THE SUPREME DOCTRINE

Psychological Studies in

ZEN *Thought*

by

HUBERT BENOIT

Introduction by

ALDOUS HUXLEY

PANTHEON

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Psychological Studies in Zen Thought

with an introduction by
Aldous Huxley

In its Eastern aspects—Chinese, Hindu, and Japanese—Zen Buddhism has proved a puzzle, though a stimulating one, to the Western mind. Himself a Westerner, Dr. Benoit has approached it through an occidental manner of thinking. "For the first time, Dr. Benoit presents the traditional doctrine of Zen Buddhism in a language that is understandable to the Western world," says one of his Indian admirers, Swami Siddheswarananda.

The author does not advocate a "conversion" to Eastern religion and philosophy. Rather, he would have Western psychological thinking and reasoning meet with oriental wisdom on an intellectual plane, in order to make it participate in the oriental understanding of the state of man in general. "I do not need to burn the Gospels in order to read Hui-neng," says Dr. Benoit.

Zen, to be quite exact, is not so much a doctrine as a hygiene of intelligent living. As such it is presented by the author, a practicing psychoanalyst. It is a way of breaking the deadlock into which the faulty functioning of our civilization has led us, of liberating us from the prevalent contemporary sickness, anxiety. This book provides the elements for reaching "satori," that modification of the internal functioning of man which can be described as a state of unassailable serenity. This state, Dr. Benoit makes clear, is the truly "normal" one. How to develop intelligence and will so that this transformation of life can be achieved is the subject of this book.

[Archivist's note: Scanning for this title was limited to pages with Merton's handwriting and pages with stars, deletions, or extra emphasis. Too much of the book has markings to include all marginalia. See physical copy.]

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FOREWORD
BY ALDOUS HUXLEY

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Chapter One

ON THE GENERAL SENSE OF ZEN THOUGHT

MAN has always reflected upon his condition, has thought that he is not as he would like to be, has defined more or less accurately the faults of his manner of functioning, has made in fact his 'auto-criticism'. This work of criticism, sometimes rough-and-ready, attains at other times on the contrary, and in a number of directions, a very high degree of depth and subtlety. The undesirable aspects of the natural [1] man's inward functioning are often very accurately recognised and described.

With regard of this wealth of diagnosis one is struck by the poverty of therapeutic effect. The schools which have taught and which continue to teach the subject of Man, after having demonstrated what does not go right in the case of the natural man, and why that does not go right, necessarily come to the question 'How are we to remedy this state of affairs?' And there begins the confusion and the poverty of doctrines. At this point nearly all the doctrines go astray, sometimes wildly, sometimes, subtly, except the doctrine of Zen (and even here it is necessary to specify 'some masters of Zen').

It is not to be denied that in other teachings some men have been able to obtain their realisation. But a clear explanation of the matter and a clear refutation of the false methods is only to be found in pure Zen.

The essential error of all the false methods lies in the fact that the proposed remedy does not reach the root-cause of the natural man's misery. Critical analysis of man's condition does not go deep enough into the determining cause of his inner phenomena;

[1] The expression 'the natural man' in this book describes man as he is before the condition known as satori.

it does not follow the links of this chain down to the original phenomenon. It stops too quickly at the symptoms. The searcher who does not see further than such and such a symptom, whose analytic thought, exhausted, stops there, evidently is not able to conceive a remedy for the whole situation except as a development, concerted and artificial, of another symptom radically opposed to the symptom that is incriminated. For example: a man arrives at the conclusion that his misery is the result of his manifestations of anger, conceit, sensuality, etc., and he will think that the cure should consist in applying himself to produce manifestations of gentleness, humility, asceticism, etc. Or perhaps another man, more intelligent this one, will come to the conclusion that his misery is a result of his mental agitation, and he will think that the cure should consist in applying himself, by such and such exercises, to the task of tranquillising his mind. One such doctrine will say to us, 'Your misery is due to the fact that you are always desiring something, to your attachment to what you possess', and this will result, according to the degree of intelligence of the master, in the advice to give away all your possessions, or to learn to detach yourself inwardly from the belongings that you continue to own outwardly. Another such doctrine will see the key to the man's misery in his lack of self-mastery, and will prescribe 'Yoga', methods aimed at progressive training of the body, or of feelings, or of the attitude towards others, or of knowledge, or of attention.

All that is, from the Zen point of view, just animal-training and leads to one kind of servitude or another (with the illusory and exalting impression of attaining freedom). At the back of all that there is the following simple-minded reasoning: 'Things are going badly with me in such and such a way; very well, from now on I am going to do exactly the opposite.' This way of regarding the problem, starting from a *form* that is judged to be bad, encloses the searcher within the limits of a domain that is *formal*, and, as a result deprives him of all possibility of re-establishing his consciousness beyond all form; when I am enclosed within the limits of the plane of dualism no reversal of method will deliver me from the dualistic illusion and restore me to Unity. It is perfectly analogous to the problem of 'Achilles and the Tortoise'; the manner of posing the problem encloses it within the very limits that it is necessary to overstep, and as a result, renders it insoluble.

ON THE GENERAL SENSE OF ZEN THOUGHT

The penetrating thought of Zen cuts through all our phenomena without stopping to consider their particularities. It knows that in reality nothing is wrong with us and that we suffer because we do not understand that everything works perfectly, because in consequence we believe falsely that all is not well and that it is necessary to put something right. To say that all the trouble derives from the fact that man has an illusory belief that he lacks something would be an absurd statement also, since the 'lack' of which it speaks is unreal and because an illusory belief, for that reason unreal, could not be the cause of anything whatever. Besides, if I look carefully, I do not find positively in myself this belief that I lack something (how could there be positively present the illusory belief in an absence?); what I can state is that my inward phenomena behave as if this belief were there; but, if my phenomena behave in this manner, it is not on account of the presence of this belief, it is because the direct intellectual intuition that nothing is lacking sleeps in the depths of my consciousness, that this has not yet been awakened therein; it is there, for I lack nothing and certainly not that, but it is asleep and cannot manifest itself. All my apparent 'trouble' derives from the sleep of my faith in the perfect Reality; I have, awakened in me, nothing but 'beliefs' in what is communicated to me by my senses and my mind working on the dualistic plane (beliefs in the non-existence of a Perfect Reality that is One); and these beliefs are illusory formations, without reality, consequences of the sleep of my faith. I am a 'man of little faith', more exactly without any faith, or, still better, of sleeping faith, who does not believe in anything he does not see on the formal plane. (This idea of faith, present but asleep, enables us to understand the need that we experience, for our deliverance, of a Master to awaken us, of a teaching, of a revelation; for sleep connotes precisely the deprivation of that which can awaken.)

In short everything appears to be wrong in me because the fundamental idea that everything is perfectly, eternally and totally positive, is asleep in the centre of my being, because it is not awakened, living and active therein. There at last we touch upon the first painful phenomenon, that from which all the rest of our painful phenomena derive. The sleep of our faith in the Perfect Reality that is One (outside which nothing 'is') is the primary phenomenon from which the whole of

the entangled chain depends; it is the causal phenomenon; and no therapy of illusory human suffering can be effective if it be applied anywhere but there.

To the question 'What must I do to free myself?' Zen replies: 'There is nothing you need do since you have never been enslaved and since there is nothing in reality from which you can free yourself.' This reply can be misunderstood and may seem discouraging because it contains an ambiguity inherent in the word 'do'. Where the natural man is concerned the action required resolves itself dualistically, into conception and action, and it is to the action, to the execution of his conception that the man applies the word 'do'. In this sense Zen is right, there is nothing for us to 'do'; everything will settle itself spontaneously and harmoniously as regards our 'doing' precisely when we cease to set ourselves to modify it in any manner and when we strive only to awaken our sleeping faith, that is to say when we strive to conceive the primordial idea that we have to conceive. This complete idea, spherical as it were and immobile, evidently does not lead to any particular action, it has no special dynamism, it is this central purity of Non-Action through which will pass, untroubled, the spontaneous dynamism of real natural life. Also one can and one should say that to awaken and to nourish this conception is not 'doing' anything in the sense that this word must necessarily have for the natural man, and even that this awakening in the domain of thought is revealed in daily life by a reduction (tending towards cessation) of all the useless operations to which man subjects himself in connexion with his inner phenomena.

Evidently it is possible to maintain that to work in order to conceive an idea is to 'do' something. But considering the sense that this word has for the natural man, it is better, in order to avoid a dangerous misunderstanding, to talk as Zen talks and to show that work that can do away with human distress is work of pure intellect which does not imply that one 'does' anything in particular in his inner life and which implies, on the contrary, that one ceases to wish to modify it in any way.

Let us look at the question more closely still. Work which awakens faith in the unique and perfect Reality which is our 'being' falls into two movements. In a preliminary movement our discursive thought conceives all the ideas needed in order that we

may theoretically understand the existence in us of this faith which is asleep, and in the possibility of its awakening, and that only this awakening can put an end to our illusory sufferings. During this preliminary movement the work effected can be described as 'doing' something. But this theoretical understanding, supposing it to have been obtained, changes nothing as yet in our painful condition: it must now be transformed into an understanding that is lived, experienced by the whole of our organism, an understanding both theoretical and practical, both abstract and concrete; only then will our faith be awakened. But this transformation, this passing beyond 'form', could not be the result of any deliberate work 'done' by the natural man who is entirely blind to that which is not 'formal'. There is no 'path' towards deliverance, and that is evident since we have never really been in servitude and we continue not to be so; there is nowhere to 'go', there is nothing to 'do'. Man has nothing directly to do in order to experience his liberty that is total and infinitely happy. What he has to do is indirect and negative; what he has to understand, by means of work, is the deceptive illusion of all the 'paths' that he can seek out for himself and try to follow. When his persevering efforts shall have brought him the perfectly clear understanding that *all* that he can 'do' to free himself is useless, when he has definitely stripped of its value the very idea of all imaginable 'paths', then 'satori' will burst forth, a real vision that there is no 'path' because there is nowhere to go, because, from all eternity, he was at the unique and fundamental centre of everything.

So the 'deliverance', so-called, which is the disappearance of the illusion of being in servitude, succeeds chronologically an inner operation but is not in reality caused by it. This inward formal operation cannot be the cause of that which precedes all form and consequently precedes *it*; it is only the instrument through which the First Cause operates.

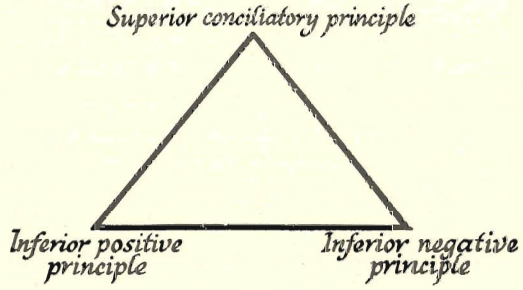
In fact the famous narrow gate does not exist in the strict sense of the word, any more than the path on to which it might open; unless one might wish so to call the understanding that there is no path, that there is no gate, that there is nowhere to go because there is no need to go anywhere. That is the great secret, and at the same time the great indication, that the Zen masters reveal to us.

Chapter Two

'GOOD' AND 'EVIL'

We know that Traditional Metaphysics represent the creation of the universe as the result of the interplay, concomitant and conciliatory, of two forces that oppose and complete one another. Creation results, then, from the interplay of three forces: a positive force, a negative force, and a conciliatory force.

This 'Law of Three' can be symbolised by a triangle; the two lower angles of the triangle represent the two inferior principles



of creation, positive and negative; the apex represents the Superior or Conciliatory Principle.

The two inferior principles are, according to Chinese wisdom, the two great cosmic forces of the *Yang* (positive, masculine, dry, hot) and of the *Yin* (negative, feminine, damp, cold) they are also the *Red Dragon* and the *Green Dragon*, whose unceasing struggle is the creative motive power of the 'Ten Thousand Things'.

The diagram of the *T'ai-ki* comprises a black part, the Yin, another which is white, the Yang, of strictly equal extent, and a circle that surrounds them both, which is the Tao (Superior

Chapter Three

THE IDOLATRY OF 'SALVATION'

One of the errors which most surely hinder man's intemporal realisation is that of seeing in this realisation a compulsive character. In many 'spiritual' systems, religious or otherwise, man has the 'duty' of achieving his 'salvation'; he denies all value to that which is temporal and concentrates all the reality imaginable on the 'salvation'. It is evident, however, that there is again here a form of idolatry, since realisation, seen thus as something which excludes other things, is then only one thing among others, limited and formal, and that it is regarded at once as alone 'sacred' and immeasurably superior to all the rest. All the determining, enslaving reality which man attributed to this or that 'temporal' enterprise is crystallised now on the enterprise of 'salvation', and this enterprise becomes the most determining, the most enslaving that can be imagined. Since realisation signifies liberation one arrives at the absurd paradox that man is subjected to the coercive duty to be free. Man's distress is concentrated then on this question of his salvation; he trembles at the thought that he may die before having attained his deliverance. Such a grave error of understanding necessarily entails anxiety, inner agitation, a feeling of unworthiness, an egotistical crispation on oneself-as-a-distinct-being, that is to say, it prevents inner pacification, reconciliation with oneself, disinterestedness towards oneself-as-a-distinct-being, the diminution of emotion—in short all the inner atmosphere of relaxation which governs the release of satori.

The man who deceives himself thus, however, can think again and better. There is no duty except in relation to an authority which imposes it. The believer of this or that religion will say that 'God' is the authority which imposes on him the obligation of

salvation. But who then is this 'God' who while imposing something on me, is separate from me and has need of my action? Everything, then, is not included in his perfect harmony?

The same error is found among certain men sufficiently evolved intellectually no longer to believe in a personal God. They seem at least no longer to believe in him. If one looks more closely one perceives that they believe in him still. They imagine their satori, and themselves after their satori, and that is their personal God, a coercive idol, disquieting, implacable. They *must* realise themselves, they *must* liberate themselves, they are terrified at the thought of not being able to get there, and they are elated by any inner phenomenon which gives them hope. There is 'spiritual ambition' in all this which is necessarily accompanied by the absurd idea of the Superman that they should become, with a demand for this becoming, and distress.

This error entails, in a fatally logical manner, the need to teach others. Our attitude towards others is modelled on our attitude towards ourselves. If I believe that I *must* achieve my 'salvation' I cannot avoid believing that I *must* lead others to do the same. If the relative truth that I possess is associated in me with a duty to live this truth—duty depending on an idolatry, conscious or otherwise—the thought necessarily comes to me that it is my duty to communicate my truth to others. At the most this results in the Inquisition and the Dragonnades; at the least those innumerable sects, great and small, which throughout the whole of History, have striven to influence the mind of men who never questioned them, of men who asked nothing of them.

The refutation of this error that we are here studying is perfectly expounded in Zen, and as far as we know, nowhere perfectly but there. Zen tells man that he is free now, that no chain exists which he needs to throw off; he has only the illusion of chains. Man will enjoy his freedom as soon as he ceases to believe that he needs to free himself, as soon as he throws from his shoulders the terrible duty of salvation. Zen demonstrates the nullity of all belief in a personal God, and the deplorable constraint that necessarily flows from this belief. It says: 'Do not put any head above your own'; it says also: 'Search not for the truth; only cease to cherish opinions.'

Why then, some will say, should man strive to attain satori?

To put such a question is to suppose absurdly that man cannot struggle towards satori except under the compulsion of a duty. Satori represents the end of this distress which is actually at the centre of one's whole psychic life and in which one's joys are only truces; is it intelligent to ask me why I strive to obtain this complete and final relief? If anyone persists in asking I reply: 'Because my life will be so much more agreeable afterwards.' And, if my understanding is right, I am not afraid that death may come, today or tomorrow, to interrupt my efforts before their attainment. Since the problem of my suffering ends with me why should I worry myself because I am unable to resolve it?

A clear understanding, on the other hand, neither forbids the teaching of others nor obliges one to undertake it; such a prohibition would represent an obligation as erroneous as the first. But the man who has understood that his own realisation is not in any manner his duty contents himself with replying, if asked, that if he takes the initiative of speaking it will be only to propose such ideas with discretion, without experiencing any need of being understood. He is like a man who, possessing good food in excess, opens his door; if a passer by notices this food and comes in to eat it, well and good; if another does not come in, that is equally satisfactory. Our emotions, our desires and our fears, have no place in a true understanding.

regards his existence. In one way which at first sight may appear paradoxical, the egotistical man trembles lest he lose his existence because, with regard to acting, to living, he looks upon existing as nothing. In existence resides, as we have seen, the Absolute Principle, this All that man does not know how to appreciate more or less, this All that can only be, for man, zero if he does not appreciate it, or the Infinite if he appreciates it. If man does not see any value in anonymous existence, he does not participate consciously in the nature of the Principle, he is consciously nothing, and in consequence incapable of supporting the subtraction which is death (which appears to him as a negative infinity). If, on the contrary, man sees an infinite value in anonymous existence, he participates fully in the nature of the Principle. He is then consciously infinite and in consequence the subtraction which is death appears to him as nothing.

One sees also the illusory character of the distressing questions which egotistical man puts to himself on the subject of an individual after-life. For these questions are founded on the illusory belief in the reality of the individual living and on the ignorance of the universal existing.

The error of certain philosophical conceptions called existentialist results, among other things, from the fact that the actions of existing and of living are there confounded. This confusion carries with it unfortunate consequences: existing assumes therein a purely phenominal character and, all idea of the First Cause having disappeared, the fact that existence wills itself results in an absurdity that is categorical and no longer merely apparent (it is like the idea of a material eye that itself sees itself). And this living, that is necessarily also absurd, is the capital thing; action, the 'doing and performing', become dogmatic necessities. The disappearance of the Principle entails logically this dualism torn asunder and heart-rending.

Let us return to the distinction that we have made between existing and living, and to the border-line that we have traced between the two. This border-line passes, as we have said, within the domain of actions, between the actions which serve my vegetative life and those which serve my egotistical affirmation. If I study all this in its bearing on my psychological consciousness it seems at first that existing comprises an unconscious part, my

vegetative phenomena, and a conscious part, the actions of which serve my vegetative life. But, if I think about it more carefully, I perceive that these actions are as unconscious as my vegetative phenomena, since their object is null for my consciousness. I cannot pretend that I consciously maintain my existence since I am entirely unconscious of the reality of my existence. Let us quote here a dialogue taken from Zen literature:

A MONK: In order to work in the Tao is there a special way?
THE MASTER: Yes, there is one.
THE MONK: Which is it?
THE MASTER: When one is hungry, he eats; when one is tired he sleeps.
THE MONK: That is what everybody does; is their way then the same as yours?
THE MASTER: It is not the same.
THE MONK: Why not?
THE MASTER: When they eat they do not only eat, they weave all sorts of imaginings. When they sleep they do not only sleep they give free rein to a thousand idle thoughts. That is why their way is not my way.

The natural man is only conscious of images, so it is not astonishing that he should be unconscious of existing, which is real, which has three dimensions. In short I am unconscious of that in which I am real, and that of which I am conscious in myself is illusory.

The attainment of satori is nothing else than the becoming conscious of existing which actually is unconscious in me; becoming conscious of the Reality, unique and original, of this universal vegetative life which is the manifestation in my person of the Absolute Principle (that in which I am I and infinitely more than I; imminence and transcendence). It is that which Zen calls 'seeing into one's own nature'. One understands the insistence with which Zen keeps coming back to the maintenance of our vegetative life. To the disciple who asks for the way of Wisdom the master replies: 'When you are hungry you eat; when you are tired you lie down.' There is therein the wherewithal to scandalise the vain egotist who dreams of 'spiritual' prowess and of 'extatic' personal relations with a personal 'God' whose image he creates for himself.

It would be false to consider the revalorisation of the vegetative life, and of the actions which serve it, as a concrete inner effort on the plane of 'feeling'. The Zen master is too intelligent to advise the natural man to suggest to himself, when he satisfies his hunger, that he is at last in contact with Absolute Reality; that would be to replace the old imaginative reveries by a theoretical image of cosmic participation which would change nothing whatever. The natural man has not to revalorise his vegetative life, he has only to obtain one day the immediate perception of the infinite value of this life *by the integral devalorisation of his egotistical life*. The necessary inner task does not consist in 'doing' anything whatever, but in 'undoing' something, in undoing all the illusory egotistical beliefs which keep tightly closed the lid of the 'third eye'.

Indeed what we have just said on the unconscious character of our vegetative life was only an approximation. It would be more exact to speak of 'unconscious consciousness' or of 'indirect or mediate consciousness'; and to conceive of satori not as a consciousness being born *ex nihilo*, but as the metamorphosis of a mediate consciousness into an immediate consciousness. In speaking of indirect consciousness I mean to say that I am indirectly informed concerning the reality of my vegetative life in perceiving directly the fluctuations which menace the phenomena constituting this life. When I am hungry I perceive directly the menace with which inanition threatens my vegetative existence. If I had no kind of vegetative consciousness I would not be conscious that its phenomenal manifestation is menaced; by my hunger I am indirectly conscious of my vegetative existence. In the same way the joy and the sadness of my egotistical affirmations and negations denote diminutions and augmentations of the menace with which the outside world constantly threatens the whole of my vegetative existence; they constitute, then, the becoming-conscious indirectly of this existence.

In short all the positive and negative fluctuations of my affectivity spring from pure and perfect fundamental vegetative joy. This is not directly felt; it is so only indirectly, in the fluctuation of the security or insecurity of this vegetative life. And let us repeat that the direct perception of this perfect existential vegetative joy should not entail any fear of death but, on the contrary,

should definitely neutralise this; indeed the fear of death presupposes the imaginative mental evocation of death; but the direct perception of existential reality in three dimensions, in the present moment, would cast into the void all the imaginative phantoms concerning a past or a future without present reality. Man, after satori, is perfectly joyous to exist as long as he exists, up to the last moment at which the disappearance of the mental functions entails the disappearance of all human joy or human pain.

I can say that I am not directly conscious of my existence, that is to say of myself existing, but only of the phenomenal variations of this existence; and that it is my actual belief in the absolute reality of these variations which separates me from the consciousness of that which is beneath them (and which does not vary: noumenal existence, principle of my phenomenal existence). I ought to understand the perfect equality of the varying phenomena (joy or sadness, life or death) in regard to that which *is* beneath these variations, and this understanding should penetrate right to the centre of me, in order that I may obtain at last the consciousness of that which *is* beneath the variations, that is to say of my existence-noumenon, my Reality.

Zen says that the slavery of man resides in his desire to exist. The intellectual apparatus of man develops in such a way that his first perceptions are not perceptions of his existence, but images both partial and biased which suggest the absence of all consciousness of existence and which implant in his mentality the seed of the desire of this consciousness. It is a part of the condition of man that he ought necessarily to pass through the desire to exist in order to reach the existential consciousness which will abolish this desire. And it is the checkmate, correctly interpreted, of all attempts to satisfy the desire to exist which alone can break through the obstacle constituted by this desire.

Among how many human beings can one observe the terror of 'ruining their lives'! Whereas there is in reality nothing to make a success of and nothing to spoil. But a certain temporal realisation is necessary for satori, of a kind that is in some sort negative. As long as man is in the impossibility of succeeding fully in his attempts to satisfy his desire to exist, he cannot go beyond this desire. It is in this sense that man ought to pass by the illusory

living in order to reach the real existing. In reality existing precedes living, in the sense that the Principle necessarily precedes its manifestation; but, in the unfolding of temporal duration, man ought to traverse the consciousness of living in order to reach that of existing, which is identical, as long as the human organism lives, with that of 'being'.

Chapter Five

THE MECHANISM OF ANXIETY

When man studies himself with honest impartiality he observes that he is not the conscious and voluntary artisan either of his feelings or of his thoughts, and that his feelings and his thoughts are only phenomena which happen to him. It is easy to note this where feelings are concerned, it is less easy as regards thoughts; however, if I look into myself closely, I realise that my thoughts also just happen to me; I can deal with the subject with which my thought is concerned, but not with my thoughts themselves which I have to take as they come to me.

Since I am not the voluntary artisan of my feelings nor of my thoughts I ought to recognise that I cannot be the voluntary artisan of my actions either; that is to say I can do nothing of my free-will.

But these negative observations regarding a real consciousness and will, lead me to conceive the possible advent of these in man, in me, and I question myself concerning the means of realising these possibilities. I question myself with all the more curiosity in that I feel in myself, connected with this lack of mastery of myself, a fundamental distress which my 'moral' sufferings manifest directly and from which my joys only represent a momentary respite.

In the course of my researches for the means of liberating myself I note that the various teachings which admit the possibility of liberation or 'realisation' in the course of life can be divided into two groups.

The greater part of these teachings are founded on the following false theory: real consciousness and will are lacking to the ordinary man, he does not have them at birth; he must acquire them, build them up in himself, by means of a special inner labour. This

labour is difficult and long; consequently the result of this work will be a progressive evolution, that is to say that the acquisition of consciousness and will is progressive. Man will surpass himself little by little, slowly climbing the steps of his development, obtaining higher and higher consciousness by means of which he will progressively approach the highest consciousness—'objective', 'cosmic' or 'absolute' consciousness.

This is a theoretical attitude radically opposed to that which Zen doctrine holds. According to this doctrine man does not lack this real consciousness and this real will, he lacks nothing whatever; he has in himself everything that he needs; he has, from all eternity, the 'nature of Buddha'. He needs absolutely nothing in order that his temporal machine may be controlled directly by the Absolute Principle, that is by his own Creative Principle, in order that he may be free. He can be compared with a machine which lacks not the smallest part in order that it should function absolutely perfectly. But the state of man at his birth comprises a certain modality of development which, as we shall see, entails a hiatus, a non-union which divides his mechanism into two separate parts, soma and psyche. In the absence of this union man does not enjoy the prerogatives of his absolute essence which is nevertheless entirely his own. One would be wrong in suggesting that this lack of union is a lack of some *thing*; the machine is complete, perfect in its smallest details, no part is missing which it should be necessary to manufacture and install in order to make it work properly; it is necessary only to establish a connexion between the two parts that are not joined. Leaving this mechanical comparison for a chemical analogy, let us say that no substance is lacking among the substances necessary for the desired reaction; everything is there; but a contact has to be established in order to set off the reaction. Or again, following another comparison of Zen, there is in man a block of ice to which absolutely nothing is lacking for it to take on the nature of water; but heat has to be generated so that this ice may melt and thus enjoy all the properties of water.

This conception necessarily entails the instantaneous, lightning-like character of man's 'realisation'. Either there is not union between the two parts of man, and then he does not enjoy his divine essence; or the direct contact is re-established, and there is

no reason, since absolutely nothing is lacking, why man should not be instantaneously established in the enjoyment of his divine essence. *The inner work which results in the establishment of this direct contact, but not the deliverance itself, is long and difficult, and so, progressive.* In the course of this progressive preparation man brings himself nearer chronologically to his future liberty, but he does not enjoy an atom of this liberty until the moment at which he will have it in its entirety; all that he has in the course of his work is a diminution of his suffering in not being free. He is like a prisoner who laboriously files the bars of his window; his work is progressive and brings him nearer, in time, to his escape; but as long as this work is not completed this man remains entirely a prisoner; he is not free little by little; he is not free at all for some time, then he is completely free at the very moment the bars give way. The only progressive advantage that this man obtains from his work is an increasing alleviation of his suffering through being a prisoner; he is quite as much a prisoner one day as the day before, but he suffers less on that account because his instantaneous deliverance is getting nearer in time.

One can show the same thing again in another way, that which Jesus used in his interview with Nicodemus. Jesus said that man must die in order to be reborn. It is progressively that the 'old' man, by a process of special inner work, goes towards his death, but this death itself and rebirth in another state could only be the two aspects of an inner occurrence that is unique and instantaneous. The 'old' man can be more or less in a dying condition but not more or less dead; as for the 'new man' he is born or he is not yet, but he cannot be more or less born. *This unique and instantaneous inner event Zen calls 'satori' or 'opening of the third eye', and it affirms its sudden character.*

'At a single stroke I have completely crushed the cave of phantoms.'

