

THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

PASSIVITY IN THE BUDDHIST LIFE

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Preliminary Note

“Thy way, not mine, O Lord.
However dark it be;
Lead me by Thine own hand,
Choose out the path for me,
Smooth let it be or rough,
It will be still the best;
Winding or straight, it leads
Right onward to Thy rest.
Choose Thou for me my friends,
My sickness or my health;
Choose Thou my cares for me,
My poverty or wealth.
Not mine, not mine the choice
In things or great or small;
Be Thou my guide, my strength,
My wisdom, and my all.”¹

The feeling of passivity in religious experience, so typically given expression here, is universal and natural, seeing that the religious consciousness consists in realising, on the one hand, the helplessness of a finite being, and, on the other, the dependability of an infinite being, in whatever

¹ Horatius Bonar, 1808-1889.

way this may be conceived. The finite side of our being may protest saying, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" but while this protest possesses us there is no religious experience. we are not yet quite saved. For salvation comes only when we can say, "Father, unto thy hands I entrust my spirit," or "Lord, though thou slay me, yet will I trust thee." This is resignation or self-surrender, which is a state of passivity, ready to have "thy will" prevail upon a world of finite beings. This is the characteristic attitude of a religious mind towards life and the world; and we know that all religious experience is psychologically closely connected with the feeling of passivity. The object of the present article is to see how this feeling rules and in what forms it expresses itself in the Buddhist life.

I

The Doctrine of Karma

Superficially, passivity does not seem to be compatible with the intellectual tendency of Buddhism, which strongly emphasises the spirit of self-reliance as is seen in such passages as "The Bodhisattva-mahāsattva retiring into a solitude all by himself, should reflect within himself, by means of his own inner intelligence, and not depend upon anybody else;"¹ or as we read in the *Dhammapāda*:

"By self alone is evil done,
By self is one disgraced;
By self is evil undone,
By self alone is he purified;
Purity and impurity belong to one;
No one can purify another."²

¹ *The Laṅkāvatāra*, p. 133, lines 10, 11. Bodhisattvo mahāsattva ekāki rahogataḥ svapratyātma-buddhyā vicārayaty aparapraṇeyah.

² Translated by A. J. Edmunds. *The Dhammapāda*, 165.

Attanā 'va kataṃ pāpam attanā saṅkilissati,
Attanā akataṃ pāpam attanā 'va visujjhati,
Suddhi asuddhi paccattaṃ nā 'ñño aññaṃ visodhaye.

Besides, the Four Noble Truths, the Twelfefold Chain of Origination, the Eightfold Path of Righteousness, etc.—all tend towards enlightenment and emancipation, and not towards absolute dependence or receptivity. “To see with one’s own eyes and be liberated” is the Buddhist motto, and there is apparently no room for passivity. For the latter can take place only when one makes oneself a receptacle for an outside power. The attainment of passivity in Buddhism is especially obstructed by the doctrine of Karma.

The doctrine of Karma runs like warp and weft through all the Indian fabrics of thought, and Buddhism as a product of the Indian imagination could not escape taking it into its own texture. The Jātaka Tales making up the history of the Buddha while he was yet at the stage of Bodhisattvahood and training himself for final supreme enlightenment, are no more than the idea of Karma concretely applied and illustrated in the career of a morally perfected personage. Śākyamuni could not become a Buddha unless he had accumulated his stock of merit (*kuśalamūla*) throughout his varied lives in the past.

The principle of Karma is “Whatever a man sows, that will he also reap,” and this governs the whole life of the Buddhist; for in fact what makes up one’s individuality is nothing else than his own Karma. So we read in the *Milindapañha*: “All beings have their Karma as their portion; they are heirs of their Karma; they are sprung from their Karma; their Karma is their refuge; Karma allots beings to meanness or greatness.”¹ This is confirmed in the *Samyukta-nikāya*:

“His good deeds and his wickedness,
Whate’er a mortal does while here;
’Tis this that he can call his own,
This with him take as he goes hence,
This is what follows after him,
And like a shadow ne’er departs.”²

¹ Quoted from Warren’s *Buddhism in Translations*, p. 255.

² *Loc. cit.*, p. 214.

