barons; and the barons belonged to the king or so he liked to think.

With the exception of the four directional gods, the sky, and the irrepressible ancestors, the Zhou Son of Heaven evicted the armies of spirits that had tenanted his kingdom. Professional shamanism was 'officially discouraged,' i.e., professional shamans were executed. Order meant conformity and conformity could be obtained only through an organized, literate priesthood - a priesthood that was bound by standardized ritual, ceremony, and, above all, codified divinatory pronouncements. Benevolent despots, the Zhou realized that the kind of order they wished to mandate had to emanate from qualities inherent in each individual and group. Personal responsibility and not bribery of spirits was what they sought. The divine footprint into which their queen had stepped marked the path of virtue.

Not once in all the Shang's obsessive interrogation of the spirits had the word virtue (de) appeared. Rebounding from such neglect, virtue became the Zhou's motto even as order became the operative word of their decrees.

Believing that human nature was inherently good and that error resulted more from confusion than from deliberate intent, they created The Book of Change, the Yijing (I Ching), an extraordinary instrument which, even three thousand years post-publication, remains one of the most cunningly contrived works in all of religious literature.

On its surface, the book appears to be a divinatory almanac, the illusion of supernatural involvement being facilitated by the random selection - through tossing sticks or coins - of one of sixty-four hexagrams, each of which has its own specific textual advice.

To be effective, an oracle must be bold, brief and cryptic; and the Yijing is precisely that. It identifies the nature of the inquiring person's problem in opening lines called 'The Judgment' and proceeds to suggest, in lines called 'The Image,' a winning strategy.

In fact, the book is a psychological tool designed to cut through the emotional thicket of confusing data which often confronts a person who must make a difficult decision. The underlying assumption, of course, is that the person subconsciously knows which course of action is preferable or morally superior but that he is unable consciously to see this choice because the pros and cons of argument have momentarily confounded him. The Yijing, through its cleverly ambivalent coachings, tricks him into seeing the choice he unknowingly prefers. It does not matter which of the sixty-four hexagrams he 'draws.' All of the advice is slanted towards benign or moral conduct. In its vague but authoritative manner, the book counsels emotional restraint, caution, respect for life, and so on, and especially to someone who is agonizing over a decision, miraculously serves to clarify an ethical and desirable choice.

Naturally, when employed for purposes of prophecy the Yijing is as worthless as a cup of soggy tea leaves.

The Zhou, able now to place all military resources under one centralized command, took the initiative in action against northern barbarians and recalcitrant neighboring tribes. Having secured the peace, they moved immediately to undertake comprehensive irrigation projects, to dig canals for river drainage, to build roads and many public works, and to construct long stretches of walls along the northern frontier - not to keep out men, for men could easily climb the walls, but to keep out horses, for without their mounts the northmen were no threat at all.

At many places where the walls ended, garrisoned trading centers were established; enemy northerners obtained foods, pottery and metal implements while the southerners obtained horses for themselves. Horses were the single most prized possession in the Hua kingdom.

For five hundred years art and science flourished: poetry, painting, medicine, ceramics, metallurgy, textiles, astronomy, architecture. Society began to stratify: aristocratic

ruling families, military men, educators, farmers, artisans and, at the absolute bottom of the heap, merchants.

The kingdom began to trade internationally. Seaport cities thronged with sales representatives from India, Tibet, Persia and the Levant.

But while the Hua treated foreign visitors with courteous tolerance they were not so well disposed towards their immediate neighbors. Achievement had made them incredibly arrogant toward those of less technological attainment. To the Hua, only the Hua were human beings.

Diet and some genetic commerce with the western provinces had given the Hua a different look from their northern cousins whom they now regarded as obvious barbarians... 'dogs' in the figurative sense. But the Mang people who lived south of the Middle Kingdom, in South China, Vietnam, Burma and Thailand, whose eyes were rounder, like a puppy's, and whose hair sometimes had an spaniel's wave or even a poodle's curl, were truly dogs, or half-dogs. In fact, according to Hua belief, a Hua king had once promised the hand of his daughter to anyone who could bring him the head of his enemy. A dog accomplished this feat and what could the king do? The dog, as considerate as he was brave, removed the mating spectacle to the south, far beyond the royal range of vision. By some accounts, the offspring were reptilian and simian as well as canine. (So authoritatively was this genesis tale publicized that a thousand years later southern peoples were still sacrificing to their ancestral dog. Chinese ideograms for southern peoples in current usage still contain these animal elements.)

Little by little, inexorably, the army of nature spirits returned to occupy Hua territory; but their effect was largely salutatory. For not only did the nature gods serve to mitigate some of the more brazen antics of the ancestors, but, by fostering or renewing the idea of spirits in objects, it could be seen that to a dead rider, the spirit of a clay horse could carry him just as far as the spirit of a flesh horse; or that the spirit of a little paper chair provided as much comfort to the loins of an ancestral spirit as did a full-sized ottoman.

Relieved of much of his financial obligations to the dead, the average man prospered.

The king, too, found life easier. No longer the passive instrument of divine communication, the god-shaman, he became the principal actor, the god-priest, who officiated at ceremonies and conducted rituals. And he succeeded in his new role according to the exactitude with which he invested his performance. For the notions of sympathetic magic had thoroughly saturated his religious imagination. Like produced like. When a quality in one place was altered or engendered, a similar quality in another place responded similarly. (Today, for example, we still find in many societies, that pregnant women will not eat 'twinning' fruits and vegetables for fear of allowing the quality of twoness to enter their bodies and produce twins. A similar idea informs voodoo practices in which a doll modeled

after a specific individual can, when pierced through its leg, cause pain to be felt in the leg of the human model.)

Therefore, if the Son of Heaven wanted order in heaven and on earth, he merely had to conduct all appropriate rituals with exacting order. If he erred in performing a ritual, then, somehow or someway, he would precipitate disaster.

Enthralled by the schemes of magical power, the Zhou kings, with prodigious precision, conducted their religious rituals conscious that every finger movement was duplicated elsewhere in the motions of heaven; and that every syllable uttered was a note in the music of the celestial spheres, a pitchpipe's cue that kept the earth and stars in tuneful harmony. The kingdom prospered all because order had been virtuously determined and ordained.

And to oversee all of this virtuous order, to manage all the public works and provide for the regulation of commerce, industry and education, and, of course, to collect taxes, fees and fines, a vast bureaucracy was established. There followed nepotism, graft, spite, extortion, bribery, jealousy, and not a little hate.

More and more the barons cared less and less for the king's order. More and more they saw themselves as sovereigns of their own states, charged by destiny to keep the cadence of the times. Men of action who appreciated precision more in military drill than in ceremonial chants, they grew restive in their capitals.

And so, while the Son of Heaven kept the sky from falling by keeping his head at the correct tilt, the new monarchs looked to each other's lands, lowered their lances and squared-off.

The Zhou kings who had succeeded so well in keeping order among the distant planets were inexplicably unable to maintain the slightest semblance of order in the center of the universe, their own Middle Kingdom. Civil war was the order of the day.

To combat the disorder of the warring states, two contesting groups of philosophers offered their assistance: the Confucians, who believed that man was inherently good, and the Legalists, who believed that man was inherently evil.

The Confucians saw civic order as a consequence of family order. Family relationships were natural relationships which involved inherent responsibilities. Thus, virtue consisted in dutiful conformation to these natural laws, i.e., dharma. Fathers naturally instructed their sons who naturally obeyed. Heaven directed its offspring, the king, who naturally complied. In like manner, the king's magistrates patronized and punished the childishly submissive common man who did as he was told - or else! - and dead ancestors rose to the challenge of guiding their living descendants who, of course, kowtowed in perfectly natural ceremoniousness.

According to this scheme, when an individual constrained himself and sacrificed his narrow interests to the larger interests of his family, there was harmony and prosperity in the family. And when such self-sacrificing morality was inculcated at the family level, honorable sons would rise to take positions of responsibility in the family of families, the government bureaucracy.

The Confucians left nothing to chance. Every person's conduct was governed by rules of deportment. Every possible human relationship was reduced to an appropriate dharma equation. Only friends were equals; everyone else was superior or subservient to somebody else: age over youth, male over female. Society was completely stratified. Laws, however, did not apply to the upper strata. Gentlemen were expected to settle their disputes honorably and in private; and Confucianism's celebrated Golden Rule was applied only to members of one's own class.

The virtues which Confucianism most extolled were calmness and scholarly refinement, a dispassionately maintained appreciation of decorous academics. Since conduct towards other people, dead and alive, constituted The Good, a man was required to examine his conscience not to determine how well he was faring in the eyes of one, supreme, ethical god whose commandments and judgments applied equally to all, but merely to determine how well he was behaving in the rather prejudicial eyes of his ancestors and in the equally colored estimations of other members of his particular pecking order. This unvarying, societal perspective conduced, as indeed it must, to superficial morality, to humanism robbed of empathy. Men of refinement did not hesitate to order a suspect of a crime beaten, or to have a few of his bones crushed, before questioning him, so as not to waste time listening to irritating denials.

And all the rectitude did nothing to lessen intrigue; for kinship took precedence over kingship. We find, for example, in the Confucian Analects (13:18), "The Duke of She told Confucius, 'In my country there is an upright man named Kung. When his father stole a sheep, he bore witness against him.' Confucius said, 'The upright men in my community are different from this. The father conceals the misconduct of the son and the son conceals the misconduct of the father. Uprightness is to be found in this.'" Thus, it was not merely permissible to cover-up the crimes of one's family, it was morally right and desirable to do so. And what happened when someone else was accused of the crime? Ah... too bad for him. Confucianism, in practice, did not always work the way it was designed. People who lived outside the family circle were quite likely to find intrafamily morality somewhat demoralizing.

Clearly, the families Confucians had dedicated themselves to preserving were those of the privileged classes to which they belonged. During the several hundred years of the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.) major conflicts over usually trivial causes occurred on average every few years. Confucian overlords conscripted hundreds of thousands of ordinary farmer/family men to fight and die in settlement of their noble squabbles.

The Confucians also mocked the old gods and ridiculed those who continued to believe in them. They regarded all spirits, except those of their own ancestors, as nothing but troublemakers whose communications were prescriptions for discord; but these other gods were precisely those upon whom the poor depended. Ancestor worship entailed enormous expenditures of time and money. Only the rich could afford, for instance, the enforced idleness of the obligatory three year mourning period for a deceased parent or, during livelier days, could pay for the elaborate costumes and costly feasts of ceremonial occasions. Any fool could see how well a properly appeased ancestor provided for his descendants. Common folks who couldn't improve their lots by such progenitorial bribery resented those who could. They continued to look upon the old gods as the great equalizers who would provision and avenge them.

But as war followed war the old gods could not even save themselves. Only the great gods of the four directions and a few of their ladies remained. For the rest of the pantheon, it was *Gotterdammerung*.

The Zhou dynasty withered and died beneath an impotent sky and catastrophe awaited as even Heaven, itself, seemed to abdicate in favor of a new and venal creed. Legalism had made its terrible appearance.

The Legalists had an entirely different view of the needs and the nature of man. Since people were by nature vicious, lazy, dirty, deceitful and greedy, to mention but a few of their more genial characteristics, and could be managed only by small rewards and big punishments, harsh and frequent discipline was absolutely essential. Only when a man was afraid to do wrong could he be expected to do right.

Therefore, consistency and severity were Legalist operative words: Never fail to apply strict punishment to anyone who breaks the law and there will soon be harmonious order. According to their guide book, the *Han Fei Zi*, "The severe household has no rebellious slaves; it is the affectionate mother who has spoiled sons. A ruler... does not devote himself to virtue but to law."

Therefore, the king decides what his law should be, proclaims it to as wide an audience as possible and then uses his power to see that it is universally obeyed. Justice was a concept that did not apply to the quality of the law, but to the non-exceptional enforcement of it.

If a righteous state saw a neighbor behaving in an unseemly manner, living, for example, in the corruption of unbridled and indulgent peace, the righteous state was obliged to conquer and correct. A state at remedial war was a virtuous state.

For so long as the Zhou kings had been committed to the delicate ethics of Confucian family welfare, they could hardly condescend to subscribe to such unrefined sentiments.

There was, however, at the Middle Kingdom's barbaric far-western frontier, another kingdom which didn't at all mind stooping to conquer.

The Qin (Ch'in) kings had weighed the differing Confucian and Legalist treatises and found the Legalist argument the most gravely to their liking. And as the other states mortally wounded each other, Qin armies advanced to administer the coup de grace. One by one they picked them off until, in 221 B.C. the Qin controlled all of the Middle Kingdom which was now, for the first time, called China - Land of the Ch'in.

The triumphant Qin monarch surveyed his vast, united domain and declared himself Emperor, the first of a dynasty that he estimated would last ten thousand years. It lasted fourteen. But the Emperor Qin Shihuangdi would make the ten of them that he presided over very, very memorable. His name was not to be one of history's footnotes.

The Emperor immediately discarded the old, fractious nobility and their feudal system. Now, individual peasants could own land. The obverse of this coin was that now individual peasants would pay taxes directly to the Emperor's collectors. The aristocratic middleman had successfully been removed.

He also made it possible for a man to rise socially. Any conscripted farmer who displayed uncommon valor on the battlefield was rewarded when he returned home by the gift of five neighboring families.

He kept the streets clean and commercial transactions equitable by punishing such misdemeanors as littering or giving short measure by an array of importunities which included flogging, facial tattooing, mutilation by branding iron, and chopping-off of fingers, hands, feet, or testicles.

He was tougher on felonies. Death came fast by strangulation or decapitation or slow by a variety of ingenious means.

To inspire a winning spirit in his soldiers and to show how little he cared for losers, he ordered, on one ordinary day, the execution of 400,000 prisoners.

He also instituted the practice of collective responsibility. If a crime was serious (and what crime wasn't?) a man's entire family could be charged and exterminated along with him. If, for example, an individual failed to pay his taxes, his entire village could be held accountable. At the very least, the village head was forced to share the guilt. Thus, mutual civilian responsibility provided for mutual civilian surveillance. And if this wasn't enough, and it certainly should have been, to raise the esprit de corps of his tax collectors beyond all conceivable bounds, cash rewards were paid to informants! Think of it! Citizens who would have been happy to squeal just to remove themselves from punitive consideration were able actually to make a buck. In the ancient, vast, and international brotherhood of Internal Revenue Service agents, none has ever had it better.

Preferring to be absolutely certain of a defendant's guilt before they punished him so lavishly, Qin magistrates made confession a vital part of the testimony. Prongs, pincers and other instruments of torture were displayed upon the judge's bench and when confessions were not voluntarily given, the instruments were used. In keeping with the fairness of public trial, the defendant was tortured in full view of his peers. To be certain that witnesses or even the plaintiffs or victims were telling the truth, they, too, could be subject to such pointed interrogations. (The practice of judicial torture was not outlawed in China until the 20th Century.)(Anno Domini)

There was no arguing with the Emperor Qin Shihuangdi. He tolerated no difference of opinion. All books, except Qin history, divination, agriculture and medicine, were rounded up and burned. Anyone who quoted from a banned book was publicly executed. To show his contempt for the allocutions of Confucian scholars, he rounded up hundreds of them and buried them alive.

Even gods were subject to his wrath. Once, while crossing the Chang Jiang (Yangtze) River a gale sprang up and defiantly rocked the Emperor's boat. Qin Shihuangdi held the river goddess responsible. Seeing her sacred mountain nearby, he ordered 3,000 prisoners to cut down every tree on the mountain.

Now that he had the attention of his people, the Emperor moved to realize two consuming ambitions: the completion of his tomb and the connection of all the various segments of northern wall into one Great Wall.

Millions of men were dragged from their farms and sent to work either at the northern frontier wall or to his capital city, Xi'an, the location of his tomb.

Multitudes died building the Great Wall. Many men were executed for poor performance. Many were worked into fatal exhaustion. Many were killed in construction accidents. Many succumbed to disease and malnutrition.

At Xi'an, 700,000 men worked on the tomb. They excavated a vast subterranean parade ground and filled it with thousands of full-sized, individually sculpted, clay soldiers and horses that marched eternally to the glory and protection of Qin Shihuangdi. Rivers of mercury flowed through the underground landscape. The gallery's vaulted ceiling was a map of the stars.

The effect of all this conscription was predictable. The number of able-bodied farmers, already critically diminished by years of warfare, was now further reduced by impressed service at the wall and tomb. With insufficient manpower to operate the farms, the crops failed and in the resultant famine, hundreds of thousands of families starved to death.

Walls do not long impede determined invaders. The Greeks entered Troy. The Germans zipped past the Maginot Line. The Northerners invaded China.

There is a quirk in the human spirit which manifests itself as an inability to see a man's character as being unredeemably corrupt: No man's soul is so inked over by crime but that a white spot remains upon which some exonerating good may be written. It is as if we could balance a tome of iniquity with a phrase of benevolence. Thus, for example, it is said of the leaders of the three axis powers of World War II, Mussolini, Hitler, and Hirohito - three men whose malignant vanity required the torture and murder of millions upon millions of innocent people and the plunder of the accumulated treasuries of whole continents - that they, after all, made the trains run on time, built good roads and inexpensive autos, and wrote excellent haiku poetry.

And so it is said of this beast of ancient China, the Emperor Qin Shihuangdi, this tyrant whose vile ambition brought such unspeakable sorrow to so many millions, that he was, after all, responsible for standardizing the weights and measures of China. Before him, axles were a hodgepodge of differing widths.

We surely should have no difficulty in understanding that while he reigned, life in China was something intelligent men tried to avoid. In fact, for the entire duration of the Warring States period, thoughtful souls of the Middle Kingdom believed that on the whole, they'd rather be elsewhere. Sailing to distant, fabled lands had a definite appeal. So did walking as far as possible. Fortunately, peripatetic members of the intelligentsia did not find themselves without a desirable destination. They turned southward... for down south, in the barbaric lands of the semi-dogs, strange and mysterious things were happening, things that were inviting, intriguing, and wonderfully sanctuarial.

The Dao had found its followers... and northerners went to join the parade.

It is a peculiar fact that whenever anyone speaks of ancient Chinese culture, invariably he speaks of the culture of northern China. It is as if southern lands did not exist until an hour before the northern Chinese discovered them. So easily dismissed is southern culture that even the Dao (Tao), China's greatest gift to religion and to philosophy, is considered an Indian import... a variation of culture expressed originally in the Upanishads. The "Dao" is considered a simple renaming of Brahman's One, Absolute and Ultimate Reality.

But the native populations the Aryans encountered in 1500 B.C. had not confined themselves to the Gangetic plain or delta. They occupied China as well as the Indo-China peninsula. The base upon which 8th Century B.C. India is credited with stamping her metaphysics covered a vast area; and no one can say when or where the doctrines specifically originated or which areas most contributed to their refinement.

We can note the appearance in Daoism's bible, the Dao De Jing (The Way and The Power), of the same union of opposites - the power and the law the power obeys, female and

male, earth and sky, dark and light, and so on, which characterized indigenous Indian beliefs at the time of the Aryan invasions. Daoism's Yin and Yang restates this concept.

We can also note that though the 8th Century B.C. Upanishads are regarded as the first formal expression of such "opposed unions", they clearly are not the first written record of them. While the Upanishads continued to be spread only by the vector of memory, the Dao De Jing was being passed in documentary form from hand to hand. The descendants of the Hua knew how to write! If being first to publish counts for anything, the religious copyrights belong to China.

And this was what the Warring Years and Qin Shihuangdi's megalomania accomplished; an exodus of literati! Northern artists of both vision and verse brought their talents and their consummate skills with them and applied these resources to whatever they observed and learned and taught.

Having no need for mnemonic repetitions, they extracted truth's marrow from the bone-dry cadences of scriptural recitations, poetically reconstituted it in brief but haunting lines, and presented it to the public for mass consumption. Daoism's extraordinary accessibility still remains its special genius.

Master calligraphers, with the merest suggestion of line and hint of color, they made profound obeisance to the sheltering landscape's mysteries: mountain, water, tree, tiger and man. And bamboo... always bamboo.

Though no language in the world approaches the philosophical precision of Sanskrit, Indian philosophy, for all this precision, as well as Indian art and poetry, lacks the delicacy and elegant simplicity of expression that is the hallmark of its ancient Chinese counterpart.

The difference in attitude remains striking: where Hinduism beats its breast, Daoism shrugs its shoulders.

As determined by two scholars, one, a legendary 6th Century B.C. spiritual explorer called Lao Zi (Lao Tzu), and the other, a flesh and blood prospector named Zhuang Zi (Chuang Tzu) (350-275 B.C.), the Dao staked its claim upon the gentle ways of non-attachment, noninterference, of going with the flow, of finding nothing personal in nature's importunities.

Meditation was an essential step in the Dao path. And Dao scripture paid immediate homage to the practice. Meditation, then as now, is a peculiarly ineffable experience. There are no words to describe it simply because meditation is largely a function of the brain's right hemisphere, the hemisphere that does not program words or contain a vocabulary. And so we find in the opening lines of the Dao De Jing, the oldest Dao scripture we have, an acknowledgment of this wordless experience: "The Dao that we can talk about is not the Dao we mean."

The stated object of Dao training remains the creation of an 'Immortal Foetus,' an interior child, called in Western Alchemy 'The Lapis' or 'Child Mercurius'.

The devotee must first attain androgyny, an advanced spiritual state called "the Valley Spirit" or "Mysterious Female" (represented in the Yin/Yang symbol (for men) as the black dot within the white comma and (for women) the white dot within the black.) In western terminology this event is called "Divine Marriage" or "Attaining the Grail" (the search for the blood-filled uterine chalice - hence "Percival" the Questing Knight whose name means "Pierce the Valley"). This quest/event is also illustrated in the famous Oxherding pictures, the Magpie Bridge of Androgyny uniting the Oxherder and the Spinning Maiden, celestially represented as two stars, Al-tair and Vega, within their respective constellations, Aquila and Lyra, which meet on either side of the Milky Way.

The Immortal Foetus or Divine Child is alchemically nourished by the purification of sexual energy. Using techniques similar to those of right-handed sexual yoga, the Dao monk generates heat in his abdomen and groin by using certain breathing exercises, becomes sexually aroused by this heat, gives form to the sexual force by imagining it to be molten ball of metal, restrains his worldly desire to ejaculate his semen by contracting the muscles of the abdomen, buttocks, groin, neck and chin, and mentally directs this 'seminal' fluid ball up the spine and through a bodily orbit where eventually it is distilled in the cauldron (Manipura chakra) and then stored in the brain as a kind of gestating, luminous blue pearl essence. The practice is extremely difficult to master. Needless to say, women have a much easier time in acquiring the necessary control.

During these meditations the monk, in his androgynous "other" identity, enters a visionary world, the sacred but adventurous precincts of the Tushita Heaven.

The gaze of the Daoist is always turned inward to his spiritual life. He is constantly aware of his spiritual relationship to everything in both his waking life and his dream life. Perfection in the techniques of meditation hone his intuitive faculties and give him extraordinary insights. He sees life's essential elements as they exist in pristine form, unsullied by the crimes of ego. Like a child, he has no ego. It has been consumed by the fire.

Southern culture turned out to be one of China's best kept secrets. Owing, perhaps, to the propaganda about the southerners' backward and barbaric natures, nobody in the north seems to have thought that southern lands were worth invading. (No wonder southerners persisted in sacrificing to their canine ancestor. Was it they who planted the story about the king's reward?)

The considerable difference in temperament that existed between northerners and southerners was most likely occasioned by climate. Southerners had not been bred to survive their environment but to accommodate it. They did not live north of Eden's vales: they lived within the sacred precincts. And their gods surely were the effete deities of tropical surplus.

As farmers, they of course studied weather, but their devotion to the Four Directions was far more genteel. Rain was a regular gentleman caller.

Their dispositions, too, had been largely formed by the lay of the land. Over the hard wheatlands of the northern plains, armies could march and horses could gallop. Brutal winters gave men time to suffer and scheme. But in the south where rice was grown in flooded paddy after flooded paddy, armies could not march and horses could not gallop. Water buffalo were prized over horses, and water buffalo were hardly suitable for pulling chariots. In the south, the misty mountains and green valleys were a promulgation of peace.

Why not practice yoga's sublime skills? Why not let the sun and moon cohabit in one's brain and the Milky Way's own semen circulate in one's bloodstream? Why not know ecstasy and bliss and peaceful oneness with the Eternal Dao? Why not, indeed?

And doubtless, that is why, when word of this wonderful religion sizzled like a lit fuse along the Chinese grapevine and many of the Middle Kingdom's thoughtful men and women heard the buzz, they tuned- in, dropped-out, and headed south to the safety and civility of the most beautiful mountains on earth.

The Chinese half of Zen Buddhism was finally in place.

CHAPTER 3

CHAN SCRIPTURES

A special transmission outside the sutras; No reliance upon words and letters; Direct pointing to the very Mind; Seeing into one's own nature.

- Bodhidharma, First Patriarch of Chan (Zen) Buddhism

During the Buddha's forty-five year ministry he converted thousands to his way and his truth. But what exactly that truth and way were we cannot determine either by scripture or by consensus. There is a lack of documentation and a surfeit of opinion.

Soon after the Buddha's death a group of his disciples convened in order to collect his teachings and put them into memorizable form. Convinced that their individual memories could survive war, pestilence, famine, senility, etc. and still remain in perfect accord, they dispersed to teach and to proselytize.

Anyone who has ever tried to recollect two consecutive verses (if not lines) of his national anthem can guess the outcome. There were soon so many memory lapses and so much disagreement that it was necessary, a hundred years later, in 380 B.C., for the priests to reconvene in order to reorganize the teachings. They had no new solution to the problem; and perhaps because they had no alternative, they once again resorted to memory.

No one knows when the Aryans gained the knowledge of writing. The earliest document we have from India comes from one of Alexander the Great's scribes who recorded events of the young conqueror's invasion of India in 327 B.C. The earliest native writing that has come down to us are some of the Emperor Ashoka's edicts preserved in stone inscriptions. Ashoka reigned from about 268 to 232 B.C.

By 250 B.C., then, it surely was possible to commit the teachings to print, still, to our knowledge, no one elected to do so. Religious teachings were traditionally transmitted through the priestly generations by rote and it probably was not in the clergy's interests to break that tradition. He who possessed the sacred knowledge possessed the sacred power; and it was considered sacrilegious to place that power into vulgar hands.

Regardless of the reasons, the Buddha's teachings were not committed to print until 80 B.C. when the priests of Sri Lanka finally relented and wrote down all that they could

remember. How much credence can we accord texts (the Pali Canon) compiled so long after the actual teaching?

Let's consider their version of the Buddha's deathbed pronouncements - one of the least controversial texts in Buddhism. According to the Mahaparinibbana Sutta this eighty year old man, expiring in the agony of food poisoning, halted his death throes long enough to:

1. Instruct his followers to discontinue the practice of calling each other 'friend' as they had done throughout his lifetime. In the future, junior disciples were to address senior disciples as Sir or Venerable One. Senior disciples could still call junior disciples 'friend' or, if they chose, address them by their given names. (He neglected to specify how junior disciples should address each other.)
2. Give permission for priestly communities to alter or abolish as they chose any of the minor precepts of his Path. (He did not specify which precepts were minor.)
3. Order that his beloved disciple and former servant, Channa, be ostracized from the community as punishment for having presumed upon his long and close association with the Buddha and for having behaved in a haughty manner towards the other disciples.
4. Pronounce them all (with the obvious exception of Channa) spiritually accomplished, secure and without doubts (thereby putting his Imprimatur on their doctrinal opinions and versions of events); and, having made all this perfectly clear, added,
5. "All conditioned things are transient. Work diligently for your salvation." Then he died.

For unintentional humor, it is a deathbed scene Charles Dickens could not have improved upon.

Unfortunately, with the advent of writing came even more scriptural profusion and diversity. Not content with their monopoly over existing editions of prescribed truth - ordinary laymen had no private libraries - priests, elders and Buddhist scholars of every stripe began to create new sacred literature to suit themselves and their audiences. Those with Brahman pretensions compounded their works with Brahmanism. Those with Jainist sympathies mixed Jain beliefs into Buddhist dogma. Intellectuals, gravitating as usual to hard-core Samkhya expositions, laced their disquisitions with the headier stuff of metaphysics and yogic discipline; and the spiritually unripened, as is their custom, penned tracts which offered salvation through obedience to endless rules of righteous conduct. For the young at heart, touching stories about the Buddha's efforts to save innocent life - such as the time he changed himself into a rabbit and jumped into a frying pan, substituting himself for the scheduled entree - were ingenuously recorded. Most astonishing of all were the fevered writings of those turgid authors who claimed that the Buddha had exhorted his flock to indulge in any and all kinds of licentiousness. As they quoted him, he advocated fornication with any and all kinds of women including those who would render the coupling incestuous, adulterous, or child-abusive; killing any animal and eating any meat, including human flesh; lying; cheating; stealing; and committing various other high crimes and misdemeanors to obtain nirvanic 'liberation.' As the Guhyasamaja Tantra Scripture explained, "Perfection can be gained by satisfying all one's desires." For some, then, Buddhism threatened damnation for stepping on an ant; for others, Paradise was gained by sleeping with one's Nana.

Buddhism was truly becoming a universal religion: all things to all people. There was virtually nothing so sordid, bizarre or infantile in any man's strategy for salvation but that he could find it prescribed in holy writ.

As H. G. Wells summed up Buddhism's literature in his Outline of History: "There seems to be no limit to the lies that honest but stupid disciples will tell for the glory of their master and for what they regard as the success of their propaganda... It is one of the perplexing absurdities of our human nature."

In what, then, did original Buddhist views consist? We can only assume that when the Buddha established a new religion and attracted people to join him in seeing life from his vantage, his points of view had to be appreciably different from those of his competitors.

There was, for example, no caste system in Buddhism. And as there was no caste (punishment or reward), there could not be karma (as judicable actions) or reincarnation (the means by which reward or punishment applied.)

Paradoxically, while Buddhism denied there could be any such thing as good or evil, in order to experience that tranquil, non-judgmental state directly, a devotee had to behave himself. Morality without being judgmental - a new concept!

Buddhism did adhere to the traditional views of reality versus illusion, i.e., of heaven versus hell, of Eternity versus Greenwich time, of Nirvana versus Samsara, of ego-consciousness versus Buddha awareness, and so on. In short, Nirvana was real and Samsara was merely the world of appearances, the world which the fictitious ego apprehended with its untrustworthy senses and distorted with its ego-centered consciousness. What the average fellow called reality, Buddhism insisted was merely illusion or Maya. To experience "true" reality, the ego had to be transcended.

As to supreme beings, the Buddha acknowledged the existence of many Buddhas, Mahasattvas, Bodhisattvas, Celestial Kings, and an assortment of godlike mythic creatures who reposed in Nirvana's Tushita Heaven, the locus of the Eighth and Ninth Worlds. All such beings were encountered by those individuals who attained exalted spiritual states.

He did not embrace, however, any great cosmic god of gods who was endowed with personality, will, and a secret and somewhat prejudiced agenda. He saw no god who created and destroyed at his pleasure the people, places and things of our universe. The cosmic ground of all being was The Void, the Tenth World, the destination of the ego-emptied practitioner who had completed his blissful tour of the Eighth and Ninth Worlds. For any of religion's practical purposes, the great god of Buddhism is the Buddha Nature which can be said to exist only in conscious, thinking creatures. (Does a stone have Buddha Nature? No. Does an amoebae have Buddha Nature? No. Does a dog have Buddha Nature? Maybe. Does a dolphin or a whale have Buddha Nature? Count on it.)

Again, as there is no willful, exterior great god, there is no willful, interior petty god, i.e., no individual ego that directs its own precious destiny. Dispelling the notion that in reality each human being is a separate, autonomous self is perhaps the single most important aim of Buddhist discipline.

Basically, the Buddha propounded Four Noble Truths:

1. Life in Samsara is bitter and painful.
2. Egoistical cravings cause this bitterness and pain.
3. These cravings can be overcome.
4. The way to overcome craving is to follow the Eightfold Path's ethical and commonsense approach to life and to practice such spiritual exercises as meditation.

It would seem at first glance that there is not much here to argue about; yet, areas of disagreement became vast.

Consider dietary laws. Generally speaking, the priests of Sri Lanka, an island, may eat seafood. Japanese priests may eat seafood and filet mignon, too, providing somebody donates it to them. Chinese Buddhists are vegetarians no matter where they live or what they are given. What about sexual conduct? Japanese priests may marry. Chinese priests are celibate. Thai priests may not so much as touch the flesh of a female human being or even sit at a dining table with a female priest or even sit at a dining table with any male who is not a priest. At the other extreme, priests of any 'left-hand' yoga or tantric order receive instruction in ritual sexual intercourse. What about reincarnation? Most Chinese and Japanese Buddhists virtually ignore the subject while the lives of Tibetan Buddhists are so shot through with transmigrations that there is no room left to house the creation of a single, unique, wholly-new individual. Everybody is, or was, somebody else.

Disagreement among the various factions - Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western - became outraged criticism. Enough mud was slung to transpose two continents.

Nothing limited scriptural extravagance. With fanatical zeal authors deified Siddhartha Gautama and provided him with the obligatory miraculous birth. (Gods cannot be brought by the stork like the rest of us.) Queen Maya was said to have conceived him in the course of dreaming about a six-tusked elephant which modestly penetrated her side. She delivered the agile baby while the usually indifferent flora and fauna took enthusiastic note.

Each time a literate priest had a spiritual brainstorm, he satisfied the demands of publication by resurrecting the Buddha's cousin, Ananda, who supplied a convincing blurb or personal testimonial. "Thus have I heard the Blessed One say..." the sutras begin. In such a way were thousands of pages of direct quotations of the Buddha written hundreds of years after his death.

To complicate matters even further, it was the copying scribes' practice to enter any text in order to amend it for clarification. Thus, the great rule of Buddhist scripture: the older the text, the shorter the text, and the more authentic.

With so much of such varying quality being written by so many, schism had to result.

It took only a few hundred years after the Buddha's death for Buddhism to split into two rival systems, the conservative Theravadin, called pejoratively Hinayana (little raft) and Mahayana (great raft), each with its own canon and each containing many different schools. Yanas are actually means to accomplish something or vehicles here considered to be rafts used for crossing the troubled waters that separate the ordinary, egodefiled consciousness of Samsara from the pure consciousness of Nirvana. "Getting to the other shore" is the traditional way Buddhists describe the event of salvation.

It is not in the beginner's Seventh World or in the adept's concluding Tenth World (the Void) that we find any major differences between these two rafts.

While a detailed discussion of the intervening Eighth and Ninth Worlds is beyond the scope of this work, it may be sufficient to note that Buddhist theology embraces a Trinity of Divine Persons: Buddha; Bodhisattva; and Future Buddha. When that androgyny-inspiring Savior-figure, the Bodhisattva, is seen as a celestial entity, the salvation raft is said to be in Mahayana waters. When, however, one's Guru or Perfect Master is seen to embody the Savior, the raft is navigating the Hinayana. Thus, a single, celestial Avalokitesvara-Guan Yin may deliver multitudes; while a relatively unknown Master can deliver only those few disciples who actually gain access to him. Theravadins therefore require that many masters attain perfection.

In either case, the devotee delivers the Immortal Foetus or Divine Child, the prototype of which is Maitreya (Mithras), the Future Buddha.

A third vessel, the Vajrayana (lightning raft) was added to the fleet when tantric Buddhism melted into the Bon religion of Tibet between the Seventh and Ninth centuries - subsequent to the Muslim invasions of India. The Vajrayana raft supports the entire range of Buddhist belief; from "right-hand" sexually conservative methodologies to "left-hand" libertine forms; from primitive superstition to ultra-sophisticated theology; and, of course, from the devotion to a Perfect Master to the devotion to Avalokitesvara, of whom the Dalai Lama is said to be an Avatar.

In order for Chan to become the sleek "salvation" vessel that it eventually proved to be, it had to jettison a thousand years of confused literature. But its boat did not bob about unballasted in salvation's treacherous waters. Chan retained a few Mahayana scriptures (from the Prajna Paramita Sutras) and the Sixth Patriarch's Platform Sutra. In addition, it weighted itself nicely with the elegant literature of Classical Daoism and with the numerous instruction manuals through which Dao masters publicized esoteric lore.

CHAPTER 4

ORIGINS OF THE TWO MAIN SCHOOLS OF CHAN

The Sixth Patriarch, noticing that a certain young monk spent all of his spare time sitting alone in the meditation hall, approached the monk and asked why he was so zealous in his practice. "Because I want to become a Buddha," the monk replied. "You can make a mirror polishing a brick," said Hui Neng, "sooner than you can make a Buddha sitting on a cushion."

During the years of interstate warfare and the tyranny of the Qin Emperor, Qin Shihuangdi, Daoism had continued to flourish in the idyllic mountains of South China. The religion's spiritual requirements, however, could hardly be met by the multitudes of people who came not for eternal salvation but for temporal refuge. As is the habit of the spiritually unconfirmed, short cuts were sought. "Circulating one's semen in the bloodstream" is not a practice one learns between successive Tuesdays nor between months of successive Tuesdays. The quest for soma, aphrodisiacs, elixirs of longevity, and chemical agents to quicken the Immortal Foetus became, in the popular mind, the great Dao obsession. Bare-boned chemical formulae soon began to replace the voluptuous phrases of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi. Everyone wanted to be an instant Immortal.

The Emperor could easily have followed the Daoists into the mountains, flushed them out and finished them off. He did not. Instead he brought several adepts to his court and provided them with the latest technology for developing the divine elixir. Not wishing to waste his time on fools or neophytes, he tested the adepts. According to some rather quaint history, each candidate was required to insert his penis into a glass of wine and then to draw the beverage up into his bladder. Thus were the men separated from the boys.

That the masters actually submitted to the test and then stayed on to try to concoct the sacred elixir, tells us something about the directions the Dao was taking.

Daoist metallurgy and chemistry had, however progressed sufficiently to produce such astonishingly "magical" results as would induce wild optimism among those who wanted immortality. Without any understanding of the operative laws of nature, people truly believed that it was possible to brew if not a fountain of youth then at least a phial of it. The Emperor had tolerated Daoism for no other reason than that he intended to live forever.

He came to a curious end. He had a dream in which he battled a makara - an amphibious creature associated with the Svadhithana Chakra. The dream inspired him to participate in the killing of a whale or some other large sea animal. For reasons no one understood, he immediately grew sick and was dead within a few weeks.

A peasant rebellion quickly toppled what was left of Qin Shihuangdi's dynasty, and a more civilized chain of rulers, the Han, (206 B.C. - A.D. 220) came to power. Chinese life returned to normal, and in the more relaxed atmosphere, the pressure was taken off the Daoist ashrams. As persons unsuited to the spirituality and simplicity of Dao existence returned to ordinary life, monastic Daoism returned to its pristine Way. It was then, during the Han, that Buddhism made its entry into China. It trekked into the north by way of the trans-asiatic Silk Road and into south via the sea ports, particularly Guangzhou (Canton). Two entirely different receptions were accorded it.

In the northern cities of power and learning, the Confucian ruling class, having reasserted its political dominance after the overthrow of the Qin dynasty, dismissed with patrician hauteur the various Buddhist scriptures that were slowly being circulated. They found the new teachings to be little more than a collection of barbarian superstitions, alien and antithetic to their sophisticated beliefs.

In the south, where people already were barbarians, the scriptures were greeted as an agreeable variation on existing themes of Daoist philosophy.

Northern Confucianism preached the virtues of collective identity, of the need for an individual to subordinate his own interests to those of his family and clan. A man served the past and present members of his family and they, in turn, served him. There was collective responsibility and collective compensation. In such a team-oriented system, Buddhist notions of self-reliance were decidedly subversive. Not even the Son of Heaven functioned as an individual.

From any Confucian point of view, the new religion was objectionable. Intellectuals, whose leisurely scholarship was familiarly financed, regarded the Buddha model with considerable alarm. The thought that an educated nobleman would abandon his birthright in order to pursue - as a vagrant! - some far-fetched, independent salvation was worse than contemptible. Further, reincarnation and karma were clearly bizarre blasphemies. A man's ancestral ghosts were fully accounted for. There were no unclaimed spirits hanging about waiting to inhabit new bodies; and, thanks to the very thorough ghosts, nobody required additional hardships or favors for karmic retribution to supply. Magistrates, their pincers at the ready, blanched at the prospect that a man's punishment could await him in a life beyond their reach. They scoffed at the suggestion that any suffering they imposed upon a defendant might stand not only to his credit but to their own discredit in that other-worldly judgment. Warlords found not the slightest merit in the code of non-violence; and landowners, whose fortunes depended upon the sweat of serfs, took no comfort in the vision of thousands of

ecstatic beggars ambling through their estates. All of these reactions were predictable: To any upper class, a classless society has little to commend it.

In inland, heavily populated northern cities, where long and bitter winters were the scrimps and scrolls of so much tragedy, those who controlled the granary controlled the destinies of both gods and men. Buddhism could not get very far for so long as the ruling class ruled against it.

But in the rural south, food was abundant all year round and markets were not monopolized. Salvation through individual effort, asceticism and filial divorcement was already legitimized by Daoism's (and all yoga's) ideal of disciplined retreat. Although a lack of cash for weaponry and a need to be self-reliant had conspired to create Daoist/ Indian martial arts, a non-violent nature was still an indispensable characteristic of the man of Dao; and reincarnation could hardly pose a threat to any man who believed he could obtain immortality in his present life. Begging was not regarded as a fit occupation for anyone; but since the man of Dao was not, by definition, a Confucian aristocrat, he was quite used to working. Being of such humble station, he did not require those additional self-effacements obtainable through begging's spiritual exercise. Besides, in the sparsely populated south, the remoteness of most Dao retreats served to moot the issue. There weren't too many people around to beg from.

But when the Han dynasty fell in A.D. 220 as northern barbarians invaded and seized power, the old Confucian guard became an enemy of the new state. The spectacular success of Buddhism in the lands from which it had emigrated did not go unnoticed by the new elite. Orthodox Buddhism found immediate favor at the Imperial court. Everyone welcomed the tons of scripture that were being carried in on the backs of camel, horse, pilgrim.

Buddhism had entered North China through a commercial network. In natural tandem with this commerce had grown a continuously enlarging class of merchants and urban artisans who operated outside the feudal system and the niceties of Confucian privilege. Since serfs create no markets, lest it be in serfs themselves, merchants were happy to support any institution which promoted social freedom - thereby increasing customer volume - and which also advocated easy pardon for transgressions. (Recall the harsh punishments imposed for giving short measure.)

When northern, non-Chinese dynasties converted to Buddhism they took with them this host of eager merchants and a small army of unemployed theologians who, to their everlasting delight, quickly discovered in the diversity and inconsistency of this mountain of imported scriptures, a treasure trove, a glory hole, a motherlode of argumentation.

Several scriptures emerged as favorites among the northern clergy: the Vinaya (rules governing monastic life), which relieved them of work, taxes, military service and the onerous hazards of civilian law; the Lotus Sutra, an exposition of Mahayana truth; and the Lankavatara, the 'consciousness doctrine' sutra. The Canon, as translated, was not endearing.

The foreign language was more philosophically subtle than the native language! Local interpreters despaired of trying to capture butterflies of Sanskrit nuance with the clumsy chains of practical Chinese. Their renderings were often mangled, unlovely, and difficult to comprehend.

Southern scholars, on the other hand, had their customary easier time of it. Through the yogic grapevine, Indian metaphysical concepts were already incorporated into Dao metaphysics.

Northern scholars, adhering to traditions inherited from Confucian culture, were cold-
climate gentlemen of leisure. They enjoyed sitting in their libraries demonstrating and
remonstrating for hours on end. Southern monks, independently poor, did not use such
leisure time as they had for idle discussions. They pursued salvation through focused
attention on work (Karma Yoga), through disciplined meditation, or through renunciation, the
vaunted Indian method of retreating to "the forest".

Also, Buddhism of the North was born a child of politics and population. When the
rulers converted, the masses converted. Organization was required to manage the numbers,
and orthodox Buddhism best functioned as a mass-transit vehicle of salvation or at least as a
means of crowd control for both clergy and laymen. Northern Buddhism, then, saw salvation
consisting in scholarship and in merit acquired by the good work of providing the public with
temples, shrines, statuary and such. Southern Buddhism was and remained a vehicle for
more relaxed and solitary spiritual travel.

Soon after it had embraced the new religion, the North's new ruling class had cause to
regret lavishing so much affection upon it. According to the imported rules, monasteries
were tax-free havens and monks were exempt from any activity which might remotely be
construed as work. Further, fund raising was not seen as work and, in consideration of native
disgust with beggars, a genteel solicitation of donations was held to be an acceptable
substitute for food-begging. Money that might have been spent in more secular pursuits
poured into Buddhist coffers. The monks, it seems, offered much in return for the donations
they received. Aside from being lauded publicly for their generosity, men who wanted to be
favorably reincarnated could purchase their way to that goal through performing meritorious
deeds, i.e., giving land and money to the Buddhist sangha. The purchasing power of the
clergy usually surpassed that of civilian authorities. Therefore, without having to contribute
their coin to the costs of government or their bodies to the national defense, the sangha was
able to live quite high on the establishment hog (literally, since at the time most were not
vegetarians.) Within a few hundred years, thousands of Buddhist monasteries, stuffed with
tens of thousands of monks and nuns, covering hundreds of thousands of acres, appeared
throughout China. By the time that Bodhidharma came to China, the country could boast or
despair of an estimated thirty thousand monasteries inhabited by some two million monks
and nuns.

As monasteries and shrines competed with each other in opulence, fortunes in metals were invested in statuary and religious objects. Buildings were palatial and the priests and nuns who inhabited them were fed and attired in a manner guaranteed to make them feel at home in such luxurious surroundings. Since the soiling of hands was forbidden, somebody had to be brought in to do the work. And though a simple soul might suppose that slavery would violate a Precept or two, such was held not to be the case. Thousands of temple slaves were purchased or received as donations.

To the chagrin of merchants, Buddhist monasteries became centers of banking, pawnbroking, marketing and that other adjunct of commercial investment, fortune telling. To the consternation of kings and treasury ministers, more and more wealth, though under their noses, was out of their reach. And so, whenever Buddhist monasteries got too greedy or were too obviously created as tax shelters owned, built, and administered by rich families for purposes that had nothing beyond appearance to do with religion, the threshold of official tolerance would be crossed. Periodically Buddhist lands and property were confiscated and the ranks of this resplendent Sangha thinned considerably. Ultimately, such priests as remained were forced to tolerate more spartan accommodations. The priestly menu was drastically revised: meat dishes, plain or fancy, were permanently stricken from the *carte du jour*.

While monastic centers occasionally suffered, village Buddhism managed always to prosper. Local churches did what local churches have to do in order to survive: they adopted orphaned gods and ceremonies and traded scriptural veracity for the pronouncements of fortune-tellers and the incantations of magicians and quacks. The village temple was the focal point of village culture; and people didn't usually come to it in order to work, physically or mentally, for the attainment of wisdom. Most came for gossip, laughs, cures, sympathy, food, excitement, and to get their futures predicted. Most came, in short, to be entertained.

Aside from official criticism of monastic centers, northern Buddhism also encountered opposition from its growing rival, Daoism.

The Han Dynasty which succeeded Qin Shihuangdi deliberately declined to renew his flirtation with Daoism, a slight which served to keep Daoism free of "Old Guard" taint when the Han Dynasty was itself toppled by invading, northern barbarians in A.D. 220.

With Confucianism effectively sidelined, Buddhists and Daoists prospered. Devotees came in three varieties: the spiritual who sought monastic isolation; the scholarly who preferred the more sophisticated diversions of urban or courtly life, and the ordinary village faithful who delighted in magic, superstition, and the dubious benefits of medical science and divination.

Since only Daoist philosophers had been able to get any kind of grip on the new Buddhist metaphysics, sutra translations were increasingly expressed in Daoist terminology, a

fact which northern Buddhist intellectuals found demeaning. Instead of completing the blending process and developing a Chinese hybrid (as did Southern Chan), they sought instead to purify the Buddhist strain by instituting a massive rewriting project. Orthodox Buddhism did not rest until it possessed a new canon, one which was happily uncontaminated by Daoism. Unfortunately, their desire for purity did not extend to Tantric Buddhist scriptures; and these latter works immediately became wildly popular.

The affront to Daoist philosophers could hardly serve to stifle Daoist criticism of Buddhist extravagance. Daoists were therefore pleased to add their voices to the chorus of civilian authorities who clamored for action against the increasingly reckless Buddhist hierarchy.

Into this confused mass of theories and practices came a new variant: a Buddhist/Daoist synthesis called Chan.

By the year 519, the Aryan Prince Bodhidharma had grown so disgusted with scriptural anarchy that he decided to leave India (or Iran - nobody is really sure which) to sail to China to teach a new spiritual regimen, one that was mercifully "outside the scriptures."