'A light contact with a taut wire, and behold, an explosion which shakes the Earth to its foundations; everything that lies hidden in the spirit bursts forth like a volcanic eruption or explodes like a clap of thunder.'

Zen calls that 'to return home'. 'You have found yourself now; from the very beginning nothing has been hidden from you; it was yourself who shut your eyes to reality.'

interfere in various ways, supporting one another or counteracting one another.

1ST CASE. THE INDEPENDENT INTELLIGENCE IS WEAK. THE TWO SYSTEMS MUTUALLY SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER. POLICY OF PRESTIGE

This dualistic man, without inner unity, but who has, by his absolute essence, need of unity, is going to cheat inwardly and to play within himself a lying comedy in order to give himself the impression of unity. To that end he is going to cheat either by playing upon his concepts to bring them into harmony with his animal part, or by doing the opposite.

The first case can be seen in the man whose Independent Intelligence is weak. In this man the perception of the abstract, of the general, is too feeble to prevent the concrete, the particular, from appearing to him more real. He lives in the concrete, that is to say, from the point of view of time, in duration and not in eternity. Accepting duration he wishes for *eventual* victory of his Self over the Not-Self, he accepts the momentary check without his 'divine' egotistical image being wounded thereby to an unbearable degree. This man desires to succeed in temporal duration, he seeks his egotistical affirmations in his effective temporal realisations. His abstract part tends towards the same thing as his animal part, it goes in the same direction and only accentuates the claims of the instincts. There is no inner laceration in this man; he rationalises his tendencies; he cheats in putting ideal 'principles' in harmony with his will-to-power, or more exactly in presenting to himself his practical problems in such a way that his reason approves his tendencies.

2ND CASE. THE INDEPENDENT INTELLIGENCE IS STRONG. THE TWO SYSTEMS OPPOSE ONE ANOTHER. 'FEAR' OF DEFEAT. DISTRESS

This man whose abstract part is strongly developed intellectually feels that the abstract, the general, is more real than the concrete, the particular. In the course of his search for success over the Not-Self the particular success is eclipsed by the general idea of success. He does not think in duration but from the angle of eternity; as in fact he lives in duration, and as the intersection of

eternity and duration is the *instant*, he lives in the instant. He is the man of 'at this very moment'. He does not want his victory over the Not-Self finally, but at once; he desires to succeed in the temporal sphere instantly.

But this complete victory over an aspect of the Not-Self on the moment is manifestly impossible; nothing can be done on the temporal plane without duration. In order to avoid feeling rebuffed in the very centre of his being this man must do something; he must 'reason with himself', he must withdraw the pretention that he advanced to such a manifestation of his temporal omnipotence ('these grapes are too sour'). He adapts himself to the limiting conditions of his temporal existence, he pretends to accept them voluntarily, freely. In reality he does not and cannot accept them, he resigns himself to them merely, that is to say that, without accepting them, he acts as though he accepted them.

It is of capital importance to understand this distinction between acceptation and resignation. To accept, really to accept a situation, is to think and feel with the whole of one's being that, even if one had the faculty of modifying it, one would not do it, and would have no reason to do it. Man in his inner unconciliated dualistic state, with a separated reason and affectivity, is absolutely unable to adhere affectively to the existence of the Not-Self by which he feels himself repudiated. He can only pretend to accept, that is to say resign himself. Resignation contains a factual acceptation and a theoretical refusal. And these two elements are not conciliated, and are unconciliable in the inner state of this man; they are unconciliable because they are situated in two compartments separated by an unbridged gap. And this man preserves the necessary feeling of his inner unity by means of a mechanism of defence which blinds him to the theoretical refusal of his temporal state (mental scotomy). He makes himself believe that he accepts, that he is a 'philosopher', that he is 'reasonable'; he acts the part and succeeds in deceiving himself. The 'reasonable' discourse which he holds is indeed rational, is in accordance with the real order of things in the cosmos. But this man is wrong to be right, his rightness in that premature way is a pretence founded on two lies: he cheats in withdrawing an instinctive pretention which continues, in an underground manner, on its original course; and he cheats in declaring that he withdraws his

pretention because it is reasonable while in reality he withdraws it in order to avoid seeing himself repudiated by the Not-Self. He is playing the angel, but he is not one.

If the word of the animal part were 'no', that of the abstract part is 'yes'. But this 'yes' is not the absolute 'Yes', it is only a relative 'yes'; it is not the 'Yes-noumenon', but only a 'yes-phenomenon', quite as illusory, from the absolute point of view, as the 'no' of the animal portion. The 'Absolute Yes' is to be attained ulteriorly by the union, in a ternary synthesis, of the relative 'no' and 'yes'.

Ignoring all that, the man congratulates himself on his 'yes', he sees it as proof that he is master of his animal portion, master of himself, whereas he is nothing of the kind. He thinks that he does right in saying this 'yes' more and more often, he believes that he is adapting himself to reality whereas he is only playing with himself the comedy of this adaptation. He splits himself into two personages: the 'yes' personage, the 'angel', has all his preference; he becomes as conscious of it as he can; he says that this is the personage *which is he*. During this time the 'no' personage, the 'beast', is despised and driven back; the man obscures, as much as he can, the consciousness of it which he is in danger of obtaining; and when he cannot avoid seeing it he says that *that is not he*. He says: 'I do not know what has come over me; that was stronger than I am.'

This 'no' personage, alone *in situ* at the very beginning, when the little child was becoming conscious of the opposition Self—Not-Self and rejected the Not-Self with the whole of his being, loses ground thereafter little by little in the measure that the mechanisms of adaptation are built up and consolidated. He is driven back more and more deeply, covered with layers of adaptive mechanisms ever more numerous and heavy, he is suffocated slowly and methodically. The voice which necessarily rebelled again the temporal state is gradually gagged and reduced to silence. Spontaneity is suffocated by shams, by 'reasonable' attitudes.

Sometimes, with beings of feeble instinctive vitality, this suffocation has a happy ending (if one may so call it). The 'beast' although not killed (for it could not be while the subject is not dead), is as though killed; and the man in which this happens is said to be 'civilised' and 'adapted'. One should ask oneself how this

thing can be, how this man can come to believe that he accepts his temporal state, this limited and mortal state which is in reality affectively inacceptable, how he can live in this way. He arrives at it, essentially, through the play of his imagination, through the faculty which his mentality possesses of recreating a subjective world whose unique motor principle this time he is. The man could never resign himself to not being the unique motive-power of the real universe if he had not this consoling faculty of creating a universe for himself, a universe which he creates all alone.

The man who is going to interest us now, and who is truly interesting because his existence becomes little by little a drama, is the one whose instinctive vitality is too strong for the adaptive mechanisms to succeed in stifling the 'no', the 'beast'. For a certain time these mechanisms can attain their ends; the subject 'reasons with himself' vigorously; his imagination, a kind of balancing gyroscope, spins with speed and effect. A very handy adaptive mechanism will often be used; it is the projection of the 'divine image' on to the image of an aspect of the outer world, that is to say the adoration by the subject of some idol (adoration-love of another human-being, or of a 'just cause', or of a 'God' more or less personalised, etc. . . .). This mechanism, which seems to resolve the dualism between Self and Not-Self, arranges everything as long as it lasts.

But the situation becomes serious when all these adaptive mechanisms exhaust their effect, when the idol-making process breaks down or does not succeed in establishing itself, when the 'beast' can no longer continue to withdraw unceasingly its pretentions to overcome the Not-Self; and when the fox, as a result of declaring the grapes to be sour, begins to die of hunger and to hear his 'beast' growl with rage in the depths of his being.

At this moment appears *distress* and what one calls 'fear of defeat'. Let us examine what happens exactly, at this moment, in the human-being. We are going to show that the expression 'fear of defeat' is incorrect. It is in the abstract portion of the man that the phenomena that we are studying take their departure. But the abstract portion is intellectual, not affective; and so it could not be afraid strictly speaking. The man that we are studying claims, as we have seen, to succeed in the temporal sphere instantaneously, but he claims something that is impossible. In order to avoid

feeling repulsed by the concrete occurrence he has to withdraw the presentation of his claims; and so he withdraws it. The abstract portion has no fear of the concrete repulse; let us say rather that a powerful mechanical determinism forbids him to envisage it, to conceive of the eventuality, and that as a result he refuses it. In order to refuse it, in order to repell it, he refuses and denies the conflict with the Not-Self—a combat whose issue could only be defeat, given the total and instantaneous character of this man's pretention. Unable to be sure that the Not-Self will be totally and instantaneously defeated the abstract portion pretends to be ignorant of the existence of this concrete Not-Self and takes refuge in the world re-created by his imagination. The animal portion for a certain time has accepted that his superior friend shall act thus; in effect this desertion in face of the dual between Self and Not-Self has brought certain advantages from which the animal portion has benefitted—the friendship of others, the approval of others, and so a guarantee of certain allies against the Not-Self. But little by little life has disappointed these hopes of reward for having been kind and good; misfortunes, felt as unjust, have supervened; the animal portion no longer believes in these chimeras, it decides that it has been duped and that it has had enough, it no longer wishes to avoid the combat, no longer feels in agreement with a pacific attitude which brings no benefit; it is deaf now to promises of ulterior benefits which never seem to come to hand and it now only wishes to take up arms. Being in this new frame of mind it can no longer feel the defection of the abstract portion otherwise than as an act of cowardice in face of danger, as a frightful collaboration with the enemy. This man is comparable with a besieged citadel, in which the soldiers, who can only feel and act, want to save their skins, and in which the leader, who only thinks, does not wish to hear a word about fighting and orders the laying down of arms. The army of soldiers cannot understand this absurd order, and at the same time it cannot, in the absence of an order or at least of an authorisation from above, fight as it wants to. It feels itself abandoned, dismayed by the abandonment; it feels anguish. And this anguish is not at all the fear of a particular repulse implied in the present circumstances; it is the fear of death, this ancient fear that has been in the depths of the being ever since its first meeting with the Not-Self, the selfsame fear that the baby

experienced when his mother seemed to withdraw from him her alliance.

Anguish is then a phenomenon in two periods, and it is of capital importance to examine these two periods into which it can be resolved. It is 'the head', 'the reason', 'the angel' which leads the way; the head pretends to be ignorant of the existence of the dangerous Not-Self and escapes into its dreams; acting thus it implicitly affirms the Not-Self in matter-of-fact reality, it goes over in fact to the enemy's camp. Then the animal portion, 'the beast', is distracted with fear, not with a relative fear of the relative defeat which is impending, but a total fear of the total danger of death which the Not-Self represents for a Self that the desertion of the head leaves powerless. In what one calls, incorrectly, 'fear of defeat' there are then two distinct elements: an intellectual refusal of defeat, and an affective anguish not of defeat but of death.

The erroneous belief implied in the fear of defeat explains how the vicious circle of anguish is closed. Our subject does not realise that he trembles in the face of death and that he does so because his head abandons his organism in face of the menacing general Not-Self. He believes that he trembles before such and such a concrete negative aspect of the outside world (which may be in fact a very little thing, the low opinion of Mr. X, for example). Seeing this concrete aspect of the world as the spectre of death, of total destruction (since in reality it is death which is feared) he sees this aspect of the world as a total negative Reality, as an absolute negative, and consequently as indestructible. And this vision of the obstacle of the world, as indestructible and absolute, evidently reinforces in the abstract portion his refusal to undertake the struggle. The vicious circle is thus closed.

One understands why anguish is fatally the lot of those beings who are, in a sense, the best, the richest, in whom the impartial and abstract portion is very strong and the partial and animal portion very strong also. On the contrary anguish will not be the lot of beings, on the one hand, whose abstract portion is weak and who live in a comfortable egoism ('materialists'); or, on the other hand, of beings whose animal portion is weak and who live in a comfortable altruistic renunciation ('idealists'). Among the former the 'no' triumphs in fact, among the latter the 'yes' triumphs in fact; in both cases the scales have tipped to one side or the other

and have come to a standstill. But the unhappy man whose two portions are strong is torn inwardly by the tugging of a 'yes' and of a 'no' which are unconciliated. This man is unhappy but, at the same time, he is invited to the total realisation that is represented by the conciliation of the 'yes' and the 'no'; the others are comfortable but are not invited to this realisation.

It is interesting to study attentively the relations that exist between anguish and imagination, for this study will inform us of the exact nature of 'moral suffering'.

Let us recall the two psychological phenomena which are at work in anguish; the abstract portion capitulates in face of reality because, claiming instantaneous omnipotence, it sees the normal resistance of the outside world as insurmountable, unshakable, absolutely forbidding. It escapes by flight into the world of the imagination, The concrete rebuff is thus avoided by the mentality, but, if the concrete rebuff is indefinitely postponed, in suspense, the image of the rebuff remains present to the abstract portion which turns away from the practical struggle for existence. The animal portion suffers then from the fear of death, since the defection of the 'head' leaves it paralysed in face of the aggressiveness of the Not-Self.

One sees clearly the double rôle played by the imagination in anguish. It plays the rôle of protector towards the egotistical and revendicative illusions of the abstract portion, and the rôle of destroyer towards the animal machine by abandoning it to the fear of death. It protects the Ego, which is illusory, and crushes the machine, which is real.

If one looks into it closely one perceives that the anguish is illusory since its causes are illusory (and that the effect of an illusory cause could not be real). Its immediate cause is illusory since that is the imaginative film, an artificial creation of the mind. Its efficient cause is equally illusory. In fact, if the mind turns away from the obstacle of the world and takes refuge in the imagination, it is because it presents to the world an absolute claim; and if it presents this absolute claim it is on account of its illusory ignorance of its divine filiation. Man only seeks to deify himself in the temporal sphere because he is ignorant of his real divine essence. Man is born the son of God, participating totally in the nature of the Supreme Principle of the Universe; but he is

born with a bad memory, forgetful of his origin, illusorily convinced that he is only this limited and mortal body which his senses perceive. Amnesic, he suffers from illusorily feeling himself abandoned by God (~~while he is in reality God himself~~), and he fusses about in the temporal sphere in search of affirmations to support his divinity which he cannot find there, without realising that he would not be searching for Reality if he did not participate in it by his own nature (for one cannot lack something without any knowledge of that thing).

Anguish is then an illusion since its causes are illusory. Besides this theoretical demonstration we can obtain a practical demonstration of it; we can prove directly, intuitively, the illusory character of anguish. If in fact at a moment at which I suffer morally, resting in a quiet spot, I shift my attention from my thinking to my feeling, if, leaving aside all my mental images, I apply myself to perceiving in myself the famous moral suffering in order to savour it and to find out at last what it is—I do not succeed. All that I succeed in feeling is a certain general fatigue which represents, in my body, the trace of the anxiety-phenomenon and of the wastage of vital energy which has taken place through the fear of death. But of suffering itself I do not find a scrap. The more I pay attention to the act of feeling, withdrawing thereby my attention from my imaginative film, the less I feel. And I prove then the unreality of anguish.

One will understand this still better by comparison with physical pain. If I have a painful gumboil, the more I imagine the less I suffer physically; the less I imagine, on the contrary, shifting my attention from thinking to feeling, the more keenly I am aware of my pain. This is because the pain is real, not imaginary.

We do not mean to say that there is no perception in the course of moral suffering; we say that it has an illusory suffering, which is not the same thing. If a man sees a mirage in the desert one cannot say that he does not see it; he sees, indeed, but that which he sees does not exist. In the same way, when I suffer morally I perceive, but I perceive nothing that really exists.

What then happens in me when I suffer morally? There is, as we have seen, in my feeling, the fear of death; this fear uses up my vitality and so impoverishes my reserve of organic energy; there is in that then an injury inflicted on my organism, on my body. This

necessarily ask ourselves what hierarchy there is among them. Current opinion sees in the succession from the first mode to the fifth a *progression*; it rates the state of the man who deals with external reality above the state of the man who sleeps, and it rates the state of the man who meditates on general laws above the state of the man who deals with concrete reality.

This opinion is partially correct. But we will see first wherein it is wrong, wherein the Vedanta is right in regarding the state of deep sleep as superior to the state of sleep-with-dreams, and this as superior to the waking state. From the absence of thought (sleep-without-dreams) to pure intellectual thought (meditation), the perception of inexpressible truth claims more and more to take upon itself a mental form; but the mental form, or imaginative form, is comparable with the plane section of a volume. This section certainly gives information concerning the volume, but it differs from it radically; the more the section is made with ability and precision the more precise the information which it gives; but at the same time the pretention of the section to be the volume increases, and so the more precise the information given by the section, the more it deceives the person who considers it, and the less it tells him in reality. With the man who meditates (fifth mode) the error is at its greatest since he takes his images as adequate for objective reality of general import. With the man who deals with concrete reality the error is less since he takes his images as adequate for a lesser reality. The man who day-dreams deceives himself less in his turn; he is less pretentious; he does not confuse his 'reverie' with 'reality'. The error is less again with the man who dreams while sleeping; his images are more modest, they no longer claim to do more than indicate indirectly a truth which they do not possess in themselves.[1] Finally, the man who sleeps without dreaming no longer deceives himself at all since the pretentions of his formal thought have vanished with the thoughts themselves.

From the first mode of thought to the fifth there is, then, in a sense, degradation. The form seizes more and more firmly the sense of the thought, until informal and original substance becomes ever poorer behind the curtain of images. The images, less and less

[1] Note that the highest 'esoteric' teachings always and necessarily use symbols and myths.

backed up, may be compared with bank-notes against which the gold-reserve disappears.

This way of looking at the series of modes of thought, as a hierarchy successively graded down from the first mode to the fifth, would be the only and indisputable way if man had only to be regarded from the point of view of the moment. It is no longer so as soon as one regards man as being capable of evolution in duration. At the moment the man who sleeps profoundly deceives himself less than the one who meditates; but, if one considers duration, the man who meditates is superior to the one who sleeps profoundly because, in meditating, in playing to the utmost the illusory game of his state as a natural man (egotistical state shut up in the subject-object dualism), this man comes near to the instant of satori when the 'old' man, deluded, will disappear and will give place to the 'new man', in possession of the informal original thought (immanent and transcendent thought as compared with the five modes of ordinary thought).

As we will see later, the thought of the fifth mode, or meditative thought, cannot by itself release satori, but without this thought man could never find out how to obtain this release, and in consequence he could never obtain it. It is by using this thought, the most abstract, the most pretentious, and in a sense the most completely erroneous, that man can arrive at an understanding of the vanity of all his functions of perception and of research for intemporal realisation, and can understand how he ought finally to proceed in order to relax inwardly and to present himself thus, ready for the explosion of satori.

In short, in this series of the five modes of thought of the natural man, there are at the same time two inverse hierarchies. If one looks at the question from the point of view of the moment one sees the thought decline in value from the first mode to the fifth; if one looks at the question in duration, from the point of view of the man's possible metamorphosis, one sees the thought increase in value from the first to the fifth.

Let us point out, in a short digression, the analogy which exists between the evolution of the individual man and that of humanity. Some people maintain that, with the passing centuries, humanity progresses; others maintain that this scientific or intellectual progress is a sign of progressive decomposition. The truth, as always,

become obvious; great calm at first with a sensation of suspense in which the subject is as though awake and asleep at the same time, cessation of all mental agitation (the Zen monk says that he is then 'like an idiot, like an imbecile'), the rôle of a sense-perception in the release of a new perspective of everything, the suddenness of this release, and the impression of clarity and of unity in this new perspective. But there is otherwise a great difference; the experience of which we are speaking leaves nothing but a memory, whereas satori inaugurates a new life definitely freed from the dualistic-egotistical illusion.

How should we interpret these resemblances and these differences? First of all for what reason did this little transitory satori come to me? Because an exceptional tranquility is realised in my mind; my mind is functioning in the course of my reading, but in a uniform rhythm, regular, without jerks, weaving a film made of light images, without relief. These images even fade away in the end, and my mind turns in then on its centre without projecting anything on to the surface. At this moment the habitual spasm of the mind has disappeared although the mind continues to function (I am not in a state of deep sleep); thus relaxed without being asleep, my mind is able to receive, motionless, this non-dualist perception of existence to which it is habitually opposed on account of its agitation. It is like a prisoner living in a prison the door of which is made to open inwards, and who habitually pushes this door in order to open it. The more he pushes the less the door can open, but if he stops pushing for a moment the door opens by itself. Why, then, did not my little satori last? Because the conditions which allowed the releasing of it were based on an artifice; it is thanks to a momentary forgetfulness of my personal preoccupations that this perfect tranquility was realised in me; I had withdrawn outside the range of any circumstance that could concern my Ego. When, later, I became conscious of my little satori in saying to myself that it is to me that it has happened, all my egotistical life, which had been momentarily cast out of my mind, burst in again with all the usual consequences of its illusory agitation.

True, definitive, satori supposes that a perfect tranquility has been realised in the mind of a man who has not withdrawn from the circumstances that concern his Ego, but who, on the contrary, lives them fully.

How is that possible? And first in what exactly consists this tranquility of the mind? Something is in suspense, we have said, but what? It is not a suspending of all mental functioning, since the subject remains awake, since he does not sleep. The mind functions, it works. Only it works smoothly, without jerks. Something is stopped, but not the mind, only its jerks, the irregularities of its rhythm. With what then do these jerks correspond? They correspond with the emotions. The little satori of the experience described above happened to me because I had been for an hour or two without emotions; I had left outside my mind all images concerning my personal life, my book held my attention without moving me the least in the world, my body, being comfortable, kept quiet; I felt neither joy nor grief. It was this absence of emotion which conditioned the functioning, without jerks, of my mind, and it was this functioning which conditioned the sudden release in me of the non-dualistic consciousness of existence.

What then is emotion? We must know this in order to discover the means of eliminating emotion from our psyche. (We will speak later on of the reason that leads the natural man to rebel so violently, as a rule, when one speaks to him of eliminating the emotions of his psychic life.)

Emotion represents a short-circuit of man's vital energy flowing between his instinctive, negative centre and his intellectual, positive, centre. This short-circuit consists in a disintegration of the energy at a point which one regards as a third centre and which one calls the emotional centre. (After satori this point is no longer a centre similar to the others, situated on the same plane, but the apex of the triangle of his ternary synthesis.) The short-circuit that produces emotion occurs when the intellectual terminal is not insulated. To what does this lack of insulation of the intellectual terminal correspond? To the passivity of the mind in face of the ultimate problem of man's state as this problem is manifested in the present moment. All man's movements, interior and exterior, have a unique prime motor, his natural need to-be-as-a-distinct-entity, that is to say his natural need to 'exist', which resides in his instinctive centre; but man is not conscious of this need at the moment when this need comes into play in so far as it comes into play at the given moment. Man can be conscious of it theoretically, but not concretely, in so far as this need is experienced in the

instant. Everything works in the man on the basis of a 'given-that-I-must-exist' which remains implicit; his mind can become actively conscious of all the manifestations of this primary need, but this consciousness of manifestation excludes consciousness of that which it manifests.

Let us try to say that again in another way. Behind everything that man experiences there is debated within him the illusory question of his being or his nullity. Man's attention is fascinated by the fluctuations of this dispute, and these appear to him unceasingly important and new; and he is unconscious of the dispute itself and of its constant monotony. Man is attentive to the forms of his psycho-somatic states, to their qualitative variations which are always new; he does not see, behind the formal manifestations of his momentary state, the quantitative variations of what we will call the in-formal sensation of his existence. If, at any moment, I wish to perceive, by means of an intuitive inward movement of perfect simplicity, the in-formal impression that I have of existing more or less, I can do so; but as soon as I cease to wish it I cease to do so and my attention is seized once again by formal perceptions. When I voluntarily perceive my in-formal sensation of existing (quantitatively variable), my mind is active concerning the ultimate reality of my condition at the concrete moment that I am living, and then my intellectual centre is insulated, and I experience no emotion. As soon as I cease this voluntary perception, which is unnatural, my intellectual centre ceases to be active, ceases to be insulated, and my emotions begin again.

My in-formal sensation of existing varies quantitatively, from annihilation to exaltation, but without a special effort I do not pay attention to that, though it is nevertheless that which is in question for me in my actual egotistical-dualistic condition. I am attentive to the mental forms which reveal my state, annihilated or exalted.

My mental passivity, seduced and held captive by the forms of my humour, constitutes a non-insulation of this centre which exposes it to emotional short-circuits, to jumps, to agitation (what the Hindus call 'the mad monkey').

The man who desires some day to obtain satori should train himself progressively to insulate his intellectual centre in order to protect it against emotional agitation. And he should do so, without eliminating or modifying artificially the circumstances which

concern his Ego and which try to move him, fully in the course of his natural life as it comes to him. In order to do that he must unceasingly reawaken the possibility that he has (and which tends unceasingly to fall asleep again) of perceiving, beneath the forms pertaining to his states-of-mind, his in-formal sensation, more or less positive or negative, of existing. This attention does not lead to turning his back on concrete egotistical-dualistic life, but, on the contrary, to keeping himself in the very centre of his being, accomplishing it by living it in the motionless inner point at which appears the very first dualism, that of existence—non-existence. When man's attention is fixed exactly on this source of all his agitation, then and then only, tranquility begins for him. When this tranquility is firmly established the inner conditions are at last favourable for the opening of satori in which dualism is conciliated by integrating itself in a ternary synthesis.

It is clearly impossible to describe this presence within oneself which is the immediate and in-formal perception of the degree of existence at the moment, precisely on account of the in-formal character of this perception. Let us suppose that I ask you: 'How are you feeling at this moment?' You will ask in reply: 'From what point of view? Physically or morally?' I answer: 'From all points of view together, how do you feel?' You are silent for a couple of seconds, then you say, for example: 'Not so bad', or 'So-so', or 'Very well', or something else. . . . Of the two seconds during which you were silent the latter does not interest us for you were using it in order to put into a form of expression your perception of your total state-of-mind; you had then already slipped away from the inner presence which interests us. It is during the first second that you perceived what is really in question for you all the time, and of which you are habitually unconscious, being conscious only of forms which derive from this unconscious perception or of forms in connexion with which this unconscious perception exists. If someone, after having read this, tries to obtain the in-formal perception of which we are speaking, let him beware; there are a thousand ways of believing that one has it, whereas one has it not; in any case the mistake is the same and consists in one complication or another which comprises forms; one is not simple-minded enough. *In-formal and immediate perception of existence is the simplest kind of perception there can be.* Correctly carried out it can be

obtained in the middle of the most intense external activity and without disturbing that; I do not have to turn away from what I am doing, but rather to feel myself existing in the very centre of the formal world of my activity and of the attention that I pay to it.

The natural man, as we have said above, is loath to envisage a diminution of his emotions. He resembles a caterpillar that can become a butterfly if it passes through the stage of a chrysalis. The caterpillar only moves along the ground. It cannot fly, or profit by the height dimension; but at least it moves; compared with this movement the immobility of the chrysalis might seem to it to be horrible. Nevertheless the temporary renouncement of an imperfect movement procures him ultimately a superior movement. Emotions are like the movement of the caterpillar; it is not flying but it resembles it and, with imagination, one succeeds in mistaking it for that. Man holds on to the bright sparks of his inner short-circuitings, and he has to reflect long and honestly in order to understand that these simple fireworks could never lead to anything. There is no real renunciation as long as one continues to attach value to that which one renounces.

We will take up again now, in another way, the whole problem studied in this essay.

That which popular language calls 'physical' and 'moral' corresponds with two domains which co-exist in us and which appear to us to be clearly different. The impressions by means of which I feel myself to be living, I range in my somatic or in my psychic life; for instance when I feel my life negatively, when I feel it is menaced, attacked, that may be through physical pain or through moral suffering. It is as though my 'being' presented two faces to make contact with the outside world, one somatic, the other psychic, and penetrated by the constructive or destructive influences of the outside world.

