

ESSAYS IN ZEN BUDDHISM

(FIRST SERIES)

DAISETZ TEITARO SUZUKI, D.LITT.

Professor of Zen Buddhism in the Otani University, Kyoto



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ENLIGHTENMENT AND IGNORANCE

I

STRANGE though it may seem, the fact is that Buddhist scholars are engrossed too much in the study of what they regard as the Buddha's teaching and his disciples' exposition of the Dharma, so called, while they neglect altogether the study of the Buddha's spiritual experience itself. According to my view, however, the first thing we have to do in the elucidation of Buddhist thought is to inquire into the nature of this personal experience of the Buddha, which is recorded to have presented itself to his inmost consciousness at the time of Enlightenment (*sambodhi*). What the Buddha taught his disciples was the conscious outcome of his intellectual elaboration to make them see and realize what he himself had seen and realized. This intellectual outcome, however philosophically presented, does not necessarily enter into the inner essence of Enlightenment experienced by the Buddha. When we want, therefore, to grasp the spirit of Buddhism, which essentially develops from the content of Enlightenment, we have to get acquainted with the signification of the experience of the founder—experience by virtue of which he is indeed the Buddha and the founder of the religious system which goes under his name. Let us see what record we have of this experience, and what were its antecedents and consequences.¹

¹ The story of Enlightenment is told in the *Dīgha-Nikāya*, XIV, and also in the Introduction to the *Jātaka Tales*, in the *Mahāvastu*, and the *Majjhima-Nikāya*, XXVI and XXXVI, and again in the *Samyutta-Nikāya*, XII. In detail they vary more or less, but not materially. The Chinese translation of the *Sūtra on the Cause and Effect in the Past and Present*, which seems to be a later version than the Pali *Mahāpadāna*, gives a somewhat different story, but as far as my point of argument is concerned, the main issue remains practically the same. *Aśvaghosha's Buddhacarita* is highly poetical. The *Lalitavistara* belongs to the *Mahāyāna*. In this

There is a Sūtra in the Dīgha-Nikāya known as the *Mahāpadāna Suttanta*, in which the Buddha is represented as enlightening his disciples concerning the six Buddhas anterior to him. The facts relating to their lives as Bodhisattvas and Buddhas are almost identical in each case except some incidental details: for the Buddhas are all supposed to have had one and the same career. When therefore Gautama, the Buddha of the present Kalpa, talks about his predecessors in this wise, including the story of Enlightenment, he is simply recapitulating his own earthly life, and everything he states here as having occurred to his predecessors, except such matters as parentage, social rank, birthplace, length of life, etc., must be regarded as also having happened to himself. This is especially true with his spiritual experience known as Enlightenment.¹

When the Bodhisattva, as the Buddha is so designated prior to his attainment of Buddhahood, was meditating in seclusion, the following consideration came upon him: 'Verily this world has fallen upon trouble (*kiccha*); one is born, and grows old, and dies, and falls from one state, and springs up in another. And from this suffering, moreover, no one knows of any way of escape, even from decay and death. O when shall a way of escape from this suffering be made known, from decay and death?' Thus thinking, the

Essay I have tried to take my material chiefly from *The Dialogues of the Buddha*, translated by Rhys Davids, *The Kindred Sayings*, translated by Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Majjhima-Nikāya*, translated by Silacāra, and the same by Neumann, the Chinese Āgamas and others.

¹ The idea that there were some more Buddhas in the past seems to have originated very early in the history of Buddhism as we may notice here, and its further development, combined with the idea of the Jātaka, finally culminated in the conception of a Bodhisattva, which is one of the characteristic features of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The six Buddhas of the past later increased into twenty-three or twenty-four in the *Buddha-vamsa* and *Prajñā-pāramitā* and even into forty-two in the *Lalitā-vistara*. This idea of having predecessors or forerunners seems to have been general among ancient peoples. In China, Confucius claimed to have transmitted his doctrine from Yao and Shun, and Lao-tzū from the Emperor Huang. In India, Jainism, which has, not only in the teaching but in the personality of the founder, many similarities to Buddhism, mentions twenty-three predecessors, naturally more or less corresponding so closely to those of Buddhism.

Bodhisattva reasoned out that decay and death arose, from birth, birth from becoming, becoming from grasping, grasping from craving, until he came to the mutual conditioning of name-and-form (*nāmarūpa*) and cognition (*viññāna*).¹ Then he reasoned back and forth from the coming-to-be of this entire body of evil to its final ceasing-to-be—and at this thought there arose to the Bodhisattva an insight (*cakkhu*)² into things not heard of before, and knowledge arose, and reason arose, wisdom arose, light arose. (*Bodhisattassa pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi, ñāṇam udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloka udapādi.*)

He then exclaimed: 'I have penetrated this Dharma, deep, hard to perceive, hard to understand, calm, sublime, no mere dialectic, subtle, intelligible, only to the wise. (*Dhammo gambhīro duddaso duranubodho santo paṇito atakkāvacaro nipuṇo paṇdito vedanīyo.*) But this is a race devoting itself to the things to which it clings, devoted thereto, delighting therein. And for a race devoting itself to the things to which it clings, devoted thereto, delighting therein, this

¹ It is highly doubtful that the Buddha had a very distinct and definite scheme for the theory of Causation or Dependence or Origination, as the *Paticca-samuppāda* is variously translated. In the present *Sūtra* he does not go beyond *Viññāna* (consciousness or cognition), while in its accepted form now the Chain starts with Ignorance (*avijjā*). We have, however, no reason to consider this Tenfold Chain of Causation the earliest and most authoritative of the doctrine of *Paticca-samuppāda*. In many respects the *Sūtra* itself shows evidence of a later compilation. The point I wish to discuss here mainly concerns itself with the Buddha's intellectual efforts to explain the realities of life by the theory of causation. That the Buddha regarded Ignorance as the principle of birth-and-death, and therefore of misery in this world, is a well-established fact in the history of Buddhism.

² *Cakkhu* literally means an eye. It is often found in combination with such terms as *paññā* (wisdom or reason), *buddha*, or *samanta* (all-round), when it means a faculty beyond ordinary relative understanding. As was elsewhere noticed, it is significant that in Buddhism, both *Mahāyāna* and *Hīnayāna*, seeing (*passato*) is so emphasized, and especially in this case the mention of an 'eye' which sees directly into things never before presented to one's mind is quite noteworthy. It is this *cakkhu* or *paññā-cakkhu* in fact that, transcending the conditionality of the Fourfold Noble Truth or the Chain of Origination, penetrates (*sacchikato*) into the very ground of consciousness, from which springs the opposition of subject and object.

(*paticca-samuppāda*), however perfect and thoroughgoing, could not make him so completely sure of his conquest over Ignorance, Pain, Birth, and Defilements. Tracing things to their origin or subjecting them to a scheme of concatenation is one thing, but to subdue them, to bring them to subjection in the actuality of life, is quite another thing. In the one the intellect alone is active, but in the other there is the operation of the will—and the will is the man. The Buddha was not the mere discoverer of the Twelfefold Chain of Causation, he took hold of the chain itself in his hands and broke it into pieces so that it would never again bind him to slavery.

His insight reached the bottom of his being and saw it really as it was, and the seeing was like the seeing of your own hand with your own eyes—there was no reflection, no inference, no judgment, no comparison, no moving either backward or forward step by step, the thing was seen and that was the end of it, there was nothing to talk about, nothing to argue, or to explain. The seeing was something complete in itself—it did not lead on to anything inside or outside, within or beyond. And it was this completeness, this finality, that was so entirely satisfying to the Buddha, who now knew that the chain was found broken and that he was a liberated man. The Buddha's experience of Enlightenment therefore could not be understood by referring it to the intellect which tantalizes but fails to fulfil and satisfy.

The Buddha's psychological experience of life as pain and suffering was intensely real and moved him to the very depths of his being, and in consequence the emotional reaction he experienced at the time of Enlightenment was in proportion to this intensity of feeling. All the more evident, therefore, it is that he could not rest satisfied with an intellectual glancing or surveying of the facts of life. In order to bring a perfect state of tranquillity over the waves of turmoil surging in his heart, he had to have recourse to something more deeply and vitally concerned with his inmost being. For all we can say of it, the intellect is after all a spectator, and when it does some work it is as a hireling

for better or for worse. Alone it cannot bring about the state of mind designated as enlightenment. The feeling of perfect freedom, the feeling that 'aham hi araha loka, aham sattha anuttaro', could not issue from the consciousness of an intellectual superiority alone. There must have been in the mind of the Buddha a consciousness far more fundamental which could only accompany one's deepest spiritual experience.

To account for this spiritual experience the Buddhist writers exhaust their knowledge of words relating to the understanding, logical or otherwise. 'Knowledge' (*viññā*), 'understanding' (*pañānanā*), 'reason' (*ñāṇa*), 'wisdom' (*paññā*), 'penetration' (*abhisameta*), 'realization' (*abhisambuddha*), 'perception' (*sañjānanam*), and 'insight' (*dassana*),¹ are some of the terms they use. In truth, so long as we confine ourselves to intellection, however deep, subtle, sublime, and enlightening, we fail to see into the gist of the matter. This is the reason why even the so-called primitive Buddhists who are by some considered positivists, rationalists, and agnostics, were obliged to assume some faculty dealing with things far above relative knowledge, things that do not appeal to our empirical ego.

The Mahāyāna account of Enlightenment as is found in the *Lalita-vistara* (chapter on 'Abhisambodhana') is more explicit as to the kind of mental activity or wisdom which converted the Bodhisattva into the Buddha. For it was through 'ekacittakṣaṇa-samyukta-prajñā' that supreme perfect knowledge was realized (*abhisambodha*) by the Buddha. What is this Prajñā? It is the understanding of a higher order than that which is habitually exercised in acquiring relative knowledge. It is a faculty both intellectual and spiritual, through the operation of which the soul is enabled to break the fetters of intellection. The latter is always

¹ *The Mahāvīyūtpatti*, CXLII, gives a list of thirteen terms denoting the act of comprehending with more or less definite shades of meaning: buddhi, mati, gati, mataṁ, dṛishtaṁ, abhisamitāvi, samyagavabodha, supratividdha, abhilakshita, gātimāgata, avabodha, pratyabhijñā, and menire.

dualistic inasmuch as it is cognizant of subject and object, but in the Prajñā which is exercised 'in unison with one-thought-viewing' there is no separation between knower and known, these are all viewed (*ikṣhaṇa*) in one thought (*ekacitta*), and enlightenment is the outcome of this. By thus specifying the operation of Prajñā, the Mahāyānists have achieved an advance in making clearer the nature of sambodhi: for when the mind reverses its usual course of working and, instead of dividing itself externally, goes back to its original inner abode of oneness, it begins to realize the state of 'one-thought-viewing' where Ignorance ceases to scheme and the Defilements do not obtain.

Enlightenment we can thus see is an absolute state of mind in which no 'discrimination' (*parikalpana* or *vikalpa*), so called, takes place, and it requires a great mental effort to realize this state of viewing all things 'in one thought'. In fact, our logical as well as practical consciousness is too given up to analysis and ideation; that is to say, we cut up realities into elements in order to understand them; but when they are put together to make the original whole, its elements stand out too conspicuously defined, and we do not view the whole 'in one thought'. And as it is only when 'one thought' is reached that we have enlightenment, an effort is to be made to go beyond our relative empirical consciousness, which attaches itself to the multitudinosity and not to the unity of things. The most important fact that lies behind the experience of Enlightenment, therefore, is that the Buddha made the most strenuous attempt to solve the problem of Ignorance and his utmost will-power was brought forth to bear upon a successful issue of the struggle.

We read in the *Kāṭha-Upanishad*: 'As rain water that has fallen on a mountain ridge runs down on all sides, thus does he who sees a difference between qualities run after them on all sides. As pure water poured into pure water remains the same, thus, O Gautama, is the self of a thinker who knows.' This pouring pure water into pure water is, as we have it here, the 'viewing all qualities in one thought' which finally cuts off the hopelessly entangling logical mesh

by merging all differences and likenesses into the absolute oneness of the knower (*jñānin*) and the known (*jñeya*). This, however, in our practical dualistic life, is a reversion, a twisting, and a readjustment.

Eckhart, the great German mystic, is singularly one with the 'one-thought-viewing' of things as done by Buddhists when he expresses his view thus: 'Das Auge darin ich Gott sehe, ist dasselbe Auge, darin Gott mich sieht. Mein Auge und Gottes Auge ist ein Auge und ein Gesicht und ein Erkennen und eine Liebe.'¹ The idea of reversion is more clearly expressed in Jacob Boehme's simile of the 'umgewandtes Auge' with which God is recognized.

Enlightenment, therefore, must involve the will as well as the intellect. It is an act of intuition born of the will. The will wants to know itself as it is in itself, *yathābhūtam* *dassana*, free from all its cognitive conditions. The Buddha attained this end when a new insight came upon him at the end of his ever-circulatory reasoning from decay and death to Ignorance and from Ignorance to decay and death, through the twelve links of the *Paṭicca-samuppāda*. The Buddha had to go over the same ground again and again, because he was in an intellectual *impasse* through which he could not move further on. He did not repeat the process, as is originally imagined, for his own philosophical edification.

The fact was that he did not know how to escape this endless rotation of ideas; at this end there was birth, there was decay and death, and at the other end there was Ignorance. The objective facts could not be denied, they boldly and uncomfortably confronted him, while Ignorance balked the progress of his cognitive faculty moving farther onward or rather inward. He was hemmed in on both sides, he did not know how to find his way out, he went first this way and then that way, forever with the same result—the utter inutility of all his mental labour. But he had an indomitable will; he wanted, with the utmost efforts of his will, to get into the very truth of the matter; he knocked and knocked until the doors of Ignorance gave way: and

¹ Franz Pfeiffer, p. 312, Martensen, p. 29.

they burst open to a new vista never before presented to his intellectual vision. Thus he was able to exclaim to Upaka, the naked ascetic, whom he happened to meet on his way to Benares after Enlightenment:

'All-conqueror I, knower of all,
From every soil and stain released,
Renouncing all, from craving ceased,
Self-taught; whom should I Master call?