An enigmatic priest with formidable powers to attain profound states of samadhi but not much in the way of conversational skills, Bodhidharma seems to have arrived in Guangzhou like the white knight Lohengrin: the Chinese depict him as being transported there by a swan. In Guangzhou, where he disembarked, or de-swanned, there can be seen monastery murals which commemorate his arrival. We can also see, given his curly golden-brown beard and aqua eyes, why the Chinese gave him the sobriquet, "The Blue-eyed Barbarian".

As legend has it, Bodhidharma went north and presented himself to the Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty who, as a dedicated Buddhist, had furthered the cause of his religion by building many temples and monasteries. The record of their brief encounter would become the core of Chan belief. Wu: I have performed many good deeds. How much merit have I earned towards my admittance into Nirvana? Bodhidharma: None whatsoever. Wu: What, then, as a Buddhist, should have been my aim? Bodhidharma: To be empty of yourself. Wu: Just who do you think you are? Bodhidharma: I have no idea.

In this startling exchange we learn that there is no such thing as meritorious or unmeritorious action (good and evil being fictions in the conjured world of the phantom ego), that kenosis (egolessness) is the aim of Buddhist practice, and that the Buddha Nature cannot be apprehended intellectually. To be enlightened in Chan is to experience enlightenment.

For nine years, Bodhidharma stayed at Shao Lin Monastery, silently absorbed in the universe that unfolded in the plane surface of a whitewashed wall.

Though he could see Infinity in a speck of calcium, he couldn't see the jealousy and resentment he was causing in the Imperial Throne and in the seats of Buddhist power. Who would approve of an educated priest who didn't like to debate the sutras? Or an aristocrat who lived more humbly than a peasant? This was subversion, pure and simple! Without intellectuality and a little luxury, what was the point in being religious at all? The barbarian who studied a wall needed watching.

Bodhidharma persisted in trying to teach without words. A scholar named Huiko approached him repeatedly, begging for instruction. But the Blue-Eyed Barbarian ignored him until, in an effort to demonstrate his sincerity and to get the teacher's attention, Huiko cut off his own arm - or so the legend has it. He wanted to see what Bodhidharma saw in the white wall; and eventually he succeeded. With his vision of reality perfected, Huiko went to live among the poor. His vision of illusion was not so good. Jealous priests and bureaucrats were already planning his execution.

When Bodhidharma left China and Huiko inherited the "Patriarchal" Mantle, the humble scholar found himself blamed for all of Buddhism's tantric excesses.

Chan History is understandably hazy at this sad nadir. Bodhidharma's Mantle passed from Huiko's hands successively into the hands of three men about whom little is known. Using their old style romanized names, they are Seng Ts'an, Tao Hsin, and Hung Jen.

Third Patriarch Seng Ts'an, it is said, suffered from leprosy. When Huiko was arrested and killed, Seng Ts'an went to live in the mountains, even an untouchable leper couldn't risk falling into the hands of the reformers.

Seng Ts'an was succeeded by Tao Hsin who is best remembered as the man who really started Chan's monastic movement. He made the monks both stationery and self-sufficient. Between meditation and work they gained enlightenment and avoided persecution. Fourth Patriarch Tao Hsin was succeeded by Hung Jen, who ignored the Lotus and Lankavatara Sutras and devoted himself to the Prajna Paramita's Diamond Sutra. Hung Jen inadvertently made Chan what it is today. It all had to do with picking his successor.

Hung Jen had become Fifth Patriarch just as the Tang Dynasty was ushering in China's Golden Age. It was during this 7th Century period that three characters in particular would set the course that the Buddha's religion would follow in China: Hui Neng, Sixth Patriarch according to Southern Chan; Shen Xiu, Sixth Patriarch according to Northern Chan; and the redoubtable Empress Wu of the Tang dynasty.

In the phylum of devotees, Wu was in a class by herself. (What a gal!) The Empress, ruling from 690 to 705, could claim, at the very least, to be one of Buddhism's most ardent supporters. In fact, she offered herself not only as a model of mercy but as an actual reincarnation of Guan Yin. Northern Orthodox Buddhism would not long survive Her Grace.

The Empress began her career as a rather ordinary, second-string concubine, one of the battalion of young women impressed into servicing the emperor. Her talents went unnoticed until a fortuitous coincidence enabled her to showcase them to just the right person: She happened to pass the privy while the heir to the throne was sitting on the toilet. Seizing the moment, she seduced him en situ, an act of such audacity and novelty that the prince would be titillated by her for years to come. As was the custom, however, when the old emperor died, she was sent to a Buddhist convent along with his other concubines. (Burying them alive had gone out of fashion.)

The prince, now the new emperor, settled into court life in the "second" capital of Xian with his new wife who, regrettably, was unable to produce an heir. He quickly grew tired of her and turned his amorous attentions to one of his young and beautiful concubines. His wife, trying to divert him from this diversion, summoned Wu, of scatological fame, from the convent. It was to be the wife's gruesomely fatal mistake. Wu gave birth to a son then murdered it after carefully planting evidence of the act on the wife and the 'diverting' concubine. Convinced of their guilt, the emperor permitted Wu to oversee their punishment. First, she had their hands and feet amputated and then she boiled them alive. That done, the Emperor elevated his Goddess of Mercy to the more exalted rank of Empress of China.

The good Empress Wu insisted that the court be moved from Xian to the old capital, Loyang, where she immediately proceeded to finance the construction of huge monastic centers.

During this Golden Age, Orthodox Buddhism saw its responsibility as more or less ministering to the whole man, not to just his spirit. Accordingly, many urban Buddhist convents functioned as brothels. And why not? Tantric Buddhism had proven to be an infection to which the traditional Buddhist body had become inured. Sex and salvation not only coexisted, they became synonymous. Even Daoism's Single Cultivation quickly became Dual Cultivation, i.e., sexual yoga that required its adherents to maintain private harems or at least to reside near houses of prostitution. The truly spiritual who sought salvation alone and in private were by definition beyond public scrutiny.

Monastic sex centers provided an additional service: They dispensed aphrodisiacs. Daoist pharmacology had provided Chinese medicine with an array of substances guaranteed to stimulate sexual activity, and Buddhist nuns specialized in their purveyance.

It so happened that when the Empress was in her sixties there appeared at court on one otherwise ordinary day an extraordinary fellow, a man who functioned as a kind of traveling ponce and pharmacist for one of Loyang's largest Buddhist convent/brothels. This fellow was clearly his own best advertisement and his prodigious work in the bedchambers of titled ladies quickly gained him the Imperial patronage. Wu, ever the madcap, was so pixilated by him that she appointed him abbot of Loyang's principal monastery, a post, considering the state of orthodox Buddhism, for which he was eminently qualified.

When, however, the fellow failed to remember the font from which his blessings flowed and he two-timed the empress once too often, Wu had his neck wrung. The Goddess of Mercy failed, unfortunately, to anticipate the vacuum his absence had created. Hell, through the fissures of overstimulated ladies, spewed up its fury upon Wu. She became the target of a drenching scandal.

Poor Wu found herself with few allies. She could not rely upon the unified strength of the Imperial family. According to some accounts, she was at the time scheming to manipulate succession to the throne to suit her personal preference, an effort which gained her the support of the few at the expense of the many.

Buddhist clergymen, considering her appointment of a common huckster to such high priestly office, were hardly likely to rally to the side of one who had sold their honor so cheaply.

Therefore, those whom she had most counted upon - the powerful members of the Buddhist hierarchy - turned against her and joined with Daoists, resurgent Confucianists, disgruntled Imperial family members, and an assortment of civic leaders in a righteous campaign to restore moral order. Players now in a private political game, each group sought to deal for itself an unbeatable hand. But the Empress/Goddess was still popular amongst the aristocracy, and so her enemies saw the necessity of first shuffling 'public' opinion against her. The demands for new moral leadership grew as did the supposition that the empress was unfit to provide that leadership.

We will leave Wu, the consummate game player, studying her cards and wondering how an incarnation of Guan Yin should best respond to orthodox Buddhism's ingratitude and betrayal, and turn to our other two principals.

Along about the time that the empress was merely an ambitious concubine trying to position herself on the imperial lap, another power game was being played in the headquarters of that unimportant, non-orthodox sect of Buddhism: the so-called Dhyana or Chan Sect of Buddhism which Bodhidharma had founded one hundred thirty years earlier.

At East Mountain Monastery, Fifth Patriarch Hung Jen, while looking for a successor, set in motion a crucial power play.

Everyone in his monastery had assumed that he would pass the Mantle to Shen Xiu (605 - 706), an aristocratic priest and former Confucian scholar, whose integrity, erudition, refinement, and dedication to the practice of "mind-blanking" meditation had gained him considerable fame as a most deserving man. But as Fifth Patriarch Hung Jen well understood, enlightenment was not a matter of morality, trance, intellectuality, dedication, or taste; and he despaired of anyone's futile attempt to gain salvation by trying to deserve it. He therefore declined to name the patrician Shen Xiu to the Patriarchy and instead decided to have candidates compete for the honor. They would vie for the post with poetry. In no more

nor less than four lines they were to reveal the depths of their understanding of enlightenment's "cardinal meaning".

Since none of his peers had cared to come forward to compete against him, Shen Xiu composed his quatrain without ever imagining that working in the kitchen of the monastery there was an illiterate, impoverished, long-haired, young, dark-skinned barbarian from South China waiting to defeat him.

This man, Hui Neng (638 - 713), though uneducated, was spiritually quite precocious. He had experienced enlightenment upon hearing someone recite a verse from the Diamond Sutra - the scripture that was so near and dear to Hung Jen's heart. Asking where he should go to study these marvelous words, Hui Neng was told, "To East Mountain, the monastery of Hung Jen."

In rags which might just as well have been a jester's motley, Hui Neng went north and presented himself to the accomplished priests of East Mountain who, we are told, laughed at his appearance and his presumptuousness and put him to work in the kitchen. Eight months later, on the fateful night of the poetry contest, he was still working there as a grain thresher. He had not yet so much as set foot inside the meditation hall.

Shen Xiu inscribed his entry on a corridor wall. His lines, loosely translated, were, "Our body is the Bodhi Tree. Our mind is the frame of a bright mirror. We must constantly polish this mirror so that no dust collects on it." Clearly, Shen Xiu equated enlightenment with virtue and regarded ethical conduct and vigilant self-discipline as evidence of the illumined life. Rub out your tendencies to sin! Act righteously and you will be rewarded! This is the slow, methodical path, the so-called Gradual School; but to Fifth Patriarch Hung Jen, its goal had more to do with Orthodox Buddhism than with Chan.

When Hui Neng heard Shen Xiu's verse, he challenged it, asking someone to write his response alongside: "Bodhi Trees? Dirty mirrors? The Buddha Nature is always pure! What can dirty it? The ego does not exist! How can it polish anything?" This was an intellectual slap in the face! Uh, Oh. Trouble on East Mountain.

The Fifth Patriarch thought he knew an insightful poem when he saw one and summoned Hui Neng from the kitchen to give him Bodhidharma's robe. His poor servant had demonstrated that even an illiterate man can attain Wisdom. And even more! Hui Neng could personally testify to just how suddenly the grace of Wisdom comes. Grace! The unmerited love and favor of the Buddha Self! Enlightenment! By way of celebration the two men discussed their beloved Diamond Sutra. We can imagine their joy: Hung Jen reading it to (Praise the gods!) an enlightened disciple; Hui Neng hearing it in its entirety for the very first time.

Anticipating the uproar that followed his decision, Hung Jen advised Hui Neng to keep a very low profile for awhile; and the latter, heeding this advice for longer perhaps than

was necessary, went back to South China and stayed in the mountains there for sixteen years before re-emerging in Guangzhou (Canton) as the Sixth Patriarch.

Immediately upon the announcement of the accession, Shen Xiu, understandably miffed, moved out of East Mountain monastery with a group of his supporters who indignantly insisted upon conferring the title of Sixth Patriarch upon him anyway. He founded his own monastery in which he adhered to traditional Buddhist methods. His practice continued to include daily sessions of mind-blanking meditation. To Shen Xiu, simply living like an enlightened person was all that was necessary for a person to claim to be enlightened, and that was that! Already renowned for his personal integrity and erudition, he had no difficulty in securing a reputation for being a great Chan master.

So, while few people may have known or even cared about the creed of this peculiar Buddhist sect, everyone knew about this exemplary master. And that is why when the Empress Wu increasingly found her name being sullied and her ambitions being stymied and her priests being wickedly disloyal, she thought of Shen Xiu.

Then, as her enemies played their high cards against her, she calmly countered with her trump. She summoned to court His Eminence, Shen Xiu, Sixth Patriarch of Northern Chan.

And when this old man was finally ushered into her inquisitive court, the mighty Wu did something Chinese empresses simply did not do: she descended from the Imperial throne and to everyone's utter astonishment curtsied deeply to him. The upstart sect of Chan Buddhism had scored a grand slam.

Chinese orthodox Buddhism, so obviously in its decadent phase, virtually collapsed when confronted by such an unassailable obstacle as the venerable Shen Xiu. Who could fail to pay him obeisance when Wu appointed him Lord of the Dharma? Who could oppose his imperially sponsored reforms or fail to support the new monasteries which Wu constructed in his honor? Under the new regime, Buddhist priests and nuns got out of the flesh trade and put their pharmacological expertise to work by treating less challenging conditions than sexual dysfunction: Buddhist monasteries actually became hospitals for sick people. And, having not too much else to do with their spare time, Buddhist priests also managed to invent printing. (The oldest printed document in the world happens to be a copy of the Diamond Sutra printed in A.D. 868. It is a work of such technical refinement that experts estimate that the actual invention of printing had occurred at least a hundred years earlier.)

Wu, fit at last to be called a benefactress of her religion, survived to live out her reign.

Regal Northern Chan would live on long enough to allow its offspring, under the regency of the formidable Dogen Zenji, to emigrate to Japan as Soto Zen, the vehicle of gradual enlightenment. The School did not die out entirely in China: A few isolated monasteries managed to survive and are still viable institutions today.

Southern Chan, persisting in its "What, me worry?" attitude, continued to perfect the Buddhist-Daoist synthesis. Hui Neng, considering himself a simple man of Dao, gathered many followers at his monastery, Bo Lin (Fragrant Wood) which he founded at "Ts'ao Ch'i" located near the city of Shao Guan, about 120 miles north of Canton. The monastery is popularly called Nan Hua Si which means Elegant (in the sense of classic) South China Monastery. (Note: Nan Hua Si is the monastery in which the author of this work was ordained.)

So thoroughly identified with Daoism is the Sixth Patriarch's Chan that even today Daoists have their own shrine inside his monastery's gates. Until recently, when the practice was outlawed by civil authorities, Daoists set off firecrackers everyday to drive away any evil spirits who might wish to molest him. (His body, preserved, lacquered, and dressed in priestly garb, is still displayed there.)

On August 28, 713, Hui Neng, the gentle saint of Buddhism and humble man of Dao, died without, as far as we know, naming a successor. A few years later one of his disciples, a priest named Shen Hui, motivated either by a personal claim to the title of Seventh Patriarch or by a sincere desire to restore throughout China the rightful title of Sixth Patriarch to his master, took exception to Shen Xiu's usurpation of the title and decided to set the record straight. He lobbied mightily against Shen Xiu's successors in an effort to restore the title to its southern claimants. Being a rather eloquent speaker, he attracted much attention.

The Tang emperor, one of Wu's grandsons, was at the time having critical money problems. Expensive civil wars had virtually bankrupted him and as he cast about looking for new sources of revenue, he saw in Shen Hui's crusade a way by which he could circumvent the moral order that Shen Xiu had installed and get some much needed cash out of wealthy Buddhist laymen. The Emperor summoned the agitating southern priest and made a deal with him: The Crown would recognize southern claims to the patriarchy if Shen Hui would raise money for the Crown by selling ordination certificates and other spiritual goodies to laymen. Religion, always a boon to tax dodgers, once again came to the rescue of the rich. For one large and quick payment, years of tax-free living could be enjoyed. Hordes of idle gentlemen received an overnight call to priestly glory. And when the Emperor decreed that henceforth Hui Neng of the Southern School was to be the one and only Sixth Patriarch, everybody who was anybody murmured "Amen." The problem of succession was finally solved.

This infusion of new talent into Buddhist ranks did little to improve priestly performance. Northern Buddhism, demoralized by such imperial venality, forgot new reforms and remembered old iniquities. Once again, it proved receptive to the contagion of tantric practices.

Northern Chinese Buddhism soon became something that civilized men could very well do without. And in droves, civilized men opted to do just that. More and more of the

intelligentsia sought refuge in Confucian morality. This brain-and-decency drain alarmed no one in the hierarchy. Many priests continued to use Buddhism as a shield for licentiousness and greed until, finally, a hundred years after one Tang emperor had overseen a swelling of Buddhism's rank and file, another Tang emperor ordered that all offending Buddhist monasteries be sacked, their lands and property confiscated, their hierarchies purged, and their temple slaves freed.

Southern Buddhism, as usual, did not notice much in the way of inconvenience. Southern Chan had always followed the 'no work, no dinner' rule. Southerners, inured to the refinements of Daoist sexual yoga and the excesses of Daoist magic were not titillated by gauche tantric rituals. Few people had the resources or felt the need to buy their way into heaven; and thus, having given no offense, southern monasteries usually escaped Imperial punishments. The religion had found a simple formula for prosperity; and Chan Buddhism despite being manhandled by Wu's eventual successor, Chairman Mao, is still alive and well and living in South China.

PART II: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DISILLUSIONMENT

CHAPTER 5

SIX WORLDS OF SAMBARA

Spiritually speaking, human existence is divided into ten worlds. The first six of these worlds are depicted as segments of an endlessly turning wheel; the last four are seen as stories of a high mountain.

The six worlds belong to Samsara, the realm of illusion in which reality is distorted by an intervening ego. The four worlds belong to Nirvana, the realm of pure awareness in which, in ascending degrees, reality is experienced directly without the ego's interpretations. The goal of Chan is to get to the top of this mountain, i.e., to experience life spontaneously, without subjecting all incoming data to the ego's edicts and explications.

Because it is so important to understand at the outset exactly what is meant by these two terms, Samsara and Nirvana, or, Form and Emptiness as they are frequently called, we will illustrate the distinction between them.

Let us imagine a room, a parlor in the home of Miss Jane Doe. In this room a human being sits on a blue velvet sofa. Opposite the sofa are two pale silk brocade chairs. At the ends of the sofa are tables upon which sit lamps which have large, ruffled shades. On the floor is a rose and cream medallion rug and on the walls are many oil paintings which bear the signature of Jane Doe. The windows are open and a strong breeze causes the curtains to billow into the room. Outside, a poplar tree branch slaps rhythmically against one of the window panes. A clock on the mantle chimes eleven o'clock.

This description of things exactly as they are is the reality of Nirvana or Emptiness.

Now let us imagine this same room as seen through the eyes of the person who is sitting on the sofa. Let us say that this person is Louisa Doe, Miss Jane Doe's niece who has come in response to an invitation for tea. While the aunt is busy in the kitchen, the niece looks around the room and says to herself, "Those paintings are atrocious. No wonder the poor woman never married. And those lampshades. Good grief! But this sofa is first rate.

She must have paid a fortune for it. I remember seeing it years ago and it still looks the same. So soft... Too bad I'm not into Duncan Phyfe. Lord, she ought to recover those chairs! The armrests are positively grungy. But this rug... I'll bet it's a real oriental. Yes... This must be the one she bought in Cairo. That breeze means business. I wonder if I left the car windows down. She'd better get that branch cut back or one of these days it'll break the glass. Eleven o'clock! Ah, that's the old Hamilton chimer Daddy says is rightfully his. I hope I can get out of here by noon. I wonder if she plans to leave this place to me."

This description of things viewed through the intervening ego is the distortion of reality, Samsara or Form.

There is no intrinsic difference between Form and Emptiness. We merely perceive them differently.

In both Samsara and Nirvana the room was the same. But in Nirvana there was no judgmental scrutiny or evaluation. There were no memories or plans, no 'before and after,' no 'what used to be,' or 'what will be,' or 'what should be.' There was no prejudicial I or me. In Nirvana there only 'is.' And the perception of what 'is' is direct, spontaneous, and, as it happens, accompanied by profound joy and serenity.

We speak of the six worlds of Samsara because of the six types of human beings who inhabit it. People are categorized according to the manner in which their ego accomplishes its distortion of reality. Each type or 'world' represents a style of adaptation, a pattern of response or method of coping with the exigencies of life. Every individual, from the time of his infancy on, through trial and error determines which style suits him best and is most efficient in gaining him the attention and the status he craves. The six worlds, then, may be considered six basic survival strategies. (Their identification, incidentally, constitutes the oldest psychology system in history.)

In Buddhism, we learn to recognize these six strategies, not so that we may identify them in others, though that can be helpful if the observations are objective, instructive, and non-accusatory, but so that we may learn to identify them in ourselves whenever we use them to evade responsibility, to maneuver other people into acting in our best interests, to gain us whatever advantages we seek, and so on.

In the every day world of samsaric existence, every person in every society uses one of these strategies. But we shall first describe them as they are found in religious life. In monasteries, temple complexes and Chan Centers, monks and devotees who are still caught on the samsaric wheel are jokingly said to practice Six Worlds' Chan.

The six classifications are Hungry Ghost Chan, Devil Chan, Human Being Chan, Animal Chan, Titan Chan, and Angel Chan. Again, these are not Chan but are merely styles of adaptation used by egos that have religious pretensions. (In Japanese Zen these classifications are called, respectively, Gaki, Jigoku, Ningen, Chikusho, Shura, and Tenjo. In

the Tibetan "Wheel of Life" the six classifications are Pretas, Hells, Men, Animals, Titans, and Gods.)

Human Being Chan. This is the Chan of mundane affairs. The people who practice it are practical people who excel in improving earthly existence. In monasteries Human Beings are always involved in nonspiritual activities, doing jobs which they perform with exemplary efficiency. Their strategy is simply to become indispensable and it succeeds admirably since, invariably, they are fearless and proficient in all tasks which scare the wits out of Chan masters and other spiritual persons. They know how to fill out forms, handle media, arrange excursions, regulate crowds, collect fees, profitably manufacture and peddle religious articles and other souvenir items, compile mailing lists, and operate restaurants, bakeries, retreats, hostels, etc. When it comes to developing monastery real estate and putting the bite on tourists, pilgrims and congregation members to pay for the improvements, Human Beings have no peers.

These worthy people become Buddhist devotees or monks because they appreciate the many ways in which their lives are improved by the Buddhist way of doing things. Human Beings generally believe that Chan is more a way of life than a religion and, as such, they value it for the poise which its meditation cultivates, for its healthful low-cholesterol diet, for its stress-free environment, for the orthopedic excellence of its sleeping mat, for the intelligence, variety, and non-fanatical decency of its followers, for the comfort of its loose, natural-fiber clothing, and so on. They do not neglect spiritual matters. Sometimes they concern themselves with which mantra produces the most salubrious effect upon the nervous system or which chant most inspires joyful fellowship. Sometimes more is involved. They may have ambitious sex lives and word may have reached them that there are techniques in Buddhist Yoga which when successfully employed can prolong an orgasm for twenty minutes. This is nothing if not selfimproving and so they rush to join a Zen or Chan center.

Human beings simply do not understand that Chan is Buddhism and Buddhism is a religion, a religion of salvation. Though Buddhism may well provide for such ancillary functions, it is not a health club or a social center, a guild, an arts and crafts studio, a sanitarium, a study group, a philanthropical society, a boarding house or a profit making enterprise. The aim of Buddhism is not to cope with earthly existence but to transcend it, not to gain material comfort but to dispense with the notion of it, not to enhance or to rehabilitate reputations, but to be born anew without earthly identity in the glorious anonymity of Buddha Nature. Being a good fund raiser is a little off the mark.

Titan Chan. In mythology, Titans were the crudely powerful ancestors of ancient Greece's more genteel gods. And following in that tradition, people who practice Titan Chan have a brutish, sadomasochistic approach to religion. They are strict disciplinarians who can go no other way but 'by the book.' Whether inspired by martyrs, crusaders or drill-sergeants, they are convinced that their commitment to Buddhism and to the welfare of the monastery exceeds everyone else's. And they truly believe that the indices of that commitment are pain, sweat, discomfort, deprivation, and compliance with a code that would make the KGB blush.

Even though Titans are noticeably hard workers and reap considerable - if grudging - praise for their efforts, they still find it necessary to glean a last measure of satisfaction by denigrating the work of others. Though they grouse and nit-pick in differing verses, the chorus is always the same: "If you want something done right you have to do it yourself."

As Titans understand religion, evil can be purged and goodness acquired by a variety of colorful ordeals. In addition to their daily rituals of sacrificing themselves in the performance of chores, they will, with all due fanfare, undertake prolonged fasts the difficulty of which is greatly lessened, they will modestly note, by considering the slop manufactured by the present kitchen crew; or they will take vows of silence, a tactic which allows them to glower, scribble, hiss or otherwise graphically mime their criticisms.

During the leg-stretching, walking period that mercifully divides a long meditation session, Titans will remain seated in perfect posture demonstrating that they never abuse others more than they abuse themselves. In Japanese meditation halls one monk is assigned the duty of keeping everyone alert. He prowls the aisles with a long stick and if he catches someone nodding, he whacks him on the shoulder. These blows are rather bracing and should anyone decide for himself that he requires this stimulant to keep awake, he bows to this fellow and is flogged accordingly. Needless to say, Titans bow repeatedly. Witnessing their battery does not conduce to tranquillity though it is considerably more relaxing than having one of them on the other end of the stick.

Traditionally, in Chinese Buddhism, after completing seminary training, both men and women novitiates go through an ordination ceremony during which three or twelve cones of burning incense are placed on the crown of their shaved heads. When these cones burn down they sear the scalp leaving permanent scars. At some later time the newly ordained priest might decide to repeat this cone-burning ordeal as a special penance or offering of some kind. Titans, of course, are among this practice's most enthusiastic followers. Much like college football players who get little stars glued on their helmets to advertise their meritorious acts, Titan monks can have their scalps decorated with little round burn scars. (In Guangdong province, I met an old monk who had a few dozen more than the obligatory three or twelve. He laughed about them, attributing the excess to youthful exuberance. "Much like tattoos," he said with some regret.)

To strangers, i.e., anyone who has not yet proven lazy, incompetent, spineless or immoral, Titans can be surprisingly congenial. But their initial friendliness is only a beachhead from which they will later stage attacks of righteousness. Intimidating martyrdom is not a strategy for winning close personal friends; but it does succeed in gaining attention and status.

Animal Chan. This Chan gets its name from the chief characteristic of domestic animals....dependency. A person who practices Animal Chan needs to be cared for the way that cows and canaries need to be cared for. Let us consider these two creatures and the

contractual arrangement they have with us. One of them gives milk and the other sings in exchange for room, board, and whatever other perquisites they can negotiate. Stop feeding a canary and he will stop singing. Stop feeding a milk cow and see what you get. Turned loose or set free, neither survives for long. Perhaps at one time both could have prospered in the wild, but it is now too late. They have become too timid and have lost the ability to fend for themselves and to act or even think independently.

A person who does Animal Chan cannot tolerate the anxieties of secular life. He simply cannot hold his ground in the hectic give-and-take of sexual or workplace politics. In the monastery he knows that he will receive at least three meals a day, a room of his own, medical care, retirement benefits, a small but adequate paycheck every month for a job from which he can never be fired, supplemental donations from kind relatives, and life-long respectability which permits him to thumb his nose at all those people who said he'd never amount to anything. On festive occasions he never has to worry about getting an invitation since there is always a seat for him at the banquet table. And, of course, on New Year's Eve, he never has to worry about getting a date.

People who do Animal Chan may be timid, passive and dependent, but though this suggests a certain stupidity, such an inference would be wrongly drawn. They are neither stupid nor uneducable. Those who are not already trained before they enter the monastery are encouraged to pursue an academic interest, take music lessons, or learn a craft or some other skill.

On the other hand, it does not follow that because they are socially helpless they are socially nonreactive. They notice everything, recording who does what and when in a brain that is defensively programmed to minimize good conduct of others and to exaggerate that which is not so good. Such information is their ammunition which, should they ever be found wanting in the execution of their own duties, they will use in any way they can to defend themselves. They are not above poison pen letters. They also whine a lot.

Angel Chan. This is the Chan of sophisticated neo-intellectuals who are captivated by Chan's lofty, philosophical principles, its cool, esthetic presentation and the dignity of its priesthood which they enter as though pledged and pinned to a good Greek House. These are the people the Prophet Mohammed had in mind when he said that, "A philosopher who has not realized his metaphysics, is an ass bearing a load of books."

Kosho Uchiyama Roshi, one of the great Zen masters of the modern era of Antaiji Temple, notes that in Japanese monasteries it is Americans nowadays who swell the ranks of Angel Zen. They seem to excel, he says, in "polishing the scepters" of high-ranking, spiritual persons. Exquisitely superior, they are called 'angels' because, while being less than God, they are ever so much more than mortal men.

People who do Angel Chan stroll meaningfully in temple gardens where they frequently are caught, en flagrante, in acts of sublime cogitation. Daily they have intercourse

with the cosmos - encounters which leave them a little breathless and pregnant with a poem or two. Usually they come to Chan because they are fed up with the crass materialism and moral degradation of American cities. They despise the 'plastic' world and yearn for the elegant simplicity of Chan's Natural Man. But despite their convictions that Urban Man is corrupt, they are very fussy about where they get their university degrees and which symphony orchestra has recorded their favorite classics. And though Chan describes itself as 'a special transmission outside the scriptures, not founded upon words and letters' a description which somehow suggests that to whatever degree canonical works provoke disputation their study does not foster 'natural' living, people who do Angel Chan scan the voluminous tonnage of Buddhist scriptures just to be able to calumniate each other in the name of scholarly exegesis. They will argue for hours about the most abstruse or insignificant trifle, calling out chapter and verse like so many quarterbacks.

Inevitably they are published. But it does not matter whether they make a best seller list or merely have an occasional byline in newsletters or other in-house publications. The printed acknowledgment of their erudition is proof to them that their strategy is working.

A person who does Angel Chan believes that knowing about something is the same as being something, as, knowing about grammar makes one a grammarian or knowing about snakes makes one a herpetologist, so, he reasons, knowing about the Dao makes one an Immortal. His knowledge is so precise and exhaustive that he feels justified in dismissing whatever is beyond it (the actual spiritual experience) as spurious or defective. Affecting an expression of deep insightfulness and an air of benign condescension, an Angel, who has not personally experienced so much as five minutes of true meditation, will try to present himself as an enlightened being. But if taken for anything other than window dressing, he can be spiritually dangerous. For should some poor fool (someone who does not know the ontological argument when he sees it) seek to discuss the ecstatic vision of Buddha he has just had during an hour's worth of deep samadhi, the Angel is likely to assure him that he has been hallucinating and only thinks he has had a spiritual experience. Further, he will warn the fool that such flights of imagination are quite pernicious and must be guarded against. Incredible as it seems, in Japanese Zen but not in Tibetan or Chinese, Angels have succeeded in standardizing their advice: "If while meditating you should see the Buddha, spit in his face and he will go away." Well, I guess.....

Hungry Ghost Chan. A Hungry Ghost is a person who fervently desires things that he is constitutionally unable to use. If he were to haunt a Smorgasbord to satisfy his hunger, he would discover at the very first dish that he could not consume it; but that would not deter him from haunting the second dish and then the third and so on. In looking for a cause of his failure to ingest the food, he would never investigate himself. He would simply fault the recipe, ingredients or chef and flutter on to the next offering. This type of person is often depicted as having a belly that is swollen with cravings and a neck too narrow to allow satisfaction to pass.

Just as a numismatist may possess a thousand coins none of which he can use to buy a morning paper or a philatelist may possess a thousand stamps none of which he can stick on his mortgage payment, so, in Chan, the Hungry Ghost collects techniques for achieving exalted states of consciousness none of which has ever served to raise his own one centimeter above its present notch.

His desires are so intense that to satisfy them he regards nothing as too foolish, bizarre or dangerous. He will take drugs, climb mountains, float in isolation tanks, trek through deserts, sit in caves, stand on his head, chant, pant, wear pyramid hats, get hypnotized, consult ouija boards and tarot cards and join the most outlandish cults imaginable. He initiates each new endeavor with enormous enthusiasm; but when, after reading a few books, attending a few meetings or practicing a few hours, he does not experience satori, he moves on to something else. If we meet him in January, he has joined an ashram to learn yoga. By June he has chosen a more scientific approach and is taking biofeedback lessons. In December he has become a novice at a Chan monastery where on Monday he has dedicated his life to reciting the names of Buddha and on Tuesday he has committed himself to years of silent sitting-meditation, and on Wednesday he paces the garden mumbling the possible solutions to a koan to which he has pledged a lifetime of inquiry - should that be what is required; but, of course, on Thursday he has discovered that all that is needed to attain Nirvana is the practice of mindfulness and so he consigns himself to an eternity of vigilance.

On and on he tries this and joins that. Soon he possesses an enviable library and receives so much international junk mail that neighborhood postal clerks and stamp collectors stand in awe of him. As the years progress, he becomes what, in his heart, he is actually striving to be: a compendium of esoterica, a catalog of techniques, an encyclopedia of beliefs, a sample book of the occult, and an anthology of religious practice. Having so much information at his fingertips, he is regarded as an expert, a 'source'. If he has once paid dues to a religious organization he is entitled, he believes, to discuss it with the authority of an insider. And, of course, he is always happy to lend his expertise precisely because he does have the serious collector's peculiar zeal for offering information, opinions, references, advice and anecdotal digressions. This is his strategy for obtaining attention and status.

In religion's Bazaar, the Hungry Ghost is the proprietor of a popular kiosk. He offers acquaintance passed off as intimacy, the superficial touted as the profound, and all in amazing variety.

Devil Chan. This is the Chan of appearances. It is Impostor Chan. Though they would vehemently protest the charge, the people who practice it are merely posing as religious persons. Criminally vain and brainless to a fault, Devils actually believe that looking the part is being the part. They subscribe without reservation to the garment maker's dictum, 'Clothes make the man.'

The name Devil comes from the wretched hell these displaced thespians feel whenever they are forced to sit in drab silence during long periods of meditation. They have no more use for meditation than they have for manual labor. Processions and ceremonies are their forte; and they prepare for such occasions with more solemnity and fastidiousness than is required for an act of Hara Kiri. Though such satisfaction as they derive from their religion is always limited to the presentation of it, it is no small satisfaction. We all know how it feels to experience a rush of pleasure when we are seen wearing garments in which we think we look particularly attractive. We also know that this rush is intensified if the garments convey membership in an elite group to which, when naked, we would not dream of including ourselves. Though we be unable to run the mile in less than two hours, an expensive jogging suit and running shoes will assert that we are serious athletes. Though we are certain that Shangri-La is a seaport in southeast China and that the Hilton associated with it is a hotel there, we need only don a turtleneck sweater and a good tweed jacket with suede elbow patches to be rightly considered a campus intellectual. And in the same meretricious manner Buddhist robes can be worn; for, though we have the humility of a South Bronx pimp and the compassionate nature as well, a black robe will proclaim that we do indeed possess such gentle virtues. Though we be as sexually restrained as a rutting moose, a cassock will convince the most jaded cynic that we are practically virgins. We may be so devious and manipulative that we cannot purchase a postage stamp without resorting to Machiavellian intrigue, yet little cloth slippers will boldly declaim our simplicity.

It does not matter whether the person who does Devil Chan embraces religion because he is compensating an evil nature or whether he is not venal at all but merely vacuous and is simply stuffing himself with the fixin's of religion. He may, in fact, be as devoid of content as the display-window manikins that are his source of inspiration and guidance. He may believe not a single syllable of creed nor feel a single pulse beat of love or pity for any living creature save himself, yet, let him costume himself properly and wear a pious expression and he will find his substance and meaning in the approving glances of all who observe him.

These are the types who inhabit the six worlds of Samsara.

It may seem from all of this that a monastery is the last place in the world we should expect to find a genuinely religious person; but in truth, we can and do encounter many saints in such places. They pass among us unheralded by drum or trumpet. The sound they make is what St. John of the Cross called, 'silent music,' and we must strain to hear it. In Chan, nothing is accomplished without attention.

These, then, are the six basic survival strategies as they are encountered in religious life. To see these Samsaric types as they exist in the secular world let us imagine that in a certain society women are compelled to marry at age eighteen. A reasonably mature woman who is genuinely in love has a good chance of entering into an abiding union with her husband; but those women whose marriage is not so sanctified are likely to respond to this traumatic event according to type. The Hungry Ghost will launch a series of reckless affairs; the Devil will pretend to be a loving wife while secretly despising the role and, presumably,

her husband; the Human Being will take advantage of the partnership to merge assets, diversify incomes and investments, and organize doubles in tennis. The Titan will martyr herself; the Animal will passively submit to her fate; and the Angel will join the Junior League and the Symphony Society, take courses in Continuing Education and in record time emerge as one of society's leading young matrons.

And if it should happen that one of these marriages begins an unhappy dissolution, the woman, alone, miserable and confused, is sure to receive from family and friends advice that accords with these same six worlds' perspectives. The Hungry Ghosts will counsel her, "Get out and get yourself another man! There's more than one fish in the sea!" The Titans will chastise, "What did you expect marriage to be, a Tupperware party? Stop your griping! You made your bed, now lie in it." The Human Beings will recommend that she immediately get a lawyer, a financial counselor, and a membership in the YMCA. The Animals, seeing no problems at all since she holds title to her home and is assured of enough alimony to get by on, will ask incredulously, "What do you have to be miserable about? Do you know how many divorced women get stuck with nothing? Count your blessings!" The Devils, however, will have no trouble in recognizing the cause of her grief. "How do you expect to hold a man looking like that? Lose ten pounds, see a beauty consultant, and above all, get yourself some decent clothes!" And, of course, the Angels will insist that she seize the opportunity to expand her horizons by studying philosophy, psychology or, now that she's a 'woman of experience' and has a certain 'depth,' creative writing.

In Samsara, the world which the ego dominates and distorts, whenever someone is involved in an emotional crisis he receives or he gives advice of these six types. Such counsel is considered eminently sensible and no one perceives any contradiction in believing, for example, that happiness consists in being wealthy and that there is a lot of money to be made exploiting the discontented rich.

Samsara is strife, itself. Every segment is a war zone. And the simple cause of the conflict is that the ego, by its very nature, exists in a perpetual state of desire, wanting love, fame and power and, unfortunately for us all, not much caring how it gets them. To succeed in its ambitions it will lie, cheat, steal, betray, kill, and generally manipulate other egos without the smallest mercy. If in the course of its development it has noted how loyalty, gratitude, or generosity are prized, it seeks fame for being grateful, generous or loyal. But when it perceives that such virtues are not to its immediate advantage, it defers to Number One and dispenses with such sentimental notions. Seemingly altruistic acts that are performed because the ego desires the esteem such actions generate are not altruistic at all; on the other hand, altruistic acts which are performed from genuine love and selflessness are acts which have transcended the ego and are not Samsaric at all.

May any man dare to hope that after he has unscrupulously striven half a lifetime to gain an objective he will, upon finally possessing it, enjoy it for more than two weeks? No. The moment an ego gets what it has fought for, it devalues the prize. The goal loses its fascination and the bored, competitive ego quickly sets its sights upon another, more worthy

challenge. To live in the Six Worlds of Samsara is to live in constant conflict, winning some battles and losing others, but never being able to secure the peace. The Wheel of desire turns relentlessly, one possession after another, one relationship after another, one conquest after another. Such is life under the ego's tyranny.

Pity the poor Chan master! He has literally vowed never to rest until he has freed all who are in his charge from the bondage of Samsara. In addition, therefore, to leading his bona fide disciples (7th and 8th World Chan) to Nirvanic realization, he must also guide all the Six Worlds' monks and nuns in his monastery safely out of their ego-deluded existence. This is not an easy task.

For so long as a person believes in himself, i.e., in the sufficiency of his own ego to deliver him to an existence of peace, joy and freedom, he cannot be liberated. For so long as a person thinks that his conscious ego is in total control of his life and that he can cope with failure and success, he cannot be freed. The craving ego and the Spirit (Buddha Nature) are mutually exclusive entities. Where there is one the other cannot be.

Of course, no conscious individual can function without a sense of identity. The ego about which we speak is the one which values itself and judges itself as it values and judges all the persons and things of its environment. The ego, then, is a fictitious creature. It has no real existence. It is a ghost-general that must be relieved of its command by being demoted, retired or killed. This process of ego elimination, which Christian monks and nuns call 'dying to self' and which Buddhists sometimes refer to as 'killing the fool,' is long, tedious, and, by definition, humiliating.

In Chan, ideally, the master confers privately every day with each person in his charge. To those who practice Seventh World Chan he assigns exercises which are designed to lead them to controlled states of concentration, meditation, and samadhi. To those who practice Eighth World Chan, he usually assigns a thought-frustrating riddle (a koan) the pondering of which will ultimately cause the ego briefly to annihilate itself (satori). But for those who are in the six worlds, the master has to go back to basics. During audiences with these persons, he begins the process of ego-elimination by determining which of the six segments of Samsara the novice is in. He then helps the novice to confront the truth about himself. Without this confrontation, there can be no progress. The novice must see for himself how he resorts to a particular survival strategy to gain his objectives, and how the use of this strategy is inimical to his spiritual development. The master usually hopes for a miracle and to facilitate one assigns a meditation exercise, but it is essentially by his own inspirational example and by his instructions and admonitions, both gentle and harsh, that the master is able to prod the novice to increased self-awareness and change.

The difficulty of this task is illustrated in the Chan story of the master and the three novices. The master greets his new charges and tells them that the first spiritual discipline he will impose upon them, effective immediately, is the rule of absolute silence. As he nods and turns away, the first novice calls, "Oh, Master. I can't tell you how happy I am to receive

your instruction." Whereupon the second novice snarls, "You fool! Don't you realize that by saying that you broke the rule of silence?" And the third novice throws up his hands and sighs, "Lord! Am I the only one around here who can follow orders?"

In old, established monasteries, the Master or Abbot usually can rely upon an excellent support system. All authoritative positions in his monastery from chief cook to head gardener will have been filled by spiritually accomplished men and women who constitute an assisting staff of fully enlightened masters. Regardless of where a novice is assigned to work, he is always under the watchful eye of a master. His spiritual supervision is therefore constant.

In newer institutions, however, there can be serious problems with 'unripened' staff members. A newcomer - whether novice or layman - must be circumspect in his selection of spiritual advisor. He should not seek guidance from the young and inexperienced. (Ripe priests usually do not occur in nature under the age of thirty-five or forty.) He must also give careful consideration to any advice he is given or to any requests made of him.

Although an unripened, six worlds' priest is spiritually useless, he is not necessarily spiritually harmless. Some members of the clergy, despite their robes and pious poses, manage to be fools, knaves or a mystifying combination of both.

CHAPTER 6

THE GAP BETWEEN THE SIX WORLDS AND THE SEVENTH

*The stone which the builders rejected,
This became the chief cornerstone.
- Matthew 21:42*

In Buddhism we sometimes imagine that between the Wheel of Samsara and the Mountain of Nirvana there lies a dark and deadly swamp, a kind of spiritual gap or bardo that teems with suffering souls. These are the people who jumped, fell or were pushed off the Wheel when their survival strategies stopped working.

As Samsara is reality as seen through the prejudicial eyes of the ego, and Nirvana is reality apprehended directly, the gap or swamp is the place where transition from one mode of awareness to the other is possible... not inevitable but merely possible.

The Gap, then, is the critical period of disillusionment a person enters whenever he suddenly discovers that his ego is malfunctioning as an arbiter of reality. The moment it dawns upon him that something is intrinsically wrong, that he is making terrible errors in judgment, and that things or people upon whom he would have bet his life are not what he thought them to be, he enters the swamp. He may previously have run his life with confidence and efficiency; but in the gap he doubts his ability to cope with life at all.

A variety of causes can catapult an individual into the swamp. Sometimes he is overwhelmed by an event which his ego views as a personal tragedy: the death of someone loved; a betrayal; a serious illness or infirmity; a humiliating failure or rejection; or perhaps even a seemingly insignificant difficulty which has brought to critical mass an accumulation of small miseries. Sometimes he simply cannot accept the natural, changing order of things as when he notices ageing's deleterious effects upon his face, physique and virility or when his children grow up and exclude him from their private lives, relegating him to lesser roles than he is accustomed to playing. Sometimes he invests himself too heavily in a job, a creed or a way of life and experiences, upon discovery that his investment was foolishly made, the mortifications of insolvency.

One other peculiar but common cause of troubled introspection is an individual's abrupt awakening to the fact that the "becoming" phase of his life is over, that he already is whatever he was destined to be, and that the answer to the question, "Is that all there is?" is dismally affirmative.

Regardless of the cause, whenever a person is sufficiently stunned by a revelation of his ego's fallibility, he will find himself in disillusionment's waters.

It may not, however, be supposed that because all people encounter serious problems, all will sooner or later find themselves in the swamp. Many egos can withstand any adversity. Many men can bury their sons at dawn and work out the details of a business deal by noon, or can survive the most brutalizing ordeal and before the blood is washed from their bodies begin haggling over the rights to their story, or can even experience tragic accident and be reduced to ponder no other questions but those which concern the merits of litigation.

Neither may it be assumed that people automatically relinquish their places in Samsara during the simple course of growing old. While it is true that the majority of those who confront the crimes and follies of their egos are of middle age, there are many outstanding examples of persons much younger who have made the transition and, on the other hand, persons much older who never leave Samsara at all. The Buddha walked out of his samsaric life when he was twenty-nine. Shankara, of Vedanta fame, had already founded many monasteries by the time he died at thirty-two. Sri Ramana Maharshi, the great Indian saint who died in 1954, reached spiritual maturity while in his teens.

As to those who cling to their ego-deluded lives and reach old age with their samsaric carcasses still intact, we find many who are as willfully self-absorbed at sixty-five as they were half a century before, when they were teenagers. Unlike their peers who have mellowed with age - the unmistakable sign of ego diminution - many elderly people have egos that are still as tough, mean, greedy, capricious and demanding of attention as ever. We do not speak of sociopaths, derelicts or even of the ill or age-infirm. A shocking number of perfectly healthy and otherwise respectable people often resort to a variety of petty crimes to satisfy egotistic whims. Managers of supermarkets located in prosperous retirement communities, to mention one sad example, have had to take a hard line against shoplifting and stand up to the negative publicity of having some 'poor, hungry old lady' arrested ever since they determined that what Grandma was boosting was pate de foie gras and caviar. (Grandma knows that you might as well get hanged for a sheep as a lamb.) And any traffic court magistrate can confirm the terrifying number of elderly drivers who are blind to objects more than ten feet distant and have reflex response-times measurable in minutes, and who still insist upon their inalienable right to operate a vehicle on a freeway. We are not all mandated to decline gracefully.

But every man or woman who does suffer the Gap's crisis of disillusionment will likely find his difficulty exacerbated by confusion and feelings of alienation. He will know that his standard of values must itself be re-evaluated, but he will not know how to accomplish the revision. (The subject cannot be its object just as the eye cannot see itself.) Since his judgment has already proven unreliable, he does not know where he can dependably turn or whom he can safely trust. His old strategies are ineffective, the rules of the game having so drastically changed. So much will seem to be going wrong at once that he will see

himself as being under siege from every quarter. The tension he feels will be so oppressive that to relieve it he may recklessly consume alcohol or drugs and give, thereby, public notice that he is out of control and has 'gone off the deep end' or 'over the edge.' Or, he may conceal his despair from others and suffer in secret. He will not see the dangers in either response since his present emergency will prevent him from thinking rationally about the future. He will not realize that he is at war with himself and that his ego's monopoly over his destiny has finally been challenged.

There in the swamp, he will with much confusion find himself surrounded by the dead and the dying, the drugged, the drunk and the mad. It may not immediately occur to him that he is or may soon be one of them. He is as yet only a stranger in a strange place.

Three courses of action are open to him: (1). He may notice the distant signs of sanctuary blinking on the Nirvanic mountain. In many different ways, religions of salvation always advertise their ability to help troubled people. If he is spiritually precocious - and frequently the people we least suspect of having spiritual potential turn out to be the most divinely gifted - he may not take long to size-up his situation. He may quickly sense that happiness cannot consist in the world exterior to himself and that if he is to survive, he can no longer continue to define himself in terms of his relations to other people (the religious equivalent of attempting to divide by zero.) Concerned now for the first time about the safety of his own soul, he may start swimming in the direction of Nirvana's alluvial fan. (2). He may look back at the Samsaric world and see family, friends, TV pitchmen, and a variety of social workers, all trying to reach down from the Wheel and pull him back aboard. They will assure him that he will find new life if he only gets his teeth capped, buys a sports car, joins a health club, restyles what is left of his hair, invests in penny stocks, or attends the meetings and social gatherings of persons similarly discomfited.

