

# Buddhist Elements in the Coming World Civilization

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## *The Discovery of What We Are Not*

MODERN man everywhere is being driven beyond the limitations imposed upon him by social structures antedating the superindustrial state. Patterns of culture always operate to produce a unitary and comprehensive way of life enacted daily in the attitudes, expectations, social roles and goals of their members. The peculiar condition of our time is that powerful forces released by modern science and technology have destroyed very rapidly most of the control-systems of the pre-industrial era; and modern man has not been able to bring these gigantic instruments of power into the service of either the ancestral order of life or of the widening and deepening community of men and women who are beginning for the first time to think of themselves as members of one species, rather than as members of a pseudo-species, a particular race, an exclusive social class or nation.

Age-old structures in control of his life until now have begun to self-destruct inside him and around him, with the result that, while modern man may be as confused as ever concerning his identity, *he is beginning to discover what he is not*. More and more people spend all their waking hours in a world to which they feel they do not belong. This is one of the inescapable counterparts of the volatile social changes of the superindustrial age.

Since men and women hitherto have found their sense of identity and affiliation in relatively predictable relations to mankind and the totality of which their living was a significant part, we can see why they are winning a deeply moving perspective on what they are *not*, however confused they may be about what they are. Where mankind has studied the past to win some insight

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into the present, he now finds himself faced with the *necessity* for freeing his mind from this mental and emotional track. All of the studies from which we have just quoted might well have borne the title, "The Death of Permanence," or, in an even more frankly Buddhist spirit, "The Discovery of What We Are Not."

The extent to which men and women are awakening to the transitoriness of life, which in Buddhist thought is one of the three basic features of existence (*Anicca*), depends upon an individual's educational development, his vocational or professional connections, his racial and ethnic background, his standard of living, and particularly his location within the total system of social power and dependence in which he lives. Those most fully awakened are developing forms of awareness and social behavior that may well fit them to carry out a significant change in the way life is presently organized on the planet. Less awakened groups feel the pivotal change as a threat, and they respond with vigor and violence to defend, at whatever cost, the patterns so recently looked upon as "their world." Incapable of reading the signs of the times, and lacking a true diagnosis of the underlying causes of the frustration and dispersion of their power, members of the power structures view the present transmutation of man as a conspiracy to dislodge them from control.

Many other types of response are as epidemic as this. Some feel life to have become an intolerable burden and lose faith in the possibility of living a meaningful existence. Some look for an escape hatch through alcohol, drug addiction, and an unbroken cycle of sporting events throughout the year televised to fifty or a hundred million spectators in the United States alone. Still others throw up defensive and protective psychoneurotic devices which allow them to withdraw and so lessen the pain, without consciously addressing the source of their new trouble. Others continue to experience their life, but at a low ebb, like Fontenelle, when his physician asked, "What do you feel?" The reply of his last hour was, "Je sens une difficulté d'être."

It is with the most creative and fully awakened ones that our present writing is concerned, for they appear to be reaching for a new approach to life, and not merely new knowledge. They appear to be beating at the time-honored limits of rational thought, seeking wider ranges of sensitive awareness and broader and deeper powers of attention. In a word, they seem bent upon giving birth to a new man, one with powers capable of controlling the

world revolution that science and technology are unavoidably achieving. They are reaching for new values of a world more rich with quality than any man has ever known. In small groups everywhere, they are experimenting with new ways of changing themselves from victims of mindless mechanisms and compulsions into men and women with unprecedented range and depth of sensitive awareness. All around us new experiments in living are going forward, bent upon laying the foundations for a higher plateau on which mankind will find it possible to become more fully human.

These creative and more fully awakened ones belong to every ancestral order, every social class, every nation, racial and ethnic tradition. One distinction, alone, separates them from their fellow-creatures: *they are fully alive to what they are not, because they are no longer under the compulsive grip of any particular content of consciousness, nor fettered by the patterns of culture in which they were reared.*

Among these are the most fully developed college students of the contemporary world—in Soviet Russia, the United States, England, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Israel, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and other nations of Eastern Europe. They harbor a more powerful drive than ever before to substitute critical for tradition-bound attitudes and habits of mind. They have been fully exposed since the cradle to the drastic changes and violence of their world, and they have had practice all their lives in rethinking everything they have been told. They know with Meister Eckhart that “only the hand that can erase can write the truth.” They suspect that they are being cheated or taken in, not so much by huge mass sections in History or Biology, as by the preconceived questions and the predigested answers that seem to constitute their education on every hand. They resent the college or university that undertakes to determine what they shall believe. Fewer than ever before of the generations now in college find it possible to respond with vigor to the unfulfilled tasks and goals older generations have hitherto endowed upon their young. Running after money or status, looking forward to the good life in suburbia, climbing the ladder of the business community, seeking life’s fulfillment in the insatiable wants of the middle classes, seeking tranquility on the greens of the country club—all this has become a state of *anti-being*. More clearly than anyone else now alive, they know that *all this is what they are not.*

Having rejected their own ancestral religion in the West as too fully im-

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mersed and identified with social structures from which they have withdrawn their affiliation, these younger men and women are probing and screening the legacy of Buddhism and other religions in search of types of experience and behavior that might heal their fragmented minds and their alienated lives. They know what they are *not*, and *they are prepared with the Lord Buddha to bang their lives upon nothing at all*. They reflect in the manner of Bruno Bettelheim upon their own lives: "If I cannot feel myself full of vitality because of my hopes for a life in the future, if the world I am about to create will not be better than that of my fathers, better not to live in this world, better to retire from it or feel alive in the moment, no matter what price I must pay in the future."<sup>1</sup> They find nourishment in lines such as these:

Although innumerable beings have been led to Nirvana  
no being has been led to Nirvana  
Before one goes through the gate  
one may not be aware there is a gate  
One may think there is a gate to go through  
and look a long time for it without finding it  
One may find it and it may not open  
If it opens one may be through it  
As one goes through it  
one sees that the gate one went through  
was the self that went through it  
no one went through a gate  
there was no gate to go through  
no one ever found a gate  
no one ever realized there was never a gate.<sup>2</sup>

As we shall see more fully in the following pages, there is a powerful and creative minority composed of members of all age-groups, ethnic and racial traditions, social classes, nations and regions of the world, who constitute an

<sup>1</sup> Bruno Bettelheim, "The Problem of Generations," in Erik Erikson, *Young: Change and Challenge* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1963), page 77.

<sup>2</sup> R. D. Laing, *hoss* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), page 85. The first two lines, the ones about Nirvana, are italicized in the original.

invisible community throughout the planet. *Members of this invisible community share much more than an awareness of what they are not.* They are deeply moved by massive world problems which older generations and culture-bound men and women lack both the will and the resources to solve. This is the case, for example, with the problem of over-population. Attitudes, fears, and massive new knowledge dominated by purposes and assumptions of an age that is past aggravate the problem and leave it unsolved. Pollution of the biosphere is the same kind of problem. It can be faced creatively only in a global approach, only by people who put their isolated ancestral culture worlds behind them and work together for new approaches. Nuclear war with its appalling capacity at the present moment for killing every man, woman and child on the planet seventy times over now lies within the range of too many nations to be an alternative for any one nation, despite the existing anarchy of international affairs. Exhaustion of resources required for life on the planet, and more effective pooling of dwindling resources remaining, find only a small minority willing to meditate and reflect on these problems and come up with solutions utterly new. As fundamental as any of these problems is the shocking growth of uninhabitable human wastelands from which individuals are compelled to withdraw by means of drugs, suicide, psychosomatic disorders, desperate group violence, or complete hopelessness and despair.