That which I know I learned of none,
My fellow is not on the earth.
Of human or of heavenly birth
To equal me there is not one.

I truly have attained release,
The world's unequalled teacher I,
Alone, enlightened perfectly,
I dwell in everlasting peace.¹

When we speak of enlightenment or illumination we are apt to think of its epistemological aspect and to forget the presence of a tremendous will-power behind it—the power in fact making up the entire being of an individual. Especially as in Buddhism the intellect stands forth prominently, perhaps more than it ought to, in the realization of the ideal Buddhist life; scholars are tempted to ignore the significance of the will as the essentially determinate factor in the solution of the ultimate problem. Their attention has thus been directed too much towards the doctrine of the Paṭicca-samuppāda or the Ariyasacca, which they considered constituted the final teaching of Buddhism. But in

¹ Translated by Bhikkhu Silācarā. The original Pāli runs as follows:
Sabbābhibhū sabbavidū 'ham asmi,
Sabbesu dhammesu anūpalitto,
Sabbamājāho tanhakkhaye vimutto
Sayam abhiññāya kam uddiseyyam.
Na me ācariyo atthi, sadiso me na vijjati,
Sadevakasmim lokasmim na 'tthi me patipuggalo.
Aham hi arahā loka, aham satthā anuttaro,
Eko 'mhi sammāsambuddho, sitibhūto 'smi, nibbuto.
Dīgha-Nikāya, XXVI.

this they have been sadly at fault, nor have they been right in taking Buddhism for a sort of ethical culture, declaring that it is no more than a system of moral precepts (*śīla*), without a soul, without a God, and consequently without a promise of immortality. But the true Buddhist ideas of Ignorance, Causation, and Moral Conduct had a far deeper foundation in the soul-life of man. Ignorance was not a cognitive ignorance, but meant the darkness of spiritual outlook. If Ignorance were no more than cognitive, the clearing-up of it did not and could not result in enlightenment, in freedom from the Fetters and Defilements, or Intoxicants as some Pāli scholars have them. The Buddha's insight penetrated the depths of his being as the will, and he knew what this was, yathābhūtam, or in its tathābhāva (thatness or suchness), he rose above himself as a Buddha supreme and peerless. The expression 'Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi' was thus used to designate this pre-eminently spiritual knowledge realized by him.

*
*
Ignorance, which is the antithesis of Enlightenment, therefore acquires a much deeper sense here than that which has hitherto been ascribed to it. Ignorance is not merely not knowing or not being acquainted with a theory, system or law; it is not directly grasping the ultimate facts of life as expressive of the will. In Ignorance knowing is separated from acting, and the knower from that which is to be known; in Ignorance the world is asserted as distinct from the self; that is, there are always two elements standing in opposition. This is, however, the fundamental condition of cognition, which means that as soon as cognition takes place there is Ignorance clinging to its very act. When we think we know something, there is something we do not know. The unknown is always behind the known, and we fail to get at this unknown knower, who is indeed the inevitable and necessary companion to every act of cognition. We want, however, to know this unknown knower, we cannot let this go unknown, ungrasped without actually seeing what it is; that is, Ignorance is to be enlightened. This involves a great contradiction, at least

epistemologically. But until we transcend this condition there is no peace of mind, life grows unbearable.

In his search for the 'builder' (*gahākara*), the Buddha was always accosted by Ignorance, an unknown knower behind knowing. He could not for a long time lay his hands on this one in a black mask until he transcended the dualism of knower and known. This transcending was not an act of cognition, it was self-realization, it was a spiritual awakening and outside the ken of logical reasoning, and therefore not accompanied by Ignorance. The knowledge the knower has of himself, in himself—that is, as he is to himself—is unattainable by any proceedings of the intellect which is not permitted to transcend its own conditions. Ignorance is brought to subjection only by going beyond its own principle. This is an act of the will. Ignorance in itself is no evil, nor is it the source of evil, but when we are ignorant of Ignorance, of what it means in our life, then there takes place an unending concatenation of evils. *Taṇhā* (craving) regarded as the root of evil can be overcome only when Ignorance is understood in its deeper and proper signification.

II

Therefore, it betrays an utter ignorance on the part of Buddhist scholars when they relegate Ignorance to the past in trying to explain the rationale of the Twelffold Chain of Causation (*paṭicca-samuppāda*)¹ from the temporal point of view. According to them the first two factors (*angāni*) of the *Paṭicca-samuppāda* belong to the past, while the following eight belong to the present and the last two to the future.

¹ Ordinarily, the Chain runs as follows: 1. Ignorance (*avijjā*, *avidyā*); 2. Disposition (*sankhāra*, *saṃskāra*); 3. Consciousness (*viññāna*, *viññāna*); 4. Name and Form (*nāmarūpa*); 5. Six Sense-organs (*saḍāyatana*, *saḍāyatana*); 6. Touch (*phassa*, *sparsa*); 7. Feeling (*vedana*); 8. Desire (*taṇhā*, *trishṇā*); 9. Clinging (*upādāna*); 10. Becoming (*bhāva*); 11. Birth (*jāti*); and 12. Old Age and Death (*jarāmaranaṃ*).

Ignorance, from which starts the series of the Nidānas, has no time-limits, for it is not of time but of the will, as is enlightenment. When time-conception enters, enlightenment, which is negatively the dispelling of Ignorance, loses all its character of finality, and we begin to look around for something going beyond it. The Fetters would ever be tightening around us, and the Defilements would be our eternal condition. No gods would sing of the Awakened One as 'a lotus unsoiled by the dust of passion, sprung from the lake of knowledge; a sun that destroys the darkness of delusion; a moon that takes away the scorching heat of the inherent sins of existence.'¹

If Enlightenment made the whole universe tremble in six different ways as is recorded in the Sūtras, Ignorance over which it finally prevailed must have as much power, though diametrically opposed to it in value and virtue, as Enlightenment. To take Ignorance for an intellectual term and then to interpret it in terms of time-relation, altogether destroys its fundamental character as the first in the series of the Twelve Nidānas. The extraordinary power wielded by the Buddha over his contemporaries as well as posterity was not entirely due to his wonderful analytical acumen, though we have to admit this in him; it was essentially due to his spiritual greatness and profound personality, which came from his will-power penetrating down into the very basis of creation. The vanquishing of Ignorance was an exhibition of this power which therefore was invincible and against which Māra with all his hosts was utterly powerless either to overwhelm or to entice. The failure to see into the true meaning of Ignorance in the system of the Paṭicca-samup-pāda or in the Ariyasacca will end unavoidably in misconstruing the essential nature of Enlightenment and consequently of Buddhism.

In the beginning, which is really no beginning and which has no spiritual meaning except in our finite life, the will wants to know itself, and consciousness is awakened, and with the awakening of consciousness the will is split in two.

¹ *The Buddhacarita*, Book XIV.

The one will, whole and complete in itself, is now at once actor and observer. Conflict is inevitable; for the actor now wants to be free from the limitations under which he has been obliged to put himself in his desire for consciousness. He has in one sense been enabled to see, but at the same time there is something which he, as observer, cannot see. In the trail of knowledge, Ignorance follows with the inevitability of fate, the one accompanies the other as shadow accompanies object, no separation can be effected between the two companions. But the will as actor is bent on going back to his own original abode where there was yet no dualism, and therefore peace prevailed. This longing for the home, however, cannot be satisfied without a long, hard, trying experience. For the thing once divided in two cannot be restored to its former unity until some struggle is gone through with. And the restoration is more than a mere going back, the original content is enriched by the division, struggle, and resettlement.

When first the division takes place in the will, consciousness is so enamoured of its novelty and its apparent efficiency in solving the practical problems of life that it forgets its own mission, which is to enlighten the will. Instead of turning its illuminating rays within itself—that is, towards the will from which it has its principle of existence—consciousness is kept busy with the objective world of realities and ideas; and when it tries to look into itself, there is a world of absolute unity where the object of which it wishes to know is the subject itself. The sword cannot cut itself. The darkness of Ignorance cannot be dispelled because it is its own self. At this point the will has to make a heroic effort to enlighten itself, to redeem itself, without destroying the once-awakened consciousness or rather by working out the principle lying at the basis of consciousness. This was accomplished as we see in the case of the Buddha, and he became more than mere Gautama, he was the Awakened One and the Exalted and supremely Enlightened. In willing there is really something more than mere willing, there is thinking and seeing. By this seeing, the will sees itself and is

thereby made free and its own master. This is knowing in the most fundamental sense of the term and herein consists the Buddhist redemption.

Ignorance prevails as long as the will remains cheated by its own offspring or its own image, consciousness, in which the knower always stands distinguished from the known. The cheating, however, cannot last, the will wishes to be enlightened, to be free, to be by itself. Ignorance always presupposes the existence of something outside and unknown. This unknown outsider is generally termed ego or soul, which is in reality the will itself in the state of Ignorance. Therefore, when the Buddha experienced Enlightenment, he at once realized that there was no Ātman, no soul-entity as an unknown and unknowable quantity. Enlightenment dispelled Ignorance and with it all the bogies conjured up from the dark cave of ego disappeared. Ignorance in its general use is opposed to knowledge, but from the Buddhist point of view, in which it stands contrasted to Enlightenment, it means the ego (*ātman*), which is so emphatically denied by the Buddha. This is not to be wondered at, seeing that the Buddha's teaching centred in the doctrine of Enlightenment, the dispelling of Ignorance.

Those who see only the doctrine of non-ātman in Buddhism, and fail to inquire into the meaning of Enlightenment are incapable of appreciating the full significance of the Buddha's message to the world. If he simply denied the existence of an ego-entity from the psychological point of view after reducing it into its component factors, scientifically he may be called great as his analytical faculties stood far above those of his contemporaries in this respect; but his influence as a spiritual leader would not have reached so far and endured so long. His theory of non-ātman was not only established by a modern scientific method, but essentially was the outcome of his inner experience. When Ignorance is understood in the deeper sense, its dispelling unavoidably results in the negation of an ego-entity as the basis of all our life-activities. Enlightenment is a positive

conception, and for ordinary minds it is quite hard to comprehend it in its true bearings. But when we know what it means in the general system of Buddhism, and concentrate our efforts in the realization of it, all the rest will take care of themselves, such as the notion of Ego, attachment to it, Ignorance, Fetters, Defilements, etc. Moral Conduct, Contemplation, and Higher Understanding—all these are meant to bring about the desired end of Buddhism; that is, Enlightenment. The Buddha's constant reiteration of the theory of causation, telling his disciples how, when this is cause, that is effect, and how, when cause disappears, effect also disappears, is not primarily to get them acquainted with a kind of formal logic, but to let them see how Enlightenment is casually related to all human happiness and spiritual freedom and tranquillity.

So long as Ignorance is understood as logical inability to know, its disappearance can never bring out the spiritual freedom to which even the earliest known literature of Buddhism makes so frequent and so emphatic allusions. See how the Arhat's declaration of spiritual independence reads in the Nikāyas: 'There arose in me insight, the emancipation of my heart became unshakeable, this is my last birth, there is now no rebirth for me.'¹ This is quite a strong statement showing how intensely and convincingly one has seized the central facts of life. The passage is indeed one of the characterizations of Arhatship, and when a fuller delineation of it is made, we have something like the following: 'To him, thus knowing, thus seeing,² the heart is set free from the defilement of lust, is set free from the

¹ Nānañ ca pana me dassanañ udapādi akuppa me ceto-vimutti ayañ antima jāti natthi dāni punabbhavo.

² 'Thus knowing, thus seeing' (*evam jānato evam passato*) is one of the set phrases we encounter throughout Buddhist literature, Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna. Whether or not its compilers were aware of the distinction between knowing and seeing in the sense we make now in the theory of knowledge, the coupling is of great signification. They must have been conscious of the inefficiency and insufficiency of the word 'to know' in the description of the kind of knowledge one has at the moment of enlightenment. 'To see' or 'to see face to face' signifies the immediateness and utmost perspicuity and certainty of such knowledge. As was mentioned elsewhere, Buddhism is rich in terminology of this order of cognition.

defilement of becoming, is set free from the defilement of Ignorance. In him, thus set free, there arises the knowledge of his emancipation, and he knows that rebirth has been destroyed, that the Higher Life has been fulfilled, that what had to be done has been accomplished, and after this present life there will be no beyond.¹ In essence the Arhat is the Buddha and even the Tathāgata, and in the beginning of the history of Buddhism the distinction between these terms did not seem quite sharply marked. Thus to a great extent they may be qualified in the same terms.

When the Buddha was talking with his disciples concerning various speculations prevalent in his days, he made the following remarks about the knowledge of things in command by the Tathāgata :

‘That does he know, and he knows also other things far beyond, far better than those speculations ; and having that knowledge he is not puffed up ; and thus untarnished he has, in his own heart, realized the way of escape from them, has understood, as really they are, the rising up and passing away of sensations, their sweet taste, their danger, how they cannot be relied on, and not grasping after any of those things men are eager for, he the Tathāgata is quite set free. These are those other things, profound, difficult to realize, and hard to understand, tranquillizing, sweet, not to be grasped by logic, subtle, comprehensible only by the wise, which the Tathāgata, having himself realized and seen face to face, hath set forth ; and it is concerning these that they who would rightly praise the Tathāgata in accordance with the truth, should speak.’²

These virtues for which the Tathagata was to be praised were manifestly not derived from speculation and analytical reasoning. His intellectual sight was just as keen and far-reaching as any of his contemporaries, but he was

¹ Tassa evam jānato evam passato kāmāsavāpi cittaṃ vimuccati bhavāsavāpi cittaṃ vimuccati avijjasavapi cittaṃ vimuccati, vimuttasmim vimuttamit nānam hoti. Khina jāti vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ kataṃ karaniyaṃ naparaṃ itthattāyāti pajānāti.