According to the *Visuddhimagga*, Chapter XIX, Karma is divisible into several groups as regards its time and order of fruition and its quality: (1) that which bears fruit in the present existence, that which bears fruit in rebirth, that which bears fruit at no fixed time, and bygone Karma; (2) the weighty Karma, the abundant, the close-at-hand, and the habitual; (3) the productive Karma, the supportive, the counteractive, and the destructive.¹ There is thus a round of Karma and a round of fruit going on all the time. And who is the bearer of Karma and its fruit?

- “No doer is there does the deed,
Nor is there one who feels the fruit;
Constituent parts alone roll on;
This view alone is orthodox.
- “And thus the deed, and thus the fruit
Roll on and on, each from its cause;
As of the round of tree and seed,
No one can tell when they began.
- “Not in its fruit is found the deed,
Nor in the deed finds one the fruit;
Of each the other is devoid,
Yet there’s no fruit without the deed.
- “Just as no store of fire is found
In jewel, cow-dung, or the sun,
Nor separate from these exists,
Yet short of fuel no fire is known;
- “Even so we ne’er within the deed
Can retribution’s fruit descry.
Not yet in any place without;
Nor can in fruit the deed be found.
- “Deeds separate from their fruits exist,
And fruits are separate from the deeds:
But consequent upon the deed
Fruit doth into being come.

¹ Warren, p. 245 ff.

“No god of heaven or Brahma-world
Doth cause the endless round of birth;
Constituent parts alone roll on,
From cause and from material sprung.”¹

The working of Karma is apparently quite impersonal as is explained in these quotations, and it may seem altogether indifferent for anybody whether he did something good or bad. There is no doer of deeds, nor is there any sufferer of their fruit. The five Aggregates or constituent parts (*skandhās*) are combined and dissolved in accordance with the inevitable law of Karma, but as long as there is no personal agent at the back of all this, who really feels the value of Karma, it does not seem to matter what kind of deeds is committed and what kind of fruit is brought forth. Still the Buddhists are advised not to practise wickedness:

“If a man do wrong,
Let him not do it repeatedly,
Let him not take pleasure therein;
Painful is wrong’s accumulation.”²

Why painful? Why pleasurable? The Hinayanist reasoning is logically thoroughgoing, but when it comes to the question of practical psychology, mere reasoning does not avail. Is the feeling no more real than the mere bundling together of the five Aggregates? The combination, that is, unity seems to be more than the fact of combination. Whatever this is, as I am not going to discuss the doctrine of Karma here in detail, let it suffice to give another quotation from Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*, Chapter XVII, where the doctrine of Karma appears in a new garment.³

“All sentient beings are born according to their Karma:

¹ Warren, pp. 248-9.

² *The Dhammapada*, 117, translated by A. J. Edmunds.

³ Edited by Louis de la Vallée Poussin. Pp. 302 ff. For a detailed exposition of the theory of Karma, see the *Abhidharmakośa* (translated by the same author), Chapter IV; what follows is an abstract.

good people are born in the heavens, the wicked in the hells, and those who practise the Paths of Righteousness realise Nirvana. By disciplining himself in the Six Virtues of Perfection, a man is able to benefit his fellow-beings in various ways, and this is sure in turn to bring blessings upon him, not only in this but also in the next life. Karma may be of two sorts: inner or mental, which is called *cetanā* (思, 'intention'), and physical, expressing itself in speech and bodily movement. This is technically known as Karma 'after having intended' (從思生, *cetayitvā*). Karma may also be regarded as with or without 'intimation' (or 'indication' *viññapti*, 表 or 作). An act with intimation is one the purpose of which is perceptible by others, while an act without intimation is not at all expressed in physical movements; it follows when a strong act with intimation is performed and awakens the tendency in the mind of the actor to perform deeds of a similar nature, either good or bad.

“It is like a seed from which a young plant shoots out and bears fruit by the principle of continuity; apart from the seed there is no continuity; and because of this continuity there is fruition. The seed comes first and then the fruit, between them there is neither discontinuity nor constancy. Since the awakening of a first motive, there follows an uninterrupted series of mental activities, and from this there is fruition. Apart from the first stirring of the mind, there will be no stream of thoughts expressing themselves in action. Thus there is a continuity of Karma and its fruit. Therefore, when the ten deeds of goodness and purity are performed, the agent is sure to enjoy happiness in this life and be born after death among celestial beings.