These problems can be solved only by people who have discovered what they are not. They call for approaches, conceptual systems, and original insights which can emerge only among people who have broken the chrysalis or envelope of the one-sided, pseudo-species in which people hitherto have all been reared. What we are *now not* is the unwitting spokesman for our own traditional approach, or the approach that is most consistent with our particular position in the spectrum of social power and dependence. Even though the answers that emerge should involve us in continued friction and controversy, we will continue to ask, if we are mature, "whither we goeth," so long as we maintain an interest in our own existence.

For no exclusive social class, or race, or nation, or powerful stream of civilization can escape any longer the massive threat of these problems, however innocent many of us may be of having contributed to their lethal character and emergence.

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The future is rushing at individuals everywhere at an ever accelerating pace. People will eventually confront more and more relentlessly the choice of being shattered by this "future shock" and "culture shock" or accepting into conscious awareness the Buddhist insight into the transitoriness of life, the ubiquity of change. And this will need to be accepted, not as a mere passing point of view, but as an assumption admitted into the very citadel and vital center of their lives. Conditions are far advanced which make it a personal disaster to be culture-bound, enslaved by the ancestral order of life. It is late for men and women to be discovering what they are not, a discovery long familiar to people reared in a Buddhist tradition. For the world changes even as we walk in it.

It is not easy to understand why patterns of culture dominant in the West have tended to cut off and suppress the insights of great minds like Saint Augustine and Spinoza, who had the greater enrichment of humanity at heart. "I could see," Spinoza says, "the benefits which are acquired through fame and riches, and that I should be obliged to abandon the quest of such objects, if I seriously devoted myself to the search for something different and new. I seemed to be willingly losing hold on a sure good for the sake of something uncertain." It is worth our wondering in how many millions similar misgivings dwelt concerning the dominant and compulsive drive for power and wealth in the West.

Why did the penetrations of the mystic and the philosopher into strange and obscure regions of experience find in the West a cultural climate hostile to their earlier elaboration? Why did it take the West so long to produce a Freud, whose major importance for our times lies in his demonstration that people we speak of as "normal" or "ordinary" are shriveled and dessicated fragments of what a person can be? Was it the awareness of the presence of alien people living on their very frontiers, whose warriors might one day lay waste and exterminate one's people? Was this fear of the alien at the gate merely internalized into a general policy of suppression, so that deviation from the prevailing states of normal conscious awareness was always hunted down and destroyed? Is this why, in the most amazing centuries of European history—the sixteenth and seventeenth—a hundred thousand "witches" were executed, with the tacit approval of both Protestant and Roman Catholic hierarchies? Such barbarism in these remarkable centuries of creative

scientific, philosophic, political and religious endeavor could hardly have happened, except among people who were already uneasy over strange stirrings within, fearful over threats from outsiders, and fierce in their defense of personal and social norms. Were they enacting in real life Plato's Allegory of the Cave, and extending it into a type of authoritarian social policy that captured or slaughtered even the most generous impulses of the Hebrew-Christian tradition? Were they likewise enacting in real life the Greek legend of Narcissus, who was so fascinated with his own image in the quiet woodland pool that he would never be able to discover what he was not? Or, was Europe suffering from what we today call "cultural shock"? Is this why the strange penetrations into obscure regions of experience which we associate with Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre could only in our time become widely read, so that only now an Ortega y Gasset can risk saying, "Whoever is not like everybody, does not think like everybody, runs the risk of being eliminated"? Or as in Samuel Beckett, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969, who comments with irony: "Don't wait to be hunted to hide."

Cultural anthropology confirms what we have been saying, generalizing it to humanity at large. "One of the most significant facts about us," Clifford Geertz observes, "may finally be that we all begin with the natural equipment to live a thousand kinds of life but end in the end having lived only one." The "natural habitat" of human thought "is the house yard, the market place, and the town square." The symbols that give meaning to experience are "already current in the community when he is born, and they remain, with some additions, subtractions, and partial alterations he may or may not have had a hand in, in circulation there after he dies."<sup>3</sup> Thoreau had similar insights a century or more before: "All men," he says, "are partially buried in the grave of custom, and of some we see only the crown of the head above the ground." Only with this change, that in cultural anthropology the grave has disappeared, and we see only the "normal" man.

We probably have before us here at least a part of the tangled web of relations accounting for the fanaticism with which ideologies have been defended

<sup>3</sup> Clifford Geertz, "The Impact of the Concept of Culture," *New Views of the Nature of Man*, ed. John R. Platt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), pages 107-108.

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in the West, the spawning ground of those great non-scientific systems which have as their aim the organization and control of behavior, and which are the most obstinate adversaries of thought. Ingenuity and creativity have been committed almost totally, and with Inquisitorial passion, to the defense of established doctrine, established institutions, established ideologies and the bureaucracies to which they have more recently given rise. So thoroughgoing has been this militant defense against new and radically different forms of experience and awareness that the psychological experimentation fostered for over two thousand years in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions was literally blacked out and deprived of even a name—and what man has no word for he can hardly admit to consciousness even in a dream. All sorts of experience lie beyond our reach because we cannot name them, and we cannot name them because we cannot afford emotionally and socially to harbor the purposes that would enable us to accept them. Thus a controlling “frame of mind” keeps most of the native endowments and possibilities for experience lying dormant and dark beneath our private and social towers of defense.

As we shall see in our next section, this selective life and death of the fragments of meaning a person finds in his experience has prevailed throughout all the human past. Its discovery constitutes the major precondition for the Lord Buddha's Enlightenment beneath the Bodhi tree near the present town of Patna in northeast India. It showed him why change in the underlying assumptions and attitudes of people is almost as slow as the weathering of rock, why governments have no difficulty summoning their citizens to die in defense of the ancestral order, and why human suffering can have no solution until the compulsive rule of a culture's dominant wants and aspirations can be broken. This discovery of the Lord Buddha is still an important part of the legacy of Buddhism in South and Southeast Asian nations, where, as Wriggins writes of contemporary Ceylon, there is a marked Buddhist predisposition to be “wary of the vested interests, the ambitions, and the presumptions of authority of man over man that are the inescapable accompaniments of human organizations.”<sup>4</sup>

The West has been late in arriving at this major discovery of the Buddha,

<sup>4</sup> W. Howard Wriggins, *Ceylon: Dilemmas of a New Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), page 190.



the discovery of what one is not, but most of the leading minds of the past century or more wrote out of this kind of awakening, the most systematic formulations of which are found in Freud and Marx and the writings in our own day which they may be said to have inspired. The most comprehensive and secure formulations of reason are embodiments of this fundamental alienation of man from his own original experience and larger potentials for development. As long as they could live in relative isolation, protected by weapon-systems out-dated by the hydrogen bomb, one rational ordering of life could keep members of a particular culture world from discovering "what they were not."