² *The Brahmajāla Sutta*, p. 43. Translation by Rhys Davids.

There are things higher and sweeter than that, one of which is the complete destruction of the Three Bonds (delusion of self, doubt, and trust in the efficacy of good works and ceremonies) and the attainment of such a state of mind as to lead to the insight of the higher things in one's spiritual life. When this insight is gained the heart grows serene, is released from the taint of Ignorance, and there arises the knowledge of emancipation. Such questions as are asked by you, O Mahāli, regarding the identity of body and soul, are idle ones; for when you attain to the supreme insight and see things as they really are in themselves—that is, emancipated from the Bonds, Taints, and Deadly Flows—those questions that are bothering you at the moment will completely lose their value and no more be asked in the way you do. Hence no need of my answering your questions.

This dialogue between the Buddha and Mahāli well illustrates the relation between Enlightenment and the problem of the soul. There is no need of wondering why the Buddha did not definitely solve the ever-recurring question instead of ignoring it in the manner as he did and talking about something apparently in no connection with the point at issue. This is one of the instances by which we must try to see into the meaning of Ignorance.

III

One of the reasons, however, why the Buddha left some metaphysical questions unanswered or indeterminate

'From being one he becomes multiform, from being multiform he becomes one; from being visible he becomes invisible; he passes without hindrance to the further side of a wall or a battlement or a mountain, as if through air; he penetrates up and down through solid ground as if through water; he walks on water without dividing it, as if on solid ground; he travels cross-legged through the sky like the birds on wing; he touches and feels with the hand even the moon and sun, beings of mystic power and potency though they be; he reaches even in the body up to the heaven of Brahma.' Shall we understand this literally and intellectually? Cannot we interpret it in the spirit of the *Prajñā-pāramitā* idealism? Why? Taccittam yacittam acittam. (Thought is called thought because it is no-thought.)

(*avyākata*) was due to the fact that Buddhism is a practical system of spiritual discipline and not a metaphysical discourse. The Buddha naturally had his theory of cognition, but this was secondary inasmuch as the chief aim of Buddhist life was to attain Enlightenment from which spiritual freedom ensues. Enlightenment vanquishes Ignorance lying at the root of birth and death and laying fetters of every description, intellectual as well as effective. And this vanquishing of Ignorance cannot be achieved except by the exercise of one's will-power; all the other attempts, especially merely intellectual, are utterly futile. Hence the Buddha's conclusion: 'These questions¹ are not calculated to profit, they are not concerned with the Dharma, they do not redound to the elements of right conduct, nor to detachment, nor to purification from lusts, nor to quietude, nor to tranquillization of heart, nor to real knowledge, nor to the insight of the higher stages of the Path, nor to Nirvāṇa. Therefore is it that I express no opinion upon them.' What the Buddha on the other hand expounded was: 'What pain is, what the origin of pain is, what the cessation of pain is, and the method by which one may reach the cessation of pain.' For these are all practical matters to be not only fully understood and realized, but actively mastered by any one who really desires to accomplish the great deed of emancipation.

That the Buddha was very much against mere knowledge and most emphatically insisted on actually seeing and personally experiencing the Dharma, face to face, is in evidence everywhere in the Nikāyas as well as in the Mahāyāna texts. This has been indeed the strongest point in the teaching of Buddhism. When a Brahman philosopher was referring to his knowledge of the Three Vedas and a union with that which he has not seen, the Buddha ridiculed him in one of his strong phrases: 'So you say that the Brahmans are not able to point the way to union with that which they have seen, and you further say that neither any one of them,

¹ The questions are: Is the world eternal? Is the world not eternal? Is the world finite? Is the world infinite? *Potthapāda-Sutta*.

nor of their pupils, nor of their predecessors even to the seventh generation, has ever seen Brahma. And you further say that even the Rishis of old, whose words they hold in such deep respect, did not pretend to know, or to have seen where, or whence, or whither Brahma is. Yet these Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas say, forsooth, that they can point out the way to union with that which they know not, neither have seen. . . . They are like a string of blind men clinging one to the other, neither can the foremost see, nor can the middle one see, nor can the hindmost see. The talk of those Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas is but blind talk: the first sees not, the middle one sees not, nor can the last see.'

Enlightenment or the dispelling of Ignorance, which is the ideal of the Buddhist life, we can see now most clearly, is not an act of the intellect, but the transforming or remodelling of one's whole being through the exercise of the most fundamental faculty innate in every one of us. Mere understanding has something foreign in it and does not seem to come so intimately into life. If Enlightenment had really such a tremendous effect on our spiritual outlook as we read in the Sūtras, it could not be the outcome of just getting acquainted with the doctrine of Causation. Enlightenment is the work of Paññā, which is born of the will which wants to see itself and to be in itself. Hence the Buddha's emphasis on the importance of personal experience; hence his insistence on meditation in solitude as the means of leading to the experience. Meditation, through which the will endeavours to transcend the condition it has put on itself in the awakening of consciousness, is therefore by no means the simple act of cogitating on the theory of Origination or Causation, which for ever moves in a circle, starting from Ignorance and ending in Ignorance. This is the one thing that is most needed in Buddhism. All the other metaphysical problems involve us in a tangled skein, in a matted mass of thread.

Ignorance is thus not to be got rid of by metaphysical means but by the struggle of the will. When this is done,



we are also freed from the notion of an ego-entity which is the product or rather the basis of Ignorance, on which it depends and thrives. The ego is the dark spot where the rays of the intellect fail to penetrate, it is the last hiding-lair of Ignorance, where the latter serenely keeps itself from the light. When this lair is laid bare and turned inside out, Ignorance vanishes like frost in the sun. In fact, these two are one and the same thing, Ignorance and the idea of ego. We are apt to think that when Ignorance is driven out and the ego loses its hold on us, we have nothing to lean against and are left to the fate of a dead leaf blown away hither and thither as the wind listeth. But this is not so; for Enlightenment is not a negative idea meaning simply the absence of Ignorance. Indeed, Ignorance is the negation of Enlightenment and not the reverse. Enlightenment is affirmation in the truest sense of the word, and therefore it was stated by the Buddha that he who sees the Dharma sees the Buddha, and he who sees the Buddha sees the Dharma, and again that he who wants to see the Buddha ought not to seek him in form, nor in voice, etc. When Ignorance ruled supreme, the ego was conceived to be a positive idea, and its denial was nihilistic. It was quite natural for Ignorance to uphold the ego where it found its original home. But with the realization of Enlightenment, the whole affair changes its aspect, and the order instituted by Ignorance is reversed from top to bottom. What was negative is now positive, and what was positive now negative. Buddhist scholars ought not to forget this revaluation of ideas that comes along with Enlightenment. Since Buddhism asserts Enlightenment to be the ultimate fact of Buddhist life, there is in it nothing negativistic, nothing pessimistic.

IV

As philosophy tends to emphasize unduly the importance of abstract ideas and logical inferences and forgets to keep itself constantly in touch with the actual world of

experience, the Buddha, as I have repeatedly stated, flatly refused to subscribe to theorization (*takka* or *vitakka*) at the expense of practical discipline. Enlightenment was the fruit of such discipline, and the dispelling of Ignorance could not be effected by any other means. If the Buddha could be said to have had any system of thought governing the whole trend of his teaching, it was what we may call radical empiricism. By this I mean that he took life and the world as they were and did not try to read them according to his own interpretation. Theorists may say this is impossible, for we put our subjectivity into every act of perception, and what we call an objective world is really a reconstruction of our innate ideas. Epistemologically this may be so, but spiritually a state of perfect freedom is obtained only when all our egoistic thoughts are not read into life and the world is accepted as it is as a mirror reflects a flower as flower and the moon as moon. When therefore I say Buddhism is radical empiricism, this is not to be understood epistemologically but spiritually. This is really the meaning of 'yathābhūtam', or 'yathātatham'—the term quite frequently used in the Buddhist canon and in fact forming a most important refrain of Buddhist thought.

In the *Sāmañña-phala Sutta*, in the Dīgha-Nikāya, we are told in an ascending scale what the ultimate fruits of Buddhist life are, and the scale terminates in the 'yathābhūtam' acceptance of the world:

'With his heart thus serene, made pure, translucent, cultured, devoid of evil, supple, ready to act, firm, and imperturbable, he directs and bends down to the knowledge of the destruction of the Defilements (*āsavā*). He knows as it really is: "This is pain." He knows as it really is: "This is the origin of pain." He knows as it really is: "This is the cessation of pain." He knows as it really is: "This is the path that leads to the cessation of pain." He knows as they really are: "These are the Defilements." He knows as it really is: "This is the origin of the Defilements." He knows as it really is: "This is the cessation of the Defilements." He knows as it really is: "This is the path that

leads to the cessation of the Defilements." To him, thus knowing, thus seeing, the heart is set free from the Defilement of Lusts (*kāma*), is set free from the Defilement of Existence (*bhāva*), is set free from the Defilement of Ignorance (*avijjā*). In him, thus set free, there arises the knowledge of his emancipation, and he knows: "Rebirth has been destroyed. The higher life has been fulfilled. What had to be done has been accomplished. After this present life there will be no beyond!"'

How shall we understand this? As in the case of the Twelve Nidānas, the Fourfold Noble Truth will surely fail to yield up its deepest signification when we approach it intellectually. For it is no more than a restatement of the dogma of dependent origination, however different in form, the same principle is asserted both in the Paṭicca-samuppāda and in the Ariya-sacca. The latter points out the practical method of escape from the fetters of karma while the former draws out in view the plans of its *modus operandi*. As concepts, both formulas remain just what they are—that is, effectless and inefficient to produce a spiritual revolution. The Buddha's idea of formulating the Fourfold Truth was to see it practically applied to the realization of an ideal. The elaborate mental discipline which is explained in the previous parts of the *Sāmaññaphala* is but preparatory to this final catastrophe. Without a serene, pure, and firm heart, the truth can never be grasped as it really is. A keen, penetrating intellect may know of the truth and discourse about it, but as to its realization in life a disciplined mind is required.

The passages above quoted are intelligible only when they are seen in the light of spiritual life. Buddhism may be logical, but if we fail to perceive anything further than that we sorely distort it. The logicity of Buddhist teaching is just one aspect of it and not a very important one. We may even regard this logicalness as incidental to Buddhism, and those who are entranced by it remain quite ignorant of the true import of Buddhism. 'He knows as it really is,' ti yathābhūtam pajānāti—we must come to this; for Yathā-

bhūta-nāṇa-dassana is the insight that destroys the Defilements (*āsavānaṃ khaya-nāṇa*) and produces the consciousness of spiritual emancipation (*cetovimutti*). Without this Nāṇa or Nāṇa-dassana (insight or intuition), no detachment, no freedom would be possible to a Buddhist, nor would he ever be assured of his ultimate deliverance from the bondage of existence as well as of the attainment of the higher life (*brahmacarya*). The 'knowing thus, seeing thus' does not mean an intellectual comprehension of facts or truths which fall outside the pale of one's own experience, but it is the perception of events that have actually taken place within oneself. Even an intellectual comprehension will be impossible when there is no experience that goes to support its validity. For those who have no spiritual training along the line of the Hindu dhyāna exercises, the mental state culminating in the yathābhūtam contemplation of the world will be a very difficult subject to be in sympathy with. But in this light only the Buddha's discourse on the fruits of the Sāmañña life is to be understood.

The Defilements (*āsavā*), or Oozings (*lou*), as the Chinese translators have them, are three, sometimes four, in number. They are the Defilements of Desire (*kāma*), Existence (*bhāva*), Ignorance (*avijjā*), and Intellection (*ditthi*). What kind of insight is it that destroys all these Defilements? And what is it that will be left in us after such a destruction? The answers may be anticipated to be thoroughly nihilistic, because nothing but absolute void will be seemingly the result of such destruction. Especially when we read a verse like the following (*Sutta-nipāta*, vv. 949 and 1099) we may reasonably be tempted to regard the teaching of the Buddha as absolutely negativistic:

'What is before thee, lay it aside;
Let there be nothing behind thee;
If thou wilt not grasp after what is in the middle,
Thou wilt wander calm.'¹

¹ Cf. *Dhammapāda*, v. 385. 'He for whom there is neither this nor that side, nor both, him, the fearless and unshackled, I call indeed a Brahman.'

B. not negative

v.ally important!

ENLIGHTENMENT AND IGNORANCE

But the fact is, from the spiritual point of view, that it is only after the destruction of the Defilements and a release from every form of attachment that one's inmost being gets purified and sees itself as it really is, not indeed as an ego standing in contrast to the not-ego, but as something transcending opposites and yet synthesizing them in itself. What is destroyed is the dualism of things and not their oneness. And the release means going back to one's original abode. The insight therefore is to see unity in multiplicity and to understand the opposition of the two ideas as not conditioning each other but as both issuing from a higher principle; and this is where perfect freedom abides. When the mind is trained enough, it sees that neither negation (*niratta*) nor affirmation (*atta*) applies to reality, but that the truth lies in knowing things as they are, or rather as they become. A mind really sincere and thoroughly purified is the necessary preliminary to the understanding of reality in its suchness. As the result we have 'ti yathābhūtam pajānāti', and this came later to be formulated by the Mahāyānist into the doctrine of Thatness or Suchness (*bhūtatathatā*). The trained mind that has gone through the four dhyāna exercises as prescribed in the Nikāyas further develops into what is known among the Mahāyānist as the Ādarśa-jñānam (mirror-insight), which corresponds to the Bhūta-ñāṇa in the Anguttara Nikāya. The last simile in the Buddha's discourse on the fruits of the Sāmañña life, which sums up the spiritual attainment of the Buddhists, becomes now quite intelligible. It runs thus:

'Just, O king, as if in a mountain fastness there were a pool of water, clear, translucent, and serene; and a man, standing on the bank and with eyes to see, should perceive the oysters and the shells, the gravel and the pebbles and the shoals of fish, as they move about or lie within it: he would know: This pool is clear, transparent, and serene, and there within it are the oysters and the shells, and the sand and gravel, and the shoals of fish are moving about or lying still.'