“There is something in Karma that is never lost even after its performance; this something called *avipranāśa* (不失法, 'not lost', or 'unlosable', or 'indestructible') is like a deed of contract, and Karma, an act, is comparable to debt. A man may use up what he has borrowed, but owing to the document he has some day to pay the debt back to the

creditor. This 'unlosable' is always left behind even after Karma and is not destroyed by philosophical intuition (*darśanamārga*, 見道). If it is thus destructible, Karma will never come to fruition. The only power that counteracts this 'unlosable' is moral discipline (*bhāvanamārga*, 修道). Every Karma once committed continues to work out its consequence by means of the 'unlosable' until its course is thwarted by the attainment of Arhatship or by death, or when it has finally borne its fruit. This law of Karma applies equally to good and bad deeds."

While Nāgārjuna's idea is to wipe out all such notions as doer, deed, and sufferer, in other words, the entire structure of Karma-theory, this introduction of the idea "unlosable" is instructive and full of suggestions. Taking all in all, however, there is much obscurity in the doctrine of Karmaic continuity, especially when its practical working is to be precisely described, and theoretically too, we are not quite sure of its absolute tenability. But this we can state of it in a most general way that Karma tends to emphasise individual freedom, moral responsibility, and feeling of independence; and further, from the religious point of view, it does not necessitate the postulate of a God, or creator, or moral judge, who passes judgments over human behaviour, good or bad.

This being the case, the Buddhist conviction that life is pain will inevitably lead to a systematic teaching of self-discipline, self-purification, and self-enlightenment, the moral centre of gravity being always placed on the self, and not on any outside agent. This is the principle of Karma applied to the realisation of Nirvana. But we may ask, What is this Self? And again, What is that something that is never "lost" in a Karma committed either mentally or physically? What is the connection between "self" and the "unlosable"? Where does this "unlosable" lodge itself? Between the Buddhist doctrine of no-ego-substance and the postulate that there should be something "not to be

lost" in the continuation of Karma-force, which makes the latter safely bear fruit, there is a gap which must be bridged somehow if Buddhist philosophy is to make further development. To my mind, the conception of the Ālayavijñāna ("all-conserving soul") where all the Karma-seeds are deposited was an inevitable consequence. But in the meantime let us see what "self" really stands for.

The Conception of Self

"Self" is a very complex and elusive idea, and when we say that one is to be responsible for what one does by oneself, we do not exactly know how far this "self" goes and how much it includes in itself. For individuals are so intimately related to one another not only in one communal life but in the totality of existence—so intimately indeed that there are really no individuals, so to speak, in the absolute sense of the word. Individuality is merely an aspect of existence; in thought we separate one individual from another and in reality too we all seem to be distinct and separable. But when we reflect on the question more closely we find that individuality is a fiction, for we cannot fix its limits, we cannot ascertain its extents and boundaries, they become mutually merged without leaving any indelible marks between the so-called individuals. A most penetrating state of interrelationship prevails here, and it seems to be more exact to say that individuals do not exist, they are merely so many points of reference, the meaning of which is not at all realisable when each of them is considered by itself and in itself apart from the rest. Individuals are recognisable only when they are thought of in relation to something not individual; though paradoxical, they are individuals so long as they are not individuals. For when an individual being is singled out as such, it at once ceases to be an individual. The "individual self" is an illusion.

Thus, the self has no absolute, independent existence. Moral responsibility seems to be a kind of intellectual make-

shift. Can the robber be really considered responsible for his deeds? Can this individual be really singled out as the one who has to suffer all the consequences of his anti-social habits? Can he be held really responsible for all that made him such as he is? Is his *svabhāva* all his own make? This is where lies the main crux of the question. "How far is an individual to be answerable for his action?" In other words, "How far is this 'he' separable from the community of which he is a component part?" Is not society reflected in him? Is he not one of the products created by society? There are no criminals, no sinful souls in the Pure Land, not necessarily because no such are born there but mainly because all that are born there become pure by virtue of the general atmosphere into which they are brought up. Although environment is not everything, it, especially social environment, has a great deal to do with the shaping of individual characters. If this is the case, where shall we look for the real signification of the doctrine of Karma?