Most of the citadels of meaning with which men and women have for centuries been identified, and in which they have compulsively sought to find enough meaning to sustain their lives, are rapidly falling into a state of obsolescence and disrepair. Individuals are thus able to opt for qualitative enrichment beyond existing boundaries of personality and its conscious concerns; and the richer the *now*, the less the stress of acquisitive and compulsive feelings arising from within the self. The world now coming into being is less object-oriented, less hardware-oriented, and much more concerned with the enhancement of life's qualitative richness. Sometimes the new quality and meaning emerge in the lines of a poem, and the poem becomes a ball of light. "Words in a poem, sounds in movement, rhythm in space, attempt to recapture personal meaning in personal time and space from out of the sights and sounds of a depersonalized, dehumanized world. They are bridgeheads into alien territory. They are acts of insurrection. Their source is from the Silence at the center of each of us... The creative breath...comes from the zone of no-thing.... We forget that we are all there all the time."<sup>5</sup>

Another symbol suggests itself in this connection. The supreme aesthetic achievement of the twentieth century, and the act most significant for its unique spiritual fallout, may well prove to be the launching of astronauts into outer space, where they are freed from the gravitational field of the earth and see our planet floating like a beautiful agate in a sea of darkness, its blue oceans and grey contours of land becoming discernible every few hours in the rays of the sun—the good earth, our biosphere, our common astronomical home.

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<sup>5</sup> Laing, *op. cit.*, pages 43-44.

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Slowly this new perspective from beyond the pull of gravitational systems will wash against the hard and compelling value systems of the culture-bound creature, who has killed more than one hundred million similarly "normal" fellow-creatures in the last fifty or sixty years. Eventually this aesthetic perspective upon his global home may free him to stand in or to stand out of structures of meaning and involvement that hold almost everyone in their compulsive grip. Space travel may transfigure the Cave Man. If this is the result of our first ventures in space, they will have become worth their tremendous cost and possible misdirection of our energies, for they will then have symbolized the exploration of man's inner world. The new perspective from far beyond the window of re-entry may be destined to recast man's appraisal of himself as the aperture through which the fullness of existence, or "the abyss of nothingness" or *śūnyatā*, as it is called in the East, becomes more openly accessible to the species that has finally discovered what it is not. Perhaps strangest of all, at least to the older generations, is the growing willingness of the best minds among the rising generations to commit the kind of cultural heresy that has always been a poorly veiled implication of the teachings of the Lord Buddha, and a "top secret" implication in Christianity and Islam. Venturesome pioneers who crossed an ocean, battled a wilderness, and made their way along the "Oregon Trail" have produced in America, at least, a generation of great-grandchildren who fight in the wilderness of new human values.

There is indeed a seachange occurring throughout the planet, a global reorganization of life. In some ways it resembles the famous Underground of World War II with which we associate such names as Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. The change is matched, however, by only two others in all the human past: first, by the emergence of civilization ten thousand years ago; and, second, by the struggles two or three million years before that, when man was first distinguishing himself from other forms of life. What is changing now so swiftly that none is able to keep abreast seems indeed like a new beginning for both men and the biosphere in which their living is embedded.

The dramatic and potentially tragic speed with which people are being released from the control systems of the ancestral order makes it imperative that we know much more than we do about the "life style of civilized man,"

the ordering of life that was dominant everywhere until now. If we are to understand the particular forms of liberation that tax our inner resources to live more out of the fullness of existence, or "the abyss of nothingness," we must try to set aside our visual and rational clichés long enough to take another look at the control-systems from which we are being released. If the creative resources of the earth's multitudes are to break through on a broad spectrum for the first time in the life of the species, we must take a closer look at the life style that mobilized these resources mainly for defense. We must learn more about the mechanisms available to every social institution for reproducing its own imagery in each rising generation. Since, as Northrop puts it, "no people can slough off their cultural past completely, since their living law—its mentality and its social ways—has been built into them over centuries to form their inner personalities as well as their outer social practices,"<sup>6</sup> we face the task immediately of learning more about the life style that still lives in us all, despite the epoch-making changes indicated above. It will help us to face the "electric age" with its constantly accelerating change, its global interdependence, and its demand for a new self-corrective community if we can turn now to examine in more detail the cultural past that still lives with us, long after we have discovered what we are not.

### *The Life Style of Civilized Man*

The distinguishing mark of civilized man, *the man we now know we are not*, is that for ten thousand years he has been shaped from the cradle to the grave by the meanings and norms, the signs and symbols, and the system of values that he has acquired by living in an invisible cave. The forces shaping human life have been as various as the climate and the stars, but one kind of control-system has been at the core of the changes, because it has been fundamental to every ancestral order of life. This basic control-system, which may be viewed as the life style of civilized man, represents his commitment to patterns of culture which have taken his biological and physiological propensities for living a thousand different kinds of lives and shaped him from his mother's

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<sup>6</sup> F. S. C. Northrop, *Philosophical Anthropology and Practical Politics* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1960), page 218.

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womb into the life his social group has looked upon as "normal." Each new arrival has learned from his self-enclosed, self-justifying, self-validating linguistic system and culture world the meanings that would give him his identity.

For ten thousand years man has been nurtured in a kind of linguistic and behavioral incubator until one day he might come of age. To use cybernetic language, each new arrival is programmed in his nerve endings by the official patterns of symbolic systems and patterns of culture. He is equipped with roles and rules, tools and weapons, myths and values, rituals and norms and all the other paraphernalia with which individuals acquire a common identity, learn to anticipate how others will respond, and proceed to interpret and anticipate some small portion of the possibilities for life on the planet. A particular matrix for experience and behavior is trapped in the brain and neural network of those who enact it, cleaving imperceptibly to every member, and embedded in the attitudes with which life and its relations are regarded.

The life style of civilized man is this imprinting of the valuing consciousness of man (inherently capable of infinite expansion) with the exclusive, self-referent, self-validating symbols and routinized behavior of a particular ancestral order of life. All the different culture worlds are narrowly circular, like a dictionary in which each word is defined in terms of all the others. No individual or age-group or social class carries the entire dictionary in his experience and behavior, but all the parts fit together into a more or less consistent whole. Tensions emerge with changes of various kinds, but the tensions are resolved in ways that maintain the unity of the culture world intact. As a species we have the capacity to speak, but what language we learn depends upon the symbolic world to which we belong. As a species we have latent potentialities for assimilating new qualities and meanings without limit, but the frames of reference in terms of which we perceive and think are given on the walls of our invisible cave.

We are not referring here to primitive preliterate man who was irresistibly and wholly one with his cultural cocoon because it was all he knew. We are speaking of civilization with its artistic, mathematical, and linguistic symbols, and of civilized man who has relations opened with people beyond his own exclusive way of living. We are thinking of civilized man as a creature who makes every effort *not* to think of himself as a member of a universal human

species, as Erik Erikson puts it in his recent book on Gandhi.<sup>7</sup> Civilized man chooses the culture world into which he has been born, just as it has "chosen" him, with full awareness of competing ways of life with different norms and values.

The life style of civilized man, indeed, is just this *commitment* to his self-encapsulated, socio-centric control system; it is his attachment to it and his living for its continuance as a mothering matrix for those yet unborn. So compulsively does he cling to the cultural patterns in which he is born that all his energies are enlisted in their defense. To deny their validity is to deny his being. Out of a sense of affiliation and belonging he feels with those who share his self-isolating chrysalis of culture, and despite serious differences he often has with members of his own cultural cave, civilized man continues into our own time to look with fear and dread toward people who live by different systems of value, and he is normally prepared to exterminate any and all who constitute a present danger. His very identity as man has been shaped by the pseudo-species to which he and his ancestral order of life belong.