The radical empiricism of the 'Yathābhūtam' teaching

3 not passive

ESSAYS IN ZEN BUDDHISM

of the Buddha is here graphically presented, which reminds us of the Buddha in the *Itivuttaka*, v. 109, describing himself as the spectator standing on the shore (*cakḥhumā puriso tīre thito*). To understand this simile intellectually will be sheer nonsense. The writer describes his mental attitude from a higher plane of thought which has been realized by him after a long training. Sambodhi or Enlightenment is the Buddhist term given to this realization. The destruction of the four Defilements is the negative phase of the experience which is the insight to which the Buddha's serene and translucent mind was directed and bent down. When the destructive activity alone is considered, Enlightenment is annihilating and negativistic; but when the insight opens to the suchness of truth, it is most emphatically affirmative. This is where lies that 'matchless island possessing nothing and grasping after nothing, called Nirvāṇa, the destruction of decay and death'. (*Sutta-nipāta*, v. 1094.) Remember that what is here destroyed is decay and death and not life; for it is through Enlightenment that life is for the first time restored to its native freedom and creativeness.

The simile of mirror (*āḍarsā*) may, however, suggest that the Buddhist attitude towards the world is merely passive and lacking in energizing inspirations. This, however, betrays the ignorance on the part of the critic of the Buddha's own life, which was so unselfishly devoted for forty-nine long and peaceful years to the promotion of the general spiritual welfare of his people; not only this, but the critic has also forgotten to notice the extraordinary missionary enterprises of the Buddha's disciples as well as their intellectual activities which developed into the Mahāyānist school of Buddhism. Whatever this be, the charge of passivity against Buddhist *weltanschauung* is wrong even when it is considered apart from the historical facts of Buddhism. Passivity, we notice in Enlightenment, is merely apparent. As a general statement, a thing absolutely passive is unthinkable, unless it is a state of absolute nothingness without any kind of content in it. So long as Enlightenment is the outcome of a most strenuous spiritual

effort, it is a positive state of mind in which lies hidden an inexhaustible reservoir of possibilities; it is a unity in which a world of multitudinosity is lodged. 'Noisy go the small waters, silent goes the vast ocean.'¹ In the vast ocean of Enlightenment there is the silence of unity. The Avatam-saka philosophers too compare it to the immense expanse of an ocean, calm and translucent, which reflects all the shining bodies of heaven, but where at the same time possibilities of roaring and all-devouring waves lie innocently embosomed.

So asks the Buddha in the *Mahāli Sutta*: 'When a monk knows thus and sees thus, would that make him ready to take up the question, Is the soul the same as the body, or is the soul one thing and the body another?' It is thus evident that the Buddha's teaching always centred in the practical realization of Enlightenment as 'asavem khata-nana', insight that destroys the Defilements and releases one from every attachment (*upādāna*). He did not shun the discussion of the metaphysical problems merely because they were metaphysical, but because they were not conducive to the attainment of the ultimate end of Buddhist life, which is the purification of spirit and not the display of epistemological subtlety. Ignorance was to be dispelled in our inner experience, and not by intellectually understanding the principle of dependent origination whether expressed as the *Paṭicca-samuppāda* or as the *Ariya-sacca*.

Further, that Enlightenment consists in seeing into things 'yathābhūtam' or 'yathātatham', free from doubt, not disturbed by intellection or theorization, may be gleaned from the last gāthā in the *Itivuttaka*, where the Buddha is praised for his various virtues. I quote the first three stanzas:

'Having insight into all the world,
In all the world as it really is,
He is detached from all the world
And without compare in all the world.

¹ *Sutta-nipāta*, v. 720. Sanantā yanti kussobbhā, tunḥi yāti mahodadhi.

All surpassing in everything, steadfast,
Freed from all ties,
The highest repose belongs to him
Who has attained Nirvāṇa, with no fear from any side.

This Enlightened One, with Defilements destroyed,
Undisturbed, and free from doubt,
Has attained destruction of all karma,
And is released in the destruction of the substratum.'

V

Viewing things 'yathābhūtam' is, so to speak, the intellectual or noetic aspect of Enlightenment, though not in the sense of discursive understanding; there is another aspect of Enlightenment which will be the subject of consideration here. I mean its relation to samādhi or dhyāna. This is preliminary, as I said before, to the realization, but it also shows that the realization thus attained is something more than merely seeing into truth. If Enlightenment were just this seeing or having insight, it would not be so spiritually enlightening as to bring about a complete riddance of evil passions and the sense of perfect freedom. Intuitions could not go so penetratingly into the source of life and set all doubts at rest and sever all bonds of attachment unless one's consciousness were thoroughly prepared to take in the All in its wholeness as well as its suchness. Our senses and ordinary consciousness are only too apt to be disturbed and to turn away from the realization of truth. Mental discipline thus becomes indispensable.

We must remember that the Buddha had this discipline under his two Samkhya teachers and that even after his Enlightenment he made it a rule for his disciples to train themselves in the dhyāna exercises. He himself retired into solitude whenever he had opportunities for it. This was not of course merely indulging in contemplation or in making the world reflect in the mirror of consciousness. It was a

kind of spiritual training even for himself and even after Enlightenment. In this respect the Buddha was simply following the practice of all other Indian sages and philosophers. This, however, was not all with him; he saw some deeper meaning in the discipline which was to awaken the highest spiritual sense for comprehending the Dharma. Indeed, without this ultimate awakening, dhyāna, however exalting, was of no import to the perfection of Buddhist life. So we have in the *Dhammapāda*, v. 372: 'Without knowledge (*paññā*, *prajñā*) there is no meditation (*jhāna*, *dhyāna*), without meditation there is no knowledge: he who has knowledge and meditation is near unto Nirvāṇa.' This mutual dependence of *jhāna* and *paññā* is what distinguished Buddhism from the rest of the Indian teachings at the time. *Jhāna* or *dhyāna* must issue in *paññā*, must develop into seeing the world as it really is (*yathābhūtam*); for there is no Buddhism in meditation merely as such. And this was the reason why the Buddha got dissatisfied with the teaching of his teachers; it, to use his own words, did 'not lead to perfect insight, to supreme awakening, to Nirvāṇa' (*na abhiññāya na sambhodāya na nibbānāya samvattati*). To be abiding in the serenity of nothingness was enjoyable enough, but it was falling into a deep slumber, and the Buddha had no desire to sleep away his earthly life in a daydream. There must be a seeing into the life and soul of things. To him *paññā* or *prajñā* was the most essential part of his doctrine, and it had to grow out of *dhyāna*, and the *dhyāna* that did not terminate in *paññā* was not at all Buddhist. The boat was to be emptied indeed, but staying in an 'empty house' (*suññāgāraṃ*) and doing nothing is blankness and annihilation; an eye must open and see the truth fully and clearly, the truth (*paramaṃ ariyasaccaṃ*) that liberates life from its many bondages, and encumbrances. (*Majjhima Nikāya*, 140.) Sings the *Dhammapāda* again (v. 373):

'A monk who has entered his empty house, and whose mind is tranquil,

Feels a more than human delight when he sees the truth clearly.'

As thus the aim of the dhyāna exercises is to prepare the mind for the realization of the paramasacca which destroys and liberates, and as the truth is realizable only by the awakening of the parama-paññā which is the knowledge (*ñāṇa*) that puts an end to all misery (*sabba-dukkha*), the Buddha never fails duly to impress the importance of paññā on the minds of his disciples; for instance, in his general disciplinary scheme given to them under the three headings: *śīla* (morality), *jhāna* (meditation), and *paññā* (intuitive knowledge). Whatever supersensual pleasures one may experience in the *jhāna* exercises, the Buddha considered them to be far short of the ultimate goal of Buddhist life; every one of such pleasures had to be abandoned as it would entangle the mind and interrupt its ascending course to the awakening of paññā. It was through this awakening alone that the consciousness of emancipation or going back to one's original spiritual abode could be attained. And by emancipation the Buddha meant to be free from all forms of attachment, both sensual (*rūpam*) and intellectual (*viññānam*). So says he in the Majjhima Nikāya, 138: Let not thy mind be disturbed by external objects, nor let it go astray among thy own ideas. Be free from attachments, and fear not. This is the way to overcome the sufferings of birth and death.

As long as there is the slightest trace of attachment anywhere, outwardly or inwardly, there remains the substratum of selfhood, and this is sure to create a new force of karma and involve us in the eternal cycle of birth-and-death. This attachment is a form of obsession or illusion or imagination. Nine of such self-conceited illusions are mentioned in the Nikāyas, all of which come out of the wrong speculations of selfhood and naturally lead to attachment in one way or another. They are the ideas that 'I am', 'I am that', 'I shall be', 'I shall not be', 'I shall have form', 'I shall be without form', 'I shall have thought', 'I

shall be without thought', 'I shall neither have thought nor be without thought'.¹ We have to get rid of all these *maññītaṃs*, arrogant, self-asserting conceptions, in order to reach the final goal of Buddhist life. For when they are eliminated, we cease to worry, to harbour hatred, to be belabouring, and to be seized with fears—which is tranquillization (*santi*), and Nirvāṇa, and the seeing into the reality and truth of things. When paññā is awakened in us, morality is abandoned, meditation left behind, and there remains only an enlightened state of consciousness in which spirit moveth as it listeth.

The well-known simile of the raft (*kullūpamaṃ*)² which may seem somewhat unintelligible to some of the Buddhist critics who are used to an altogether different 'intellectual landscape', is a good illustration of the Buddhist teaching of non-attachment. The teaching, 'Kullūpamaṃ vo bhikkhave ājānantehi dhammā pi vo pahātabbā, pageva adhammā' (Like unto a raft, all dharma^s indeed must be abandoned, much more un-dharma^s!), is really the most fundamental keynote running through the whole course of the history of Buddhist dogmatics. The philosophy of Prajñā-pāramitā, which is considered by some quite deviating from the spirit of primitive Buddhism, is in no way behind in upholding this doctrine of non-attachment—for instance, as we see in the *Vajracchedikā Sūtra*. In fact, the theory of Śūnyatā as expounded in all the Prajñāsūtras is no more than philosophizing on the doctrine of non-attachment.³ The *Vajracchedikā* has:

'Tasmād iyaṃ thathāgatena sandhāya vāg bhāshi

¹ The Majjhima-Nikāya, 140, *Dhātuvibhaṅgasuttam*. Asmīti bhikkhu maññītaṃ etaṃ; Ayam aham asmīti maññītaṃ etaṃ; Bhavissan ti maññītaṃ etaṃ; Na bhavissan ti maññītaṃ etaṃ; Rūpi bhavissan ti maññītaṃ etaṃ; Arūpi bhavissan ti maññītaṃ etaṃ; Saññi bhavissan ti maññītaṃ etaṃ; Asaññi bhavissan ti maññītaṃ etaṃ; Nevasaññi-nasaññi bhavissan ti maññītaṃ etaṃ.

² Majjhima Nikāya, 22.

³ Cf. *Sutta-Nipāta*, v. 21. 'By me is made a well-constructed raft, so said Bhagavat, I have passed over to Nirvana, I have reached the further bank, having overcome the torrent of passions; there is no further use for a raft; therefore, if thou like, rain, O sky!'

kolopamaṃ dharmaparyāyam ājānadbhir dharmā eva tā prahātavyāḥ prāgeva adharmā.'

The simile itself runs as follows (Majjhima Nikāya, 22):

'In the simile of a raft do I teach my doctrine to you, O monks, which is designed for escape, not for retention. Listen attentively and remember well what I am going to say. Suppose that a man coming upon a long journey finds in his way a great broad water, the hither side beset with fears and dangers, but the further side secure and free from fears, and no boat wherewith to cross the flood nor any bridge leading from this to the other shore. And suppose this man to say to himself: Verily this is a great and wide water, and the hither side is full of fears and dangers, but the further side secure and free from fears; and there is neither boat nor bridge to take me from this to that further shore. How if I gather some reeds and twigs and leaves and bind them together into a raft; and then, supported on that raft, and labouring with hands and feet, cross in safety to that other shore? Accordingly, O monks, suppose this man to gather together reeds and twigs and leaves and branches and bind them all together into a raft, and launching forth upon it and labouring with hands and feet, attain in safety the other shore. And now, the flood crossed, the further shore attained, suppose the man should say: Very serviceable indeed has this my raft been to me. Supported by this raft and working with hands and feet, I am safely crossed to this other shore; how now if I lift the raft up on my head or lay it upon my shoulder, and so proceed whithersoever I wish? What think ye, O monks? So doing, would this man be acting rightly as regards his raft?

'Nay, verily, O Lord!

'And what then ought this man to do if he would act rightly as regards the raft? Thus, O monks, ought the man to consider: Truly this raft has been serviceable to me! Supported by this raft and exerting hands and feet, I am crossed in safety to this further shore. How now if I lay this raft up on the bank or leave it to sink in the water and so

proceed upon my journey? So doing, O monks, the man would be acting rightly as regards his raft.