My impressions are released by the outside world, but I feel them well-up in myself; my physical pain may be due to a blow, but I feel that it springs from my body; my moral suffering may be due to any external event, but I feel that it takes its rise in what I call my 'soul'. If I try to see from where, in myself, these impressions come to me, I do not succeed; my painful somatic sensation reaches my consciousness from a source in which it is unconscious. It is the same with the moral suffering; I see clearly

sciousness being necessarily always above consciousness itself, outside it, unconscious. No, the true answer is otherwise: Let us say that everything happens in the natural man as though his central cross-roads were asleep, passive; and that everything happens in the man who has attained realisation as if his cross-roads were awake, active. It is relatively easy to imagine the sleeping cross-roads of the natural man; it is indeed only a cross-roads, that is to say a place at which pass by all the influences coming from the outside world. Crossing this simple 'place', the influxes from without reach the secondary centres of the somatic and psychical domains, centres which respond to them by automatic reactions. The natural man, whose cross-roads is asleep, is an automaton. With the man who has attained realisation the central cross-roads is not asleep, the Absolute Original Thought is functioning there (although, once again, always unconsciously). This Thought interprets the influx that has come from without; conceiving things in their totality it sees this particular influx in the totality of the universal context; it sees it, then, in its relativity, that is to say that it sees it as it is really. It is to this vision, interpreted, 'enlightened' (the 'third eye' opened in the centre of the unconscious), and no longer to a vision deformed by lack of context, that the secondary centres are going to react now, and their reaction will be adequate to the reality. The natural man was a machine whose reflexes were conditioned by such and such a particular aspect of the outside world; the man who has attained realisation is a machine whose reflexes are conditioned by the totality of the cosmos as represented by such a particular aspect; he is identical with the Cosmic Principle (in so far as this manifests itself), and he manifests himself, like this Principle, in a pure independent invention.

This Absolute Thought, Universal, Unconscious, when it functions in the centre of man, constitutes Absolute Wisdom, incommensurable evidently with any formal intelligence; in fact this Wisdom is in-formal, preceding all form, and is the first cause of all form.

We have said that the Unconscious Universal Thought sleeps at the centre of the natural man, and that it is awakened at the centre of the man who has attained realisation. Let us see now that the sleep of this Absolute Thought knows degrees, and that these degrees are disposed in inverse order to the five modes of thought

of the natural man. When the natural man sleeps without dreams, the Absolute Thought is as though awakened in him (more precisely, is not asleep), and this man is altogether like the man who has attained realisation; but this does not manifest at all in his consciousness because he has not at that time any consciousness; it is manifested only in the harmonious and re-creative operation of his vegetative life. As soon as this man begins to dream, that is to say as soon as his formal mind begins to function, that corresponds with a certain weakening of the Absolute Unconscious Thought, and the man is already less 'wise'. When this man awakens (in the ordinary meaning of the term), the Absolute Thought weakens more markedly and it is all the more enfeebled in that the formal mind is about to function in a manner that is pure, abstract, and generalised. It is nevertheless thanks to these moments of maximum enfeeblement that a certain evolution will take place in the man whose abstract intellect is at work, and in his life as a whole the Absolute Thought will sleep gradually less profoundly. This man will be able to live according to a relative and increasing wisdom. It is as if the sleep of the Absolute Thought at the moment [1] suscitated its awakening in duration; at the utmost one has the right to conceive of the positive and definitive awakening of the Absolute Thought (satori) as being released by an instant in which there will have been apprehended the total sleep of this Thought, an instant at which the mind will have reached the extreme limits of its dualistic functioning.

Let us say that again in a different way. The man who sleeps without dreams has withdrawn to the centre of himself; he who dreams has already moved out of his centre; the awakened man who day-dreams is still more 'ex-centric'; the man who adapts himself to external reality, and he who meditates, are ever further from themselves, more remote from their centre. The man who sleeps without dreams is in possession of his Reality but without being aware of it; the more he climbs thereafter the graded modes of formal thought the more this Reality disappears in proportion as the means wishing to seize it increase; as if the man were withdrawing from a centre of warmth in proportion as his sensibility to heat increased. In the instants which precede satori man is as

[1] *Duration*, composed of past-present-future, as opposed to *the moment*, i.e. the present that has no duration.

far from his centre as is possible. Then the inverse relation which has operated up till then is broken at the moment of satori, and the man finds himself definitively installed at his centre in his capacity as universal man, although able to withdraw himself at the same time into the various modes of formal thought in his capacity as personal man.

Man attains satori, then, as a result of turning his back, as thoroughly as possible, on his centre, as a result of going right to the ultimate limits in this centrifugal direction, as a result of pushing to its ultimate degree of purity the functioning of the discursive intelligence which keeps him away from Wisdom. He ought to *accomplish* formal thought to the point of breaking up the form. In order to do that he ought to make his formal mind function in a persevering attempt to perceive, beyond its limits, the in-formal; an attempt that is absurd in itself but which brings about the release one day of the miracle of satori, not as crowning the success of the ridiculous efforts accomplished, but as the defeat, definite at last, and triumphant, of those efforts. It is like a man separated from the light by a wall and who cannot touch this wall without making it higher and higher; but a day comes when all these absurd efforts have built up the wall to such a height that it becomes unsteady and collapses suddenly, a catastrophe that is final and triumphant, and which leaves the man bathed in the light.

It is this absurd but necessary effort that we accomplish when we oblige ourselves to perceive our in-formal sensation of existing-more-or-less in the course of all the episodes of our daily life. This effort towards an in-formal perception of existence is not similar to the reflex mental efforts that we make habitually and which are mental contractions that form images. It is even quite the contrary; it is an effort of de-contraction made in order to escape from the habitual contractive reflexes, an effort towards perfect simplicity in order to escape from the complexities that we habitually introduce, by way of reflex, into the question of our existence. We learn, by this effort, not to do something new, but no longer to do the inward actions, useless and agitating, which are usual with us. We learn to obtain from our mind not the most ingeniously clever gestures, but the pure gesture which is the essence of all the others and which rejoins immobility. This simple mental functioning

terminism as a passing-beyond, an accomplishment of this partial determinism in the total determinism of the Supreme Principle. When I have attained Realisation my psycho-somatic organism will no longer be governed only by the apparently disordered laws of partial determinism but by the total law of universal and cosmic equilibrium, a law rigorously ordered which is the principle of all the apparently disordered laws of partial determinism. If I suppose myself to be liberated by Realisation I ought not to imagine my organism escaping all determinism, but as being conditioned at last by the total determinism of the Supreme Principle which is my 'own nature'; I ought not to imagine my organism no longer obeying any cause, but as obeying at last the First Cause which is its own Reality. In short my liberty does not reside in the absence of all causation geared on to my organism, but in the perfect equivalence in me between that which is caused and that which causes it, between that which is conditioned and the Principle which conditions it. If, at the moment at which I attain Realisation, I cease to be constrained, it is not because that which was constraining me has been wiped out, but because that which was constraining me has expanded infinitely and has coincided with the totality in which Self and Not-Self are one, in such a way that the word 'constraint' has lost all sense.

Failing the understanding of that, the natural egotistical man fatally envisages an act of free-will as an act of fantasy, gratuitous, arbitrary, connected with nothing, and he ends up thus at absurdity, at that which no longer has any meaning. This illusory liberty, which is on this side of partial determinism, and not on the other side, chimerically excludes our organism from the rest of the cosmos and thus contains an internal contradiction which wipes it out. In a book on Zen that appeared recently a Western author affirms that the man liberated by satori can do anything in any circumstances; but this is radically contrary to a true understanding, for the man liberated by satori can only perform one single action in a given circumstance. He can no longer do anything but the action that is totally adequate to that circumstance; and it is in the immediate, spontaneous elaboration of this unique adequate action that the enjoyment of the perfect liberty of this man lies. The natural egotistical man, activated by partial determinism, elaborates in a mediate manner one of the innumerable

inadequate reactions to the given circumstance; the man who has attained Realisation, activated by total determinism, elaborates with absolute rigour the unique action that is adequate.

On this side of the adequate act of free-will there exists a whole hierarchy of actions more or less inadequate according to the narrowness or the amplitude of the partial determinism which rules it. Right at the bottom of this hierarchy it is purely reflex action, without any *reflection*, in which we see come into play a spontaneity on this side of reflection. Then, reflection intervening more and more, we see this inferior spontaneity disappear little by little; the action becomes adquate to an ever-wider aspect of surrounding circumstances. After satori reflection is left behind and the action finds quite a new spontaneity at the same time that it becomes perfectly adequate, adequate to the spatial and temporal totality of the phenomenal universe.

In the range of this intermediate hierarchy there is a direct proportion between the discipline of the act and the inner impression of liberty which accompanies it. The more the rigour of the determinism increases, the more the action is felt inwardly as free. If, for example, someone asks me to name any substantive, I feel uncomfortable, a confusion of which I am prisoner; I do not know what to say. If someone asks me to name a musical instrument of any kind I like, I feel a lesser degree of discomfort and I reply more readily. If someone asks me to name the smallest instrument of a quartet, the confusion of which I was prisoner disappears entirely; by naming the violin I experience within an impression of liberty which is bound up with my certainty of being able to reply adequately. According to the degree in which my possibilities of reply are restricted, in which my exterior liberty of reply decreases, in the same degree my impression of interior liberty increases; in other words, my mind is freer in the degree in which that which I have to elaborate is more rigorously defined.

The modern evolution of art is a striking illustration of the disorder which seizes the human spirit when it rejects all discipline. In refusing to accept limitations man deprives himself of the impression of liberty which he feels when he is within accepted constraints; with this impression of liberty he loses a tranquillity of which he has need in order to receive the message of his deeper inspiration. And so the artist who refuses all discipline, and who

This intuitive perception is interesting, for it allows me to observe the relations which exist between my inner state and my comportment, sentiments and actions. Just as the meaning of a dream is found in its latent content and not in its manifest content, so the meaning of my life, this other dream, is to be found in my latent consciousness, subjectal, and not in my manifest consciousness, objectal. It is the thought of my latent consciousness which determines my comportment and my manifest consciousness.

In my latent consciousness in which is tried the action concerning my being and my nullity, I desire to be acquitted, I desire to feel myself as being, and I am terrified of my nullity. Let us see how the two phenomenal dualisms of my being—'light-darkness' and 'agitation-immobility'—are connected with this fundamental dualism being-nullity. Everything happens in me as though light were identified with being and darkness with nullity, and as though agitation were identified with being and immobility with nullity. That is to say my innate partiality for being is expressed by a partiality for a 'luminous state, in motion'. But it is possible to specify still further my partiality; the particular modalities of life and of my personal inner structure are not always such that I can have at the same time light and agitation; I am obliged sometimes to choose between the two; I then perceive, by my comportment, that I still prefer agitation to light. I can say, still more accurately and speaking now in the negative mode, that, if my deep fear is fear of darkness and of immobility, my fear of immobility is greater than my fear of darkness; I encounter more strongly the terrifying impression of not 'being' in the absence of movement of my subjectal consciousness than in its character as black. (Thus a child will prefer to see his mother scold him than not pay attention to him at all; he would prefer that she paid attention to him by kissing him; but if he fails to obtain that he will prefer her scolding to her neglect. So also, the masochist, if his greatest preference tends, as that of every man, towards vibrant joy, likes better, since he has not succeeded in obtaining this vibrant joy, to vibrate by suffering rather than not to vibrate at all.) Everything happens, then, as though I feared more than anything the immobility of my deep state, and secondarily the darkness of this state; as if I feared more than anything not to feel myself living (and so, vibrating, movement being the essential

criterion of life), and secondarily not to feel myself joyous. Man generally pretends to desire happiness; this pretention corresponds with the sound intuition that the deep state of the man who has attained Realisation will be luminous and motionless. But in fact this pretention does not accord with the natural man's comportment; the natural man does not live for happiness, he does not tend to obtain for himself a luminous and motionless state; he tends to obtain for himself a state that is, above all, vibrant and, secondarily, luminous.

It is not surprising that the natural man does not attain happiness, since he does not tend towards it. And the fact that his preference for agitation is stronger than his preference for light explains why his joys are so precarious; when he is joyous he attaches more value to the agitation by means of which he strives for still more joy than he attaches to his joy itself. This is expressed by an unlimited demand for joy which always ends by his stumbling on the limits of the temporal plane and by bringing about the collapse of the joy. (Consider a man who has a great piece of luck; at once he wishes to celebrate it and to add as much gratification as possible to his original gratification.)

Of the two distinct preferences experienced by the natural man in connexion with his states, the secondary preference for the light is sound; but his primordial preference for agitation is erroneous, and it is the cause of all his miseries. It is because he desires unceasingly to feel his life vibrating in him, that is to say, in the egotistical situation in which he still is, to feel himself affirmed as distinct, that he remains plunged in the miseries of dualism and its lacerating contradictions.

Only comprehension can deliver man from this absurd preference; comprehension reveals to him that this inner immobility of which he is terrified not only is not to be feared but represents salvation. Indeed, in the egotistical situation in which he is at present, he cannot have at the same time light and immobility; if he brings himself, being initiated, to prefer in fact, that is to say to seek, immobility, he will have darkness at the same time; the 'Night' of Saint John of the Cross, if it is motionless is at the same time dark. But this night is very bearable when I am established in this immobility of which I am no longer afraid, in which on the contrary I put my hopes.

This inner task does not consist in 'doing' anything new whatsoever; it consists only, because one has understood, in spontaneously remembering the absurdity of the hopes that we place mechanically, naturally, in our inner agitation, and of the harmful absurdity of this agitation. Each time that I conceive this revealing non-natural thought my agitation ceases more or less completely. Abandoning my pretension of settling my action between being and nullity I confide myself to my Principle so that it may scatter the phantoms of this absurd action. I *do* nothing further, I leave everything to my invisible Principle, in which I believe without seeing it. I have only, for my part, to maintain and to increase my understanding by honest intellectual work, so that the spontaneous effects of this understanding may grow richer as well.

But an important question remains which we must study. Since, like every natural man, I have five different manners of thinking, which of these manners will constitute the most favourable psychological climate for my efforts to 'see into my own nature'? The reply is simple: there is only one manner of thinking which is compatible with this perception, that is the fourth manner, that of the man who adapts himself to the real outer world. When the variation of my states of existence depend on the non-real and non-present outer world that my imagination creates, that is to say on an imaginative film that I fabricate outside present reality with the materials of my reserve of images, at that moment my mental apparatus is entirely occupied by this fabrication, and it is not available for active perception. I can only actively perceive my varied states of existence when these variations depend not on my activity but on another activity than mine, on the activity of the Not-Self, of the present real outside world. And this activity of the present real outside world only concerns my psychic mechanism during the periods when I join myself to this world, when I adapt myself to reality. One could object that, even at that moment, the variations of my states depend on a certain activity of my mind; which is true, but re-active activity; re-activity, not activity. When I adapt myself to the real outside world the initiative of the mechanisms which will result in my states is outside me, not in me, and it is that which matters. From the moment that this initiative is outside me my initiative is available to me for an active perception.

Experience proves to us, better than any reasoning, what I have just said. If I wish to perceive my state of existence at a moment when I am day-dreaming, or at a moment when I am meditating, I must suspend my activity in order to achieve it; I must suspend that which is my life of that moment, and stop living. If, on the contrary, I want to perceive my state of existence at a moment when I have real concrete occupation I realise that I can do so without interrupting my action, that I can feel myself even in the middle of my action. The imaginative film that I have in my mind when I am paying attention to the present outside world is an accurate reflection of this world; it is reactive; it is the outside world which determines it. This reactive imaginative film does not hinder my perception of my state of existence; it is like a

wheel which turns with the regular rhythm of the cosmos and at the centre of which my attention can direct itself to the perception of my state of existence at this moment. Every active imaginative film, on the contrary, fabricated by my mind without contact with the present outer world, forbids me the perception of my state of existence. The inner work is, then, incompatible with sleep, with day-dreaming, and with meditative reflection; it is only compatible with life that is adapted to the present concrete world.

Thus are we able to understand why Zen masters have so often repeated that 'the Tao is our daily life'. A monk one day asked his master to instruct him in Zen; the master said to him: 'Have you had your breakfast, or not?' 'I have had it,' replied the monk. 'Very well then, go and wash your dishes.' Zen says also: 'When we are hungry, we eat: when we are sleepy, we lie down; where in all that does the finite or the infinite come in? It is only when the intellect, fertile in restlessness, comes on the scene and takes command that we cease to live and that we imagine that we lack something.'

The inner task consists in an effort of decontraction, in a non-action opposed to our reflex inner agitation; it is a simplicity opposed to our natural complexity; and Zen insists often on this simplicity, this relaxation. Sometimes then we come to think that the inner task should be easy, that we do not have to take trouble; on account of our ignorance of the non-action we believe that it is only in order to 'do' something that we have to take trouble. Let us try, however, to decontract our whole body and to maintain it in a state of complete decontraction for five minutes; we will see then what trouble we must take to remain vigilant, without which one group of muscles or another will quickly slip back into a state of tension. That is why Zen, if it often recalls the simplicity of the inner task, says also: 'Inner peace is only to be had after a bitter fight with our personality . . . the fight should rage with extreme force and virility; otherwise the peace which follows will only be a sham.' This battle with the personality is not on the plane of form, it is not, for example, a battle with shortcomings; it is a fight against the mental inertia which engenders all our formal inner agitation, a struggle against that current in order to remount it little by little right up to the reintegration of our consciousness with the in-formal source of our being.

We must now complete what we have said concerning the relations of compatibility or of incompatibility which exist between the effort to 'see into our own nature' and our five manners of thinking. We ought further to enlarge the distinction that we have made between the reactive imaginative film, based on the present outer world, and the active imaginative film, fabricated by our mind with the material of our reserve of images. This distinction is parallel with a distinction that the observation of our concrete psychological life imposes on us: we live at the same time on two distinct planes, the plane of sensation and the plane of imagery. Most men, for example, crave for riches, luxury; they expect from that affirmation of themselves; in fact the rich man obtains from his wealth affirmation of himself. But these affirmations are of two kinds. My wealth affirms me on the plane of sensation by favouring my organic life (good food, good sleep, refreshing sensory impressions, etc.), and on the plane of imagery 'I feel that I am "someone" because I have all that.' The plane of sensation corresponds with physical coenaesthesia, the plane of imagery with psychical coenaesthesia. Notice at the same time that the plane of sensation is real while the plane of imagery is illusory; in fact the plane of sensation corresponds with the man in so far as he is as all other men, that is to say universal man; while the plane of imagery corresponds with the man in so far as he sees himself and wishes himself unique, distinct, that is with the egotistical personal man, who has the illusory image of an Ego. It is illusory because, if each man differs from every other, it is only in formal factors and not at all in his specific condition.

The natural man, except when he sleeps deeply, never lives on just one of these two planes; he lives always on both planes at once. His mind never limits itself to building up a reactive film (plane of sensation) or even an active film (plane of imagery); he builds up unceasingly two films at the same time, one reactive, the other active; his attention shifts from one to the other of these films and it is only on one at each moment, but the two films are unceasingly built up together. It is easy enough at first to see that I do not live on the plane of sensation without living at the same time on the plane of imagery: the lawsuit between my being and my nullity is pleaded unceasingly within me and it is influenced by everything that happens to me on the plane of sensation; according to

whether I experience physical discomfort or well-being I mistrust myself or I have faith in myself, etc. On the other hand it may seem that I live sometimes only on the plane of imagery; we will see, however, that it is not so, and we will even realise that the plane of imagery is based on the plane of sensation, that it depends upon it, that it results from it. Let us study to that end a case in which the play of the plane of imagery is nevertheless carried to extremes. A rich financier goes bankrupt and he kills himself in order to escape from a life curtailed, in which he would no longer be important. This man destroys his body in order to save his image of himself; it would certainly appear that such an act is performed entirely on the plane of imagery and that there is here priority of this plane over the plane of sensation. But let us look more closely: this man kills himself in order to avoid a loss of consideration; but this loss of consideration is only unbearable to him because it is the loss of a consideration on which he placed an extremely high price. And he only envisaged this price of the consideration of himself by others because this consideration, this affirmation of himself by others, represented an alliance of the others with him in his combat against the Not-Self, a protection of his organism against death. However paradoxical the thing may seem, this man kills himself in order to preserve that which virtually protects him against death. In the light of this example I understand that the plane of imagery is a sort of illusory construction which my active imaginative mind builds on the plane of sensation; everything that I like on the plane of imagery, everything which affirms me on this plane, I see as affirming me because I see it as favourable ultimately to my organism. I say 'ultimately' because there is no immediate coincidence between my imaginative affirmation and the organic affirmation from which it derives. Here, for example, is a powerful business-man who works unceasingly and becomes very rich; this daily agitation is a negation of the plane of sensation; he leads, according to the popular expression, a dog's life, nevertheless if he clings to his position it is because the power that it confers upon him represents a virtual protection of his organism against death. This man also kills himself by degrees, in order to maintain and to increase that which protects him against death. There is no immediate coincidence between the affirmation that he obtains on the plane of

imagery and that which his wealth procures him eventually on the plane of sensation; it is nevertheless this last affirmation, however virtual it may be, which determines and supports the first.

The natural man lives, then, unceasingly on these two planes at once. These two planes correspond with the two domains, somatic and psychic, that we studied in another chapter. Let us recall that every episode of our lives results ultimately in concomitant reactions in us in these two domains, but that the contacts with the outside world which will release these reactions in the two domains together come to us via the one or via the other. I am touched by the outer world either on the plane of sensation (the outside world effectively present), or on the plane of imagery (the outside world recollected), but I experience each of these two contacts at the same time on the two planes.

If the natural man lives unceasingly on the two planes at once we have said that he only pays attention to one of them at each moment. When a man dreams, when he day-dreams, and when he meditates, his attention is fixed on the plane of imagery only, on the active imaginative film only; the reactive imaginative film is developed alongside it, but the attention is not on it. It is only when he adapts himself to the present outside world that a man experiences his life at the same time (thanks to the rapid alternations of his attention) on the plane of sensation and on that of imagery. If I observe myself well I realise that I day-dream always a little, and very often enormously, at the same time that I adapt myself to the real present in order to join myself with the outer world and use it. Knowing that, we can now reconsider more exactly the compatibility which exists between the fourth manner of thinking and the inner task. Theoretically this compatibility is absolute; concretely everything happens as though it was not absolute because I am never unreservedly in the fourth manner of thinking. My attention alternates incessantly between the fourth manner and the third, I am astride these two manners of thinking. The aim of the inner task is precisely to install myself some day, by means of satori, entirely in the fourth manner of thinking, to adapt myself at last really to the outside world, to reach Reality by the elimination of the dream.

Experience demonstrates it to me. As soon as I begin to make the right kind of efforts in order to perceive my instantaneous state

of existence I realise that these efforts curb the active imaginative film which is in me and which is incompatible with these efforts. More exactly these efforts have a solvent effect on my illusory film, by taking my attention from it and placing it on the real reactive imaginative film. In short my efforts dissolve my life-on-the-plane-of-imagery and purge of it my life-on-the-plane-of-sensation. The inner work eliminates my psychic coenaesthesis, which is illusory, from my physical coenaesthesis, which is real; it eliminates my egotistical life, which is illusory, from my organic life, which is real. I realise that there is in me a real 'Earth', my organic life with my perceptions, reactive to the real present, and an illusory 'Heaven', my active imaginative life. On account of this illusory Heaven I really have to-day neither my Earth nor Heaven. The inner work, by abolishing the illusory Heaven will give me back to my Earth; and this restitution of my Earth will be at the same time the enjoyment of the true Heaven. Such is the sense of that phrase of Zen: 'The Earth, that is Paradise.'

This understanding, which re-valorises our organic life and de-valorises our imaginative life, exposes us to the temptation to devote ourselves directly to our organic perceptions, to our organic coenaesthesis. Such an inner proceeding would be sterile and dangerous. It is impossible artificially to wipe out our imaginative life; we would thus make merely an absurd pretence. It is not on the dualistic plane where the real and the illusory manifest that there can be effected the subtle distillation which will eliminate illusion; our formal inner manipulations are powerless there. Only our Principle can effect this alchemical distillation, this purification. We have only to stop opposing this action of our Principle; and it is by means of the instantaneous total inner relaxation of which we have spoken that we can learn to stop our habitual opposition.

The progressive dissolution of our life-on-the-plane-of-imagery brings us nearer to delivery, to our birth in Reality. But, looked at before satori, this dissolution represents the laborious agony of the 'old' man. Consequently the inner work carried out in order to 'see into one's own nature' constitutes the veritable asceticism (of which exterior kinds of asceticism are only imitations), the veritable purification, the veritable mortification. (Let us make it clear that the veritable asceticism evidently requires no modification of the outward manner of living.)

It is important clearly to understand the immensity of what we have to abandon, in our actual way of looking at things, and at the same time the perfectly painless character of this abandonment. This plane of imagery that I am going to lose is more than immense for me to-day, it is everything; it is the salt of my life, it gives it all its meaning. It may be the scene of my terrors, but it is also the scene of my delights, fervours, compassion, and of my hopes. The natural man can only imagine the disappearance of sentiment from his life, the disappearance of the dualistic sensibility of his 'soul', as the death of his being; this illusory Heaven, with its tempests as with its sunshine, seems to him to be more precious than anything, in particular more precious than his Earth, than his body. But the dissolution of life-on-the-plane-of-imagery represents the definite renunciation of this illusory Heaven, of all that we see as 'sacred', 'super-natural', in our actual condition.

However, this renunciation is perfectly painless; the agony of the 'old' man is laborious (that is the bitter fight with our personality), but it is not painful. This renunciation indeed only takes place according to the degree in which, without snatching from me anything regarded as precious on the plane on which I see it as such, I obtain, in procuring a displacement of my attention which encourages in me the plane of sensation, the dissipation of the mirages which caused me to see value where there is none. The plane of imagery is not taken away from me—which would be horrible—it is I who leave it; no regret is possible to me for what I thus leave, since the plane of imagery only exists illusorily for me when I am on it. An inner task that is painful is badly done; it directly attacks the emotions; the correct inner task, the effort 'to see into my own nature', acts in us at the point from which the emotions spring. How could I be painfully moved in escaping from emotion? We have nothing to fear from forms in the course of efforts correctly carried out towards the in-formal; in dissipating this shadow the light dissipates all the shadows.

this pure vital energy, saved from phenomenal disintegration, in the light of Zen thought? We can suppose that this energy accumulates in us indeed, but not within a form, however subtle one may wish to imagine it; it accumulates without form on the plane of the two inferior creative principles, positive and negative, principles which although giving birth to all forms are themselves in-formal. It accumulates there and could be qualified as potential, actualised energy; as potential energy, it no more acts, phenomenally, than potential energy acts when at its source; but, actualised, it accumulates for ulterior action. This ulterior action is satori. Vital energy is comparable with an explosive powder which, without co-ordinating action from within, burns packet by packet in simple fireworks, powerless to change the structure of the being (these fireworks are our emotions and their psycho-somatic effects). The inner work from time to time saves a certain quantity of this powder and stores up these little packets, manufacturing thus a kind of delayed-action bomb. This bomb will only burst when a sufficient quantity of the powder has thus been accumulated. But this delayed explosion will have nothing in common with the emotional fireworks; while the emotions used the human organism because these little explosions occurred within the form of this organism, the formidable explosion of satori will not touch a single cell of the human organism. It will occur in the in-formal, and its action on the formal plane, on phenomena, will be comparable with a catalysis which allows the conciliated combination of temporal duality, in consequence suppressing definitively all inner tension of anxiety.

During the period of accumulation of the in-formal energy, without satori yet being possible, this accumulation is revealed by the appearance in the man of a relative wisdom, or, more exactly, of a relative diminution of his habitual folly. If certain men, as they grow older, become wiser, that is in the measure in which, losing their illusory beliefs by contact with experience, they accord less of their attention to forms, outer or inner, and thus bring about to some extent, without knowing it, this displacement of the attention of which we are speaking from the formal on to the in-formal. These men work inwardly without knowing it. But, because they do not know it, they do it too little for the production within them of the great accumulation of in-formal energy which satori requires.