One of the major reasons why the teachings of the Lord Buddha are difficult to accept and to enact is that he was rescuing man from the imperious command the symbolic systems and culture worlds of the past ten thousand years exercise over their members. These life styles of civilized man give us answers to the questions our life together had led us to ask; they hold before us the values and goals that give life meaning; they direct us to the aims and purposes we climb to glory in achieving. The stakes are always high in our ancestral caves. And it is the almost universal sense of lacking an alternative that leads the most highly civilized people on earth to resort upon occasion to deeds more barbaric than the most primitive man. Nothing could be more barbaric, for example, than the way the dominant culture world of the United States destroyed the American Indian, not because Americans coming from Europe needed their land, but because the dominant culture everywhere must have its way, and those who cannot or will not assimilate that culture must perish.

East or West, Red or Liberal, those in whom the blueprints of the culture's dominant guidance system have been most sharply and vividly imprinted are

<sup>7</sup> Erik H. Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1969), page 431.

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prepared to defend their encapsulated cultural cave and the answers emblazoned on its walls, even if they have to destroy everything else in their defense. They are symbolized in the American major in South Vietnam who stood in the ruins his artillery had produced and said, "We had to destroy it in order to save it."

During the sixties upper middle-class America unwillingly found itself in the presence of perhaps one-quarter of the nation's population who lacked the motivation to spend every waking moment getting rich. The overwhelming response to this awakening of the rich to the increasing militancy of minorities with nothing to lose but their chains, was the immediate planning of new and secluded housing developments. Lacking a national guard large enough to protect every suburb and every campus in the country, and alarmed to see that their own sons and daughters were building a counter-culture to replace the myth of rising ever higher into the sunshine of sensuous contentment, millions of affluent Americans were moving behind dark glasses and drawn window-shades into planned communities protected on land and water by security guards and shore patrols. Pulling in their shopping centers behind them, they had one look at suffering and ran. The joy and the security of their affluence suddenly seemed threatened on every hand by the ocean of the world's hungry and humiliated millions. Just in case their military-industrial complex, their commerce department, food and drug administration, department of health, education and welfare, department of justice, interstate commerce commission, federal reserve board, state highway boards and utilities commission, and the new Environmental Protection Agency should fail them, upper middle-class Americans were devising their twentieth century counterparts of the medieval castle and moat, where they could hope to live out to the end the culture-bound affluence which was the only thing they knew to protect. This was the way they chose to come to grips with the unprecedented problems of the modern world.

It must be emphasized that the situation we are describing is not the problem of any one superindustrial state. On the contrary, it is the major predicament of civilized man, and hence the major problem of the earth during our time. It is the problem stemming from the life style of civilized man, from his commitment to a cultural fragment, a pseudo-species, in which he is reared from the cradle to the grave.

## THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

The ten thousand years of civilized man are now drawing to a close. Ten millenia ago the creature with the human future in his gene pool discovered new techniques of agriculture and social organization and lifted himself from bestiality into civilization in the hill country overlooking the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The first villages of this region that has been called "the cradle of civilization" are now being exposed by the archeologist's spade, the scene being reconstructed by teams from the University of Chicago who date the villages about 7500 B. C. Having once emerged, the new life style could be communicated anywhere on earth, each culture world discovering new ways of reproducing its dominant image in its members.

The course of history is no longer being directed by the power structures that command the age of civilization. Events now occurring throughout the earth testify that this life style is in a state of obsolescence. The contradiction between sophistication in technology and primitive social understanding is at long last emerging into conscious awareness, and the control and direction of life is shifting *away from* established culture worlds *over to* a self-corrective style of life and global community in which the full spectrum of the individual's resources become accessible to a life more fully human. This is the global condition in which the teachings of the Lord Buddha become freshly relevant. It is questionable, indeed, whether the transition can be carried through to success, unless the forced relationship every human being bears to the culture in which he has been reared can be fully aired, understood, and overcome.

Ten thousand years of civilization are not long in the perspective of human evolution. They are more like a cultural kindergarten in this longer perspective. But these ten thousand years have established themselves deeply in everyone now alive. The rigidity and inflexible forms of man's forced relation to his culture are not likely to be broken unless the resources of the Lord Buddha's teachings can be brought to bear, despite the powerful currents of liberation that are now running in this direction. It is to the epoch-making breakthrough that we now turn. Civilization conquered the earth. Man must now conquer civilization.

*The Life Style of Self-Corrective Man*

The entire life style of civilized man is self-destructing throughout the planet. It is being inundated by knowledge growing at an exponential pace at millions of points on the globe with consequences that cannot be foreseen. As Charner Perry remarked many years ago, the future of mankind depends upon inventions, and it is a contradiction to speak of predicting an invention, which is to say, before it is made. This is one reason why history can no longer be driven toward preconceived ends, why it cannot be controlled by the purposes of any military-industrial complex, or social class, or United Nations. What the power structures cannot foresee they cannot control, and the impression is growing among students of the world's developmental problems that history is either out of control, or else it is being shaped by something new, something we lack the appropriate conceptual structure for understanding, even though it may be operating before our very noses. Either history is running amuck, or some swift, automatic process is operating, like the self-sustaining reaction of the first atomic pile built by Fermi and his group at the University of Chicago.

Much more than the "knowledge industry," however, is involved. The self-deluding, self-justifying, encapsulated life style of civilized man is being swept aside by the velocity of unprecedented social change, by the cultural typhoon of modernization, by loss of respect for duly constituted law and order on a world scale, by a growing epidemic of rigidity and inflexibility in the power structures, and by the rising expectations of submerged people throughout the globe. Contrary to the normal condition of men until our Space Age, no one will for long be "contained" in the historic community into which he was born.

Much more is involved, as well, than the interpenetration of culture worlds and their constituent social institutions. The institutions themselves are changing their style of behavior. Voluntary associations are multiplying in all major nations. There are hundreds of them in Japan alone, and in India they are eroding the caste system more effectively than formal acts of government can do. A Harvard scholar comments on a new flexibility overtaking social institutions: "At new depths and over a wider range of affairs, organizations are opening their operations to self-inquiry and self-analysis, which involves a change in how the men who make history and the men who make knowledge regard each other. The scientists have realized their affinity with men of



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affairs, and the latter have found a new receptivity and respect for men of knowledge."<sup>8</sup>

Administrative processes and time-honored attitudes associated with powerful historic institutions like the Roman Catholic Church are in a surprising condition of ferment. Between 1968 and 1970, in two years alone, four hundred Dutch priests resigned from the ministry, most of them in order to marry, while hierarchical debate on clerical celibacy continues to be banned by Pope Paul.<sup>9</sup> Four hundred twenty-five French priests in January, 1969, published a manifesto condemning the authority of the Roman Catholic Church as derived from the antiquated Roman Imperial Law which stipulated that its authority needed no justification. Twenty-five hundred Roman Catholic laymen met in the shadow of the Vatican in October, 1967, respectfully asking to be heard in any decision concerning artificial birth control and the problem of overpopulation on the planet. A year later two thousand members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science condemned the Pope's 1968 encyclical banning all contraceptive devices, calling the decision of the Pope "immoral" and "against the interests of mankind." Father Kavanaugh, trained in Canon Law, has publicly advocated that the Church should reform Canon Law by dumping all 2114 Canons into the Tiber River. And these are but a few of the instances of corrective behavior constantly battering against the historic Church. One gets the impression that the Church itself is on trial for its life.