'In like manner also do I teach my doctrine to you in the simile of a raft, which is meant, O monks, for escape and not for retention. Understanding the simile of the raft, O monks, you must leave dharmas behind, how much more un-dharmas!'¹

The teaching of the Buddha may now be summed up as follows: Seeing things thus or 'yathābhūtam' is the same as the attainment of perfect spiritual freedom; or we may say that when we are detached from evil passions based upon the wrong idea of selfhood and when the heart grows conscious of its own emancipation, we are then for the first time fully awakened to the truth as it really is. These two events, seeing and being freed, are mutually dependent, so intimately that the one without the other is unthinkable, is impossible; in fact they are two aspects of one identical experience, separated only in our limited cognition. Paññā

¹ I left here 'dharmas' untranslated. For this untranslatable term, some have 'righteousness', some 'morality', and some 'qualities'. This is, as is well known, a difficult term to translate. The Chinese translators have rendered it by *fa*, everywhere, regardless of the context. In the present case, 'dharma' may mean 'good conduct', 'prescribed rules of morality', or even 'any religious teaching considered productive of good results'. In the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*, chapter i, reference is also made to the transcending of both 'adharma' and 'dharma', saying: 'Dharmā eva prahātavyāḥ prāgeva dharmāḥ.' And it is explained that this distinction comes from falsely asserting (*vikalpagrahaṇam*) the dualism of what is and what is not, while the one is the self-reflection of the other. You look into the mirror and finding an image thereon you take it for a reality, while the image is yourself and nobody else. The one who views the world thus has the rightful view of it, 'ya evam pasyati sa samyakpasyati.' Indeed, when he takes hold of *ekāgra* (one-pointedness or oneness of things) he realizes the state of mind in which his inner wisdom reveals itself (*svapratyātmaryajñānagocara*) and which is called the Tathāgatagarbha. In this illustration 'dharma' and 'adharma' are synonyms of being (*sat*) and non-being (*asat*) or affirmation (*asti*) and negation (*nāsti*). Therefore, the abandoning of dharma and adharma (*dharmādharmaḥ prahāṇam*) means the getting rid of dualism in all its complexities and implications. Philosophically, this abandoning is to get identified with the Absolute, and morally to go beyond good and evil, right and wrong. Also compare *Sutta-Nipāta*, verse 886, where dualism is considered to be the outcome of false philosophical reasoning 'Takkañ ca diṭṭhisu pakappayitvā, saccam musā ti dvayadhammam āhu.'

X
without jhāna is no paññā, and jhāna without paññā is no jhāna. Enlightenment is the term designating the identification-experience of paññā and jhāna, of seeing 'yathā-bhūtam' and abandoning the dharma-raft of every denomination. In this light should the following be understood:

'Therefore, O monks, whatever of matter (or body, *rūpam*) there is, whether of the past, of the future, or of the present time, whether internal or external, whether coarse or fine, mean or exalted, far or near, all matter (or body) is to be regarded as it really is, in the light of perfect knowledge (*sammāpaññā*), thus: "This is not of me," "This am I not," "This is not my Self." So with the rest of the five aggregates (*khaṇḍa*): *vedanā* (sensations), *sañña* (concepts), *sankhāra* (formative principle), and *viññānaṃ* (consciousness). One who thus seeing the world turns away from the world is truly freed from evil passions and has the consciousness of freedom. Such is called one who has the obstacles removed, trenches filled, one who has destroyed, is free, one whose fight is over, who has laid down his burden, and is detached.'¹

In short, he has every quality of the Enlightened, in whom the will and the intellect are harmoniously blended.

VI

Ignorance is departure from home and Enlightenment is returning. While wandering, we lead a life full of pain and suffering, and the world wherein we find ourselves is not a very desirable habitat. This is, however, put a stop to by Enlightenment, as thus we are enabled once more to get settled at home where reign freedom and peace. The will negates itself in its attempt to get an insight into

¹ Abridged from the Majjhima Nikāya, 22, p. 139. Cf. also the Samyutta Nikāya, XII, 70, p. 125.

its own life, and dualism follows. Consciousness cannot transcend its own principle. The will struggles and grows despondent over its work. 'Why?' the intellect asks, but it is the question no human intellect can ever hope to solve; for it is a mystery deeply inherent in the will. Why did the Heavenly Father have to send his only child to redeem the creation which was his own handiwork and yet went further astray from its home? Why had Christ to be so dejected over the destiny of the erring children of God? This is an eternal mystery, and no relative understanding is made to grapple with these questions. But the very fact that such questions are raised and constantly threaten one's spiritual peace shows that they are not idle metaphysical problems to be solved by professional philosophers, but that they are addressed directly to one's inmost soul, which must struggle and make effort to subdue them by a higher and deeper power native to itself—far higher and deeper than mere dialectic of cognition.

The story of the prodigal son¹ is such a favourite theme, both for Buddhists and Christians, and in this do we not discover something eternally true, though tragic and unfathomable, which lies so deep in every human heart? Whatever this may be, the will finally succeeds in recognizing itself, in getting back to its original abode. The sense of peace one finds in Enlightenment is indeed that of a wanderer getting safely home. The wandering seems to have altogether been unnecessary from the logical point of view. What is the use of losing oneself if one has to find oneself again? What boots it after all—this going over from one to ten and from ten to one? Mathematically, all this is nonsensical. But the spiritual mystery is that returning is not merely counting backwards so many figures that were counted before in a reverse way. There is an immense difference here between physics and psychology. After returning one is no longer the same person as before. The

¹ For the Buddhist version of the story, see the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka Sūtra*, chapter iv, and the *Vajrasamādhi Sūtra*, chapter iv (Chinese translation).

will, back from his excursion through time-consciousness, is God himself.

In the *Vajrasamādhi Sūtra* the Bodhisattva Apratisthita asks the Buddha why the father was so unkind as not to recall his wandering son before fifty years expired, to which the Buddha answers, 'Fifty years is not to be understood as indicating time-relation here; it means the awakening of a thought.' As I would interpret, this means the awakening of consciousness—a split in the will, which now, besides being actor, is knower. The knower, however, gradually grows to be the spectator and critic, and even aspires to be the director and ruler. With this arises the tragedy of life, which the Buddha makes the basis of the Fourfold Noble Truth. That pain (*duḥka*) is life itself as it is lived by most of us, is the plain, undisguised statement of facts. This all comes from Ignorance, from our consciousness not being fully enlightened as to its nature, mission, and function in relation to the will. Consciousness must first be reduced to the will when it begins to work out its 'original vows' (*pūrvapraṇidhāna*) in obedience to its true master. 'The awakening of a thought marks the beginning of Ignorance and is its condition. When this is vanquished, 'a thought' is reduced to the will, which is Enlightenment. Enlightenment is therefore returning.

In this respect Christianity is more symbolic than Buddhism. The story of Creation, the Fall from the Garden of Eden, God's sending Christ to compensate for the ancestral sins, his Crucifixion, and Resurrection—they are all symbolic. To be more explicit, Creation is the awakening of consciousness, or the 'awakening of a thought'; the Fall is consciousness going astray from the original path; God's idea of sending his own son among us is the desire of the will to see itself through its own offspring, consciousness; Crucifixion is transcending the dualism of acting and knowing, which comes from the awakening of the intellect; and finally Resurrection means the will's triumph over the intellect—in other words, the will seeing itself in and through consciousness. After Resurrection the will is no more blind

striving, nor is the intellect mere observing the dancer dance. In real Buddhist life these two are not separated; seeing and acting, they are synthesized in one whole spiritual life, and this synthesis is called by Buddhists Enlightenment, the dispelling of Ignorance, the loosening of the Fetters, the wiping-off of the Defilements, etc. Buddhism is thus free from the historical symbolism of Christianity; transcending the category of time, Buddhism attempts to achieve salvation in one act of the will; for returning effaces all the traces of time.

The Buddha himself gave utterance to the feeling of return when his eye first opened to the Dharma unheard of before at the realization of Enlightenment. He said, 'I am like a wanderer who, after going astray in a desolate wilderness, finally discovers an old highway, an old track beaten by his predecessors, and who finds, as he goes along the road, the villages, palaces, gardens, woods, lotus-ponds, walls, and many other things where his predecessors used to have their dwellings.¹ Superficially, this feeling of

¹ Samyutta XII, 65, Nagara; cf. also one of the *Prajñā-pāramitā sūtras* which is known as one preached by Mañjuśrī (Nanjō Catalogue, No. 21). In the Sūtra we find that the Buddha, after mentioning the simile of a gem-digger, makes reference to a man who feels overwhelmed with delight when people talk pleasantly about the old towns and villages once visited by himself. The same sort of a delightful feeling is expressed by one who will listen to the discourse on *Prajñā-pāramitā* and understand it; for he was in his past lives present at the assembly which was gathered about the Buddha delivering sermons on the same subject. That the understanding of the doctrine of *Prajñā-pāramitā* is a form of memory is highly illuminating when considered in relation to the theory of Enlightenment as advanced here.

That the ushering of Enlightenment is accompanied by the feeling of return or remembrance is also unmistakably noted by the writer of the *Kena-Upanishad* (VI, 50):

'Now in respect to the Ātman:

It is as though something forces its way into consciousness

And consciousness suddenly remembers—

Such a state of mind illustrates the awakening of knowledge of the Ātman.'

Sonadanda the Brahman had the following to say when he grasped the meaning of the Buddha's discourse on the characteristics of the true Brahman (Rhys Davids' translation): 'Most excellent, O Gotama, most excellent! Just as if a man were to set up that which has been thrown

congregation at the Vulture Peak where the Buddha discoursed on the Sūtra. Then said the master, 'If not for you no one could see the truth: and if not for me no one could testify it.' It is often remarked by Zen masters that the holy congregation at the Vulture Peak is still in session. This, however, ought not to be confounded with the remembering of the past, which is one of the miraculous gifts of the Buddhist saints. It has nothing to do with such memory, for in Enlightenment there are more things than are implied in mere time-relations. Even when the *Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtras* expressly refer to one's previous presence at the discourse on the subject, this is not a form of mere recollection; the understanding is not a psychological phenomenon, the *prajñā* goes much more penetratingly into the depths of one's personality. The sense of return to something familiar, to the one thoroughly acquainted with it, really means the will getting settled once more in its old abode, after many a venturesome wandering, with an immense treasure of experience now and full of wisdom that will light up its unending career.

VII

It may not be altogether out of place here to make a few remarks concerning the popular view which identifies the philosophy of Schopenhauer with Buddhism. According to this view, the Buddha is supposed to have taught the negation of the will to live, which was insisted upon by the German pessimist, but nothing is further from the correct understanding of Buddhism than this negativism. The Buddha does not consider the will blind, irrational, and therefore to be denied; what he really denies is the notion of ego-entity due to Ignorance, from which notion come craving, attachment to things impermanent, and the giving way to egoistic impulses. The object the Buddha always has in view and never forgets to set forth whenever he

thinks opportune is the Enlightenment of the will and not its negation. His teaching is based upon affirmative propositions. The reason why he does not countenance life as it is lived by most of us is because it is the product of Ignorance and egoism, which never fail to throw us into the abyss of pain and misery. The Buddha pointed the way to escape this by Enlightenment and not by annihilation.

The will as it is in itself is pure act, and no taint of egoism is there; this is awakened only when the intellect through its own error grows blind as to the true working of the will and falsely recognizes here the principle of individuation. The Buddha thus wants an illumined will and not the negation of it. When the will is illumined, and thereby when the intellect is properly directed to follow its original course, we are liberated from the fetters which are put upon us by wrong understanding, and purified of all the defilements which ooze from the will not being correctly interpreted. Enlightenment and emancipation are the two central ideas of Buddhism.

The argument Āśvaghosha puts into the mouth of the Buddha against Arada (or Ālāra Kālāma), the Samkhya philosopher, is illuminating in this respect. When Arada told the Buddha to liberate the soul from the body as when the bird flies from the cage or the reed's stalk is loosened from its sheath, which will result in the abandonment of egoism, the Buddha reasons in the following way: 'As long as the soul continues there is no abandonment of egoism. The soul does not become free from qualities as long as it is not released from number and the rest; therefore, so long as there is no freedom from qualities, there is no liberation declared for it. There is no real separation of the qualities and their subject; for fire cannot be conceived apart from its form and heat. Before the body there will be nothing embodied, so before the qualities there will be no subject; how, if it was originally free, could the soul ever become bound? The body-knower (the soul), which is unembodied, must be either knowing or unknowing; if it is knowing there must be some object to be known, and if there is this object

it is not liberated. Or if the soul be declared to be unknowing, then what use to you is this imagined soul? Even without such a soul, the existence of the absence of knowledge is notorious, as, for instance, in a log of wood or a wall. And since each successive abandonment is held to be still accompanied by qualities, I maintain that the absolute attainment of our end can only be found in the abandonment of everything.¹

As long as the dualistic conception is maintained in regard to the liberation of the soul, there will be no real freedom as is truly declared by the Buddha. 'The abandonment of everything' means the transcending of the dualism of soul and body, of subject and object, of that which knows and that which is known, of 'it is' and 'it is not', of soul and soul-lessness; and this transcending is not attained by merely negating the soul or the will, but by throwing light upon its nature, by realizing it as it is in itself. This is the act of the will. An intellectual contemplation which is advocated by the Samkhya philosophers does not lead one to spiritual freedom, but to the realm of passivity which is their 'realm of nothingness'. Buddhism teaches freedom and not annihilation, it advocates spiritual discipline and not mental torpor or emptiness. There must be a certain turning away in one's ordinary course of life, there must be a certain opening up of a new vista in one's spiritual outlook if one wants to be the true follower of the Buddha. His aversion to asceticism and nihilism as well as to hedonism becomes intelligible when seen in this light.