HOW TO CONCEIVE THE INNER TASK

Let us come back now to this displacement of the attention. In order to render it understandable we have shown on what intuitive perception our attention must come to be fixed; and we ought to proceed thus in fact, for it is impossible to withdraw our attention from a point without having another point towards which to direct it. But it would be entirely wrong to believe that this in-formal intuitive perception towards which we voluntarily direct our attention positively presents the least interest (illusory conception of spiritual as opposed to temporal 'possessions'). It is only a point of orientation, a simple means of which we avail ourselves to preserve our energy from the meshes of the formal machinery which would seize upon it but for that. Thus to displace attention, that is to work inwardly, is not then to 'do' anything but what one would do ordinarily, it is to 'do nothing', or more exactly actively to inhibit every 'deed' that can be described.

This conception of the two planes, formal and in-formal, of such a kind that 'to do' in the second corresponds with 'to do nothing' in the first, enables us to understand the real positivity of the negative terms which Zen uses so readily, 'no-mind', 'no-form', 'no-birth', 'emptiness', 'void', 'Unconscious', etc. . . .

The practice of the 'koan' is understandable also. The cryptic formula on to which the Zen monk incessantly brings back his attention, has, certainly, a form; but this form is such that it quickly ceases to be perceptible on account of its apparent absurdity. When the Zen monk fixes his attention on his koan it is not this last which possesses the slightest interest; what is interesting and efficacious is by that means to tear the attention from the plane of form.

The displacement of attention which constitutes the inner task should really be a displacement, and so a coming-and-going of the attention between the formal and the in-formal. It would be impossible to fix the attention on the in-formal (as also on any kind of form) with stability. To begin with that would amount to suicide. But, above all, the excitation of the outer world is absolutely necessary for the surging-up of the in-formal energy from its central source. The inner task is then necessarily discontinuous; in that it conforms to the law of alternation which dominates all creation (day-night, summer-winter, systole and diastole of the heart, etc.).

It is not a question, either, of wishing to save from phenomenal disintegration all our vital energy. To think incessantly of the energy which wastes itself in us would be to fall back into the distressing error of 'salvation' regarded as a 'duty'. There would then be contraction, not relaxation. It is only when I no longer trouble myself to contract that I can relax.

The Zen masters say to us: 'You should not in any event hinder or disturb the course of life.' The inner task is performed in the course of our life, but it does not disturb it because it is done in parallel with it and not in it. That is to say that it is not concerned with forms, with the manner of life, and does not try to modify them; the attention, in leaving the plane of form, is content to ignore form. The man who works according to Zen becomes ever more indifferent to his actions, to his imaginations, to his sentiments; for all that is precisely the formal machinery with which he is obliged to share his energy. This man can work inwardly all day, in the alternating manner of which we have spoken, without this work comprising the slightest spiritual 'exercise', the least intentional discriminative reflection, the slightest rule of moral conduct, the least trouble to do 'good'. Turning his back on the visible and its phantoms, fair or ugly, he accumulates in the invisible the charge of energy which will one day blow up in him all the 'cave of phantoms', and will open to him thus the real plenitude of his daily life.

Chapter Thirteen

OBEDIENCE TO THE NATURE OF THINGS

According to Zen man is of the nature of Buddha; he is perfect, nothing is lacking in him. But he does not realise this because he is caught in the entanglements of his mental representations. Everything happens as though a screen were woven between himself and Reality by his imaginative activity functioning in the dualistic mode.

Imaginative mental activity is useful at the beginning of man's life, as long as the human machine is not completed, as long as the abstract intellect is not fully developed; it constitutes, during this first period, a compensation without which man could not tolerate his limited condition. Once the human machine is entirely developed the imagination, while still retaining the utility of which we have just spoken, becomes more and more harmful; it brings about in fact a wastage of energy which otherwise would accumulate in the interior of the being until the crystallisation of intuitive non-dualistic knowledge (satori).

The misfortune is that man takes the relief which imagination obtains for him for a real amelioration of his state; he takes the momentary relief of his distress for progress towards its abolition. In reality his momentary relief merely results in a progressive aggravation of the condition from which he wishes to be relieved. But he does not know this, and he cherishes an implicit belief in the utility of his imaginative activity and of his mental ruminations.

Experience should, one would think, contradict sooner or later a belief so mistaken. More often than not, however, it is not so. Why then does man believe so strongly in the utility of his agitation in spite of the experience which proves it to be harmful?

important page – "Grace"

Man believes in the utility of his agitation because he does not think that he is anything but that personal 'me' which he perceives in the dualistic manner. He does not know that there is in him something quite different from this visible personal 'me', something invisible which works in his favour in the dark. Identifying himself with his perceptible phenomena, in particular with his imaginative mind, he does not think that he is anything more. Everything happens as though he said to himself: 'Who would work for me except myself?' And not seeing in himself any other self than his imaginative mind and the sentiments and actions which depend on it, he turns to this mind to rid himself of distress. When one only sees a single means of salvation, one believes in it because necessarily one wishes to believe in it.

However, if I look at the life of my body I observe that all kinds of marvellous operations are performed spontaneously in it without the concourse of that which I call 'me'. My body is maintained by processes whose ingenious complexity surpasses all imagination. After being wounded, it heals itself. By what? By whom? The idea is forced upon me of a Principle, tireless and friendly, which unceasingly creates me on its own initiative.

My organs appeared and developed spontaneously. My mediate dualistic understanding appeared and developed spontaneously. Could not my immediate understanding, non-dualistic, appear spontaneously? Zen replies affirmatively to this question. For Zen the normal spontaneous evolution of man results in satori. The Principle works unceasingly in me in the direction of the opening of satori (as this same Principle works in the bulb of the tulip towards the opening of its flower). But my imaginative activity counteracts this profound genesis; it wastes by degrees the energy generated by the Principle, which otherwise would accumulate until the explosion of satori. As an old Zen master said: 'What conceals Realisation? Nothing but myself.' I do not know that my essential wish—to escape from the dualistic illusion, generator of anguish—is in process of being realised in me by something other than my personal 'me'; I do not believe that I can count on anyone but on myself: I believe myself therefore obliged to do something. I take fright in believing myself alone, abandoned by all; necessarily then I am uneasy and my agitation neutralises by degrees the beneficial work of my deeper self. Zen expresses that

in saying: 'Not knowing how near the Truth is, people look for it far away . . . what a pity!'

This manner of thwarting the profound spontaneous process of construction is the work of mechanical reflexes. It operates automatically when I am not disposed to have faith in my invisible Principle and in its liberating task. In other words, the profound spontaneous process of construction only makes progress in me in the degree in which I am disposed to have faith in my Principle and in the spontaneity, always actual, of its liberating activity. Faith does not move mountains, but it procures that mountains shall be moved by the Universal Principle.

My participation in the elaboration of my satori consists, then, in the activity of my faith; it consists in the conception of the idea, present and actual, that my supreme good is in process of being elaborated spontaneously.

One sees in what respects Zen is quietist and in what respects it is not. It is, when it says to us: 'You do not have to liberate yourselves.' But it is not in this sense that, if we do not have to work directly for our liberation, we have to collaborate in thinking effectively of the profound process which liberates us. For this thought is not by any means given to us automatically by nature. The outer world unceasingly conspires to make us believe that our true good resides in such and such a formal success which justifies all our agitations. The outer world distracts us, it steals our attention. An intense and patient labour of thought is necessary in order that we may collaborate with our liberating Principle.

Arrived at this degree of understanding, a snare awaits us. We run the risk of believing that we must refuse to give our attention to life. We run the risk, thinking we are doing the right thing, of going through life like a somnambulist, incessantly bringing back, into our surface mind, the fixed idea of the Principle operating in us. And this could only lead to mental derangement.

We must proceed otherwise. At moments when outer and inner circumstances lend themselves to it we reflect upon the understanding of our spontaneous liberation, we think with force, and in the most concrete manner possible, of the unlimited prodigy which is in process of elaboration for us and which will some day resolve all our fears, all our covetousness. In such moments we seed and re-seed the field of our faith; we awaken little by little in

ourselves this faith which was sleeping, and the hope and the love which accompany it. Then when we turn back to life we go on living as usual. Because we have thought correctly for a moment a portion of our attention remains attached to this plane of thought, although this plane penetrates the depths of our being and is lost to sight; a portion of our attention remains there while the remainder goes where it always goes. The man who has adored a woman or a piece of work which he is in process of conceiving will understand what we are trying to say. While he goes about his usual business it will happen that he no longer thinks consciously of the woman he loves, as though he were forgetting her; nevertheless when his thought comes back to this beloved image he realises that he had never entirely left her, that he had remained all the time beside her as though in a secondary state, on a subterranean plane of consciousness.

When it is a question of our participation in our liberation this secondary state is not granted to us gratuitously; we have to obtain it by means of special moments of reflection on the borderline of our practical daily life. Nevertheless these necessary moments are not what really matters; what will be really efficacious will take place when we are once more in our daily life and when our faith, now more or less awakened and vigilant on a subterranean plane of consciousness, will dispute victoriously with the outside world a part of our attention and, in consequence, a part of our energy.

In the measure in which this second subterranean attention develops we will perceive a less compelling interest in the world of phenomena; our fears and our covetousness will lose their keeness. We will be able to learn how to be discreet, non-active, towards our inner world, and we will thus become able to realise this counsel of Zen: 'Let go, leave things as they may be. . . . Be obedient to the nature of things and you are in accord with the Way.'

Let us note that the natural man sometimes has an attitude that is correct, discreet, non-active; he has it during deep sleep. There he stops being restless with the idea of doing himself good; he effaces himself, he 'lets go', he 'leaves things as they may be', he abandons himself to his Principle and lets it operate without interference. It is because man is then non-active that sleep has such a wonderful recuperative effect.

But the man who sleeps only behaves wisely through a kind of

syncope of his mind; the pernicious egotistical imaginative film is only stopped because the imaginative film based on the real exterior present is stopped also. The harmful part of the mind only stops because its healthy part (that which perceives directly things that are present) stops too. And on that account sleep could not bring Realisation.

We can achieve wisdom without the whole of our mind coming to a full-stop. Each progression of our faith in our liberating Principle weakens our egotistical imaginative film without weakening our imaginative film based on the real present; the appearance and the growth of our faith establish by themselves a discrimination between our two imaginative films. Thus we go little by little towards a state in which deep sleep and the waking state are reconciled. There again let us affirm that this astonishing conciliation is established by itself; our inner manipulations are powerless to establish the slightest real harmony in us. For our Principle, which is the only artisan qualified for this Great Work, to operate in us it is enough that we think correctly, or more exactly that we cease to think wrongly.

In order to understand more clearly what has been said above we can use a symbolical illustration. Man, in his development, may be compared with a balloon-figure progressively inflated. At his birth he is like a little balloon very slightly inflated, without many indications of form, a little spherical mass. Then, the Principle inflating the balloon, it increases in volume; at the same time its form departs more and more from the simple form of the sphere; reliefs and hollows appear; a figure develops whose structure is unique in its particularities. It is the development of what one calls the character, the personality, of that by which I am 'I' and nobody else. That corresponds to the development of the human machine, soma and psyche.

If man's ignorance did not intervene to counteract his normal evolution, this is what would happen. The balloon, at the moment at which the human machine is fully developed (towards puberty, when the somatic machine is complete with the appearance of the sexual function and when the psychic machine is complete with the appearance of the impartial intelligence, abstract and generalising), the balloon then is fully inflated and it attains in surface an extension which it can no longer exceed. But the

Principle continues to inflate it; and this brings about a state of hypertension. Under the influence of this hypertension the inextensible surface will be deformed so that its content may increase, that is to say that it will flatten out its folds, reduce its reliefs and its hollows, progressively become spherical, since the simple form of a sphere corresponds to the greatest possible capacity for a given surface. Little by little the irregularities of the balloon-figure disappear. Finally the perfectly spherical form is attained; no increase of contenance is any longer possible. The Principle still inflating, the balloon bursts.

In the course of this normal evolution one sees three phases succeed one another. The little sphere at the beginning, little spherical bundle of the balloon as yet uninflated, that is the phase which is up-stream of man's temporal realisation, up-stream of the development of his personality, of his Ego. One might say that the small child is still spherical. The second phase, that of the developed personality, corresponds to the figure endowed with particular contours, complex and personal. In the third phase, which precedes the final explosion, the irregularities are smoothed out, the personality is blurred according to the degree in which the thought attains a universal point of view, or, more exactly, frees itself from the narrowness, from the rigidity of personal points of view. Man comes back to his initial spherical form, but this time down-stream of his temporal realisation. This phase then resembles the first although it is in a sense its opposite (one recalls the words of Jesus: 'In truth I say unto you, whoever will not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child shall not enter therein').

Let us note that this third phase appears to us necessarily at the same time as progress and as regression. It is progress from the point of view of the universal, since the balloon increases its capacity and approaches an explosion which will make it coincide with the immense sphere of the cosmos; but it is at the same time regression from the point of view of the particularities of shape, from the point of view of the personality. That which distinguishes this man from all others grows less, he becomes more and more ordinary, his reliefs disappear; the 'old' man wastes away and approaches death in the measure that the birth of the 'new man', with the bursting of the balloon, comes nearer. (One can thus

understand the words of St. John the Baptist: 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make smooth his paths. Every hollow shall be filled up, every mountain and every hill shall be made flat.')

The outcome of the third phase, the bursting of the balloon, is the explosion of satori, the instant at which every limitation disappears, and at which the one is united with the all.

We have said that man's ignorance thwarts this normal evolution. In fact man, before any initiation, does not recognise any reality in what his balloon-figure contains, but he sees reality that is indisputable and unique on its surface and in the particular shape of this surface. In this ignorance his will to 'be' expresses itself only by the will to 'be as one distinct'. This ignorant balloon, built up into a figure, refuses to accept the smoothing-out of its distinctive reliefs: it stiffens itself in its particular form, it is opposed to any stretching of its folds which would increase its capacity by tending towards the spherical. The hypertension being unable to resolve itself in this normal manner must resolve itself otherwise; and there comes into play the man's imaginative-emotive activity, a kind of safety-valve by which is released the pressure caused by the continuous inflation of the Principle. This corresponds to the wastage, of which we have spoken, of energy which ought to have been accumulated with a view to an explosion.

Every man who observes himself realises that he is unceasingly more or less overstrained inwardly. He feels it through the agitation of his emotive states, positive or negative, exalted or depressed, states which correspond with the unconscious resistence which he opposes to the opening-out of the folds of his personal form. But, if it is easy to see to what the hypertension in our concrete psychology corresponds, it is less easy to see in what consists the normal inner release of this tension. This release occurs at the moment at which I become conscious of my tension while neglecting the contingent circumstances in connexion with which this tension appeared, and at which I accept it in myself.

In the extent to which I have overcome ignorance, in the extent to which I have understood that reality is not at all to be found in the external forms which are the object of my fears and of my covetousness, but that it resides in the vital hypertensive pressure itself; to this extent my attention abandons forms and

directs itself towards my centre, towards my source, the place from which wells-up my vital pressure. I can do this if I have understood that my Principle is engaged in leading me to my true fulfilment and that I need not trouble myself about anything in this matter. Then my imaginative-emotive activity stops for a moment, and I feel my hypertension yield. That is all that I feel, but I know furthermore that the capacity of my balloon has just increased a little as a result of the simplification of its form. Evidently this docility to the opening-out of folds, which helps my realisation, is passing, instantaneous, and this 'letting go' has to be done afresh with perseverence as often as may be necessary.

The comparison we have just used may be criticised, like all comparisons. But it can help us to understand the modalities of our normal growth, and above all the essential notion that this growth will take place by itself right up to its perfect accomplishment if, having faith in it, we cease to oppose it by our restlessness and our inner manipulations.

Let us return to this idea that man, in the measure in which he is still ignorant, is lacking in faith, and consequently also in hope and in charity. We will show that, faith being absent, everything happens in man in a sense radically opposed to the normal. The normal direction is from above downwards: when man abandons ignorance his understanding (which pre-existed through all eternity but which was sleeping in unconsciousness) awakens in his intellectual centre. Of the three theological virtues it is Faith which leads the way, intellectual intuition of the absolute Principle and certainty that it is 'my' Principle. The awakening of Faith carries with it the awakening of Hope: there is no longer anything to fear, I can hope for everything, from the moment that the absolute Principle is 'my' Principle. Thus that which began in the intellectual centre continues in the emotional centre. Finally the awakening of Faith and of Hope brings the awakening of Charity. It is in error that Charity is often thought of as an emotion, as adoration-love; it is in reality desire-love, an appetite felt by the whole of our organism for a kind of existence that the spectres of duality have ceased to conceal from us. It is a constant appetite for all aspects of existence. Thus that which began in the intellectual centre, and which continued in the emotional centre, ends up in the animal or instinctive centre;

that which began in the head has passed by the heart in order to finish up in the entrails.

In so far as man is still in ignorance the succession is reversed. That which begins in him is the appetite to exist, the desire to affirm himself as distinct, the desire for the positive aspects of existence only. This natural awakening of the desire to exist carries with it the awakening of all sorts of 'hopes' (which are the opposite of Hope), hopes of this or that success on the plane of phenomena; that which began in the animal centre continues in the emotional centre. Finally the awakening of the desire to exist, and of hopes, entails the awakening of 'beliefs' (the opposite of Faith) which build up false values, the aims which the hopes need, the image-idols necessary to polarise the impulses coming from below. That which began in the animal centre and has continued in the emotional centre has risen to the heart, and then to the head.

One observes the radical opposition which exists between these two directions that man's life takes. The natural direction is from below upwards: appetite for the positive aspects of existence, then hopes, then beliefs. The normal direction is from above downwards: Faith, then Hope, finally Charity or appetite for all aspects of existence.

The natural direction exists only at the outset of life. Realisation consists in the appearance of the normal direction and in its final triumph. This final triumph is satori. Before satori the normal direction should appear in concurrence with the present natural direction and should play an ever bigger part at the expense of this natural direction. ('He must increase and I must decrease.')

When we study the problem of Realisation we incessantly come across all sorts of paradoxes. 'He who loses his life shall save it,' says the Gospel for example. These paradoxes cease to embarrass us when we thoroughly understand that there are in us two life-currents; one is natural, given to us and starting from below to move upward; the other is normal, possible to us and starting from above in order to descend. The natural life can thus be called the 'life of the "old" man', the normal life the 'life of the "new" man'. ('It is necessary to die in order to be reborn.')

The new current should appear while the old natural current is still flowing. The new current begins, let us repeat, at the place at which the natural current stops, in the intellectual centre.

The life of the new man takes its departure in the Independent Intelligence, pure thought, intellectual intuition removed from affective influences. The work of the Independent Intelligence destroys little by little the 'beliefs' which polarise the natural current, ascending, and without which this current could not flow. In the extent to which man 'ceases to harbour opinions', as Zen says, he abolishes absolutely the natural current within him. Faith increases in him in the extent to which beliefs decrease.

But it is on the emotional plane that we shall find in its most interesting aspect this inverse evolution. It is there that we shall best be able to understand the 'letting go' of Zen. Just as Faith pre-existing from all eternity but asleep, awakens in the measure that beliefs are abolished, so Hope, pre-existent from all eternity but asleep, awakens in the measure that 'hopes' in general are wiped out. That which is sunrise in the new life is sunset in the old; that which is triumph in the new life is disaster in the old. Satori can only be foreseen by the 'old' man as the most radical of all imaginable disasters.

If I observe myself I see that I struggle incessantly and instinctively in order to succeed; whether my enterprises are egotistical (to win, to enjoy, to be admired, etc.) or altruistic (to affirm others, to become 'better', to uproot my 'faults', etc.) I struggle incessantly, instinctively, to succeed in these enterprises; I struggle unceasingly 'upwards'. Incessantly I am agitated by upward-tending contractions, like a bird which continually makes use of its wings in order to rise, or to fight against a downward motion which a down-blowing wind imposes on it. I conduct myself as though my hopes were legitimate, as if the real good which I need (Realisation, satori) were to be found in the satisfaction of these hopes. Nevertheless just the contrary is true; my hopes lie to me, they are part of a vicious circle in which I wear myself out in useless efforts. All my upward-tending exertions are only gestures of ignorant resistance opposed to the happy spontaneous transformation that my Principle is always ready to bring about. Perfect Felicity does not await me above, but below; it does not await me in that which I see actually as a triumph, but in that which appears to me actually as a disaster. My perfect joy awaits me in the total anihilation of my hopes.

One must thoroughly understand that the total disaster in the

middle of which satori awaits us does not necessarily coincide with a practical exterior disaster. The realising disaster, the satori-disaster, consists in an understanding, an intellectual intuition of the radical absurdity of our natural ascending current, in the clear vision of the nullity which is at the end of all our hopes. The realising despair does not consist in the practical ruin of hopes which would continue to exist in us (this would lead to suicide, not to satori), but in the annihilation of the hopes themselves. The man that one habitually calls 'desperate' is definitely not desperate; he is filled with hopes to which the world opposes a flat refusal; therefore he is very unhappy. The man who has become really desperate, who no longer expects anything from the world of phenomena, is flooded by the perfect joy which at last he ceases to oppose.

Here is the way in which I can, in practice, make progress in the annihilation of my absurd and deplorable 'hopes'. I am not going to set myself to organise the failure of my enterprises; to hope to succeed in ruining myself instead of hoping to succeed in enriching myself would not change anything in any way. No, I let my instinctive and emotive life go on as usual. But my understanding, initiated into the reality of things, works in parallel. At the moment when I suffer because my hopes come up against the resistance of the world I remind myself that my old successes have never brought me that absolute accomplishment in which I had placed my hopes; all my surface satisfactions, sometimes so intense, were in the last instance deceptions in depth, that is to say in truth. Profiting by this experience, correctly interpreted, of my fallacious successes I think now of the new successes which I am in process of coveting; I imagine their concrete realisation, and feel afresh their vanity. The bad moments, the moments of anguish, are the best for this work; the suffering felt by the organism-as-a-totality curbs the illusions which show us satori in the opposite direction from that in which it awaits us. On the condition that all our essential hopes have been more or less fulfilled in the past our actual hope, recidivist, is the more readily annihilated as it is thwarted by the world. It is easier for me to let go when my muscles are very tired. Zen affirms: 'Satori comes to us unexpectedly when we have exhausted all the resources of our being.'

which are our muscular contractions. If a muscle can contract dynamically in a *contraction* it can also contract statically in a *spasm*, or cramp. Emotions connected with conscious images are psychic *contractions*, the emotional state connected with subconscious images is a psychic *spasm*.

In order to be clear we have, to begin with, thus established our distinction by means of words of approximate exactitude. We can now be more precise. The phenomenon 'emotion' represents a short-circuit between the psychic pole and the somatic pole of our organism. One should not speak in connexion with emotivity, of psychic contraction or of psychic spasm, but of contraction or spasm of our psycho-somatic organism; the emotional centre is half-way between the intellectual (or psychic or subtle) centre and the instinctive (or somatic or gross) centre. Similarly if we spoke at the beginning of emotions and the emotive state released by images, that is by psychic, subtle, excitations, we must not forget that our emotivity can equally be released by somatic, gross, excitations. A somatic indisposition can be the releasing cause of my gloom, which is an emotive spasm of my psycho-somatic organism. In any case, whether the releasing cause has been psychic or somatic, the spasm that results always affects both the psyche and the soma; a certain muscular spasm (of my muscles striated or non-striated) always accompanies my psychic spasm based on a subconscious image and vice versa.

Coming back to the idea that emotivity in general represents a short-circuit of energy between the intellectual and the instinctive poles, let us see how, from this point of view, dynamic emotion (we will call it simply 'emotion' in future) is distinguished from the static emotional state (or emotional state for short). Making use of an electrical comparison one can say that emotion corresponds with a spark uniting the two poles. This spark can last for a certain time, but it is not static, for the reason that the contact which it establishes between the separated poles is a contact in continual repetition, a contact which shifts; the spark does not simply fly from one pole to the other, it also flies in a lateral direction. The emotive state, on the contrary, can be compared with a passage of energy which occurs between the two poles when they touch one another directly along a surface that is more or less considerable.

This comparison already shows us one of the factors which renders the emotive state more dangerous than emotion. Emotion, because it shifts, is visible, conscious; the subject is made aware of it by his inner sensibility; on account of that divers defensive mechanisms come into play at once, which succeed in reducing, then in interrupting, the short-circuit that eats up energy. On the contrary the emotive state does not give the alarm quickly enough to the defensive mechanisms; it only gives the alarm tardily, when its regrettable consequences have become visible; and the defensive processes which are necessary at this moment carry a very tiresome aspect; they are neurotic (giving this word its widest meaning), and reduce the contact between the two poles through a certain deterioration of the poles themselves. Emotion is comparable also with a visible hæmorrhage which disturbs the sufferer and endangers the treatment; the emotive state is comparable with an invisible and continuous hæmorrhage which undermines the sufferer. He will have himself treated nevertheless some day, but at a time when the curative value of the treatment will be much less effective.

But these somewhat rough comparisons leave aside the most important considerations. In fact in these comparisons we assumed that the combustion of energy in the spark was similar to the destruction of energy in the contact of the poles. In reality it is not so; there is a fundamental difference between the two phenomena. In the case of emotion the two poles are separated; the spark which unites them is not, properly speaking, a short-circuit; in this spark the energy burns and frees itself, something is produced. In the emotive state, on the contrary, the two poles touch, there is a real short-circuit; the energy passes from one pole to the other; the total energy of the subject—energy which depends on the difference of tension between the two poles—is destroyed since this difference of tension is reduced, and it is destroyed without producing anything. The emotion is part of the manifestation, of the life which manifests the 'being'; therefore it can be called normal. The emotive state on the contrary is not 'alive'; it is destructive without a counterpart. The energy which it consumes cannot be used for liberation, and since it cannot lead us to our norm we must call it 'abnormal'.

Another comparison may help us to understand all this better.

Satori corresponds, in our image, with a moment in which the wheel entirely stops turning; it is an instant without duration, but this instant suffices for the two centres to coincide. When they have coincided, if only for a single instant, they will never again be separated from one another; however fast the wheel turns now, its rotation can no longer bring about the appearance of any centrifugal force. After the moment of satori, in which there is neither emotion nor the emotive state, there will again be as many emotions as one may care to suppose, but never again an emotive state. The elastic of our image corresponds to the profound nostalgia which man carries within himself for satori. This nostalgia is not, indeed, felt as nostalgia for satori since the natural man cannot have any conception of this event (it is felt as a nostalgia for such and such temporal things or for an inadequate image that we make of satori), but it is none the less nostalgia for satori. The further a man is, in his emotive states, from satori, the further his elastic will be stretched, the more intensely will he experience the nostalgia of its attainment in whatever way he may envisage it; the nearer a man approaches satori, the more his elastic slackens, the less strongly does he feel his nostalgia for its attainment. On the verge of satori, in the moments which precede it, all nostalgia of its attainment disappears; then, for lack of any nostalgia, he who attains to satori does not feel it at all as an attainment; he can say, with Hui-neng, 'There is no attainment, there is no liberation', liberation only existing in the eyes of him who is not liberated. In our image liberation is the complete slackening of the elastic; but, in satori, the elastic is destroyed and there could no longer be any question of its slackening.