If he accepts their help and tries all the Six Worlds' nostrums for curing despair, it will be only a matter of time before he discovers that blow-dried hair cannot resolve an existential crisis nor a Blaupunkt sound system drown out a spiritual call to arms. Nothing will have changed for the better. He will still feel like an alien... a bewildered and, after several months of these remedies, financially overextended alien. His distress will intensify accordingly and he will return to the swamp in worse condition than when he left it.

If he has developed serious problems with alcohol, drugs or other self-destructive behaviors, family, friends, TV pitchmen and an even greater variety of social workers will up-scale their efforts to rescue him again. All sorts of samsaric tourniquets will be applied to his hemorrhaging ego. TV pitchmen will now direct him to private 'hospitals' guaranteed to restore his dignity, a quality they will ignore when his insurance runs out. Friends will wax empathetic, "There but for the grace of God go I," until the floundering man becomes an obnoxious dinner guest or is crass enough to ask for a loan or a letter of recommendation on personal stationery - requests that in the best of times can be fatal to a relationship. (At this point friends usually reappraise their stores of grace and pronounce him quite worthy of a hellward plunge.) Families will reconsider the bonds of blood. The soft bosom of filial love

("Son, we're with you every step of the way back") will likely harden into a steel breastplate should Sonny stumble or go into reverse ("Your Mother and I don't care what you stick in your nose just so you don't do it in or near the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.") Social workers will persist in their efforts after all others have ceased to acknowledge the fallen man's existence. No matter how terrible a client's life upon the Wheel has been, a zealous case worker will try to haul him back for more. Some people who return to Samsara may achieve a measure of reintegration. Some will stay cured for longer than two weeks. But many, deciding that Samsaric cures are worse than Swamp diseases, will re-enter the Swamp once again. Off the wagon. Off the deep end. Back and forth. Lost and 'rescued' until their ruination is complete. (3). A man may turn neither to the Mountain nor to the Wheel. Blind and deaf to anything but his own interior battles, he may perish in the waters, at once the slayer and the slain.

Uchiyama Roshi of Japan's Antaiji Temple likes to describe this self-destruction as a situation which starts with the man drinking the saki, then after awhile becomes the saki drinking the saki, and finally ends with the saki drinking the man. And so it is with a variety of drugs, legal and illegal, which start by promising to liberate a man from his troubles and end by worsening his troubles and killing him in the process.

It is sad to note that those who express an interest in finding sanctuary in religion never receive encouragement from the folks up on the Wheel. No one in Samsara ever advises an ego-wounded man to seek religious treatment for his injuries.

The world of the ego simply does not recognize a separate and distinct world of the spirit. In terms of spiritual geography, the Mountain of Nirvana cannot even be seen from the Wheel of Samsara. People on the Wheel do not know that to get to Nirvana it is absolutely necessary to negotiate the Swamp. (There is no other way.) They believe to a certainty that Nirvana is simply a refined state or higher altitude of Samsara. They acknowledge the existence of spiritual people but they suppose that spirituality is merely a condition of an altered ego, an ego which, perhaps, has purged itself of all outward signs of sin and, as a reward, has been glorified and elevated. They cannot conceive of losing their ego, a loss, they think, equal to losing their mind or at least their humanity. To them, egoless creatures are creatures without identities: vegetables, amoebas, and lunatics - groups in which nobody willingly includes himself.

Further, even if they were to concede that disillusionment and alienation are religious problems, they would misunderstand the terms of the solution. Egos, by nature, strive to dominate other egos, a control which invariably extends to fiscal interests. People in Samsara instinctively fear that religion may liberate a person from his assets as it liberates him from his pain. Jesus might have advised those who wished to become his disciples first to give their money to the poor, but no person in Christendom ever advises a relative to be so wantonly generous. Not even friends or social workers countenance such heresy. Many will suggest to a wounded man that he talk to his priest or spend a little time in church; but, since novices frequently transfer their property to the religious orders they enter, they will not

advise him to seek sanctuary in a monastery. They will, however, accept his power of attorney while he commits himself to a sanitarium.

These, then, are the three possible destinies that confront someone who has descended into the gap. He can return to Samsara, cauterized, branded and somewhat more grim and less spontaneous than he was before. Or, should all the therapeutic constraints fail and he fall back into his self-destructive ways, he can resume his career in the swamp until he succeeds in totally destroying himself.

Or, in a lucky, precious, lucid moment, he can discern the obvious and see that life is simply very painful and bitter and that after all his years of trying, he has completely failed to lessen the pain or sweeten the experience. This conclusion must be reached; and it does not matter how long a person takes to reach it, or how much he has suffered before he reaches it, or even how much crime he has committed in the course of reaching it. It matters only that he arrive at this understanding.

If he finds himself in pain amongst the dead and the dying, the drugged, the drunk and the mad, and he at last cries out begging the Lord to help him, he has entered the Seventh World of Chan.

For, the first of the Buddha's Four Noble Truths is just this: Life is bitter and painful. Unless this Truth is understood... not accepted on faith, but known.. not studied, but testified to... not assumed by reason, but verified by experience, absolutely and without qualification, unless a person knows from his scalp to his toenails that life is indeed bitter and painful, he is not even a candidate for Buddhist liberation.

The First Truth must be comprehended before the Second Truth can be revealed. To live in Samsara is to suffer. Life under the ego's tyranny is an endless battle which cannot end in victory. For so long as the tyrant lives, he tyrannizes us. We are whipped. Salvation, therefore, begins with an admission of defeat. (Not with an act of contrition, as some would have it, but merely with an admission of defeat. Contrition is second.)

A little bolder now and with a little more curiosity, the candidate may show up at a Chan master's door saying that life as he presently knows it is not worth living and that he seeks to invest it with something of value; or, he may say that somehow he lost his way in life and finds himself in a place where nothing jibes, where nothing is synchronized, and where everything seems alien and devoid of meaning. He regrets everything that he has ever done and blames no one for his troubles but himself. He begs for any direction that will lead him out of the hostile, sorrowful terrain. He may use the metaphors of battle and say that his world is in ruins, that his struggle with life has left him wounded and bleeding badly, and that he has no strength left to continue the fight. He may add, almost as a final challenge, that he comes to Buddhism because he has nothing else to lose and nowhere else to go.

At the sound of these words the master's heart will begin to stiffen and snap like a prayer flag in a strong wind; and in whatever language he speaks he will whisper, 'Thank you, Lord.'

The master knows that the life of the ego is truly bitter and that a man must learn for himself the folly of ever believing otherwise.

In the lexicon of salvation, Disillusionment comes before Awakening.

CHAPTER 7

A WORKING MODEL OF THE PSYCHE: ZEN'S PRACTICAL APPROACH TO THE PSYCHOLOGY OF C.G. JUNG

Anything that's rare or mysterious is fascinating, particularly so when the health of the body, mind or spirit is involved. Then, exotic information has an irresistible allure. More than commanding our attention, it saturates our consciousness.

In medical school, for example, when studying tropical diseases - diseases which are virtually unknown in the U.S. - students often become so intrigued with the strange symptoms that they'll give them undue consideration when making diagnoses in the course of their clinical training.

When presented with the symptoms of a chest cold, they wonder about the possibility of psittacosis... parrot fever. They see a case of malnutrition, and stop to rule out leishmaniasis... a jungle parasite.

Med School professors must repeatedly caution: When you hear the sound of hoofbeats, think horses... not zebras!

We all tend to process information that is too specific, with details that far exceed our need.

If a foreigner asks, "What is 'cow'?" It may be true to answer, "a quadruped, mammalian bovine." But if the fellow doesn't know 'cow' he's not likely to know bovine. A better answer is, "It's the animal that goes Moooooo." This the foreigner will likely understand and this, unless we be zoologists or dairymen, is probably all we're qualified to answer.

In Zen, when we approach the necessary subject of Jung's psychology, we are foreigners. We're in that "what is cow?" class. Giving us kingdom, phylum, class, order, etc., is more than we can handle and more than we require. We need a stripped-down version, one that is free of psychspeak. This "no frills" approach will not be sufficient for aficionados of exotic detail. In Zen we have our share of folks who when hearing the hoofbeats of those Four Riders of the Apocalypse would wonder if Death was riding a pale zebra. On the other hand, it's better to know more than you need and to risk being sidetracked than it is to try to proceed without the guidance of a good model.

The connection between Zen and Jungian psychology is long-standing. Zen's foremost exponent was the late, great, Professor Daisetz Suzuki. When Carl Jung read Suzuki he immediately saw how Zen dovetailed with his own system of psychology. Zen's goal of "non-attachment" was Jung's goal of "individuation". Zen practitioners likewise recognized the applicability of Jungian thought to their own spiritual insights. The two men, contemporaries, are said to have corresponded extensively with each other. Jung considered himself privileged to write a long and now famous introduction to Suzuki's work.

At the outset, then, it was evident that these two disciplines were complementary. Jung's Depth Psychology tells us why we are the way we are. Zen provides the methodology by which we can change the way we are. And in advanced spiritual states, the generic rationale, the "dramatic plot" of alchemy's androgyny as well as the gestation and delivery of the Divine Child or Lapis is supplied by Jung while the methodology, i.e., the various meditation disciplines such as Qi circulation and embryonic breathing, is supplied by Zen or Daoist techniques.

What we need, then, "to connect the dots" of the two disciplines, is a model of the psyche, a simple and workable model that, for example, doesn't purport to explain the present state of the human condition without accounting for the evolutionary dictates of natural selection. We cannot postulate behavior that fails to demonstrate survival value. We need a model of the normal - not a therapeutic regimen for the disturbed or pathologic.

In Zen or Chan Buddhism we strive to live the natural life, a life that brings harmony to the melodies of our human nature. What, then, is this natural life? How has Nature fashioned us? What are we genetically preprogrammed to do in order to survive? What instinctive behavior is characteristic of our species?

An instinct or Archetype is a natural, inborn and unacquired force which impels us to act in certain ways. The complex interactions between a mother and newborn infant, for example, do not have to be taught. Baby does not need sucking lessons any more than Mother needs to be advised of her part in the feeding process. Teenagers do not have to be directed to notice teenagers of the opposite sex. Command them not to and see what happens. Instinctive behavior is as automatic as it is universal. Its mechanisms are hormonally or chemically signaled and fueled and when conditions are normal, the results are virtually guaranteed for every classification of human being: primitive or sophisticated, equatorial or arctic, rich or poor, intelligent or dull-witted, gorgeous or homely. Each and all are subject to the same instinctual drives. Beauty, brains and wealth do not relieve their possessors of archetypal havoc.

Havoc? Well, yes. Archetypes or Instincts are strong-willed autocratic forces. Monarchal or godlike, they are despots who don't tolerate much in the way of opposition. Usually, they operate beneath the level of consciousness so that they get us to do what they want us to do without our ever really understanding why we act the way we act, or like what we like, or dislike what we dislike. We think that we know the sequence of events: we think

that because something conforms to certain standards which we have already determined to be pleasing, we like it. In fact, the order of events is usually quite opposite. First, we like or dislike something; second, we determine a reason for liking or disliking it. Our ego fabricates and exaggerates in support of its choices.

The most difficult part of Zen is achieving the understanding that our ego is not a competent arbiter of reality. Our ego's judgmental powers are so thoroughly compromised that it is nearly impossible to look at ourselves objectively or even to consider the possibility that we're not in absolute control of ourselves. We do not suspect that, for the most part, we are simply running genetic programs, programs which, to varying degrees, have been altered by a long list of environmental factors.

For the purposes of our rudimentary model, we will consider nine basic instincts and how they specifically affect the course of our life. We'll call these nine instincts by the names generally given them by Jung:

1. Self or God, the instinct for order
2. Mother, the clinging instinct
3. Child or Adorable Little One, the protective instinct
4. Shadows (both forms):
 - a. Friend - positive self-preservation via the herd instinct
 - b. Enemy - negative self-preservation via the destructive instinct
5. Anima/Animus, the reproductive instinct
6. Persona, the instinct to conform socially
7. Heroes, the instinct to excel and to lead
8. Hunter, the instinct to pursue
9. Transformation, the instinct for spiritual change

Since evolution is such a slow process - biologically, we haven't really changed in 3,000 years - we can avoid the confusing complexities of modern urban life by using as our exemplar the life cycle of a boy born into a rural family living anywhere in the world in the year 1,000 B.C. (We could just as easily have chosen a girl, the dynamics would not be essentially different.)

1. SELF OR GOD

The moment our sample baby leaves the oblivion of the womb, he experiences the pleasures and pains, the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches of a chaotic consciousness. Nature's first requirement, therefore, is order. Baby must organize these incoherent experiences.

The opposite of chaos is cosmos; and, like a god, a great cosmic principle, baby must create order out of disorder. His innate abilities enable him to work much magic. He can perceive and recognize. He can think and form new ideas and retrieve information from his

memory banks. He can concentrate his attention and consider things or events objectively. Soon, he will not only see, he will examine; he will not only hear, he will listen. He will know 'pleasant' and 'unpleasant' and to gain the former he will be able to plan strategies, evaluate their results and repeat the successful ones. He will learn.

He also becomes aware of who it is who is learning. He develops an ego, an identity, a continuous self-awareness which empowers him to think, "I am now who I was yesterday and will be tomorrow." Associations, infinite in number and variety, begin to adhere to his ego. Qualities, ideas and recollections cling to his Self-reflection like gold dust in a miner's fleece. Before long he will acquire language and learn his name and place in his tiny universe.

2. MOTHER

The second instinct which promotes survival is the mother instinct. The baby must be absolutely devoted to his mother since his survival totally depends upon her. He is sheltered by her arms and pacified by her caresses. In her breast is his only source of food. If his mother dies, he perishes. For other reasons too, Nature wants him to fix his attention on her. He must cling to her and stay within her ready grasp since babies who crawl away from mother are eaten by predators or are left behind in emergency flights or are killed in falls over precipices or into rivers. (Babies who crawl away from mother do not usually survive to pass this unfortunate tendency on to offspring.)

3. CHILD OR ADORABLE LITTLE ONE

This instinct is not felt by Baby but is experienced by others in their responses to Baby. It is the instinct that not only keeps Mother's attention on Baby but causes Father, brothers and sisters actually to welcome this noisy, troublesome intruder into the family.

Calling this instinct the Adorable Little One avoids the limiting designation of Child since the tenderness that every human being feels in his heart for babies extends to the young of any species. We can adore a pet every bit as much as a child.

When this instinct is evoked, we become watchful and protective towards Little Ones. We fondle and feed them and are extraordinarily tolerant of their behavior, forgiving them easily for acts which others do at their peril. If our puppy messes on the living room rug, we dutifully clean it up. If our old dog does the same we consider euthanasia. If Baby deliberately smashes an expensive vase, Mother picks up the pieces and sings "all gone." If Daddy deliberately smashes the same vase, Mother gets a lawyer. We are not alone in this happy indulgence of babies. Even the irascible King of Beasts will contentedly let cubs chew his eyelids and stuff their paws into his sensitive nostrils. He enjoys the attention.

We can easily understand the survival value of this behavior. If the young did not instantly engender love in our hearts, if they did not immediately arouse our desire to indulge

and protect them, they very likely would not survive their first night of screeching. Nature intends that we be slaves to cuteness.

The reciprocal mother/baby bond is probably the strongest and most enduring of all instinctive bonds. It will not take Baby long to learn what the rest of us have happily discovered: Mother is the one person in the world who will insist that we are decent, intelligent, industrious and good looking despite all evidence to the contrary.

By the time that Baby is old enough to protest the injustice, Mother has a new Adorable Little One to occupy her attention. Fortunately Baby now has teeth and is able to eat the food which Father, who farms, hunts, and fishes, brings home and gives to Mother who cooks and distributes it to the family.

4. FRIENDLY SHADOW AND ENEMY SHADOW

The friendly shadow, who is usually the same sex as ourselves, is our frequent dream-companion. Since it grows up with us, it assumes a variety of developing forms.

No longer anybody's Baby, our Child must establish new relationships with his family. For many years to come they will be his indispensable support group. They will protect him, teach him and act as his companions and guides. They will share their food with him in time of scarcity, nurse him when he is sick or help him when he is in trouble. This relationship is special; for while he must be extremely close to his family, he must not consider them as potential mates. Nature does not intend that they should be breeding stock since inbreeding is so frequently a genetic disaster.

The instinct that promotes mutual support of family members while simultaneously nullifying sexual attractions is the Friendly Shadow. Father, brothers and sisters who guide, protect, and provide for our model child are the first persons upon whom he will project this archetypal regard. It is worthy of note that this instinct is apparently evoked between all developing youngsters who share the same domestic environment. Not too long ago the Israelis reported that of several thousand young adults who had been raised together from the time of their infancy in Kibbutz nurseries, there was not a single instance of inter-marriage. Each toddler instinctively regarded all members of the group as his brothers and sisters and, accordingly, the sexuality of all members of the opposite sex was neutralized. The fraternal attitude overrode the biological fact.

Our model child, at the age of two or three, is now diverting much of the attention he had lavished on Mother to the other members of his family. Additional projections of the Shadow upon friends, particularly a best friend or buddy, will occur later as he becomes older and more socially involved.

As the child is taught right from wrong, he becomes confused whenever his own desires conflict with those of his family. He may know, for example, that he is not to eat

food that has been set aside for a later meal, but he may become so hungry that he cannot resist eating it anyway. Discovered, he is shouted at, struck and shunned. He is called a rat, a coyote, a snake or any animal which the family associates with the sneak-thievery of food. Temporarily pushed outside the family circle in rejection and disgrace, he broods about his fate. The hunger pains have vanished and he is no longer quite so sure why he stole the food. It is now that the Shadow rises to the occasion of his distress. The Enemy Shadow has many functions but the most important one is to defend the ego against attack. It is the miscreant alter-ego. It accepts the blame for the theft. Unconsciously the child understands that it was someone else who took the food and brought this punishment on him. In the most insidiously subtle way imaginable, his ego heals the wounds of insult by removing him from responsibility and blaming his shadow. (The devil made him do it.) This is necessary for, in order for him to go on living happily with people who have physically harmed and rejected him, he must be able to differentiate his ego from the bad boy/animal that they punished. He does not consciously recognize this alien individual; but deep within his psyche, the 'evil one' thrives. The Enemy Shadow will grow stronger each time the boy commits an anti-social act. If he does something bad and is not caught, the Shadow rewards him with feelings of superiority and insight into human duplicity. If he is caught and punished, the Shadow comforts him with delicious plans for revenge. In either case the Shadow has fulfilled its function: the boy develops a suspicious awareness. He's ready for trouble. He understands deceit.

By the time our model child reaches maturity, his definitions of evil will be carefully recorded in his Enemy Shadow's lexicon; but he will not be consciously aware of his constant reference to the entries. He will always believe that the person he despises or distrusts truly deserves to be despised. Not easily will he come to understand how much of himself he has conveniently projected onto the despised target.

5. HEROES

There are basically four sequential projections of the Hero Archetype: Trickster, Superman, Human, Savior-Bodhisattva.

Punishing 'bad' behavior is one side of the coin. The other side is appealing to the 'good.' As a child of three, four or five, the boy continues to find that he is frequently reprimanded for being disobedient, greedy, or disruptive. But the rat, coyote or snake in him need not remain in perpetual disgrace. It can be rehabilitated.

The dynamics of normal family life are such that members strive to maintain a benign or civilizing balance. Mutual support means mutual reliance, and each member of the unit must behave responsibly. Laziness, selfishness, deceit and all forms of behavior which breach security, cause dissension or squander assets are obviously detrimental to the family's welfare. So the child must tame his own desires, subordinating them to the collective desires of the unit. He must learn to be ethical in his dealings with other people. He must learn to

follow a prescribed moral code that is designed to enable him to function successfully in larger, more diverse, groups.

Large societies offer distinct survival advantages: the larger the social group, the larger the gene pool; the bigger the army, the greater the variety of skills; and so on. But this increase in security and cultural enrichment is not automatically yielded. It is gained by the cooperation and contribution of all members. In short, the benefits of a civilization accrue according to the degree of organization and inspired participation of the citizenry.

The Hero instinct inspires the child to become a better person, as decent, loyal, honest, generous, skilled, industrious, courageous and responsible as he can possibly be. This is a great deal to expect, but that we all grow up to be the sterling citizens we are attests to the relative ease with which the difficulty is surmounted. The Hero is extremely powerful.

This civilizing or 'ennobling' process commences when Mother and Father begin to tell our model child marvelous stories about Heroes. They will start with the first Hero figure, the Trickster.

We have all met the naughty but likable Trickster. He is Loki, the fire god who is so troublesome to control; he is Bugs Bunny, who steals the farmer's crops; he is noisy Woody Woodpecker. Since all Hero projections are generated in the same manner, we can see how this amazing instinct works in all its sequential forms by considering a myth that Navajo parents tell their children. (They recite this story slowly and with great seriousness.) The Navajo Trickster figure is called Coyote:

Coyote was always getting into trouble. He would forget to do things that he had promised to do; he would fall asleep when he was supposed to stay awake; and sometimes when he had received specific instructions, he would decide that he knew a better way and he would really mess things up. Everyone laughed at Coyote and nobody would trust him with even the smallest job. Very sad, he went to the Great Spirit and asked for a chance to redeem himself. "Please give me a job to do so that I can show everyone that I have learned to be responsible," he said.

At first Great Sprit refused, but Coyote begged and begged until Great Sprit felt pity for him and relented. "Here is a job for you," he said. "By tonight, I have to pay a debt to Great Bear who lives on top of a distant mountain. Can you take this pouch of sparkling stones to him as my payment of the debt?" "Of course," said Coyote. "I'll run and run and I'll get it to him before nightfall." Then Great Spirit tied the pouch with a rawhide cord and gave it to Coyote. "Make sure this pouch doesn't come untied or the gems will be lost." Coyote was very grateful for the chance to prove himself. "Oh, thank you, Great Spirit, and do not worry," he said. "I'll take good care of the pouch." He put the pouch in his mouth and ran off.

Pretty soon he got hungry and as he ran, the ends of the rawhide cord rubbed against his nose and lips. The cord smelled so delicious that he thought he would nibble on the ends

just to ease his hunger. By the time he got to the base of the mountain he was very hungry and had begun to gnaw the cord and by the time he was half way up the mountain he was chewing hard. Little by little he chewed-up and swallowed the cord. Poor Coyote! He never noticed how much he had eaten. When he got to the top of the mountain he discovered that the pouch had opened and all the precious stones were gone. He was so ashamed. "I ate the cord," he confessed. "I'm so sorry." Great Spirit was very angry. "Do you see what your disobedience has caused?" Coyote cried and begged for forgiveness.

When Great Spirit saw that Coyote was truly repentant he took pity on him. "I will forgive you but I never want you to forget the lesson you learned here tonight!" And saying this he waved his hand and all the sparkling stones that had been lost on the mountain flew up into the sky. And that is how the stars were created. And to this day, every evening as the stars come out Coyote is reminded of his mistake and you can hear him cry, "Ooooooooooh... I'm sorry! Oh..Ooooooooooh I'm sooooo sorry!"

Legends, myths, and fairy tales do not merely entertain. They instruct, encourage and reassure. They tell the child that mother and father know how hard it is to become responsible. They let him know that when he errs, if he is repentant and sincerely tries to improve, he will always be forgiven. Such stories are lessons in social awareness and in expanding consciousness. Throughout his life, tales of the Hero will inspire him to greatness. Without these role models, maturity is difficult if not impossible to attain.

As the child grows, the Hero stories change. He has learned obedience. Now he needs courage and skill. He next learns about the second Hero figure, the Superman, that half-man, half-god creature who protects the good and summarily vanquishes the evil. These superhuman Hero figures have extraordinary powers - sometimes they can fly, see through solids or swim underwater without needing air. At the very least, they can jump higher, throw farther, run and swim faster, shoot their arrows more accurately and outwit anybody else. Their exploits excite and inspire.

Father now begins to teach the child how to farm, fish, hunt, and fight. He instructs him in the use of the ax, knife, net, bow and spear. He has a very willing pupil. Our child is infatuated with his heroes and eagerly tries to imitate them.

The Enemy Shadow has also grown in stature. The boy is capable of much greater mischief. He can be duplicitous, dishonest, lazy, irresponsible, and selfish - qualities which will be neatly balanced by his increasing ability to pretend to their opposite.

As the boy's horizons expand and he encounters new and incomprehensible phenomena, he relies upon his Heroes. Supermen know how to deal with all things fabulous and real.

Since the skills that Father teaches must be practiced, the child now develops a particularly close friendship: his best friend or benign alter ego. Such a friend has enormous

survival value. With this friend the child can practice his lessons without fear of being mocked or punished for error. He can try out new techniques and engage in constructive competition. The benefits of the Confessional are also his: he can reveal his most personal secrets, fears and aspirations. But above all, whenever he explores new territory or goes adventuring he enjoys the safety of the Buddy system. He and his Best Friend are supportive partners, a team.

As our child, now a boy of ten or so, acquires the virtues of loyalty, trust, and a cooperative attitude, he learns to hunt and kill for food and protection. Animals are not the only threats. There are people whose interests his family regards as being inimical to theirs. He must possess enough anger and aggression in his heart to defend his home, to drive off or kill those who threaten. The Enemy Shadow, rising to the occasion, reduces any human being upon which is it projected to the level of dangerous, irritating, or contemptible animal - one that can be exterminated not only with impunity but with honor. (Three thousand years later even the most sophisticated soul amongst us calls someone he dislikes a rat, skunk, snake, louse, bitch, etc.) In a world of predators, animal and human, this survival strategy is a categorical imperative.

The Enemy Shadow, then, defends our ego from immobilizing disgrace, justifies us in the acquisition of our desires, instructs us in the ways of deceit, keeps us on our guard, and gives us the will and the power to kill in fear and anger. Unfortunately, when the Shadow contaminates another instinct, we have an abusive mother, a sadistic lover, a back-stabbing friend.

6. PERSONA, THE INSTINCT TO CONFORM

As the child becomes a young man he is initiated into a rule-filled society. Every activity has its standard of behavior and he must learn how to conduct himself accordingly. He may carouse at a fiesta and play the clown, but when he's selling vegetables in the market, he must at least appear to be sober, honest, and pleasant.

In any stressful encounter, people are reassured by sameness and are uncomfortable when confronted by atypical behavior. Whether our young man is participating in a military exercise, selling shoes, or courting a young lady - an instinctive imperative which will soon manifest itself - he will behave differently according to the role he is playing. He will strive to behave in ways that are calculated to foster social acceptance.

The instinct of conformity is also known as the Persona, a term which originated in ancient Greece when actors wore masks, called personas, that varied according to the role being played. When the performance was finished, the masks were removed. A Persona, like a uniform worn in specific occupations, is supposed to be shed when its user is not engaged in the occupation for which it was designed.

Our young man will leave his personas on the doorstep when he enters his home. He may even define his home as that one place in the world in which he needs no personas.

7. ANIMA/ANIMUS, THE REPRODUCTIVE INSTINCT

To enter society is to enter a gene pool; and in such water our young man wants to be a shark not a flounder. He sees who is at the top of the food chain: musicians, athletes, warriors, priests, physicians, and those fellows whose job description is limited to - but not in any disadvantageous way - simply being rich. It is these men who get the attention of nubile females.

Our young man experiences the next phase of hero projection: the human hero. He picks his exemplar and becomes an understudy or apprentice. Should he have chosen a harpist to emulate, he will, at every unfortunate moment of the day or night, assiduously practice his lyre scales and chords. His appreciative audience will consist of those family members and neighbors who realize that he could just as easily have taken up the drums or conch.

The more he perfects his art, skill, and persona, the more marriageable he is considered. Soon he will attract the girl of his dreams and will project upon her that carrier of his reproductive instinct, the Anima. (In females the instinct is called the Animus.)

When this instinct's hormones enter his bloodstream, he can barely control himself. He plays like Orpheus gone mad, thinking of little else but the young woman upon whom he has projected his dream-goddess Anima. He wants to possess her body and soul.

8. HUNTER, THE INSTINCT TO PURSUE THE PREY

There are times when knowing when to quit may have definite survival value; but in most cases the one who prevails is the one who perseveres. This is particularly true of the hunter.

If "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny" as biologists are wont to say, then surely one of the rungs in our evolutionary ladder is the rung of the predatory carnivore. Nature has programmed us to pursue, to track, and to stalk. When this archetype is engaged, a special emotion is felt, an emotion which is quite apart from any heroic pride or culinary satisfaction.

Whenever our Young Man hunted, he would be driven - not necessarily by hunger, either his own or the hunger of those who depended on him, but by the thrill of the chase. The evidence of this is that in the service of this thrill he may invest far more energy than the captured prize could possibly return.

Even today, a man will spend considerable sums of money buying weapons, vehicles, clothing and camping gear all in an effort to track down and kill a deer for a supply of meat

that he could purchase at a market for a few dollars. The same man who at home requires the utmost in refined comfort and safety will travel for hours in order to enter the woods and sleep among insects, spiders and snakes, to go unbathed for days, to eat badly prepared meals of stuff that originated in cans or plastic pouches, and to climb, slide, fall and stumble - all because he is in thrall to the archetypal god in him who enjoys stalking a prey. No inconvenience can counterbalance that ecstatic rush the hunter feels, that singleness of purpose, that concentration and focus that ascend into meditative obsession.

Our model young man may heroically carry home his deer or take his trophy-antlers and leave the meat for scavengers.

If it is a woman he has been pursuing, the dynamics are the same. What he does with her after he stalks and claims his quarry will be up to other gods.

He may, if he's lucky, reach a state of contentment and decide to settle down with his prize. His art will become his hobby. He'll sell his lyre to buy a plow. Hunting for sport will be a luxury he can't often afford. He conforms to his role as responsible husband and head-of-household. Our young man's devotion to his wife must be complete. Children will be coming.

Now he marries and has his own adorable little ones and as the responsibilities of family and community burden him, the sacrifices he must make increase both in kind and in degree. He wants peace and harmony in his home and in his community, he wants and needs law and order. He turns to religion, not because he's feeling anything spiritual, but because he knows the value of rules. Also, he wants to be loved, a desire that is more easily realized when somebody else is the bad-guy who makes and enforces the rules. In short, he supports religion because he needs religion's support.

Organized religions are usually founded upon the last hero figure, the Savior Bodhisattva. This hero helps to sustain us in stressful times. (The spiritual significance of the Savior-Bodhisattva is not appreciated until the devotee has reached the Eighth World.)

Our model man may frequently be tempted to abandon his responsibilities and to become a philanderer or a spendthrift or an adventurer. He may resent being replaced in his wife's attentions by the children. He may look covetously at a neighbor's wife or daughter and desire to elope with her; but he will fear whatever punishments his priests promise by way of hell, loathsome rebirth, shunning, and so on. More, civil authorities may stake a claim on whatever happiness, freedom, and property he has left. If he has the wherewithal to think things over, he will likely cower and toe the line.

Not only may his truant tendencies be countered by the Savior's good example but he may even be tempted to emulate the Hero who sacrificed so much for the good of his people. The humble Savior also teaches that greatness can be achieved without wealth or power.

Other hero figures had inspired him to individual excellence, but the Savior, through the cohesive medium of organized religion, unites him with his countrymen, adding the force of his arms and his righteousness to theirs. He understands that it is under the Savior's aegis that all are born into the community and that it is under this same aegis that all are as well buried in the community's hallowed ground. The Savior promotes harmony and unity and makes the many, one.

But this is simply the function of religion at its base level. He may feel the need for more. He may be discontented with his entire life, with its superficiality, with its skewed values, with the evaporative pleasures of material acquisitions, with the transience of all existence. Is this all there is, he wonders. He may want to know the meaning of life, the face of god behind the veil of Maya. He may feel purposeless and incomplete.

9. TRANSFORMATION, THE INSTINCT FOR SPIRITUAL CHANGE

Our model man has now arrived at the place where spiritual life begins, the place where the raw is cut and cooked, where the ore is smelted and the metal shaped. He must now experience the fire of transformation - the hearth and the cauldron, the forge and the crucible. He must now place himself into the hands of the "keepers of the flame", the cook and the smith, mankind's original priests.

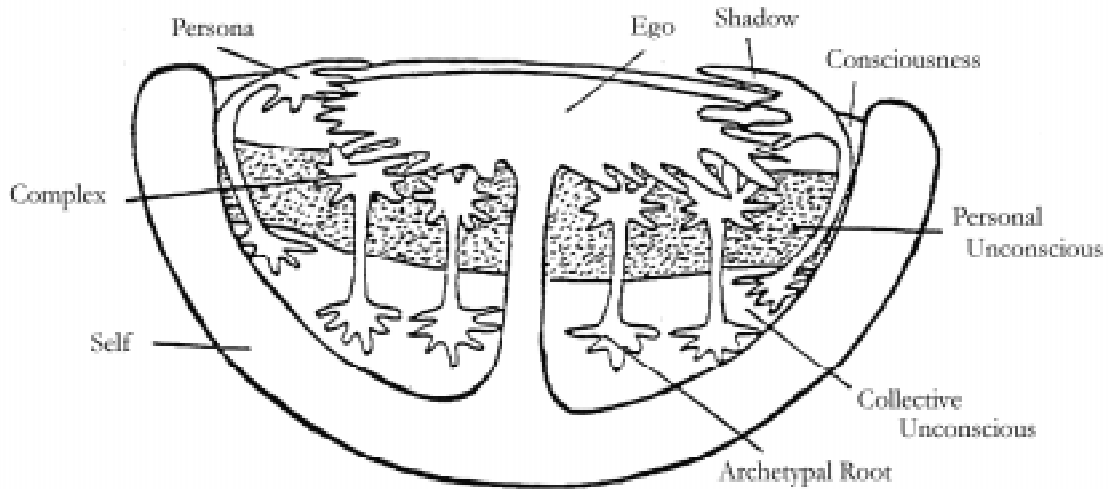
No longer may he identify himself as someone's son, brother, friend, student, lover, or father. Before he can discover his true nature, he must become the anonymous mendicant whose wealth consists in the realization that he chops wood and carries water.

Zen training is precisely this: Spiritual transformation achieved through sacrificial fires of ego-immolation, through disciplines anciently formulated in terms of earth, water, fire, air, and space. In the place of transformation, everything is consigned to the flames: fame, family, lovers, wealth and beauty.

This, then, is our model. Man, separated from his divine nature by the force of instinct, subjected to fragmenting ordeal in his middle years, and made whole as a nirvanic conclusion to the years of samsaric travail.

Of course, our model was an exemplary creature living in an exemplary world. He, unlike many of us, had a best friend, had heroes, had a loving wife and family. All of his instinctive drives found suitable goal-line recipients. None was buried alive in his psyche and he was able to mature with few complications.

CROSS-SECTION: MODEL OF PSYCHE



The self is seen as a bowl which encompasses 3 layers of consciousness. The bottom layer (the collective unconscious) contains the archetypal roots. The middle layer (the personal unconscious) contains the archetypal complexes with their tree like branches and leaf-clusters of associations. The personal unconscious also stores memories and other consciously and subliminally received data. The top layer (consciousness) contains the ego complex which arises directly from the self and interfaces with the contents of the personal unconscious. The Persona and the Shadow are seen to be exterior to the ego.

CHAPTER 8

BUDDHA NATURE AND ARCHETYPAL DYNAMICS

Happiness must never be thought to consist in anything exterior to ourselves: not in any person, not in any place, and not in any thing. Heaven and hell exist and they exist here and now and in our own minds. We can live in one locale or the other; and, unless we've been decapitated, we carry our heaven and our hell with us wherever we go. The problem is always in the mind.

Religions are civilizing enterprises. At their base levels, they take disparate groups of xenophobic savages and impose union and order on us whether we like it or not. Precepts or Decalogue is imposed and our instinctual drives are steered by promises of reward or threats of punishment.

At their higher levels, religions provide the so-called "mystical ladders" by which we can climb out of Samsara's snake-pit. The rungs are the ethics, the humility, the methodologies of mind management, and any of the other means by which we siphon-off energy from outwardly directed instinctive force and redirect it towards our interior life, in service to our Buddha Self. Though the terminology varies, the objective is everywhere identical: the individual soul's ecstatic union with the Divine Self. To be content with anything less is to settle for mere subsistence, to cultivate a tolerance for absurdity.

To Buddhists, Hell is life in Samsara, the world we encounter in the Six Worlds of false Chan, the world of the ego. In Samsara, all things are constantly changing and always conditional. We need to be needed even by those we do not care to serve, to be loved even by those whom we reject, to be admired and respected even by those whose opinions we consider worthless, and all this while we grovel at the feet of heroes who care as little for us as we care for those whose allegiance we require.

The Seventh World is the beginning, the place we are when we wake up and look upon ourselves objectively for the first time, when we are seized by the impulse to change, to transform ourselves and our environment. We want to be free of needing the people, places and things of this world. We have had them and they did not make us happy. We need to simplify existence and to find in that simplicity peace, joy, truth and freedom.

The Eighth and Ninth worlds of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas constitute the Tushita Heaven's precincts, the worlds of Divine Marriage, the Mysterium Conjunctions or Union of Opposites, i.e., Spiritual androgyny, and the worlds in which the Divine Child is created. After our these worlds, we strive to achieve complete kenosis, the saintly empty-of-ego state

in which we simply live out the life of our Buddha Self - The Tenth World's Void. We enter what in modern parlance might be termed Cypherspace: Zen's Empty Circle.

In Chan, the psychic matrix is called the Buddha Nature, the Original Face, Mind, or the Self. This Self is the core and essence of our being, at once its totality and that part of it which is divine. In Western societies people are used to referring to this divinity as God. Buddha Nature may therefore be referred to as God providing it is not regarded as a supreme being which exists external to the individual, except as it exists in all other living individuals. The facts of creation are simply outside our area of spiritual interest, at least in the beginning stages of spiritual life.

Chan Buddhism is non-dualistic. We do not believe that there is God and man. We believe that there is God in man. The Self, then, may be seen as the difference between a sleeping man and a fresh corpse. The Self is present in the sleeping man. In the dead man, no matter how recently dead he is, there is no Self. A dead man is a stone. And as there is no lord of the stones there is no lord of the dead. (Rhapsodic claims about finding Buddha Nature in clouds, mosquitoes, dog feces, and atomic nuclei are pantheistic drivel.)

Further, the Self never judges. The Self, if he be in the body of a murderer, sees no murderer, or if he be in the body of a saint, sees no saint. To our Self or Buddha Nature there is neither good nor evil, there are no praiseworthy beliefs or blameworthy beliefs, there are no meritorious actions or unmeritorious actions. These moral determinations are for humans to make in regard of social contracts, implied or expressed. Good and evil are necessary civil designations, but they have no spiritual applications.

In Chan, the dead have no Buddha Nature (and most assuredly do not find their egos reborn in another body) and the living have no God who stalks the universe planning, creating, punishing, rewarding or ignoring as suits his inscrutable will. The Kingdom of God is truly within; and the Kingdom of God, in its sublime entirety, is for the living.

Most of all, we think of our Buddha Self as a cord or artery or vine which connects us to each other so that we all live a single life.

The Self is also the organizing principle which regulates our body and provides for our development. It contains the general genetic formula that determines that we are men and not carrots and the specific genetic information that determines our individual physical and mental characteristics or tendencies thereto.

The Self is privy to all sensory data, including that which we consciously acknowledge and that which is received subliminally. Due to evolutionary preferences, consciousness has raised the human threshold of sensory awareness. We isolate an object or event for study and tune-out everything we deem extraneous. Whether we are subjecting something to rational analysis or are simply daydreaming about it, whenever our attention is thus engaged, many odors, tastes, sounds, visual and tactile stimuli pass unnoticed through

the portals of awareness. They are, however, recorded in the unconscious brain where they are accessible to the Self.

The Self is also the producer and director of our dreams and visions; and since the fund of data at its disposal is far more comprehensive than is available to ego-consciousness, the dreams which it produces can be particularly instructive.

Based upon Jung's description of the psyche, we can construct a rudimentary model of the psyche. In this model the mind is visualized as a bowl which contains three layers of consciousness.

The bowl is the Self in which the entire psyche rests. At the bottom of the bowl is the collective unconscious which functions as the earthlike repository of all our genetically ordained instinct seeds; the middle layer is the personal unconscious which contains our memory banks; and the top layer is consciousness, the domain of the ego. The ego can be seen as an outgrowth, a kind of center sprout that rises up out of the bowl's own material.

Each archetype rises into the personal unconscious until the layer becomes forested with treelike complexes. Above these trees, and interfacing with them, is the tree whose branches and leaves constitute the complex of ideas and associations that is the individual's identity or ego. Two of these archetypal trees, the Persona and the Shadow, grow around the ego and in this exterior position act as an obscuring mask, a protective visor, or a lens.

Normally, we have access only to the contents of the personal unconscious. All sensory data, even those upon which we have not focused conscious attention, are stored there. These recordings may be yielded to us at will, as when we retrieve information through an act of remembrance, or non-volitionally, as when we experience dreams, subliminal messages or other associative influences or ideas.

Using again our model child, we can say that at his birth the seed of the Mother archetype has sprouted into the personal unconscious but has, as yet, no leaves on its branches. The instinctual force must be transferred or projected upon a specific person, a mother, who will then supply the needed data leaves.

Our baby experiences the pain of hunger and quickly learns that it is mother who relieves this pain. The first leaf on the mother tree is the association of Mother = Relief of Pain. If he is cold and mother holds him close to her, the leaf of Mother = Warmth will appear on the tree. If he is frightened and mother soothes him, he will associate Mother = Safety. Other sensual data will enfoliate the mother tree. He will quickly learn the pattern of her face and distinguish it from those of other faces. He will recognize the sound of her voice and distinguish it from other voices. If she rubs her body with mimosa flowers, he will not only know her scent but for years to come he will associate mimosa with his mother whenever he smells it. If she sang a certain lullaby to him, he will think both of her and of peaceful sleep whenever he hears the melody. Memories of mother and the feelings of love,

pride, anger, security, jealousy, and so on that these memories engender, will fill out the tree. The contents will depend not only on the quality of the events themselves but on the quality of his perceptions of them and on his ability to understand, relate, integrate and respond to them. If there are congenital flaws in his brain or if he is otherwise impaired by injury or malnutrition, spring may never come to his mother tree.

The enfoliating process, then, constitutes a complex of ideas, memories and associations which adhere to each archetypal structure, giving it its peculiar characteristics. Through its many interfacing with consciousness, the complex transfers its data, thus influencing the ego to comply with the instinctive function.

All archetypal projections or bonds produce in the projector a desire to be within communicating range of the recipient. Whether an individual projects upon a best-friend, a lover or a hero, or even upon an enemy, he will find this person fascinating and he will be motivated to observe him or her closely. Each of his encounters supplies him with information and impressions that fill out the respective archetypal tree.

Mother, however, will be the dominant tree former. Not only are all Baby's experiences in some way related to her, but during the formative first year or so of his life, Baby's ego is insufficiently developed to categorize or to evaluate consciously the data mother supplies. Where others write and are read, mothers cryptically carve.

As the complex of maternal associations continues to grow, our Child simultaneously develops his own ego. As he gains command of his thoughts, he learns how to manipulate mother into providing that which he considers pleasurable and into eliminating that which he considers unpleasurable. He gains a repertoire of signals which prompt her to act. Smiles may be rewarded with cuddling. Tears may deliver candy. Mother may reward neatness, cleverness, politeness, or quiet submissiveness. He tries out many strategies and soon learns which one produces the greatest return of toys, attention and status. Problems

A person's ability to enter into successful relationships can be severely compromised whenever complexes contaminate each other or when one becomes so huge that it invades the domain of consciousness.

A mother who intrudes too much and too long into a child's life may cause so many associations to constellate about the Mother complex that its increasing volume forces it to penetrate the child's consciousness, obliterating the child's sense of self. The child affects strangely maternal attitudes and becomes a mental reflection of his mother.

More serious problems may arise. Should persistent abuse or neglect cause the Enemy Shadow to infiltrate the Mother Complex, the child may become, at the very least, a candidate for misogyny.

A Persona may grow so large that it stifles the ego, limiting its development. In public, the individual seems to lead a richly detailed and structured life. In private, he is often immature, disorganized, and uninvolved in anything beyond his persona's interest.

The Enemy Shadow is a particularly troublesome archetype. The Shadow never has a problem finding targets for his projection: he will try to cast himself upon anyone who comes within range. The old adage, 'familiarity breeds contempt,' in fact applies to that close association which makes someone a convenient screen for shadow projection. Kept at a distance, a person's armor is difficult to find chinks in; but with closeness, flaws become visible and the shadow is easily able to penetrate and infect. He will know what he is looking for, the details of vulnerability having already been supplied by the projector's own reservoir of reprehensible conduct. Projection

No one understands to an absolute certainty the mechanism of imprinting, that mysterious manner in which the specific details of face and form are etched into an archetype's original, smooth surface. We don't know why a gosling thinks the first creature it sees upon hatching is its mother, be that creature the responsible goose, the gardener, the lab scientist, or the neighborhood dog. We don't know why a chick will run for cover the first time it sees a chicken hawk's shadow move across the ground. We don't really understand why we are attracted by some people and repelled by others. Something in a stranger's appearance signals a congenial or distressing familiarity and we heed the message. "My type." "Not my type." It sometimes seems as though a batch of blank gingerbread men/gods were stored in our brains during our prenatal existence; and then, during our early formative years, various people who were close to us at the appropriate times sneaked into the Olympian bakery and decorated the divine, cookie-cut images with raisin eyes, glaze brows, nose, smile or frown, all to suit their own likenesses.

Take the case of thirty-five year old, moderately successful businessman Adam Doe. Imagine further that although divorced after a calamitous marriage which netted one child - the unexpected instigator of the nuptial contract - he is socially acceptable and available.

Adam has a problem. His relationships with women, never too mellifluous to begin with, always seem to turn unpalatably tart. He does not consciously recall that as an infant, finding faithful comfort and refection in the warm surroundings of his mother's breast, he once stared up into an adorable face whose features were at that very moment providing the architectural rendering, the plan and specifications, of his dream-girl construct. This face was now engraved upon his anima, and one day, years later when the proper hormones kicked-in, he would search for this face from among the hundreds of female faces he daily saw. Identified by chemical blueprint, he would recognize the girl of his dreams. Her face, just as this sweet maternal prototype's would be framed with fluffy red curls, her eyes would be sunny-sky blue, her nose, a graceful work, would wrinkle at its edges when she laughed; and she would laugh frequently. Yes, the great love of his life would be this pert, saucy type and naturally, she would be as generous, kind, chaste, loyal, dependable, intelligent, resourceful,

honest, loving, witty, and good humored as dear Mom, during his uncritical wonder years, had been.

Thirty-five years later, who would suspect that the frowsy old lady who turned his Mother's Day card over to check its price before reading it, whose skin had the texture of an iguana's, who smoked brown cigarettes and was addicted to Bingo, who gossiped incessantly and divided all mankind into an array of despicable minorities, who never once voted for an incumbent, who registered her lap dog, a vicious cur, as "Presheepoo of Tinkiville" and suffered the drooling mutt to kiss her the way no human ever had, was this very same adorable benefactress of his infancy? Who would even have remembered that her black dyed hair had once been dyed bright red? Not Adam, certainly.

And in those intervening thirty-five years, though he had been intimate with many women he had not been fully satisfied by one, for none even approximated the specifications of his dream girl. Usually he blamed himself or his karma. But blame did not cure. His relationships still tended to go sour.

Adam did not appreciate how very much circumstance and need contrive to mix the ill-suited, to mate odd socks. He did not understand how random events throw us together, how lust, greed, sloth, and a variety of unsavory motives drive us to make bitter choices, how loneliness or the fear of being left behind by our advancing peer group compels us to adjust our criteria, to make do, to adapt. (If we want to stay in the game, we cannot keep 'passing.' Sooner or later we have to play the hand we've been dealt.) In Adam's dream girl quest, there had been a troublesome lack of candidates. He had come of age in a Texas border town in which redheads did not comprise a notable percentage of available heads.

And then one day, lunching with a business associate, he chances to see, sitting nearby, a wondrous creature, a young woman with fluffy red curls, sunny-sky blue eyes, and a nose that wrinkles at its edges whenever she laughs. Adam Doe is fascinated - the first stage of projection. Again and again he finds his gaze drawn to her. He searches her fingers. She wears no wedding ring. She sees him stare and smiles slightly before she turns away. He is intrigued. The hunter in his breast awakens. Later, quite spontaneously, he alters his schedule for the following day: he will just happen to be in the vicinity of that restaurant at lunch time.

Now, in hot-pursuit, the hunter takes command. Adam must discover her name and address. He follows her into the parking lot and gets her license number. He trails her back to her office. Later, he will cruise her neighborhood and arrange an accidental encounter. "Haven't we met somewhere before?" He engages her in conversation and with a rush of triumph no Caesar ever knew obtains her phone number. Palms sweating, he calls and offers to take her to dinner. She accepts. He plans his campaign with meticulous care. Veni. Vidi. Vici.