The Majjhima-Nikāya's account of the Buddha's interview with the Samkhya thinkers somewhat differs from the Mahāyāna poet's, but in a way gives a better support to my argument as regards the Buddha's Enlightenment. The reason why he was not satisfied with the teaching and discipline of Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka is stated to be this: 'This doctrine does not lead to turning away, to dispassion, to cessation, to quietude, to perfect penetration, to

¹ *Buddhacarita*, translated by E. B. Cowell, pp. 131-132.

supreme awakening, to Nirvāṇa, but only to attainment to the Realm of Nothingness.¹ What did then the Buddha understand by Nirvāṇa which literally means annihilation or cessation, but which is grouped here with such terms as awakening, turning away (that is, revaluation), and penetration, and contrasted to nothingness? There is no doubt, as far as we can judge from these qualifications, that Nirvāṇa is a positive conception pointing to a certain determinable experience. When he came up to the bank of the Nairanjana and took his seat of soft grass on a shady, peaceful spot, he made up his mind not to leave the place until he realized in himself what he had been after ever since his wandering away from home. According to the *Lalitavistara*, he at that moment made this vow (*praṇidhana*):

'Let my body be dried up on this seat,
Let my skin and bones and flesh be destroyed:
So long as Bodhi is not attained, so hard to attain for many a kalpa,
My body and thought will not be removed from this seat.'¹

Thus resolved, the Buddha finally came to realize Supreme Enlightenment for which he had belaboured for ever so many lives. How does this vary from his former attainments under Uddaka and Ālāra Kālāma? Let him express himself:

'Then, disciples, myself subject to birth, but perceiving the wretchedness of things subject to birth and seeking after the incomparable security of Nirvāṇa which is birthless, to that incomparable security I attained, even to Nirvāṇa which is birthless.

'Myself subject to growth and decay, but perceiving the wretchedness of things subject to growth and decay and seeking after the incomparable security of Nirvāṇa which is free from growth and decay, to that incomparable security I attained, even to Nirvāṇa which is free from growth and decay.

¹ Lefmann's edition, p. 289.

'Myself subject to disease, but perceiving the wretchedness of things subject to disease and seeking after the incomparable security of Nirvāṇa which is free from disease, to that incomparable security I attained, even to Nirvāṇa which is free from disease.

'Myself subject to death, but perceiving the wretchedness of things subject to death and seeking after the incomparable security of Nirvāṇa which is deathless, to that incomparable security I attained, even to Nirvāṇa which is deathless.

'Myself subject to sorrow, but perceiving the wretchedness of things subject to sorrow and seeking after the incomparable security of Nirvāṇa which is sorrowless, to that incomparable security I attained, even to Nirvāṇa which is sorrowless.

'Myself subject to stain, but perceiving the wretchedness of things subject to stain and seeking the incomparable security of Nirvāṇa which is stainless, to that incomparable security I attained, even to Nirvāṇa which is stainless.

'Then I saw and knew: "Assured am I of deliverance; this is my final birth; never more shall I return to this life!"'¹

When Nirvāṇa is qualified as birthless, deathless, stainless, sorrowless, and free from growth and decay and disease, it looks negativistic enough. But if there were nothing affirmed even in these negations, the Buddha could not rest in 'the incomparable security' (*anuttaraṃ yogakkhemam*) of Nirvāṇa and been assured of final emancipation. What thus the Buddha denied, we can see, was Ignorance as to the true cause of birth and death, and this Ignorance was dispelled by the supreme effort of the will and not by mere dialectic reasoning and contemplation. The will was asserted and the intellect was awakened to its true significance. All the desires, feelings, thoughts, and strivings thus illuminated cease to be egoistic and are no more the cause of defilements and fetters and many other hindrances, of which so many are referred to in all Buddhist

¹ *Ariyapariyesana-sutta*, Majjhima-Nikāya, XXVI, p. 167.

satori, which is indeed the Alpha and Omega of Zen Buddhism. Zen devoid of satori is like a sun without its light and heat. Zen may lose all its literature, all its monasteries, and all its paraphernalia; but as long as there is satori in it it will survive to eternity. I want to emphasize this most fundamental fact concerning the very life of Zen; for there are some even among the students of Zen themselves who are blind to this central fact and are apt to think when Zen has been explained away logically or psychologically, or as one of the Buddhist philosophies which can be summed up by using highly technical and conceptual Buddhist phrases, Zen is exhausted, and there remains nothing in it that makes it what it is. But my contention is, the life of Zen begins with the opening of satori (kai wu in Chinese).

Satori may be defined as an intuitive looking into the nature of things in contradistinction to the analytical or logical understanding of it. Practically, it means the unfolding of a new world hitherto unperceived in the confusion of a dualistically-trained mind. Or we may say that with satori our entire surroundings are viewed from quite an unexpected angle of perception. Whatever this is, the world for those who have gained a satori is no more the old world as it used to be; even with all its flowing streams and burning fires, it is never the same one again. Logically stated, all its opposites and contradictions are united and harmonized into a consistent organic whole. This is a mystery and a miracle, but according to the Zen masters such is being performed every day. Satori can thus be had only through our once personally experiencing it.

Its semblance or analogy in a more or less feeble and fragmentary way is gained when a difficult mathematical problem is solved, or when a great discovery is made, or when a sudden means of escape is realized in the midst of most desperate complications; in short, when one exclaims 'Eureka! Eureka!' But this refers only to the intellectual aspect of satori, which is therefore necessarily partial and incomplete and does not touch the very foundations of life

considered one indivisible whole. Satori as the Zen experience must be concerned with the entirety of life. For what Zen proposes to do is the revolution, and the revaluation as well, of oneself as a spiritual unity. The solving of a mathematical problem ends with the solution, it does not affect one's whole life. So with all other particular questions, practical or scientific, they do not enter the basic life-tone of the individual concerned. But the opening of satori is the remaking of life itself. When it is genuine—for there are many simulacra of it—its effects on one's moral and spiritual life are revolutionary, and they are so enhancing, purifying, as well as exacting. When a master was asked what constituted Buddhahood, he answered, 'The bottom of a pail is broken through.' From this we can see what a complete revolution is produced by this spiritual experience. The birth of a new man is really cataclysmic.

In the psychology of religion this spiritual enhancement of one's whole life is called 'conversion'. But as the term is generally used by Christian converts, it cannot be applied in its strict sense to the Buddhist experience, especially to that of the Zen followers; the term has too affective or emotional a shade to take the place of satori, which is above all noetic. The general tendency of Buddhism is, as we know, more intellectual than emotional, and its doctrine of Enlightenment distinguishes it sharply from the Christian view of salvation; Zen as one of the Mahāyāna schools naturally shares a large amount of what we may call transcendental intellectualism, which does not issue in logical dualism. When poetically or figuratively expressed, satori is 'the opening of the mind-flower', or 'the removing of the bar', or 'the brightening up of the mind-works'.

All these tend to mean the clearing up of a passage which has been somehow blocked, preventing the free, unobstructed operation of a machine or a full display of the inner works. With the removal of the obstruction, a new vista opens before one, boundless in expanse and reaching the end of time. As life thus feels quite free in its activity,

which was not the case before the awakening, it now enjoys itself to the fullest extent of its possibilities, to attain which is the object of Zen discipline. This is often taken to be equivalent to 'vacuity of interest and poverty of purpose'. But according to the Zen masters the doctrine of non-achievement concerns itself with the subjective attitude of mind which goes beyond the limitations of thought. It does not deny ethical ideals, nor does it transcend them; it is simply an inner state of consciousness without reference to its objective consequences.

II

The coming of Bodhi-dharma (Bodai-daruma in Japanese, P'u-ti Ta-mo in Chinese) to China early in the sixth century was simply to introduce this satori element into the body of Buddhism, whose advocates were then so engrossed in subtleties of philosophical discussion or in the mere literary observance of rituals and disciplinary rules. By the 'absolute transmission of the spiritual seal', which was claimed by the first patriarch, is meant the opening of satori, obtaining an eye to see into the spirit of the Buddhist teaching.

The sixth patriarch, Yenō (Hui-nêng), was distinguished because of his upholding the satori aspect of dhyāna against the mere mental tranquillization of the Northern school of Zen under the leadership of Jinshu (Shên-hsiu). Baso (Ma-tsu), Ōbaku (Huang-po), Rinzai (Lin-chi), and all the other stars illuminating the early days of Zen in the T'ang dynasty were advocates of satori. Their life-activities were unceasingly directed towards the advancement of this; and as one can readily recognize, they so differed from those merely absorbed in contemplation or the practising of dhyana so called. They were strongly against quietism, declaring its adherents to be purblind and living in the cave of darkness. Before we go on it is advisable, therefore, to

have this point clearly understood so that we leave no doubt as to the ultimate purport of Zen, which is by no means wasting one's life away in a trance-inducing practice, but consists in seeing into the life of one's being or opening an eye of satori.

There is in Japan a book going under the title of *Six Essays by Shoshitsu* (that is, by Bodhidharma, the first patriarch of Zen); the book contains no doubt some of the sayings of Dharma, but most of the Essays are not his; they were probably composed during the T'ang dynasty when Zen Buddhism began to make its influence more generally felt among the Chinese Buddhists. The spirit, however, pervading the book is in perfect accord with the principle of Zen. One of the Essays entitled 'Kechimyakuron', or 'Treatise on the Lineage of Faith', discusses the question of *Chien-hsing*,¹ or satori, which, according to the author, constitutes the essence of Zen Buddhism. The following passages are extracts.

'If you wish to seek the Buddha, you ought to see into your own Nature (*hsing*); for this Nature is the Buddha himself. If you have not seen into your own Nature, what is the use of thinking of the Buddha, reciting the Sūtras, observing a fast, or keeping the precepts? By thinking of the Buddha, your cause [i.e. meritorious deed] may bear fruit; by reciting the Sūtras your intelligence may grow brighter; by keeping the precepts you may be born in the heavens; by

¹ *Hsing* means nature, character, essence, soul, or what is innate to one. 'Seeing into one's Nature' is one of the set phrases used by the Zen masters, and is in fact the avowed object of all Zen discipline. Satori is its more popular expression. When one gets into the inwardness of things, there is satori. This latter, however, being a broad term, can be used to designate any kind of a thorough understanding, and it is only in Zen that it has a restricted meaning. In this article I have used the term as the most essential thing in the study of Zen; for 'seeing into one's Nature' suggests the idea that Zen has something concrete and substantial which requires being seen into by us. This is misleading, though satori too I admit is a vague and naturally ambiguous word. For ordinary purposes, not too strictly philosophical, satori will answer, and whenever *chuen-hsing* is referred to it means this: the opening of the mental eye. As to the sixth patriarch's view on 'seeing into one's Nature', see above under *History of Zen Buddhism*.

and the Buddha is the Way, and the Way is Zen. This simple word, Zen, is beyond the comprehension both of the wise and the ignorant. To see directly into one's original Nature, this is Zen. Even if you are well learned in hundreds of the Sūtras and Śāstras, you still remain an ignoramus in Buddhism when you have not yet seen into your original Nature. Buddhism is not there [in mere learning]. The highest truth is unfathomably deep, is not an object of talk or discussion, and even the canonical texts have no way to bring it within our reach. Let us once see into our own original Nature and we have the truth, even when we are quite illiterate, not knowing a word. . . .

'Those who have not seen into their own Nature may reach the Sūtras, think of the Buddha, study long, work hard, practise religion throughout the six periods of the day, sit for a long time and never lie down for sleep, and may be wide in learning and well informed in all things; and they may believe that all this is Buddhism. All the Buddhas in successive ages only talk of seeing into one's Nature. All things are impermanent; until you get an insight into your Nature, do not say "I have perfect knowledge". Such is really committing a very grave crime. Ānanda, one of the ten great disciples of the Buddha, was known for his wide information, but did not have any insight into Buddhahood, because he was so bent on gaining information only. . . .'

The sixth patriarch, Hui-nêng (Yenō), insists on this in a most unmistakable way when he answers the question: 'As to your commission from the fifth patriarch of Huang-mei, how do you direct and instruct others in it?' The answer was, 'No direction, no instruction there is; we speak only of seeing into one's Nature and not of practising dhyāna and seeking deliverance thereby.' Elsewhere they are designated as the 'confused' and 'not worth consulting with'; they that are empty-minded and sit quietly, having no thoughts whatever; whereas 'even ignorant ones, if they all of a sudden realize the truth and open their mental eyes,

thus sitting cross-legged, thou murderest him. So long as thou freest thyself not from sitting so,¹ thou never comest to the truth.'

These are all plain statements, and no doubts are left as to the ultimate end of Zen, which is not sinking oneself into a state of torpidity by sitting quietly after the fashion of a Hindu saint and trying to exclude all the mental ripples that seem to come up from nowhere, and after a while pass away—where nobody knows. These preliminary remarks will help the reader carefully to consider the following 'Questions and Answers' (known as *Mondō* in Japanese); for they will illustrate my thesis that Zen aims at the opening of satori, or at acquiring a new point of view as regards life and the universe. The Zen masters, as we see below, are always found trying to avail themselves of every apparently trivial incident of life in order to make the disciples' minds flow into a channel hitherto altogether unperceived. It is like picking a hidden lock, the flood of new experiences gushes forth from the opening. It is again like the clock's striking the hours; when the appointed time comes it clicks, and the whole percussion of sounds is released. The mind seems to have something of this mechanism; when a certain moment is reached, a hitherto closed screen is lifted, an entirely new vista opens up, and the tone of one's whole life thereafter changes. This mental clicking or opening is called satori by the Zen masters and is insisted upon as the main object of their discipline.

In this connection the reader will find the following words of Meister Eckhart quite illuminative: 'Upon this matter a heathen sage hath a fine saying in speech with another sage: "I become aware of something in me which flashes upon my reason. I perceive of it that it is something,

¹ That is, from the idea that this sitting cross-legged leads to Buddhahood. From the earliest periods of Zen in China, the quietest tendency has been running along the whole history with the intellectual tendency which emphasizes the satori element. Even today these currents are represented to a certain extent by the Sōtō on the one hand and the Rinzai on the other, while each has its characteristic features of excellence. My own standpoint is that of the intuitionist and not that of the quietest; for the essence of Zen lies in the attainment of satori.

which fitly describes the teaching of Zen. Did not Confucius declare: "Do you think I am holding back something from you, O my disciples? Indeed, I have held nothing back from you?" Sankoku tried to answer, but Kwaido immediately made him keep silence by saying, 'No, no!' The Confucian disciple felt troubled in mind, and did not know how to express himself. Some time later they were having a walk in the mountains. The wild laurel was in full bloom and the air was redolent. Asked the Zen master, 'Do you smell it?' When the Confucian answered affirmatively, Kwaido said, 'There, I have kept nothing back from you!' This suggestion from the teacher at once led to the opening of Kōzankoku's mind. Is it not evident now that satori is not a thing to be imposed upon another, but that it is self-growing from within? Though nothing is kept away from us, it is through a satori that we become cognizant of the fact, being convinced that we are all sufficient unto ourselves. All that therefore Zen contrives is to assert that there is such a thing as self-revelation, or the opening of satori.