Man before satori can imagine nothing positive concerning man after satori. In a negative manner only can he conceive that the emotions experienced after satori will be profoundly different from those experienced before satori, since they will no longer release that emotive state, that inner spasm, which was responsible for our distress. This leads us to a fresh understanding of the distinction between 'emotion' and 'emotive state' which we are studying at this moment. Emotions can be positive or negative, joys or sorrows; but the emotive state is always negative. Following our image, the wheel can turn in one direction or in the other;

Let us imagine a horizontal wheel, which turns but whose centre of rotation does not coincide with its geometrical centre; its rotation is eccentric. This wheel is set in motion by two kinds of forces; first a rotative or 'dynamic' force; but the wheel as a whole is affected by a centrifugal force which tends to move it from its centre of rotation; and this force, which has no effect, can be called 'static'. The movement of rotation, which in this illustration represents the emotion, can be used; if I fix a belt to my wheel it will be able to work machines. On the contrary the static force which tends in vain to project the whole wheel far from its centre of rotation, cannot be used; it symbolises the motionless spasm, a cramp of the emotive state.

The man who has attained realisation, man after satori, may be compared with a wheel whose centre of rotation coincides with the geometrical centre; he will have emotions, but he will not have an emotive state. The natural man, before satori, may be compared with our eccentric wheel. And this image of the eccentric wheel allows us to demonstrate certain important aspects of our affective life. Everything happens in me as if there exists, between the centre of rotation of my wheel and its geometrical centre, an elastic band which tends to make them coincide. When my wheel turns slowly, when I have little emotion, the centrifugal force is weak and the elastic suffices to maintain the centre of rotation not far from the geometric centre. But now violent emotions arise in me; my wheel begins to turn rapidly, the centrifugal force increases; despite the elastic my centre of rotation moves away from my geometric centre. This shows us how the emotions determine the appearance of the emotive state; when I have just experienced violent emotions, I feel myself thereafter quite 'ex-centric', as though out of my axis, internally displaced, and a certain time has to elapse before my elastic exercises its action and brings together my two centres, of rotation and geometric. Never before satori can the two centres of my wheel coincide absolutely; indeed where the natural man is concerned, who does no correct inner work, if the emotions may sometimes be of slight intensity they are never inexistant. The wheel turns sometimes slowly, but it turns all the same; there is always a certain centrifugal force which prevents the elastic from making the two centres coincide.

but in both cases the centrifugal force remains centrifugal. A concrete examination of our affective life shows us this; when something very pleasing happens to me, releasing in me violent emotions of joy, the central displacement, or shifting of the axis, of which we spoke a moment ago, takes place in me just as it takes place as a result of violent negative emotions; distress appears under my joyous images, distress connected psychologically either with the fear of losing the affirmation which has come to me, or to the unsatisfied demand which my affirmation endlessly increases right up to that absolute accomplishment of myself that I am always waiting for in the depths of my being.

The emotive state, or profound emotivity (opposed to the surface emotivity which the emotions create), corresponds with that profound psychic, or subconscious, plane on which is tried the 'case' of my Ego in connexion with the situations in which I am involved with the outer world. The emotive state is always in relation with a doubt concerning my 'being'; this doubt, this dilemma between 'being or nullity', menaces me unceasingly, and my 'case' goes on in the unrealisable hope of a definitive temporal absolution.

Some euphoric people appear to be constantly possessed by a positive emotive state, and this fact seems to contradict what we have just explained. The study of the apparent happiness of the natural man is very interesting because it can help us better to understand what the emotive state is. If I observe myself continuously I perceive that I am occasionally euphoric and that this state corresponds with a moment at which my doubt of myself is transitorily asleep. An external situation that is moderately affirming and which appears sufficiently stable, added to a good physical condition, puts my inner 'trial' to sleep; for lack of incidents in court judge and witnesses have gone to sleep. My subconscious psychological plane is drowsy. At the same time I am in an agreeable 'state'. But this agreeable state does not correspond with a positivity of the emotive state in activity, it corresponds with a non-activity of the emotive state; it does not correspond with a decision, favourable at last, of the trial, but with a temporary suspension of this trial; it does not correspond with a destruction of my illusory belief that I lack something, but with a temporary quiescence of this illusion. How is this

are little used. Also the trial is rarely very drowsy, perhaps never. The further this man's life proceeds the more his possible compensations deteriorate beyond repair; his trial knows no more suspensions; this man more and more clearly envisages everything that happens to him, all his situations in face of the Not-Self, from the angle of self-doubt; in his subconsciousness, never asleep, he lives unceasingly in the expectation of an illusory verdict on which he feels that his absolution or his final condemnation depend. His self-respect is incessantly in question in one direction or in the other; he is touchy, and this constant excitation corresponds with the permanent activity of his subconscious emotive state and of his irritability. Whereas the man who has little craving for the Absolute is calm, the man who has a great need of the Absolute is hyperexcitable, overstrained. Everything concerns his Ego, he envisages everything that he perceives from the unique angle of his self-respect.

Let us finish this passage by affirming that the emotive state can only be negative, a spasm of distress, and that the activity of the subconscious in which this emotive state operates is in relation to the need of the Absolute and consequently to the need of intemporal realisation. The presence of distress and the need of satori are intimately connected in any given individual.

After satori if a man still experiences emotions he no longer experiences them against a background of constant distress; and this modification of the background is a modification so immense, so fundamental, of our whole affective life, that we cannot correctly imagine anything about the emotions of a man after satori.

The inner work to attain satori should aim at this moment, perfectly non-emotive, the necessity for which we have seen. This work of restraint of our emotivity cannot be correctly understood as long as the distinction between emotions and the emotive state is not understood. The emotive state by itself is abnormal and contrary to satori; emotion itself is normal and not contrary to satori. But it is a thousand times easier to perceive the emotions than the existence of the emotive state. And so man often believes that it is good to curb the emotions; and all his work is vain because it is misdirected.

Correctly directed, the work will aim at curbing the emotive

state; it will aim at obtaining not a disappearance of the contractions of the psycho-somatic organism which are the emotions, but the disappearance of the spasms of this organism. It is for the organism as a whole as for the aspect of it that is merely gross: the virtuoso pianist has not suppressed his muscular contractions: he has suppressed the spasm which, at the beginning of his apprenticeship, was the troublesome background against which his muscular contractions took place.

But how can one obtain the annulment of the emotive state, of the distress-spasm which constitutes the basis of all our affective life? It would be vain to attempt it directly. One might think it would be useful to make an effort of voluntary muscular decontraction, in the hope that this partial decontraction might automatically bring about a general decontraction. Such efforts, directed against a particular object, are in reality powerless to touch the generality of the being; a central spasm necessarily accompanies the effort by which I relax one aspect of myself; I cannot envisage anything particular without spasm. One could also try to fight against the emotions, since the emotions release the emotive state; but that would be to injure our very life; the problem is to relax the emotive state without touching the emotions, without touching anything particular.

We cannot obtain any modification of our total organism except by using the law of Three. That is why any direct effort that tends to reduce something within us is inoperative as regards our totality. On the contrary we ought to respect, directly, what we deplore in ourselves and bring up face to face with it the antagonistic and complementary element; this brings into play the conciliatory principle and, as a result, the resolution of the regrettable element. This element is reintegrated in the whole and disappears by losing its illusory autonomy.

Let us see how this law applies here. The profound spasm of my total organism, although affecting my organism as a totality, is not itself total, it is not absolute. It is more or less intense, but always partial; at each moment only one part of my possible spasm is found to be effective, while all the rest is ineffective, unmanifested. My deep attention (the attention which functions on the profound plane) is, in a natural manner, always focussed on the manifested part of my spasm. The disequilibrium resides

precisely in this natural partiality by which I am only attentive to the manifested part of my spasm. The desirable equilibrium consequently requires that I be attentive to the non-manifested part of my spasm at the same time that I am attentive to its manifested part; in other words, at the same time that I am attentive to my interest in such and such a particular thing I ought to be attentive to my indifference towards all the rest of the manifestation.

This time again there arises the temptation, to which we are so well used, to act directly; I am tempted to make a voluntary effort by which I may perceive my indifference to everything with which I am not concerned at the moment. But this is impossible; the indifference to which I am required to be attentive is non-manifested. As soon as I wish consciously to think that I am indifferent I perceive the manifested idea of 'indifference' and not the unmanifested indifference. The non-manifested necessarily escapes my dualistic consciousness which comprises a subject that perceives and an object that is perceived, both of which are manifested.

Once I have escaped the snare of this last temptation to act directly, I am brought back to the fundamental law of our evolution towards realisation: *only pure intellectual comprehension is effective*. No useful modification of my inner phenomena can result from a concerted manipulation, no matter how ingenious one may imagine it. Every useful modification, useful in view of intemporal realisation, should come spontaneously from our Absolute Principle, owing to the breach made in the screen of ignorance by intellectual intuition. Each piece of intellectual evidence that is obtained concerning the problem of our realisation is a breach operated in the screen of ignorance; by this breach is accomplished thereafter, without our having to worry about it, the process of our transformation. In the case which concerns us here the intellectual evidence to be obtained is the following: we radically deceive ourselves with regard to our profound emotivity; we believe in the existence of our emotive state only, of our spasm. We do not believe in our profound emotivity except in so far as it manifests itself by a spasm, in so far as it shows signs of life; we misjudge all the rest, we misjudge our emotivity in so far as it does not manifest itself, in so far as it does not show signs of life.

But our emotivity in so far as it shows signs of life is limited, whereas our emotivity in so far as it does not show signs of life is infinite. What is real in my affectivity, at every second of my existence, what therefore is really of importance for me, is not my emotive state, my spasm, my partiality, but on the contrary, behind that, my perfect indifference, my freedom from spasm, my impartiality. That which counts in me, as far as I am a sensitive being, is not what I am in process of feeling but the infinity of that which I am in process of not feeling; in short my emotive state actually manifested is in reality without any interest for myself.

This intellectual evidence, when I obtain it, is a revelation which upsets my whole vision of my inner life. This vision does not immediately destroy my affective partiality for my emotive manifestation but it installs in me a counterbalancing intellectual certitude which affirms my emotive non-manifestation, my serenity relaxed and non-manifested. Thanks to this new intellectual certitude, an attention developes in me to the infinite indifference which dwells in me underneath my limited interests. This attention operates in the Unconscious and gives me no dualistic perception; but it operates none the less (in the degree that I understand), and this invisible action is revealed ultimately and visibly by a progressive diminution of the intensity of my emotive states. Thus it is possible for me to make my way towards the non-emotive state which will permit the release of satori.

The correct operation of our profound attention is revealed in the long run, in the course of our general evolution, by a diminution of our emotive states. But general evolution comprises transitory periods during which the emotive spasm increases. We will see why this is so.

In the case of a man who has not yet understood the distinction between emotions and the emotive states the attention operates in the following manner: the surface attention, on the plane called 'conscious', is fixed on the emotions (or, more exactly, on images of the emotive film); the profound attention, on the plane called 'subconscious', is fixed on the emotive state. The ordinary average man is not conscious of his emotive state (that is why classical psychology ignores this state); he only has a 'subconscious' sense of it, and it is only by inductive reasoning that this man sometimes

arrives at the conclusion 'I am very irritable to-day'; he is not directly conscious of his irritability, but only of the images which pass across the background of it.

The understanding of the distinction between 'emotion' and 'emotive state' will produce, in the degree in which it is obtained, a deepening of the task of the attention. The surface attention, which was operating on the conscious plane of the imaginative film, will now tend to operate on the plane hitherto subconscious of the emotive state (that is to say, this man, thanks to his understanding, becomes capable of directing his attention towards his emotive state); and meanwhile the profound attention will tend to operate in the Unconscious, a domain that is infinite and immutable, against which stand out the variations of the emotive state.

If this understanding were complete from the first this shifting of the profound attention would be realised immediately, in its entirety, with stability; this attention would be reinstated in the Unconscious (or Self or Own-Nature of Zen), and satori would take place. But it is far from likely that the understanding would be complete from the first. Between the first moment at which it is conceived theoretically and the moment at which it has acquired, by contact with experience, all the third dimension which it lacked at first, there should elapse a more or less drawn-out period of maturing. The obtaining of theoretical understanding does not sweep away at one stroke all the illusory beliefs which were there before it and which are supported by automatisms, affective and of comportment. Faith and 'beliefs' will coexist for a more or less long time. The maturing of understanding consists in the progressive erosion of errors by means of the truth obtained at last; the good grain grows and stifles little by little the brambles.

In the course of this maturing an antagonism exists between the understanding (or Faith) and the affective automatisms which support the errors. Faith tends to make a man conscious of his emotive state; but his automatisms raise up the obstacle of distress between his conscious vision and this emotive state which is the place of the distress-spasm. The emotive state will lose its illusory poison of distress in the degree in which it is observed; but in the measure in which my automatisms still prevent me from seeing

while my understanding directs my gaze towards the emotive state, that is in the degree in which the vision of the emotive state is attempted without success, the emotive state increases. A critical recrudescence of the emotive spasm is therefore to be found on the route to relaxation (the dragons placed on the path to the treasure). The man should be warned in order that he may not let himself be frightened and discouraged; if he knows this he will strive without respite for progress in his understanding, even when his condition seems to be getting worse. When consciousness has courageously penetrated at last to the plane of the emotive state, hitherto subconscious, there will be revealed the penetration of the profound attention into the Unconscious, the domain of Absolute Positivity which dissipates all distress.

We have remembered that only pure intellectual understanding is effective, and that no concerted manipulation can modify our inner phenomena in a direction that is useful for satori. It is important to insist on this point and to reject all the conceptions according to which we think we can *ourselves* effect our metaphysical transformation. However, this being admitted, we will show how a voluntary inner gesture to perceive the emotive state intervenes at a given moment of the liberating evolution.

As soon as my understanding has reached a certain degree, and my major compensatory attitudes have been left behind, my profound emotive spasm increases. My understanding, as I have said above, will then tend to displace my attention towards the depths, it will make clear to me, with evidence, the value of an inner gesture that is neither natural nor automatic, leading to the conscious perception of the emotive state which until then had been subconscious (that is to say the value of no longer running away in the face of distress as I have until now, but on the contrary of facing up to it with a spirit of investigation). This comes from the understanding alone, the decision to make this inner gesture flows spontaneously from the understanding. The gesture is not commended to me by an idolatrous affective attitude ('duty' of 'salvation', 'spiritual' ambition) which would seek to impose itself on me by pushing back other tendencies; the *decision* to make this gesture takes effect in me spontaneously when I see, with evidence, its utility. Then only, after the accomplishment of the long task of necessary understanding, I am able to effect the

gesture whose utility has become evident to me; until this moment any attempt at carrying it out would be premature and inopportune. If we now suppose that the required intellectual evidence has been obtained and that the *decision* to make the useful inner gesture flows entirely from a complete certainty, if we suppose then that I am at last capable of successfully executing this gesture, then I realise that this execution cannot flow spontaneously from the understanding alone. The gesture is decided by the pure intellectual intuition, but it is executed on the plane of the concrete inner life on which all my automatic mechanisms operate. This non-natural gesture is executed on the plane of natural mechanisms and against the current of the automatism which unceasingly draws my attention towards images.

We should stress this essential point, we should remember that all inner work in whose undertaking the irrational affectivity has played a part, is by that very fact bound to fail from the point of view of satori. These indispensible oratory precautions having been clearly formulated we can go on to speak of the practical inner task looked at from the angle of this study.

This task consists in making, whenever we can, an inner gesture aiming at the perception of the emotive state. But let us see at once what there is of paradox in this perception. My emotive state affects me, affects my psycho-somatic organism, in so far as that is a totality; it cannot then be the object of a dualistic perception comprising subject and object. It is illusorily objective as long as I do nothing in order to perceive it, but it does away with itself in the measure that I seek to perceive it. *The liberating inner gesture aims at the perception of the emotive state but it could not achieve that; it achieves a certain perception of my total organism, or perception of Self, across the emotive state which covers and hides this Self at the same time that it points out the way. This gesture results then in a moment of real subjective consciousness obtained via the partial annihilation of the emotive state, by 'Looking into one's own nature'.*

The natural man, apart from all inner work, believes that he can perceive his emotive state; but, when he ends up with the observation that he is 'irritable', he only perceives a mental image fabricated in connexion with the illusory objectivity of his emotive state. All his reflexes, all his mechanisms, are conditioned by his emotive state; the importance of this state is, then, immense;

but this importance is *implicit*, subconscious, and the emotive state in reference to which the man considers everything is never itself consciously considered. The natural man lives uniquely in reference to his Ego, but he never questions himself regarding this Ego. Thus the emotive state, in the functioning of the human-being, plays the rôle of a fixed point round which everything turns; in other words, the natural man is centred round his subconscious (centre of rotation), whereas his real or geometrical centre is the Unconscious.

In reality the emotive state is not a fixed point; and it is its illusory fixity which conditions all the illusions of our egotistical life. When I deliberately direct my attention towards my emotive state (that is to say towards my total coenaesthesis, in reality towards my Ego under this coenaesthesis), then I see that 'this' is not fixed, that 'that' moves, I feel intuitively the intimate pulsation of my life (it is not, therefore, noumenon but phenomena; the Ego cannot be the Absolute since it moves). This partial abolition of the illusory fixity of the emotive state brings my centre of rotation near to my geometrical centre, and I 'normalise' myself.

This vision that 'something moves' at the centre of my phenomenal being is not analogous to my vision that a stone that is thrown moves. In the vision in which 'something moves' in me neither space nor time exist any longer, nor forms; it moves where it is and without changing; I touch there the eternity of the instant.

In practice this work should entail inner gestures repeated, but short and light. It is not a question of laboriously dwelling upon it as though there were there something to seize. There is nothing to seize. It is a question of voluntarily noting, as in the winking of an eye, instantaneous and perfectly simple, that I am conscious of myself globally in that second (through an effort to observe *how* I am conscious of myself in that second). I succeed instantaneously or not at all; if I do not succeed at all I will try again later (this may be a few seconds later, but the gesture should be carried out at one go). It is to my interest to make this gesture as often as possible, but with suppleness and discretion, disturbing as little as possible the course of my dualistic inner life; I have to interrupt the consciousness that I habitually have of my dualistic life by a 'break' that is clean, frank, instantaneous, but

without doing anything which modifies it directly. The normalising modification will be carried out by the Absolute Principle through the instantaneous 'breaks' produced by this inner work.

The distinction between emotions and the emotive state allows us to state precisely the nature of the perception which a man has of his affective life. That which is called a sentiment is a complex phenomenon comprising on the one hand an imaginative film and on the other hand an emotive variation.

If I envisage first of all the imaginative film I see that I have an indisputable conscious perception of it. The images which file across my mind are fixed by my memory and stored up in me; they constitute a stock of subtle forms that I can call up, bring back under the notice of my attention, examine at leisure, and describe in words. I have power over my images, I dominate them, I manœvre them, and I seize them in an active perception in which my consciousness-subject seizes the image-object.

If I now envisage the emotive variation, my sentiment properly so-called, the situation is quite different. In a sense I have a certain perception of it; in fact if my sentiment is sad and someone asks me: 'Are you gay?', I can reply with conviction: 'No, I am sad.' If I had no perception of my sadness I would not be able to reply thus. But if I try to perceive my sadness with an effort of investigation, in order to examine it and know it, I realise that what is presented for my examination is always a film of images, sad or saddenning, but not my sadness itself in its indivisibility. I fail completely in seizing the same active perception of my sadness that I can seize of my sad images. It is completely impossible to me to seize my sentiment in a mental capture and to *know* it as I can my images; I seized my images, decomposed their initial form into partial constituting forms, analysed them, and saw into what elements they were reducible. I simply cannot do as much with my sentiment; I know its existence in me (I am not therefore without knowing something about it), but I cannot know it by means of a similar analysis.

Since I have nevertheless a certain perception of my sentiment, there exists between my surface consciousness and it a certain articulation. But this articulation is manifestly not of the same nature as that which exists between my consciousness and my images since it does not allow me any capture of my sentiment.

In the articulation between my sentiment and my consciousness my sentiment is active and my consciousness is passive. An illustration will help us to understand this. Suppose that in the darkness I seize an object and turn it round in my hand; I have thus an active perception of this object which gives me information concerning it. Let us suppose now that in the darkness an immense giant takes me in his hand, turns me round and presses me; I realise the existence of the giant, I find him more or less agreeable or disagreeable according to whether he caresses me or crushes me, but that is all; I have obtained no information about the giant himself, and it is impossible for me to describe him.

In the course of such a sentiment as I am in process of experiencing I can say, then, that I seize the images which form part of this emotive phenomenon, but that I am seized by the global emotive phenomenon of which the images form part. My consciousness is a seizing-consciousness on the part of the images and a seized-consciousness on the part of the sentiment. Everything happens as if I were conscious of the Images which form part of my sentiment and as if my sentiment were conscious of me.

But this way of looking at it corresponds with the illusory pespective of the natural man, according to which he considers his surface consciousness as constituting him, as being himself. In reality my surface consciousness is not 'me', it does not constitute the principle of all these phenomena by means of which my psycho-somatic organism creates itself, principle which alone can be called 'me'; it is only a certain plane of these phenomena which manifest my principle. Instead of saying that my sentiment seizes my consciousness, I should say then that my subconcious seizes my surface consciousness. My subconscious is still 'me'. If I feel this seizure of my consciousness by my subconscious as an alienation of my liberty, that is not because that which seizes my consciousness is foreign to me, but because that which seizes my consciousness (and which is still 'me') is asleep, and that, because of this sleep, my subconscious acts under the complete determination of the outside world. Everything happens as though, in my sentiment, the outside world seized me. However the outside world confines itself to determining the modalities of the play of my sleeping subconscious, but the real motive-force of this play is not foreign to me, it is my own principle, it is 'me'. In my sentiment

I have been acted upon, certainly, but only because as a result of my actual sleeping state I allow myself to be acted upon.

Arrived at this point of understanding I realise that what I have called my 'subconscious' is illusory, that it forms a part of the dream of my sleep of man-before-satori. That which seizes my surface consciousness and moves it is my first and only motor, my principle, the Absolute Principle which moves me as it moves all created things. This Principle, anterior to all consciousness since it engenders all consciousness by manifesting itself in it, we ought to call here the Fundamental Unconscious (No-Mind or Cosmic Mind of Zen). That which I have called my subconscious is only the illusory manner in which I represent to myself, imaginatively, the action which the sleeping centre of my mind exercises on the superficial phenomena, alone actually awake, of this same mind, that is to say the action which the Unconscious exercises on my surface consciousness. In fact the subconscious, this intermediary stage, has no reality; the Unconscious has an absolute reality (noumenal), the surface consciousness (imaginative film) has a relative reality (phenomenal), but the subconscious has only an illusory reality; it is only an intermediary and hybrid representation which, if one regards it from the point of view of activity, is the acting Unconscious, and which, regarded from the point of view of passivity, is the superficial consciousness that has been acted upon.

Man-after-satori will not then become capable of seizing the sentiment which the man-before-satori was incapable of seizing. For satori, or the awakening of the Fundamental Mind, dissipates the illusory hybrid representation which we call sentiment. *And it is precisely the fruitless attempt to seize the unseizable sentiment which results in the awakening of the Fundamental Mind.* There is no more sentiment for man-after-satori; his surface consciousness is acted upon directly by the Fundamental Mind in a reply that is cosmically harmonious to the excitation of the outside world; this reply takes account of the particular outer circumstances but it is not at all wrought upon, 'in-formed' by it.

one-way relation: the form of the imaginative phenomena determines the form of the emotive phenomena. From the point of view of form the outside world is active and my inner world is passive. Nothing is motionless; the exterior phenomena change unceasingly, and the reacting emotivity varies unceasingly. There is no motionless emotivity; there are only contractions, no spasm; there is no emotive state, but only emotions.

When it is a question of an imaginary film everything is much more complicated. The relation with emotivity is no longer one-way, it exists in both directions at once. It exists first of all as it existed in the preceding case; the emotivity reacts to the imaginary images as it reacted to the real images (emotivity does not differentiate between these two kinds of images; a jealous man who vigorously imagines a scene in which his wife deceives him is as moved as if the scene were real). But on the other hand the emotive state reacts to the elaboration of the imaginery film; if a real misfortune befalls me and saddens me I start imagining a thousand other misfortunes and I see everything in the same sombre light. Thus there is established a vicious circle of double reactions.

But, in this relation between emotivity and imaginary film, another more important factor intervenes. The imaginary film resembles the real film to a certain extent; the films that I invent are necessarily elaborated with the elements that I have received in the past from the outside world; but there exists an essential difference between these two kinds of films. The real film is invented by the Cosmos, its source is the cosmic source, which is the Primary Cause of the Universe; therefore every real film is harmonic, balanced in the Whole. Its fixed centre is the Noumenon, and there could not be in this film any phenomenal fixity, it is only pure movement. On the contrary the imaginary film is centred on my Ego, on 'myself pretending to be absolutely a distinct individual'; its source, its centre, is not the immutable noumenal centre of the Cosmos, but a false, ex-centric centre. And there is, in this film, at the same time as a continual movement, a certain phenomenal fixity derived from this phenomenal centre. This is revealed by the fact that my day-dreams, if they are made of moving images, are made of images which turn ever more and more round a fixed idea; they are always more or less

The authentic emotivity, that of the child, operates according to a mobile unstable rhythm and it is quite irrational (it is unrelated with the importance that our reason accords to the images according to our scale of values). The false emotivity operates with a slow rhythm and it is more or less rational (except that at moments of fatigue, a certain instability can be seen there also; but this instability is not a healthy absence of fixity, it is only failure of a spasm which is exhausting itself). This emotivity is in relation with the ideal image that I make of the world and of myself, with my desire to see myself in attitudes that are 'beautiful-good-true' and with my fear of seeing myself in attitudes that are 'ugly-wicked-false'. My authentic reaction to a given circumstance scoffs at the 'ideal', it depends only on my vision of the outer world; but my false emotive reaction can be radically different for it depends on my ideal vision of myself. It is made up of sentiments that I cherish, no longer with regard to the outer world but concerning my attitudes before this outer world. On account of that I can very well be falsely gay (in my imaginary emotivity) while being at the same time authentically sad in my authentic emotivity, or the other way round.

For example: I have amused myself, months beforehand, with the thought of my annual holidays; an image of myself-joyous-at-seeing-Florence has firmly developed in my mind; if I am 'idealistic', strongly 'egotistical', greedy to 'be absolutely', the realisation of this image becomes for me the object of a very imperious need. Once I am in Florence, I find myself very tired and depressed; my authentic state, which mocks at my vision of myself and only responds to the real circumstance, is contracted; at bottom I am unhappy. But my desire to see realised the image of myself-joyous-in-Florence forbids me to realise that I am unhappy; if anyone asks me: 'Well, and this holiday?', I reply: 'Splendid; all these museums are a bit tiring, but what does that matter compared with so much beauty.' If I then direct my attention to my emotivity with an honest spirit of investigation, I see the naked truth: I am unhappy, more unhappy than I usually am in the Underground which takes me to my work; and I see that, without a special effort, I cannot realise it; or else I realised my sadness but I attached it illusorily to an imaginary film which was only the effect of it.

lie which the elaboration of my false emotivity involves. The need that I have to see realised the ideal image of myself, has little by little warped my emotivity. As soon as I make honest efforts to see my emotive variations as they really are I no longer see anything but my authentic emotive variations, and I then perceive that there is no difference between the young child and myself; my authentic emotivity is quite as unstable and irrational as his.

The inner work of which we are speaking here (in order to see directly our instantaneous emotive situation) brings into play an intuitive and direct inner regard, which passes through the false emotivity without stopping there. The only emotivity which does not disappear under this regard is the authentic emotivity, that which corresponds only with the plane of sensation, or the animal plane. The plane of images, the 'angelic' or 'ideal' plane, vanishes. It is a strange revelation to appreciate the unique reality of our irrational emotive agitation and to see with what constancy we lie to ourselves on the subject. We then see that the 'animal' has always persisted integrally in us under angelic imaginary constructions and that this animal is all that is actually 'realised' of our total being; all the rest is unreal. It is to this organism that we must modestly return in order to obtain the awakening, in its centre, of its immanent and transcendent principle.