The intellect wants to have a clear-cut, well-delineated figure to which a deed or its "unlosable" something has to be attached, and Karma becomes mathematically describable as having its originator, perpetrator, sufferer, etc. But when there are really no individuals and Karma is to be conceived as nowhere originated by any specifically definable agent, what would become of the doctrine of Karma as advocated by Buddhists? Evidently, there is an act, either good or bad or indifferent; there is one who actually thrusts a dagger, and there is one who actually lies dead thus stabbed; and yet shall we have to declare that there is no killer, no killing, and none killed? What will then become of moral responsibility? How can there be such a thing as accumulation of merit or attainment of enlightenment? Who is after all a Buddha, and who is an ignorant, confused mortal?

Can we say that society, nay, the whole universe is responsible for the act of killing if this fact is once established? and that all the causes and conditions leading to it

and all the results that are to be connected with it are to be traced to the universe itself? Or is it that the individual is an ultimate absolute fact and what goes out from him comes back to him without any relation to his fellow-beings and to his environment, social and physical? In the first case, moral responsibility evaporates into an intangible universality; in the second case, the intangible whole gets crystallised in one individual, and there is indeed moral responsibility, but one stands altogether in isolation as if each of us were like a grain of sand in no relation to its neighbours. Which of these positions is more exactly in conformity with facts of human experience? When this is applied to the Buddhist doctrine of Karma, the question comes to this: Is Buddhist Karma to be understood individualistically or cosmologically?

Mahayana Buddhism on the Theory of Karma

As far as history goes, Buddhism started with the individualistic interpretation of Karma, and when it reached its culminating point of development in the rise of Mahayana, the doctrine came to be cosmically understood. But not in the vague, abstract, philosophical way as was referred to before but concretely and spiritually in this wise: the net of the universe spreads out both in time and space from the centre known as "myself," where it is felt that all the sins of the world are resting on his own shoulders, and that to atone for them he is determined to subject himself to a system of moral and spiritual training which he considers would cleanse him of all impurities and by cleansing him cleanse also the whole world of all its demerits. This is the Mahayana position. Indeed, the distinction between the Mahayana and the Hinayana form of Buddhism may be said to be due to this difference in the treatment of Karma-conception. The Mahayana thus came to emphasise the "other" or "whole" aspect of Karma, and, therefore, of universal salvation while the Hinayana adhered to the "self" aspect.

As Karma worked, according to the Hinayanists, apparently impersonally but in point of fact individualistically, this life of pain and suffering was to be got rid of by self-discipline, by moral asceticism, and self-knowledge, nobody outside could help the sufferer out of his afflictions, all that the Buddha could do for him was to teach him the way to escape, but if he did not walk this way by himself, he could not be made to go straight ahead even by the power and virtue of the Buddha. "Be ye a lamp and a refuge to yourselves," (*attadīpa-attasarana*), was the injunction left by the Buddha to his Hinayana followers; for the Buddha could not extend his spiritual virtue and attainment over to his devotees or to his fellow-beings. From the general position of the Hinayanists, this was inevitable:

"Not in the sky,
Not in the midst of the sea,
Nor entering a cleft of the mountains,
Is found that realm on earth
Where one may stand and be
From an evil deed absolved."¹

But the Mahayana was not satisfied with this narrowness of spiritual outlook, the Mahayana wanted to extend the function of Karuṇā (love) to the furthest end it could reach. If one's Prajñā (wisdom) could include in itself the widest possible system of universes, why could not Karuṇā too take them all under its protective wings? Why could not the Buddha's wish (*praṇidhāna*) for the spiritual welfare of all beings also efficiently work towards its realisation? The Buddha attained his enlightenment after accumulating so much stock of merit for ever so many countless kalpas, and should we conceive this stock of merit to be available only for his own benefit? Karma must have its cosmological meaning. In fact, individuals are such in so far as they are thought of in connection with one another and also with

¹ *The Dhammapada*, 127. Translated by Albert J. Edmunds.

the whole system which they compose. One wave good or bad once stirred, could not help affecting the entire body of water. So with the moral discipline and the spiritual attainment of the Buddha, they could not remain with him as an isolated event in the communal life to which he belonged. Therefore, it is said that when he was enlightened the whole universe shared in his wisdom and virtue. The Mahayana stands on this fundamental idea of enlightenment, and its doctrine of the Tathāgatagarbha or Ālayavijñāna reflects the cosmological interpretation of Karma.