V

* As satori strikes at the primary fact of existence, its attainment marks a turning-point in one's life. The attainment, however, must be thorough-going and clear-cut in order to produce a satisfactory result. To deserve the name 'satori' the mental revolution must be so complete as to make one really and sincerely feel that there took place a fiery baptism of the spirit. The intensity of this feeling is proportional to the amount of effort the opener of satori has put into the achievement. For there is a gradation in satori as to its intensity, as in all our mental activity. The possessor of a lukewarm satori may suffer no such spiritual revolution as Rinzaï, or Bukkō (Fo-kuang), whose case is quoted below. Zen is a matter of character and not of the intellect,

which means that Zen grows out of the will as the first principle of life. A brilliant intellect may fail to unravel all the mysteries of Zen, but a strong soul will drink deep of the inexhaustible fountain. I do not know if the intellect is superficial and touches only the fringe of one's personality, but the fact is that the will is the man himself, and Zen appeals to it. When one becomes penetratingly conscious of the working of this agency, there is the opening of satori and the understanding of Zen. As they say, the snake has now grown into the dragon; or, more graphically, a common cur—a most miserable creature wagging its tail for food and sympathy, and kicked about by the street boys so mercilessly—has now turned into a golden-haired lion whose roar frightens to death all the feeble-minded.

Therefore, when Rinzai was meekly submitting to the 'thirty blows' of Ōbaku, he was a pitiable sight; as soon as he attained satori he was quite a different personage, and his first exclamation was, 'There is not much after all in the Buddhism of Ōbaku.' And when he saw the reproachful Ōbaku again, he returned his favour by giving him a slap on the face. 'What an arrogance, what an impudence!' Ōbaku exclaimed; but there was reason in Rinzai's rudeness, and the old master could not but be pleased with this treatment from his former tearful Rinzai.

When Tokusan gained an insight into the truth of Zen he immediately took up all his commentaries on the *Diamond Sūtra*, once so valued and considered indispensable that he had to carry them wherever he went; he now set fire to them, reducing all the manuscripts to nothingness. He exclaimed, 'However deep your knowledge of abstruse philosophy, it is like a piece of hair placed in the vastness of space; and however important your experience in things worldly, it is like a drop of water thrown into an unfathomable abyss.'

On the day following the incident of the flying geese, to which reference is made elsewhere, Baso appeared in the preaching-hall, and was about to speak before a congregation, when Hyakujo came forward and began to roll up

the matting.¹ Baso without protesting came down from his seat and returned to his own room. He then called Hyakujo and asked him why he rolled up the matting before he had uttered a word.

'Yesterday you twisted my nose,' replied Hyakujo, 'and it was quite painful'

'Where,' said Baso, 'was your thought wandering then?'

'It is not painful any more today, master.'

How differently he behaves now! When his nose was pinched, he was quite an ignoramus in the secrets of Zen. He is now a golden-haired lion, he is master of himself, and acts as freely as if he owned the world, pushing away even his own master far into the background.

There is no doubt that Satori goes deep into the very root of individuality. The change achieved thereby is quite remarkable, as we see in the examples above cited.

VI

Some masters have left in the form of verse known as 'Ge' (*gāthā*) what they perceived or felt at the time when their mental eye was opened. The verse has the special name of 'Tōki-no-ge'², and from the following translations the reader may draw his own conclusions as to the nature and content of a satori so highly prized by the Zen followers. But there is one thing to which I would like to call his attention, which is that the contents of these *gāthās* are so varied and dissimilar as far as their literary and intelligible sense is concerned that one may be at a loss how to make a comparison of these divers exclamations. Being sometimes merely descriptive verses of the feelings of the author at the

¹ This is spread before the Buddha and on it the master performs his bowing ceremony, and its rolling up naturally means the end of a sermon.

² *Tou chi chia*, meaning 'the verse of mutual understanding' which takes place when the master's mind and the disciple's are merged in each other's.

that there is such a thing in Zen as satori through which one is admitted into a new world of value. The old way of viewing things is abandoned and the world acquires a new signification. Some of them would declare that they were 'deluded' or that their 'previous knowledge' was thrown into oblivion, while others would confess they were hitherto unaware of a new beauty which exists in the 'refreshing breeze' and in the 'shining jewel'.

VII

When our consideration is limited to the objective side of satori as illustrated so far, it does not appear to be a very extraordinary thing—this opening an eye to the truth of Zen. The master makes some remarks, and if they happen to be opportune enough, the disciple will come at once to a realization and see into a mystery hitherto undreamed of. It seems all to depend upon what kind of mood or what state of mental preparedness one is in at the moment. Zen is after all a haphazard affair, one may be tempted to think; but when we know that it took Nangaku (Nan-yüeh) eight long years to answer the question 'Who is he that thus cometh towards me?' we shall realize the fact that there was in him a great deal of mental anguish and tribulation which he had to go through before he could come to the final solution and declare, 'Even when one asserts that it is a somewhat, one misses it altogether.' We must try to look into the psychological aspect of satori, where is revealed the inner mechanism of opening the door to the eternal secrets of the human soul. This is done best by quoting some of the masters themselves whose introspective statements are on record.

Kōhō (Kao-fêng, 1238-1285) was one of the great masters in the latter part of the Sung dynasty. When his

PRACTICAL METHODS OF
ZEN INSTRUCTION

‘WHAT is Zen?’ This is one of the most difficult questions to answer—I mean to the satisfaction of the inquirer; for Zen refuses even tentatively to be defined or described in any manner. The best way to understand it will be, of course, to study and practice it at least some years in the Meditation Hall. Therefore, even after the reader has carefully gone over this Essay, he will still be at sea as to the real signification of Zen. It is, in fact, in the very nature of Zen that it evades all definition and explanation; that is to say, Zen cannot be converted into ideas, it can never be described in logical terms. For this reason the Zen masters declare that it is ‘independent of letter’, being ‘a special transmission outside the orthodox teachings’. But the purpose of this Essay is not just to demonstrate that Zen is an unintelligible thing and that there is no use of attempting to discourse about it. My object, on the contrary, will be to make it clear to the fullest extent of my ability, however imperfect and inadequate that may be. And there are several ways to do this. Zen may be treated psychologically, ontologically, or epistemologically, or historically as I did in the first part of this book to a certain extent. These are all extremely interesting each in its way, but they are a great undertaking requiring years of preparation. What here I propose to do, therefore, will be a practical exposition of the subject-matter by giving some aspects of the *modus operandi* of Zen instruction as carried out by the masters for the enlightenment of the pupils. The perusal of these accounts will help us to get into the spirit of Zen to the limits of its intelligibility.

As I conceive it, Zen is the ultimate fact of all philosophy and religion. Every intellectual effort must culminate in it, or rather must start from it, if it is to bear any practical fruits. Every religious faith must spring from it if it has to prove at all efficiently and livingly workable in our active life. Therefore Zen is not necessarily the fountain of Buddhist thought and life alone; it is very much alive also in Christianity, Mahommedanism, in Taoism, and even in positivistic Confucianism. What makes all these religions and philosophies vital and inspiring, keeping up their usefulness and efficiency, is due to the presence in them of what I may designate as the Zen element. Mere scholasticism or mere sacerdotalism will never create a living faith. Religion requires something inwardly propelling, energizing, and capable of doing work. The intellect is useful in its place, but when it tries to cover the whole field of religion it dries up the source of life. Feeling or mere faith is so blind and will grasp anything that may come across and hold to it as the final reality. Fanaticism is vital enough as far as its explosiveness is concerned, but this is not a true religion, and its practical sequence is the destruction of the whole system, not to speak of the fate of its own being. Zen is what makes the religious feeling run through its legitimate channel and what gives life to the intellect.

Zen does this by giving one a new point of view of looking at things, a new way of appreciating the truth and beauty of life and the world, by discovering a new source of energy in the inmost recesses of consciousness, and by bestowing on one a feeling of completeness and sufficiency. That is to say, Zen works miracles by overhauling the whole system of one's inner life and opening up a world hitherto entirely undreamt of. This may be called a resurrection. And Zen tends to emphasize the speculative element, though confessedly it opposes this more than anything else in the whole

process of the spiritual revolution, and in this respect Zen is truly Buddhistic. Or it may be better to say that Zen makes use of the phraseology belonging to the sciences of speculative philosophy. Evidently, the feeling element is not so prominently visible in Zen as in the Pure Land sects where 'bhakti' (faith) is all in all; Zen on the other hand emphasizes the faculty of seeing (*darsana*) or knowing (*vidyā*) though not in the sense of reasoning out, but in that of intuitively grasping.

According to the philosophy of Zen, we are too much of a slave to the conventional way of thinking, which is dualistic through and through. No 'interpenetration' is allowed, there takes place no fusing of opposites in our everyday logic. What belongs to God is not of this world, and what is of this world is incompatible with the divine. Black is not white, and white is not black. Tiger is tiger, and cat is cat, and they will never be one. Water flows, a mountain towers. This is the way things or ideas go in this universe of the senses and syllogisms. Zen, however, upsets this scheme of thought and substitutes a new one in which there exists no logic, no dualistic arrangement of ideas. We believe in dualism chiefly because of our traditional teaching. Whether ideas really correspond to facts is another matter requiring a special investigation. Ordinarily we do not inquire into the matter, we just accept what is instilled into our minds; for to accept is more convenient and practical, and life is to a certain extent, though not in reality, made thereby easier. We are in nature conservatives, not because we are lazy, but because we like repose and peace, even superficially. But the time comes when traditional logic holds true no more, for we begin to feel contradictions and splits and consequently spiritual anguish. We lose trustful repose which we experienced when we blindly followed the traditional ways of thinking. Eckhart says that we are all seeking repose whether consciously or not just as the stone cannot cease moving until it touches the earth. Evidently the repose we seemed to enjoy before we were awakened to the contradictions involved in our

logic was not the real one, the stone has kept moving down towards the ground. Where then is the ground of non-dualism on which the soul can be really and truthfully tranquil and blessed? To quote Eckhart again, 'Simple people conceive that we are to see God as if He stood on that side and we on this. It is not so; God and I are one in the act of my perceiving Him.' In this absolute oneness of things Zen establishes the foundations of its philosophy.

The idea of absolute oneness is not the exclusive possession of Zen, there are other religions and philosophies that preach the same doctrine. If Zen, like other monisms or theisms, merely laid down this principle and did not have anything specifically to be known as Zen, it would have long ceased to exist as such. But there is in Zen something unique which makes up its life and justifies its claim to be the most precious heritage of Eastern culture. The following 'mondō' or dialogue (literally questioning and answering) will give us a glimpse into the ways of Zen. A monk asked Jōshu (Chao-chou), one of the greatest masters in China, 'What is the one ultimate word of truth?' Instead of giving him any specific answer he made a simple response saying, 'Yes.' The monk who naturally failed to see any sense in this kind of response asked for a second time, and to this the master roared back, 'I am not deaf!'¹ See how irrelevantly (shall I say) the all-important problem of absolute oneness or of the ultimate reason is treated here! But this is characteristic of Zen, this is where Zen transcends logic and overrides the tyranny and misrepresentation of ideas. As I said before, Zen mistrusts the intellect, does not rely upon

¹ Another time when Jōshu was asked about the 'first word', he coughed. The monk remarked, 'Is this not it?' 'Why, an old man is not even allowed to cough!'—this came quickly from the old master. Jōshu had still another occasion to express his view on the one word. A monk asked, 'What is the one word?' Demanded the master, 'What do you say?' 'What is the one word?'—the question was repeated when Jōshu gave his verdict, 'You make it two.'

Shuzan (Shu-shan) was once asked, 'An old master says, "There is one word which when understood wipes out the sins of innumerable kalpas": what is this one word?' Shuzan answered, 'Right under your nose!' 'What is the ultimate meaning of it?' 'This is all I can say':—this was the conclusion of the master.

occasion, 'When a man comes to you with nothing, what would you say to him?' his immediate response was, 'Cast it away!' We may ask him, When a man has nothing, what will he cast? When a man is poor, can he be said to be sufficient unto himself? Is he not in need of everything? Whatever deep meaning there may be in these answers of Jōshu, the paradoxes are quite puzzling and baffle our logically trained intellect. 'Carry away the farmer's oxen, and make off with the hungry man's food' is a favourite phrase with the Zen masters, who think we can thus best cultivate our spiritual farm and fill up the soul hungry for the substance of things.

It is related that Ōkubo Shibun, famous for painting bamboo, was requested to execute a kakemono representing a bamboo forest. Consenting, he painted with all his known skill a picture in which the entire bamboo grove was in red. The patron upon its receipt marvelled at the extraordinary skill with which the painting had been executed, and, repairing to the artist's residence, he said, 'Master, I have come to thank you for the picture; but, excuse me, you have painted the bamboo red.' 'Well,' cried the master, 'in what colour would you desire it?' 'In black of course,' replied the patron. 'And who,' answered the artist, 'ever saw a black-leaved bamboo?' When one is so used to a certain way of looking at things, one finds it so full of difficulties to veer round and start on a new line of procedure. The true colour of the bamboo is perhaps neither red nor black nor green nor any other colour known to us. Perhaps it is red, perhaps it is black just as well. Who knows? The imagined paradoxes may be after all really not paradoxes.

followers. A monk, Sei-jei (Ch'ing-shi), came to Sozan (Ts'ao-shan), a great master of the Sōtō school in China, and said, 'I am a poor lonely monk: pray have pity on me.' 'O monk, come on forward!' Whereupon the monk approached the master, who then exclaimed, 'After enjoying three cupfuls of fine *chiu* (liquor) brewed at Ch'ing-yūan, do you still protest that your lips are not at all wet?' As to another aspect of poverty, cf. Hsiang-yen's poem of poverty.