The intuitive inner regard traverses the false emotivity without stopping there; it traverses the images of the imaginary film, dispelling them as it goes. But, if it dispels this film it does not dispel the profound spasm in its actual determinism. I can already understand this theoretically: it is not enough to dispose of the imaginary film that is joined in the instant to the subconscious, in order to wipe out all this subconscious itself. And practice effectively proves to me the persistence of my profound spasm. This leads me to consider further and to understand that this spasm, which I have called abnormal (and justifiably in a sense) is on the road that leads to satori.

In the spasm of my total organism there is an element of immobility which is quite certainly beneficial; our spontaneous evolution will move towards satori if we are 'obedient to the nature of things', if we cease to busy ourselves with ersatz-forms of satori. 'To do nothing', which is the immobility of our total organism, the immobility of its phenomenal centre, allows the maturing of

satori. There is then something right and normalising in the profound spasm; it is beneficial in that it tends to immobilise our centre. If in fact it has not been normalising for me up to the present that is because I have always defended myself by means of a reflex against this immobilisation. Let us remember the double relation which exists between emotivity and the imaginary film; the images release the spasm and then the state of spasm releases images. That the images release the spasm is inevitable and is not to be regretted because that tends towards the desirable immobility. What is regrettable, and avoidable, is that the state of spasm should release images, entailing perpetual variations in the spasm, variations which prevent me from profiting by the immobility virtually contained in it. Why is a new imaginary film released by the spasm, or rather in connexion with it, preventing me from immobilising myself? Because there exists in me a false belief according to which immobility is dangerous, mortal; for lack of Faith in my Principle I still believe that I ought myself to achieve my salvation, realise by a personal activity my total accomplishment. As long as this belief operates in me I cannot prevent my state of spasm from releasing a new imaginary film, and that is a vicious circle of agitation.

The caterpillar has to immobilise itself as a chrysalis in order to become a butterfly. When I am agitated in the vicious circle of emotive states and of imaginary films I am comparable with a caterpillar who feels himself overtaken by the process of becoming a chrysalis and who fights bitterly against the immobilisation which he feels as a danger.

Nevertheless if I understand how absurd it is to fear immobilisation, if I understand that my profound spasm offers me not destruction but only an apparent death (chrysalis) in order to obtain a life that at last is real (butterfly), then I perceive that the release of an imaginary film by the emotive state is not by any means inevitable. Strong in my understanding, in my Faith, I realise that I am able, and quite easily, to lose myself in my spasm, that is in my fear, or sadness, or anxiety, without any *image* fearful or sad or anxious, without thoughts, or inner movements. At the end of a moment my sadness ceases to be such in order to become colourless immobility merely. I am then insensible, anaesthetised, like a piece of timber; an idiot in one sense, but still very well

able to act, to react correctly to the outer world, like a robot in good working order.

One sees at what paradoxical conclusions our study arrives. Our first observations condemned the emotive spasm and inspired in us a nostalgia for the purely fluid emotivity of childhood. But it is impossible to go backwards; and besides the state of the child was the extreme opposite of that of satori. We must go ahead. The deplorable consequences of our intellectual development arose only from the fact that our intellect was not enlightened; as a result of our ignorance we were resisting our inner immobilisation; the resistance to immobilisation caused our variations of spasm, eddies of distress; we were wounding ourselves on the bonds which bound us up. But the remedy is there where we saw the evil; the bonds were only enemies to us when we resisted them. The emotive spasm was only destructive as long as it continued to be emotive, that is agitated. As soon as I cease to dread immobility I free myself from the imaginary film, illusorily coercive, which was born from the spasm; the spasm ceases to be emotive, and it ceases forthwith to be spasm in order to become merely immobility without suffering. The maturing of satori is then possible.

Our intelligence always ends up with this paradox at the moment at which thesis and antithesis are resolved in a synthesis. I was possessed first of all by the unconsidered belief that my emotive state was my very life (thesis); my considered study brings me to the belief, diametrically opposite, that my central spasm is my death (antithesis); and then suddenly my intellectual intuition discovers that my conscious adhesion to my spasmodic emotive state delivers me from it, that is this adhesion conciliates life and death, movement and fixity, spasm and suppleness. The paradox is only apparent, on the formal plane; behind this appearance there is the conciliation of the contraries.

Our comparison between emotivity and a muscle allows us to make clear what new kind of relaxation we obtain in ceasing to struggle against the immobilisation of the spasm; and this comparison, as we shall see, serves us thus at the moment at which it is no longer applicable. When my muscle goes into a spasm it is shortened; when it is decontracted it recovers its length and is ready for a new shortening spasm. When I do not correct inner

work it inevitably happens that my central spasm decreases; this eventuality, as with the muscle, then throws me back into a relaxation ready for a new spasm. Up to this point our comparison is applicable, but when I adhere consciously to my spasm, what takes place in me is analogous to a phenomenon that is never seen in physiology: a muscle which is relaxed without becoming longer, which could decontract without recovering its original length, and then be at once shortened and supple. Let us suppose that a failure puts me into a spasm of humiliation; if I take no correct inner action my humiliation will pass more or less rapidly and sooner or later I will come out of this state; I shall be no longer humiliated, but then I shall have come back to my habitual pretention and in consequence open to an eventual new humiliation. If, on the contrary, in my state of humiliation, I consciously adhere to my spasm, my humiliation disappears without my pretention reappearing; my central 'muscle' (as opposed to what can be seen in the case of my material muscles) decontracts without losing its shortening; my *humiliation* is transformed into *humility*.

The comparison with the muscle (with its states of expansion and of diminution) is a good one. When a success exalts me I feel myself to be aggrandised, increased tenfold in volume; physically even, I feel my chest fill out, my nostrils open, I use large gestures. When, on the contrary, a repulse humiliates me I feel myself small, shrivelled, reduced, I have a weight on my chest, my gestures are curtailed. The inner action of which we are speaking consists in shutting ourselves up willingly in this reduced volume. There is then produced a sort of condensation of the Ego; the Ego is at once denied in its volume and affirmed in its density. This process is comparable with that which transforms coal into diamonds; the aim of this process is not the destruction of the Ego but its transformation, its sublimation. The conscious acceptance results in the coal which has become denser, and so blacker and more opaque, being instantaneously transformed into a diamond that is perfectly transparent.

It is evident that we cannot really accomplish this inner gesture of complete adhesion to our shortening spasm the moment we try. For all our previous automatisms push us towards gestures that are radically opposed to this one. The inner work consists in making with perseverence partial performances of the useful

Chapter Sixteen

ON AFFECTIVITY

We can enlarge more thoroughly the preceding studies by envisaging the whole of conscious affectivity, that is the whole of the inner phenomena by means of which we experience pleasure or pain in contact with the outer world. Since these two poles, pleasure and pain, correspond with the qualitative variations of a single thing, my consciousness of being-distinct, it will simplify our exposition to speak for the most part of the painful variations. What will be valid for the painful will be valid also for the pleasurable.

First of all it appears that there are two sorts of sensibility, physical (physical pain) and psychic ('moral' suffering). I cannot confuse the pain which an abcess gives me with that given me by the death of someone I love. These two sensibilities seem to correspond with the gross part of me (the somatic), and with my subtle part (or psychic). The physical sensibility comprises *sensations*, agreeable or disagreeable; the psychic sensibility comprises *sentiments*, also agreeable or disagreeable. In practical psychology I necessarily make a clear-cut difference between these two domains of sensibility.

But this duality of soma and psyche only indicates two aspects of a single thing, my psycho-somatic organism; there are therein merely two aspects (distinct only to the outside observer) of this creature which I call 'Self', of this microcosm, synthetic and single, which is a particular manifestation of the Absolute Principle. If I hold, on edge, a sheet of cardboard in front of my left eye, my left eye sees this sheet as a straight line while my right sees it as a surface; but the sheet of cardboard is the same; in one sense it is both a line and a surface; in another it is neither line nor surface; in any case it is only a single sheet of cardboard.

deceive myself in considering that which touches me as being favourable or unfavourable to my existence; but I deceive myself in considering it as 'good' or 'bad', in considering it with affectivity. The sensation of being burned is not a delusion, but the pain of the burn is. My perceptions are correct in so far as they inform me, they are illusory in so far as they *affect* me. Between my Absolute Principle which 'is' and my organism which 'exists', between my noumenon and my phenomena, my affectivity neither is nor exists. Every affective phenomenon is the interpretive deformation, through ignorance, of non-affective phenomena. All my affectivity is an interpretive delirium resulting from illusory beliefs. My real Self is inaffective.

Besides, at every moment, at the same time as I am affectively sensible to such and such a thing I remain insensible to all the rest of the universe. But as long as my Faith is not entirely awakened, in satori, my attention allows itself to be captured by my fallacious affectivity and turns away from my inaffectivity.

The inner work leaves things in this state, it lets the attention wander towards the affective pseudo-phenomena. But it does more than let it go passively in this direction, it actively pushes it that way. Where I was captured by something incomprehensible, and where this fact of being captured was expressed by suffering, I now project my active attention in order to seize that which seized me, that which I called my suffering. Now that my understanding has neutralised my fear I have the courage to turn round, in a spirit of investigation, towards these hypothetical flames that my flight had stirred up. This inner effort to capture what was seeking to capture me causes my suffering to lose hold; it is thus that we should understand the Zen concept of 'Letting Go'. This inner gesture frees the energy which was tied up, dissolves what was coagulated; it installs me in an anaesthesia which is not just absence of affectivity, but Not-Feeling, the motionless principle of all the affective movements. In destroying affective partiality it prepares the breaking forth of satori; it cures the '*malady of the spirit*', *this malady which consists, according to Zen, in* '*opposing that which we like to that which we do not like*'.

Tsou-hsin was very pleased about it and said: "If the truth of Zen is what I possess now, why do you make us swallow all those old tales and exhaust us in efforts to find out the meaning of them?" The master said: "If I did not make you fight in every possible way in order to find the meaning and lead you finally to a state of non-fighting and of no-effort from which you can see with your own eyes, I am sure that you would lose every chance of discovering yourself." '

I am not then obliged to refuse to see myself actually as a horseman on horseback, nor to refuse to act as a horseman who schools his horse. But I do not forget, despite this optical illusion, that I am in reality a centaur, and that all schooling which allows the illusory hiatus between horseman and horse to persist keeps me away from my true nature. However fine, however exalting, may be the result of my schooling, it keeps me away from my true nature. Little does it matter to me in reality that my horse is schooled to be a 'saint' or a yogi with spectacular powers, or to experience inner states felt as transcendent; my true nature is not there, it consists in no longer being other than one with my horse; then the smallest gesture of my life, however apparently banal one may suppose it, will participate in Reality.

But at the moment in which the illusory hiatus is abolished, the centaur, this formal symbol of which my understanding made use before realisation, is abolished at the same time that it is realised. 'In not being two', says Zen, 'everything is the same and everything that exists is included therein.' The horseman and the horse are united, but they unite in the in-formal All; so that there is no longer either horse or horseman, and the centaur is transcended as soon as he is reached. It is this that is demonstrated by the admirable Zen text entitled: 'The Ten stages of the Training of the Cow.' In that Zen affirms the necessity of passing through the training; but it affirms also that the ultimate aim is by no means a trained cow. 'Mounted on the cow, the man is at last back at home. But behold here there is no longer a cow and with what serenity he is sitting all by himself.' Then the man himself disappears also: 'Everything is void, the whip, the cord, the man and the cow; who has ever contemplated the immensity of the sky? On the incandescent furness not a flake of snow can fall. When one has arrived there, manifest is the mind of the old Master.'

the nature of Buddhi; but before satori, my manifested Independent Intelligence is not Buddhi (transcendence of the principle). As soon as my mind escapes however little from my affective movement of the moment (that is as soon as there is a certain passage from the particular to the general), Buddhi is manifested in this mind, but at the same time I would be deceiving myself if I identified this functioning of my mind with Buddhi itself or the 'vision of things as they are'. The Independent Intelligence necessitates throwing the affectivity out of gear with the mind, but there are degrees in the execution of this process; in so far as there is throwing out of gear it is perfectly thrown out of gear, but this qualitatively perfect process is only incompletely effected quantitatively.

From this quantitative gradation of the functioning of the Independent Intelligence flows the whole horizontal hierarchy of disciplines of which we have spoken; and this quantitative gradation conditions, in the eyes of my affectivity, a qualitative gradation of the kinds of training, from the most gross to the most subtle. The purpose of our discussion here is not to study the whole hierarchy itself, but that which constitutes the summit of it. It is important to study the most subtle modality of the operation of the Independent Intelligence, the primordial training, that which gives rise to all the inferior kinds of training, in order to find therein the primordial insufficiency of the manifestation of Buddhi in us, the ultimate error which, in our return to the beginning, we have to transcend.

We have seen that all training consists in an evaluation of the functioning of our horse, in a judgement of this functioning; and that this judgement is in reference to an ideal norm conceived by the rider. Each man, at each moment, has a certain conception of the manner in which in his view his horse ought to work, and this conception expresses itself in an image. The more this image is personal, gross, the more the corresponding training is felt as being 'low' in the affective hierarchy of the modes of training; the more the image is general, subtle, the more the corresponding training is felt as being subtle or 'high'.

But in the degree in which my understanding becomes richer and more precise my lucidity dissipates idolatries, my ideal image of myself becomes poorer and blurred. I end by understanding

of the tendency of the horse; the horse strives against the outer world, against the Not-Self, while the rider strives against the horse, against the Self.

The situation created by the primordial training carries then a radical antagonism between my two parts. This is not surprising since this antagonism is one of the aspects of the dualism of Yin and Yang. But, in the equilibrium of the Tao, the two poles Yin and Yang, if they are antagonistic, are at the same time complementary. What I can deplore is that, on account of my ignorance, the antagonism of my two parts is radical, I only live the antagonism of my two poles and not their complementary character. What I live is not to be destroyed, but to be completed.

This achievement will come through understanding and can only come through that. Understanding, which has freed me from personal ideal images and has thus purified in me the radical antagonism which was making these idolatrous illusions, will go deeper in its work. The clear theoretical conception of the ideas expressed in this study will penetrate little by little my concrete inner life, my inner experience. In the degree in which I recognise theoretically my subconscious pretention of triumphing always and completely over the Not-Self, and the implied subconscious exigence of my rider towards my unfortunate horse, in this degree a new inner attitude appears with regard to the old and neutralises it little by little. This new attitude is indulgence towards the horse, acceptance that he feels himself denied; I cease to bear myself ill-will each time I fail, each time that I am unhappy or unwell. I regard my horse as a friend and no longer as a simple instrument of my limitless claims. I make it up with my brother before going into the temple, as the Gospel has it.

But this new attitude does not appear consciously; and so it must not be confused with the banal conscious self-satisfaction which is the comfortable result of personal training. It is like a base that one throws into an acid; scarcely present in the mixture, the base ceases to exist as such, and its presence is only represented by a diminution of acidity. No friendly partiality is apparent in me for my horse, but only a diminution of my unfriendly partiality against him. No absolving judgement is apparent, but only a diminution of judgement in general, which always condemns when all is said and done.

Chapter Nineteen

THE IMMEDIATE PRESENCE OF SATORI

My primordial demand to be a distinct being conditions all my desires and, by my desires, my hopes and my beliefs. Bearing this claim, I am the bearer of an aspiration, of an expectation: believing myself to lack something, I await that which will be able to fulfil my need.

This general aspiration manifests itself in the fact that I await a 'true life', different from my actual life in that I shall then be totally, perfectly affirmed, no longer in a partial and imperfect manner. Every human being lives, whether he realises it or not, in the expectation that there shall begin at last the 'true life' from which all negation will have disappeared.

What this 'true life' may be each of us represents to himself differently, according to his structure and the moment. More exactly, each man represents to himself that which, according to him, might inaugurate a new era in which the imperfections of his present life would be abolished. Voices arise in me in order to tell me that it would definitely be marvellous if at last I had this . . . or if at last I were like that . . . or if such and such a thing were to happen. Sometimes I think I see very clearly what could inaugurate the 'true life'; sometimes it remains vague, I merely await 'something' which, I am persuaded, would settle everything. Sometimes this expectation remains dumb in me, but it is only a passing drowsiness from which there will arise again very soon my aspiration for a life at last perfectly satisfying. Everything happens in me as if I believed myself exiled from a paradise which exists somewhere and as if I saw, in such and such a modification of the outside world or of myself, the key capable of opening the door of this lost paradise. And I live in the quest of this key.

While waiting I kill time as I may. One part of my vital energy can devote itself to the effective preparation of the key: I struggle to achieve this or that success, material or subtle. But I can only put into that one part of my energy; the rest I devote to an imaginative elaboration, to reveries concerning the famous inner trial the successful issue of which should be obtained for me by the key. I feel myself obliged to invest my energy somewhere, to fidget, externally or internally. I cannot remain motionless in my expectation. Besides, without movement, there could not be expectation, tension towards that which should come, aspiration; and without this aspiring movement I would be dead. In the measure in which I cannot fidget externally in order to obtain the expected key I fidget internally by fabricating images which relieve my expectation.

Like everything that I can observe in my natural structure, this expectation is sound in itself but wrongly directed. It is sound in itself because it manifests my deep need of this vision-of-things-as-they-are which will usher in for me a *true* life. But it is wrongly directed because my aspiration is turned towards things as I see them in actuality. As long as my understanding has not been awakened by correct instruction I necessarily let my aspiration direct itself towards what I know, towards what I can picture to myself, to the dualistic world of phenomena. Searching for the key of the lost paradise in what I can picture to myself, it is inevitable that I picture this key either as something already experienced by me (at least partially), or as something not yet exactly experienced but of the same general nature as what I know. Even when I do not see the key clearly, formally, I picture to myself my return to the lost paradise as an inner state that is perfectly positive, perfectly happy, analogous to, but better than, the happy states I have already experienced. The 'natural' orientation of my aspiration is necessarily situated on the horizontal plane of temporal dualism; it does not tend towards anything new, outside this dualism, but towards an amelioration of that which I know.

There is therein a manifest error. In effect I expect thus, from an amelioration, something that is perfect; but no amelioration of something imperfect, however unlimited one may suppose this amelioration, could succeed in reaching perfection. No 'evolution', no 'progress', can reach that which Zen calls 'the asylum of rest'.

illusory desire of perfect rest in phenomena

Let us note, besides, that my aspiration, turned towards the dualism of satisfaction and unsatisfaction, joy and sorrow, has no right to hope for the dissociation of this inseparable dualism which can only be conciliated in the Tao. Aspiration, turned towards this dualism, can only bring about the dualism itself, with its two poles. The stronger my aspiration thus directed, the stronger becomes my own inner dualism, whether I am conscious of it or not. When my thirst is thus directed the water which comes to me is like salt water which increases my thirst after a moment of apparent quenching. The man who expects the true life from the world of manifestation, from the world which he knows, waits for it in vain until his death.

What is correct in my aspiration itself is revealed in the following manner. In expecting something other than my life of the moment, I escape complete identification with this life, I save my consciousness from being completely swallowed up in the forms that are actually present. But at the same time, on account of the false orientation of my aspiration, I founder in another identification; I identify myself with something that I imagine, more or less clearly, as being absolutely desirable; and this thing, since I imagine it, also has a form (however subtle one may suppose it) in which my consciousness loses itself. If my dream concerning the paradise to be regained saves what I have at my disposal among the circumstances momentarily lived, it abdicates this precious power of disposal in the process of imagining a chimerical phenomenal perfection.

This false direction of my aspiration creates for me the illusion of *time* and the painful impression that time is unceasingly escaping me. When I conceive that to which I aspire as an amelioration of what I know (which is phenomenon, conditioned by space-time), I necessarily project my perfect satisfaction into the future. Thus there is created for me the illusory absolute reality of time, time which seems to me to stretch out between the present imperfect moment and the future perfect moment to which I aspire.

In face of this time illusorily endowed with an absolute value, my attitude is ambivalent. When I look back I bitterly deplore the passage of time, I would like to make it come back or at least prevent it from flowing on further; when I look ahead I would like to see it flow on with infinite rapidity, because I am impatient for the

opening up of the lost paradise. When I evoke some epoch of my past life I feel it quite differently from the way in which I felt it when it happened: in fact, when I evoke it, I am freed from this vertiginous aspiration towards a better future which was then possessing me, snatching me from the moment itself and preventing me from living it. Thus is explained in me my regret for a passage of time which, however, I did not appreciate.

In the degree in which my understanding awakens as a result of correct instruction, a change takes place in me. I understand that my primordial unlimited aspiration has nothing to expect from the phenomenal world, however universally and subtly one may envisage this. I understand that what I have always been waiting for, while incarnating it in an illusory manner in one kind of representation or another, is that which Zen calls *satori*. I understand that this satori could not be conceived as an amelioration, however fantastic one may suppose it, of that which I know actually; there could not be dissociation of an inseparable dualism, progressive purification of a 'good' cleansed of all 'evil'; rather is it access, beyond dualism, to 'something' which conciliates the dualism in a trinitarian Unity. This 'something' I cannot evidently picture to myself, I can only conceive it as indescribable, unimaginable, entirely different by its very nature from anything I know to-day.

My understanding, if it is really exact, does not result in a new conscious expectation oriented towards something unimaginable; for there cannot be operation of our consciousness without imagination, and the imagination of something unimaginable is another image. Exact understanding does not result, then, in a new conscious expectation different from the last. The new expectation is not born in the surface consciousness, but in the depths of the psyche in which it balances and neutralises the old expectation oriented towards the imaginable. Correct understanding brings to birth and nourishes, in the depths of me, an aspiration antagonistic and complementary to my natural aspiration; as though a demand no longer to expect any restrictive affirmation of myself-as-a-distinct-being were born in face of the natural demand for this affirmation. That which is thus born is as insufficient by itself as that which was before; but a moment will come when these two poles, insufficient by themselves, will be in equilibrium in the

'Great Doubt' of which Zen speaks and in which this state of equilibrium will allow us to experience satori. It is just as though we came into the world with only one eye open and we were obliged to work in order completely to open the second—so that we may obtain at last 'the opening of the third eye'.

If this new expectation, born of understanding, resides in our subconscious only, wherein lies the natural expectation from which aspirations spring, we are not forbidden (nothing, for the matter of that, being forbidden to us) to make a conscious mental effort to try to conceive this new expectation. (It should be well understood that we are not advising this mental effort as a systematic method in view of realisation.)

This new expectation, or expectation of satori, is an aspiration oriented towards 'something' unimaginable, radically new, not resembling anything that I know. When I try to put myself into this state of expectation, my mind comes up against various kinds of imaginable perception which offer themselves to it and which it turns down. The rejected perceptions, as aspects of the outer world or inner states, being situated outside me or within me, their disappearance leaves my expectation between these two situations. My expectation is neither outside me nor within me, nor attached to an object eventually perceived, nor to an I-subject eventually perceiving: it is focussed on the perception itself which joins subject and object. But this perception is itself imperceptible to me, like a point without dimension or situation. There is then virtual liberation from space, which is accompanied, as we shall see, by a similar liberation from time. In my old expectation I awaited something which was not given me at the time but which nevertheless existed for me in the world of possibilities. In my new expectation I await something which does not exist at all for me since it is unimaginable. This something which is outside my possibilities, I can no more imagine in the future than I can evoke in the past; it is outside time as it is outside space (which is not surprising since space and time are two aspects of the same system). When I await this consciousness that is entirely new and unimaginable, of the world, of myself, of their relationship, I await something which, existing neither in space nor in time, is at the centre of my expectation and at the very moment of this expectation, at the point which engenders the whole Universe and

in the eternity of the instant, *hic et nunc*. Besides, my expectation ceases to be an expectation since that which I await is separated from me neither by space nor by time. I understand then the mistake that I made when I pictured to myself the state of satori as a future state; my effective becoming-conscious of the state of satori can be seen as a future eventuality, but not the state of satori itself which is from the present moment my state, has always been my state, and is my eternal 'being'. And as for this becoming-conscious of the state of satori, I ought not to believe that it will be offered to me in the future; it is offered to me from this moment, at every moment. Only my acceptation can be regarded as situated in time, in a negative manner, that is to say that I can say at each moment that I have not yet accepted satori, but without rejecting the possibility that I may accept it the next moment. I am comparable with a man in a room, where the door is wide open whereas the window is protected by bars; since my birth I have been fascinated by the outside world and have been clutching the bars of the window; and my keenness for the images outside makes my two hands violently contract. In a sense I am not free since this contraction prevents me from going out of the room. But in reality nothing else shuts me in but this ignorance which makes me take the imaginative vision of life for life itself; nothing shuts me in but the crispation of my own hands. I am free; I always have been; I will realise it as soon as I 'let go'.

It is interesting to compare with these thoughts resulting from Zen the parable of the ten virgins in the gospel. Five of them, the foolish virgins, did not supply themselves with oil; the wise virgins supplied themselves with it; and all slept until the coming of the bridegroom. The sleep of the virgins symbolises the identification of my egotistical life with all the dreams of my hopes and of my fears. The oil symbolises the expectation of the unimaginable, of satori. As long as I have not this oil in me, this new expectation born of understanding, I am the foolish virgin who cannot receive the bridegroom. And, at the end of the parable, the bridegroom says: 'watch, for ye know neither the day nor the hour'; it can be at each moment, it is offered at each moment.

A Zen anecdote illustrates this conception of the *pure expectation* (pure from time and from space), which is *pure attention*, attention without an object:

Pure attention

THE IMMEDIATE PRESENCE OF SATORI

'A man of the people one day asks the bonze Ikkyou: "Bonze, will you write for me some maxims of high wisdom?"

'Ikkyou took up a brush and wrote the word "Attention".

' "Is that all?" said the man, "won't you add a few more words?"

'Ikkyou then wrote twice: "Attention. Attention."

' "All the same," said the disappointed man, "I don't see much depth or subtlety in what you have written there."

' Ikkyou then wrote the same word three times.

'Slightly irritated, the man said: "After all, what does this word 'Attention' mean?"

'And Ikkyou replied: "Attention means attention." '

Chapter Twenty

PASSIVITY OF THE MIND AND DISINTEGRATION OF OUR ENERGY

We wish in this study to carry our reflections deeper on the subject of satori and on the inner phenomena which precede it. It is necessary first of all to establish a clear distinction between the intemporal satori-state and the historic satori-occurrence. We have already shown that the state of satori should not be conceived as a new state to which we have to obtain access, but as our eternal state, independent of our birth and of our death. Each one of us lives in the state of satori and could not live otherwise. When Zen speaks of satori within time, when it says for example: 'Satori falls upon us unexpectedly when we have exhausted all the resources of our being', it is not speaking of the intemporal state of satori but of the instant at which we realise that we are in this state, or, more exactly, of the instant at which we cease to believe that we are living outside this state.

This distinction between the satori-state and the satori-occurrence is very important. If I only conceive the satori-state I fall into fatalism. If I only conceive the satori-occurrence I fall into spiritual ambition, into the greedy demand for Realisation, and this error enchains me firmly to the illusion on which all my distress is founded.

The satori-occurrence is an event that is very special in that it ceases to be seen as such as soon as it happens. The man of satori no longer believes that he lives exiled from the Intemporal; living in the Intemporal and knowing it, he no longer makes any distinction between a past in which he believed himself to be living outside satori and a present in which he knows that he is living in it. This does not mean that this man has lost the memory of the

time lived before the satori-occurrence; he can remember everything, his distress, his weaknesses, the inner phenomena which obliged him to act against his reason; *but he sees that all that was already the state of satori*, that nothing has been, is, nor will be outside the state of satori. Past, present, and future bathing for this man in the same state of satori, it is evident that the satori-occurrence ceases to exist for him as a particular historical date. The satori-occurrence only exists for us to whom this event has not yet happened, it only exists in our illusory actual perspective. For us the man of satori is a *liberated* man, but he does not see himself as liberated, he sees himself as *free*, free from all eternity. Thus is explained what Hui-neng says 'I had satori at the instant at which I understood such and such an idea', and that he can also say, 'There is no liberation, there is no realisation'.