Adam has been hooked. He is in love. Experiencing a level of excitement never known before, he takes her to dinner. Now, assuming that the woman does not behave too atrociously, he is confirmed in his idolatry. Addicted. In bondage. No drug can get him so high as he is on Reds. He passes the second phase of projection, one-pointed focus, and enters the third: blindness. He does not - indeed, he cannot - see her as she really is. He sees only the image which he has projected upon her.

For, in addition to granting the three visual qualities (hair, eyes, nose), he generously accepts without evidence that she has fulfilled the remaining specifications of his 'dream-girl' construct; and he cannot even consider that such largesse may not be condign. Let his friend say to him, "Chaste? That redheaded bimbo we saw in the restaurant? Hah! She's slept with every cop on the force, including the women." Adam will respond with flaming eyes, clenched teeth and fist, and inform his former friend of the penalties of blasphemy. Let a friend say to him, "Honest? I happen to know she's done time for shoplifting!" and there will be much for that ex-friend to regret. And if, when confronted by her rap sheet, she snivels that the arresting officer and district attorney threatened to charge her with espionage if she didn't plead-down to theft, he'll believe her. Not until the awful day of reckoning arrives in the form of overdrawn bank accounts and credit cards maxed-out with purchases that included men's items he never received, is the veil torn from his eyes sufficiently for him to see that she is not the woman he believed her to be. And he will regard this as her fault! How he curses her as he itemizes her deceits! Well... we know that she never professed to be honest, loyal, generous, kind, loving, dependable and so on. We know that he merely credited her with those qualities. All she had was curly red hair, sunny-sky blue eyes and a cute nose that wrinkled at its edges when she laughed.

Had he been lucky, his materialized dream girl might have actually possessed fifteen or twenty of his requisite qualifications. She might indeed have turned out to be honest and loyal, etc. He'd have made adjustments for the few qualities she lacked. "My wife? Great in bed but no appreciation whatsoever of Samuel Beckett." It would have worked.

There is an old, ironic story in Islam about a handsome, rich sheik who never married. "Ah," said an old friend, "you were always such a great lover of women! Why did you never wed?" "Because," answered the sheik, "I was always waiting for the perfect woman." "Ah, and you never found her!" "Oh, yes, I did." "Then why didn't you ask her to marry you?" "I did. But she turned me down because she was waiting for the perfect man."

And so this is what God intends. We should be hooked by the presence of only a few features and should merely imagine that all the others exist as well... and then take our chances that each of us will possess enough of the required characteristics to keep the other happy. If we all waited until we found mates who were as perfect for us as we were for them, the human race wouldn't have made it to the starting line.

We find a friend and believe that he will make our interests his interests. We trust him with our loved ones, our reputations, our finances, perhaps even our lives. The pain we

feel if we discover that our trust has been betrayed is terrible. Only when we become wiser do we understand that we are seldom justified in placing so great a burden upon someone, and that when a person fails to live up to our expectations, it is more the fault of our judgment than his performance.

To the same degree that we are blind to the faults of someone we love, we are blind to the good qualities of those we hate. We could hardly kill a murderous intruder if we stopped to consider the richness of his baritone or to admire the gentle way he steadies his Rottweiler. Blindness, a total inability to see objectively the person, place or thing upon which we have projected a hunk of our own psyche, has definite survival value.

It is a condition of Samsara that the instinct-gods who live in our cerebral cortex's Mt. Olympus demand that we worship them. They will do whatever it takes to get us to project them upon the people, places and things of our environment so that we can then kneel at the feet of the recipient. The gods reward us with pleasure. We feel happy, connected, and complete whenever we project one of these divine images.

To grow we must engage others or pay a penalty for failing properly to project an archetype. Loneliness and anxiety are the principal penalties; but there are secondary fines. An immature woman who has not projected her Animus (and is therefore not in love with anyone) is not merely lonely, she tends in her demeanor to become a caricature of masculinity - loud, opinionated, bossy, and rough. An immature man who is not in love is dominated by his Anima who frets, pouts, and flits about his mind impatiently. He tends to show this alien femininity by being moody, capricious, vain, overly-sensitive and catty. No one enjoys being so influenced by his own in-house Animus or Anima. The euphoria which attends projection, i.e., finally falling in love, attests to the despair of being unattached. When Cupid strikes, the bossy woman becomes a coquette and the tentative man becomes assertive, protective, and, for so long as the attraction lasts, as solid as granite.

When flesh and blood recipients are unavailable, characters from novels, movies, and soap operas provide convenient receptacles for our archetypal contents; but interactions with fictional recipients are rarely beneficial since we can mature only by interacting with living persons. Further, most projections are reciprocal: the Mother projects the Adorable Little One, the child projects the Mother, and the dyad is complete. There are two needed for friendship. There must be a pair of lovers. And a man alone has only half an enemy at best. In these bonds, one side necessarily informs and develops the other. We learn only by such confrontation. Fantasy friends, lovers, or children always do precisely what we or some clever screenwriters say they must do. There is no opportunity for conscious consideration, empathy, sacrifice, forgiveness, responsibility, or any of the trials and errors of learning.

Again, life requires us to engage, exploit, and then disengage and integrate, in an appropriate time and manner, the natural sequence of archetypes. As we have seen, as a man progresses from birth to fatherhood, he invests his psychic energy in a series of projections which starts with (no surprise here) Mother. When Mom pushes him away in order to care

for a new baby and, simultaneously, his developing mind and body permit social interactions, he withdraws psychic energy from Mother and invests it in new Family and Friend relationships. He finds Heroes to inspire him. At puberty, the Anima can all but bankrupt his nervous system. Such assets as remain he stashes in his Persona. By the time he marries, he divests himself of outside social interests and devotes his attentions to his wife and children.

After we have fulfilled our biological commitments, we can attend to our spiritual agendas. We can detach ourselves from the people and things we have bonded to and absorb into ourselves the connecting archetypal force. Directed inwardly, our love becomes one-pointed devotion to our Buddha Self while outwardly, it becomes diffuse affection, extending to everyone, everywhere. Instead of having specific friends, we simply become friendly.

Thus, one class of archetype replaces another in accordance with rising biological imperatives. It is a unique individual, indeed, who attains maturity without having experienced these archetypal encounters.

CHAPTER 9

HIGH PRICE OF DESIRE

It should come as no surprise to anyone that conmen the world over exploit our failure to mature on schedule. We become ‘easy marks’ and ‘pluckable pigeons’ in our eagerness to enter into social relationships, to belong, connect, bond, to be a lover or a friend.

We can illustrate the danger inherent in this immaturity by a looking at that ancient game of dice, Shooting Craps.

First, some explanations: Each die, a cube, is spotted so that its opposing sides total seven, in other words, 6 is opposite 1, 5 is opposite 2, and 4 is opposite 3. This much can safely be assumed.

In Craps, a player, using a pair of dice, bets that he can throw a 7 or an 11 on the first toss. People can bet with him or against him. If he succeeds, he wins; if he throws 2, 3, or 12, he loses. If, however, he throws 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, or 10, this number becomes his ‘point’ and he throws the dice as many times as he needs either to get that same point again, in which case he wins, or until he throws a 7, in which case he loses.

In Nevada, for example, gambling is both legal and well controlled. At unpredictable occasions, the hand of a gaming control agent will reach out of the Crap table’s crowd to pick up the dice before the stickman can retrieve them. A badge is flashed, the dice are inserted into an official envelope which is immediately sealed and signed, and the dice are taken away to be tested. Should they be in any way less than perfect the casino will be subjected to ruinous investigation and the very real possibility of loss of license.

A gaming license is so valuable that casinos go to extremes to insure the integrity of their dice. They do not want ‘bad’ dice introduced into any game, not only because they might lose to the player (a comparatively minuscule loss) but because if a Gaming Control Board agent should happen to confiscate the dice, there would be hell to pay. So, to prevent counterfeit dice from being introduced into the game, each casino has its logo stamped upon the dice it uses.

Naturally, it also being extremely valuable, the die that imprints the logo is stored in the local dice manufacturer’s vault. And, of course, it had better be used only on dice that are ‘straights’ or ‘squares.’ But just because dice manufacturers know how to make good dice doesn’t mean they don’t know how to make ‘bad’ dice. Ah, they do make lots of these ‘trick’

dice. Some of them even have impressive (but not Nevada registered) logos stamped upon them. Such dice are shipped out of state to worldwide locations.

Trick or 'crooked' dice come in four varieties: rockers, bevels, shapes, and loads.

As the name suggests, a rocker has one convex side, It is much easier to overturn a rocking chair than it is to overturn a chair whose legs are flat against the floor. Let's say that, depending upon degree of curvature, friction, and so on, it is five times easier to overturn a curved object than it is to overturn a plane object. Consider a flat-surfaced cube (the die) tumbling down the Crap table's green felt. If five units of force are required to overturn it on its plane, straightedged surface, it will stop tumbling whenever it possesses less than those five required units. But if one side of the die is curved so that only one unit of force will suffice to overturn it, the die, just as it comes to the end of its tumble, will then continue, one final unit's worth, to flip over and reveal the intended face.

Bevels, also as the name suggests, have one edge shaved to a forty- five degree angle so that they will flip over with much less energy than is required to have them flip over a ninety degree angle.

Shapes are not perfect squares. They are rectangular, i.e., longer in one dimension than they are in the other two. If a perfect cube tumbles down the felt, one side is as likely to come up as the other. But a rectangular shape will tumble over its long dimension, virtually ignoring its short or square edges. If you tossed a man down a hill, he would not tumble head and feet, head and feet, he would tumble belly and spine, belly and spine.

Loads are the most famous and common trick dice. Professional dice have their spots shallowly drilled out; paint, of density equal to the plastic, is then inserted into the vacant spaces. Loads are created when the spots of one face, usually the six, are filled with heavy, lead-laced paint. The law of gravity prevails and just as a dropped piece of buttered toast usually lands butter side down, the heavy six-side will come to rest against the felt. "Snake eyes", a loser, is quite easy to throw with a pair of six-spot loads. Three, also a loser, similarly can be obtained with a six and a five load.

Dice cups facilitate the introduction of trick dice into a game. The stickman merely palms the trick die or dice and deftly makes the switch when, between plays, he retrieves the dice and drops them into the cup. Dice cups are prohibited in Nevada and wherever else gaming is responsibly controlled.

To understand what all this has to do with archetypal projection we must first ask, Who purchases these trick dice? The sad answer is that they are purchased by people whom we all 'instinctively' trust. Remembering that the archetype of the Good Friend (the friendly shadow) serves our requirement to trust - as in the buddy system - we can readily see that it is precisely our inclination to trust certain people that creates the market. Individual chapters of an enormous variety of men's organizations (both with and without animal names and

including veterans' organizations) purchase trick dice for fund raising events. The 'need' need not be so seemingly altruistic. Trick dice are shipped to master sergeants the world over and to Chief Petty officers in every ship in the fleet of every navy. Upperclassmen of fraternity houses make their car payments by sporting with eager freshmen; cruise ships, in international waters, are at liberty to cheat their fun-loving passengers; but the biggest customers of all are those hyphenated foreign-home 'friendship' clubs - Irish-American, Chinese-American, Polish-American, German-American. Substitute for American whatever country you reside in. If they've got a 'back room' dice game, you'd better bet the dice are bad.

Fritz Doemann, a salesman from Berlin, comes to Somecity, U.S.A. to conduct business. He is not a mature man. He has never integrated his archetype of the Good Friend.

Though tired, Fritz is restless in his hotel. He must go out and be among people. He anxiously reconnoiters the downtown streets until he sees a sign which announces that he has arrived at the German-American Friendship Club. Fritz cannot resist the call. He enters and is immediately greeted by a jovial fellow who speaks his language and welcomes him with unabashed warmth. Fritz rejoices.

Generously, his host escorts him to the bar and buys the first round of genuine German beer. Contempt-in-common being the glue of comradeship, his host ventures to opine, "American beer! Ugh!" "Ja. Ja. Ha. Ha," Fritz concurs, adding, "the water my wife washes dishes in tastes better." "Ja. Ja. Ha. Ha," confirms his host, declining to press for details about those occasions during which Fritz drinks dish-water. Of course, Fritz may never have actually tasted American beer either, but he will be unable to refrain from criticizing it. He needs to connect with a friend; and no one knows this better than his host.

For fifteen minutes or so there will be talk of things German. And then his host, overwhelmed by goodness of heart, will wink and hold his index finger to his lips, signaling the conspiracy of true friends. He will tell Fritz that he is going to do him the favor of gaining him admittance to some back room action. Fritz will feel like the luckiest sheep in Christendom as he goes to his fleecing.

Especially in the critical period of adolescence, an unprojected hero archetype tends insidiously to lower an individual's self esteem and confidence. Unmotivated and restless, the young person finds his life devoid of purpose or meaning. He drifts, clinging desperately to those of his friends who also lack the inspiration necessary to achieve even modest success. However, once this youngster finds an inspiring role model upon which to project his hero, he may become a driven man. Challenged by his hero, he enters the contest and with determined concentration practices guitar chords, or develops computer programs, or rises at dawn to run ten miles, or announces to his flabbergasted parents that their fears about his entering the world of crime were not entirely without foundation: he has just decided to become a lawyer.

Of course, if his spirit is willing but his flesh untalented, financially unsupported, or too susceptible to the charms of old habits, he may let his heroic dream die an ignoble death. If fate is not too unkind he'll quietly retreat into the refuge of spectators and become one of those tuberous masters of the fine art of vicarious participation, a couch potato.

But even if he accepts the challenge, pursues his dream and becomes a competent consiglieri, he may not necessarily have integrated the previous levels of hero projection. Spiritually, he may still believe in fairy tales. He may believe that no matter how he errs, a simple apology will set things right and that he can always count on the good will and resources of his magical godfather to set things right. He will likely be mistaken.

Each level of hero projection is more than a staging area for the next level. True, the Trickster is the support for the Superman who is the launching platform for the Human hero, who, in turn, is the base upon which the Savior stands. But each base must be destroyed, immolated in the launching process.

It isn't enough to cease believing in the reality of Bugs Bunny. We also have to understand that Trickster ethics will no more function in our world than Trickster methods. We can't steal the farmer's crops and we can't avoid justice by being cute or by pushing the farmer off a cliff.

It isn't enough to cease believing in the reality of Superman. We can't continue to transfer control of our lives to caped crusaders. We can't depend on vagrant spirits or on stars to explain and direct our destinies. Stars and spirits cannot do for us what we are obliged to do for ourselves.

And, most assuredly, we cannot approach the Bodhisattva/Savior if we idolize another human being.

We can easily gauge a person's level of spiritual maturity by observing the level at which he has projected his hero archetype.

The following experience should serve to illustrate:

I was once associated with a Zen group which, having outgrown its meeting room, rented a larger facility from an unaffiliated New Age religious group that had just leased a new building. Other small groups also became subtenants so that the room was occupied each night of the week. The new meeting room's decor was pleasant and unobtrusive, suitable for serious lecture, discussion and meditation.

At first, the different tenant groups seemed well-suited for coexistence. None left even a trace of its activity. But soon the room's bare walls began to fill up with posters of cute animals with cute captions. A kitten with its paws pressed in the gesture of prayer announced, "I'm not purr-fect but God loves me." A lamb, looking sheepish, appeared over

the legend, "Even when you're baaaad, you're God's precious lamb." Unicorns - stuffed, ceramic, and wax - lounged on the tables; and then there materialized one night a rather large, blue pyramid frame. It hung from the light fixture in the center of the room from which place it funneled through its apex the scattered energies of nearby galaxies or so we were told. The following week there appeared in the room's four corners long, ray-collecting, quartz crystals which pointed to the center of the room, deliberately plotting the trajectories of their cosmic payloads to collide with the pyramid's vertical downpour. Despite the danger, chairs were positioned nearby - a bit too insouciantly to suit me - while a star-topped wand of uncertain function stood ready presumably to tap the celestial current and direct it wherever it was needed.

If all this were not enough to open the fontanelles of the most hardheaded skeptic and set his spine into harmonic motion with the firmament, there also appeared plaques and other representations of the zodiacal constellations, a little bust of Cleopatra, an obelisk, some engraved invitations to witness a spirit channel's transmission of the voice of a dead philosopher, and several portraits of White angels who, we were informed, could cause sacred books, epistles, and other instruments of enlightenment to appear on people's coffee tables and credenzas.

When dozens of bright red, paper hearts were taped to walls, doors and mirrors ("to remind people to love"), the Zen Buddhists cried foul and were invited to move out.

To be fair, New Agers are sincere in their beliefs which, after all, are predicated upon seductive, semi-plausible explanations. They are told that pyramids are the most stable of all geometric shapes and who would argue with this? They are offered testimonials by persons with scientific credentials, persons who, having stood inside an Egyptian pyramid, were able to describe convincingly the "incredibly strong vibrations" and other effects of interstellar radiation. They hear about Marconi, radio waves, and the receptivity of crystals. It seems to make sense. But something prevents them from subjecting their beliefs to any kind of scrutiny. We wonder how they can be so interested in historical Egypt without giving Egypt's history a thought. How do they not know, as every unconcerned schoolboy does know, that after the Syrians invaded Egypt in the 7th century, B.C., came the Persians in the 6th, the Macedonian Greeks under Alexander in the 4th, (did they forget that Cleopatra was of Macedonian Greek descent?), the Romans at the time of Christ, (did they recall Mark Antony and Julius Caesar?), the Arab invasions in the 7th century A.D., the French, the Turks, and finally the British (didn't they see Lawrence of Arabia?). Not until after WWII under President Nasser was Egypt truly ruled by an Egyptian. How did it happen that Egypt, the absolute center of pyramid power, had to be dragged through two and a half millennia before it found the strength to stand on its own political feet?

As to crystal power, they knew their crystals came from South America. How did they remain unaware that they were mined there by some of the world's most exploited workers - men who died poor, young, and with lungs filled with the wondrous dust. If it were

possible to channel beneficial cosmic energy through crystals, surely the men who mined them would live past forty and own the beds they died in.

This New Age group was composed of decent, intelligent people whose spiritual development just happened to be arrested at a comic book level, somewhere between the Trickster and the Superman phase. Animals taught them their ethics, and the lesson was always the same: It's OK to fail. If you're sincere in your desire to improve, you'll be forgiven. (Coyote!) That was their lower bound. Their upper bound was the Superman/Hero evidenced by their reliance upon spirits, magic, astrology, and other pseudoscience to achieve their fuzzy goals.

Caught between the Trickster and Superman phase, a person's consciousness cannot expand sufficiently for him to gauge the true extent of his knowledge. He doesn't know that he doesn't know. He says, "Ahah!" and, like a schoolboy with a hunch, thinks he understands everything. Mere coincidence is easily elevated to divine revelation. He is energized by his 'discovery.' His reason is consumed in an intuitive flash. (This is one of the peculiar side-effects of a genuine meditation experience.) Unfortunately, the ash of this combustion is often the emotional fertilizer which nourishes zealotry... the smug conviction, the need to proselytize.

As all believers have, this New Age group had its dark night of the soul. Terrible days came when the dreaded Vortex effect of planetary alignment interfered with the cosmic flow. Cataclysms were predicted for their Earth Mother. Fortunately, they prayed around the clock and She was saved.

May we sophisticated souls repose sanguine in the knowledge that we are safely above the fray of superstition? Are we sure that we have been permanently inoculated against voodoo's mumbo-jumbo and other paranormal infections? Let us consider the old tale of the lucky bank teller:

One day Mr. Samuel P. Doe receives a strange, unsigned, personal letter: Dear Sammy,

You don't know me but I know you very well. I never had anything to give you so I always had to stay in the background. But recently something wonderful happened to me.

Sammy, I was given the gift of prophecy. I get glimpses of the future. It is a religious gift so I can't use it to benefit myself. But I can use it to benefit you. All I ask is that you don't tell anyone about it.

Saturday night there is going to be a championship prizefight between Smith and Jones. Sammy, I have seen the future. Smith is going to win. Bet whatever you can on Smith and you will make yourself some money. That will make me very happy. (signed) Someone Who Cares

Mr. Doe tells himself that he does not believe in such nonsense... but who is this person who has been in the background watching? Why did he send such a letter. There was no solicitation. The writer asked for nothing. Why is he so paternal? Good Grief!

Mr. Doe resists the impulse to toss the letter into the trash. A day or so later he places a bet on Smith. He can hardly contain himself when, on Saturday night, he watches the victorious Smith don the Champion's belt and circle the ring. The money Mr. Doe has made is at the moment relatively unimportant. He feels 'chosen'. Dare he believe that he is close to someone who has an inside track to God?

Early the following week he receives another letter from the same benefactor. This letter informs him that Sunday's big professional football game between the Weasels and the Leopards will be won by the ones with spots. Bet heavily, he is advised. Can Mr. Doe cease salivating when the Leopards win returning him eight dollars for every three he wagered? It would take him months to earn the equivalent amount in salary. More, this is his personal money. He need share it with nobody. And it is tax-free! The gift is cornucopian.

And the week after that sees the deliverance of yet another fortunate epistle. Bet on the Carbuncles to take the Diamondbacks in Sunday's contest! Mr. Doe is delirious as he secretly withdraws his life's savings. He sees himself sailing, without benefit of spouse, to Bora Bora... make that Singapore... No, Monaco.

The Carbuncles come through for him and as he counts his money he renews his passport and gets vaccinated. A few more bets and he will be able to live like royalty. After all, has he not been indirectly singled out by God?

How he trembles when, a week later, instead of a sure winner, he receives the following note: Dear Sammy,

I've just gotten some bad news from my doctor. He tells me I need my large colon operated on or else I'll die in a few months. As you know, God is my life and because I serve Him, I am vowed to earthly poverty. So, I don't have the twenty thousand dollars the surgery and recovery will cost. I want to live if only to be able to continue helping you. So, if you have the spare cash and want to pay for my operation, fine. Send a cashier's check to me at the enclosed post office box address. But if you can't afford to help me, don't worry. I will die happy knowing that in some small way I was finally able to help you. (signed) Someone Who Has Always Cared

Who would fail to provide that cashier's check? Who would doubt that this benefactor possessed supernatural power? Was not the evidence held in hand and deposited in secret safe deposit box? Mr. Doe can hardly be blamed for rushing to the aid of his Golden Goose.

How could he know that his benefactor was a clever conman who came to his city, availed himself of the Chamber of Commerce's VIP (Very Important Persons) list, the membership lists of various professional groups, the society pages, the classified phone directory, and so on, and developed a list of five thousand 'marks'. He then told twenty-five hundred of them that Smith would win the prizefight. The other twenty-five hundred were told that Jones would win. When Smith won he discarded the latter group and divided the former into two groups. He then told twelve hundred and fifty that the Weasels would win and the other twelve hundred fifty that the Leopards would win. By the time that the Carbuncles or the Diamondbacks won, there were six hundred twenty-five fanatical "believers" willing and able to send him thousands of dollars.

Nobody can see the future. We casually accept this, but we can't truly believe it until we have sacrificed our archetypal Superman and given him a proper hero's funeral. Failing this, we don't know when or if he will ever rise up and project himself upon Someone Who Cares.

Transitions from one level of hero to another are usually distressing. A toddler, properly functioning in the Trickster level, believes in Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny. When he is older and enters school, his slightly older peers mock him for such childish beliefs. He is hurt, embarrassed and confused. Can it be true that his heroes don't even exist? Oh, he has been deceived! It was Mommy who filled the Easter basket. It was Daddy in the red suit. He sulks until someone asks him whether he would rather be Superman or Spiderman. Wow! Happily, he makes and defends his choice. He considers and accepts as true the inter-planetary battles he sees on television. For him Klingons and Clark Kent really do exist. He marvels at the supernatural. He believes in ghosts and magic and yet feels safe amongst the fabulous for he can clutch his rabbit's foot or draw a circle on the floor to keep evil spirits at bay. Before long his beliefs will again be subjected to peer review; and if it is discovered that he accepts as factual the existence of winged men or Martian war veterans, he faces ridicule and calumny. Cursing his stupidity, he again labors in pain and confusion until that blessed day when he is saved by the likes of Tupac Shakur or Johnny Unitas. Feeling the beat of rap or rock and roll or knowing a good forward pass when he sees one gains him re-admittance to the human race. His heroes are at last human; but he will do what he can to deify them.

The Human Hero projection will show itself in devotion to a teacher, entertainer, athlete, politician, and so on, devotion that is often fanatical. The projecting person's heart flutters as his Guru or Roshi or presidential candidate or Hall of Fame quarterback or Nobel Laureate enters the room. A devotee will stand in the rain for hours to hear his 'Diva' sing or watch his favorite guitarist perform. A star centerfielder retires and grown men weep as he makes his farewell address. (Was there such a crowd at Calvary?)

For a final illustration of the price we pay for failing to free ourselves from the need to bond with other people, let's look at Jesse Doe, a forty-four year old engineer, who's a divorced father of two.

Since his ex-wife and kids live in another state, Jesse keeps his own little apartment; and between the rent, the car and the child support payments, his existence hovers around the poverty level.

He's more than bitter. Daily he says to himself, "Here I am, my life two-thirds over. I've worked for years and what do I have to show for it? Nothing. My kids plays softball with the stranger who's living in my house, sleeping with my woman, eating at my table. And I sit here alone in this dump watching television." As the months pass, his discontent deepens.

Jesse Doe has a barber who is a born-again Christian. Snip, snip, snip... "Brother, until you've let Jesus into your heart, you're condemned to misery. Come with me to a Revival meeting. You won't regret it." Snip, snip...

"No," says Jesse. And he means it. He dreads getting his hair cut because of the evangelical pitch that comes with the snipping.

Then, one night, as Jesse sits before his flickering tube, the barber knocks at his door with a proposition he can't refuse. "The world's greatest preacher is speaking in a tent just outside town. Come with me and I swear the moment you say you want to leave, we'll leave without a word. Not only that but I promise you that I will never bring up religion to you again. Never."

A future filled with peaceful haircuts - and all for the price of taking a quick ride with the barber. Jesse relents.

They pull up at the busy tent. Brilliant light streams from the entrance. A band plays and even in the parking lot Jesse receives the tactile benefits of a sound wave massage. The music, hauntingly familiar, evokes recollections of childhood innocence and simpler times... before the world turned rotten, before he knew the burden of responsibility and the high price of a fickle heart.

There in the convivial sights and sounds, someone pats his shoulder and calls him Brother. A kindly old lady extends a tray of cookies towards him and calls him Sonny. People are friendly. And the smells of cinnamon buns and coffee fill the air. And the music! Soon, Jesse is singing and clapping his hands and stompin' his feet to the rhythm of hymns he hasn't heard in decades.

And then the lights dim and a spotlight shines on a fellow in a white suit who comes to the podium with The Book in his hand, a fellow who speaks in seductive cadences, who lets his voice curl sensually around buzzwords while his tongue licks new meaning from old and tired clichés, who gyrates and stretches, who points and pounds. Jesse is enthralled, and

it doesn't even surprise him that when the preacher asks for dedicated souls to raise their hands and shout Hallelujah, he complies without hesitation.

He joins his barber's church and enters what seems to him to be a new life, a pure and love filled life. He easily differentiates friend from foe, good from evil, truth from lie. He will finally know who his enemies are, the ones who were responsible for his failures. He will identify Satan and his minions: the women who create lust; the wicked comrades who entrapped him with lures of alcohol; the merchants, employers and politicians whose greed cannot be sated. And the particular will extend to the general in a frenzy of sampling.

For as surely as we look eastward to see the rising sun, his enemy will soon become some other religion or sect, some other nationality or race, some other economic class or politically active group.. one that has conveniently been identified for him by his new church. Religious leaders need to identify a powerful group enemy because they need to avoid internecine strife. They need to prevent their parishioners from casting their Shadows upon each other; and the most efficient way to avert this organizational catastrophe is to direct everyone's individual shadow outside the congregation, to cast them collectively upon some "menacing" alien group. Common hatred is the glue that holds congregations together.

Jesse Doe will beam and greet his fellow church members with unabashed affection. Excited by the release of his long pent-up gods and eager to worship them, he will testify to the power of God Almighty at every opportunity and never will he suspect that his conversion, while obviously religious, is far from spiritual or that the changes he is experiencing, while being dramatic, are neither deep nor permanent.

Would Jesse's fate have been different if he had gone to a Zendo instead of a church? Not at all. It cannot be said often enough: Heaven and hell exist and they exist here and now and in our minds. Unless we've been decapitated, we bring our heaven or our hell with us wherever we go. Who dares to enter a synagogue, a mosque, a cathedral or a temple with the intention of gratifying his ego, that patron of hell? Only a wretched fool would enter a holy place in order to be seen and admired, as part of some hellish Six Worlds' strategy to gain status for himself. People who join Zen groups often join for the same reasons that they join any club. The harm is minimized according as they admit they are not there for spiritual reasons.

So Jesse was a changed man; but the archetypal projections which instigated the changes were designed for a young, maturing person. Jesse's person was as overripe as it was underfinanced. He had projected the archetype of the Good Friend onto his fellow church members when he was far beyond the need for large gene pools or the safety of the buddy system and the herd; he had projected the archetype of the Hero onto the preacher, when he was in need of a Savior not a social director or moral coach; and, of course, instead of accepting responsibility for his own failures, he had cast past and future blame upon his newly identified and adopted Shadow antagonists. (Should he have become sexually attracted to a church "sister" he would have found himself confronted by an archetypal full-

court press.) His new attachments will not make him happy; they will only present him with more obstacles to overcome, more severed ties, more disappointments.

Jesse has yet to learn that happiness must never be thought to consist in anything outside himself: not in any person, not in any place, not in any thing. In his church or out of it, he is still a dependent creature. He must become an individual, complete unto himself. Just as a good teacher seeks respectful relationships with his students but does not allow them to become emotionally attached to him, a good path, while providing for the occasional support of fellow travelers; is not intended to supply lovers and friends.

We'll leave Jesse at religion's base-level, worshipping Samsara's false idols. Before he becomes spiritual and finds Christianity's true mystical ladder, he'll likely become thoroughly disillusioned and disgusted with religion and life and find himself in the Swamp.
Dreams and Visions

As terrible as it is to have an unprojected archetype prowling our mind, it seems even worse to project the creature upon someone who tears it off and tramples it. A disloyal child can inflict more injuries than a legion of devils; and as we can all attest, it seems easier to look into the eyes of a hooded cobra than it is to search the face of a perfidious lover.

Whenever a bond is broken without our consent, whether by death or infidelity, or whenever we suffer injury or failure great enough to cancel our security and obliterate our hope, we grieve bitterly and alone. God's comforting hand does not seem to be anywhere near us. We are in what we feel to be eternal, isolating darkness, full of pain for which there is no anodyne. Yet, God is there to help us. We need to learn how to ask for help and how to receive it in whichever way He gives it.

A man once came to a Chan priest asking for help in determining the meaning of a vision. "It happened several years ago," he said. "I awakened in the middle of the night and found my father, who had died years before, standing at the foot of my bed. I saw him as clearly as I'm seeing you. I called to him but he disappeared before he had a chance to speak. I want to know, what was he trying to tell me?"

"Your father wasn't trying to tell you anything," the priest replied. "Your father was dead." "But I saw him," protested the man. "I am sure you did," countered the priest. "But THAT you saw him IS the message. Without knowing your history I will guess three things: one, that you loved your father very much; two, that at the time you had the vision you were in deep personal distress; and three, that afterwards you felt much better." The man confirmed all three guesses. He had been going through bankruptcy at the time of the vision and was severely anxious and depressed; and, indeed, he had recovered his composure after the vision.

"No doubt," said the priest, "You had been praying for God's help. Well, God answered your prayers. You saw with your own eyes that your Dad, the one person in this

world who could comfort and reassure you, was right there watching over you as you slept! No matter what trouble you faced, your Dad was still standing beside you. Of course you felt better! Who wouldn't? A true spiritual experience produces euphoria! For months afterwards you can feel that surging happiness. Financial problems don't seem important when you're in a state of Grace. What a wonderful thing for God to do for you! Now," demanded the priest, "tell me what you expected when you prayed for help? Did you think God would write you a check and leave it on the kitchen table?"

All visions are important and deserve consideration. It will not do to make a celebrity of one man because he sees the Virgin Mary standing by the freeway and to make a pariah of another man because he hears the devil talking to him on a short-wave radio. Yes, as in this exchange between the man and the priest, we are usually correct when we interpret a pleasant vision as therapeutic, a signal of strife's resolution; and we are usually correct when we regard an unpleasant vision as describing defeat or disintegration, a signal of worsening emotional turmoil. The problem is that usually the person who has had a frightening vision has had other less-troublesome visions before, or has at least exhibited other signs of distress which we chose to ignore. The ante gets 'upped'. Signals of distress become more and more outrageous until somebody finally pays attention to them. When the devil starts making speeches on the short-wave we grab his audience, institute drug and shock therapy and attempt to communicate with a psyche that by then is in ruins. Sometimes when a problem is small a little kind attention is all that is required to solve it. (Can we not do this much for each other?)

Dreams serve a variety of needs. They regulate a person's psychic balance, alert him to the dangers of a course he has undertaken, or even to prompt him to explore new solutions to a difficult problem.

In compensatory, balance-restoring dreams, a person who has been humiliated by someone he admires may dream that he is praised or befriended by one of his heroes... perhaps a movie star or athlete; and the dream will help to restore his self-esteem. Likewise, if on some occasion a person has been overly smug about himself, he may dream that one of his heroes snubs him; and the dream will have a disquieting, sobering effect. Thus, compensatory dreams serve to moderate the extremes of our ego's pride or debasement.

In premonition dreams, a person may be encouraged to proceed with a certain course of action or to be warned against it. The dream may caution him about someone or, conversely, may suggest that someone be seen in a more favorable light. The dreamer will be influenced. If he acts in accordance with the dream, he feels reassured. If he acts against the dream's advice, he feels anxious.

Additionally, a person who is struggling with a problem, intellectual or emotional, may find a clue to its solution neatly delivered in a dream.

When evaluating dreams we must recall that the Self - the dream director - is privy to data collected from a variety of sources unnoticed by consciousness.

Nightmares cry out for interpretation and anyone who experiences them is well advised to seek professional help in determining their significance.

In our dreams the clothes we are wearing (or the lack of them) usually represent an evaluation of our persona while the house we find ourselves in represents the condition of our ego. Most people find that before they are spiritually saved they dream of being in a dilapidated building. Sometimes the building has a nice facade; but once inside the dreamer finds himself in a bombed-out wreck. When he is saved and gets on the Path, he finds himself occupying higher priced real estate.

Dream messages are rarely verbal. Usually, metaphors are played out. For example, if in his everyday speech a man says "kicked the bucket" when he means died, then when he dreams that he saw his Uncle John kick a bucket that was lying on the sidewalk, he has likely dreamed that his Uncle John died. Curiously, a dream of actual death (non-metaphorical) in which the dreamer sees his death occurring on a given date, or sees his tombstone, etc., often heralds the date of his satori. It is as if the ego, but not the man, is scheduled to die.

Dreams that are repetitive call the dreamer's attention to a psychological problem which he must resolve. If he cannot interpret the symbolical language for himself, he should seek the help of a Jungian analyst or psychologist. Also, dreams may have an anniversary nature, marking a significant event in the dreamer's life. Sometimes if the event was painful, the dreamer may not be consciously aware of the event, his memory of it having been graciously erased. A complex of associations may have constellated around the event, creating a 'block' which will likely require professional assistance in clearing.

Dream settings and the various dream props have significance that varies among individuals. What is a threatening object to one person may be a useful tool to someone else. A place which one person associates with peace, another may associate with terror.

We can see immediately that such highly subjective meanings and evaluations render useless any casual analysis of dreams. Only someone who is familiar with the various universal dream symbols and who is able to ascertain the dreamer's specific metaphors, associations, definitions, and so on, can possibly assist in interpreting a dream. Dream-books and such are worse than worthless. They can be dangerously misleading.

The most important classification of dreams, the archetypal dream, is the one associated with what Jung called Individuation, the process by which an individual acquires independent non-attachment. Archetypal dreams or visions are true spiritual experiences and as such are psychically energizing and produce a long-lasting euphoria. A series of several dozen such dreams occurs during the Individuation process.

By studying dreams and mythologies Jung was able to discover that instinctive behavior patterns are represented in our unconscious minds by certain universal forms or images which he called symbols. These symbols appear to us in profound meditative states, in spontaneous visions, and in these rare but powerful archetypal dreams. The setting, props, characters, and action in these dreams are extremely vivid and completely unforgettable. Years later, the dreamer is able not only to recall the details but to replay the drama with the same sense of wonderment.

Besides appearing as gods in human form, instincts can represent themselves as animals or even inanimate objects. For example, the Mother archetype can not only appear as a great earth goddess or heavenly queen, but she can also appear inanimately as a sacred bowl or vessel, or as an animal, usually a cow or some other milk-giving creature. In the Orient she often appears, no doubt because of her power and grace, as a large cat - a tiger or panther.

The Self, though usually seen as dazzling light or valuable diamond or gold, may appear in dreams or meditative visions in the human form of a god, goddess, Chakra Lord, or divine agent such as an angel or one of the four directional Kings; in an animal form such as a white horse or elephant; or in a geometric representation such as a mandala, a yantra, or a splendidly designed and colored kaleidoscopic pattern involving circle, triangle or square.

The hallucination of sound is no less significant than sight. Aside from certain 'white noises' such as buzzing or humming which we often hear in meditation, there can be rare blasts of sound that seem to function as 'annunciation' messages, signaling that we will soon attain an important spiritual goal. Since this auditory event, called the Holy Shabd or Nahd, is far easier to describe than to explain, I'll simply relate my own experience. I was awakened at 4AM one morning by the sound of a distant trumpet and wind whistling in the trees. I sat up and listened as the whining sound grew louder. Soon, the wind buffeted the house like a tornado and the trumpet's blare became a microphone's feedback squeal. I pressed my hands against my ears to block the painful noise. My right eardrum burst. Fluid oozed out between my fingers and down my arm. Then the sound and the buffeting stopped. I looked at the clock and felt my arm. It was perfectly dry (of course).

PART III: PRACTICE

CHAPTER 10

FIRST ZEN PRACTICE: THE 1:4:2 HEALING BREATH

The road has two rules only:

Begin and Continue.

- Christmas Humphreys

In Eastern religions control of the breath is a beginner's first task. Most of the theories offered in support of this immediate need to regulate the breath are of the pseudoscientific stripe: "prana", "qi" or "chi" forces, which are considered positive, masculine and solar, are said to be contained in the air. Breathing techniques are therefore designed to help the body to absorb, circulate and store these forces. Whether or not these theories can withstand scientific scrutiny is unimportant. The point is that whole systems of yoga require the precise visualization of these 'forces' and that however quaint such explanations are they must be regarded as literal truth and given full faith and credit.

Likewise, any instructions given by book or by a master should be accepted without too much in the way of analysis. It is always a mistake to intellectualize that which can only be acquired intuitively. It is a mistake because what passes for righteous skepticism is usually nothing more than a destructive ego's attempt to sabotage a practice.

There are, however, physiological considerations which, when understood if only in a rudimentary manner, can influence a person's appreciation of the rules. Let's briefly consider these:

All meditative practices strive to attain three levels of higher consciousness: concentration, meditation, and samadhi. All three states require that the ego be bypassed.

When we concentrate, we lose track of time and of self. There is only the problem or the music or the drama - whatever it is we are concentrating on.

Meditation is defined as a state in which the ego is transcended; and this means that in the meditative state there cannot be any thoughts of I, me, my or mine. When we meditate, all of the conditions of concentration obtain, but in addition, certain areas of our brain are stimulated, and at the conclusion of the meditation we experience euphoria. These areas are

believed to exist mostly on the nonverbal, non-discursive side of our brain, the side which processes patterns, rhythms, shapes, and colors. Hence, most meditative techniques employ yantras and mantras - colorful geometric designs or repeated expressions. If we are meditating upon a rose, i.e., mentally reconstructing the experience of a rose - its touch, smell, color, physical parts, etc., the rose will suddenly glow in our minds and the euphoria which accompanies the sight of this "Ideal" rose will convince us that we have seen perfection. Meditation produces a high that lasts indefinitely... days or even weeks. The world seems as perfect and as wonderful as the rose. This state of egoless appreciation of everything is called Kensho.

While there is nothing sexual about meditation, Samadhi, on the other hand, is orgasmic ecstasy. It is possible to remain in this indescribably blissful state for hours.

Now, just as the brain has two largely independent halves, the body's autonomic nervous system is divided in two: the sympathetic nervous system - which is activated in response to fear, fight or flight, and also for seminal ejaculation. Adrenaline being its principal messenger, the body is informed by higher heart rates, higher blood pressure and a dry mouth. (Think about getting up to speak before a group..."mike-fright"... the heart pounds and, in the sudden absence of saliva, lips stick to teeth.)

The parasympathetic nervous system, on the other hand, kicks in for sexual arousal and as preparation for feeding. The heart rate drops as does the blood pressure and the mouth salivates profusely. The verbs for eating and lovemaking are therefore similar.

Physical pain or any fearful state will activate the sympathetic system... the opposite direction from where the seeker of samadhi desires to go. The meditator needs the parasympathetic nervous system to get into an ecstatic state. Therefore, physical pain or any fearful state must be avoided. Gasping for breath or choking will induce a panic response. Painful sitting postures or improper breathing techniques are therefore destructive to any meditation practice.

Yet, the breath must be regulated. For some mysterious reason, oxygen deprivation is often associated with an ecstatic experience. Many cases of "near" death as well as cases of nitrogen narcosis (Rapture of the Deep), or erotic asphyxiation either by deep-throat or garrote methods, and so on, involve the reduction of oxygen to the brain. It is a practice among Yogis to cut the membrane under the tongue and then to routinely pull on the tongue to lengthen it so that it can be inserted back into the pharyngeal passage to close-off an air supply. It is not a Zen Buddhist practice either to tie a cord around the neck or to lengthen the tongue.

Zen Buddhists regulate the breath, making it finer and finer, slowing it down gradually; but always, the meditator remains in control.

Again, meditation requires that the ego be bypassed. Unfortunately, there is nothing in this world an ego enjoys less than being bypassed. Consequently, whenever a person attempts to carry out instructions and is not rewarded with instantaneous success, or when the execution of his program becomes tedious or inconvenient and he would just as soon be someplace else than on his cushion, his ego will create an analytical intrusion into the practice. He forms opinions about the instructions he has been given. He questions the necessity of adhering so rigidly to the rules. He cannot see what difference it would make if he altered a few points or requirements. What harm can there be in slight deviations? This, he reasons, is meditation... not brain surgery.

Friends or instructions from other books will complete the destruction. They will assure him that there are techniques superior to the one he is working on. Testimonials will be offered regarding the efficacy of every practice except, of course, the one he has specifically been given. Questions of orthodoxy are raised. Is what he is doing authentic, legal Chan or Zen? Master So-and-so of such-and-such a temple assigns a totally different practice to his new disciples...and Master So-and-so ought to know what's best. On and on it goes. The beginner is assailed with all sorts of advice from people whose highest state of consciousness was experienced in a dentist's chair. The beginner, eager for success, knows that he hasn't gotten anywhere in the twenty minutes he has devoted to his practice and so he is ripe for change. The assigned practice, having been undermined by ignorance and doubt, collapses. All other practices will similarly fail, the fault being in the man and not the techniques.

We could have given as an initial meditation practice any one of a dozen different exercises. All would be equally good. But let's not miss the point. We will begin with the 1:4:2 Healing Breath. This is the exercise that has been given and this is the one that must be mastered. Regardless of how difficult it seems, it must be the single goal. There can be no eclecticism. We do not take part of one exercise and glue it onto part of another to form a more acceptable third. Neither do we simultaneously work on another practice. And certainly we do not content ourselves with partial success. The practice must be followed exactly, completely, and exclusively. The technique must be mastered, that is to say, done perfectly. And no other meditation exercise may be attempted until this exercise is done to absolute perfection.

All instructions in Buddhism are lessons in humility. It is the ego that gets us into trouble and it is the ego that keeps us there. We should not call ourselves disciples if we cannot demonstrate even the slightest degree of discipline.

Since this exercise involves breath control, a person must be careful about following the instructions. A physician should always be consulted prior to beginning any yoga or meditation practice. For people who tend to hyperventilate or who have respiratory problems, such exercises can be harmful. Even normal, healthy people occasionally experience fainting or dizziness. At the first sign of such distress, the exercise must be

discontinued and resumed only slowly, conservatively, and with a physician's approval. First Practice. 1:4:2 Healing Breath

The first exercise is the 1:4:2 proportioned breath control, the so called 'Healing Breath.'

Since the value of a ratio is unchanged if all terms are multiplied by the same number, we will multiply the 1:4:2 ratio by 4, yielding 4:16:8.

In a quiet place in which distractions are at a minimum, begin by sitting erect but relaxed in the full lotus posture (see instructions below). If full lotus cannot be easily accomplished, half-lotus or any posture which will not disintegrate into slouching may be taken.

If possible, light incense that has a pleasant and subtle fragrance. (Five and dime store incense generally gives a ten dollar headache. The best places to purchase incense are oriental specialty shops and religious books and supplies shops.)

Gently closing your eyes, repeat a one-line prayer or mantra three times. Anything simple will do. "Lord, help me to know you." "I take refuge in the Buddha." "Om."

Begin the exercise by expelling all air from your lungs. This is accomplished by slowly contracting the abdominal muscles. As you empty your lungs, imagine that you are trying to force your navel back against the spine:

1. Begin the breath cycle by inhaling to the count of 4. Each count should be one second long. Imagine that your body is a bellows. Your nose is the nozzle and your abdomen and spine are the handles. To fill the bellows to capacity it is necessary to pull the handles apart. You therefore thrust out the abdomen as you inhale. Strive to make absolutely no sound as you do this. As you inhale, your shoulders will tend to rise, the muscles becoming taught due to the exaggerated inflation of the lungs.
2. Retain the air in your lungs for the count of 16. (16 seconds)
3. Exhale in two parts. First, to the count of 4, simply allow the air to seep out of your lungs effortlessly as your shoulders relax and drop. Second, to the count of 4, contract all of the muscles of your abdomen forcing out all the remaining air - as if closing the bellows. As you exhale, imagine that there is a small plume a couple of inches in front of your nose. Your exhalation must be so fine that it does not ruffle this feather.
4. Immediately repeat the cycle, inhaling to the count of 4.

Some people find it easier to count using foreign words that have no 'left-brained' familiarity. The Hindu words Puraka (filling), Kumbhaka (pot full), and Rechaka (emptying) or the Japanese words hitotsu (one), futatsu (two) and mittsu (three) may be used with additional beats added as required. In other words, the 4-count inhalation would be Pu - ra - ka - dedum.

After ten breath cycles are performed the exercise is finished. Although other forms of meditation should not be attempted until the healing breath is mastered, hatha yoga or tai ji quan are definitely beneficial... just so long as you don't "perform" the exercises as if you had an appreciative audience. In short, your ego may not be permitted to intrude into the process.

Holding the breath for sixteen seconds can be difficult for some people. Therefore, if you cannot hold your breath for the count of sixteen, you should try to hold it for twelve and when you accomplish this with ease, you should try to reach sixteen. If you cannot hold your breath for the count of twelve, you should try eight or even four and then work your way up.

Your attitude should always be that you have the rest of your life to master the exercise. The Healing Breath is more than a preliminary exercise. It is a valid meditation technique in and of itself. Therefore there should be no rush to master it. After a person masters one level, he simply multiplies the proportion to increase its difficulty. So, why be in a hurry?

The lotus posture is a difficult one. If you cannot readily assume it, the following instructions may be helpful:

1. Sit on a small, medium-hard cushion or pillow, one that will elevate the tail-bone by a couple of inches. This allows a "3-pointed" posture, the body's weight being distributed between the spine and knees. This posture is easier to master than the traditional Indian version of sitting in lotus on a flat surface. Sit only on the edge of the cushion.
2. Arch the back as much as possible. The chest should be bowed far forward. This changes the pelvic axis to a more favorable angle.
3. Place the right ankle on the left thigh. (The thighs and knees should point forward, not out to the side as in other lotus posture variants). The right knee should be touching the floor. Don't proceed until the right knee is properly down and able to bear weight.
4. Bend the left leg, bringing the foot to the right knee. Grab the foot and cautiously pull it up onto the right knee. Be careful to use only reasonable force. Start counting. Initially, there will be a natural amount of pain associated with the position. When the pain becomes too much, carefully push the foot off. If on Monday the count of three was reached, try to reach

four on Tuesday and then five on Wednesday. The knee joint will slowly loosen. In a few weeks, full lotus can be attained for five minutes or so. In a few months, half an hour can be managed.