Soviet Russia also has its own "silent spring," the Caspian Sea being to Moscow what Lake Erie is to Washington. In both cases, the battle is being lost to oil, petroleum products, industrial and city sewage, ballast and waste from ships. Spawning areas are drying up as the water level falls and some species of fish are totally extinct. Punitive measures against polluters come up against the eventual perception that they are aimed at eminent members of the Establishment,<sup>10</sup> a few of whom still consider it all a joke to be stated for purposes of laughter, "We have met the enemy and they are us!"

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<sup>8</sup> Warren G. Bennis and Philip E. Slater, *The Temporary Society* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968), pages 59-60.

<sup>9</sup> *Newsweek*, January 19, 1970, page 84.

<sup>10</sup> C. L. Sulzberger, syndicated column, New York Times News Service, from Sukhumi, USSR, published in *The Charlotte Observer*.

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It is precisely in the most advanced industrial nations where life is most unpredictable, and where the greatest pyramids of power ever witnessed are no longer capable of managing the affairs of mankind, nor even, for that matter, of their own citizens. Some of these nations girdle the earth in their last subtle efforts to conceal their authority and power, reaching out to one another in new efforts at collaboration, but the supremacy of the nation as an autonomous and cohesive principle of organization is over, its own history having become an unpredictable and uncontrollable affair.

The growing rule of novelty in human affairs is the outward sign of an invisible condition of being freshly and deeply rooted or grounded in what Buddhism calls the life continuum or "Stream of Being." It is the sign that mankind is in process of making a radical stride in freeing itself from any dominant member, and that it is developing at last the capacity for placing ultimate trust in the deepest truth about itself. Not trusting its own capacity for self-correction, its basic obligation to inquire, its power to perceive the evidence that points the way to the more generous and compassionate truth, mankind has conspired against itself to set limits to the chaotic possibilities of individual freedom to inquire. The increase of novelty in our time is the announcement that the age of self-corrective man has arrived. The fundamental challenge, therefore, to men and women now alive, to people who still maintain an interest in their own existence, is not merely to accept the volatile change now inducing "future shock" in many. The basic challenge is to break through all the barriers and coercions that have been choking the unique and original self-corrective propensities of mankind.

For the deepest truth about man is not that suggested by the terms *homo sapiens*, *homo faber*, or *homo symbolicum*, all of which are too obvious to need the special emphasis they have been given. *The deepest truth is man's capacity to probe his experience and to respond to whatever is encountered.* The life style of civilized man bears within itself the seeds of its own destruction, because for ten thousand years it has run like a juggernaut over man's capacity for self-correction, for rethinking from time to time everything he has known, for correcting the way he was reared, for perceiving strategies of self-delusion and self-justification in himself and others, and for correcting his responses in the light of what he discovers. The life style of civilized man is destroying itself, not primarily because each ruling elite is seeking to lift its culture world to the top of the pyramid of

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world power, but because *man's deepest natural bent, his ability to learn from his experience, and to learn how to learn, is being released from the clenched fist of the encapsulated culture worlds of the past.*

Like every other potentiality in the gene pool of the human species, the capacity for self-correction, which we have called man's deepest natural bent, must find conditions favorable to its development if it is to rise to dominance over the countervailing influences in the legacy of civilized man. Certain social conditions, for example, are obviously presupposed. It must find itself in a matrix of mutual support. It must also be provided with appropriate conceptual models that enable men and women to find in the fullness of existence all that is relevant to its nature and growth. It must find men and women who are too fully committed to inquiry and self-correction to use it for ulterior ends, such as a new means envisioned for discovering something they call "ultimate reality." It must not be conceived as a future goal towards which history seems to be moving. It must find appropriate conceptual structures that enable it to be viewed as the basic dynamism already shaping history, transferring allegiance *from the sociological community of one's encapsulated culture world to the self-corrective global community now growing out of all proportion to the population at large.* The new conceptual model will have to be proposed and criticized, and corrected and criticized again and again, until it is understood as summoning men and women to rely upon nothing at all. Only in this way will it avoid what Whitehead has called "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness."<sup>11</sup>

The community presupposed for facilitating the self-corrective capacity in the gene pool of mankind has already found a one-sided but nonetheless clear embodiment in the community of modern science. We can use this truncated form of the new self-corrective community now growing throughout the planet, providing we remember that it is an "Exhibit A" or a concrete existing illustration. As the Report of the Committee on Science in the Promotion of Human Welfare stressed, science is not to be identified with its theories. To do this would be to commit one to viewing the history of science as a catalogue of errors. As Ernest Nagel points out in this connection, "Every

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<sup>11</sup> Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925), pages 51, 58ff.

change in scientific theory would then be judged as fresh evidence for the 'bankruptcy' of science and for the incapacity of the human mind to attain genuine knowledge by way of scientific inquiry."<sup>12</sup> Strictly speaking, it is not theories that are scientific, it is the self-corrective way of behaving. Theories play an important function in this behavior; we could not see without them; they are the net in which we catch and categorize experience, but there is more to this fishing than the net.<sup>13</sup> What identifies a group as a scientific community is its deliberate effort to produce observations and logical implications that clash with the prevailing view. All progress in science increases the restability of its leading ideas.

Science distinguishes itself from other forms of behavior in cooperating in the search for evidence that falsifies established belief, established ordering of data, established patterns for dealing with phenomena across the broad spectrum that includes the amino acids, radioactivity, the mentally ill, the culture of the poor, the nature of the criminal and his crime, and the process of human development.<sup>14</sup> Flexibility in creating and changing models, Thomas Kuhn to the contrary, is what "normal science"<sup>15</sup> is all about, whether it be in biology, chemistry, physics, or mathematics. All the sciences have this built-in feature; it is the chief qualification for belonging—the capacity for imagining some new logical construct or conceptual model and perceiving the falsifying evidence it enables one to see for the first time. This central feature of scientific behavior may be illustrated even on the tennis

<sup>12</sup> Ernest Nagel, "The Place of Science in a Liberal Education," *Daedalus*, Winter, 1959, page 60.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Clarence Irving Lewis, *Mind and the World-Order* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), pages 307ff.

<sup>14</sup> Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* (New York: Basic Books, 1962), pages 25, 36, 127ff, 256ff. See also N. P. Jacobson, "The Cultural Significance of Scientific Behavior," *Educational Theory* (Jan. 1968), pp. 23-31.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). Second edition, enlarged, Vol. 2, No. 2 of *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, espec. chapters 2-4. The question of "normal science" and scientific revolutions constituted the topic of the Proceedings of the International Colloquium in the Philosophy of Science, London, 1965, published as *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, edited by Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (Cambridge: University Press, 1970). See especially papers by Watkins, Toulmin, Popper, Kuhn, and others.

court, where it is rare to find the superior player who is not happy to lose a game or match if by losing he may learn something more about the sport.