The state of satori, an intemporal state, is evidently unconditioned; in particular it is not conditioned by the satori-occurrence. But our actual perspective only allows us to envisage the satori-occurrence, and we necessarily envisage it as conditioned by such and such inner processes concerning which we question ourselves.

This conditioning of the satori-occurrence demands first of all certain precisions of a general nature. The idea of conditioning ought not to be understood as causality here least of all; no event is caused by a previous event, but is conditioned by it according to the Buddhist formula. 'This being so, that happens.' We will not, therefore, seek to know what inner processes are capable of causing or of engendering the satori-occurrence, but what processes necessarily precede it.

Besides we shall see that this conditioning, even freed thus from all idea of causality, is a notion of most inexact approximation. Indeed the very special functioning of the attention to which satori succeeds is not, properly speaking, a process but brings about the abolition of a process inherent in our actual condition. In reality it is my non-perception of the state of satori which is conditioned by certain processes; and the 'conditioning' of satori is only negative, is only the cessation of the conditioning of my non-perception of the state of satori.

All our study will then be devoted to analysing the inner processes which now condition our illusion of not living in the state of satori. We will see that they are our imaginative-emotive pro-

cesses—in which our vital energy is disintegrated—and we will try to define clearly what incomplete functioning of our attention conditions in its turn these imaginative-emotive processes.

To that end let us start with a concrete observation. A man annoys me; I become angry and I want to hit my adversary. Let us analyse what takes place in me in the course of this scene. We will see that my inner phenomena are divided into two different reactions that we will call primary reaction and secondary reaction.

The primary reaction consists in the awakening, in me, of a certain amount of vital energy; this energy was lying, latent, in my central source of energy until it was awakened by my perception of an energy manifested in the Not-Self against Self. The foreign aggressive energy stirs up in me the manifestation of a reactive force which balances the force of the Not-Self. This reactive force is not yet a movement of anger, it has not yet a precise form; it is comparable with the substance which is going to be poured into a mould but which has not yet been released. During an instant, without duration, this budding force, mobilised at my source, is not yet a force of anger; it is an informal force, a pure vital force.

This primary reaction corresponds to a certain perception of the outer world, to a certain knowledge. It corresponds therefore to a certain consciousness, but quite different from what is habitually so called. It is not the mental consciousness, intellectual, clear, evident. It is an obscure consciousness, profound, reflex, organic. It is the same consciousness which presides over the release of the knee-cap reflex; every reflex corresponds to this organic consciousness which 'knows' the outside world in a non-intellectual manner. Besides, this is corroborated by an inward observation: I feel anger *going to my head* where it will proceed to build up a thousand images; I feel it rising from below, from my organic existence. This primary reaction is extremely rapid and it escapes my observation if I am not very attentive, but if, after my anger, I examine in detail what has happened in me, I realise that, during a short moment, a pure anonymous organic force, coming from an organic consciousness, has preceded the play of my intellectual consciousness, formulator of images of anger.

Let us note that my organic consciousness releases my energy-reaction against the Not-Self when it perceives it. That is, the play

of this consciousness implies the acceptance of the existence of the Not-Self in face of the Self: it is in accord with the cosmic order, with things as they are. It presides over exchanges of energy between Self and Not-Self, it conciliates these two poles; it is in accord with the Tao.

Let us now study the secondary reaction. The dynamic modification of my being constituted by the primary reaction, this mobilisation of my energy in response to the energy of the outside world, will release a second reaction. Just as the movement of the outside world released the reactive play of my organic consciousness, this play in its turn—the inner movement which manifests this play—will release the reactive play of my intellectual consciousness; and this secondary reaction will tend to re-establish in me the original immobility by disintegrating the mobilised energy. Why? Because, in contradiction to my organic consciousness, my intellectual consciousness does not accept the existence of the Not-Self. Let us recall what we have called our primordial demand, or divine fiction, or claim to be-absolutely-as-a-distinct-being, to exist-absolutely. At the bottom of our intellectual understanding of the Universe, there is the irreducible discrimination between Self and Not-Self, there is an assumption that 'I *am* and that, in consequence, the Not-Self is not'. It is this discrimination that one evokes when one speaks of the Ego, when one speaks of identification with our psycho-somatic organism. In so far as I am an organic consciousness I do not discriminate, but, in so far as I am an intellectual consciousness, I discriminate. In my organic consciousness I am as much identified with the Not-Self as with the Self; in my intellectual consciousness I am identified with the Self, I affirm that only my Self exists. My intellectual consciousness only knows Self. When I think that I have an intellectual knowledge of the outside world, I only have knowledge in reality of the modifications of my Self in contact with the outside world. Philosophers call that 'the prison of my subjectivity', disregarding my organic consciousness which does not discriminate between subject and object and thanks to which I am already virtually free.

My intellectual consciousness being what it is, let us see what results in my inner phenomena. In the course of the primary reaction my organic desire to exist was thwarted by the outside

world; from which there was born in me a force that balanced the exterior force. In the course of the secondary reaction, my intellectual need to 'be' is thwarted by this mobilisation of energy in me, for this mobilisation implies the acceptance of the outside world and so tears me from the immutability of the Principle. Everything happens as though, in so far as my intellectual consciousness operates, I were claiming, for the source of energy of my organism, the attributes of the Absolute Principle: immutability, non-action, permanence, an unconditioned state. My secondary reaction to the mobilisation of my energy can only be, therefore, a refusal opposed to this mobilisation. But this opposition to the cosmic order could not succeed; the force which is mobilised in me could not return to non-manifestation. My refusal of the mobilised energy cannot result, therefore, in anything but the destruction of this energy by its disintegration.

The law of equilibrium of the Tao comes into play in these two reactions. The primary reaction balances the force of the Not-Self by a force of the Self. The secondary reaction balances the mobilisation of my vital energy by the disintegration of this energy. The primary reaction aims at maintaining the equilibrium between Self and Not-Self; the secondary reaction aims at maintaining the equilibrium in the interior of the Self, between the constructive manifestation and the destructive manifestation, between Vishnu and Shiva.

The disintegration of the energy mobilised is realised by the imaginative-emotive processes. These, as we have said elsewhere, are veritable short-circuits during which the energy is consumed in producing organic phenomena and mental images. These mental formations are what Buddhist philosophy calls *samskaras*. The samskaras have substance and form; their unique substance is my vital energy in process of disintegration. Their form, on the contrary is not mine, it is foreign to my form, to the form of my organism, and consists of mental images of infinite variation. On account of these foreign forms the samskaras are comparable with foreign bodies that my organism ought to reject. They are formations in some degree monstrous, heterogeneous, lacking in inner architectural harmony, non-visible: and this is by no means astonishing since they manifest the disintegration of energy.

The appearance of these images in my mind starts a vicious

formal expression, which remains without answer since it does not carry any. It is a challenge which neither aims at nor meets anybody; it is an attention to everything, which has no object. The suspension of my imaginative film, thus obtained without having been sought, is instantaneous; it is without duration, an intemporal flash of lightning in the heart of time; it in no way resembles the states into which, on the contrary, exercises of concentration can put me. On account of this absence of duration, this gesture of looking into my own nature does not result in the vision of the 'third eye', it only prepares it. These gestures are repeated set-backs—which should be condensed into an ultimate set-back—which some day will bring about the disappearance of the illusion in which I am living at present of not being in the state of satori.

If the gesture of instantaneous decontraction prepares the satori-occurrence, that is because the instantaneous suspension which it obtains in the unfolding of the imaginary film breaks on each occasion the vicious circle which exists between our images and our emotions. This vicious circle that we have called 'imaginative-emotive rumination', which corresponds also with what we have described as the 'emotive state', or 'inner spasm', or as 'gearing of the affectivity with the intellect', is an inner automatism animated by a great force of inertia. Our imaginative rumination does not function continuously with the same effective power, but in each stage of our evolution it has a certain possibility of power. This possibility is used, mined little by little by the instants of decontraction. This progressive diminution of the solidity of the vicious circle of images and emotions is revealed by a progressive modification of our inner life, of our vision of things in general. Not that we are able, before satori, to have the least little atom of 'vision of things as they are'; but our present vision of things-as-they-are-not loses its clarity, its relief, its colours.

In order to make clear the modifications that the inner work obtains indirectly in our vision of things we will make use of an illustration. We will compare our imaginative film with the projection of a cinematographic film comprising a projector, a screen, and the luminous cone which connects them. When the projection is well focussed on the screen I see clear images thereon, in which the blanks and whites are well-contrasted. If, without changing anything in the projector, I progressively bring the

for us here: if I incorrectly conceive satori as an accomplishment of myself-as-a-distinct-being, in the illusory perspective of a 'superman', I shall *covet* satori, desire it positively, I shall wish for it in the usual sense of this phrase. If I thus demand satori, and if on the other hand I have understood the efficacity of a letting-go in view of satori, it is going to be necessary for me to carry out this letting-go. A compulsion of my primordial spasm, the logical result of my claim to be-as-a-distinct-being, forces me to impose on my organism, whether it likes it or not, the gesture of decontraction. It is very clear that no real decontraction is possible thus and that what will be achieved will only be the contracted mental evocation of the image of decontraction.

This is not to say that there is no discipline in the inner task correctly carried out; but it must be clearly understood. In all inner discipline 'something' directs the functioning of my psychosomatic machine; but what should this something be, in order that the inner task may be correctly carried out?

To reply to this question we will first of all show what this something should not be, and analyse to that end the usual notions of 'self-control', of 'self-mastery' and 'will'.

We will neglect, to begin with, the examination of this famous and illusory 'Will-power', and we will use this word in its usual sense in studying 'self-control'. The control of self can be control of the outer behaviour—'good' deeds or 'good' abstentions (asceticism); or control of the inner behaviour—'good' sentiments or 'good' thoughts or mental exercises to achieve a 'good' manner of making the mind function (concentration, meditation, mental void, etc.) If one analyses deeply what happens in the course of such efforts, one always finds, as an initial mechanism, the voluntary mental evocation of an image or of a system of images. That is evident when it is a question of meditation (even if the mental image evoked is that of the absence of images); and it is the same if it is a question of external action since the decision governing all action is controlled by the conception of its mental image. All self-control consists therefore essentially in a voluntary mental evocation, an imaginative manipulation in the course of which there is actualised my partiality for one image to the detriment of all other possible images. This partiality for such and such a form of my manifestation, and consequently against the opposite

forms, prevents the control-of-self from working towards a synthesis of all my manifestation; I can only 'do' thus by refusing what I do not do; no unification of my being is then possible. The preferred images are samskaras as much as the refused images. This method cannot modify the imaginative-emotive process as a whole; the forms fabricated by the process alone are modified. The preferred samskaras are reinforced; they tend to become encysted; imaginative habits are acquired. I can thus train myself to feel sentiments of love for the whole Universe at the expense of my aggressiveness. A form has been modified but there can be no passing beyond form, no transformation.

We have already said that these kinds of training are not in themselves an obstacle to the obtaining of satori. The reinforcement of certain samskaras to the detriment of others should not be able to make man's inner situation worse with regard to an eventual transformation. That which does not work for satori is limited to not working for it; but nothing should be able to work against it. Ignorance has no active reality against the Intemporal nor against the eventual realisation of the Intemporal. It is merely time that is lost with regard to the satori-occurrence.

An objection offers itself: the corrct inner gesture of letting-go is carried out under a general authorisation given to no matter what image; it is no longer a question, therefore, of evoking a preferred image; there is no longer partiality in face of my inner world. That is true, but if I wish to make myself perform the gesture of letting-go in a systematic manner because I covet satori, if I wish to do it each time that I think of it, without taking into account my actual inner condition, I will be obliged to evoke the *preferred* mental image of the authorisation given to no matter what image; and I will fall back again thus into the same absurdity.

We meet for the first time the capital notion of taking into account my actual inner condition. That which places the usual conception of discipline in opposition to the correct conception that we are trying to define, is precisely that fact that the usual discipline does not comprise the idea that one should take account of the actual inner condition.

Let us analyse exactly what happens in the course of 'self-control'. Every effort of self-control is a struggle between two

capable of doing so, will say that he has imposed this fast on himself in a disinterested manner, and that it is not a tendency which has struggled in him against his greed; he does not see in himself this tendency to drive his inner world with a whip, the tendency to tyrannise by which he is himself tyrannised. He wished to cease being the slave of his desires, but he has concentrated his slavery on the unique desire to be free from all his other desires. On the whole the inner condition remains the same, neither improved nor worsened from the point of view of an eventual satori. The 'self-control' can lead to 'holiness', to the harmonious unification of a positive part of the being alone authorised to act, but not to the unification of the totality of the being or satori. From the point of view of intemporal realisation this 'will' can be of no use whatsoever.

Let us note that in these 'wilful' efforts of self-control the subject does not take account of his actual inner condition; he makes his effort each time that he thinks of it. When he does not do it, that is only because he forgets his task. If, sometimes, he thinks of the effort that should be made and does not make it nevertheless, it is not that he takes account of his inner condition. The fact of envisaging the effort he has conceived as systematically good is already, by itself, a release of the effort; and if this release sometimes misses fire that is because the opposite tendency has been stronger from the beginning.

When I have thus clearly seen the inefficacity of 'self-control' I am tempted to admit that the man is right who lives as he likes, who makes no demand on himself, who only makes demands on the outside world in order to obtain what suits him. But I perceive, first of all, that my reaction depends upon false reasoning; if efforts at self-control made the state of mankind worse from the point of view of eventual satori, the man who ceased to make these efforts would bring himself nearer the eventual satori. But, as we have seen, these efforts could not in themselves constitute an obstacle. The fact of no longer exerting oneself in that way cannot, therefore, remove an obstacle which never existed.

The principle refutation of the quietist attitude is much more important. In reality the man who does not make efforts of self-control seems to live as he likes, but he does not do so. If his mind

does not consciously disturb the play of his tendencies, it disturbs them subconsciously. If there is no conscious opposition to the tendencies, if there is apparent composition of the tendencies, this apparent composition masks to a great extent a subconscious opposition. This man has not a theoretical, conscious 'ideal', but he has a practical, subconscious one. From the fact that his tendencies have procured him affirmations or negations, practical judgements are pronounced in him on these tendencies, approving or condemning them. The man necessarily sees a certain relation of causality between his tendencies and their practical results; his attachment to the results necessarily carries with it a partiality for or against his tendencies, that is a secondary tendency to control his primary tendencies. Even the man who appears to struggle only to control the outside world conceals an inner struggle under the tyranny of his practical 'ideal'.

What takes place in this man is more complex than what takes place within the partisan of 'will-power'. For the partisan of 'will-power' the inner control is visible all the time, for a conscious examination of the tendencies presides as much over their authorisation as over their repression. In fact, for this man, a tendency is never merely authorised; if it is not repressed it is activated by the secondary controlling tendency. In the man who, consciously, only struggles against the outer world, the inner control is only perceptible in its repressive aspect. When the controlling tendency does not repress a primary tendency it does not activate it either, it lets it work; it disappears itself. The mechanisms of this man enjoy from time to time a certain spontaneity.

In short, the man who performs no conscious inner task does not let-go on that account. Impartiality does not reign in his inner world. Even this relative spontaneity that we have just seen is not a real spontaneity. When I act impulsively my subconscious attitude in face of the inner world of my tendencies, of my Self, is not a 'Yes' said to the totality of that world; it is a 'Yes' spoken to the only tendency which is acting, but a preferential 'Yes' which is accompanied by a 'No' said to all the rest of my 'Selves', that is to say it is a 'No' said to my machine as-a-totality.

What should one think now of the method which consists in supervising all my tendencies but in consciously approving the present tendency? It is the attitude at which the man logically

imagination fabricates compensations.

THE COMPENSATIONS

Our imagination, this function which creates in us an imaginative film that is not based on the real present, is therefore our compensating function; it is the function which fabricates our compensations. Our compensations are systems of images which we borrow from our sensory and mental perceptions—from the material of images stored up by our memory—and which we arrange as we please, in accordance with the structure of our individual psycho-somatic organism. These constitute our inner personal world. Evidently they could not be a pure creation; they are recreation, with non-personal elements, of a personal representation of the world, according to a personal order which is like a special section cut in the volume of the Universe (for this personal order does not result, either, from a personal creation; it is a particular aspect, chosen according to our personal structure, from among the indefinite number of aspects of the cosmic order).

One can compare the universe personally recreated, which our compensations constitute, to a design imagined by an artist. No designer could create a form of which the prototype did not already exist in the Universe and which he has not perceived himself by the intermediary of a personal image based on outer reality. The creation of the designer only consists in choosing a form in the outer world by neglecting all others and, sometimes, in assembling as he wishes forms he has never seen assembled in this way in reality. Thus the personal element in the recreation of our imaginary universe does not reside in the elementary forms used, but first in using such and such a form rather than any other, and second in assembling universal forms in accordance with a personal style. The elaboration of a compensation is an imaginary artifice.

Our compensations correspond with what one currently terms our scale of values. Each man sees certain things as particularly real, particularly important, and it is these which give a meaning to his life. If I wish to know my compensations it is enough for me to ask myself: 'What gives a sense to my life?'

Before going further let us return to the question: 'What do our compensations compensate?' They do not compensate, as one often thinks, the particular negating aspects of existence. If it were thus our compensations would always be affirming, positive images; but we shall see that they can just as well be negative.

The essential character of a compensation is not that it should be agreeable to me but that it should represent the universe to me in a perspective such that I am the centre of it. Only that matters, and not the fact that this universe centred on me is affirming or negating. Our compensations compensate our illusory belief that we are separated from Reality, that is the subjective non-appearance of our essential identity with the Absolute Principle. In other words, the recreated imaginary personal universe constituted by our compensations compensate the sleep of our vision of the Universe as it is in its total reality. It is because we do not yet see things as they are that we are obliged to see them in an imaginary way which is a partial way.

Our compensating vision of the world is not false, therefore it is merely partial; what is false is our belief that this vision is totally adequate for that which is seen. The importance that we attach to certain aspects of the world is not false, it is not illusory; what is illusory resides in the exclusive character of this vision, in the fact that it denies the same importance to the rest of the world. The vision of things as they are would attribute an equal importance to all aspects of the Universe; everything would be important and in consequence nothing would be important in the preferential sense that we usually give to this word 'important'. It is only in the partiality of our imaginary vision that the illusion resides, not in the vision itself. Let us establish then clearly, from the beginning of this study, that our compensations are not to be deplored as obstacles to satori, to the vision of things as they are. Our compensations are not illusory in themselves and are not opposed to satori; the idol is not an obstacle to Reality; the reality that we see in the idol is not opposed to our reunion with Reality. The obstacle is only the ignorance through which we deny to that which is not the idol the same reality that we see in the idol. *The only obstacle is ignorance, and ignorance is partiality.* Our compensatory vision of the world is not, then, a bad thing, to be destroyed; it is something incomplete, to be extended, to be accomplished, by dissipating restrictive ignorance that is exclusive and partial. Adhesion to that which is only a part is not bad but only 'partiality', that is ignorant belief in the total character of that which is only a part.

This should be well established before entering into a detailed

study of compensations. When one speaks of the subjection in which a compensation places us it is really a question of the subjection in which we are placed by the ignorant partiality by which we deny implicitly what we are not affirming. A compensation is never enslaving in itself; what enslaves us is the partiality with which we consider it. Subjection does not lie in seeing Reality in the evocation of Jesus or of the Buddha, but in only seeing it there by denying it to the rest of creation.

Our compensations are necessary to our total realisation since without them we could not accept existence and we would destroy ourselves at once; they are on the way of our correct evolution towards satori. But the obtaining of satori assumes that some day we shall pass beyond our compensations. This passing-beyond should be understood not as a loss of the vivifying substance contained in our compensations, but as a bursting of the formal and exclusive circumference which was limiting this substance. The reality seen in the idol is not wiped out but is diffused outside the idol whose restrictive circumference has burst.

Compensation is at once favourable and unfavourable to the evolution towards satori. It is favourable by its affective aspects, which are nourishment to me and save me from suicide. It is unfavourable in the measure in which it comprises an intellectual belief in the Reality—or absolute value—of the compensating image. For example; one of my compensations is to have a healthy child. The joy which I find in this situation (the image of myself possessing this healthy child) is favourable to my evolution towards satori, for it forms part of that which helps me to accept existence. What is unfavourable to my correct evolution is my belief that this situation is *absolutely* good whereas the death of my child would be *absolutely* bad; it is the belief according to which my adhesion to the compensating situation excludes my adhesion to the eventuality of the contrary situation. In fact this exclusion limits what I perceive of cosmic reality and even prevents me from correctly perceiving what I perceive of it by cutting it off from its connexion with all the rest. I cannot perceive anything as it is in reality as long as any one of its connexions with the rest of the Universe is cut; and all the connexions of anything are concentrated in its relation with the opposite thing, antagonistic and complementary.

Hui-neng refutes the deplorable 'belief' which resides in our compensations when he proclaims: 'From the beginning not a thing is.' In speaking thus he does not condemn my compensating joy; this joy is a moving phenomenon which 'exists' merely and does not pretend to 'be'; *he refutes my belief in the Reality of a fixed image which pretends to 'be' by the exclusion of the contrary image. Hui-neng does not condemn the affective point of departure of the idolatry, but he refutes the idolatrous intellectual belief.* This belief, in isolating an image by the exclusion of the image which depends upon it in the cosmic equilibrium of the Yin and the Yang, attempts illusorily to confer on the isolated image the immutable Unity of the Absolute Principle. The image thus artificially isolated becomes a compensating 'idol', and it is not the image itself but this manner of seeing it as an idol that Hui-neng aims at when he reminds us that 'not a thing is'.

The declaration of Hui-neng does not at all advise us not to live our compensations, to feel that there is value in particular things. It merely invites us to pass beyond these compensations in breaking, by means of understanding, the enslaving exclusivity of our idolatrous 'opinions'. This breaking aims only at limiting intellectual forms, not at all at the living affective substance contained therein. It is possible for me, by means of understanding, to continue to feel value in this or that particular thing without persisting in implicitly proclaiming the anti-value of the contrary thing. My understanding shows me in fact that, from the only real point of view of my intemporal realisation, there is not value and anti-value, but that all things are fit to be used for this realisation.

The phrase of Hui-neng is not, therefore, a malediction on all particular things, but, very much on the contrary, a blessing, undifferenced, impartial, on all particular things. The same thought is found in many passages of a remarkable Zen text known by the title of 'Inscribed on the believing mind':

> The Perfect Way knows no difficulties
> Except that it refuses all preference.
>
> If you would see the Perfect Way manifest
> Take no thought either for or against it.
> To oppose what you like and what you dislike,
> That is the malady of the mind.

THE COMPENSATIONS

That which is is the same as that which is not.
That which is not is the same as that which is.

If only this is realised,
You need not worry about not being perfect!

All compensations are idolatries, attempts to see Reality incarnate itself in a particular image illusorily immobilised outside the cosmic whirlpool. The passing beyond compensation is not destruction of the image but of its artificial immobilisation; the image, devalorised as an idol, is replaced in the middle of the multitude of other images in the ceaselessly-moving flow of cosmic life such as it is in reality.

Passing beyond compensations, the devalorisation of idols, is a process which takes place in my intellectual intuition. This process supposes first of all the acquisition of a correct theoretical comprehension which demasks in the abstract the illusory idolatrous belief. It assumes on the other hand that I have experienced, by suffering, the unsatisfactory character of compensation. This painful dissatisfaction is inevitable; indeed the compensation, as we have seen, only mitigates my distress in the moment during which it functions, but I expect in the depth of my being, that it will definitively remedy my distress; and so I am necessarily led, more or less rapidly, to realise the deceptive character of my compensation in comparison with what I expected of it. It is then, in the suffering of deception, that my understanding will manifest itself by a correct interpretation of my suffering. Abstract comprehension and concrete suffering are both necessary; neither one nor the other is sufficient alone. We will return later to this question of passing beyond compensations, it is in fact impossible to deal with it without knowing how the various compensations are constituted.

Every compensation is essentially constituted by an image involving my Ego, by an image-centre around which is organised in a constellation, a multitude of satellite images. The image-centre is bi-polar, like everything that belongs to the domain of form. This explains why there are positive and negative compensations. Man has an innate preference for the positive—the beautiful, good, true—and tries always at first to build up a

positive compensation; but failure can release the inversion of it into antagonistic negative compensation. For example, I begin to hate the being with whom I have tried in vain to establish a love relationship; and this hatred can give a sense to my life as love had. After pointing out this process of the possible inversion of our compensations, we will limit ourselves to describing the principle positive compensations that the observation of human-beings and our own inner world reveal to us.

The image-centre can represent me as receiving the service of the outside world, which is the compensation of being loved. It can represent me as actively seizing my nourishments in the outside world, which is the compensation of enjoyment (the affirmation of myself eating the outside world; the love of riches, which is a potential means of eating the outside world).

The image-centre can represent me as serving the outside world, as nourishing it, and very many compensations proceed from this image: 'to love', 'to give pleasure', 'to give life', 'to help', 'to serve' (one's Country, a political cause, a cause regarded in general as just, humanity, the oppressed, the weak, etc.). There also should be placed the joy of doing one's duty, of doing well what one does, the joy of being faithful to a moral code, of being at the level of such and such an 'ideal'.

In other compensations the image-centre no longer comprises action linking the Self with the outer world, but a simple perception. The compensating image is of the Self perceiving the outer world (joy of thus participating in beauty, in art, in intellectual truth, in knowledge in general). Or again, an image of Myself perceived by the outside world: the joy of attracting attention, of being admired, of being feared.

The image-centre can be the image of Myself as 'creator' of some work in the outside world, of a modification which I impose on the surrounding world and which I see as a distinct entity: the 'creation' of a work of art, a scientific or intellectual work, a political movement, a social organisation, religious order, etc. . . . It can be the image of Myself creating something in myself: 'developing myself', 'realising myself', 'discovering who I am', 'developing my gifts', 'showing what I am capable of', 'cultivating myself', 'making efforts or experiments which make me rich', etc. . . . This category of compensation is very vast and important;

it groups all the ambitions, either in the material or the subtle sphere, or in the sphere that is called 'spiritual' (the obtaining of 'superior' states of consciousness, of 'spiritual powers', the cult, more or less disguised, of the 'superman'. We will come back more particularly to this question of 'spirituality'.)

Finally there is a very remarkable compensation in which the constituting elements of all the compensations already enumerated are found in fusion and so abolished as distinct (as all the colours are found together and abolished in white); that is *adoration*. In adoration I am dealing with my own Ego projected on to an exterior form that is more or less gross or subtle. The dualisms Self and the outer world, act and acted upon, nourish and to be nourished, perceive and to be perceived, create and to be created, disappear on account of the identity existing between the subject and the object. These dealings, besides, are reduced to the utmost simplicity; joy no longer comes to me from acting nor from seeing myself perceiving, *but simply from perceiving in a unitive contemplation*. It is a simple glance in which I believe that I see my Principle in the image on to which I have projected myself in an exclusive identification.

These various compensations can evidently be combined among themselves. Adoration in particular is combined, more often than not with loving and being loved, in the sense of affirming and being affirmed, serving and being served.

Every compensation, or imaginative constellation, constitutes in the being an element of fixity; but it is a dynamic fixity, like a stereotyped gesture of which I have the habit and which represents a fixity in my movement. The fixed compensation tends towards a certain ensemble of moving, living phenomena. Each compensation is a certain stereotyped form of living. I must therefore distinguish such compensation—which tends to make me live in such and such a manner—from the fact that I live, or not, in that manner; for it may happen that I have in myself such compensation and that nevertheless I do not live according to it, according to the bargain towards which it tends. This is clearly seen in neuroses; and the neurotic can be defined as a being who is badly compensated, incapable of living in accordance with his compensations. Let us imagine a being in whom exists the compensation 'loving and being loved',

'participation in the collective life by an exchange of services'. This being comes up against the wickedness of the outside world, a mischance unjustly wounds him. If the compensation were entirely inverted he could live in accordance with it so inverted: his life could find a sense in hatred and vengeance and he would be compensated in that way. But often the inversion only partially takes place, in its practical and not its theoretical aspect; the subject refuses his participation in the outside world in each particular eventuality, but continues to wish to participate in general. He would like to hit someone else, to wound him, in a particular practical action, but he cannot act thus because he persists in wanting to love, to serve, in general.