II

The Development of the Idea of Sin in Buddhism

As long as Hinayana Buddhism restricted the application of Karma to individual deeds, its followers tried to overcome it by self-discipline. Life was pain, and pain was the product of one's former misconduct, and to release oneself from it, it was necessary to move a force counteracting it. Things thus went on quite scientifically with the Hinayanists, but when the Mahayanists came to see something in Karma that was more than individual, that would not be kept within the bounds of individuality, their scheme of salvation had to go naturally beyond the individualism of the Hinayanistic discipline. The "self-power" was not strong enough to cope with the problem of cosmological Karma, and to rely upon this self as segregated from the totality of sentient beings was not quite right and true. For the self is not a final fact, and to proceed in one's own religious discipline with the erroneous idea of selfhood will ultimately lead one to an undesirable end and possibly bear no fruit whatever. A new phase was now awakened in the religious consciousness of the Buddhist, which had hitherto been only feebly felt by the Hinayanists: for with the cosmic

sense of Karma thus developed there came along the idea of sin.

In Buddhism sin means ignorance, that is, ignorance as to the meaning of the individual or the ultimate destiny of the self. Positively, sin is the affirmation of the self as a final *svabhāva* in deed, thought, and speech. When a man is above these two hindrances, ignorance and self-assertion, he is said to be sinless. How to rise above them, therefore, is now the question with the Mahayanists.

Calderon, a noted Spanish dramatist, writes: "For the greatest crime of man is that he ever was born." This statement is quite true since sin consists in our ever coming into existence as individuals severed from the wholeness of things. But as long as this fact cannot be denied from one point of view, we must try to nullify its evil effects by veering our course to another direction. And this veering can take place only by identifying ourselves with the cosmos itself, with the totality of existence, with Buddhata in which we have our being. The inevitability of sin thus becomes the chance of devoting ourselves to a higher plane of existence where a principle other than Karmaic individualism and self-responsibility reigns.

When Karma was conceived to be controllable by the self, the task of releasing oneself from its evil effects was comparatively an easy one, for it concerned after all the self alone; but if it is sin to believe in the ultimate reality of an individual soul and to act accordingly, as if salvation depended only on self-disciplining or on self-enlightenment, the Mahayanist's work is far greater than the Hinayanist's. As this goes beyond the individual, something more than individual must operate in the Mahayanist heart to make its work effective. The so-called self must be aided by a power transcending the limitations of the self, which, however, must be immanently related to it; for otherwise there cannot be a very harmonious and really mutually-helping activity between the self and the not-self. In fact, the idea of sin,

and hence the feeling of pain and suffering, is produced from the lack of a harmonious relationship between what is thought to be "myself" and what is not. The religious experience with the Mahayanists is to be described in more comprehensive terms than with the Hinayanists.

A Reality Beyond Self

Buddhatā or Dharmatā is the name given by the Mahayanists to that which is not the self and yet which is in the self. By virtue of this, the Mahayanists came to the consciousness of sin and at the same time to the possibility of enlightenment. Buddhatā is the essence of Buddhahood, without which this is never attained in the world. When the Buddha is conceived impersonally or objectively, it is the Dharma, law, truth, or reality; and Dharmatā is what constitutes the Dharma. Dharmatā and Buddhatā are interchangeable, but the experience of the Mahayanists is described more in terms of Buddhatā.

With the conception of Buddhatā, the historical Buddha turns into a transcendental Buddha; he ceases to be merely the Muni of the Śākya, he now is a manifestation of the eternal Buddha, an incarnation of Buddhatā, and as such he is no more an individual limited in space and time, his spirituality goes out from him and whatever power it has will influence his fellow-beings in their advance or development towards Buddhahood. This will take place in proportion to the intensity of desire and the sincerity of effort they put forward for the attainment of the goal. The goal consists in getting cleansed of sin, and sin consists in believing in the reality of self-substance (*svabhāva*), in asserting its claims as final, and in not growing conscious of the immanency of Buddhatā in oneself. The cleansing of sin is, therefore, intellectually seeing into the truth that there is something more in what is taken for the self, and conatively in willing and doing the will of that something which transcends the self and yet which works through the self.