Science is not distinguished by the quest for evidence that confirms what is believed. Every witchdoctor does this; every superstition in history has been sustained by evidence. This is why people thought the earth was flat, and why they “knew” the sun revolved around the earth.

While every superstition and emotional disorder sends the believer in search of supportive evidence, science holds its beliefs tentatively, awaiting their falsification sooner or later, allocating huge amounts of time and resources to produce observations and logical implications at variance with the official doctrine. This is not a mere matter of emphasis; it is the very essence of scientific behavior, such that without it there would be no science at all. It gives us for the first time in history the motivation and the means for changing the incorrigible and the inflexible mind without resorting to coercion.

Interest in self-correction lies at the heart of all true learning. It characterizes a community in which individuals learn, not merely to be open to persuasion, but to consider that one’s most outspoken opponent, regardless of his racial and ethnic tradition, may be the instrument of new insight leading one to rethink everything hitherto viewed as “normal” in one’s science. The sight of someone, therefore, who sees things otherwise is never an incitement to rage or to protective maneuvering, or to withdrawal behind bastions of defense—not in a mature scientist such as Albert Einstein, Nils Bohr, Leo Szilard, Robert Oppenheimer, Eugene Wigner, and dozens more one might name. The community of science changes its members over the years, enabling them to remain more and more widely open and receptive in the midst of failure and breakdown of the established order in their science.

Karl Popper puts it much stronger: “If scientific objectivity were founded upon the individual scientist’s impartiality, then we should have to say good-bye to it. Scientists may have superficially purged themselves from some of their prejudices in their particular field... But scientific objectivity rests on different grounds. It is a matter of scientific method... and objectivity is closely bound up with the *social aspect of scientific method*... from the cooperation of many scientists.”<sup>16</sup> Science is pursued, that is, in a community of inquiry, and

<sup>16</sup> Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), pages 398–400, see also Chapter 23 and pages 705–707.

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it is the distinctive character of this community that all members are constantly auditing and correcting each other's work. For science, self-analysis is not enough; there must be a community of inquiry in which individuals are helped to become more self-corrective.

This self-corrective capacity operating in the community of modern science is sometimes very revolutionary indeed, as in the first thirty years of this century when quantum mechanics and relativity theory were emerging,<sup>17</sup> and more recently in the emergence of molecular biology.

This is how the Report of the AAAS Committee referred to above states it: "The ultimate source of the strength of science will not be found in its impressive products or in its powerful instruments. It will be found in the minds of the scientists, and in the system of discourse which scientists have developed in order to describe what they know and to perfect their understanding of what they have learned. *It is these internal factors*—the methods, procedures, and processes which scientists use to discover and to discuss the properties of the natural world—which have given science its great success." These processes and the organization of science on which they depend, the Report says, "constitute the integrity of science." This inner dynamic structure of method, procedure, and process of social interaction, the Report goes on to say, "is the ultimate strength of science."<sup>18</sup>

The notion that there is something peculiarly "materialistic" about science belongs to its earlier stages when it was fighting with men like Galileo and Darwin against powerful institutions bent on limiting its freedom. A huge backlog of metaphysical presuppositions was unavoidably implicated in the centuries that witnessed the rise of modern science, some of these presuppositions being favorable, some hostile, to the established system of religion and social values. No finality is any more attached to anything scientists say about the cosmos; everything they know is true until the falsifying evidence appears tomorrow. There is no ground whatsoever, therefore, in viewing science as either disinterested or hostile to human value.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> George Gamow, *Thirty Years That Shook Physics* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966).

<sup>18</sup> Report approved for publication by the American Association for the Advancement of Science Board of Directors, Dec. 31, 1964. Chairman of the Committee on Science in the Promotion of Human Welfare was Barry Commoner.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. J. Bronowski, *Science and Human Values* (Harper & Row, Rev. Ed., 1965).

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It is surprising in the extreme to notice how many of the features of this one-sided community of science, dominated as it presently is by government and industry, were incorporated in the teachings of the Buddha twenty-five hundred years ago; especially the emphasis upon method, the equality of the men and women in the community, the interest in eliminating error from consciousness, and the program for loosening compulsive attachment to what one is and thinks. It is as Govinda says: "The Buddha was the first man who discovered that not the results of our thinking, not our so-called 'ideas' or opinions... beliefs or disbeliefs, in one word our conceptual knowledge—be it in the form of religious dogma, so-called 'eternal truths' in the form of scientific formulas and statements—is what matters, but *the method* behind it."<sup>20</sup> We shall have occasion in the following section to examine in some length the relevance of the Dhamma to the global self-corrective community whose fragmentary embodiment in the world of scientific research is presently under discussion.

A member of Columbia University's Philosophy Department has brought together many of the points we have made about science in the following paragraph:

Science...is not a creed in competition with other creeds; it is not the view of a sect. It is a way of bringing all creeds to the test of certain common techniques and methods.... 'The progress of science...is not the progress of some one creed at the expense of others. It is the progress of a set of rules and procedures which allow men to co-ordinate their thinking and to co-operate in the search for truth. The achievement of such an institutional technique for achieving objective beliefs is, indeed, the signal intellectual achievement of modern liberal society. It is the one point at which that society differs most fundamentally from other societies. There are techniques in all societies for fixing men's beliefs, and for bringing them into some sort of agreement on the facts. All of these methods involve accepting something without question—custom, a revelation, the superior judgment of selected indivi-

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<sup>20</sup> L. A. Govinda, *The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy* (London: Rider & Co., 1961), page 40.

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duals; most of them also contain an element of coercion; none of them are self-corrective in a steady and deliberate way. The institutions of modern science, in contrast, represent a radically new technique for coordinating men's ideas without coercion, and for bringing unquestioned assumptions or 'ideologies' under criticism. The emergence of such a revolutionary institution in the modern world represents a turning point in the way in which human society achieves its beliefs.<sup>21</sup>

It is unusual, to say the least, that the motto of the Royal Society founded in England in the early years of the seventeenth century should read, *Nullius in Verba*, meaning "take nobody's word for it; see for yourself." This is the theme of Richard P. Feynman, Nobel Prize winner in physics in 1965, and professor of theoretical physics at California Institute of Technology: "Science," he says, "is the belief in the ignorance of experts."<sup>22</sup> And it is the theme of the Lord Buddha, as everybody knows: "Be ye not misled by report or tradition or hearsay. Be not misled by proficiency in the collections...nor out of respect for a recluse [who holds it].... But if at any time ye know of yourselves: These things are profitable, they are blameless, they are praised by the intelligent [i.e. the self-corrective]: these things when performed and undertaken, conduce to profit and happiness—then, Kālāmas, do ye, having undertaken them, abide therein." For "each must work out his own salvation with diligence."

Scientists are still few who have given much thought to the historic significance of their community, especially its tremendous power for remolding the very style of human life. Few have been able to keep their specialized research from leaving behind more or less completely the human community and even the problems with which their own research often began. Almost none, therefore, can be taken as a paragon of the self-corrective life style of the new epoch. Many, indeed, are as fully under the control of the military-industrial complex as Archimedes in the famous incident of testing the purity

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<sup>21</sup> Charles Frankel, *The Case for Modern Man* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1956), page 143.