Of course, as soon as it is possible to sit comfortably in lotus, the back is relaxed into an erect but normally balanced posture (no bow). Care must be taken not to lean to either side. The hands may simply rest in the lap or, with palms upward, the right hand may lie upon the left, thumbs touching gently. Since learning the lotus posture is stressful, efforts to achieve it should follow and not precede a meditation session. (Pain activates the sympathetic nervous system, a meditational no-no.)

The lotus posture is the traditional 'seat' taken in Japanese zendos. In Chinese Chan monasteries, the Daoist (half-lotus) seat is often taken. Teachers in most western institutions usually don't care what a person does with his legs, but they do get very fussy about mudras (the position of the hands) and will frequently become outraged if a devotee's hands do not conform to specifications. (I have had my hands slapped, pulled and adjusted in no less than four different meditation halls.) The biggest source of conflict involves the stacking of hands: should the right hand rest upon the left or vice versa?

Textbooks are undoubtedly a source of the confusion. Photographic plates are sometimes reversed by the printer so that the hands of the Buddha or Bodhisattva depicted appear opposite to what they actually are. People learn from these photographs and feel confident that they are duplicating an authentic mudra.

There are several reasons for placing the right hand upon the left. First, as evidenced by the 'on-guard' stance of martial artists, the right hand, contracted into a fist (palm down, with thumb and index finger towards the chest) represents power while the left hand resting open, palm down, upon the knuckles represents intellect. This position signifies that one's power must be governed by one's brain.

When, however, the warrior becomes a supplicant or devotee, the fist is opened and turned upward showing that it neither is a weapon nor contains one - the essential reason why in Western societies men shake their right hands in greeting. The fist, with the left hand still securely placed upon the knuckles, is simply inverted and the fingers gently opened. This signifies meditation's state of receptivity. (Remember that power is feminine and receptive. Recall from Chapter 1: Shakti/Shiva - power and the law power obeys.)

Second, as evidenced in Buddhist iconography, the series of Buddhas associated with the various chakras are recognized principally by the position of their hands. The first four Dhyani Buddhas - East, South, West and North, are shown always with the left hand resting in the lap while the right hand makes the four basic mudras: earth- touching (palm down with fingertips touching the earth), giving (palm up with fingernails touching the earth), receiving (palm up, hand resting on top of the left), and reassuring (hand held up, palm facing outward).

Zen is a branch of the Mahayana, and as Mahayana Buddhists we are particularly devoted to the Buddha Amitabha, He of Infinite Light and Lord of the West, and to his divine offspring, the Savior/Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara Guan Yin (Kwannon). Usually both this Buddha and Bodhisattva are depicted with their hands in the above mudra - palms up, right hand lying upon the left.

Those who still prefer to place their left hand upon the right are free to do so.

Of all postures, the lotus most conduces to relaxation. Its advantage may lie in the placement of weight upon certain body pressure points, perhaps along acupuncture meridians. Endorphins and other relaxing body chemicals are released when these points are stimulated.

Since calmness is vital to the success of the exercise, caffeine or other stimulants should be avoided. If you begin your day with coffee or tea you should perform your practice before you eat breakfast. If you cannot perform it at that time, then you should wait until the effects of your morning coffee or tea have worn off before beginning.

Certain medications, such as antihistamines, frequently interfere with a person's ability to concentrate. They should be taken into consideration when scheduling practice.

Signs of progress are:

1. A feeling, upon exhaling, of delicate tingling in the shoulders
2. An inability to keep the count straight due to drifting into a peaceful emptiness of mind
3. The formation in the field of vision (behind closed eyelids) of shapes that rotate, undulate and shimmer in gray or iridescent hues
4. An enveloping feeling as if the brain is trying to rotate
5. A feeling of being suspended inside a golden cloud or mist
6. A lapse into a prolonged period of no or barely perceptible breathing
7. The hearing of unusual sounds such as a gong ringing, thunder, buzzing, or an authoritative but gentle voice which guides or encourages; (If, however, angry, argumentative or threatening voices are heard, the practice should be discontinued and not resumed until safely in the presence of a Chan master. Don't take this lightly. Many people experience nasty hallucinations.)
8. The loss of a sense of time - as an inability to gauge the amount of time that has passed during the exercise
9. an upward turning and squeezing of the eyes in their sockets
10. A feeling of numbness in the hands as if gloves are being worn;
11. Little but extremely clear pictures (as of a room or landscape) blinking in and out of consciousness
12. A brightly colored or dazzling white geometric design filling the closed eyes' visual field

13. A feeling of euphoria after completing the exercise

Progress in a meditation practice can also be measured in a dramatic lessening of nervous tension and in the ability to free oneself from dependence on alcohol, tobacco, tranquilizers, stimulants, or sleeping pills.

One final caveat: A practice must never be discussed with anyone. Beginners never seem to be able to resist recommending their practice to others. The penalty they pay for this breach of discipline is that they quickly lose their ability to concentrate. They become observers of and commentators on their own practice. Instead of just doing the exercise, they watch themselves do the exercise, thinking about each step and judging their performance until they fall into a stream of consciousness and begin thinking about a thousand things. At this point, the mind jumps around like ‘a drunken monkey’ and the practice is ruined. It sometimes takes years of hard work to regain the ability that was squandered in a few minutes of innocent prattling. Again, never discuss a meditation practice with anyone other than a Chan master or a physician.

People who have no difficulties performing a deep-breathing exercise do not have to limit themselves to ten cycles. What is important is the perfection of the practice, in making the breath is so fine and the body’s movements so imperceptible that someone sitting alongside would not know to a certainty whether he was sitting beside a mannequin or a living human being. Healing Breath Variation

We conclude this chapter with a variation of the Healing Breath which, though more advanced, is used to great advantage in conjunction with the Healing Breath. In this exercise the lungs are held empty instead of full. Usually, several Healing Breath cycles are followed by an equal number of variant cycles.

Simply exhale for 8 seconds, leave the lungs empty for 16 seconds, and inhale for 4 seconds and immediately repeat. Do not strain to keep the proportion. If the lungs cannot be held empty for 16, then reduce the time to 12, 8 or even 4 seconds and work up to 16, without a sense of competition.

CHAPTER 11

RIGHT UNDERSTANDING

FIRST STEP ON THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

Why is it so necessary that we temper our judgments with humility? Why are we all so worried about understanding Dharma: duty, law, truth, the right Way to proceed, the privileges and obligations of position; while at the same time we ignore Karma, the network of causes and effects that places us in the position we find ourselves?

The secret of Zen lies in understanding why we do the things we do and why we are the way we are. We begin by doing a little mental housecleaning.

1. Judging good and evil, and other foolish notions.

Zen requires us to rid ourselves of the comfortable but mistaken idea that when we act in ways that are considered good, it is our ego who has acted so meritoriously, who has earned, through the determined display of various virtues, all the honor due it; and when we act in ways that are considered evil, it is somebody else who is to blame. Such an attitude, we know, is childish - but at what point do we cease being children.

Where, precisely, is the line of maturity drawn in time's sand. Somehow the age of reason comes upon us, "sudden and awful" - as it says on medieval tombstones, without our seeming ever to be prepared for it. One day we are callow youths, able to rescind a contract we have signed to buy a car because we are too young to be forced to honor our agreement - though we are quite old enough to operate the vehicle in traffic - and the next day we are fully responsible adults, subject to capital punishment or even law suits if such should be the punishment prescribed for an offense. We have reached our majority and therefore have attained the age of reason.

Too often we forget karma's basic lesson: that until the Archetype of Transformation commands us or permits us to change, what we do in our life's twelfth chapter is largely determined by the previous eleven. Only a fool, crowing with hubris, would announce that the sun now rises upon one who is the master of his fate.

To see how thoroughly confused we can become by these expectations of responsibility, let us pretend that once upon a time identical twin brothers were put up for adoption at birth. Baby A was given to a couple who were rather like ourselves (were it not

for a harsh and undeserving fate and a couple of unmentionable in-laws): kind, genteel, prosperous, educated, and responsible.

Aware of the diverse requirements of children, the new parents of Baby A were lovingly disposed to provide the best food, nutritional supplements, medical care, protective clothing, sleep environment and so on, as they possibly could. They taught him good manners and other games and when he attended school they helped him to memorize lists, dates and formulas. They always reviewed his homework and were easy marks for door-to-door encyclopedia salesmen.

Baby A never lacked for supplies or equipment to assist him in his studies. When he did particularly well in a test he was rewarded with special treats. He became an habitué of zoos, planetaria and natural history museums. On Sundays he went to church with Mom and Dad and, as they strolled home together, engaged them in spirited elucidations of the sins referred to in the homily. He had a dog, a cat, a scout troop, a guitar, a bicycle and a paper route which all conspired to teach him personal, social and financial responsibility. Baby A, Mom and Dad were, in all ways, a formidable family unit.

Baby B was not so lucky. A year after he was adopted, his father died in a traffic accident. His mother, overcome with sorrow, first squandered the insurance money on drugs that soothed her grief and then on the cure of the drugs that soothed her grief. Eventually Mom remarried. Step-Dad was at least classifiable as a primate. He was bipedal, hairy, unequivocally hot-blooded and had opposable thumbs. But beyond certain mammalian ways, he gave not much cause to be included amongst homo sapiens for wise, he was not. He was drunk much of the time and frequently beat Mom and Baby B. Mom drank, too. There were terrible fights and binges.

Baby B not only didn't get enough vitamin supplements, he didn't get enough food. Many nights, cowering from the battery, he went to bed hungry. Encyclopedias were not a big item in the family budget. And unlike his twin brother who received medical treatment for warts, Baby B did not receive medical treatment for those three-inch cranial gashes that evidenced some rather serious trauma. The only other stars he ever got to know well were on the lapels of the deputy sheriffs who came to quell the family riots.

Baby B like music, too. But there was no money for an instrument or lessons. A teacher lent him a guitar but Step Dad smashed it ending Baby B's music career permanently. Under threat of bastinado, Baby B lied and said that he had lost the guitar. The admission of carelessness did not endear him to his maestro.

Baby B was less than well groomed. His frequent dirtiness subjected him to frequent scorn and when one of his front teeth was knocked out during a domestic skirmish, scorn elevated itself to ridicule. He was bitter, lonely, hungry, confused and mightily ashamed of everything about himself and his existence.

Now, the question is this: Which baby, Baby A or Baby B, is more likely to become a bank president? (Granted, there have been of late a distressing number of bank failures and not a noticeable dearth of embezzlements, but it must be conceded that before a man can become an incompetent bank president or even a crooked one, he still must demonstrate some competence and honesty on his way up to that position.) Baby A is our clear choice.

Conversely, we may ask: Which baby, Baby A or Baby B, is more likely to become a car thief or a pimp or both? Clearly, Baby B is our candidate for crime.

Knowing what we do about their respective upbringing, would we dare say to Baby B as he is being carted off to jail, "You scum! You worthless piece of excrement! Look at your brother over there... a credit to God, family and the American Way... while you are not worth the cost to feed you in jail. You could have been clean and good like him, but noooooo... you had to be scum..." etc. etc.

Would we say that? Yes, we would; and yes, we do... for we believe in the majesty of ego, in the display of virtue as a simple exercise in noblesse oblige. Baby B behaved ignobly. He was old enough to have known better. Off with his head.

Would we feel justified in commending Baby A for his good deeds? Of course. We would never tire of rewarding him for his goodness. His office walls and shelves would be full of plaques, trophies, and documents which all attested to our appreciation of his excellence. He would live in the best neighborhoods and belong to the best clubs. His kids would get into the best schools and would marry into the best families. They would ski and swim and play tennis. They would speak French. And when Baby A passed away, we would eulogize him with tears in our eyes because we so admired him for his many qualities and accomplishments. Who would mourn Baby B?

The Buddhist position is that Baby B is no more deserving of blame than Baby A is deserving of praise. Emperor Wu: I have done many good deeds. How much merit have I earned? Bodhidharma: None whatsoever.

In point of fact, Baby A could no more help being 'good' than Baby B could help being 'evil.' Life may, indeed, play out as melodrama but, ultimately, when the audience finally cries "Author! Author!" we aren't the One who bows... or who runs from the hook. We are not the creators of ourselves. Genes, environment and fate have collaborated to write all our life's scenarios.

Whenever we are inclined to judge someone we should remember that a painful history does not always show itself on a person's face. There are many kinds of wounds and the scars that most of them leave are not proudly worn on our cheeks like a Prussian fencer's schmisse. Most of them are deliberately hidden precisely because we regard our vulnerability as shameful.

Although the tale of our twins was an obvious exaggeration, the simple truth remains. People are not born into equal environmental circumstances. Neither are they born with equal genetic endowments. Baby B as a fraternal twin could easily have been born as mentally dull as he was socially unlucky. Our personalities are so constitutionally different that some of us will survive the worst sorts of psychological abuse while others are felled by a single act of rejection.

In Buddhism we say that the same man does not exist in two consecutive minutes. With each passing minute we gain new experience and information just as we simultaneously forget old experience and information. On Monday, we can recall what we had for lunch the day before, a week later, only a hypnotist can extract that datum from us.

Our minds proceed mechanically. The engine performs exactly in accordance with the external facts of its manufacture and its maintenance. We do not judge the engine's ego. It has none.

We therefore cannot submit anyone's ego to judgment. Righteous individuals are not rewarded with Nirvana because they have obeyed laws. Criminals are not denied Nirvana because they have broken laws. There are no egos in Paradise and that fact alone should bring us to our knees.

At first this might seem radically different from other religions such as Christianity. But consider the Christian position. Aside from being Biblically enjoined from judging others, Christians know that regardless of the seriousness of their sins, if they but repent and sincerely ask God's pardon, they are absolved of their sins. If even an Adolph Hitler is not necessarily beyond God's mercy, what then is the special significance of such terms as good and evil?

Egos are samsaric illusions just as good and evil are samsaric descriptions. We, as particular societal elements, usually apply such descriptions to persons or events according as they seem either beneficial or detrimental to us. What benefits us we consider good and we then tend to speak of that good as though it suffuses all society. "What's good for General Motors is good for the country." Or, as in that marvelous phrase of ministerial seduction, "If you take care of the shepherd, you take care of the sheep."

What passes as good and evil, then, is frequently nothing more than a shift in rights to money, power or pleasure. The shiftees and the shiftors determine which is which according to increase or loss in such samsaric valuables.

It is sometimes difficult to remember that when one man perceives another as his enemy he may commit terrible acts against him. This does not make him a devil any more than it makes his victim a saint.

2. Repentance

It is necessary to appreciate the difference between penitence and repentance. We are merely penitent when we are sorry for having allowed our cravings to become injurious either to ourselves or to others. Penitentiaries are places where people are imprisoned in order that they may sorrow and suffer for having failed to put the brakes on their cravings. When we are sufficiently sorry, sorry to the point of being disillusioned by and alienated from all that we have ever desired, we enter the Swamp. Still, we are not eligible for salvation until we repent.

Repentance goes beyond sorrowing for having craved injuriously and extends to the clear and unequivocal intention to change, to eliminate our cravings at their source, to be saved from ourselves.

The desire to repent must be heartfelt. We cannot fill out a form to be saved. We cannot hire a good lawyer to get us out of the Swamp. We can't be saved by inheriting money or by giving away what money we have. An outside influence - a holy man, a loving child, a sincere teacher, moving music or drama - may inspire us; but the resolution to change can only be formulated within ourselves. We must be aware of our past egotism; acknowledge and regret the damage we have done; desire to reform; recognize that the task is too great to accomplish alone; and appeal for help to the only being in the world who can help us, our Buddha Self or God.

Nirvana and Samsara occupy the same time and space. They are not located apart from each other. During all the days of our repentance we may never have left home. We may have gone to work every day, mowed the lawn on Saturday, and watched football on Sunday. (Life would not have been much different if we had gone to a monastery.)

Regardless of our spiritual condition, we remain physically present in the world. And in this world the problems of society, particularly the problems of crime and punishment, must be addressed. They are not, as we will see, easy issues to deal with. Even experts have trouble with them.

3. Crime, Punishment and Forgiveness

If Zen Buddhism had a modern-era patron saint, that saint would be Daisetz Suzuki. Professor Suzuki, largely through the good offices of Christmas Humphreys and London's Buddhist Society, brought Zen to the West single-handedly. No one else's contribution comes close.

In the person of the lyrical priest, Thomas Merton, Roman Catholics also had a modern champion of equal fame as Suzuki. Merton, as it happened, showed a favorable interest in Zen Buddhism.

Fortunately for us, these two giants of religion carried on a lively correspondence. Their dispute about the actions of a certain group of Desert Fathers is a classic discussion about some aspects of the problems of good and evil, crime, punishment and forgiveness. Every Buddhist should be familiar with it.

The story at issue concerned a group of Christian hermit monks who lived in the Egyptian desert during the 4th Century. A band of robbers attacked one of these ascetics and his cries summoned the other monks who caught the fellows and took them to jail. When their abbot learned of the event he chastised the monk who had cried out for having been betrayed by his own thoughts - he had not immediately forgiven his transgressors - and for having placed such value on his possessions that he called out and caused the robbers to be taken to jail to suffer punishment. This monk, taking the rebuke to heart, immediately went to the jail, broke-in, and let the robbers escape.

Merton sided with the monk, or rather, it would seem, with the robbers. "So the outraged hermits are in reality much more to blame than the robbers, because precisely it is people like these who cause poor men to become robbers. It is those who acquire inordinate possessions for themselves and defend them against others, who make it necessary for the others to steal in order to make a living."

Merton did not itemize the "inordinate" possessions of these hermit monks that so inspired or coerced the robbers into stealing them.

Suzuki took the opposite view. "We are all social beings and ethics is our concern with social life. The Zen-man too cannot live outside society. We cannot ignore the ethical values."

Suzuki acknowledged all the virtues of non-attachment and simplicity but still thought, "The outcome of the 'great hermit's' inner goodness in releasing the robbers from jail may be far from being desirable."

What do we do, then, about good and evil when we understand why a person may have become a criminal and we feel compassion for him for having been brought by fate to his sorry state? What do we do with poor Baby B when he grows up and batters his wife and children? What do we do with him if he steals our car or murders our neighbor?

Nothing confounds people on the Path more than the questions of crime and punishment. We know that we ought to forgive someone who commits a crime against us. But does forgiveness by a victim mean that the criminal should not be punished by society? Are we justified in insisting that another victim forgive his transgressor? May we forgive someone and yet, in good conscience, assist society in punishing him?

A civilized society is composed of a mixture of men, some civilized and some clearly not. Within it, saints are in a definite minority. Civilized societies require laws and if not

punishment in the sense of physical pain then at least in the sense of removal from society of anyone who breaks the laws or is otherwise injurious.

What is it that compels us to respect other people's lives and property and to keep the covenants of citizenship? Personal honor? No. Honor systems do not work. How many of us would pay our taxes in full or in part if there were no penalties for failing to pay? Worse, would we not brand the fellow who paid voluntarily as an unregenerate spendthrift? A society of saints requires no laws. A society of ordinary men cannot exist without them. Where there is crime, there must be punishment.

To forgive someone is to cease to harbor resentment against him and to pardon him, i.e., to cease personally to desire to punish him. A saint understands the karmic sequence of a person's criminal actions, loves the person in spite of his actions, and feels compassion for him because of his samsaric pain. Those of us who are not saints forgive by ceasing to harbor resentment against a transgressor. We pardon him for what he has done to us.

When, then, do we forgive and when do we press charges?

The answer, simply and generally, lies in the nature of the offense. If someone insults us, we may wish to excise his lungs and do not easily allow uncomfortable thoughts of forgiveness to supplant such a pleasant desire. Yet, with sufficient grace we manage. We tell our lawyer to forget about the libel or slander and usually learn with some chagrin that he already had.

In this instance, we were the only ones hurt or likely to be hurt by the offense.

When, however, we are not the only ones hurt or likely to be hurt by the offense, the situation changes. If someone calls a man a thief or moral degenerate, the man can forgive his accuser if he chooses; but if the charge is made against his dependent son or daughter, he no longer has quite the same right to overlook the insult. He may not force others into his martyrdom. He must defend against the attack.

A young mother may not wish to yield the family larder to a thieving Baby B. No one may require her to place more importance upon Baby B's hard luck story - however true it is - than she places upon the welfare of her children. Regardless of whether or not the hermit can be faulted for resisting, she surely cannot be faulted for reasonably defending her possessions.

Also, if the nature of a crime is felonious and there is the slightest chance that the criminal may again commit the crime against another innocent person, a man's forgiveness must not be allowed to facilitate another person's victimization. What would we think if a couple of armed robbers murdered everyone in a store except one man who later refused to testify against the killers because he had forgiven them?

We know that, ideally, we ought not to punish Baby B, we ought to rehabilitate him. Ideally, we ought to have intervened in his early life and removed him from his abusive environment and placed him in more congenial surroundings. We also know that not every criminal comes from a flagrantly abusive household. Some of history's worst crimes were committed by members of fine, upstanding families.

Society does, in fact, make an attempt to rehabilitate troubled individuals. For juveniles, there are school counselors, youth hostels, and reform schools. At adult levels, first offenders are routinely treated lightly. Judges order probationary periods and mandate as much counseling as the system provides. Frequently, however, the only deterrent to continued criminal behavior is the fear of execution or, what might be even more intimidating considering the dismal state of our prisons, the fear of incarceration. Fear is a poor replacement for guidance but sometimes fear is all the citizenry is willing to invest in.

Unfortunately many young people enter the system when they are already so psychologically deformed that nothing short of a miracle can restore them. They zip in and out of reformatories, lesser and greater jails and, with a trail of grieving victims behind them, finally end their days on Death Row. (It is then that many Buddhists begin to pay a great deal of attention to them.)

We Nirvana-bound individuals may see these criminals as victims - a view which is perfectly clear to all summit inhabitants but which is not nearly so clear to the victims of the criminals who must observe, for the moment at least, from Samsaric vantage points.

The Chan Man may not ignore the responsibilities of citizenship. If he doesn't like the terms of this social contract, he can apply to another more suitable country. But for as long as he cares to remain within a country, he has to fulfill his obligations as a citizen even as he exercises his rights to exert pressure, by whatever legal means, to change those laws and policies to which he thoughtfully objects.

Yet, in religion, we find many well-intentioned people who persist in advising others to act like saints. Most of the time this religious mawkishness is harmless. A Path-climber may laugh when he is instructed to divest himself of his material goods by a novice who took a vow of poverty last Thursday. But sometimes the advice hurled at him is disturbing and involves more than some bewildering legal ambiguities.

For example, it is difficult to borrow money from a saint. If he has money to lend, he gives it freely. He is responsible only to himself and knows how to get along in poverty. But Path-climbers may not yet be shorn of their assets nor be so free of family responsibility that they can afford to give away needed money. They can agree to lend it and regardless of how substantial the sum, they and their family can be injured if the money is not repaid. If the borrower absolutely cannot pay, the lender is spiritually obliged not only to wait patiently for his money but also to see if there is something else he can lend or do to help the borrower get

through his troubles. It's another story when the borrower says he cannot pay but evidences some disconcerting purchasing power to the contrary.

At such a time, would-be saints are rank with directives to forgive the debt. But what does this really mean? Tom owes Jerry a large sum of money and pays him with a check that bounces, and all the checks Jerry wrote against it bounce in turn. Jerry may be unable to cover this deficit. Should he forgive Tom the debt while he sits in jail watching him drive by in his new car? Tom thinks Nirvanic solutions are great but Jerry has some serious doubts.

Without malice or self-pity Jerry should press charges against Tom. He should do this not only because his creditors will likely understand his dilemma (having no doubt suffered their own Toms) and may agree to wait for payment, and not only because Jerry has a civic duty to take a bad-check passer out of circulation and prevent the fleecing of another victim, but also because without conscious confrontation there can be no spiritual progress. Tom has to grow up and accept responsibility for himself. He has to be penitent. He has to repent. He can't do that if all his victims hasten to forgive him his debts just to show how benevolent and spiritually superior they are. Such generosity serves only to stunt him. And it doesn't do a lot for the orderly growth of community morale, either. No one is suggesting that Tom be keelhailed or mutilated. But a little counseling - not to mention restitution - is in order. The law should be allowed to take its course.

If Jerry and Tom were living in a monastery, Jerry should go quietly to the Abbot who is obliged to investigate Tom's excuse for not paying; and if he determines culpability, the full force of his authority must be brought to bear to obtain payment. And then, as Abbot, he must counsel Tom until this flaw of character is corrected. And if the flaw does not submit to correction, the Abbot has to make some tough decisions about Tom.

No one wants to see Baby B punished from crimes that he can't be blamed for committing; but even less does anyone want to see him proceed unimpeded in his criminal ways. As citizens we should want to see him rehabilitated. But as Buddhists we should want to see him saved - and salvation has nothing whatsoever to do with the criminal justice system.

And this is the core of the issue. To save Baby B is not to save him from punishment. To save him is to save him from his ravaging ego. To assist in his salvation is to provide him with an inspiration to repent. By instruction, by example, and by concern not for where he happens to be physically residing but for the alienation and rejection he is suffering within his own mind, do we help him. The change that is required is not in his external environment but in himself. Do we not believe in the redeeming bliss and eternal life of the Buddha Self? Do we not believe in the transformative power of God's Grace? Are we practicing somebody else's religion?

And while we are on the subject, let us remark, not a little unkindly, that a Death Row Baby B has doubtless been in jail for years before the eve of his execution - that night of vigil

and protest for so many opponents of capital punishment. But where were those enlightened people who could have shown him the Way during all the years of his incarcerations? Why are there so many Buddhist priests who protest the death penalty and virtually none who minister to convicts?

The Path contains so many natural obstacles as it is, that it is almost unforgivable that there should be shoveled out in front of the struggling Path-climber so much ill-conceived advice, advice which always seems to favor the criminal to the further detriment of the victim. Merton's assertion that people who possess things of value somehow invite and contribute to the crime of their theft is of the same idiotic genus as the supposition that a woman who is "inordinately" pretty invites and contributes to her own sexual attack. To reduce her desirability she could perhaps disfigure herself. But what should children do to stave off the attentions of a pedophile?

Wearing Buddhist robes does not require a man to abandon the principles either of jurisprudence or of common sense.

We sin and we are sinned against. Repentance is a dreadful burden; but salvation, when it comes, is a spiritual achievement. The pain of being victimized is also a dreadful burden, but forgiveness, when it comes, is a sacrament of release. A victim who truly forgives his transgressor is exalted. He is the lotus that rises up and blooms above the mud.

A few years ago in Northern Ireland, a group of civilians were the victims of a terrorist bombing. A man and his mortally wounded daughter lay beneath the rubble waiting to be rescued. Hours later, when the man was saved, he recounted the event. "She grew steadily weaker," he said. "Then she whispered to me, 'I love you, Dad,' and died. I wept. I prayed. And I forgave them."

This, in case anyone has any doubts, is Enlightenment.

4. Reincarnation

Reincarnation not only presents us with its peculiar mystery, it also confronts us with some serious problems in etiquette.

Since an uncomfortable number of Buddhists believe in the ego's afterlife, we cannot say categorically that Buddhists do not believe in reincarnation. We can say only that some need not, some should not, and some are Tibetans.

There are two sorts of persons who need not believe: those who seek status and those who seek consolation.

We meet the former when, for example, our barber informs us that in a previous existence he was Ghengis Khan. (How should we respond to this?)

And if a single confession of past glory can stun us into confused silence, what do we do when confronted with several people who each claim to be the Egyptian queen, Hatshepsut? How many Queens Hatshepsut were there? And how do we properly address reincarnated royalty? And what about transsexual reincarnations? How are we to refer to such persons? How, for example, should we properly accept our mail if Queen Elizabeth I is inhabiting the body of the postman...? Suppose we are Spanish Catholics...

And what may we reasonably expect in the way of sexual gratification from a woman who informs us, as we nibble her earlobe, that in another time and in another place she was the Grand Inquisitor Torquemada? More than a few faux pas are at stake here.

Possibly because the world was suffering a plethora of Cleopatras and Eleanors of Aquitaine, Leonardo deVincis, Sophocleses, and all the really exciting men and women of history had already been taken by one's former friends, it has become fashionable in recent years to lay claim to less ostentatious (but somehow more... fascinating) former lives.

An illegitimate daughter of a lady in waiting to Eleanor of Aquitaine would live in the same historically detailed circumstances as the Queen but, being born with sinister bend, would likely have been secreted in the shadows of documentable existence, eluding forever snooping researchers. An investment in an anonymous spirit yields much conversational interest while being, as far as the hazards of debunkability are concerned, a very low risk venture.

Sometimes lovers who are particularly simpatico reckon that their love is too great for one lifetime and must have arrived in an already well-developed or prefabricated state. They may conjecture that their affection passed through its nascent phase while occupying the bodies of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning, Tristan and Isolde, or Mr. and Mrs. Cesare Borgia, depending upon whether the modern transmogrifees identify with members of the Literary Guild, Young Republicans or Mafia. It is all very complicated.

The other group of persons who need not believe in reincarnation are usually encountered in times of bereavement. They try to extract a measure of comfort from the thought that one day they may be reunited with someone they love very much. A better source of solace is of course provided by an understanding of Buddhist principles.

An often told story about the Buddha concerns a young mother who had become deranged by grief over the death of her child. Refusing to surrender the child's body for cremation, she implored the Buddha to administer a reviving medicine. He agreed on condition she fetch a necessary ingredient: mustard seeds obtained from households in which there had been no deaths. After a futile search the mother understood. She regained her composure and released her sad burden.

We must note that the Buddha did not offer platitudinous anodynes or placebos. He held out no hope of happy playgrounds in the sky nor of another child's body waiting in the wings to receive the departed spirit. He asked only that she understand that death comes to all and is a fact which the living must accept.

Naturally, it is difficult to criticize such believers. Prudence demands that we be circumspect in our zeal to instruct others. Dispensing wisdom to the grief-stricken is best left to the wise who, by definition, know when to beat the Dharma Drum and when to muffle it.

The people who should not believe in reincarnation are those whose lives are governed by greed and pride and who employ the theory to further or to defend their vain ambitions.

Confirmed in their ignorant surmise that present agony is divine retribution for past iniquity, these people regard the poor not only as deserving of poverty but as being fortunate to have been reborn as human beings. (After all, they could have been reborn as animals.) These believers then preen about their own good fortunes, offering themselves as models of virtue to all who desire to be reborn so splendidly. Such beliefs seldom lend themselves to correction unless, of course, providence intervenes with an appropriate disaster.

Perhaps the largest group of believers who should discard their views on reincarnation are those gullible folks who attach themselves to spirit channels or mediums.

Under hypnosis or even trance that is self-induced, some people have the marvelous ability to pool whatever technical or historical information they have about a person, culture, place or subject of any kind and create from all the bits of data a specific personality or intuitive but folksy 'expertise.' This exercise in constructive imagination requires an extraordinary degree of suggestibility, nevertheless every once in a while someone emerges with the necessary talent.

The ability to recall a past life under hypnosis or self-induced trance is related to glossolalia, the 'speaking in tongues' frequently associated with Christianity. People in the midst of a profoundly emotional religious experience may burst out singing or speaking in strange syllables. Occasionally, a person so entranced may record messages in the unknown idiom. But despite the most enthusiastic attempts at translation, these writings have always proven to be nonsensical.

Because of the potential for mischief these spirit channelings present, let us examine some of the concocted ghosts who lurk in the human mind and are manifested in the spooky world of showroom religion.

In the last hundred years there have been two particularly well documented cases of past life regression which deserve notice.

At the turn of the century, a famous French psychic, Catherine Elise Muller (known as Helene Smith), stunned Europe by her ability to recall her past lives as an Indian princess, Simandini, as Queen Marie Antoinette of France, and as the Virgin Mary, among others.

Helene Smith had also been a frequent tourist to Mars and was easily able to converse with contemporary friends who formerly were natives of that planet.

Possessed of a high degree of entranced literacy, she recorded in detail the Martian alphabet and wrote many messages in that language. The French, who had long regarded their language as the best in the world, were delighted to discover that in its grammar and syntax French was the best in two worlds. For Martian, they observed, was structured identically to French, Mlle. Smith's native language.

Further, for the benefit of Parisian couturiers, she sketched the current fashions on Mars. Unisex styling was in vogue; everyone wore blousey pants and a long, decorated shirt that was cinched at the waist.

Smith as the 'incarnating medium' or 'channel' of Marie Antoinette also wrote letters and it troubled none of the believers that her handwriting in no way resembled the Queen's documented hand. Neither was anyone disturbed by Marie Antoinette's references to telephones, steamships, and so on.

Smith soon met Theodore Flournoy, professor of psychology at the University of Geneva, who assiduously chronicled her trances.

Flournoy concluded that all of her personalities and their utterances were products of her own mind; although, having determined that she clearly was not feigning the trances, he never doubted her sincerity.

Despite the fact that she had identified Flournoy as her loving husband in her previous life as the Princess Simandini, she became so angry with him for his refusal to acknowledge her reincarnated personae, that she divorced him, in a manner of speaking, and never spoke to him again.

She retreated more and more into her imaginary worlds and by the end of her life was living full-time in the character of the Virgin Mary.

More recently, but as well-documented, is the case of Bridey Murphy which captivated the U.S. during the 1950s. Morey Bernstein, a businessman and amateur hypnotist, used a trance regression technique on a friend of his, Virginia Tighe. Asked to go farther and farther back into her own life, Tighe suddenly began to speak strangely, confiding finally that she was eight years old, that the year was 1806, and that her name was Bridey Murphy of Cork, Ireland. During subsequent sessions, Bridey dictated her autobiography.

Born in 1798, the daughter of Duncan Murphy, a barrister, and his wife, Kathleen, Bridey lived in Ireland until she died in 1864. She said that when she was 20 she married, in St. Theresa's Church, Mr. Sean McCarthy who took her to Belfast where he taught law at Queen's University. They had no children. After long and happy lives, she and her husband were buried in Belfast.

But despite her long residency in Ireland, she could not name a single mountain in the Emerald Isle nor even estimate the distance between Cork and Belfast. Researchers could not find any record of such a child or such a barrister or such a law teacher at Queen's University, or even such a Church as St. Theresa's. In short, though she had died less than a hundred years before and was not one of the anonymous poor, there were no documents anywhere that could substantiate a single line of her autobiography.

The case began to recede into blessed obscurity after a newspaper reported that while Virginia Tighe was growing up in Chicago, she had a close neighbor by the name of Bridie Murphy Corkell. Tighe admitted readily that she knew the lady and had been in her home several times; but she insisted that she knew her only as Mrs. Corkell.

Despite the volumes written to explore and explain such instances of glossolalia, spirit writing and reincarnated spirit channelings, an astonishing number of otherwise intelligent people will rally around victims of this psychological displacement, encouraging their delusions and, in more than a few cases, making them profitable. Channels can become cult figures if they have altruistic pretensions and are inclined to sermonize on such subjects as universal love and brotherhood, healthful living, the worldwide elimination of poverty, the raising of consciousness and the lowering of crime, etc.

But the course these religions take is seldom one that demonstrates the slightest concern for anyone outside the cult. We find no Mother Teresas among them. They may labor long and hard but their purpose is always to enrich and to glorify their leader.

When family members and friends outside the body become alarmed by this slide into fanatical hero-worship and begin to express their concern or attempt to expose the fraud, cult members frequently descend into a stubborn, 'them-versus-us' seige-mentality, an incipient form of shadow-dominated paranoia.

Buddhists who know that God is not Siddhartha Gautama are less likely to believe that He is a preacher from Korea, a guru from Antelopian India or an evangelist from a Guyanian jungle enclave. But whenever Buddhists concur in the possibility of reincarnation, they unwittingly lend credence to the claims of such persons. As we have previously mentioned, there are many Jain and Hindu inspired 'Buddhist' scriptures that buttress such vaulting imaginations.

But even at that, all Buddhist texts, including those most influenced by Jainism and Brahmanic Hinduism, clearly state that we are automatically freed from 'the rounds of birth

and death' the moment we enter Nirvana. This is precisely what we should expect since the world of Nirvana is indisputably the real world. In the real world there is only the Buddha Nature. No egos exist in it. No one else inhabits it. It is the one life that we all live... here, now and eternally.

Reincarnation, then, is a belief which only people in Samsara can possibly entertain. In the world of illusion you can be born and die as often as you like.

Tibetan Buddhists are in a class by themselves. Neither viciousness nor vanity informs their belief in reincarnation. It is so fundamental, so intrinsic to their Way, that it is difficult to imagine their religion without it. When dying, Tibetans do not go gently into that good night. They enter the tumultuous Bardo between two worlds and, if they are sufficiently prepared (adept at some arduous meditational techniques) quickly re-emerge in a new body. Sometimes it takes an entire lifetime just to prepare for the next.

5. Karma

Karma is the network of events from which and into which our existence is woven. Karma - never to be considered as divine retribution whether as punishment or as reward - may be thought of as fate providing that what is meant does not imply predestination.

Most people incorrectly regard karma as a kind of ledger sheet on which The Great Bookkeeper In The Sky posts, as so many debits and credits, our good and bad deeds. According to this view, at our deaths or sooner if need be, the ledger sheet is tallied and depending upon virtue's surfeit or lack thereof, we are rewarded or punished. In this life or the next, we find ourselves in altered circumstance. To entertain this silly notion, we must believe that all of the victims of a certain disaster were equally deserving of punishment or we must assume that when an epidemic strikes all of the people who contract the disease are guilty of something - the ones who die are more guilty than the ones who are merely deformed or debilitated by it. Likewise, all people who are born handsome are, or have been, better than people who were born ugly. And people born handsome and rich are the best people of all.

Belief in this kind of karma is said to be beneficial to those who suffer because it helps them to accept their misfortune with grace and dignity and to strive, despite their discomforts, to lead more righteous lives. It is also believed to provide incentive to the fortunate to continue behaving in the same meritorious manner. There is no end to the nonsense.

Since Karma is, in fact, an entire network, no single event can be isolated or surgically excised from the myriad of causal elements which precede and entangle it. Each event is a nexus, a connecting knot that is composed of threads that lead out of other knots. When we are children we understand this perfectly. A mother says to her little boy, "I want you to behave yourself and be particularly good when we visit Aunt Jane." "Why?" he asks.

"Because Aunt Jane dislikes children." "Why?" "Because children make her nervous."
"Why?" "I think it's because they remind her that she has no children of her own." "Why
doesn't she have children of her own?" "Because the doctor says she can't have any." "Why?"
(ad infinitum)

A child perceives that in existence there are no closed systems, no spontaneously generated occasions. All events are links in a cause/effect concatenation, a network of events. They are both factors and products. Adults, however, try to tear apart the net, to isolate a knot and then deem that knot supportive of all those which appeared to radiate from it. Life does not work this way. In a network, all parts are interconnected.

We have all heard 'For want of a nail the shoe was lost.' A horse has been improperly shod, there being a nail missing from one shoe. The horse is ridden by a messenger who has critical information for a battlefield commander. Armed with this intelligence, the commander will be victorious. Without it, he will lose. The shoe that lacks a nail falls off and since the horse is unable to continue, the information does not get to the commander and the battle is lost.

This concatenation of causes and effects is what is meant by karma. It does no good to speculate, 'Ah, but even if the horse had been properly shod, something else might have intervened to prevent delivery of the message.' Probables and possibles have nothing to do with karma. The reason the blacksmith failed to shoe the horse properly may have been that he was killed before he could finish... or he was drunk... or he was exhausted... or he was out of nails... or his customer was in a hurry and said the job was good enough as it was. There is a cause antecedent to the effect of the missing nail; and that cause is itself an effect of some other cause. The network is truly infinite.

And in attempting to decide for whom this battlefield karma was good or bad, we foolishly waste even more time.

Let us consider an event...the crash of an airliner. Mr. Doe is on his way to the airport when his wallet is stolen. The plane leaves without him. He isolates this event and judges it to be singularly bad. While he rants about his rotten luck and curses the thief, he learns that the airliner has crashed. Now he judges the theft to be good and he blesses the thief. A few days later he learns that he has a fatal disease which will cause him great pain and will also ruin him financially, leaving his dear wife destitute. He also learns that the families of the crash victims will receive huge settlements. Now he curses the thief for if the thief had not stolen his wallet, he would have been on the airliner and would have been spared a long, agonizing death and his dear wife would have been financially secure. But while he lies in torment his wife runs off with his best friend. Now he blesses the thief for having stolen the wallet which made him miss the plane which kept his wife from becoming rich and spending the money enjoying herself with his perfidious friend.

Insofar as these events concern our existence in the world of Samsara, we simply have no way of judging what is good karma and what is bad.

If we are lucky, we are led by the chain of events to Nirvana. At some point we are receptive to an inspiring force. Our ears are opened at the particular time the calling bell is struck. We hear and follow. If we are not lucky, we die without ever having heard the call.

We know we have truly been saved when we are so overjoyed by salvation that we can review all of our misfortunes and understand that had any one of these events not happened exactly as it had, we might not have arrived at salvation's shore.

In other words, to be truly saved is to accept without rancor all that has happened in our lives. Of course, we regret the wrongs we have done. But salvation enables us finally to understand our own crimes even as we understand the crimes of others and to forgive ourselves even as we forgive others. This is a rare victory... which is why those who are saved are counted among life's ultimate winners and those who are not are too numerous to count.

CHAPTER 12

RIGHT THOUGHT OR PURPOSE

*Who is it who has dragged this carcass here?
- Chinese Hua-tou (thought puzzle)*

SECOND STEP ON THE PATH

Nobody gets anywhere in Buddhism without understanding from his scalp to the soles of his feet that samsaric life is bitter and painful, the First Noble Truth. And why is life so hard? Because in our egotism we crave so many foolish things. This is the Second Noble Truth. Can we get out of the mess? Yes. This is the Third Noble Truth. How? We kill the fool who craves. We kill it by tearing it away from the people, things and ideas it clings to as it parasitically tries to drain from these sources some substantive identity. The tearing-away process is the painful wounding of the ego, the harsh Right Purpose of the Fourth Noble Truth's Eightfold Path.

When we're young, our craving for status serves a biological imperative. Social success insures successful breeding and survival of the stock. That's how nature programmed us; but once we have played out our biological programs, we're entitled to retire from the everyday cruelties of competition and to live in the perfect peace of spiritual fulfillment.

We have to awaken from the dreamy illusion that we are the sum of people and things with which we have identified. People who have spent enough time in swamp water hear the reveille clearly. They need a few instructions and a little direction but require no further prodding. Others, who are new to disillusionment, are usually not so fortunate. Their egos have to feel a bit more of the pain of alienation and humiliation. They need a good Chan master who has a big heart and a strong stick.

"Who is it who has brought me this carcass?" the Chan master demands to know. His student trembles. This is Buddhism's principal challenge and there is no way to avoid it. "Who am I?"

Ask a swamp dweller "Who are you?" He answers, "I'm nobody. I'm less than nothing." And he's not being modest. Ask him again after he's made it even halfway up the Path. "I'm the most blessed man on earth," he replies without resorting to hyperbole. He is

radiant, humble, compassionate, joyful. He is a budding Buddha. His fool is dead. It died in the Swamp along with everything else he used to value.

Many Chan newcomers, however, act as if they intend to climb the Path while still embracing their old strategies, titles and possessions. Like gentlemen contestants in a leisurely sport, they require material comforts - books, recorded music, video, telephones, computers, as well as quality garments and suitable accommodations. They need a supporting entourage and of course, a gallery. Where is the sport if their efforts are not appreciated by family, friends, colleagues, lovers, scapegoats and other prized companions?

Now the Chan master wants to know, "Who are you?" And the foolish newcomer answers, "I'm John Doe, scion of the Doe family." Whack! The Chan master hits him with the stick. "That's a name, a lineage, you dolt! Who are you!?" He tells the student to get out and to come back the next day with a better answer.

During subsequent interviews, the contestant tries to identify himself in a variety of ways. He tries his occupation or his membership in a social rank. He is somebody's son, father, husband, or brother. He attempts to distinguish himself by his net worth or by his nationality. He sees himself as somehow being a unique individual by virtue of his creed or his address, by his personal achievements, traits or physical features. And each time he offers a false identification, his master strikes him with his stick and charges him with stupidity.

By design, this humiliation does not take place in private. Chan masters are notoriously loud, gruff, and indiscreet. Everyone within a radius of fifty miles will know that the poor, oafish student is an Oaf of the First Magnitude.

May we suppose that by presenting ourselves as religious persons we have legitimized our fool? If, when our master asks who we are, we reply, "A humble servant of the Lord," our master, when he stops laughing, will hit us with his stick.

Faking it, we may add, constitutes an impertinence deserving of many whacks. A person who replies, "I am a Buddha" without having discovered this fact through Satori had better be able to run fast.

No ego identification is valid. We do not vanish if our money or possessions disappear or if our titles are taken away or if we are suddenly unable to perform some meritorious act or other. If we lose a leg, our humanity is not diminished by a proportionate loss. If we are stricken with amnesia we are not genetically altered. Let all this and more be taken from us, yet while we live and are conscious, we remain. The ego is a series of fictitious characters. In none of its aliases does it exist. Ultimately we find that all we are is a complex human covering of a single Buddha Self.

Detachment is a yielding of status, a surrendering of pride. We live our lives clamoring for recognition, sinking our emotional teeth and claws into other people whose

identity is always prefixed by the possessive adjective "my" - my fans, my wife, my son - the doctor... And just as we define and sustain ourselves by such human possessions, we try to suck the quality from material possessions, and assimilate these qualities to ourselves.

Sometimes we develop a collector's mentality and desire expensive or rare objects just for the sake of possessing them. "I have something nobody else has. As it is unique, I, its possessor, am unique." Art or artifact, it does not matter what the class of object is. Believe it or not, there are people who collect toilet seats. Our surprise by such a category should not be increased by learning that Charles, Prince of Wales, numbers himself among these strange collectors of privy memorabilia.

We are convinced that the quality of our possessions magically adheres to us. A man who deems a Ferrari superior to a Ford, deems himself, as a Ferrari owner, superior to a Ford owner. He wants an attractive car so that people will be attracted to him - yet he fully expects that all will love him not for his possessions but for himself. He is certain, as he looks through the parking lots of life, that he has few equals. And if it should happen that the monthly payments on the Ferrari are bankrupting this particular man, so what? He does not swagger less.

A woman argues with her hairdresser about the undulation of a particular tress. She claims that it proceeds in a direction which makes her look unattractive. She is very fussy about her hair. It is her best feature. Not until the perverse curl is reversed is she satisfied with her appearance. And if it should happen that this woman weighs three hundred pounds and grotesque rolls of fat cascade down her torso, is she less fastidious about her coiffure? No. Her ego has attached itself to her hairdo. Her self-esteem is in her curls.

Sportscars and stylish hairdos are worthwhile if they increase a breeding adult's attractiveness; but when procreative considerations are nonexistent, such flashy displays usually indicate that the ego is serving no other instinct than its own self-preserving vanity.

This is an essential difference between youth and maturity. We expect young people to crave attention-gaining things. A sixty year old woman driving a Ferrari is strange to us. A spiked, punk hairdo is sort of engaging when it is worn by a sixteen year old boy. We would, however, very likely refuse to dine with a sixty year old man who wore one. On the other hand, when we find young people taking vows of chastity and poverty and retreating to a cloister we wonder what is wrong with them.

For how long can an ego safely reside in a possession? Sometimes in samsaric permanence. We have all met collectors who will pause in their accretions only to receive Extreme Unction. While passing on, they direct the priest's attention to their latest acquisition. As many attorneys can verify, there are hosts of vain women who name in their wills the particular hairdresser they want to coif their corpse. We even occasionally hear about sportscar owners who stipulate that they be buried in their Porches.

Usually our love-affairs with things do not last. Deciding that our happiness depends upon getting the flashy car in the dealer's window, we proceed to make the investment and to project a huge hunk of our self-esteem onto the pretty piece of machinery. But as the novelty wears off without our level of contentment having risen a notch, our desire to form a permanent relationship with this particular ego-vehicle wanes. Though we once had vowed with our blood to maintain it as we would a nuclear missile, we soon drain the egotistical juices out of it and leave it desiccated at the curb - a quarter-inch of road dirt on its body and oil in its crankcase the color and consistency of asphalt.

On the path we ruthlessly examine each desire. Why do we want a particular thing? Whom are we trying to impress or attract? How can our self-worth be seen to reside in this or that object?

The problem of false identities extends naturally to strategies. Here, too, we are confused.

The first thing that a person with no Swamp experience does when he looks over the list of Six Worlds' strategies is to sigh with relief that (thank God!) he doesn't practice Chan of these abysmal sorts. But there is a little test which must be taken. The test is simple: he has to ask three people who know him best which of the six categories they would put him into if they absolutely had to put him into one of them. If all three separately confide that probably he is a Titan, or an Angel, etc., he should give the unthinkable some thought.

Sooner or later, each of us has to face his truth.

Can it be true, wonders the Devil for example, that he is just a clotheshorse? Have people been laughing at him... as in the story of the Emperor's new clothes? Is it possible that everyone regards him as an empty-headed, posturing mannequin? Here he thought he was ready to espouse the Bodhisattva Ideal only to learn he is not yet divorced from Samsara! Well! What to do? He is not what he thought he was. But if not this, what?