III

The next form in which Zen expresses itself is the denial of opposites, somehow corresponding to the mystic 'via negativa'. The point is not to be 'caught', as the masters would say, in any of the four propositions (*catushkotia*): 1. 'It is A'; 2. 'It is not-A'; 3. 'It is both A and not-A'; and 4. 'It is neither A nor not-A.' When we make a negation or an assertion, we are sure to get into one of these logical formulas according to the Indian method of reasoning. So long as the intellect is to move among the ordinary dualistic groove, this is unavoidable. It is in the nature of our logic that any statement we can make is to be so expressed. But Zen thinks that the truth can be reached when it is neither asserted nor negated. This is indeed the dilemma of life, but the Zen masters are ever insistent on escaping the dilemma. Let us see if they escape free.

According to Ummon, 'In Zen there is absolute freedom; sometimes it negates and at other times it affirms; it does either way at pleasure.' A monk asked, 'How does it negate?' 'With the passing of winter there cometh spring.' 'What happens when spring cometh?' 'Carrying a staff across the shoulders, let one ramble about in the fields, East or West, North or South, and beat the old stumps to one's heart's content.' This was one way to be free as shown by one of the greatest masters in China. Another way follows.

The masters generally go about with a kind of short stick known as shippé (*chu-pi*), or at least they did so in old China. It does not matter whether it is a shippé or not; anything, in fact, will answer our purpose. Shuzan, a noted Zen master of the tenth century, held out his stick and said to a group of his disciples: 'Call it not a shippé; if you do, you assert. Nor do you deny its being a shippé; if you do, you negate. Apart from affirmation and negation, speak, speak!' The idea is to get our heads free from dualistic tangles and philosophic subtleties. A monk came out of the

inner spiritual experience. No meaning is to be sought in the expression itself, but within ourselves, in our own minds, which are awakened to the same experience. Therefore when we understand the language of the Zen masters, it is the understanding of ourselves and not the sense of the language which reflects ideas and not the experienced feelings themselves. Thus it is impossible to make those understand Zen who have not had any Zen experience yet, just as it is impossible for the people to realize the sweetness of honey who have never tasted it before. With such people, 'sweet' honey will ever remain as an idea altogether devoid of sense; that is, the word has no life with them.

Goso Hōyen first studied the Yogācāra school of Buddhist philosophy and came across the following passage, 'When the Bodhisattva enters on the path of knowledge, he finds that the discriminating intellect is identified with Reason, and that the objective world is fused with Intelligence, and there is no distinction to be made between the knowing and the known.' The anti-Yogācārians refuted this statement, saying that if the knowing is not distinguished from the known, how is knowledge at all possible? The Yogācārians could not answer this criticism, when Hsüan-chuang, who was at the time in India, interposed and saved his brethren in faith from the quandary. His answer was, 'It is like drinking water; one knows by oneself whether it is cold or not.' When Goso read this he questioned himself, 'What is this that makes one know thus by oneself?' This was the way he started on his Zen tour, for his Yogācāra friends, being philosophers, could not enlighten him, and he finally came to a Zen master for instruction.

Before we proceed to the next subject, let me cite another case of echoing. Hōgen Mon-yeki (Fa-yen Wen-i), the founder of the Hōgen branch of Zen Buddhism, flourished early in the tenth century. He asked one of his disciples, 'What do you understand by this: "Let the difference be even a tenth of an inch, and it will grow as wide as heaven and earth"?' The disciple said, 'Let the difference be even a tenth of an inch, and it will grow as

wide as heaven and earth.' Hōgen, however, told him that such an answer will never do. Said the disciple, 'I cannot do otherwise; how do you understand?' The master at once replied, 'Let the difference be even a tenth of an inch and it will grow as wide as heaven and earth.'¹

Hōgen was a great master of repetitions, and there is another interesting instance. After trying to understand the ultimate truth of Zen under fifty-four masters, Tokushō (Tê-shao, 907-971) finally came to Hōgen; but tired of making special efforts to master Zen, he simply fell in with the rest of the monks there. One day when the master ascended the platform, a monk asked, 'What is one drop of water dripping from the source of So² (Ts'ao)?' Said the master, 'That is one drop of water dripping from the source of So.' The monk failed to make anything out of the repetition and stood as if lost; while Tokushō, who happened to be by him, had for the first time his spiritual eye opened to the inner meaning of Zen, and all the doubts he had been cherishing secretly down in his heart were thoroughly dissolved. He was altogether another man after that.

Such cases as this conclusively show that Zen is not to be sought in ideas or words, but at the same time they also show that without ideas or words Zen cannot convey itself to others. To grasp the exquisite meaning of Zen as expressing itself in words and yet not in them is a great art which is to be attained only after so many vain attempts. Tokushō, who after such an experience finally came to realize the mystery of Zen, did his best later to give vent to his view which he had gained under Hōgen. It was while he was residing at the Monastery of Prajñā that he had the following 'mondō' and sermon. When Tokushō came out into the Hall a monk asked him: 'I understand this was an ancient wise man's saying: When a man sees Prajñā he is

¹ When this is literally translated, it grows too long and loses much of its original force. The Chinese runs thus: *Hao li yu ch'a t'ien ti hsian chüeh*. It may better be rendered, 'An inch's difference and heaven and earth are set apart.'

² That is, Ts'ao-ch'i, where the sixth patriarch of Zen used to reside. It is the birthplace of Chinese Zen Buddhism.

tied to it; when he sees it not he is also tied to it. Now I wish to know how it is that a man seeing Prajñā could be tied to it.' Said the master, 'You tell me what it is that is seen by Prajñā.' Asked the monk, 'When a man sees not Prajñā, how could he be tied to it?' 'You tell me,' said the master, 'if there is anything that is not seen by Prajñā.' The master then went on: 'Prajñā seen is no Prajñā, nor is Prajñā unseen Prajñā: how could one apply the predicate, seen or unseen, to Prajñā? Therefore it is said of old that when one thing is missing the Dharmakāya is not complete; when one thing is superfluous the Dharmakāya is not complete: and again that when there is one thing to be asserted the Dharmakāya is not complete; when there is nothing to be asserted the Dharmakāya is not complete. This is indeed the essence of Prajñā.'

The 'repetition' seen in this light may grow to be intelligible to a certain degree.

VII

As was explained in the preceding section, the principle underlying the various methods of instruction used by the Zen masters is to awaken a certain sense in the pupil's own consciousness, by means of which he intuitively grasps the truth of Zen. Therefore, the masters always appeal to what we may designate 'direct action' and are loth to waste any lengthy discourse on the subject. Their dialogues are always pithy and apparently not controlled by rules of logic. The 'repetitive' method as in other cases conclusively demonstrates that the so-called answering is not to explain but to point the way where Zen is to be intuited.

To conceive the truth as something external which is to be perceived by a perceiving subject is dualistic and appeals to the intellect for its understanding, but according to Zen we are living right in the truth, by the truth, from which we cannot be separated. Says Gensha (Hsüan-sha), 'We are

here as if immersed in water head and shoulders underneath the great ocean, and yet how piteously we are extending our hands for water!' Therefore, when he was asked by a monk, 'What is my self?' he at once replied, 'What would you do with a self?' When this is intellectually analysed, he means that when we begin to talk about self we immediately and inevitably establish the dualism of self and not-self, thus falling into the errors of intellectualism. We are in the water—this is the fact, and let us remain so, Zen would say, for when we begin to beg for water we put ourselves in an external relation to it and what has hitherto been our own will be taken away from us.

The following case may be interpreted in the same light: A monk came to Gensha and said, 'I understand you to say that the whole universe is one transpicuous crystal; how do I get at the sense of it?' Said the master, 'The whole universe is one transpicuous crystal, and what is the use of understanding it?' The day following the master himself asked the monk, 'The whole universe is one transpicuous crystal, and how do you understand it?' The monk replied, 'The whole universe is one transpicuous crystal, and what is the use of understanding it?' 'I know,' said the master, 'that you are living in the cave of demons.' While this looks another case of 'Repetition', there is something different in it, something more of intellection, so to speak.

Whatever this is, Zen never appeals to our reasoning faculty, but points directly at the very object one wants to have. While Gensha on a certain occasion was treating an army officer called Wei to tea, the latter asked, 'What does it mean when they say that in spite of our having it every day we do not know it?' Gensha without answering the question took up a piece of cake and offered it to him. After eating the cake the officer asked the master again, who then remarked, 'Only we do not know it even when we are using it every day.' This is evidently an object lesson. Another time a monk came to him and wanted to know how to enter upon the path of truth. Gensha asked, 'Do you hear the murmuring of the stream?' 'Yes, I do,' said the monk.

VIII

We now come to the most characteristic feature of Zen Buddhism, by which it is distinguished not only from all the other Buddhist schools, but from all forms of mysticism that are ever known to us. So far the truth of Zen has been expressed through words, articulate or otherwise, however enigmatic they may superficially appear: but now the masters appeal to a more direct method instead of verbal medium. In fact, the truth of Zen is the truth of life, and life means to live, to move, to act, not merely to reflect. Is it not the most natural thing for Zen, therefore, that its development should be towards acting or rather living its truth instead of demonstrating or illustrating it in words; that is to say, with ideas? In the actual living of life there is no logic, for life is superior to logic. We imagine logic influences life, but in reality man is not a rational creature so much as we make him out; of course he reasons, but he does not act according to the result of his reasoning pure and simple. There is something stronger than ratiocination. We may call it impulse, or instinct, or, more comprehensively, will. Where this will acts there is Zen, but if I am asked whether Zen is a philosophy of will, I rather hesitate to give an affirmative answer. Zen is to be explained, if at all explained it should be, rather dynamically than statically. When I raise the hand thus, there is Zen. But when I assert that I have raised the hand, Zen is no more there. Nor is there any Zen when I assume the existence of somewhat that may be named will or anything else. Not that the assertion or assumption is wrong, but that the thing known as Zen is three thousand miles away, as they say. An assertion is Zen only when it is in itself an act and does not refer to anything that is asserted in it. In the finger pointed at the moon there is no Zen, but when the pointing finger itself is considered, altogether independent of any external references, there is Zen.

Life delineates itself on the canvas called time; and time never repeats: once gone, forever gone; and so is an act: once done, it is never undone. Life is a *sumiye*-painting, which must be executed once and for all time and without hesitation, without intellection, and no corrections are permissible or possible. Life is not like an oil-painting, which can be rubbed out and done over time and again until the artist is satisfied. With a *sumiye*-painting, any brush stroke painted over a second time results in a smudge; the life has left it. All corrections show when the ink dries. So is life. We can never retract what we have once committed to deeds; nay, what has once passed through consciousness can never be rubbed out. Zen therefore ought to be caught while the thing is going on, neither before nor after. It is an act of one instant. When Dharma was leaving China, as the legend has it, he asked his disciples what was their understanding of Zen, and one of them who happened to be a nun, replied, 'It is like Ānanda's looking into the kingdom of Akshobhya Buddha, it is seen once and has never been repeated.' This fleeting, unrepeatable, and ungraspable character of life is delineated graphically by Zen masters who have compared it to lightning or spark produced by the percussion of stones: *shan tien kuang*, *chi shih huo* is the phrase.

The idea of direct method appealed to by the masters is to get hold of this fleeting life as it flees and not after it has flown. While it is fleeing, there is no time to recall memory or to build ideas. No reasoning avails here. Language may be used, but this has been associated too long with ideation, and has lost directness or being by itself. As soon as words are used, they express meaning, reasoning; they represent something not belonging to themselves; they have no direct connection with life, except being a faint echo or image of something that is no longer here. This is the reason why the masters often avoid such expressions or statements as are intelligible in any logical way. Their aim is to have the pupil's attention concentrated in the thing itself which he wishes to grasp and not in anything that is in the remotest

Wei-chêng's) way was somewhat different. He said to the monks, 'You open the farm for me and I will talk to you about the great principle [of Zen].' When the monks finished attending to the farm and came back to the master to discourse on the great principle, he merely extended his open arms and said nothing.

A monk came to Yenkwān An, the National Teacher, and wanted to know what was the original body of Vairochana Buddha. The Teacher told him to pass the pitcher, which he did. The Teacher then said, 'Put it back where you got it.' The monk faithfully obeyed, but not being told what was the original body of the Buddha, he proposed the question once more, 'Who is the Buddha?' Answered the master, 'Long gone is he!' In this case the direct method was practised more by the monk himself under the direction of the master, but unfortunately the pupil's spiritual condition was not ripe enough to grasp the meaning of his own 'direct method', and alas, let go 'the old Buddha!' Something similar to this case may be found in the following one:

Sekisō (Shih-shuang) asked Yenchi (Yüan-chih), who was a disciple of Yakusan (Yüeh-shan), 'If some one after your death asked me about the ultimate fact, what should I say to him?' The master gave no answer, but instead called up the boy attendant, who at once responded. He said, 'Fill up the pitcher', and remained quiet for some little while. He now asked Sekisō, 'What did you ask me before?' Sekisō restated the question, whereupon the master rose from his seat and left the room.

As some Zen masters remarked, Zen is our 'ordinary mindedness'; that is to say, there is in Zen nothing supernatural or unusual or highly speculative that transcends our everyday life. When you feel sleepy, you retire; when you are hungry, you eat, just as much as the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field, taking 'no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on'. This is the spirit of Zen. Hence no specially didactic or dialectical instruction