<sup>22</sup> Richard P. Feynman, "What Is Science?" *The Physics Teacher* (September 1969), page 319.



of the gold in King Hiero's crown. During the early period of modern science in the West, moreover, the power structures either captured science for their own aims, or they shunted it into the role of an indentured servant tinkering with issues which left the established order of power and dependence unquestioned and undisturbed.

The community of modern science is a clarifying exhibit, nonetheless, of what is growing in the planet as a self-corrective community of man. Unlike any community ever to appear, this one daily acknowledges its need for correction. All the inner struggle and infighting among the members only make the community of minds deeper and more inclusive. No other enterprise has this character, not even the life of intimate love between two or more persons. It might be argued, of course, that flexibility for self-correction in a community like this is itself a deep form of love, implied in some of the world's religious documents, such as the *New Testament* (I Corinthians 13) and the *Tao Te Ching*.

The new self-corrective human community in which all systems of law and government, all social prejudice, all socially accepted rejection and extermination of the poor, and other forms of man's inhumanity find self-corrective responses confronting them on all sides has another thing in common with the community of modern science. Neither community has any geographical center, any Rome or Mecca or Peking; neither controls any nation-state, manages its own radio or television facility, administers any college or university, grows food to feed the hungry, nor possesses any established public presence. As communities, they are nowhere, and yet they are everywhere. The fact that the overwhelming majority of people still live in a prescientific age, even in a pre-Darwinian age, not to mention a pre-Einsteinian age, takes nothing from this picture. Confidence in the self-corrective style of science is widely distributed even among people who have known nothing in their own lives but authoritarian controls.

It may therefore diminish some of the strain upon one's credulity to see these basic features of the emerging life style of self-corrective man displayed in the admittedly one-sided and over-specialized, and therefore not truly representative, community of modern science. Its membership is spread across a broad spectrum of every age, race, ethnic and national group, all being candidates for the Nobel Prize and sharing positions of high honor in societies of

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which they are members. *Like the self-corrective individual of our time who has discovered what he is not, these men and women are also members of a sort of cultural underground, rarely present to one another, yet always conscious of the presence of all the others.*

### *Buddhism and the New Style of Life*

For several decades it has been growing increasingly evident that the future of man is caught in a delicate balance between the forces of self-correction and the forces of self-destruction.

We must search through the resources of past and present, therefore, to find attitudes, aims, purposes and outlooks which might tip the scales in favor of the self-corrective community.

We must look everywhere in what man has thought, said, and done for attitudes and outlooks that move with poise amid change, presupposing the change as one of the elementary lessons for good living. Above all, man must be cured of the assumption that permanence is the ground of life. If he attributes ultimate value to what cannot now survive the inundation of each culture world by all the rest, his appreciation of what is ultimate in life must be changed. Above all, if he is being coerced into becoming self-corrective, something must be found that will enable him to become freely self-corrective as the greatest joy of life. His individual orientation and system of devotion must be brought into line with the conditions prevailing in the self-corrective life. In these conditions he must be helped to find himself at home.

These are our guidelines as we explore the legacy of Buddhism now. We do so because we must. The stakes are no less than the survival of any kind of human existence worth the living. It is for the welfare of the many, for the enhancement of the quality of our lives. We must not continue to support the suffering and the sacrifice of human beings happening daily before unseeing eyes. We must not continue to be blind to the violence that begins when every child is born.

The source of the appalling suffering for the overwhelming majority of people now alive is the compulsive clinging to things, attitudes, thoughts and activities that constitute the encapsulated culture worlds now falling into ruins before our eyes. It is a suffering distinctively human to have original capabilities in an individual selected for suppression, while potentialities use-

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ful to the culture world are provided with an "education." To lose one's very own qualities of life is to suffer. To become a servant for what a culture world and its massive technology require is to become an automaton, a modern word for "slave." Who is not now suffering through the experience of being only partially human?

It could hardly be irrelevant, then, to explore the resources in the teachings of the Lord Buddha, for whom suffering was the central human problem. Nowhere in all the funded experience of the species has suffering been singled out in this way.

Buddhism begins with a man who has awakened to the compulsive commitment into which members of the life style of civilization have fallen, resembling nothing so much as other animals controlled by inborn unconditioned response. The Buddha discovered that this is the source of suffering, and that the force of it can be broken by meditation and analysis,<sup>23</sup> once an individual has awakened. Release, he found, is won as the individual disentangles himself from the desires, interests, preoccupations, fears, hopes and passions with which it is the function of the gene pool, unconscious drives, and cultural worlds to bind all thought, experience, and behavior. "It is not the 'world' or its transitoriness which is the cause of suffering, but our attitude towards it, our clinging to it, our thirst, our ignorance."<sup>24</sup> And the chief stumbling-block to the breaking of this compulsive attachment is the illusion at the core of a person's being, the illusion of an indestructible, unitary, coherent, and immortal Self.<sup>25</sup> We have seen why, in the life style of civilized man, people cling hardest of all to this illusion.

This, briefly, is the Buddha's diagnosis of suffering and of the mind's role in its origin and aggravation. The proper use of the mind is the key to the solution of this predicament, a fact hardly unimportant in the self-corrective life style now growing throughout the earth.

In discovering what he was not, modern man has found different motivations at his disposal, particularly the willingness to live out of the fullness of

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<sup>23</sup> Nolan Jacobson, *Buddhism: The Religion of Analysis* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, Paperback Edition, 1970), pages 93-103.

<sup>24</sup> Govinda, *op. cit.*, page 55.

<sup>25</sup> Jacobson, *op. cit.*, pages 82-92.

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existence, "the abyss of nothingness" or *śūnyatā*, as it is called in the East. We have observed that all this is not something merely in present forms of consciousness, but that it is embodied in the present stage of historical development, with the whole life style of civilized man falling forever into obsolescence, and with a new self-corrective man emerging with sufficient power to accept responsibility for the total biosphere in which his life is more securely nestled.

The distinctive feature Buddhism and this self-corrective man have in common, therefore, is that both teach their fellow-creatures to rely upon nothing at all—other than the self-corrective process of inquiry itself, "the Stream of Being or life-continuum, the background on which thought-pictures are drawn... dispensing to the world around it the thought-stuff it has gathered by the way."<sup>26</sup> Human life for the Buddhist is an uninterrupted encounter with the Stream of Being which all minds have as their indispensable condition, and the point is to keep this everchanging "Stream" free of compulsions and other illusions. Continuous probing and penetration of the self-justifying, self-deluding, encapsulated culture worlds now falling into disrepair constitute the eternal quest of all true Buddhists.<sup>27</sup> It is easy to see, therefore, why Charles Hartshorne, professor emeritus of the University of Chicago, would characterize Buddhism and modern science as "very likely the two most fully self-corrective communities of the modern world."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Shwe Zan Aung, translator, *Compendium of Philosophy* (London: Luzac & Co., Pali Text Society, 1956 ed.), pages 11-12.

<sup>27</sup> Kenneth Inada, "The Ultimate Ground of Buddhist Purification," Abstract in *Proceedings of the XIth International Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions*, II, 147 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968). "Buddhism is in actuality the most thoroughgoing naturalistic discipline the world has ever witnessed, though it is unappreciated in this light for the most part." *Ibid.*, page 146. See also Jean Filliozat, "The Psychological Discoveries of Buddhism," *University of Ceylon Review*, XIII, Nos. 2 and 3, 68-82 (April-July 1955): Filliozat emphasizes that the goal of Buddhist meditation "is not 'ecstasy' as surmised by many scholars trying to find in European religious mysticism an equivalent for that actually pure psychological notion. It is by no means a raptus of the soul outside the body. On the contrary, it is a masterful domination of the entire psychological and physiological human forces, a control of all the episodic manifestations affecting the self."