This is where lies the difficulty of the Mahayanist position—to be encased in what we, relative-minded beings, consider the self and yet to go beyond it and to know and will what apparently does not belong to the self. This is almost trying to achieve an impossibility, and yet if we do not achieve this, there will be no peace of mind, no quieting of soul. We have to do it somehow when we once tumble over the question in the course of our religious experience. How is this to be accomplished?

That we are sinful, does not mean in Buddhism that we have so many evil impulses, desires, or proclivities, which, when released, are apt to cause the ruination of oneself as well as others; the idea goes deeper and is rooted in our being itself, for it is sin to imagine and act as if individuality were a final fact. As long as we are what we are, we have no way to escape from sin, and this is at the root of all our spiritual tribulations. This is what the followers of Shin Buddhism mean when they say that all works, even when they are generally considered morally good, are contaminated, as long as they are the efforts of "self-power," and do not lift us from the bondage of Karma. The power of *Buddhatā* must be added over to the self or must replace it altogether if we desire for emancipation. *Buddhatā*, if it is immanent—and we cannot think it otherwise, must be awakened so that it will do its work for us who are so oppressed under the limitations of individualism.

The awakening and working of *Buddhatā* in mortal sinful beings is not accomplished by logic and discursive argument as is attested by the history of religion. In spite of the predominantly intellectual tendency of Buddhism, it teaches us to appeal to something else. The deep consciousness of sin, the intensity of desire to be released from the finality of individual existence, and the earnestness of effort put forward to awaken *Buddhatā*—these are the chief conditions. The psychological experience resulting therefrom will naturally be connected with the feeling of passivity.

A New Phase of Buddhism

Buddhism whose intellectual tendency interpreted the doctrine of Karma individualistically in spite of its teaching of non-ego (*anatta*), has at last come to release us all from the iron fetters of Karma by appealing to the conception of Buddhata. Finite beings become thus relieved of the logical chain of causation in a world of spirits, but at the same time the notion of sin which is essentially attached to them as limited in time and space has taken possession of their religious consciousness. For sin means finite beings' helplessness of transcending themselves. And if this be the case, to get rid of sin will be to abandon themselves to the care of an infinite being, that is to say, to desist from attempting to save themselves, but to bring about a spiritual state of passiveness whereby to prepare the ground for the entrance of a reality greater than themselves. Thus sings Wordsworth :

- “Nor less I deem that there are powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.
- “Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come
But we must still be seeking?
- “—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone.
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away.”

We can thus say that Karma is understood by the Mahayanists rather cosmologically, or that the super-individualistic aspect of Karma came to assert its importance more than its individualistic aspect. Nāgārjuna's attempt to nullify Karma is the negative side of this evolution which

has taken place in the history of Buddhism. As long as Karma was conceived individualistically by Hinayanists, there was no room for them to entertain a feeling of passivity. But with the Mahayanist interpretation of Karma a sense of overwhelming oppression came to possess the minds of the Buddhists, because Karma was now understood to have a far deeper, stronger, and wider foundation than hitherto thought of. It grew out of the cosmos itself, against which finite individuals were altogether powerless. This feeling of helplessness naturally turned the Mahayanists towards a being who could overcome the enormity of Karma-force.

There was another factor in the religious consciousness of the Mahayanists which made them ever persistent in applying to the super-individualistic powers of Buddhata. By this I mean the feeling of compassion (*karuṇā*) going beyond individualism. This is an annoying feeling, to say the least; it goes directly against the instinct of self-preservation. But there is no doubt that its roots are deeply laid, and in fact it makes up the very foundation of human nature. Compassion then walks hand in hand with sorrow, for a compassionate soul is always sorrowful, when he observes how ignorant and confused the world is and grows conscious of something in himself that makes him feel his own participation in universal confusion and iniquity. The sense of sin is the outcome of all this. Perhaps here lies one of the reasons why the practice of asceticism has a strong appeal to the religiously-minded who feel a shadow of penitence not always realising exactly why they do. When the overwhelming force of Karma is thus combined with compassion, sorrow, and even sin, the attitude of the Buddhist towards himself assumes an altogether different aspect, he is no more a self-reliant individualist, he now wants to identify himself with a power that holds in itself the whole universe with all its multitudinousness.