There follows a terrible period of confusion and pain, of agonizing self-consciousness and reappraisal. (Without conscious confrontation there can be no progress.) Chagrined, he is forced to scrutinize his actions and reactions, to see himself as others see him, to understand that his devotion to his outer appearance has cost him the development of his inner life.

Advised to take constructive or remedial measures, the recovering devil gives away his silks and pledges not to purchase even workclothes for at least a couple of years. Now when a garment tears, he patches it as best he can.

He has long, denuding talks with his master. The leading topic is pride.

As part of his treatment he is asked to rebut all of the old arguments he once invoked in support of his strategy. He had so often told himself that people loved pageantry and were spiritually uplifted by it; that he was an inspiring role-model for those who required lessons in deportment; that he exemplified the priestly refinement and grace which characterized his religion; that the pride he took in himself was a reflection of the pride he took in his Lord, etc.

The ex-devil finally realizes that since the Buddha, himself, cast off his finery and wore the simple garments of the poor, a follower of the Buddha can hardly 'take up the cloth' in order to preen.

Right Purpose also requires that we take critical notice of our states of mind. Whether anxious, frivolous, irritable, depressed or excessively pleased with ourselves, it is necessary to investigate the cause of our mood and to make the necessary corrections.

This can be difficult. It's easy to shrink our tongues whenever we find them waxing eloquent about our master's accomplishments; but getting control of a negative emotion such as anger, jealousy or contempt is an exponentially greater assignment... by ten or twenty orders of magnitude. If we prate about our master, we merely run the risk of making ourselves ridiculous to the people who politely walk away from us, but if we fail to control our anger we can do serious damage.

Depending upon our individual anger thresholds, different sorts of situations threaten us with loss of control: Sonny fails to return a library book and the fine is \$2.50. Dad shouts for half an hour about irresponsibility and money growing on trees before he gives him the cash. Then he grumbles for another hour about kids nowadays and what his father would have done to him if he had ever been so inexcusably delinquent in such a civic duty as returning a library book on time. He cools down to the point where he is able to avoid talking to Sonny for the rest of the day.

If the probable truth were known, first, the only time Dad ever went to the library was when he used his presence there as an excuse to get out of the house at night; and second, the one time he actually borrowed a book, he forgot to take it back and didn't remember it at all until a notice came in the mail. And when his dad inquired about the notice, he lied, saying that he already had taken it back. Then he sneaked the book into the library and put it on the shelf causing, ultimately, his indignant dad to inform the librarian that she was negligent. This is the probable truth because this is how the Shadow conducts its business. When we angrily scold someone we are usually accusing him of something that, more or less, we've done ourselves.

Right purpose requires a person to observe his own responses and to gauge them disinterestedly for appropriateness. The Shadow is the ego's blackplumed champion. Whenever it thinks it must ride out to slay a dragon - especially a tiny dragon - the ego has a problem.

The chronic annoyance of trivialities can be easily managed. We learn to say, "Big deal," or "So what." We tell ourselves to "Get a grip" and get over it.

Matters of a more acute nature demand serious attention. Let us suppose, for example, that Sonny borrows Dad's car to take his girl to the high school prom. He pledges ceremoniously that he will neither drink nor smoke grass nor allow anybody else in the car to do so. Then, naturally, he, his date and four other kids leave the prom early, get stoned and drunk, and, with Sonny behind the wheel, crash into another car. (You think this doesn't happen?)

His date, who was not wearing a seat belt because she didn't want to ruin her corsage, went through the windshield and will require plastic surgery into the next decade. The four in the back seat sustained injuries that will add up to six figures within a week. The two people in the other car, who are parents of three, are in intensive care. Nobody knows if they will even live to join in the eventual law suits. Sonny walked away from the accident with a few cuts and bruises.

This is a test of controlling anger.

Between the lawyer and the bail bond, Dad spends Sonny's college tuition money. (The lawyer wants his money up front because he knows that Dad will be wiped out long before the case is adjudicated.) He looks over Dad's insurance policy and financial statement, takes out a calculator, tells Dad to prepare for the possibility that Sonny will be tried for manslaughter, and adds that in any case, Dad faces penalty fines and an inevitable host of civil suits any one of which will result in bankruptcy. "Say 'adios' to your assets," says the lawyer. "You have just lost everything."

Sonny, newly sprung from jail by Mom, walks up the path as Dad watches from the living room window. How should Dad greet him?

What would the Buddha do? Let's suppose that the Buddha's son, Rahula, had taken the Buddha's favorite stallion, Kantaka, to a party after promising his dad that he would stay perfectly sober and would take excellent care of the horse. Then Rahula got stoned, hitched Kantaka to a chariot, jammed four of his friends into the chariot and drove the horse, chariot and friends into a crowd of people. The injuries were many and serious. Kantaka was totaled.

Nobody should imagine that the Buddha would remain His Serene Self when first informed of the 'accident.' Rather, it would be all the disciples could do to pry his hands off the kid's throat. The Buddha was a man and a man can get angry. Jesus threw the money changers out of the temple and he wasn't calm when he did it.

So Dad is allowed to get angry. It is then, while he is considering various ways to execute his firstborn, that he sees Sonny walk towards the house.

If Dad is smart he will go down to the basement and avoid Sonny until his rage has abated. (Physical removal is to outrage what a tourniquet is to a severed vein.) Dad should go to the basement because, unfortunately, he can't go for a long drive since he doesn't have a car anymore; and he can't go for a long walk because he is too ashamed to face anyone and too afraid of being beaten or shot at. The victims were after all his neighbors. So the basement or a closet is a good place to go at least until Sonny is safely sequestered in his bedroom. Now is the time for Dad to try to get control of himself.

Incredibly, we gain control of ourselves at such times by resorting to those old clichés that always leap so gracefully from our lips whenever we attempt to console someone else. We have an extensive repertoire of sagacious remarks - some pro and some con on the very same issue - which truly comfort and illuminate. (We should think of these sayings as balm which the Self uses to heal anger or grief.) Dad should therefore reach down into himself and withdraw for conscious consideration such maxims as: 1. There but for the grace of God, go I. (Dad must remember all the times he drove when he was swacked. He got away with it. Sonny wasn't so lucky.) 2. Boys will be boys. (This was a high school prom Sonny was attending, not a meeting of the Security Council. He knew Sonny was a kid and kids by definition are immature. Many adults promise to stay sober but still drink and drive. What should he expect from a kid who is carried away by the excitement of his first formal dance?) 3. If you want to dance, you've got to pay the piper. (Nobody held a gun to Dad's head and forced him to get Mom pregnant. That was his own idea. If he didn't want the burden of raising children, he shouldn't have had any.) 4. You've got to take the bitter with the sweet. (Sonny is not a bad kid. In fact, he's a pretty good kid. He's done a thousand things right. True, this one thing that he's done wrong more than offsets the right things... but, after all, he didn't plan to have the accident. He didn't harm anyone maliciously. He made a mistake. Dad stood proudly by him in the good times. Can he abandon him in this time of shame?) 5. I cried because I had no shoes until I saw a man who had no feet. (It could be worse. Sonny could have been killed. The tears Dad's shedding could be shed over a coffin that contained the remains of his pride and joy, that once and former great kid and namesake.) 6. Why pour water on a drowning man? (What good would screaming at the boy or beating him accomplish? It would only make things worse. A rift between him and Sonny won't get either one of them out of the trouble they're both in. Think about what this has done to Sonny's life. Give the kid a break, for God's sake!)

Dad finally begins to sympathize with Sonny. How is the boy going to face people? Kids are so cruel. Dad can survive the notoriety. His friends and associates will pretend to commiserate. They'll withhold criticism until Dad makes the mistake of criticizing one of them for something. (Dad makes a mental note never to criticize anybody for anything ever again.) But kids are different. They will torment Sonny about the accident for years to come. Poor Sonny! He's got to face his victims and his friends. And he's as isolated in his guilt as any human being can possibly be.

After Dad has sympathized with Sonny, he can turn his attention to Sonny's victims. He can begin to realize that the most important task facing him is rectifying the damage.

Dad knows it's not enough to say, "Well, that's what I paid all those insurance premiums for." There are moral responsibilities to be met. He and Sonny must go to the hospital and face the injured and their families. Dad imagines the injuries... the pain and suffering... a pretty girl's disfigured face. He thinks about this girl's father. Dad has a daughter, too. He thinks about her. He weeps. What is bankruptcy compared to the destruction of a sweet and lovely face?

It is at this point, the point at which Dad begins to see the accident from other points of view, that he has finally gotten control of himself.

It is now possible for him to pray. He prays for the injured to recover. He prays that no further pain and suffering be caused anyone. He prays for the boy upstairs who has the troubles of a lifetime on his shoulders. There is no end to the things Dad prays for.

Time to go up and put a comforting hand on the kid's shoulder.

The human brain seems to organize reality around clichés. There is no better way - perhaps there is no other way - to conquer anger or grief than to use maxims, proverbs, parables and the like to help us through a crisis.

Of course, if a person is overwhelmed with anger or grief and finds himself in imminent danger of losing control and doing something that he will surely regret, he should immediately consult a physician. Once his emotional crisis has been managed, longer term counseling with a psychologist or clergyman can be obtained. He can see any trained advisor. (Anybody but a bartender. They do no good at all.)

Self-control is gained through rational consideration of the situation. The old nostrums such as counting to ten are worthless if they are not followed by an empathetic regard for the antagonist. Telling people to relax suffices only to raise the level of their anger. Worst of all are such attempts as, "I refuse to let that miserable so-and-so get to me! He isn't worth the aggravation! I have to consider the source!" Buddhists are supposed to consider the source not to accuse or condemn it but to understand how it got to be what it is. Zhuang Zi (Chuang Tzu) asked his Daoist followers:

"Suppose you were crossing a river in a rowboat and another boat, an empty one, came drifting toward you in the current. You could be the most irritable man in the world, yet you would not lose your temper. You would carefully do what was necessary to avoid a collision or to minimize any damage.

"But suppose there was a man in this other boat. Well! As you saw him approaching you would shout at him to be careful, to watch where he was going, to steer away from you. And if he still kept coming, you would curse and threaten him; and if he kept on coming and got within striking distance, you'd probably hit him with your oar even if it meant you'd capsize your boat and fall into the river.

"Although the problem in both instances was precisely the same, the empty boat aroused no anger while the occupied boat did.

"Consider your anger and the damage it causes. Consider also that if you lived your life as empty of attachments as the first boat, who would wish to injure you?"

Jealousy is another form of anger. We nearly always resent someone else's gain in status. Egos do not easily play the role of spectator at another's successful performance.

The bedfellow of jealousy is schadenfreude, that secret, sweet feeling we get when learning of someone's misfortune. If left unchecked, jealousy and schadenfreude motivate us to behave in less than honorable ways. Self-criticism will reveal the underlying baseness of these emotions.

"One man may conquer ten thousand men in battle," noted the Buddha, "while another man may conquer only himself. And this man is the greater victor."

After we have freed our egos from participating in the qualities of names and things, and after we have gained control of our destructive emotions, we may find that though we have made great progress spiritually, we still have not dealt with the Evil One.

All religions command devotees to vanquish their Enemy-Shadows. The instruction is usually as follows: Even when a man kneels in prayer, if he feels anger or hatred towards another person, he must leave off his orisons and go to that person to make peace; for while he harbors contempt in his soul, he should not pray to God.

"Love thy enemy." The order is the same in all religions.

It is easy to say, "Well, first you must realize that your enemy is a person no better nor worse than yourself." "Ha!" we reply, "Like hell!" Then we proceed to list the differences. "I have good table manners. He eats with all the grace of a hammerhead shark. I enjoy Bach. He likes Tchaikovsky! He beats his wife indiscriminately. I beat my wife, too, but I, at least, make sure she deserves it before I strike her." There is no end to the flattering distinctions we make when comparing ourselves to persons we dislike.

The more we hate our enemy, the greater his power over us becomes. Since he can arouse and motivate us the way few others can, our feelings about him are seldom ambivalent. Far more positive in disapproval than we are in approval, we say with complete

conviction, "The friend of my friend is possibly my friend, but the enemy of my enemy is definitely my friend."

What, then, do we do when we loathe a co-worker, or are certain that our neighbor is possessed by the devil, or are convinced that our mother-in-law salivates for the taste of our spleen, or suspect that the Requiem for the human race will be sung in non-Castilian Spanish?

First, we must remember basic Buddhism. Fundamental to Buddhist belief is the knowledge that egos are nonexistent and that the only real identity a person has is the Self, the Self which is identical in all individuals. This means that you and I are one unit, not two. And when we see the Buddha Nature in an individual and see also that the individual does not see that Nature in himself, we feel compassion for him. (There is a wonderful Hua Tou about this in Chan: "Why, when I know you do not exist, am I trying to save you?")

We should also try to put ourselves in our enemy's place and to see ourselves from what we suppose to be the vantage of his inferior level of consciousness. Remembering how the world used to look to us when we were stuck in Samsara, we account for the faults in his vision as we recall our own dismal record of cockeyed perceptions.

It is sometimes helpful to make a list of all the people, individuals and groups we dislike for any reason whatsoever. A Chan master will discuss each entry with us; but in the absence of a master, we can conduct the inquiry ourselves.

Let us assume that Jerry, having been racked and pilloried on account of Tom's irresponsibility, has decided that Tom is a fit object for enmity. (Jerry, we recall, lent Tom a large sum of money and Tom repaid it with a bad check which, when it bounced, caused all of the checks Jerry had written against it to bounce in turn.) For the sake of argument, let's say that Jerry listened to his pious advisors who counseled him to be magnanimous and not to prosecute Tom.

Jerry, taking what he thought was the high road, tried to honor his obligations to his creditors, employees and family and succeeded only in becoming a divorced ex-businessman with an alcohol problem and a bad liver. He smoldered with hatred for the deadbeat Tom until he extinguished that and all other passions during a long sojourn in the Swamp. Finally he threw himself upon the mercy of the Buddha and a good Chan master and was saved.

Now Jerry is told by his master that it is not sufficient that he no longer quivers at the mention of Tom's name. He must forgive and love Tom. Hearing this, Jerry cocks an incredulous eyebrow and replies that he would sooner be ordered to climb Everest naked and on stilts. Nevertheless, he is ordered to forgive and to love Tom.

His master may help by inviting him to play a game - a deadly serious game. Since Jerry wants to make a final assault upon the Nirvanic summit, he consents to play.

Jerry is told to pretend that Tom is the Swamp and that the Buddha personally is going to decide whether or not he will pull Tom onto salvation's shore. It is Judgment Day for Tom. Court is in session with the Buddha presiding. Jerry, to his astonishment and extreme discomfort, is named counsel for the defense.

The Buddha acknowledges Tom's long list of felonies and says that if Jerry can convince him to disregard the offenses, he will save Tom. But - and here is the kicker - if Jerry fails to defend Tom, he will send them both back into the Swamp, permanently. (Ah, if only such arrangements could be made with lawyers in the real world.)

Jerry's own salvation depends upon his success in demonstrating the extenuating circumstances of Tom's actions. He must plead Tom's case and he must plead it well.

As Jerry shakes his head incredulously, his Chan master shouts, "You must purge yourself of this defiling hatred! You must exorcize this devil."

There is nothing in religion more difficult to do. Jerry must begin to understand the reasons Tom got to be the way he is. He must see Tom's ego as being helpless against the forces of its deformation and, deformed, helpless to reform itself without the intervening miracle of divine love. Jerry must see that he, himself, is a manifestation of that divine love and that he is both privileged and obliged to radiate it. His hatred has robbed Tom of his humanity, and now he must restore it to him.

As Jerry casts about looking for excuses for Tom (giving Tom the benefit of every doubt) he may become ill, so strenuous and obnoxious a task is this purging. But when he is through with his investigation and the preparation of his case and he imagines in his mind that he is pleading for Tom, he will experience enormous joy. Euphoria, such as is only felt after an initial experience of profound samadhi, will fill Jerry like so much helium. He will be so elated that his feet won't want to stay on the ground. (It is exhilarating to be freed from hating someone.) Nothing can stop Jerry now. His mind ripens. He is a candidate for Satori. When it occurs, he will know that if it hadn't been for good old Tom, he might not have experienced Satori. Karma!

Right Thought or Purpose also requires that we give to all of our undertakings a little of the same thought we give to the simple moves we make in the games or sports we play. We don't move a pawn, play an ace, put in a pinch-hitter, or run the football on a fourth down without being prepared for the consequences. Before we make such decisions we ask ourselves, "What possible courses of action are open to me? Which course promises the greatest success, short-term and long-run? Will success create any problems? What am I risking if I fail? Can I survive the loss? Might only partial success or failure occur? What in any case will my next move be? What is my adversary's next move likely to be?" And so on.

Chan requires us not only to analyze our desires, determining why we want something and understanding all of the consequences of getting what we want, but also to include in our plan of action provisions for failure. We must decide in advance which substitutes, options, or alternatives are acceptable to us. If we can't have our first choice, what is our second? our third? Such preparation serves to limit the amount of ego that we invest in our efforts. We no longer have our hearts so set upon achieving a single goal that we are devastated by defeat or only partial success. We also mitigate the ego-inflating thrill of success by acknowledging that substitutes might not have been entirely disappointing and by being aware that success, too, may have a dark side. At this level, Right Thought functions as a balancing, rationalization process. But at a deeper level we find that the poles of success and failure begin to move steadily closer to the mid-line of equanimity. "If not this, that," we say. "This is nice, but that would have been OK, too." Or, "This is not so bad. It could have been worse." In short, we develop that easy poise that is so characteristic of Chan.

Once that poise is attained, Right Thought's Discipline of Expectations enables us to detach ourselves from the fruits of our labor. The finished product becomes strangely less important than the execution of the work. By eliminating anxiety, we free ourselves to devote full attention to our performance. The surprising outcome of this is that when emotion and prejudice are drained from our choices, our choices improve. This, of course, is why surgeons do not operate on their children and lawyers don't defend themselves.

Right Purpose demands both restraint and ruthlessness.

"What is Zen?" the beginner asks.

"A cauldron of boiling oil over a roaring fire," replies the master.

In the religious life, people often find themselves carried away by spiritual experiences. A teacher easily becomes an avatar and the student a devotee. A mature person - one who has known adult human love - is more likely to remain upright in his appreciation of another man's holiness; but an immature person often aches to genuflect before those whom he has deified.

For these reasons we ought not to apply the same requirements of emotional suppression or control to young people who haven't yet had the opportunity to satisfy natural relationships. And certainly we ought never to encourage teenagers to enter monasteries. Forced abstinence from human contact is the spiritual equivalent of foot-binding. Young people need to interact, to learn and to grow. (We must experience life before we can become disillusioned by it.)

Right Purpose requires that we be neither slaves nor masters of devotion. Such independence mandates - and here is the central paradox of religious life - that we possess an ego that is strong enough to resist archetypal attacks but 'weak' or retreating enough to accept a humble, solitary existence.

On the Path we let our old relationships cool down. We have had enough of heated bouts of jealousy, anger and passion. This cooling does not require that we ignore friends, parents, spouses or children. It requires simply that we 'let go'. With the obvious exception of our own dependent children, we cease involving ourselves in other people's problems and we cease letting them involve themselves in ours.

We can be available when we are truly needed; but we must be careful not to allow ourselves to become providers of free labor, or of such professional services as are properly furnished by psychologists, lawyers, interior decorators, marriage counselors, financial consultants, and so on. Neither, of course, can we expect others to provide us with free labor or other services.

We can be a good friend without daily chatter. We can be a good member of a congregation without always volunteering for committee assignments or other work. As we strive not to need or be needed, we disengage ourselves and cease to find our life's meaning outside of ourselves.

People new to the Path often wince at what seems to be such emotional bloodletting. Nobody, however, makes the ascent burdened with sentimental baggage. Nobody rises if his spirit is tethered by familial ties.

Here is Jesus on the subject: "If any man come to 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" (Luke 14:26).

Hate? The word is terrible. In Buddhism the metaphor is further exaggerated but in the extension becomes somewhat more graspable: We say that we must "kill" those we love. This destruction of personal relationships is clarified in the following exchange between a novice and Chan master Deng Shan:

"Who must I slay?" the novice asks.

"All who live in your life must die," Deng Shan replies.

"But what about my parents? Must I kill them?"

"Who are they to be spared?"

"And you, Master. Must I slay you, too?"

"There's not enough of me left for you to get your hands on."

Of all the projections one individual can make upon another, romantic projections (Anima/Animus) are the most difficult to control. Only a fool would attempt to talk himself or someone else out of being in love. If prayers are in order then they should be that our beloved is not married or if so, that our beloved's spouse is not violent. Usually, the greater our attempt to rationalize our way out of a sexual attraction for someone, the deeper we involve ourselves. Romantic love, like society's legal system, has to run its course. Sexual attraction only attenuates with time and distance or, perhaps, with time and closeness.

If, on the other hand, we find ourselves daydreaming about Tara, we are in deep water and we had better be champion swimmers if we intend to linger awhile. Only Buddhas and women in their androgyne 'other' identities make love to Tara. Judging from the casualties, goddesses allow mature men to make qualifying runs but tend to become annoyed with presumptuous twits who splash about in the divine pool. History sadly notes many men who in their slavish devotion to a goddess castrate themselves in sacrificial acts of emulation, or in demonstration of the innocence of their intentions, or simply to free their divine paramours from the demeaning competition of pedestrian lust. Most men, fortunately, are content to confine their devotions to less surgical forms of adoration.

If we start sounding ga-ga when we discuss our guru, that is perfectly all right if we are twelve. If we are twenty-five, we have to remind ourselves that he is merely a flesh and blood human being who happens to possess helpful insights into spiritual problems. If we are blind to his faults we will only convince him that he has none; and then, only financially can he benefit from our lavish attentions.

True respect for an individual does not require a quickening of the pulse, a breathless intonation, or a blank check.

CHAPTER 13

RIGHT SPEECH

*A word is dead when it is said, some say.
I say it just begins to live that day.
- Emily Dickinson*

THIRD STEP ON THE PATH

Speech does our dirty work for us. In our quest for status, we are all confidence men. We lie, make promises, flatter, exaggerate, gossip, insult, twist truth or omit it, and employ speech in whatever way we can to further our ego's ambitions. No one should find it surprising that all religions prescribe silence in rather large doses when treating the maladies of speech.

Silence, however, is not an antidote to poisonous speech. Just as we don't control anger by counting to ten when we feel anger rise, but merely use this 10count demilitarized time-zone as an opportunity to reconsider the situation, thereby destroying anger at its roots, so we don't use silence to control the problems of speech. Silence merely gives our tongue a sabbatical which our brain can put to good use. Analyzing the reasons we feel so compelled to contribute our thoughts, vocally or in script, privately or to the world at large, is the way we use Right Speech to achieve non-attachment. Usually, when we examine our desire to speak, we discover our ego's intention to gain status for itself.

Some speech transgressions are easy to spot.

In the January 1981 edition of *Ten Directions*, a publication of the Zen Center of Los Angeles and the Institute for Transcultural Studies, an unsigned cartoon strip titled 'Zen Living' appears.

Four figures are in each frame: Two young, black-robed Buddhist priests who are speaking to a longhaired layman, and a man who is sitting nearby reading a newspaper.

One priest says to the layman, "I've really been seeing how my ideas and preconceptions are just the attempts of the ego to assert itself... I mean, the ego is just SO insignificant!"

The second priest continues, "Yeah, I know what you mean! And what gets me is that I spend so much energy on these trivial concerns that are all based on this false sense that the

ego is so important." The layman, looking at his watch, responds, "Yea, same here! I've been seeing that the ego's concerns are so petty, in fact the ego, itself, is so petty... Hey! Gotta go - I'm late for the New Trainee meeting."

As he departs, one priest says to the other, "Would ya getta load of that! He hasn't been here two months and he thinks he understands how petty the ego is already."

And the man reading the newspaper chimes in, "The nerve..."

The cartoon strip illustrates some of the Right Speech problems people on the Path should avoid. That the priests are gossipy and snipe at the layman is an obvious error. That they are casually discussing their intellectual insights into Buddhism is another. And that they are engaged in a kind of one-up competition with each other is a third. That they are trying to impress the layman is a fourth. And the eavesdropping bystander commits yet a fifth error in Right Speech.

There are many other ways to err.

Many people think that Right Speech has something to do with Free Speech and its related Constitutional rights and responsibilities. This confusion frequently allows political activism to contaminate religious life; and, unfortunately for the heroic crusaders who dwell within our breast, few things are as harmful to a person's spiritual practice than political activism.

When government is immoral, society looks to its religious leaders to promote change. Sometimes, as is often the case in undeveloped countries, a religion is the only organization available to form an opposition. Sometimes, ironically, it was the unwarranted intrusion into secular matters by the religion, itself, which engendered the poverty, oppression and corruption which the people are engaged in opposing. But no matter, whether trying to change conditions for which they are largely responsible or whether trying to change conditions for which they are entirely blameless, religions seem always to get involved in politics.

Unripened religious professionals, believing it incumbent upon themselves to set society straight on moral issues, frequently can be found marching in protest lines or parades. They do not realize that by publicly protesting injustices of one sort or another they are practicing Six-Worlds' Chan. Don't warn them that if they expend all their energy correcting the misconduct of others, they'll have no strength left to root lust or greed out of their own hearts. They are prepared to make the sacrifice.

Charge that their devotion to the issue far exceeds their understanding of the issue and they will rebuke you, gnashing their teeth in vehement denial. They are authorities on Good and Evil. They have studied the issue (nuclear energy, alien rights, ozone depletion, military

draft, toxic waste, abortion, endangered species, organized labor strikes, offshore drilling, etc.) and they know that they are on the side of Good.

How do religious organizations really determine which side of an issue is the good one? Do they automatically assume that the good side is the side the government is not on? No. They do not study issues that carefully. If we interview the protesters, we usually learn that they determined the good side by having it described to them by the administrators of their temples at whose instigation they also picked up their placards. And how did those astute beings arrive on the side of Good? Either they found in the 'evil' side a fit receptacle for their congregation's collective hate (common enemies being the nutritive umbilical cord of fellowship) or, what is more frequently the case, they simply differentiated good from evil according to the quid pro quo, "I'll march in your protest if you'll march in mine" accommodations which religious groups make with each other.

According to this arrangement, one religious group calls another to solicit help in protesting the deployment of Multiple Warhead Intercontinental Nuclear Missiles (their Roshi's pet peeve). The solicited organization complies and contributes a few dozen bodies to the march. Then, a month later when this organization wants to protest Offshore Drilling (the bane of their Guru's existence), they call upon the first which reciprocates. Often, the people on the line don't know anything at all about the issue except what they have been told by their religious leaders. Not exactly a think-tank operation.

People who have spent some time in the Swamp are usually appalled by this unseemly interest in society's problems. They believe that they have earned the right to simplify their lives, to discard all their Six-Worlds' junk which includes flaunting half-baked political opinions. They know that salvation has nothing to do with ozone depletion and that however urgent the ozone problem is, they must allow others the privilege of dealing with it. (That is why God made a younger generation.) When a man is standing amid the smoking ruins of his life he does not particularly care how big the hole in the ozone layer gets. In fact, if he cares at all, it is to wish that the hole gets big enough for the earth to fall through it. In his wretched way, he cheers the hole on. Once saved, the man calmly supports with his vote or his money, or his choice of refrigerants, efforts to remedy the ozone loss. But he does not worry about the hole because he understands that ultimately the hole does not matter. Nothing except knowing God matters. He takes refuge in the Buddha. And it is the Buddha's name that is on his lips... not the name of the Secretary of the Interior.

Further, people on the path should know that unless they are prepared quietly to offer an alternative 'something of value' to replace that which is being decried, they should not protest society's solution to any problem.

We should not spend hours protesting assaults upon our fuzzy moral sensibilities while begrudging five minutes of our time to correcting or preventing a related social problem. We should not be found protesting abortion if we are never found volunteering our time at child care centers, youth athletic leagues, or charity 'soup kitchens.'

Of greater importance to the person on the Path are ego-enhancing proclamations which identify an individual with the pro or con of a social issue. "I am the kind of person who defends the earth and its innocent inhabitants. Read my sign!"

We enter the religious life to remove ourselves from the damaging concerns of society. It is another world we wish to enter, a world in which the Buddha looks with equal eye upon the murderer and the hero, upon the polluter and the non-polluter, upon the communist and the capitalist. We cultivate 'holy indifference' by which we do not mean that we do not care. Holy indifference means compassionate non-involvement. We sympathize and support but do not become emotionally aroused by anyone's problems - not even our own. This doesn't mean that if someone is drowning and we know how to swim we just stand by and watch.

Right speech also means treating the telephone as though it were a loaded gun or an instrument of torture. We should be as diligent in preserving the privacy of others as we are in protecting our own.

Many monasteries have regular fund raising drives and assign monks or guest laymen to telephone every Buddhist in Christendom in order to request donations. Direct verbal solicitations are flagrant violations of Right Speech. When a monk with a begging bowl comes down the street chanting and a householder, hearing him and calculating how much rice he can spare, opens his door and gives the monk a spoonful, there is mutual benefit. Likewise, when someone knows that the temple needs money and voluntarily makes a donation, there is also mutual good. But when we actively pressure someone into giving us what we want, we make that person feel as if he has been mugged. (And, really, he has been.)

Meanwhile, back at the monastery, the person who weasels the most money out of people is rewarded with much praise. It doesn't matter that the victims who made pledges may be hard-pressed to honor them or that seventy cents of each dollar raised goes to pay for solicitation and collection expenses - the other thirty cents is needed income. Of course, if all the monks engaged in solicitation were to go out and get honest jobs and turn their salaries over to their abbot, the monastery would actually do better. But who even considers this alternative? A fellow quickly wonders what's the point of being a priest if he has to go out and work like ordinary people... and then be required to be as generous with the fruits of his labor as he, without compunction, requires others to be! Is this a violation of Church and State, or what?

Patriotism, Dr. Johnson noted, is the last refuge of scoundrels. Religion clearly is the first.

Right speech, as we have noted, sometimes means no speech. If family members or friends whose call we welcomed in former days persist in calling us when we are on the Path,

we should consider the possibility they are worried about us (nobody is ever quite ready that to accept that we have been saved by Buddhism, of all things). With polite kindness we should reassure them, firmly explaining that all our spare time is devoted to prayer and meditation and that we really can't chat. If our callers are having personal problems and want to unburden themselves, we ought to listen, offering what comfort we can, and suggesting, if appropriate, Buddhist solutions to their problems. We may invite them to services, send them instructional material, or help them to realize that the best therapy of all lies within themselves. But we should never involve ourselves in their problems, nor take sides, nor let them believe that our sympathy is a substitute for salvation.

Right Speech also requires responsibility in relating stories about the Buddha or individual Buddhists. Too often devotees become so soaked with religious fervor that they leak miracles from every pore. Dripping with self-satisfaction, they relate how they prayed for a miracle (one usually involving sex or money) and the Buddha, generous god that he is, rewarded them by providing one. These persons advise their troubled but 'deserving' neighbors to pray for similar treatment. The Buddha can do anything. He can bring back the dead or turn unpaid bills into shares of IBM or cause an slackened lover to become turgid with desire.

When things go wrong, remedy does not lie in the accommodating suspension of nature's laws. We can't pray for miracles and we can't encourage naive or desperate people to believe that any such facile solutions are available to them. Disciplined self-reliance and faith in the Compassionate Buddha are miraculous enough.

Right Speech also prohibits us from indulging in time wasting, ego gratifying, sophomoric discussions. The Buddha was said to be particularly distressed by the tendency of many of his followers to engage in metaphysical arguments. Clarification of totally irrelevant points seemed always to be a precondition to working for salvation. In one of religion's most stunning parables, aptly translated by E. J. Thomas, the Buddha responded to this tendency: "Suppose a man were wounded by a poisoned arrow and his friend brought a surgeon to heal him; and suppose that the man said, 'I will not allow the surgeon to treat me until I know who it was who wounded me, to which caste he belonged; of which family he was a member; or whether he was tall or short; or whether he was dark, white or yellow skinned; or from which town he came. I will not let the surgeon treat me until I know which kind of bow was used to wound me, whether it was a chapa or a kodanda; whether the bowstring was of swallow-wort, or bamboo fiber, sinew, hemp, or milk-tree; or whether the wood used to make the arrow's shaft was domestic or imported; or whether its feathers came from a vulture or a heron or a hawk; or whether it was bound with the sinew of an ox, or of a buffalo, or of a ruru-deer, or of a monkey; or until I know whether it was an ordinary arrow, or a razor-arrow, an iron arrow or a tooth arrow.' Before learning all of this, that man would die!"

We previously referred to Thomas Merton's translation of a collection of fourth century anecdotes about the Desert Fathers. The last entry in the work is familiar to

Buddhists because it is virtually impossible to be a Buddhist and not to have heard this particular tale: A young monk is unjustly accused of getting a girl pregnant. Though he is innocent, he does not protest. He simply accepts responsibility for her and the child. Months or years later the girl confesses her lie and names the baby's real father. With the same tranquillity that the monk accepted the responsibility, he accepts everyone's apology and departs to continue his spiritual journey.

This old chestnut has made the rounds of the celibate orders of all religions. The Desert Fathers were Christians. The monk who relates the story about himself is the Blessed Macarius. In *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*, Paul Reps' fine compilation of Zen writings, we find the identical story told this time about the Japanese Zen master Hakuin. (I have heard the same tale told about Dao monks and Chinese Chan monks.) Somebody is violating Right Speech. Why this improbable tale should be so popular among religious orders we can all imaginatively answer.

If a priest is unjustly accused of serious immoral conduct Right Speech requires him to defend himself against the charge. He may not acquiesce in a lie. Ultimately, stories of this ilk are intended to demonstrate "holy indifference" to the vicissitudes of fate, and also to create the impression of innocence in every case of accusation. If the truly innocent do not offer a defense against malicious charges, then the guilty, merely by striking a similarly passive pose, may be presumed to be similarly innocent.

If an innocent man, despite his protests, is found guilty by his master or by a court then he must accept the consequences with as much grace as he can muster. If found guilty when he has been, he ought to take the trouble to repent.

Shame sets a good example.

CHAPTER 14

RIGHT ACTION

The faults of others are easily seen, but one's own faults are perceived with difficulty. One winnows the faults of others like chaff, but conceals his own faults as a Fowler covers his body with twigs and leaves.

- *The Buddha (Dhammapada: XVII, 252)*
(Theosophical University Press)

FOURTH STEP ON THE PATH

At the outset it must be understood that the precepts given below are for ordinary, unaffiliated laymen. Rules will vary among different congregations. With certain reservations, whenever anyone joins a particular group he must obey that group's interpretation of the Precepts. Rules for monks and nuns and priests of both sexes are invariably more strict.

A pledge to obey Buddhism's five commandments, the Five Precepts, is made by everyone who officially joins the religion. Acting correctly includes not only following these basic precepts but also other obvious rules of conduct.

The Five Precepts require that we abstain from:

1. Aggressions, especially violent aggressions, against others.
2. Deceitful words or deeds
3. Illicit sexual activity
4. Theft
5. Use of mind-altering substances habitually, dependently, or to an intoxicating degree.

First, a caveat. Owing, perhaps, to the permission granted by the Buddha in the popular version of his death bed pronouncements, many Buddhist institutions have seen fit to make a few adjustments in the 'minor' precepts. In what some critics have called the 'Cannabis/Coitus Canon,' some American Zen centers have chosen to ignore the prohibitions against using mind altering substances and engaging in illicit sexual relationships.

Here, for example, is a list of the precepts exactly as they given in one American Zen Center:

1. Non-killing
2. Non-stealing
3. Not Being Greedy
4. Not Telling Lies
5. Not Being Ignorant
6. Not Talking about Others' Errors and Faults
7. Not Elevating Oneself and Blaming Others
8. Not Being Stingy
9. Not Being Angry
10. Not Speaking Ill of the Three Treasures (The Buddha, the Way, and the Priesthood.)

What happened to sex and drugs? We search the list in vain. Omissions such as this are designed to make Buddhism less intimidating to newcomers. This will not do.

The Back-to-Basics Pentalog requires us to take serious and constructive action in complying with all of the precepts.

1. Violent aggressions

Following the law of the land, we may take reasonable measures to defend ourselves or others who are defenseless, such as children, the aged and infirmed, especially if these individuals are in our charge. (Accepting the responsibility of guardianship requires the guardian to defend those entrusted to him.) If a threat against us can clearly be perceived as mortal, we can kill. What we can't do is commit a battery or a murder... not in any degree.

A person who complies with the commandment of nonviolence to the extent of refusing to defend himself clearly demonstrates an exalted spirituality; but such passivity is neither mandated nor, considering the scarcity of such saints, desirable. Persons who elect to protect their lives against unprovoked attack are not to be criticized for their actions.

For some reason the right of self-defense is difficult for many spiritual elitists to accept. The first precept does not confer exemption to military service. We are entitled to defend ourselves, but we are obliged to defend our country.

Unless we are dealing with cannibalism or the killing of any creature that possibly can pray, nonviolence should not be thought to extend to food sources. There, nonviolence means non-cruelty. Animals, whether food sources or not, must be treated humanely.

Many Buddhists around the world eat meat or fish and nobody can have a hamburger or a tuna fish sandwich without something's having been killed. Human beings evolved as meat and fish eaters and no fault attaches to such a diet. Modern vegetarians, however, in

their own gentle ways are sometimes fond of regarding meat eaters as cold-blooded murderers.

Yet, vegetarians require large tracts of land to grow their food and many animals may be killed or allowed to die of starvation when their habitat is destroyed by the plow or by the destruction of forests. Many insecticides are used to grow fruits and vegetables; and insecticides, by definition, kill living things.

Though a well balanced vegetarian diet is definitely preferred, the Chan man eats whatever foods are good for him and whatever foods he can afford to buy, and he does this without criticizing others. In many Buddhist countries, dog meat is considered good food. The thought of Fido roasting in someone's oven may make us sick and/or sad, nevertheless we are obliged to respect other people's culinary preferences even as we decline their invitations to dinner.

The commandment to be nonviolent also encompasses the abuse of family members and extends to covering up the domestic abuses of others. When we witness or otherwise know that someone is battering his children, we must report the felony to the police. The abuser may be emotionally ill and in need of much counseling; but his psychological needs must wait until after he is arraigned.

There was a time when priests of all religions assumed a judicial role in the domestic crimes of their parishioners. The priests were discreet and their counsel was wise; nevertheless, especially where child abuse is concerned, the days of private religious interventions are over. Ecclesiastical authority may not be substituted for civil authority.

Buddhist priests who commit acts of child abuse, either sexual abuse or battery, are likewise not to be accorded the in-house punishments of yesteryear. The abuses committed by clergymen are not of a different order than the abuses committed by laymen. The abbot of a monastery may not take it upon himself to impose punishment or negotiate settlements of victims' claims without having the matter formally adjudicated.

Too often congregation members are required to hold priests harmless in instances of improper conduct. Note how the last item in the list of ten precepts given above stipulates that the Buddhist devotee vow "not speak ill of the priesthood." When a priest commits an "ill" act we are in most cases required by law to "speak ill of the priest" at the police station or in court. Number ten as given above is a self-serving, Sangha-inspired rule. It is not a valid precept and no one should promise to keep it.

2. Deceitful words and deeds

This involves all forms of misrepresenting, lying, flattering for advantage, and being hypocritical or two-faced.

Salesmen frequently have difficulty with this precept. They do not know where to draw the line between puffing and deception. The person on the Path should try to impose upon himself tougher standards than exist in consumer protection laws. He should always put himself in his customer's place; and if he would buy what he is selling at the price for which he is selling it - excluding, of course, considerations of his 'wholesale' advantages - then he may proceed in good conscience. If he's earning his living cheating people, then he's breaking the law and needs to find a new job.

For most social interactions, a rule of thumb for the second precept is, "If you can't tell the truth then keep your mouth shut." Usually, we have no difficulty with this commandment if we operate from a base of non-desirousness. When we stop trying to gratify our egos, we stop having to be deceitful.

White lies preserve the peace, and only an officious fool or a sadist tells an obviously fat person that he appears to be so. A white lie is a totally innocent lie. No advantage is sought and no money changes hands.

A different matter altogether is lying for a "good cause." Religious institutions, for example, frequently subscribe to the dictum that when sheep must be fleeced no method is too sleazy. Priests or lay volunteers will unabashedly resort to a list of tear-jerking and wallet-opening ploys. The deception is excused because the money is spent on some building project or other the benefits of which suffuse the entire religious body - or so the fund-raisers may wish to believe.

Sometimes, on the pretext of "getting to know" a new member of a congregation, information about the member's occupation and financial resources is obtained. If the member is either rich or is in a position of advantage, say is a roofing contractor when a new roof is needed, the person is singled out for ecclesiastical stroking. Anyone who participates in deception of this unconscionable sort is violating the second precept.

We may not elicit a promise of secrecy from someone and then disclose to that person our criminal acts. Likewise, we may not promise confidentiality as a precondition to listening to someone's misdeeds. We don't become Buddhists in order to function as each other's father confessor or co-conspirator. We have no right to compromise others just as we have no obligation to allow others to compromise us. On the other hand, if someone reveals to us certain non-criminal personal history, we are bound to keep his confidences secret whether or not we have explicitly promised to do so.

3. Abstaining from illicit sexual activity

Again, following the law of the land, we don't have sexual relations with minors or with adults who would rather not. Neither do we indulge ourselves with somebody else's spouse no matter how enthusiastic that spouse is in his or her approach to us. Nor, if married, to someone who not our spouse. No means no.

Does this mean that we may entice at arm's length those persons with whom we are prohibited contact? May we flirt or tempt or suggest? No, we may not. Especially where minors are involved, we may not in any way introduce, by word or deed, any sexual possibilities.

When we exclude absolutely any sexual contact whatsoever with children or anyone under the age of eighteen and married people of any age, we are left with consenting, legally and morally available adults to play with. This ought to be enough.

Regarding homosexuality, every state has its own laws and the prudent man or woman doesn't get caught breaking them. This is a rancorous, emotional issue and personally speaking, I don't know why it should be. Many homosexuals are born that way and we may ask how a just God justifies creating a person who prefers his own sex only to condemn that person for his preference. Knowing what we do about karma, we should understand that a person who, by circumstance, has been led to favor his own sex can likewise be held responsible for the harmless execution of his choice.

Homosexuals are subject to the same rules which prohibit sexual contact with minors and married people. They may not flaunt their sexuality or otherwise attempt to entice juveniles or married persons into considering the possibilities of sexual contact.

A person cannot mature without knowing human love. We either love or go a bit berserk from loneliness. We have all seen the spiritually maimed who, having been brought to their religion at a tender age, grow old without the human experience of shared sexual love. They make the worst sort of priest or neighbor. A mature homosexual is a mature person whereas a person whose need to experience a deep and abiding sexual relationship has been relentlessly stifled tends to become a pious fool.

Pious fools should be allowed to do whatever it is they do providing, of course, that they are consenting adults.

4. Theft

This category includes fraud, cheating, converting to our own use goods and services to which we are not entitled, and other similar acts.

The class of persons who violate this precept is not limited to cat-burglars, muggers and temple fund raisers.

In religion we frequently find business or professional people who follow an 'end justifies the means' code. They cheat or otherwise financially abuse their employees or their customers and clients and then donate some of the profits of these transactions to a temple. Rationalizing their actions, they believe that if they did not gain such ill advantage they

would not be able to perform such good works. We may not cultivate the personas of philanthropists to mask simple egotistic greed. We are not permitted to take that which is not honestly and reasonably given or earned.

Sometimes in a spasm of religious enthusiasm we donate money that is needed for family maintenance and thereby place the burden of our largesse upon the shoulders of our dependents. In order that we may take our place proudly among the righteous, we impose our vow of poverty or our claims to generosity upon family members who do not participate in the spiritual rewards of our decisions. This constitutes a form of theft especially since what we usually most rob our family of is their respect for Buddhism. Inevitably they resent our religion and turn away from it. And who can blame them?

A forty year old man who strives for simplicity is not at liberty to divert his family's clothing budget to charity, forcing his wife and children to wear the old but serviceable clothes of plain, god-fearing folk. To all teenagers and not a few wives it is more important that a coat be fashionable than that it be warm.

5. Non-intoxication

Except for an occasional fiesta, no use of intoxicants and other mind altering substances is permitted. And fiesta or no fiesta, this means no drinking and driving. This also means no sitting around getting stoned because there's a quorum that passes for a party and nothing else for a leisurely group of people to do. There's no dependence upon sleeping pills to get us through the night or tranquilizers, nicotine or other stimulants to get us through the day.

Salvation frees us from chemical dependence and anyone who has a problem with dependence is well advised to work for his salvation.

These are the Five Precepts. In addition to observing them, we must take actions which are consonant with the goals of spiritual maturity. It isn't enough to worry about the obstacles we encounter on the Path. We may not create obstacles for others. Therefore, we take action to elevate our sense of personal responsibility.

We don't help ourselves to the possessions of others telling ourselves that the owner won't mind or that the owner in the course of some previous unresolved transaction has forfeited some of his rights of ownership. ("He took my Twinkies therefore I'm entitled to his Pepsi.")

We don't take things out of their places of storage and then leave them lying around for others to put away. We don't eat and leave a mess for others to clean up.

If we borrow something, we return it undamaged. If we incur a debt, we pay it in full. If we think we have been cheated in the bargain, we let the courts or our master adjudicate the matter. We don't simply refuse to pay and let it go at that.

If we make an appointment, we keep it. If we make a promise, we fulfill it. And we keep our appointments and promises punctually; and, regardless of how inconvenient it is to keep our word, we don't grouse about it.

We give credit to others for their contributions to the commonweal, but if only because we don't want to inspire jealousy, we keep news of our own contributions to ourselves.

We don't gossip about people but we do give evidence when required.

A mature individual doesn't create anger or lust or any negative emotions in the hearts of those around him. Right action requires that in all that we do we take into consideration the effects of our actions on others.

There is a practical approach to ethics that we ought not overlook. People often wonder why, in light of karma and the need to be non-judgmental, we ought to bother at all with trying to behave ourselves. Sometimes the simple answer is just that nobody knows when the lightning of Enlightenment will strike or when the impulse to change, to find spiritual solutions to life, will be felt. If our time for Enlightenment is scheduled for Thursday, then, if we are keeping the laws of sexual morality, we won't be shot by an irate spouse on Wednesday night. Or, if we are destined to be seized with the desire to reform on Tuesday, then, if we are keeping the rule of non-intoxication, we won't drive our car off a cliff in a drunken stupor on Monday night.

In short, the morally reckless often do not survive long enough to achieve Enlightenment.

CHAPTER 15

RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

*"The prerogative of intelligence, the only means to manhood,
and the measure of civilization. Savages do not work."*

- Calvin Coolidge

FIFTH STEP ON THE PATH: WORK...

There is an incredible amount of drivel circulated in Buddhist literature regarding the kinds of occupations which are fit for Buddhists.

According to these texts, Buddhists may not, for example, earn their living directly or indirectly by doing anything that involves the harming of living beings. At first glance this seems clear and reasonable. "Well," the young Buddhist says, "I must scratch from my list of possible career goals becoming a Mafia hit man. Fair enough."

But such texts as Walpola Rahula's "What The Buddha Taught" continue stating that Buddhists may also not be found, "living through a profession that brings harm to others, such as trading in arms and lethal weapons, intoxicating drinks, poisons, killing animals, cheating, etc."

The career-searching Buddhist immediately adds, "I will never work in an abattoir dispatching cattle to that great pasture in the sky." Then he begins to wonder to what degree he is prohibited from supporting the meat industry. Well, he reasons, trading in weapons is not in and of itself killing or even violent. It is merely supportive of violence by supplying the materiel of death. But to what degree is he enjoined from participating in the killing of animals? May he be the man who delivers the cow to the slaughterhouse? May he be the cowboy who raises the cow to be slaughtered? May he sell hamburgers? Shoes? Any leather article? May he sell gelatin? May he work at the A & P or own shares in any supermarket chain? May he be a fisherman? May he be a waiter who delivers pastrami sandwiches to a table? Also, while he pretty well understands that he must not support the Mafia in any way and he rather doubts that he could apply for the office of State Executioner, he wonders about the rest of criminal justice system. Can he be a court reporter in a court that sentences people to death? Can he aspire to be a cop?

He continues to mull the issue. Obviously a Buddhist cannot be a bartender or a cocktail waitress, he decides, or even work for a distillery or a brewery. But may he be the

man who builds the cocktail lounge or cleans it? May he be the farmer who sells his grain to the brewer?

May a Buddhist work for a pest control company? May he set rat traps or exterminate termites and roaches? Clearly not! May he swat a mosquito? No way! (I was once admonished by a nun in a Buddhist monastery in Taiwan for swatting a mosquito.) May he be a physician who administers medicines which poison thousands of innocent intestinal worms that happen to be living in a child's abdomen? May he work for a pharmaceutical company that makes the medicine?