<sup>28</sup> Personal communication, June 3, 1968. Cf. Professor Hartshorne's paper in Tokyo, "The Buddhist-Whiteheadian View of the Self and the Religious Traditions," *Proceedings of the 9th International Congress for the History of Religions* (Tokyo, 1960), pages 298-302.

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Whitehead is said to have remarked at a seminar at Harvard that most modern forms of immoral behavior were traceable to the Christian-Aristotelian concept of substance, a remark that any Buddhist would immediately understand. Self, Mind, Matter, Time, Space—all are entities inferred behind functional centers of relation which are the actual entities emerging and perishing in existence.

The substantialist view, according to Buddhism, lies behind all compulsive egocentricity, which is why the Buddha struck at this target in his concept of *anatta*. The early Buddhists dispensed with the concept of an unchanging, imperishable entity anywhere in existence, substituting in its place their doctrine of conditioned genesis (*paticcassamuppāda*), and a theory of relations (*paccaya*).

Point-instants are found in various forms of functional dependence, emerging, changing, subsiding everywhere in the events and processes we encounter or undergo, whether in the aggregates of mental phenomena, in the structures of the nonhuman world, or in forms of social, ethical, and political living. Buddhism sees all structures as transitory, including our theories about them.

This, after all, is at the heart of the Buddha's Enlightenment, where he came to his world-transforming awareness that *what has no independent existence loses its grip over man*. Functional centers of relation come and go; any power they may hold for a while can be removed or loosened through meditation and analysis over what is happening in us and around us.

Buddhism is equipped to strengthen self-corrective man, not with more technological hardware or more affluence, but by extending the range of attention and awareness to give this self-corrective man new power of control over the hardware and the affluence. Forty different forms of meditation enable different kinds of character-types to win control over the automatic mechanisms of habit, perception, and experience which otherwise rule behind their backs. No tradition has had more experience in coming to grips with the sensual and sexual gratification (*kāmāsava*) that keep human beings from maturing, and the pursuit of wealth and power (*bbavāsava*) that sends men to war, not to mention the deep human susceptibility to self-deluding and self-justifying involvements (*dittbāsava* and *avijjāsava*) that have gone as far to produce schizoid tendencies in major societies of the West. These methods of probing for self-correction have twenty-five centuries of experimentation behind them,

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and they present themselves as a legacy upon which to draw in fighting the malignancies of civilized man with selflessness, compassion, resilience, and self-corrective inquiry.

Meditation practiced with regularity helps an individual to correct his nursery, to counteract the influence of glands and cravings, to screen out the error and illusion from his tradition, and to become more attentive and aware of the ever-expanding spectrum of our involvements in "the electric age." Analysis and meditation lift these deeper-than-conscious mechanisms out of the dark, catching them in the act, so to speak, of ruling over behavior. Attending to them, analyzing them, reflecting over them, considering them in detail, their hold is broken.

To give two or three examples from contemporary affairs, the fingers that pulled the trigger in the Ohio National Guard at Kent State would not have been able to pull the trigger, much less keep on firing when screamed at by their own officers. Guardsmen practiced in meditation would not have been compulsively driven by their fear. They would have been capable of hearing what the Kent State students had been trying to say to the exemplars of civilized man for many weeks. Meditation practiced as part of their training would have facilitated the emergence of insights and perspectives which their compulsions, their fears, and existing body of persuasions prevented them from perceiving. New approaches would have been opened up by new insights and new knowledge. As it happened, old fears, perceptions and knowledge moved them along the well-worn ruts to the impact that shocked the world. The mere presence of unarmed students confronting them stampeded them into the automatic behavior in which they had been drilled week after week. Both the guard and the students were so submerged in compulsive feelings that the students took on the aspect of violence even though they had nothing to throw but the stones. It was an incident where sensitivity was suppressed and automatism ruled over man.

Is it irrelevant to point out that none would have been injured if even a handful of leaders among students and police had been practiced in the arts of meditation? Is it possible that America is "going mad" as Moynihan suggested in the May 4, 1968 issue of the now defunct *Saturday Evening Post*? Or that "we are in the worst crisis since the Civil War...and we are losing the will to deal with it," as stated by National Broadcasting Corporation announcer

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Frank McGee in 1967, the third summer of the burning and the looting of the black ghettos? Is this a compulsive drive, too, that would yield to meditation and analysis on the part of a handful of leaders in the industry that continues to make too many automobiles and allow neighborhoods to rot all around and out of sight of the power elite?

No one is safe until the real source of the American crisis—the compulsions that characterize the life style of civilized man—become unwoven through meditation and lose their present massive assault upon the process of inquiry and self-correction that is like the swallows at Capistrano heralding the spring.

Everyone now alive is caught up in the world of organic interdependence that embraces the entire planet. A new element is appearing—the necessity for individual human beings to engage in their own process of self-directive growth, utilizing in the silence of their own dwelling places some private method of meditation and analysis to broaden the span of their sensitive awareness and make them more fully alive. For many millions, the self-enclosed culture world is the launching pad that hurls them from its gravitational field to participate in the self-corrective process and community of inquiry that alone is capable of bringing the gigantic powers of scientific research and our supertechnology into the service of man, into the service of a new kind of global community that must become ever more fully open and flexible through the self-sustaining chain-reaction of unrepeatably individual growth. This is the kind of community that alone can lift civilization to the plateaus of achievement of which it is capable, where the waters of creativity will flow more freely, and where our progeny yet unborn can become more fully alive, more fully human than man anywhere has yet dreamed. The one element without which the self-correction must remain a pious hope or an evil pretension is the adoption by each individual of some kind of self-styled method for dislodging the forms of conscious awareness that keep one from perceiving the evidence that calls for his correction. And the one element that can keep his self-corrective development moving within the safeguards of personal dignity and independence is the element of private self-analysis and meditation.

It is the conviction of the present writer that people deeply rooted in the teachings of the Lord Buddha will be in the vanguard in the present emer-

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gency of mankind, quietly offering the solvent for emotional and social fixations, and by precept and example leading members of power structures, social classes, ethnic and racial traditions, status groups, ideologies and creeds to find their sense of personal worth and affiliation in the new self-corrective community that is spreading very rapidly throughout the globe. As individual scientists are related to the community of their special sciences, so the individual well-grounded in the Lord Buddha's revolutionary style of life will be related to the self-corrective process and community of inquiry now spreading everywhere to embrace mankind. To the measure that the teachings of the Buddha can add the stability and the confidence urgently needed, we may now be embarking upon the higher form of life for which human beings at their best have always believed mankind to be destined—the more fully evolved human creature in a constantly evolving community of life. One of the great turning points of human development is upon us. We are probably in the middle, rather than at the end, of an age of unimaginable violence. The propensities in the legacy of Buddhism for generating a type of self-corrective behavior which is the world's most pressing need must be lifted everywhere into prominence and fostered with every resource at our command. The stakes may be higher than human survival; they may be the continuance of life itself upon the planet.