One often says that such persons have not found their compensations, but that is not true because each person always finds his compensations. These people have found their compensations but they are not able to live in accordance with them. The neurotic has split, divorced compensations in which he cannot live. He is paralysed between hatred and love of the same object. The impossibility of investing his vital energy therein entails a perturbation of the inner metabolism of his energy. The aggressiveness of the individual acts against itself; there is distress. This distress, felt up-stream of compensations that the subject does not succeed in using in his life, is of the same nature as the distress felt in the compensations that are lived-with when these exhaust themselves without comprehension. In the two cases there is 'de-compensation', but the happy issue of these two kinds of crisis is different. For the man who lives in accordance with his compensations it is desirable that he should come out of this stage; for the man who cannot live in accordance with his compensations it is desirable that he should enter this stage.

When a man succeeds in living his compensatory life the functioning of his psycho-somatic machine is harmonised, made flexible thereby. The man who thinks he has found Reality in one thing or another—whether it be money, or honours, or power, or any kind of exalting undertaking—possesses a point of orientation which allows his life to be efficiently organised. The apparent concentration of Reality on an image confers on the man an apparent inner unity by means of simplification of his dynamism. This *simplification*, which assumes the putting to sleep of a part of

the world of his tendencies, clearly should not be confused with the *simplicity* of the man of satori in whom all is united without distinction in a total synthesis. But they resemble one another as the plane projection of a volume can resemble that volume. If a compensation of the 'adoration' type is pushed to a very high degree of subtlety, the inner simplification which it entails can actualise, in the psycho-somatic machine, rare powers which seem to be 'supernatural' (such as thought-reading, clairvoyance, psychic influences upon others, unconscious actions exactly adapted, power of healing, etc.).

The well-compensated man is, in the exact sense of the word, an idolater in the measure in which he 'believes' that the harmonising effects of his compensation come from the compensating image itself, the measure in which he identifies this image with Reality. This belief, which renders objective the subjective value of an image, evidently drives the idolater to think that all men ought to see as he does. If the idolater is of a positive type this results in proselytism, in apostleship, in a mission; if he is of a negative type it results in intolerance, in the persecution of unbelievers. The belief in the Reality of a form also entails the need of formal manifestations; the rite, which in reality is only a facultative means of expression, becomes where the idolater is concerned a constraining necessity.

Compensation forms an integral part of the period of human development which stretches from birth up to satori. Until satori, man is in unstable equilibrium, and this equilibrium is conditioned by the compensations. Therefore he should not totally pass beyond the compensations before satori, for satori alone constitutes this complete passing-beyond. But before the transformation (passing beyond form) which represents an inner event that is unique and instantaneous, there are produced in the human-being modifications and changes of form. These changes reveal the progressive elaboration of the inner conditions necessary for satori, and it is in this sense that we will speak of passing-beyond compensations as a progressive process. An illustration will make this point clear. It is said that the fox, when he wants to rid himself of his fleas, seizes a piece of moss in his mouth and enters the water backwards; the fleas leave the parts that are immersed and take refuge on that which still remains above water. Little by little the fox

carries his fleas on an ever smaller part of his body, but this reduced surface is ever more and more infested with fleas. Ultimately all the fleas are concentrated on his muzzle, then on the piece of moss, which the fox then lets go into the flowing stream. Up to the instant at which the fox abandons the totality of his fleas he is not freed from a single one of them; nevertheless a certain process has modified the distribution of the parasites and prepared their complete and instantaneous disappearance.

Progressively passing beyond the compensations, thus understood as a reduction of extent and an increase of intensity, corresponds to a purification of the compensating image which evolves from the particular towards the general. All compensation being an image of the Universe centred by my Ego—a constellation of which the Ego is the central star and certain images the satellites—the purifying process of which we speak consists in the satellites becoming more and more subtle, whereas the central star increases in density. But then occurs something very particular which no illustration can demonstrate: the Ego having no reality, either absolute or relative, the density which accumulates there remains without any manifestation. Progressive *detachment* is a purification of that attachment to oneself which is at the centre of all attachments in general; but this central attachment to an illusory hypothetical image can purify itself and condense itself again and again without manifesting itself by anything perceptible. When St. John of the Cross passes beyond his mystical compensation, when he detaches himself from the image of 'God' after this image has been as far as possible rendered impersonal, he does not feel attached to the image 'Ego' from which the image 'God' drew its apparent Reality; he does not feel attached to anything. He no longer feels anything; it is the 'Night' in which nothing exists any longer in connexion with what can be felt or thought. But there is still an ultimate attachment to the Ego which links together all the powers of the being, an ultimate and invisible compensation. It is passing-beyond this invisible compensation which is the veritable detachment, total and instantaneous. To the Night succeeds what St. John of the Cross calls the ~~theopathic state,~~ that which Zen calls Satori.

Detachment, or passing-beyond the compensations, is often imperfectly understood; people believe that it is a question of

destroying the affective preference that is felt for the compensating image, or that it is a question of tearing desire out of oneself. One forgets that attachment does not lie in desire but only in the claim to satisfaction of the desire. Desire need not disappear, but only the claim resulting from it. And the abandonment of the claim does not result from an inner struggle; it results from the correct interpretation of the deception that is inherent in the claim, whether it be satisfied or not. Distress, revendication, belief that the image claimed is Reality—these are the pieces of faulty scaffolding which is undermined by understanding and which that will one day bring crashing to the ground. Detachment is not a painful inner occurrence but, on the contrary, a relief.

Sometimes our too feeble understanding does not allow us for a long time to pass beyond such and such a compensating situation. Our inner growth seems to bump up against this obstacle. But, let us repeat, that which we love, to which we are attached, is never in itself an obstacle; the obstacle is only in the false identification of the loved image with Reality, the obstacle lies only in ignorance.

Our chances of passing beyond such and such a compensation depend then on the power of our intellectual intuition. They depend also on the degree of subtlety of our compensatory image. First of all, the more subtle this image the less the chances that it will deceive us; every image loses its value in course of time, but the more subtle the image the stronger it is and the slower in exhausting itself. Then, if nevertheless fatigue and deception occur the correct interpretation of this deception is as much more difficult as the compensating image happens to be subtle. Instead of throwing doubt on the Reality of this image I am tempted to consider myself inadequate, maladroit, idle, or cowardly, in the dealings that I have with it. It is useful, from this point of view, to draw special attention to a species of compensation that is very subtle and that one ordinarily designates by the word spirituality. In 'spiritual' compensation man loves and serves a very high cause; an infinitely just and good 'God' of whom he tries to obtain a unitive knowledge: 'superior' 'elevated' states of consciousness, which he wishes to attain; a total realisation conceived as something that ought to be conquered; or an 'ideal' aimed at the reign of love and justice among men, etc. . . .

and Manifestation is a simple analytical artifice which my mind needs in order to express itself; I understand that I deceive myself as soon as I oppose among each other the elements that I have distinguished. The mental image of Reality, which at first had been the concrete image of the Child-Jesus, has been subtilised until it has become the abstract image of the Void of traditional metaphysics, Void which includes all the imaginable plenitudes. Parallel with this imaginative distillation it is evident that my affective reactions to my conceptions of Reality are subtilised also; the interior and exterior operation of my machine is modified when I cease to believe in a personal God, an object of love and of dread, and when I arrive at conceiving abstractly my Buddha-nature as being above all thought and all sentiment.

This process of distillation, due to the work of intellectual intuition, corresponds to the idea, often expressed in this work, that *our correct inner evolution destroys nothing but fulfils everything.* The apparent death of the 'old' man is not in reality a destruction. When I extract alcohol from fruit I do not destroy the essence of the fruit, but rather purify it, concentrate it, and fulfil it. In the same way I fulfil my conception of Reality when I evolve from the image of the Child-Jesus to the image of the Void. There is apparent death because there is a diminution of the visible, of that which is perceptible by the senses and the mind; but nothing has been destroyed just because the belief in the Reality of a perception ceases to exist. The fulfilment of the human-being carries with it the disappearance of the illusory Reality of images perceived by the senses and the mind.

The condition of man, at his birth, is to feel himself fundamentally unsatisfied; he believes that he lacks something. What he is and what he has does not suit him; he expects something else, a 'true life'; he seeks a solution of his pretended problem, claiming such and such situations in existence. This revendicative attitude, which engenders all our sufferings, is not to be destroyed, but to be fulfilled. We have seen, in studying the compensations, how our claim and attachment are subtilised. All our personal attachments derive from our central attachment to the image of our Ego, to the image of ourselves-as-distinct, by means of identifying association between a personal image and this general image. The more my understanding deepens, the more these associations

are abolished; my attachment is thus purified, subtilised, and concentrated; it becomes less and less apparent, more and more non-manifested. The attached revendication is not reduced by an atom before satori, but it purifies itself, and fulfils itself according as the instant approaches of the sudden transformation when attachment and detachment are conciliated.

My amour-propre is an aspect of my revendicatory attention. It also is purified in the extent to which I understand. To the people who observe me from outside, I appear to be more modest. But I feel clearly that it is not so. My amour-propre becomes more and more subtle and concentrated, so that one sees it less; it fulfils itself, tending in one sense towards the zero of perfect humility, and in another towards the non-manifested infinite of my absolute dignity.

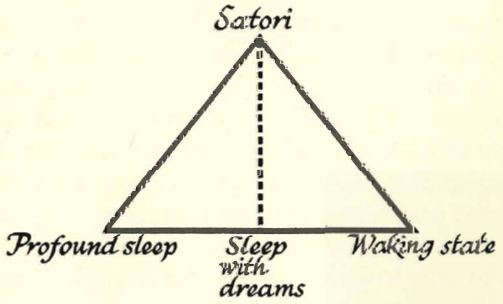
The distress which is associated with the egotistical claim is subjected to the same gradual modification. It is a serious mistake to believe that understanding can increase the anxiety of man. False information, by implanting in our mind constraining 'beliefs', can increase our distress. But the intuition of truth on the contrary subtilises distress, reducing its manifested aspect and increasing its non-manifested aspect. Profound distress, from which derives all manifested personal distress, is not reduced by an atom before satori; but it remains more and more non-manifested, so that the adept of Zen, in the measure in which he evolves (without progressing) feels distress less and less. When distress has become almost entirely non-manifested, satori is near.

The inner agitation of man reveals the conflict which exists between the vital movement on the one hand, and on the other the refusal of the temporal limitation which conditions this movement. Placed face to face with his life such as it is, man wants it and at the same time does not want it. This agitation purifies itself in the measure in which understanding entails a decrease of the refusal of the temporal limitation. The vital movement is not touched, whereas that which was opposed to it is reduced; and so this movement is purified, agitation disappears, our machine ticks over ever more smoothly.

The evolution that we are studying comprises before everything, as we have said, the subtilisation of our image-material. Our images lose little by little their apparent density, their

sciousness. Our imaginary inner universe, centred on our person, pretends that it is the Universe; the consciousness which fabricates this universe is thus assimilated to the Cosmic Mind; and it is not astonishing after that that we should depend on this conciousness in order to conquer Realisation.

In reality, whether I sleep or remain awake, I am from this moment in the state of satori. Sleep and waking are steeped equally in this state; the state of satori, with regard to sleep and waking, plays the rôle of a hypostasis which conciliates them. Steeped in the Intemporal, sleep and waking are two extreme modalities of the functioning of my psycho-somatic organism, extremities between which I oscillate. Between profound sleep and the waking state, sleep with dreams represents a middle stage, the projection, on the base of the triangle, of its summit. From this the transcendental wisdom of the dream is derived. The symbolic thought of the dream, in which are expressed the situations of our personal microcosm, stripped of all the illusory objectivity of the outside world, is actually the only thought in us capable of seeing certain things as they really are; that is why dream-thought expresses itself in symbolic fashion, things-as-they-are being impossible to express adequately in a direct manner.



In this correct perspective let us try to conceive how, in our waking dream the gradual non-progressive evolution which precedes Satori is revealed in our consciousness. Our waking dream, like everything in us, is fulfilled gradually by subtilising itself. Far from becoming more striking, more apparently real, more deluding, it becomes lighter, less opaque, less dense, more volatile; it is less attaching, less viscous. The affective charges, which

certain images carry, decrease; our inner universe evens up. Under this waking dream that is ever lighter we fulfil more completely the sleep of our actual egotistical condition. In short the fulfilment of our conscious thought brings it nearer in a sense to profound sleep. And, at the same time that our conscious thought approaches sleep, it differentiates itself from it by developing to the maximum its subtle intellectual possibilities. There is a real approach in the non-manifested, and apparent separation in the manifested. One remembers the hermetic aphorism: 'That which is above is like that, which is below, that which is below is like that which is above.'

The imaginative activity subtilises itself and tends towards non-manifestation, although the mind remains awake, and continues to function. A 'concentration on nothing' develops below the attention that is always held by images. My state then resembles that of the absent-minded scholar; but, as opposed to the scholar who is absent-minded because his attention is concentrated on something formal, I am absent-minded because my attention is concentrated on something informal which is neither conceived nor conceivable.

The whole imaginative-emotive process is lightened. This is revealed by the fact that I feel myself happy without apparent motive; I am not happy because existence seems good to me, but existence seems good to me because I feel myself to be happy. The evolution which precedes satori does not comprise an exacerbation of distress, but on the contrary a gradual relief from manifested distress. A neutralising balancing of our fundamental distress precedes the instant at which we will see directly and definitively that our distress has always been illusory. This links up with the idea that our nostalgia for fulfilment disappears in the measure in which we approach the 'asylum of rest'.

The Western mind often has difficulty in understanding the term 'Great Doubt' which Zen uses to indicate the inner state which immediately precedes satori. It thinks that this Great Doubt should be the acme of uncertainty, of uneasiness, therefore of distress. It is exactly the opposite. Let us try to see this point clearly. Man comes into the world with a doubt concerning his 'being', and this doubt dictates all his reactions to the outer world. Although I do not often realise it, the question 'Am I?' is behind

all my endeavours; I seek a definitive confirmation of my 'being' in everything that I aspire to. As long as this metaphysical question is identified in me with the problem of my temporal success, as long as I debate this question within Manifestation, distress dwells in me on account of my temporal limitation; for the question so posed is always menaced with a negative reply. But, in the measure in which my understanding deepens and in which my imaginative representation of the universe is subtilised, the identification of my metaphysical doubt with the eventuality of my temporal defeat falls asunder; my distress decreases. My question concerning my 'being' is purified; its manifested aspect wears thin; in reality it is not reduced but becomes more and more non-manifested. At the end of this process of distillation the doubt has become almost perfectly pure, it is 'Great Doubt', and at the same time it has lost all its distressing character; it is at once the acme of confusion and the height of obviousness, obviousness without formal object, having tranquillity and peace. 'Then the subject has the impression that he is living in a palace of cristal, transparent, vivifying, exalting and royal'; and at the same time he is 'like an idiot, like an imbecile'. The famous and illusory question 'Am I?', in purifying itself abolishes itself, and I shall at last escape from its fascination not in a satisfying solution of the problem, but in the ability to see that no problem ever existed.

Let us observe at last how this evolutive process which subtilises our inner world modifies our perception of time. We believe in the reality of time, as we have said, because we are expecting a modification of our phenomenal life capable of supplying what we illusorily lack. The more we feel the nostalgia of a 'becoming', the more painfully this problem of time harasses us. We reproach ourselves with letting time go by, with not knowing how to fill these days which are passing. In the measure in which my urge towards 'becoming' is subtilised in me, growing more and more non-manifested, my perception of time is modified. In so far as it is manifested in my anecdotal life, time escapes me more and more and I let it escape me in attaching to it less and less importance; my days are ever less full of things that I can tell, which I remember. Side by side with this I feel a decrease in my impression of lost time; I feel myself ever less frustrated by the inexorable

answered in the affirmative, he added: 'There, I have kept nothing hidden from you.' Every perception of the outer world contains a possibility of satori because it brings into existence a bridge between Self and Not-Self, *because it implies and manifests an identity of nature between Self and Not-Self.* We have said many times that our perception of an outside object was the perception of a mental image which is produced in us by contact with the object. But behind the exterior object and the interior image there is a single perception which joins them. Everything, in the Universe, is energy in vibration. The perception of the object is produced by a unitive combination of the vibrations of the object and of my own vibrations. This combination is only possible because the vibrations of the object and my own vibrations are of a single essence; and it manifests this essence, as one under the multiplicity of phenomena. The perceptive image is produced in me, but this image has its origin in the Unconscious, or Cosmic Mind, which has no particular residence, and dwells as much in the object perceived as in the Self who perceive it. The conscious mental image is individually mine, but the perception itself which is the principle of this conscious image neither belongs to me nor to the image. In this perception there is no distinction between subject and object; it is a conciliating hypostasis uniting subject and object in a ternary synthesis.

Every perception of the outside world does not, however, release satori in me. Why not? Because, in fact, my conscious mental image occupies all my attention. This purely personal aspect of universal perception fascinates me, in the belief in which I live that distinct things *are*. I have not yet understood with the whole of my being the declaration of Hui-neng: '*Not a thing is.*' I still believe that *this* is essentially different from *that*; I am partial. In this ignorance, the multiple images which are the elements of my inner universe are clearly distinct, one opposed to another; each of them is defined in my eyes by that in which it differs from the others. In this perspective no image can anonymously represent, equally with any other image, the totality of my inner universe. That is to say that no image is 'Self', but only an aspect of Self. In these conditions everything happens as if no union is realised, in the process of perception, between Self and Not-Self, but only a partial identification. The Self, not being integrated,

shall only be a question of the conditioning of the world by me: either I see myself as conditioning the outer world, or I see myself as not succeeding in conditioning it, but never can I recognise myself as conditioned by it on a footing of equality. From which arises the illusion of the Not-Self. If I condition the outside world, it is Self; if I do not succeed in doing so, it is Not-Self; never can I bring myself to recognise it as Itself, because I lack knowledge of the hypostasis which unites us.

The impossibility in which I find myself to-day of being in possession of my own nature, of my Buddha-nature, as universal man and not as distinct individual, obliges me unceasingly to invent a representation of my situation in the Universe that is radically untrue. Instead of seeing myself as equal with the outside world, I see myself either as above it or below, either on high, or beneath. In this perspective, in which the 'on high' is Being and the 'beneath' is Nullity, I am obliged to urge myself always towards Being. All my efforts necessarily tend, in a direct or a roundabout manner, to raise me up, whether materially, subtly, or, as one says, 'spiritually'.

All my natural psychological automatisms, before satori, are founded on amour-propre, the personal pretension, the claim to 'rise' in one way or another; and it is this claim to raise myself individually which hides from me my infinite universal dignity.

The pretension which animates all my efforts, all my aspirations, is at times difficult to recognise as such. It is easy for me to see my pretension when the Not-Self from which I wish to be distinguished is represented by other human-beings; in this case a little inner frankness suffices to give its true name to my endeavour. It no longer works so easily when the Not-Self from which I wish to be distinguished is represented by inanimate objects or above all by that illusory and mysterious entity that I call Destiny; but it is, at bottom, exactly the same thing; my luck exalts me and my ill-luck humiliates me. All perception of positivity in the Universe exalts me, all perception of negativity in the Universe humiliates me. When the outside world is positive, constructive, it is as I want it, and it then appears to me as conditioned by me; when it is negative, destructive (even if that does not directly concern me), it is as I do not want it, and it appears to me then as refusing to let itself be conditioned by me. If we see clearly the profound

basis of our amour-propre, we understand that all our imaginable joys are satisfaction of this amour-propre and that all our imaginable sufferings are its wounds. We understand then that our pretentious personal attitude dominates the whole of our affective automatisms, that is the whole of our life. The Independent Intelligence alone escapes this domination.

My egotistical pretension towards the 'on high' has to express itself in an unceasing process of imagination because it is false, and in radical contradiction with the reality of things. If I look at my personal life as a whole with impartiality I see that it is comparable with the bursting of a fireworks-rocket. The shooting upwards of the rocket corresponds with the intra-uterine life during which everything is prepared without yet being manifested; the moment at which the rocket bursts is the birth; the spreading-out of the luminous shower represents that ascending period of my life in which my organism develops all its powers; the falling back of the shower in a rain of sparks which expire represents my old age and death. It appears to me at first that the life of this rocket is an increase, then a decrease. But in thinking about it more carefully I see that it is, throughout its duration, a disintegration of energy; it is a decrease from one end to the other of its manifestation. So is it with me as an individual; from the moment of my conception my psycho-somatic organism is the manifestation of a disintegration, of a continual descent. From the moment at which I am conceived I begin to die, exhausting in manifestations more or less spectacular an original energy which does nothing but decrease. Cosmic reality radically contradicts my pretension towards the 'on high'; as a personal being I have in front of me only the 'beneath'.

The whole problem of human distress is resumed in the problem of humiliation. To cure distress is to be freed from all possibility of humiliation. Whence comes my humiliation? From seeing myself powerless? No, that is not enough. It comes from the fact that I try in vain not to see my real powerlessness. *It is not powerlessness itself that causes humiliation, but the shock experienced by my pretension to omnipotence when it comes up against the reality of things.* I am not humiliated because the outer world denies me, but because I fail to annul this negation. The veritable cause of my distress is never in the outside world, it is only in the claim that

I throw out and which is broken against the wall of reality. I deceive myself when I complain that the wall has hurled itself against me and has wounded me; it is I that have injured myself against it, my own action which has caused my suffering. When I no longer pretend, nothing will injure me ever again.

I can say also that my distress-humiliation reveals the laceration of an inner conflict between my tendency to see myself all-powerful and my tendency to recognise concrete reality in which my omnipotence is denied. I am distressed and humiliated when I am torn between my subjective pretension and my objective observation, between my lie and my truth, between my partial and impartial representations of my situation in the Universe. I shall only be saved from the permanent threat of distress when my objectivity has triumphed over my subjectivity, when the reality has triumphed in me over the dream.

In our desire to escape from distress at last, we search for doctrines of salvation, we search for 'gurus'. But the true guru is not far away, he is before our eyes and unceasingly offers us his teaching; he is reality as it is, he is our daily life. The evidence of salvation is beneath our eyes, evidence of our non-omnipotence, that our pretension is radically absurd, impossible, and so illusory, inexistent; evidence that there is nothing to fear for hopes that have no reality; that I am and have always been on the ground, so that no kind of fall is possible, so that no vertigo has any reason to exist.

If I am humiliated, it is because my imaginative autonomisms succeed in neutralising the vision of reality and keep the evidence in the dark. I do not benefit by the salutary teaching which is constantly offered to me, because I refuse it and set myself skilfully to elude the experience of humiliation. If a humiliating circumstance turns up, offering me a marvellous chance of initiation, at once my imagination strives to conjure what appears to me to be a danger; it struggles against the illusory movement towards 'beneath'; it does everything to restore me to that habitual state of satisfied arrogance in which I find a transitory respite but also the certainty of further distress. In short I constantly defend myself against that which offers to save me; I fight foot by foot to defend the very source of my unhappiness. All my inner actions tend to prevent satori, since they aim at the 'on high' whereas satori awaits me 'beneath'. And so Zen is right in saying

that 'satori falls upon us unexpectedly when we have exhausted all the resources of our being'.

These considerations seem to indicate humility to us as the 'way'. It is true in a sense. Let us see, however, in what respect humility is not a 'way' if by this word we understand a systematic discipline. In my actual condition I cannot make any effort which, directly or indirectly, is not an effort towards 'on high'. Every effort to conquer humility can only result in a false humility in which I again exalt myself egotistically by means of the idol that I have created for myself. *It is strictly impossible for me to abase myself, that is for me to reduce the intensity of my claim to 'be'*. All that I can and should do, if I wish to escape definitively from distress, is less and less to resist the instruction of concrete reality, and to let myself be abased by the evidence of the cosmic order. Even then, there is nothing that I can *do* or *cease to do* directly. I will cease to oppose myself to the constructive and harmonising benefits of humiliation in the measure in which I have understood that my true well-being is to be found, paradoxically, where until now I have situated my pain. As long as I have not understood, I am turned towards 'on high'; when I have understood I am not turned towards 'beneath'—for, once again, it is impossible for me to be turned towards 'beneath' and every effort in that direction would transform the 'beneath' into a 'on high'—but my aspiration stretched towards 'on high' decreases in intensity and, in this measure, I benefit from my humiliations. When I have understood, I resist less and, on account of that, I see more and more often that I am humiliated; I see that all my negative states are at bottom humiliations, and that I have taken steps up to the present to give them other names. I am capable then of feeling myself humiliated, vexed, without any other image in me than the image of this state, and of remaining there motionless, my understanding having wiped out my reflex attempts at flight. From the moment at which I succeed in no longer moving in my humiliated state, I discover with surprise that there is the 'asylum of rest', the unique harbour of safety, the only place in the world in which I can find perfect security. My adhesion to *this* state, placed face to face with my natural refusal, obtains the intervention of the Conciliating Principle; the opposites neutralise one another; my suffering fades away and one part of my fundamental pretension

fades away at the same time. I feel myself nearer to the ground, to the 'beneath', to real humility (humility which is not acceptance of inferiority, but abandonment of the vertical conception in which I saw myself always above or below). These inner phenomena are accompanied by a sentiment of sadness, of 'night'; and this sentiment is very different from distress because a great calm reigns therein. In this moment of nightly calm and of relaxation are elaborated the processes of what we have called the inner alchemy. The 'old' man breaks up for the benefit of the gestation of the 'new' man. The individual dies for the sake of the birth of the universal.

The conquest of humility, impossible directly, supposes then the use of humiliation. All suffering, by humiliating us, modifies us. But this modification can be of two sorts that are radically opposed. If I struggle against humiliation, it destroys me and it increases my inner disharmony; if I let it alone without opposing it, it builds up my inner harmony. To let humiliation alone simply consists in recognising to oneself that one is humiliated.

The Being, in our actual perspective, appears to us the unconciliated couple of zero and the infinite. Our nature urges us at first to identify it with the infinite and to try to reach it under this form, by incessantly rising. But this attempt is hopeless; no ascent in the finite can reach the infinite. The way towards the Being is not infinity but zero which, besides, being nothing, is not a way.

This idea that humility is not a 'way' is so important that we would like to come back to it for the last time. If I don't understand that, I shall inevitably withdraw such and such manifestations of my pretension in practical life, confine myself in a mediocre social rank, etc. I shall avoid humiliations instead of using them; imitations of humility are never anything but imitations. It is not a question of modifying the action of my fundamental pretension, but of utilising the evidences which come to me in the course of this action, owing to the humiliating defeats in which it necessarily results. If I cease artificially to fight against the Not-Self, I deprive myself of indispensable knowledge which comes to me from my defeats.

Without always saying so in an explicit manner, Zen is centred on the idea of humility. Throughout the whole of Zen literature

From the Foreword by ALDOUS HUXLEY:

The author of this book is a psychiatrist, and his thoughts about the *Philosophia Perennis* in general and about Zen in particular are those of a man professionally concerned with the treatment of troubled minds. Dr. Benoit has discussed the "supreme doctrine" of Zen Buddhism as we see it in the light of Western psychological theory and Western psychiatric practice—and in the process he has offered a searching criticism of Western psychology and Western psychotherapy in the light of Zen. This is a book which should be read by everyone who aspires to know who he is and what he can do to acquire such self-knowledge.

The Supreme Doctrine

BY
HUBERT
BENOIT

INTRODUCTION
BY
ALDOUS
HUXLEY

PANTHEON