He knows in his heart that he cannot be a pimp or a drug pusher but he knew that before he converted to Buddhism.

And he cannot earn his living through "cheating." (Uh, Oh. That lets out used cars, aluminum siding, politics and TV evangelism.) The more he thinks about it, the shorter his list gets.

And so he and the rest of us are all left wondering just what does Right Livelihood mean?

Most religious commentators avoid answering such questions. And nobody can query a book.

What is necessary, here, is common sense. Religious professionals who earn their living from the donations of working members of their congregations can afford to be angelically employed. Having no family responsibilities to anchor them to earthly reality, they can afford to float above such defilements. (And while we are on the subject, it is shocking to see how easily The Pure accept 'dirty' money. A whore can go from the crib to the pew and if her trick receipt is put in the collection box, it is welcomed. This, of course, is true of any religion. None is fussy about a donation's provenance.)

Therefore, the solution we apply to the problem of Right Livelihood is simple: A Buddhist may earn his living in any way that is honest and legal. He may sell guns... but not to someone he reasonably suspects is insane or who intends to use the gun for a criminal purpose. He may be a vegetarian and a cowboy... a shoemaker, a butcher, a soldier, a bartender, and, lest there be any doubt, he may even be the man who throws the switch on someone legally condemned to die. If he doesn't approve of capital punishment, he doesn't have to take the job.

There are limitations which a Buddhist ought to impose upon himself. While he may be a deerstalker if he believes that the meat will be eaten, it is hoped that he would not associate himself with frivolous blood sports or trophy hunting. There are people, for example, who use pigeons for target practice or who kill foxes for the fun of it. The precept of nonviolence prevents anyone from indulging himself in recreational killing, the wanton

killing of animals being unambiguously cruel. Helping other people to kill recreationally is, however, honest and legal. Many family men are employed by country squires who occasionally hunt foxes. What should they do when ordered to prepare for the hunt? Quit or get fired? What about the hound breeder and the blacksmith? They also contribute their skill to the hunt. If the only way in the world a man can earn a living and feed his family is to guide people on safari, well... we can hope he makes sure no nursing females are taken and that all the kills are clean, but we can't ask him either to remove himself from our Buddhist ranks or to abandon his responsibilities to his family. The guide, furthermore, is not alone in lending his talents to the kill and may not be singled out for criticism. The hunter may have been outfitted by a pious sporting goods salesman and transported to the safari site through the services of a upstanding travel agent and a devout pilot. A decent, loving clerk may have sold him his hunting license. What are we asking here? Should Buddhist pilots refuse to fly to Nairobi?

May a Buddhist perform or assist in the performance of an abortion? Good question. (My personal answer is, 'God, I hope not.')

But... it is honest and it is legal and sometimes greater compassion is shown assisting in an abortion than in denying the procedure. Health care professionals have to decide for themselves whether they consider terminating an early pregnancy to be killing. The law more or less states that if a child can make it on its own, its life may not be aborted. For this reason, third trimester pregnancies are usually not even considered. In some unsophisticated societies, an infant doesn't exist as a human being until it is named. If the mother does not have sufficient food for it, she lets it die anonymously. Wherever medicines or skills are available, abortions are performed.

No society has existed without practicing abortion and/or infanticide. Some societies are, however, more skilled than others and kill less women. Ultimately, this is the issue. Legal abortions are at least safe. Where abortion is not legal, the rich can afford to go where it is legal to obtain a safe procedure. The poor, removed from the traditions of native cultures, are reduced to the often lethal quackery of back-alley abortionists. Abortion, however, is not and can never be anything but a remedy of last resort. It is not an acceptable substitute for the Pill or other birth control methods.

In "The Empty Mirror", Janwillem van de Wetering's fascinating account of his experiences in a Japanese Zen Monastery, he relates how villagers would often bring their unwanted kittens to the monastery. The task of disposing of them fell to a Buddhist priest who would put them into a sack and drown them. What else could this priest have done? Should he have kept a large snake as a monastery pet, thrown the kittens to the dogs, or let the kittens starve to death? People who get indignant about the priest's solution have lived too long in an oxygen-deprived stratosphere. Down on earth tough life-and-death choices have to be made.

It is a certainty that the villagers knew or suspected that the kittens were being killed. But they did what so many of us do. We don't have 'the heart' or we are 'religiously opposed'

to doing a particularly odious job so we absolve ourselves of guilt by dumping the job onto someone else.

A person who goes to work every day makes choices and compromises. So complex is the network of commerce, industry, and professional services that it is often impossible to draw any line of demarcation between acceptable and unacceptable occupations. A Chan man must live in society and what is legal in society is legal for a Chan man. If he doesn't like the law, he can try by legal means to alter it. If he finds an occupation personally repugnant, he should abstain from it; but he should not chastise or condemn someone else whose views differ from his. There simply is no other realistic way of complying with Right Livelihood.

In all the world there is nothing more repugnant than a morally superior religious leader who will take money from those whose occupations he finds reprehensible, who likes fine leather gloves which, he supposes, come from leather trees, who demands a well ordered society while denigrating the hands that do the dirty work of maintaining it, who richly lives where there are no rats but who forbids the poor to rid themselves even of this scourge, and so on.

Such a cleric is a professional hypocrite, a livelihood many stations below the more conservative forms of prostitution.

CHAPTER 16

RIGHT EFFORT

SIXTH STEP ON THE PATH

Upon reaching this particular step, most Buddhist texts usually deliver a little sermon on willpower. Says Walpola Rahula (quoting scripture, I believe) "Right Effort is the energetic will (1) to prevent evil and unwholesome states of mind from arising, and (2) to get rid of such evil and unwholesome states that have already arisen within a man, and also (3) to produce, to cause to arise, good and wholesome states of mind not yet arisen, and (4) to develop and bring to perfection the good and wholesome states of mind already present in a man."

The Reverend Dr. Rahula, having begun and concluded his remarks on Right Effort, moves on to the next step in the Path. We are left wondering how we can use the information provided in this four-part definition. A definition is not a plan.

Right Effort requires us to simplify our life and to restructure it in ways that conduce to the performance of our Chan practice. We create an environment in which our practice can thrive.

Right Effort, then, enables us to establish a positive feedback loop: success in meditation makes us feel better emotionally and physically, and feeling better makes us enthusiastic about keeping our Chan practice. Willpower is not something we will ourselves to have. We are motivated to act only when we desire the rewards of our actions. It is possible to be motivated to act in order to avoid pain, discomfort or the descent into a former, failed way of life; but this negative kind of motivation is never very strong. A merciful providence consigns pain to oblivion. We quickly forget how really awful life can be, how very injurious to us certain people, places and things actually are. We get sloppy and backslide.

In the fables of Hinduism and Buddhism, a recurring character appears: the purchased devil. How important it is to maintain our practice is illustrated in one particular story:

A man is walking through the marketplace when he suddenly sees a caged devil for sale. He wonders why anyone would want to buy a devil but the merchant assures him that the devil is well worth the investment. The devil can perform any and all domestic tasks assigned to him. All that is necessary, says the merchant, is that the devil faithfully be told

each morning what his duties for the day will be. His owner will then be free to leave the house and attend to his own work, knowing that each night, when he returns, all the household chores will be done. The man, who happens to be a bachelor, has a definite need for housekeeping help; and so he buys the devil. Everything goes well for several weeks. The man rises, instructs his devil and goes to work sanguine in the knowledge that when he returns in the evening the house will be clean, his laundry done, the garden tended, and his dinner prepared. But one day he meets some friends after work, gets drunk with them, and stays in town overnight. The next morning he goes directly to his job. That evening when he finally returns home, he enters his house and discovers his devil dismembering a neighbor's child.

In other words, the very first time we break with our Chan routine, we invite disaster. But this is true of any routine that we swear on our mother's aorta we will keep faithfully. We are like alcoholics who think sobriety can be resumed after we enjoy just one martini. It can't. To break any routine is almost to forget that we ever had one.

Right Effort keeps us on the Path. We simplify our lives in order to lower our stress levels. By minimizing our interactions with others we minimize conflicts or other ego-energizing involvements. By taking the conditions of our body and mind seriously, we eliminate deleterious habits such as smoking, drinking, drug dependency and even addictive personal relationships, eliminations which can be ended easily, providing we grasp the power that meditation and Chan psychology and philosophy offer. We do and we think. We meditate and we gain insight.

Willpower is not a creature that spontaneously generates in our brains. We develop good habits only when their performance pleases us. If we like the result, we continue.

1. Creating a meditation space

A sanctuary is a sacred place. In it a necessary mood of spiritual well-being is evoked, creating a feedback loop. We like the feeling we get from entering the sanctuary and this motivates us to engage in our meditation practice. Success in the practice heightens the mood of the sanctuary. We can acquire the habit of entering this mood as we acquire the habit of entering the sanctuary.

Beginners require a meditation space. If we have a whole house to ourselves, we can select a bedroom, throw all of the furniture and junk out of it, take down the drapes or other window treatments that inhibit the passage of light into it, paint the walls a soft white, clean the rugs, create an altar out of a narrow table, put pictures of the Buddha and our teachers on the altar and a cushion on the floor in front of it, add some flowers and incense, and we are ready to go.

What if we don't have a whole house to ourselves? No problem. We use whatever space we have. Finding a quiet time is usually, in such cramped environments, a much greater problem.

If we have a bedroom to ourselves, we can convert a corner of it to act as our chapel. If we are human beings, we use our bedrooms to store clothes we haven't worn in ten years and can never wear again not only because they are ludicrously out of fashion but because we weigh thirty pounds more than when we bought them. We create and sanctify our chapel by getting rid of all the old clothes (a supreme act of non-attachment) and the furniture we stored them in. Now we have lots of room for our altar.

If we don't have a bedroom to ourselves, we can explore the possibility of putting a shelf on the wall near our bed or of using a closet or even a drawer. I know one person who created a beautiful sanctuary inside an old closet. When he sat on the floor in front of the closet, the opened door acted as a partition which gave him privacy. I know of another man who built a little altar inside a drawer. It worked very well. A decorated shoe box that contains our religious articles will also do.

Finding privacy and quiet are the great challenges for people who do not live alone. The most ingenious solution to noise and congestion I've heard of is that of a working wife and mother who got up half an hour ahead of her family, drew her bath, put a six-inch wide board across the tub to act as her altar, lit incense, and, sitting in silence, fragrance, and soothing hot water, meditated for twenty minutes every morning. Bravo!

Once the ability to retreat mentally into a sanctuarial state is gained, meditation is possible anywhere and under any conditions. But this kind of control takes many months of effort.

2. Curtailing social interactions

The telephone is the devil's instrument. Ideally, anyone on the Path should have his telephone disconnected, with a special ceremony performed as the line is severed. Had the device been around in Siddhartha's day, the 6th Precept would have been non-telephoning.

If, however, we need a telephone, we must take harsh measures to insure that as we do not torture others with our calls, we are not tortured by theirs. An amputated bell is a much appreciated sacrifice to the household god of peace.

In like manner, regular social engagements must be canceled or curtailed. Some people have something to do every night of the week. They belong to clubs, leagues, circles, study groups, committees, congregations. They take classes - academic, athletic, or hobby. They keep standing appointments with beauticians, masseurs and bartenders, and so on. These people are social junkies and, if they lack the fortitude to cold-turkey their habits, must carefully wean themselves away from their addiction by cutting back one night at a time.

Social activity should be reserved for weekends. In fact, with the possible exception of Sunday morning or Sunday night, religious programs ought to be forgotten on weekends. There are simply too many household chores and family activities that can not and should not be ignored. Besides, nobody can meditate when in another room the Cowboys are mauling the Redskins or when one's alma mater is shooting its way into the Final Four.

Young people have different requirements. Between their schoolwork and jobs they must keep a different and far more flexible schedule. Since they absolutely need to interact with other young people, evening or weekend religious services should provide some additional social opportunity.

But for the rest of us, sundown ought to find us safely ensconced in our domiciles... alone.

When we are on the Path we strive to acquire emotional detachment. Ruthlessly, we resign from our activities and discourage visitors or other intruders from entering our lives. As our stress levels concomitantly drop, we find that not only do we have time to sit in meditation but that we are able to approach meditation with the necessary serenity.

Once we gain that peaceful, joyful solitude which is Chan's special blessing, we discover that - perhaps for the first time in our lives - we are truly happy. At that point, knowing finally the difference between loneliness and solitude, we become ferocious about preserving our solitude.

3. Getting in shape

Usually about the time we are ready for Chan, we are also ready for the cardiac ward or the obesity clinic or the psychiatrist's couch or the gastroenterologist's table. (Sometimes all of them.) It's not easy to reverse three or four decades of self-inflicted body and mind abuse; but like everything else, progress begins with a decision. We resolve to quit doing those things which harm us and to initiate helpful programs.

Yoga, for example, has for thousands of years championed a regimen which is only now being favored by medical practitioners. Without ever knowing what cholesterol was, gurus insisted upon vegetarian diets. Without ever knowing about germs, gurus insisted upon stringent methods of personal hygiene. Without knowing anything whatsoever about hypertension, gurus developed the ability to control heart rate and blood pressure.

Hatha yoga is therefore well worth learning. Muscles that are gently stretched release powerful relaxants. Not only, then, does yoga invigorate and strengthen the body but it benefits the mind as well. Generally speaking, except for the well-conditioned, running and other hyper-energetic forms of exercise should be avoided.

When we finally decide to get in shape, we consult a physician; and if he informs us that our blood pressure is 220/180 and prescribes a suitable medication, we don't take it with the view that we have solved our problem by ingesting a few little pills each day. We take our medicine as we revolutionize our diet with the strict intention to one day be able to discontinue the drug. Sometimes we have to act like absolute madmen in pursuit of this goal.

If the only cafeteria available to us does not offer the kinds of food we require, we must 'brown bag' it and supply our own food. We may not eat salty foods and then count upon a diuretic to undo the salt intake. If we are on a cholesterol-free diet, we have to eat oat bran in nonfat milk while others breakfast on bacon, eggs, and potatoes fried in lard. If we are obese we are likewise enjoined from consuming fattening foods. There are no exceptions. Chan means control of mind and body. Fat people can't sit in lotus. Hypertense people can't relax enough to enter easily a meditative state. Good health pushes the spiral upwards. When we feel better, we meditate better; and when we meditate well, we feel great.

Nietzsche once said that it wasn't easy to get a good night's sleep: you had to stay awake all day in order to achieve it. Attention needs to be given our sleeping routine. We can't lie around all day as models of inertia waiting to collide with a more massive soporific force at nightfall. We need regularly to spend energy in order to feel the need regularly to replenish it. On the other hand we have to curtail activities that leave us too exhausted for meditation.

Yoga also offers salubrious alternatives to tranquilizers or sleeping pills. If we are too aroused by the day's encounters to get to sleep, we don't reach for the pill bottle. We stay in bed and perform one or two of several yoga postures that guarantee deep relaxation. Many people who find a rogue elephant charging inside their head when they retire, can do the cobra posture, long and slow to the count of 108, and bring that rampaging beast to earth.

In Chan, we don't try to become anything but a Chan man. Hatha Yoga probably offers mankind's best method of physical exercise, but we don't strive to become hatha yogis. This kind of ambition is no different from the usual status seeking ambitions of samsara. Some people study yoga or tai ji quan in order to show off and entertain like dancers or acrobats. Mastering these disciplines for the purpose of acquiring masterly status is the exact opposite of what we should use these disciplines for. We don't learn yoga or tai ji quan to enhance our egos. We learn these exercises because they assist us in keeping to our practice. What benefits the health of body and mind, benefits our Chan practice.

Although we are prohibited by the precepts from using mind-altering drugs we ought not to assume that the proscriptions involve recreational drugs alone. We are in a sense forbidden to use any drug that through our own self-control we can get along without. Just as we don't eat salt and then take drugs to eliminate sodium, we don't eat like sows for three days a week and take amphetamines for four to maintain a nice, willowy, Chan figure. Neither do we binge and purge.

Smoking ranks next to cannibalism in the list of unacceptable behaviors.

4. Simplifying our lives

We improve ourselves, oddly enough, by becoming plain. In its own quiet way simplicity does most to insure our success on the Path.

With the obvious exception of young people, those of us who are on the Path are advised to eliminate all flashy displays.

Women do not need to bleach their hair, sport fingernails the size of bear claws, or wear makeup. Contrary to popular belief, a plain woman is not denied male attentions. (Anyone who thinks that unpainted females have dull sex lives has never spent the night in an American Zen center.)

Fortunes do not have to be spent on wardrobes. In fact, if a Buddhist feels so inclined, he or she may adopt a quasi-religious style of dress. A few tan and black dresses or dark gray suits in conservative material and style can be worn almost as uniforms. Turtleneck pullovers and wooden prayer beads can be worn. (Be honest... when did you ever think less of nuns or priests because they dressed plainly? In fact, did you not feel more at ease in their presence because they were plainly dressed?)

If the subject comes up, all that is required in the way of explanation is a simple, "I'm a Buddhist convert." Quietly said, the remark can neutralize any criticism and even gain the speaker - though I shouldn't say it - more than a little respect. The trick is not to appear affected or bizarre.

The money that is saved by eliminating the expenses of personal packaging can be put into the bank. But it isn't just this additional financial security which eases our mind and conduces to relaxation and the ability to meditate. We are benefited even more by being freed from having to submit ourselves to the daily stresses of sartorial competition.

Expensive foreign cars, being such gratifiers of ego, are clearly detrimental to one's spiritual health. A plain, mid-priced American car is as much luxury as one's heart can stand. Parts for it will not bankrupt us. Insurance for it will not rank with our mortgage in budgetary outlay. Leaving it parked on the street will not cause bowel spasms or other anxiety attacks. When confronted with the choice between letting our Dad borrow it or letting the old guy walk ten miles in the rain, we can actually opt for the former.

If a man hasn't passed the point of believing that his value as a human being is somehow tied to the value of his car, he is not ready for spiritual liberation.

By Right Effort we mean that we create an environment in which Chan practice can flourish. We lessen social and financial burdens on ourselves, we cease competing, we give ourselves more time in which to practice, and we improve our health. The overwhelming sense of well being we derive from this induces us to practice. Buddhism's simplicity is one of Buddhism's great rewards. It is a behaviorist's dream.

CHAPTER 17

RIGHT MINDFULNESS

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

*- St. Paul First Letter to the Corinthians, 13:1-7.
(New American Standard Bible.)*

"Men of Dao! The Way of Buddhism is never phony or pretentious. It consists in doing ordinary things in a simple, natural way: shitting, pissing, dressing, eating, sleeping when you're tired. Fools laugh at me for saying this. The wise understand."

- Lin Ji (Rinzai)

THE SEVENTH STEP ON THE PATH: CULTIVATING THE CHAN ATTITUDE

On the surface, the assertions of St. Paul and Chan master Lin Ji would seem to reflect widely different attitudes; but closer inspection will reveal that while they are different stylistically, they are attitudinally identical.

The simple, natural way of Lin Ji is the unconditional love which St. Paul describes. Hypocrisy and egotism are clearly abhorrent to both men.

But of course, as if to illustrate the kind of artificiality that Lin Ji was decrying when he offered his famous description of the Way, the words shitting and pissing are frequently

sanitized in translation and appear as "going to the stool," "making water," and so on. Lin Ji wouldn't have appreciated it.

And St. Paul's love is translated in the old King James version of the Bible as charity. Charity also means love, but to us it more commonly refers to alms giving and, this being the planet earth, Paul's beautiful words are often exploited by fund raisers whenever they try to squeeze money out of people. "'Faith, hope, charity;'" they quote the chapter's final line, "'but the greatest of these is charity.' How much may we expect from you?" St. Paul wouldn't have appreciated it.

While no one has ever accused the Apostle Paul of being sentimental, his eloquence does occasionally arouse the kind of easy inspiration that Lin Ji feared and detested. Lin Ji knew that cheaply purchased goodness is goodness cheaply sold. His jolting language was designed precisely to obviate sentimentality.

When love and goodness are the subject of a religious utterance, we can expect the spirit to be moved. Seldom, however, is it moved profoundly; and superficial movement is usually worse than no movement at all. Too often the reader responds to an uplifting passage with an easy rush of ardor, a warm glow; and, like heated air in a balloon, the rising expectation of pious change carries him aloft. Yes, he will work to correct each and every one of his 108 faults! Yes, he will dedicate his life to saving the world's 4 billion sentient beings! Then, within a matter of hours, the flames of universal love and self-reform die out. He plummets back into his old ruts. Now, however, he can identify himself as one of religion's aviators. He can daydream about his moment of glory for months.

A Chan man is a veteran of change and has the scars to prove it. He knows that religiosity is not a substitute for combat. Folks who drip with sentimental fervor because they have survived the reading of a poem are not in anybody's army.

The proper Chan attitude, then, might be said to consist in 'cutting the crap,' of making no public display of piety, of saving our devotion for those times when we are alone and can properly express it; in not going out of our way to be vulgar on one hand but, on the other, in not trying to affect those refined sensibilities which suggest that we believe shitting and pissing to be quaint customs of the proletariat we once read about in Daddy's library. Chan is an extremely tough discipline. We have to turn ourselves inside-out and lay bare to a dissecting scalpel our most private thoughts and acts. People who are too squeamish or too elegant to use the language of the common man really don't have the guts for Chan. Lin Ji would have made short work of them.

And if we cease trying to impress others with our lofty status, we might cease acting like godlike puppeteers, looking down at people and manipulating them. If we join humanity instead of holding ourselves above it, we can touch the universal current. Paul's unconditional love can flow through us as Lin Ji's Dao.

The Chan attitude requires that we abandon our prideful agendas, that we work for the sake of the work and not for the sense of accomplishment. Where there is pride there can be no loving, natural attitude. Let no one believe that just because he can't do anything worth being proud of he will easily succeed in being humble. Humility ought to be - but isn't - easy to achieve. Consider the following Chan parable:

Two monks met by the river's edge. As they looked at the view of the other side, one said, "My master can send his mind wherever he wants it to go. Though he is a hundred miles from here, he could meditate, find me, and paint this view exactly as I'm seeing it now. Can your master do anything so great?" he asked. The other monk nodded. "Greater," he said. "My master can eat when he is hungry and sleep when he is tired."

Another attitudinal problem we encounter is the studied irreverence of persons who reject Judaism, Christianity, Islam or Hinduism and think that because Buddhists do not (or at least should not) worry about creation gods, they have no God at all to consider.

For some strange reason atheists are attracted to Buddhism. Not inclined to reach enlightenment in foxholes, they gravitate to Buddhism, assume our patented Tranquil Pose, and sneer nonviolently at all the non-atheists in all those other non-atheistic religions. Such persons are usually appalled when they discover Buddhists bowing before statues or, worse, kneeling in prayer before them. There is no way to reassure them that the Buddha who is being bowed to is the Buddha within the one who bows. According to their rules, all evidence of supplication, reverence, and worship of the divine must be excised from the liturgical body.

Likewise, they refuse to allow the word God ever to apply to the Buddha Nature and can grow visibly pale when watching the word extrude itself from a Buddhist's mouth. Westerners, however, grow up using the term and unless we can comfortably say when witnessing a sneeze, "Original Face bless you," or when striking a thumb with a hammer, "Buddha Nature damn it!" we ought not to strike the word God from our lexicons. And if we can comfortably bless or curse using the name of God, we certainly ought to be able to use the term for academic or religious purposes. In fact, most of what Christians mean when they say God is meant by Buddhists when they say Buddha Nature or by Daoists when they say Dao.

The Chan attitude is one of respect for other religions. Those of us who select Chan Buddhism do so because it offers a path which suits our particular needs. Most of us reject religious ga-ga, supernatural hocus pocus, hellfire and brimstone, star-ordained destinies, reincarnated 'channels' and all the other questionable tenets of popular faiths which include, of course, many varieties of Buddhism.

This does not mean that because we reject certain forms of worship we can reject the worshippers. Sri Ramakrishna, the great Indian saint of modern Vedanta, was once asked to comment upon the licentiousness of certain 'left-handed' tantric worshippers. Though the

men and women involved would have qualified for flogging in most civilized countries, Ramakrishna refused to condemn them, explaining that each man must approach God from where he is at the moment he makes his decision to approach God. Wherever he is, he must work his way forward from there. And those ahead of him must look back compassionately, appreciating as they do the greatness of any distance between a man and his salvation.

‘God bless you’ is a very Buddhist thing to say. And any man who cannot bow reverently before a statue of old Shakyamuni or show a Crucifix proper respect is too arrogant for his own good.

The Chan attitude also requires us to live in the present, to accept what we have with good grace without always scheming to alter events in order to provide for a more profitable or enjoyable future. The most famous story in all of Chan literature concerns just such an attitude:

A man of Chan was walking along the ledge of a high mountain path when he was suddenly confronted by a tiger. To escape, he grabbed hold of a sapling and lowered himself over the edge of the precipice. While he clung there - the snarling mouth of the tiger a few feet above him and the base of the cliff a quarter-mile below him - he felt the sapling’s roots slowly begin to tear away. He could find no foothold or anything else to grab. As he dangled there, wondering what he should do next, he noticed a strawberry growing out of a cleft. He picked it and ate it and remarked that especially considering the time of year, it was particularly sweet.

This old story illustrates the Chan attitude of living in or concentrating on the present moment, of being so secure in our salvation that we can find happiness in whatever circumstance we find ourselves, even including the prospect of imminent death. We accept misfortunes which we are powerless to change and try to focus our attention on those natural pleasures which make our Buddhist Way so beautiful. Death is an ineluctable fact of life but dissatisfaction with the present moment is self-inflicted misery, a kind of chronic death during life instead of at an acute conclusion of it.

Chan is power. Skill in our Chan practice is the means by which we acquire or insure an abiding Chan attitude. If, for example, we are hungry and we have no immediate access to food, or we are experiencing other kinds of pain, we can meditate our way out of distress. We need not sit and whine. Sexual urgings, otherwise unmanageable, can be harnessed through "conservative" Daoist yoga or Buddhist tantra. The problem then becomes a marvelous solution. If we are cold, concentration upon the fire chakra can warm us pleasantly. The laws of physics are somewhat difficult to break. At least until we are safely into the Tenth World’ Void, we cannot fly, levitate, walk on water or through walls. But we can get control of our senses and we can conquer fear. Our religion offers us the sublime power of ecstasy; and anyone who can experience ecstasy is usually not all that desirous of penetrating concrete.

The control we require is limited to these ordinary and quite pedestrian challenges. There is a story about the Buddha who once, while waiting for a ferry, was challenged by another guru's servant. "My master," bragged the servant, "could have crossed this river alone. He trained himself for many years until he acquired the power to walk on water." The Buddha looked at the penny fare he held in his hand. "Why," he asked, "would he expend so much effort in acquiring something he could purchase so cheaply?"

Peace, joy and freedom are powers available to anyone who dedicates himself to his Chan practice... peace despite peril, joy despite loss, freedom despite the most wretched constraints.

In other popular forms of Buddhism, the attitude of the man of Chan who found himself hanging over the edge of a cliff would have been different. The man would likely have experienced concern for his past deeds and his next life. He would have damned the tiger as an evil agent of Mara. The contemplation of a strawberry's sensory pleasure would have seemed, at such a critical moment, rather indecent. Not so in Chan. If the last nice thing between us and destruction is a strawberry, so be it. We are then obliged to deal in sweetness.

This attitude did not originate in Mahayana Buddhism. It is pure Chan in that it is derived directly from Daoism. In John Wu and Thomas Merton's excellent translation of Zhuang Zi (Chuang Tzu) we find:

"The man through whom the Dao flows freely harms no one but never thinks of himself as gentle. The man through whom the Dao flows freely doesn't worry about the future but never criticizes others who do. He's not ambitious to make money but doesn't make a virtue of being poor. He goes his way without depending on others but doesn't take pride in being independent. Fame and wealth don't tempt him and he shrugs off insults and rude treatment. Above all, he never makes judgments about what is good and what is evil. According to ancient wisdom, 'The man of Dao is transparent. Perfect virtue leaves no residue. The greatest man is Nobody.'"

Perhaps Chan's most revealing glimpse of the attitude of sainthood is found in Japanese Zen's charming story of the monk Tozan Osho, a version of which is found in Katsuki Sekida's "Zen Training":

The Buddhist monk Tozan Osho was so kind and selfless that his holy ways brought him great fame, a fame which spread to heaven, itself. God, hearing of this gentle monk, grew curious and decided to come to earth to have a look at him. But when God arrived at Tozan Osho's monastery He discovered that the monk, being so unstained by ego, was made of the same pure Mind substance as Himself! And, as the eye cannot see itself, God could not see Tozan Osho! Not wishing to have come such a distance for nothing, God formed a plan. He waited until nightfall and while the monk slept, He entered the granary, removed a bushel of rice and scattered it all over the courtyard. Then He waited. In the morning when

the gentle monk came outside and saw the waste he exclaimed, "Oh, who could have done such a terrible thing!" And in that instant God got a look at Tozan Osho.

CHAPTER 18

SATORI, THE KOAN, AND MONASTIC POLISHING

SATORI

All human beings have two identities - one sacred and singularly real, and the other profane and illusory. The sacred is the Buddha Nature, the God within. The profane is the everyday, ordinary ego, the personality complex which presides over consciousness with monarchic pretensions. This is the phantom tyrant which all Chan practice strives to dethrone and dispel.

Salvation is realized when, through any of the lifeline states of super-consciousness which constitute religious experience, we reach the Nirvanic mountain's shore. This event signifies that our ego has transcended itself and has experienced the Other, the sacred Self. But this encounter does not serve automatically to erase the fictive ego. The tyrant continues to harass our steps up the Eightfold Path until we are finally privileged to witness the ego's obliteration (Satori) and to be, however briefly, our living, sacred Self. Satori demonstrates beyond all doubt that we and our Lord are one in the same. Until we experience Satori we merely believe that there is a buddha within us. We don't know it and we certainly can't testify to it. Religious experts we may be; but without Satori we are able only to state opinions about enlightenment, to be "Shepherds who count," as the Buddha put it, "other men's sheep."

The following (with some personal references) is a list of seven identifiable parts of the Satori experience: 1. The attention is grabbed by something... a word or phrase or rhythmic sound such as a distant bell, dripping water, or a pebble bouncing down some steps. (Mine was caught by a chirping cricket.) 2. A revolving, enveloping sensation is felt... as though the brain is literally turning over. This is called, naturally enough, 'turning about in the seat of consciousness' (paravritti). A weaker version is felt upon entering samadhi. 3. There is an awareness of going away, of instantaneously receding into the horizon's vanishing point or of being extinguished as a blown-out candle flame. This is not a blacking-out as in a loss of consciousness. There is no loss of consciousness. The sense of I-ness simply blinks out. One actually feels oneself depart. 4. The senses continue to operate, i.e., the attention-grabbing stimulus continues to be recorded (the cricket continued to chirp) and the setting - the surrounding place and objects - remains unchanged except that it seems strangely peaceful and is seen in peculiar clarity, crisply defined with a pristine loveliness. There is a remoteness to this vision: it is akin to staring at the plane surface of a diamond and seeing, the moment one focuses correctly, the entire side of a room precisely reflected in the tiny surface. 5. There is an awareness that one returns - from wherever it was that one went. 6.

There is another revolving sensation as if the brain is again turning, reversing its direction. 7. There is an immediate surge of euphoria and a spontaneous exclamation. (I shouted the name of the Sixth Patriarch, saying, "Hui Neng was right! Hui Neng was right!" I had previously paid him very little attention and in fact, mispronounced his name when I shouted it.) The duration of this euphoria varies from several days to several weeks or more. This 'high,' commonly called "Zen disease", "God Intoxication", or, by Plato, "Divine Madness", is characterized by a goofy kind of elation that makes one feel like dancing, jumping or singing, usually at completely inappropriate times.

A period of confusion may also follow. (I am almost ashamed to admit that I walked around for nearly a week saying to myself, 'I know that I was gone... so, who heard the cricket?' as in part 4 above.)

After this initial confusion, one may reach some peculiar but bold conclusions that are incomprehensible to others. For example, my first rational evaluation of the experience was that it would be absolutely inaccurate ever to say that 'I' experienced Satori. Since I was not there at the time, I could acknowledge the event only by pointing to my head and saying, 'Satori was experienced here.' This sounds bizarre but, in truth, no one can ever say that he has experienced Satori. By definition, 'he' would have had to be gone from the scene. (The word play on this fact accounts for some of the deliberate absurdity of many of Chan's famous questions and answers.)

The entire satori experience lasts no more than a few seconds which, considering a person's lifetime commitment to Chan is certainly not very much. Yet, it is vital in that it is so confirmatory. Only in Satori are we permitted to witness our true identities.

The experience, it should be noted, is not limited to Buddhists. The pure egoless state and the revelation of one's divine identity is known in all religions.

Hui Neng is often criticized for telling people how vital it is to experience enlightenment while neglecting to supply them with the necessary instructions. Hui Neng, it must be remembered, was not a product of monastic training. Intelligent and sensitive, he matured in the poverty of the streets. Nobody had to tell him how to achieve enlightenment. When his mind had sufficiently ripened, "it" just happened.

Further, there are risks involved in even discussing the enlightenment experience. Friends and religious professionals tend to back away from anyone who announces that he is or has been God or a buddha. Friends don't like to dine with God. He's no fun at football games and makes a wretched pub crawler. Clergymen who have not experienced satori for themselves usually react viciously to such news. Immediately they doubt the authenticity of the experience: The claimant either is foolishly mistaken or is deliberately lying. It simply cannot be true. How, they wonder, could this fellow have been admitted into the privileged circle while they have been so long excluded? Would a just God ignore their years of hard

work and exemplary behavior and reward someone who is clearly less deserving? Not bloody likely!)

In many old, effusive texts we sometimes read about instances of mass enlightenment. So and so said something special and the two thousand people who heard it were instantly enlightened. No credence should be given such remarks. The Koan.

Meditation and ‘polishing’ methods are common to all religions. But Chan found something else to offer, something that could jolt the ripened mind into the satori experience. Chan’s peculiar and, as far as anyone can tell, wholly original contribution to religious methodology is the gongan (koan), a term which means, in ancient legalese, a ‘case’ under consideration, one that has perhaps set a precedent. The Koan and Man Tou are obviously related techniques.

Strictly speaking, by limiting the definition of the koan to that usage which is unique and original to Chan, the koan is a question that sounds logical but, in fact, is nonsense. Because it sounds logical, it engages the intellect, challenging it to the point of obsession to find a solution to the question posed. For example, a famous koan is, "We know the sound of two hands clapping; but what is the sound of one hand clapping?" In antiquity, a few Chan masters discovered that if a candidate was sufficiently mature, he could be jolted into experiencing enlightenment by trying to answer a question of this ilk. Now, "to clap" means to strike two things together. The question, then, is nonsensical. One hand cannot clap and therefore can make no sound of clapping. Yet the question is so seductive that candidates can be lured into pondering it, in extremis.

Let us imagine one such trial as it might have existed between master and pupil in old China. (Recall that in Chan’s formative years (AD 500-900) there were no private audiences. All of the exchanges between master and pupil usually occurred before an assembly of monks.)

Doe Ming, heir to the Doe fortune, has spent some time in the Swamp, been saved, learned how to meditate, and is, by his master’s estimation, ready for the final assault upon the Nirvanic summit. The monastery’s head monk begins the ordeal. He publicly flatters Ming by telling him that he is extremely impressed by his progress and has recommended to Master that Ming be given a koan to solve. (Beginners did not receive koans.) Master, the head monk confides, though not entirely sure of Ming’s ability, is personally very fond of Ming. He has therefore accepted the recommendation. Soon he will honor Ming by assigning him a koan.

Ming is not an egotistical creature, but he is still sufficiently unenlightened to be a bit puffed up by the news. He is rather proud of himself. He has loved his master for a long time and it is good to have that love requited. He notices how everyone is eyeing him jealously and likes the attention he is suddenly getting. Sporting associates make book on the

length of time he'll require. He personally thinks it should take no more than a week. Even money is on two.

Next day, before the hushed assembly, as he kneels before his master during darshan, he receives one of many possible koans. Let's say, "We know the sound of two hands clapping, but what is the sound of one hand clapping?"

A tough one! A murmur of acknowledgment passes through the assembly.

Later, after Ming receives the premature congratulations of his former peers, he starts thinking about his answer. Two hands. Hmmm. One hand. Hmmm.

He thinks he understands. Next day, with his answer safely memorized, he approaches his master. The head monk sits nearby, smiling in an approving, encouraging way.

Ming gives his answer. "One hand clapping is to two hands clapping what syllable is to sound. It is the formative potential. It is the sound before the sound is made." He thinks this gibberish is a great answer.

Master and the head monk look at each other in horror. Master is angry. The head monk is visibly confused and apologetic.

"Is this a joke?" Master asks the head monk in incredulous alarm.

The head monk apologizes abjectly. "I beg you, Master, to consider the circumstances. He is obviously excited. There's been too much commotion in the monastery. Tomorrow, when he's had an opportunity to collect his thoughts, he'll answer more intelligently."

The assembly giggles. The head monk gives Ming a withering look and Ming leaves in confusion.

For the next twenty-four hours, Ming is in hell. Everyone is laughing at him and for the life of him he cannot come up with a better answer.

What is the sound of one hand clapping? What is the sound of one hand clapping? Night comes but he cannot sleep. Friends want to assist him but they don't know how. Their suggestions are ludicrous. He is making an enormous fool of himself and he knows it. What the hell is the sound of one hand clapping?

At his next darshan, he kneels and whispers, "The sound of one hand clapping is the call of prajna (wisdom) before the penetrating stroke of upaya (method)."

"What?" shouts Master. "I can't hear you!" He turns to the head monk and gives him a threatening look.

Ming clears his throat and says, "The sound of one hand clapping is the call of prajna before the penetrating stroke of upaya... has.. reached it."

Master hits him with his stick. "You fool!" he shouts. "Get out!" As Ming scurries away, Master bellows at the head monk, "You said that he was ready! Have you lost your senses?"

While Ming, now a nervous wreck, is pacing in the garden, the head monk accosts him. "What are you trying to do to me? I vouched for you, god damn it! I stuck my neck out for you and you thank me by acting like an idiot. Pull yourself together! Think, man, think!" Ming, shifting between anger and despair, does not feel grateful.

The bookmakers are in a frenzy. Ming is red-eyed. He walks around mumbling to himself incoherently. Everyone is watching him. How long will it take? Hah! How long will it take him to die of shame? He wishes he could take them all straight to hell with him. He is doomed.

During his next interview Ming supposes that the sound of one hand clapping is the configuring yang without the shadowed yin. It is present in form, absent in substance. Master strikes him. The head monk tries to stammer an excuse but Master is too furious to listen. Ming is the most wretched human being in the province... maybe all China... maybe all Asia.

The head monk orders everyone to stop talking to Ming to allow him to think or at least to come up with a better answer than those he has given. Ming is reduced to spiritual penury. He is alone, ostracized. Everywhere he turns he is vilified by laughter. He never smiles. Instead, he snarls and makes no effort to conceal his contempt for the head monk and for his master. He suffers. Is there no respite?

He awakens from a fitful sleep. What is the sound of one hand clapping? He squirms on his meditation cushion. What is the sound of one hand clapping? He picks at his food. What is the sound of one hand clapping?

The days and weeks pass. He is hit, scorned, mocked, humiliated. "How did I ever think I could solve a koan," he begins to wonder. Then he concludes, "I am more stupid than cow dung." He weeps in shame. "Oh, Lord," he prays, "forgive me for my pride. I've been an impostor. I'm nothing but a fool." Blaming himself, he begins to exonerate others. "The head monk tried to help me and I let him down. I brought shame upon him and my good master. How will they ever forgive me." Etc. Etc. Etc.

Eventually he realizes that he is beaten. "What is the sound of one hand clapping? I don't know. I don't care. Lord," he prays, "let me hide in some quiet corner. Let me serve you in peace. Get me out of this nightmare and I will be your humble servant forever." He stops going to darshan. What's the point?

He takes refuge in menial tasks. They content him. Though he has ceased to be ashamed, there is still something triste about him. He has lost his buoyancy and has settled down to a calm bottom. Nobody pays him any attention anymore. He is grateful for his anonymity.

Then, miraculously, one day as he is sweeping the kitchen floor, the cook drops a round pot lid and as it rotates - rrrhah, rrrhah, rrrhah - the reverberating sound captures Ming's attention. Someone sitting in the rear of Ming's head blows his ego-candle out. That person then looks out of Ming's eye sockets. Ming experiences the world as an exquisite, sublimely serene creation! The cook is still there working. His knife still flashes in the sunlight. The fire still gives off heat. A breeze still blows in through the window. But Doe Ming is gone and nothing that is seen is distorted by Doe Ming's ego. The world is pure! His candle flame reignites and he returns, dazzled. "Gadzooks!" he shouts. What has happened? Is it possible that for a couple of glorious seconds he has seen the world as God sees the world... that during his own demise he, in fact, has been God? Was this Nirvana? Of course! This is Satori! Ultimate reality! Non-duality! Unity of seer and seen! Emptiness! He skips around dazed. He was emptied of himself! Kenosis! When he is able to recollect himself, he understands that in the real world, he, Doe Ming, has no more substance than a ghost. Well! If he doesn't exist neither does the Chan master. Hah! He is jubilant, triumphant! Hah! The other monks 'believe' that there is a buddha inside themselves, but they don't 'know' it. And most assuredly, they have never 'been' it!

Tossing aside his broom, the man who has been God strides into the assembly, kicks aside a monk who is kneeling in darshan, plops down on his haunches in front of Master and, remembering perhaps how his fictional self suffered at the hands of his fictional master, says defiantly, "Eat shit and die, you old fake!" Then he bursts out laughing. Master and the head monk join in merrily. They love the punch line but nobody else gets the joke.

Again and again, throughout the early history of Chan, this scenario, more or less and in infinite variety, replayed itself.

What steps prepare a person for this experience? 1. Understanding of the first truth: Life is bitter and painful. 2. A ripe (mature) mind, i.e., one that has become unattached. 3. Enough of an ego to accept a challenge. 4. Humiliation and a prolonged period of stress caused by intellectual frustration (any subject - not just a Koan - will do). 5. The release of stress by the relief of success, or by surrender, or by a vanquishing kick, blow or fearsome shout.

Unfortunately, the golden age of Chan quickly passed once religious phonies began to imitate the acts and answers of their enlightened colleagues. (Even today, some monks try to pass themselves off as enlightened. A few years ago I read about a poor fellow in a California Rinzai monastery who feigned a bizarre 'enlightened' act: he came to darshan with a tomato hidden in his robe and then, by way of answer to his koan, threw it at his master. I forget what his master did to him but I do recall that it wasn't pleasant.)

To prevent this imitation enlightenment, darshan became private but at the expense of the necessary stress of humiliation. Soon books which listed the various koans and their answers, complete with editorial commentary, were in circulation. Monks actually began to study koans! This means that koans were no longer koans. Between the good answers and the good actors, it became necessary to have many 'satoris'... one koan after another. Even satori was seen to come in varying degrees of quality! There were lesser and greater satoris. This means that a monk could strive to experience something less than no ego. A negative ego? But this is preposterous! Clearly, the system was in disarray. Nobody needs more than one koan because nobody needs more than one satori.

Some koans and mantras can never be solved. For example, "Does a dog have Buddha Nature?" A man can stretch himself considerably trying to answer this but he cannot get inside a dog's head. Is the Buddha Nature present only in minds that can conceive of it? (This is a variation on the ancient question, "Why did God create conscious men?" and its answer, "To be worshipped by them." C. G. Jung agreed with this response.) What degree of consciousness is necessary in order to worship God? Is the Buddha Nature present in animals that have no egos to transcend and therefore are able to experience reality directly and at all times? A dog with his limited brain may have no sense of self... no ego and therefore no need for religion or salvation...but is this the same as Buddhahood? And what about dolphins and whales? They have a large, well developed cerebral cortex. They are perhaps as intelligent as we. Maybe more. Do they see themselves as individuals struggling to find happiness and meaning in life? Do such creatures look up at the starry sky and marvel at its beauty? Do they pray? Do they thank God for an inlet filled with krill? Is there a Jesus of the dolphins? A Buddha of the whales?

If we do not know whether a living dog has Buddha Nature can we say with certainty that a stone statue of a dog has no Buddha Nature? (Yes, we can.) The question, then, as originally posed is reasonable but insoluble. It is not, therefore, a proper koan but pondering it can carry a person a very long way into shame, humility and compassion.

To say simply that a proper answer is a meaningless "Mu" negation leaves out too much of the deliberation.

Other kinds of questions and answers came into vogue. In these exchanges the ego and its insipid questions were shown to be disgraceful frauds which did not deserve the dignity of a response. "What is Buddha?" The standard answer: "A pound of flax seeds." Or,

"Are there any teachings which go beyond those of the Buddha and the Patriarchs?" "Yes, those that deal with sesame buns."

One remarkable exchange deserves repeating:

A novice approached a master and begged him for instruction. "Before I can teach you anything you must say one word of truth," said the master. The novice thought for a moment. "Buddha!" he responded. Angrily, the master dismissed him. "Come back when you can speak a word of truth!" The novice thought and thought and decided on a better answer. The next day he returned to the master, knelt at his feet, and whispered, "Compassion." But again the master dismissed him. The novice struggled to find a more impressive answer, one that would surely be undeniable in its truth. Thinking he had found it in the word "Love", he returned to the master. As he began to kneel, the master suddenly kicked him. "Ouch!" cried the novice. "Sit down," said the master. "You have finally uttered a truthful word." (A spontaneous response, by definition, is not corrupted by the ego.)

During the dismal period which followed the Golden Age, Chan Master Da Hui wisely advocated a method known elsewhere as mantra yoga. Accordingly, a candidate for satori was given a 'koan' exactly as he would be given a mantra. He was expected to recite it constantly, to fix his attention on it while he ate, walked, or worked, until his mind would automatically finger it, endlessly circulating it as a rosary. Eventually the threshold of meaning would be crossed. When the meaning dropped away, the ripe mind would drop away with it.

Da Hui objected to the practice of many Chan masters who resorted to long, mind-blanking meditation sessions as replacements for the bankrupt koan exchange system. He thought that it led to quietism, an other worldly approach to life that functioned as little more than a retreat from society. A Chan man should be able to withstand societal pressure. 'Going to market with one's shirt open,' (being a casual, unselfconscious person) was and still is the only acceptable attitude.

Da Hui's objections to long periods of sitting may have been prompted by considerations of health. Hemorrhoids are a distressing fact of life in hard-cushion 'sitting' monasteries.

SOTO ZEN

In any school, satori is experienced only by a ripe mind and a ripe mind is a mind which at the very least understands the First Noble Truth of Buddhism: Life is bitter and painful. How or where this truth is learned is unimportant. Monasteries, we find, often see themselves as dispensaries of this great truth.

Regardless of how profound a man believes his understanding of suffering is, monastery life in the Japanese style, for example, will take his definitive line and plumb new depths of meaning with it.

When Dogen Zenji (1200-1253) introduced Zen into Japan, it got drafted into Samurai military service and was never furloughed. It is still practiced with 'strictly by the book' regimentation. Zen was, at its introduction, a fully formed creature. (There is much history between the time Joan of Arc was burned at the stake and Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon... some 540 years. There is even more history between the time Zen was founded in China and the time Dogen introduced it into Japan, some 700 years. This is seven hundred years of Chinese genius at work.)

Dogen had been a Lin Ji (Rinzai) monk but rejected this tradition because he believed it did not probe deeply enough the mysteries of Buddhist mysticism. (By the year 1200, koan study had become a ludicrous waste of time.) Further study in China and a complete conversion to Soto Zen enabled him to return to Japan and write what still remains the bible of Soto monastery life.

Looking at one of the sections, the Taitaikoho: How Junior Priests Must Behave in the Presence of Senior Priests, we find that Dogen lists sixty-two rules of behavior.

In the following, a junior priest is defined as any monk who has been studying less than five years. A senior is any monk who has been studying five years longer than the monk in his presence.

Here is a sample of the rules: #1. You must wear your robe and carry your mat whenever a senior is present. #3. You must clasp your hands respectfully whenever you see a senior; you may not allow your hands to hang down. #9. When with a senior, you may not scratch yourself or hunt for vermin. #10. You may not spit or blow your nose when with a senior. #14. You may not touch a senior when near him. #38. No junior may go to bed before all the seniors in the house have retired. #39. No junior may take food before a senior takes food. #56. If a senior happens to occupy a less important seat than you at some function or meal, you should not bow to him and thereby call attention to his placement.

The rules extend to sleeping. (The same hall used for meditation was also used as a dormitory.) From the Bendoho: How to Train in Buddhism, we find:

"... the five rules when sleeping: (1) The head must always point in the direction of the Buddha statue. (2) No one may observe the Buddha from a lying position. (3) The legs may not be stretched out. (4) Trainees may not face the wall or lie on their faces. (5) The knees may not be raised."