III

The Psychology of Passivity

Passivity is essentially psychological, and to interpret it metaphysically or theologically is another question. The feeling that one has been cleansed of sin is passive as far as the sinner's consciousness is concerned. This subjectivism may be objectively verified or may not. But to say that in this consciousness there is absolutely no other feeling than passivity is not correct. This feeling which came upon us indeed quite abruptly or without our being conscious of every step of its progress, is no doubt predominant especially when we know that with the utmost voluntary efforts we could not induce a state of liberation. But when the feeling is analysed and its component factors are determined, we realise that this passivity is made possible only when there is something intensely active within ourselves. Let this active background be all blank, absolutely colourless, and there is not even a shadow of passivity felt there. The very fact that it is felt to be passive proves that there is a power on our side that prepares itself to be in a state of receptiveness. The exclusive "other-power" theory which is sometimes maintained by advocates of the Shin school of Buddhism as well as by the Christian quietists is not tenable.

While a man is attached to individualism, asserting it consciously or unconsciously, he always has a feeling of oppression which he may interpret as sin; and while the mind is possessed by it, there is no room for the "other-power" to enter and work, the way is effectively barred. It is quite natural, therefore, for him to imagine that with the removal of the bar he became altogether empty. But the removal of the bar does not mean utter emptiness, absolute nothingness. If this is the case, there will be nothing for the "other-power" to work on. The abandoning of the "self-power" is the occasion for the "other-power" to

appear at the scene, the abandoning and the appearance take place simultaneously; it is not that the abandoning comes first, and the ground remaining empty there is a vacancy, and finally the "other-power" comes in to claim this vacuity. The facts of experience do not justify this supposition, for nothing can work in a vacuity. On the contrary, there must be a point to which the "other-power" can fix itself, or a form into which it can, as it were, squeeze itself; this self-determination of the "other-power" is impossible if there is nothing but an absolute emptiness of passivity. The suppression of the self does not mean its utter annihilation, but its perfect readiness to receive a higher power into it. In this receptivity we must not forget that there is a power which receives, which has been made passive. The absolute "other-power" doctrine is not psychologically valid, nor metaphysically tenable.

Absolute Passivism and Libertinism

The doctrine of absolute passivity is frequently productive of disastrous consequences in two ways. The one may be called negative as it tends to quietism, laziness, contemplative absorption, or all-annihilating Dhyana or Nirodha; while the other is decidedly positive, being quite aggressive and self-assertive in its practical functioning as is shown, for instance, by the doctrine and life of the advocates of the Free Spirit in the fourteenth century. When the "I" is completely annihilated and altogether replaced by God, it is not then the "I" that thinks, desires, and moves about, but God himself; he has taken complete possession of this "I", he works through it, he desires in it. The following¹ is an extract from Ruysbroeck's *The Twelve Beguines*, in which he gives the position of the Free Spirit sect in Belgium quite clearly:

¹ Quoted in A. Wautier D'Aygalliers' *Ruysbroeck the Admirable*, p. 46.

“Without me, God would have neither knowledge nor will nor power, for it is I, with God, who have created my own personality and all things. From my hands are suspended heaven, earth, and all creatures. Whatever honour is paid to God, it is to me that it is paid, for in my essential being I am by nature God. For myself, I neither hope nor love, and I have no faith, no confidence in God. I have nothing to pray for, nothing to implore, for I do not render honour to God above myself. For in God there is no distinction, neither Father nor Son nor Holy Spirit. . . . since with this God I am one, and am even that which he is . . . and which, without me, he is not.”

Another writer quotes the following dialogue¹ between a Free Spirit brother and his questioner:

“What is freedom of the Spirit?” Conrad Kannler is asked by Ebernard de Freyenhäusen the inquisitor.

“It exists when all remorse of conscience ceases and man can no longer sin.”

“Hast thou attained to this stage of perfection?”

“Yes, so much so that I can advance in grace, for I am one with God and God is one with me.”

“Is a brother of the Free Spirit obliged to obey authority?”

“No, he owes obedience to no man, nor is he bound by the precepts of the Church. If any one prevents him from doing as he pleases, he has the right to kill him. He may follow all the impulses of his nature; he does not sin in yielding to his desires.”