The rules which govern eating defy description. There is, for example, a mandatory gesture - the raising and lowering of the left hand, palm upturned - that a recipient of food or drink must make to signal sufficiency to the serving monk. Marie Byles reports that she once witnessed a new trainee, who did not know this gesture, have her tea cup filled to overflowing. The serving monk just kept on pouring.

I made the identical gaff. During the first meal of my first sesshin (several straight days of 16 hours a day meditation designed to inflict maximum stress), I was seated second in line. Between every two monks a small tray which held a honey pot and dipper was placed for use on the initial meal, a thick, hot breakfast cereal.

I hadn't noticed the first monk use this palm-up gesture of sufficiency as the serving monk ladled the cereal into his bowl. But as the serving monk began to serve me, he accidentally knocked over the honey pot, flipping the dipper out onto the corner of my robe and the rug. The first monk and I immediately tried to clean up the mess. The serving monk saw what had happened and that my attention was diverted, but he nevertheless continued to slap huge spoonfuls of cereal into my bowl. I whispered 'Thank you, That's enough.' But that was not the correct way to indicate sufficiency and so the gruel kept coming. By the time the first monk realized what was happening and reached across me to take my left hand and pump it up and down, palm up, there was a mountain of glop in my bowl you could have measured with an altimeter. Since meditation cannot resume until everyone has eaten and since it is mandatory that everything in one's bowl be consumed, I sat there digging away at this Everest of Grits for nearly half an hour into the time for the next meditation session. Forty pairs of eyes furtively watched me eat the stuff... without benefit of honey since the messy pot had been removed.

Even the act of brushing one's teeth has a body of rules and regulations governing it, as does the manner in which one carries a towel when going to bathe.

To add to the misery, senior monks frequently behave like drill sergeants and junior monks, to curry favor, inform on each other. Junior monks are routinely pushed around and insulted and made to work during nearly every minute that they are not in the meditation hall. Sleep is a luxury and nutrition does not seem to be a consideration of menu-planning. In response to the attacks of poor diet, exhaustion, lack of sleep and unrelenting criticism, the ego will very likely send up a white flag. And we will then arrive at the same place, the 'kitchen refuge,' in which Doe Ming found himself after his koan bashing.

Although American Zen monasteries tend to be more relaxed, their routines are still calculated to be stressful. There is no point in being otherwise. (Need it be said that it is absolutely essential that the people who formulate the stress are themselves enlightened?)

Somewhere there must be a formula: a month in a Zen monastery is equal to a year on a chain-gang or six months in hell. Monks who survive five years of this treatment are on

intimate terms with the First Truth. That Japanese Soto Zen is able to turn out so many truly great masters is proof that the system, abysmal as it seems, works.

Hui Neng, however, wouldn't have approved. Life in his South China monastery is still characterized by gentleness and good humor. We can best illustrate the difference between the Japanese and Chinese styles by noting their respective methods of keeping people awake during meditation. Japanese Zendo are patrolled by a fellow with a stick who beats the sleepy; Chinese Meditation halls are patrolled by a fellow with a pot of jasmine tea.

CHAPTER 19

RIGHT MEDITATION

EIGHTH STEP ON THE PATH: METHODS

But what, we may ask, is the special virtue of Soto Zen, of gazing at the wall to achieve liberation? Prisons have walls and inflict humiliating punishments but don't necessarily turn out Zen masters. Let us go sideways into the intriguing answer.

First, some explanations and a caveat about using drugs or mechanical devices to achieve higher states of consciousness.

Nobody can deny that drugs have traditionally been used in religious ceremonies. Soma, the mysterious drug most closely associated with ancient India, the Ling Chih (Plant of Long Life) tree mushroom and other fungi, peyote, marijuana, alcoholic beverages, and an assortment of other substances have been employed worldwide and throughout history to promote or heighten mystical experience.

If a person is already in an exalted spiritual state and uses a drug ceremonially, his motives, though not necessarily his safety from criminal prosecution, are beyond question. It is quite another matter when beginners seek to tour Nirvana on an LSD trip or when clergymen, whose rosy spirituality has been bleached by worldly glare, try to rouge their faith with a liter or two of port.

Although Buddhists are prohibited by the Precepts from using mind altering substances, in truth, this rule is sometimes broken by adepts, especially those who engage in certain forms of Daoist and Buddhist Yoga. Satori and samadhi constitute a dividing line. Before enlightenment or divine union the rule is no ritual alcohol or drugs. Union with God is seldom or never experienced by anyone who hasn't been reverently humbled by suffering through a long period of ego sacrifice.

Yet, every year or so we hear about some marvelous, scientific research project in which drugs were used to induce higher states of consciousness, including, we are told, Nirvana. Nothing, as far as the readers of the published reports are concerned, ever comes of these studies. The writers, however, seem to put them to good use, offering them as evidence of their academic innocence when they apply for grants and for exemption from the various controlled-substances statutes. Anyone who thinks he can find a chemical shortcut to salvation is dangerously wrong. If chemicals could do the job, pot-heads, acid droppers,

cocaine and opium users would all be saints. Drug users invariably become self-absorbed, not selfless.

Psychologists, in recent years, have been experimenting with brainwaves and the control of them using biofeedback techniques, hypnosis and such. Though the research is wonderful, it is science, not religion.

The same difference that exists between ordinary wine drinkers and religious communicants exists between people who practice meditation as a means to realize divine union and people who work merely for some kind of mind control or for an academic purpose. Textbooks, technical manuals and machinery do nothing for a person's spiritual development. Knowledge and power, when not acquired with reverence and humility, enhance the ego - an obviously undesirable result for those who are on the spiritual path.

Experimental psychologists, however, have gained knowledge which does help us not only to understand what is happening inside our head when we sit down to meditate but also to resolve some of the controversy concerning Chan meditation styles.

Categorizing the brain's electrical activity by brainwave frequency, they determined that active, thought-engaged brain states such as might be experienced while reading, conversing or directing the attention outwardly towards people, things, or problems are beta waves (13 or more cycles per second). A brain at restful peace whose attentions are directed internally upon itself in watching or witnessing its own thoughts or in contemplation of its interior spiritual contents registers slower alpha waves (8 to 12 cycles per second). A brain in an even more profound state of rest, a state in which mandalas and strange, little pictures (hypnogogic or hypnopompic images) blink into it with peculiar clarity, registers theta waves (4 to 7 cycles per second). In theta, archetypes may be directly encountered in their symbolic forms. A sleeping brain registers delta waves (0 to 4 cycles per second). Meditation occurs only in the alpha and theta ranges.

Schools of Chan which favor tantric or yogic methods of engaging the various archetypes as chakra kings, buddhas and taras (their female counterparts) obviously require a mastery of theta frequencies.

In the lower alpha and upper theta ranges we encounter those samadhi states in which the world is seen in pristine loveliness and the body and mind seem to drop away in pure consciousness, and purity, itself, is serenely contemplated. Breathing slows down to near stopping and life seems to be suspended. Sometimes we seem able objectively to see ourselves sitting in the room in which we are meditating and sometimes we find ourselves surrounded by an impenetrable, divinely golden haze. Rapture or bliss, akin to a protracted sexual orgasm, may be experienced. This rapture will survive the meditative state as an afterglow that suffuses subsequent states of consciousness with tenderness, compassion, humility and a paradoxical sense of being both liberated from and connected to the rest of humanity. This state is called kenosis (kensho). If all this sounds crazy, it is because words

cannot describe either the rush of samadhi or its wake. Any higher state of consciousness must be experienced in order to be understood.

Does the theta induced vision of the world in its pristine loveliness resemble the visual perceptions of satori? Yes. But it neither constitutes nor substitutes for the satori experience because satori quintessentially consists in witnessing the extinction of the ego. Therefore, although the theta and satori perceptions have similar qualities, the experiences are different since one contains the extinction element and the other doesn't. Satori imparts an intellectual understanding that is irrelevant to samadhi. For example, the old Zen assertion, "Before I experienced satori I felt as though I had lost both parents and after I experienced satori I felt as though I had lost both parents," makes sense only with the satori experience. In the frustrating struggle to attain enlightenment, the monk feels as wretched as an orphan; after enlightenment, the monk realizes that his parents don't exist in the real world, a fact which makes him an orphan. Samadhi's divine union doesn't yield this insight.

Most of our information about historical Chan comes from Daisetz Suzuki who happened to be partial to Rinzai (Sudden School) Zen. Since he is Chan's most authoritative spokesman, his views cannot be easily challenged. But especially as they regard Soto (Gradual School) Zen, they can use a little updating.

Suzuki favored Hui Neng's Sudden School because Suzuki had experienced satori and knew that it was nothing if not sudden. He knew that satori occurred both to those who were skilled in meditation and to those who were not. In searching for a factor common to all of Chan's recorded experiences of satori, he was able, therefore, to eliminate skill in meditation.

But there is more to Chan than satori. Meditation practiced during or following a rigorous program - monastery or swamp - of ego detachment may or may not help to ripen the mind but it does enable the monk to master meditation and then, with luck, to ascend into samadhi.

Leaving aside the issue of satori, we find a serious problem with Suzuki's evaluations of the efficacy of 'wall-gazing' as a technique for inducing the meditative state.

Bodhidharma founded Chan Buddhism. He sat in meditation, staring at Shao Lin's whitewashed monastery walls, every day for years. Although Bodhidharma was an enlightened master whose view was a view from the top, his practice still defines the chan in Chan.

Daisetz Suzuki had difficulty appreciating the value of this 'wall-gazing.' How could mere wall-gazing start a revolutionary movement in the Buddhist world, he wondered.

But wall-gazing, modern psychologists have found, is a great way to induce alpha in both its upper and lower (and even upper theta) frequency ranges; and this is the answer to Soto Zen's special virtue.

Anybody can repeat the experiment which proved their point. Simply take a ping-pong ball, cut it in half along its seam and, using transparent tape, tape each half over an eye. The eye should be able to see nothing but the inside of the ball. Then, with opened eyes, turn to face a light source. In very short order, the field of vision will begin to shimmer, undulate and form itself into gray or iridescent shapes which circle around and continuously retreat and advance. Concentrate upon these shapes. These are the evidence of alpha. Don't let your attention divert itself to anything else. If an outside thought intrudes, dismiss it and return to the shapes. Study them. Let them fascinate.

In this technique, called 'ganzfeld' - a German word which means complete field - alpha waves are generated by staring at a blank, preferably white, bright visual field and holding the eyes steadily upon it. A white-wall fulfills this condition. All that is necessary is that the wall occupy the complete field of vision so that distractions are eliminated. (Training, however, can filter out distractions.) This technique is so powerful a generator of alpha that, contrary to Suzuki's suspicions, it easily could have started a wall-gazing revolution.

Unfortunately, modern zendos often are so crowded that devotees must sit throughout the room staring at the floor. Adepts who can generate alpha easily are honorifically given wall spaces while beginners who really need the blank wall are assigned floor spaces. This makes no sense at all. Worse, we sometimes find walls painted a dark color.

ZAZEN AS BI GUAN CHAN

To do wall-gazing Chan in a traditionally correct way you should:

1. Get a cushion and a mat. These can be obtained from most Japanese Zen Centers but any firm cushion and reasonably soft mat will do. The cushion must be firm enough to elevate the base of the spine so that it shares the body's weight with the knees.
2. Sit facing a white or light-colored blank wall as closely as is necessary to have it fill the field of vision.
3. Sit in lotus with the spine propped up on the cushion's edge. If full lotus cannot be managed, then half-lotus will have to do.
4. Place the tongue against the roof of the mouth, the underside of the tongue touching the roof.
5. Place your hands in a comfortable mudra (configuration). The easiest way to arrange your hands is to let the right one lie upon the left, top of the right hand against the palm of the left, with the thumbs gently touching.

The hands may either be held high as though cradling the navel - in which case your elbows should extend sideways, or your hands may simply rest in your lap, arms relaxed.

6. Stare at the wall, observing its texture.
7. Mentally bow to the Buddha and begin a brief but ruthless examination of conscience. Consider all of the Five Precepts and determine if you have violated any since your last meditation session. Resolve to make amends or restitution if you have. If you feel anger towards anyone resolve that within 24 hours the anger-causing incident will be settled in favor of the other person. The burden of understanding and forgiving the other fellow is entirely upon you.
8. Perform no more than 10 deep breaths of the 4:16:8 cycle. Concentrate on the actual passage of air in and out of the respiratory tract.
9. Observe the undulating figures forming in the field of vision. Fix all attention upon them. If you don't have a wall and there is sufficient exterior light in the room, closed eyes can function as a ganzfeld.
10. As soon as you are relaxed in the alpha state, empty your mind of all thoughts. Thoughts will continuously pop into your mind but your task is to allow none of them to grab your attention. Most teachers recommend that you treat your mind as you would treat a child you are taking for a walk. Whenever your attention wants to linger on a thought, it must be gently pulled away. Say to it, "Sorry, but we can't dally, now. We'll think about that another time." Or, better yet,
11. Focus your attention upon the various sounds you hear without thinking about these sounds. Just record the sound-event and allow it to pass through your head... in one ear and out the other.

This is really all there is to wall-gazing Chan. Naturally, it is much more difficult to do than to describe.

There is another story about the Purchased Devil that applies to wall-gazing: A man bought a devil and everything went well until the devil got proficient at all his chores and finished them early. Then, having nothing else to do, he would get into mischief and wreck things. The owner went back to the merchant and complained. The merchant laughed. "All that is necessary," he advised, "is that you tell your devil that when he has finished his chores he must climb up and down the tree in your backyard until you get home." "Climbing up and down" means carefully watching the breath go in or out in normal rhythm. When the mind

gets into the mischief of discursive thought, it can be managed by ordering it to watch the breath. Usually, however, the breaths are counted and observed either as inhalations or exhalations, from one to ten. After we reach ten, we begin the count again.

If, after five or ten minutes of intense effort, fatigue sets in and you find yourself getting irritated, try an opposite exercise. In this, the Witness Technique, you sit back and watch the thoughts that enter the mind. This is difficult to do because you must be calm in order to succeed. Therefore, it is best to limit your period of "no thought" or of breath watching so that you conclude it before you become irritated. In witnessing your thoughts it is imperative that you do not emotionally respond to them. You must be an uninvolved spectator.

The biggest mistake you can make in Zazen is forcing yourself to sit on your cushion after fatigue has claimed your attention. Never make meditation drudgery. Meditation is a beautiful experience. Save squirming miserably for when you are in a dentist's chair.

BREATHING MEDITATIONS

Watching the breath go up and down is the basis for an advanced 'electricity generating' kriya. Dao masters, in particular, when following Qi Gong and other martial arts' techniques, excel in using the breath to generate power or heat. Swami Vivekananda, nearly a hundred years ago, first called the world's attention to the mysterious effects of rhythmic pranayama. "Electric motion makes the molecules of a body move in the same direction. If all the air molecules in a room are made to move in the same direction, it will make a gigantic battery of electricity of the room. Another point from physiology we must remember is that the center which regulates the respiratory system, the breathing system, has a sort of controlling action over the system of nerve currents. Now we shall see why breathing is practiced. In the first place, from rhythmical breathing comes a tendency of all the molecules in the body to move in the same direction. When mind changes into will, the nerve currents change into a motion similar to electricity, because the nerves have been proved to show polarity under the action of electric currents... When all the motions of the body have become perfectly rhythmical, the body has, as it were, become a gigantic battery of will."***(Raja Yoga, Swami Vivekananda, Advaita Ashrama Pub, Calcutta.)

A potter would describe the rhythmical motions as 'wedging,' a severe kneading of clay in order to make it exceptionally strong for use as a cup or pot handle. Potters claim that the repetitious kneading causes the clay molecules to orient themselves in the same direction - as aligned fibers make a rope while unaligned fibers are so much lint or loose thread.

HEALING BREATH VARIANT

There is another variation of the Healing Breath that is particularly effective but a little more advanced. In this variation, after the lungs are completely filled, the diaphragm is lifted high and tight and the chest bowed-out or thrust all the way forward. The breath is held

for as long as possible - the duration being the determinant of the proportionate counts. The entire chest must be held in tremendous tension. The exercise proceeds as in the regular Healing Breath.

Prolonged muscular tension results, upon sudden relaxation, in the release of natural body chemicals that really conduce to profound spiritual states.

ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING

Pinch the nose between the thumb and curled ring finger, the index and middle fingers resting on the forehead with the little finger curled and relaxed downwards. To inhale or exhale through a nostril, simply release the pressure on the desired side.

This exercise can be done in two ways: first, by breathing entirely (in and out) through one nostril for fifteen minutes and then repeating for fifteen minutes using the other nostril; Second, by inhaling through one nostril, closing that nostril, and then opening the other nostril to exhale through it and leaving that nostril open to permit the next inhalation through it.

HEEL BREATHING

Heel Breathing - not to be confused with 'Healing Breath' - is an advanced form of pranayama used by Daoists in the Microcosmic Orbit, their version of Kundalini Yoga.

Heel Breathing, though different from the clearing the nadis or channels preliminary exercises, is nevertheless an excellent substitute for these clearing practices.

First, an explanation: Pleasure centers in the brain being what they are, it is impossible to take the sex out of deep meditation. There is a limited number of ways for a person to experience ecstasy. Actually, maybe only one. People who follow any of the "left-hand" (meditation with a sex partner) schools can do whatever they like. Their rituals are extremely complicated and, obviously, these instructions are not for them.

In the Orient, monks sometimes place an padded cup-cake like ball on their hard cushions. When sitting, the entire weight of their trunk presses down on this ball. Officially, the ball (called a "man-tou" which is a steamed bread bun) is said to be pressed against the anus so as to prevent Qi from leaking out. Actually, the ball serves to supply rectal stimulation and to put perineal pressure on the prostate gland which many men also consider to be arousing.

However, in most tropical locations, monks sit on the ground, not on cushions. They also go barefoot and are, therefore, "discalced." Going barefoot, especially to a mature person, is a sure way to get a hard, protruding ring of callous around the base of the heel.

Using any of a variety of asanas - but in particular the Adept's Seat (Siddhasana) in which the heel of the right foot is placed behind the testicles, toes pointing to the left, top of the foot against the ground, and the left foot drawn to the genitals - the monk achieves the desired perineal and rectal pressure.

Breathing naturally, hands in his lap, the meditator begins by focusing his attention on the dantian (point deep in the lower abdomen where the aorta bifurcates) which, owing to the posture he has taken, is now so close to his heels, anus, genitals, perineum, hands, and lower abdomen, as to feel connected to them. Together they form a "greater dantian area" (GDA). 2. He feels his pulse beat in his dantian. He then lets the pulse (which may be visualized as a ball of light) split into two balls, each of which travels to his ankles, calves, knees, thighs, hips, and base of spine - at which place, united, they meet back where they started in the GDA. 3. He draws the ball up the spine to the neck (using locks and 'bamboo breathing' - short segmented rocking breaths - if necessary) at which point it splits again. Each ball crosses a shoulder and travels down the outside of the arm to the fingers - at which place the ball is back where it started in the GDA. The pulse is carefully felt in the fingers. 4. Each ball then enters a thumb and travels up the inside of the arm to the armpit and then over the shoulder to the back of the neck where the balls join and begin to rise up the back of the head to the top of the head and down the forehead stopping at the "third eye" (between the eyebrows) to pulse there for as long as possible. 5. The ball then continues down the nose, upper lip, roof of the mouth (causing a considerable amount of saliva to be secreted), tongue, and down the throat. The meditator carefully swallows his saliva three times. 6. The ball pulses down the neck and breastbone, enters the solar plexus, and drops into the abdomen where it sinks and pulses in the GDA.

One circuit has been completed. Note: Some forms of Heel Breathing omit the arm and hand route. They shouldn't. Also, the kind of concentration that is required is similar to the concentration brought to bear upon the task of learning to play the piano or to type. First, one hand learns. Next, the other. Finally, we must co-ordinate the play of both hands together.

The meditator will complete as many circuits as is necessary to feel his entire trunk and head vibrate or "thrill" excitedly. At this point, the force will rise in his trunk's interior to his brain, leaving him suspended in deep samadhi.

A word of warning: When practicing any sexually related kriya, an inexperienced person may be shocked to discover how wildly sexual some of these meditative states can be. In meditation, the ego is transcended. John Doe, in his normal sex life, always remains, more or less, in control. Opportunities for kinkiness are usually always present; but John Doe knows that there are some things which John Doe will not do. When, however, John enters the meditative state, "he" is no longer there to put the brakes on his enthusiasm or his creativity. He can be seized by a frightening kind of "anything goes" frenzy. This wildness characterizes the rituals of tantric yoga and some of the ancient mystery religions.

OTHER FORMS OF MEDITATION

The word Chan comes from the Sanskrit word dhyana. The English cognate is dwell. The Proto-Indo-European word was *dh(e)wel - to obscure, darken and deceive, hold up, hinder, and therefore to stop and remain.

There are many ways to allow something to dwell in our minds. Japanese Zen usually confines itself to no-thought or mind-blanking meditations - a mind in which nothing dwells; but in Chinese Chan, once the basics of breath control are mastered, we use any form of meditation that works.

MEDITATION ON AN OBJECT ("with seed")

1. Before sitting down to meditate, select an ordinary household or office object such as a coat-hanger, a pencil, a stapler remover, a wooden drawer, or a picture frame, nothing too complicated. It is absolutely necessary that the object be selected before you sit down. If you wait until after you are seated, your mind will play tricks on you. You'll spend 98% of your allotted time trying to decide on an object.
2. Sit in full or half-lotus and bow to the Buddha within, review your recent conduct, making the necessary resolutions, and so on.
3. Perform as many deep breaths of 1:4:2 ratio as you need to get into alpha. Sometimes you may lose yourself in this breathing exercise and may descend into deep meditation, coming out of it slowly without having gotten to the object you selected. Don't try to force yourself back into a meditative state just for the sake of your object. Consider the experience as the performance of a valid meditation on the breath itself, i.e., that the breath had become your meditative object.
4. Consider each attribute of the object you have selected and visualize it without naming it. Avoid using words. If you have selected a yellow wooden pencil then visualize a round or hexagonal piece of wood. See the wooden shape. After you have seen wood, see yellow. Again, don't think the word yellow. Just see the color. See the black dot (if unsharpened) or point of graphite. Then see the metal collar, with its rings and clamping indentations. See the eraser. Then see the whole pencil. Let your mind trace along - without actually reading - the printing on the pencil... perhaps "No. 2" or "Ticonderoga." By this time the pencil, much larger than life, should be glowing in your mind. Hold your attention on it as if it were an object of great wonder. It will definitely seem to be so.

The longer you can ‘dwell’ on the object, the better. Spontaneously, you will come out of the meditation.

Gauge the depth of your meditation by the depth of the euphoria you feel after it ends and you come out of it. The more elated you feel, the deeper you have gone.

Euphoria is, in fact, an indication of successful meditation. True religious experience is always joyful and exciting. Sometimes, however, a meditation takes a wrong turn and the meditator afterward relates that he had entered a dreadful void, a Stygian abyss or vast area of terrible desolation. He remains for hours or days as gloomy as his vision. This kind of experience evidences a psychological problem and should prompt a visit to an analyst or a good Chan master.

Some commentators would have us believe that this Stygian void is the ultimate of meditative states. They theorize that the meditator has actually seen through the gross material state of things to some fundamental sub-atomic reality. This, they think, is what Nirvana is... seeing the world not as being composed of people, mountains, trees, oceans, sky, and such, but as photons, protons, quarks, and so on. This is elitist nonsense.

Don’t be surprised if you lose your ability to meditate upon an object the second or third time you successfully use it. The mind sometimes habituates to an object; and when the object loses its ability to fascinate, it becomes worthless as an object of meditation. If one method repeatedly fails, move on to another method.

TICKING MEDITATIONS

Get two clocks or timers that tick and place one on each side of you, a few feet away. Then take your meditation ‘seat’ and, after performing the bow, the examination of conscience and enough deep breaths to get into alpha, listen carefully to the clocks. There will be moments when their ticking is synchronized and moments when their ticking is not. Study the pattern, trying to determine which one is slower. Without resorting to numbers or names, try to get the feel of the converging and diverging rhythms. Throughout this period of observation continue to perform deep breathing using the rhythm of the clocks to measure the 4:16:8 or 8:32:16 breathing ratio. Try to make the breath slower and finer. Instead of counting with English numbers, use the Indian or Japanese words described in an earlier chapter or use nonsensical terms such as mee, mah, moo, mum, to keep the cadence. It is also possible to use your own heartbeat to keep the rhythm.

Whenever you come out of the meditation, it is finished. Don’t try to force yourself to get back into it. The entire experience may last anywhere from several minutes to a half-hour or more. Again, success is measured by the degree of elation which follows it.

Another meditation exercise using the same two ticking instruments, one on either side of you, is as follows:

Pay attention to one clock only. As you focus your attention upon it, the sound of this clock will seem to get louder while the sound of the other clock (the ignored one) will seem to soften considerably. Then shift your attention to the other clock. Now the sound volume will seem to increase on this side and decrease on the other. Listen to one side and then the other trying to determine which is louder. Continue to control and refine the breath, using the ticking to keep the cadence.

In the way of personal testimonial I can relate that my first samadhi experiences were gained through these two clock meditations (actually a clock and a timer). In fact, on one occasion I entered into such deep ecstasy that I evidently stopped breathing altogether and a voice inside my head (a very friendly archetype) called me by name and with some urgency noted that I was not breathing. At this, I sighed and slowly came out of it. The entire session lasted about an hour. (I cannot estimate how much of it was spent in the breathless, rapturous state. This is what is meant by the 'eternal' moment. It is outside of time, i.e., unmeasurable). After this experience I became so constantly aware of the clock's ticking that the moment the clock stopped, I would reach out and pick it up to wind it. If other people were in the room they invariably would grow accustomed to the ticking and wouldn't notice that the clock had stopped, but I never habituated to the sound. Though I tried to keep the clock wound, I sometimes forgot and, throughout the next several years was able actually to hear the clock stop eleven times. Then the clock broke.

PURE SOUND MEDITATION

This is a variation on the Zazen technique given above. This meditation has for some time been my personal favorite.

There is a difference between seeing and watching, between touching and feeling and between hearing and listening. The former is merely sensory while the latter involves thoughtful or conscious appraisal.

In this meditation, sit, bow, review, resolve, and perform the deep breathing exercise, and then, with the mind in a relaxed and tranquil (alpha) state, become aware of each sound that you hear ...but do not listen to the sound. Simply hear it without evaluating it or considering it in any way. Let it register without judging it. Again, do not let the sound engage the intellect. Simply, in an ongoing manner, notice it. A bird singing, a car passing, a plane overhead, a bell ringing, kids playing... anything. After one sound fades out, another enters the mind.

The beauty of this particular meditation is that since the sounds are different each time you sit, you can't habituate to the stimulus.

In Nan Hua Si (the Sixth Patriarch's monastery) many elderly monks and nuns come to evening meditation sessions and start snoozing. They snore and snore. The desire to

laugh, thinking about what would happen if they were in Japanese Zenos, is almost overwhelming. But once this desire is conquered, it is possible to meditate even on snoring. Also, you can perform this meditation wherever and whenever it's convenient.

SOUND HAVENS

This is a particularly effective meditation for people who are frequently exposed to stressful situations. Dentists long ago discovered that a patient who listens to white noise (a soft, continuous monotone) can raise his pain threshold considerably. White noise is extremely calming. Rain beating on a window pane or roof, the bath-shower beating on a shower curtain, ocean waves, falling water, and so on are all good examples of white sound. A Large spiral shell held close to the ear produces a wonderful white sound. (Actually, people who have difficulty getting to sleep can keep one of these shells at their bedside and just reach for it whenever they need to relax.) What is important about this meditation is that once you get familiar with the sound, you can recall it whenever you are under stress. All that is needed is the poise or the discipline to take a moment to withdraw into yourself and recreate the sound in your mind.

MANTRAS

Mantras are words or phrases said rhythmically, aloud or silently, quickly or slowly, but always with undivided attention.

The oldest and perhaps best mantra is 'Om.' The 'm' is held a long time. The trick is to close the lips lightly and to let the 'mmmmmmmm' vibrate the lips for as long as possible. (Sometimes the vibrations become so intense that people with capped front teeth get worried about loosening the cement.) One test of whether you are doing this correctly is that your cat will come to you, lie down and purr. 'Mu' is a variant of this mantra.

A repeated word or phrase can seduce the mind into a meditative state. Many people can even repeat their own name, over and over again, until the name becomes strangely devoid of meaning. At that point they slip into the meditative state.

I have found a particularly potent mantra to be Om, Namah Shivai. This is repeated Om (3 beats) Na (1 beat) mah (3 beats) Shi (1 beat) vai (3 beats) all on the same note. When I first learned it I understood that it meant, Om, I am Shiva! Recently I learned that it meant, Om, Salutations to Shiva! (Of course, the Shiva that is being saluted is the Shiva within each person.) I discovered how extraordinary this mantra is while once waiting for surgery. Due to the hospital's policy of minimizing drug intake, pre-operative patients were not prepped with the usual tranquilizers and such. Therefore, coldly wide awake and shivering in the ante room, (morgues are kept warmer than surgeries) I waited apprehensively. It occurred to me to recite this mantra mentally. In one weak, small voice, I began. After several repetitions, the voice grew stronger and then another voice joined it in a bold duet. Soon I heard it sounding like the harmonious chords of a small church choir. Then the mantra swelled in

volume and harmony until it seemed to be chanted by an enormous tabernacle choir with an organ piping behind it; and finally, it seemed as though a great host of angels was joyously proclaiming throughout the vibrating universe, Om, Namah Shivai!

I was neither afraid nor cold when I was wheeled into the operating room.

This mantra is also very effective when chanted aloud. Sometimes it is sung with a little melody.

For those who regard Jesus as a bodhisattva, the Jesus prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me!" is a splendid mantra. Other excellent mantras are "There is no God but Allah"; "Hare Krishna", and "Om, Mani padma hum."

Meditation both on auditory and on visual stimuli can be dangerous. Once, while driving on a jungle road in southern Mexico, I fell into a meditative state listening to music. Confused when I came out of it, I slammed on the brakes. Everything in the car went flying forward and the car nearly skidded into a ditch. On another occasion, I was downtown on a street corner waiting for a friend when I began to meditate on a lengthy, complex mantra. My friend came along and took me by the arm while I, in total confusion, stumbled and looked around not knowing where I was. It only took a moment for me to compose myself, but prior to that moment, I could have been in danger. On another occasion I was staring into a gift shop window at a display of crystal balls. One ball had been impregnated with air bubbles which drew my attention deeply into it. Entranced, my face pressed against the glass, I stood there idiotically until the proprietor came out and shouted at me. I responded to being jolted out of the trance by nailing him with a fierce look that sent him retreating to his shop.

Sound, especially musical sound, is probably the best way to 'enter the mandala.' Just be careful where you are when you meditate on it.

VISUAL MEDITATIONS

In many forms of Hindu and Buddhist yoga, the various chakras ("wheels" or psychic centers along the spine) are seen as lotus flowers which have Sanskrit or Tibetan alphabet letters inscribed on their petals. Also, in their centers, they contain a written mantra of the Om genus which when appreciated visually constitutes yet another meditative technique, *trataka*.

For example, starting at the Hindu root chakra and moving upwards, we have Lam, Vam, Ram, Yam, Ham, and last, Om, all written in Sanskrit.

Hiroshi Motoyama reports a curious incident concerning his mother, "a simple woman with no knowledge of Sanskrit." This lady would often comment after meditating that she had seen a symbol, which she described as an inverted sailboat, appear on her chest

during meditation. Motoyama was later astonished to discover that in Sanskrit the word Yam on the heart chakra does indeed look like an upside down sailboat.

I can't account for the fascination and the evidently spontaneous appearance of certain shapes in our minds, but if asked to guess why they do manifest themselves and engage us so, I'd say that somewhere along our evolutionary line certain patterns entered our primitive brains to serve as sexual or navigational signals or markers. (Polaris and the Dipper seem to be particularly ingrained.) Sanskrit syllables and Chinese characters may approximate these patterns.

Regardless of why they do, the fact is that the meditative state can be induced by staring at certain shapes and that these shapes can appear spontaneously during meditation. For this reason, the chakras also have a characteristic color and basic geometric shape: cube, crescent, ring, sphere, bowl, pyramid and star. There are also associated umbrella shapes, flame shapes, flowers, swastikas, crosses, and so on.

In the exercise known as 'trataka', after staring at the form, (preferably without blinking) the eyes are closed and the attention is focused on the afterimage. This image will want to move around the field of vision; the trick is to hold it steady.

A candle flame is the best visual stimulus to use when training in this technique. The flame, kept at eye level, should be 18 or 24 inches in front of the eyes. While staring, notice the different little faces or figures you can see in the flame.

Once a degree of mastery has been attained, full color reproductions of the chakras - one at a time - can be used instead of a candle flame. Needless to say it is necessary to possess complete knowledge of the chakras since the exercise will include concentration upon such details as the letters on the petals, the significance of the shapes, animal symbols, and the gifts proffered by the chakra gods or buddhas, etc.

The Yin and Yang figure of Daoism is particularly effective as an object for meditation. Begin by getting into alpha and then, with eyes closed, mentally construct the circle with its black and white comma-like divisions. Rotate the image nine times to the left and nine times to the right.

FASTING

Most religions include fasting in their regimens. People believe that by making the sacrifice of starvation they will be rewarded with visions or other spiritual experiences. And they usually are. After a few days of fasting, the human body produces its own lysergic acid. Spiritually immature people who fast get no more benefit from this than they'd get from dropping LSD. The energy and determination required to deprive oneself of food would be better expended in other spiritual pursuits.

Fasting, never a gentle exercise, can be health impairing. The hallucinations associated with fasting may even be a contributing factor in anorexia nervosa. Needless to say, no one should fast without first consulting a physician.

GAZING AT THE NOSE OR THE THIRD EYE

Many Daoist, Hindu, and Buddhist techniques require the meditator to sit with his eyes crossed for half an hour or so. This definitely is not easy.

The best way to master this technique is to practice at night just before going to sleep. For most people, this exercise can only be comfortably practiced in darkness. In well-lit surroundings so many objects crowd and confuse the visual field that eye-crossing tends to cause dizziness and nervous irritation.

At your bedside, keep a small bowl filled with table salt or fine gravel and a supply of joss or incense sticks. With the lights out, light a stick and hold the glowing tip about six inches in front of your face. If your eyes are relaxed you will see two glowing points. Force your eyes to merge the two points into one. Your eyes will cross as you do this. Then, maintaining this single focal point, bring the stick closer and closer to your nose. Be careful not to burn your nose. Hold the point in cross-eyed focus for as long as you can. Measure the length of time that you succeed by counting. Each night you should be able to extend the count. When your eyes tire and you can no longer focus on a single point, stand the stick in the bowl and let it burn down. Between the fragrant incense and the relaxing effects of this exercise you'll likely fall asleep quickly.

The frontal gaze can be mastered the same way. Keep the glowing point high above the eyes, see two points, and then force your eyes to merge the two points into one. Then bring the point steadily closer to the forehead. Be careful not to let ash drop into your eyes.

LOCKS

Any exercise that requires the meditator to push a ball of light through the various nadis, channels or chakras requires more than a strong imagination. The body's muscles are actually contracted in order to force the ball to move. Since these muscles are frequently neglected, strengthening them through daily practice, independent of any yoga aim, can be extremely beneficial. Each lock should be performed as a pair of exercises; first, with the lungs completely empty; and second, with the lungs filled to capacity. Each lock should be held for the count of nine. These exercises should be performed either sitting up (preferably in lotus) or in a kneeling position with the body horizontally stretched forward, supported by the hands. Root Lock. Begin by contracting the muscles of the rectum. Squeeze the anal muscles as though trying to prevent a bowel movement. Next, let the contraction roll forward until the entire genital area is constricted - as though you were trying to prevent urination, too. Diaphragm Lock. Begin by contracting the abdominal muscles as though forcing them back against the spine. Next, roll the contraction upwards, as though lifting the muscles up

into the rib cage. In order to accomplish this, all of the muscles of the lower thorax (the entire area of the diaphragm above the waist) must also contract. Neck Lock. Keeping the head erect, slowly force the chin straight back then drop it and let it rest in the v-shaped notch at the top of the breastbone.

These locks may also be practiced in succession, as a three part, 27-count exercise. This requires that you either hold your breath for the count of 27 or that you keep your lungs empty for the same count.

Also, locks are frequently used with a technique called 'bamboo breathing'. Take a deep breath and tighten the lock. Then, in short, grunting and rocking spurts, retighten the lock as you release the breath in spurts. "Active" Imagination or Meditations on Archetypal figures. Note: Symbols of the unconscious do not always appear in their easily recognizable anthropomorphic forms: recall that the Mother may appear as a golden bowl, cow, or tiger; the Self as a mandala or a glistening white stone; the Enemy Shadow, normally a satanic figure, may turn up as a threatening monster or lethal weapon, and so on.

In this technique, the meditator, in a deeply relaxed state, indulges in a kind of active/passive daydream. It is active in that initially an intense effort is made to concentrate on the sight and the "feel" of the setting.

The meditator begins by visualizing himself in a pleasant place. If he imagines that he is on the beach, he feels the breeze, the warm sun, the sand between his toes; he sees the blue sky and the sparkle of sunlight on the water; he hears ocean's waves breaking on the shore and the sea birds mewing; he smells the brine, and so on.

Next, he begins to explore the setting. He becomes a beachcomber, picking up objects that have washed ashore, studying them and noticing their weight, texture, color, form, smell, etc. (He does not attempt to classify them scientifically.)

At this point, the meditator starts to become a passive participant in the events. He ceases being the director of the production. A sense of wonderment envelops him and the setting becomes real. He IS there at the beach. Events unfold; people, animals and buildings or landscape features such as caves or cliffs appear. He observes and reacts spontaneously.

He may enter a grotto or hide from a snarling tiger. He may discover the woman of his dreams or the women of his nightmares. The encounters can be erotic or frightening; but whether pleasant or unpleasant, the drama must be allowed to take on a life of its own.

He responds emotionally to the events, reacting physically with gestures, laughter, tears, sexual excitement, and so on.

He may linger in this drama for hours, interrupting the reverie only to attend to real-world duties. At his convenience, he returns to it.

So far, so good. The characters and setting of the drama and the spontaneously plotted events can be marvelously healing - assuming that afterwards he is able consciously to integrate their meaning. Old guilts, desires, rejections, or sorrows can be satisfactorily resolved. Dead relatives or friends whose love and counsel he once depended on can return to comfort and guide him. He can ask forgiveness or give explanations or say and do things which he previously was never able to say or do.

The situation is not so good if the characters, setting, and events alarm him beyond his ability to cope with them. For example, a particular character in the drama may vivify so intensely that the meditator finds that he can actually see or hear the character outside the meditation. Now the meditator has gotten himself into potentially serious trouble. Whenever an archetype invades consciousness and the ego loses its discriminative integrity, professional or clerical help is indicated. Actually, a marvelous opportunity has presented itself: the unruly archetype may be the key to opening an emotional block of some kind. It is clear only that a problem has been encountered and that a resolution of the problem will likely serve to advance the meditator's spiritual and emotional maturity.

With varying degrees of difficulty, adepts can enter and exit these dramas, but beginners usually have no such control. For this reason, Chan masters insist that novices not allow themselves to linger in any vision or psychic encounter experienced during meditation. Japanese Zen masters are especially vehement in their opposition to these phenomena (makyo/maya) and will not tolerate such intrusions even into their own meditations. Tibetan masters, however, are truly masterful in their ability to control such situations.

In her intriguing "Magic and Mystery in Tibet", Alexandra David-Neel, the famous French adventuress and Tibetan lama, who was an undisputed adept at meditation, relates her own harrowing experience with this technique. Tibetans advocate mastery of this form and put it to many uses. Aside from conjuring up gods, goddesses, companions and lovers, they also conjure up monstrous demons and believe, for example, that they can actually send the objectified demons forth to harass their enemies. David-Neel, desiring to experiment with the technique, choose to create a companion, "a monk, short and fat, of an innocent and jolly type." For a few months she concentrated on creating this fellow and soon was able to give him objective reality: whenever she wanted, she could actually bring him to life and see him living with her in her apartment. Then, one day, she left her apartment to go on a long journey on horseback and the monk came along. Soon, she relates, "...it was not necessary for me to think of him to make him appear. The phantom performed various actions of the kind that are natural to travelers and that I had not commanded. For instance, he walked, stopped, looked around him. The illusion was mostly visual, but sometimes I felt as if a robe was lightly rubbing against me and once a hand seemed to touch my shoulder."

Soon David-Neel noticed that her jolly phantom began to change. He grew thin and "his face assumed a vaguely mocking, sly, malignant look. He became more troublesome and bold. In brief, he escaped my control." She goes on to insist that a herdsman who entered her

tent actually saw the phantom sitting there and responded to it as if it were a living person. Then, her "unwanted companion" began to get on her nerves and "turned into a 'day-nightmare.'" It took her six months to free herself of him. David-Neel concluded, "There is nothing strange in the fact that I may have created my own hallucination. The interesting point is that in these cases of materialization, others see the thought-forms that have been created." She further notes that Tibetans disagree in their explanations of such phenomena. While some adepts believe that a hallucination has been given substantive, material form, others believe that the apparition is merely due to a suggestive, hypnotic influence.

Again, these characters do not necessarily have to be deliberately created. They can appear spontaneously in an archetypal dream or during the course of meditation. Anyone who finds himself at the mercy of one of these 'creatures of the mind' should go immediately to a Jungian analyst or a Chan master.

PRAYER

Meditation and prayer are the two methods, one passive the other active, that we use to contact the interior Self, the Buddha within.

With one exception, the desired effects of prayer must never be thought to extend beyond the bodily limits of the person who is praying. The exception lies in the ability that one person's prayer may have to induce in another suggestible person certain physical or psychological responses. This kind of 'second-person' prayer is the 'laying on of hands' or faith-healing type of hypnotic therapy. For prayer to succeed as a therapeutic agent there must be belief on the part of the prayee and at least a convincing show of fervent desire on the part of the prayor. It must carefully be noted that just as nobody can hypnotize a baby, nobody can use prayer to cure an infant or an uncomprehending child of anything.

Also, prayer does not operate at a distance. Unless we are talking to our Aunt Minnie on the telephone or she is otherwise aware of our efforts and profoundly appreciative of them, we cannot help her by praying away her sorrows or any of her maladies.

Again, when praying for ourselves, we may not seek changes exterior to ourselves. Our body limits the range of our prayer's effectiveness.

What can't we pray for? We cannot pray for money because the Buddha Self is not a financier. We cannot pray for rain because the Buddha Self is not a rain god. We can't pray for our enemies to be struck down because the Buddha Self doesn't concern Itself with good and evil and is never vengeful on any account. And besides, our enemies have their own Buddha Selves - a situation which constitutes a divinely untenable conflict of interest should they simultaneously be praying that we be similarly smitten.

What type of prayer is permissible? Suppose a Buddhist were to find himself in a desert without water. He knows that there is no Great Cosmic Buddha who can, if He so desires, produce a lake or a six-pack upon request; but what, then, does he pray for?

He prays for that which is at least possible - for a lessening of the effects of dehydration and an increase in his ability to withstand the ordeal. He prays for a lowering of his body's requirement for water, a slower pulse rate, a calmer state of mind, and so on. He also prays for an increase in acuity of both thought and vision, for becoming aware of a source of water he may have overlooked, for a solution to the problem of finding or creating shade, for constructive measures such as a means of collecting urine, dew, and so on. If it becomes obvious to him that he cannot preserve his life, he prays for wisdom, patience and grace. He prays not to be abandoned in his hour of death, but to be blissfully absorbed in his Lord as his term of life expires.

Consider a case: Two men are stuck in the desert without water. Help cannot reach them for several days. Man A prays for rain. He chants and does a little rain dance. He lets The Good Lord know how deserving he is of some small liquid consideration. He scans the horizon for clouds. He anxiously waits, alternating between hope and despair.

Man B is like each of us, a sensible Buddhist. He asks The Good Lord for constructive help in surviving the ordeal. If he, unlike the rest of us, has attended faithfully to his practice, he may be able to pray himself into a state of nearly suspended animation, minimizing his water requirements.

Now, if the rescue party finds only one man alive, which man will that be? It will be the man who didn't dance.

Prayer's subtle potential can best be demonstrated by the pendulum experiment.

Take a piece of thread about a foot long and tie a small weight to one end of it, creating a pendulum. (Any small weight will do... such as the nut from a nut and bolt, a metal washer, or a fishing line weight.) Hold the other end of the thread between your thumb and index finger and, with the palm of your hand facing downwards, rest your elbow on a table and let the pendulum dangle above the table. Without making any movement in your hand, imagine that a map is under the pendulum and begin to think "north and south." Simply hold your hand steady as you concentrate on the north and south directions. With no conscious help from you, the pendulum will begin to swing back and forth. The more you think 'north and south' the more forcefully the pendulum will swing in those directions. Then change directions. Think "east and west." The pendulum will wobble eccentrically for a moment and then, with no conscious help from you, will begin to swing from side to side, east and west.

Suppose that you are given the task of consciously getting the pendulum to swing in a perfect north and south direction. If you allow your ego to take charge of the project, you

will probably use your elbow as a hinge and move your hand back and forth to get the pendulum swinging. And, in very short order, you will have a wildly swinging pendulum. You might, of course, try to slow it down, but your efforts will likely increase the swing's eccentricity.

Performing the task in the prayerful way, i.e., asking for help by way of simply thinking 'north and south', allows your interior Self to direct the action. Very subtle muscular movements will then occur in your fingers. You won't be able to detect them but the movements will be there. And the result will not be just a north and south swing: the result will be a perfect north and south swing. No wild swinging at all.

Prayer comes to our aid so miraculously that the religious life is absolutely bleak without it. We should never hesitate to pray. And we should always try to pray ahead. For example, suppose we are waiting for a letter. Let's say a letter of acceptance or rejection. Jane has applied to Harvard and she's waiting to hear if she's made it. Every day she approaches the mailbox with trepidation. What will she do if she's rejected? Oh, the horror of it all! The disgrace! Mabel has also applied to Harvard. Mabel prays, "Lord, if I am accepted, help me to bear this joyful news thoughtfully without causing anyone who was rejected to feel worse; and if I am rejected, help me to have the grace to rejoice with those who were accepted and also to look forward with enthusiasm to attending any other school that accepts me. Lord, I know that Harvard is not educational life or death. With Your help I know that I can get an excellent education no matter where I study. Maybe for a whole lot less money... In a better climate than Massachusetts has... Where I can keep my car with me..." (If Harvard has any sense it will grab Mabel fast.)

Prayer enables us to bear our sorrows and our joys with equanimity. It sustains us in our times of need, and, as in the pendulum's swing, it gives us abilities to solve our problems, abilities that we didn't even imagine we possessed. When approached with sincerity and humility, our Buddha Self is surprisingly merciful and resourceful.

CONCLUSION

I remember once being taught that in order for a thing to qualify as art it had to have the power to arouse emotion, imagination, and reason. In addition, it had to be able to survive. No matter how highly critics praised a "work of art" if it passed into obscurity or failed to excite one generation as it had another, it very likely was never art at all. It was fad or fancy, a piece of historical interest and nothing more.

To be worthy of our effort, a religious practice must also meet these four criteria. It must constantly challenge us by stimulating our imagination, stirring our emotions, and making us think.

And it must also endure. In the same way that a work of art stays in our minds long after we are beyond the range of its sight or sound, so must a religious practice abide in us long after our introduction to it.

Just as we need time to evaluate art, we need time to evaluate a religious practice. Seventh World Chan is the study period. We learn about the Path. We practice the techniques and calibrate our responses. Does Chan feel so right and get under our skin so much that we are ready to commit ourselves to it for as far ahead as we can see?

If we do decide that we have indeed found a treasure, we can formally claim it as our own. We can receive the Precepts. Simple or grand, it's a nice ceremony, an important rite of passage. It's as if we go from courtship to marriage. Now we can participate fully in all that Chan Buddhism offers. Now we are endowed with all of its treasures.

Then, like any other bride or groom, we turn our attention away from the outside world and direct it into the sacred, private, interior chamber in which our "Other" dwells. We have somebody else to worry about, somebody we enjoy pleasing, somebody who looks after us in the most wonderful way.

We know where we belong. Where once we were isolated - a voice that no one seemed to hear - we now have marvelous communion, not just during prayer and meditation, but all the time and everywhere. We cannot fail to prosper because all we need is what we are.

A Daoist would say that after such a marriage we are ready to engage the Valley Spirit and then to begin to create the Divine Child... to complete the Orbit so that we can enter the Empty Circle.

That's a nice thought to end with.

Reverend Chuan Yuan Shakya