Antinomianism upholds a life of instinct and intuition, and it works in either way, good or bad, according to the fundamental disposition of the agent. All religious life tends towards antinomianism, especially that of the mystic. It grows immoral and dangerous when the reason is too weak to assert itself or is kept in the background in too subordinate a position. This frequently takes place with those whose sense of passivity and so-called spiritual freedom

¹A. Allier, *Les Frères du Libre-Esprit*, quoted by A. Wautier D'Angalliers in his *Ruysbroeck*, p. 43.

are allied with one another as they are apt to be, and the result is inimical. Read the following passage from D'Aygaliers (pp. 46-47), in which the author describes the view of certain followers of the Free Spirit:

“Hence they go so far as to say that so long as man has a tendency to virtues and desires to do God’s very precious will, he is still imperfect, being preoccupied with the acquiring of things. . . . Therefore, they think they can never either believe in virtues, or have additional merit, or commit sins Consequently, they are able to consent to every desire of the lower nature, for they have reverted to a state of innocence, and laws no longer apply to them. Hence, if the nature is prone to that which gives it satisfaction, and if, in resisting it, mental idleness must, however slightly, be either checked or distracted, they obey the instincts of nature. They are all forerunners of Antichrist, preparing the way for incredulity of every kind. They claim indeed to be free, outside of commandments and virtues. To say what pleases them and never to be contradicted, to retain their own will and in subjection to no one: that is what they call spiritual freedom. Free in their flesh, they give the body what it desires. . . . To them the highest sanctity for man consists in following without compulsion and in all things his natural instinct, so that he may abandon himself to every impulse in satisfying the demands of the body. . . . They wish to sin and indulge in their impure practices without fear or qualms of conscience.”

That when the mystic has the feeling that he is entirely possessed of God, or something greater than himself, he is apt to give himself up to a life of sensuousness, is psychologically explainable, for there is a tendency in all religion to assert instincts or native impulses not controlled by reasoned morality. When existence is accepted as it is as part of the inconceivable wisdom of the Buddha or God, the acceptance often involves acquiescence in all ills the flesh is heir to. This is why orthodoxy is always reluctant to lend its ear unconditionally to the gospel of passivism. Grave dangers are always lurking here. The Shin teacher’s an-

nouncement that "you are saved just as you are," or the doctrine that Amida's all-embracing love takes in all sinful mortals with their sins and defilements even unwashed, is full of pitfalls unless it is tempered by sound reasoning and strong moral feeling. The injunctions such as "Take no thought of your life," or "Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself," are fine and Buddhists too will whole-heartedly uphold the truth contained in them, but at the same time we must realise that this kind of momentarism is a life essentially at one with that of the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field, and harbours the possibility of sliding headlong into the abyss of libertinism or antinomianism. True religion, therefore, always shuns absolute subjectivism, and rightly so. Still we can ill afford to ignore the claims of the mystic so simply and innocently expressed in the following life of a pious Buddhist, where there is nothing of the aggressive assertions of Brothers of the Free Spirit.

Kichibei was a wealthy farmer of Idzumo province, but when his religious consciousness was awakened he could no more rest satisfied with his old conditions. He sold all his estate and with the money thus realised he wandered about from one place to another to get instructed in Shin Buddhism. Later he sold out even his godowns, furniture, and house itself, thus freeing himself from all his earthly treasures, he devoted himself to the study of Buddhism, that is, he was never tired of travelling far and near listening to the religious discourses of Shin teachers. Many, many years passed like that and his neighbours used to remark, "Kichibei goes around in sandals made of gold," meaning that all his money and property had gone into his religion. He did not at all mind his poverty, saying, "Enough is the living for the day." At seventy he was still peddling fish to get his daily livelihood, though his earning was no more than a few *itōbyaku* (pennies). When a neighbouring child brought him one day a bunch of flowers, he was very grateful. "By

the grace of Amida I live this day to make him this flower-offering''; he went up to the altar. The child was rewarded for it with two pieces of *tōbyaku*, the earning of that day.¹

Is not such a Buddhist a good follower of Jesus too? He had no thought for the morrow, and in these modern days of economic stress how would he have fared? In spite of all this, there is something most captivating in a life like Kichibei's. Rolle speaks of "a contemplative man [who] is turned towards the unseen light with so great a longing that men often consider him a fool or mad, because his heart is so on fire with the love of Christ. Even his bodily appearance is changed, and is so far removed from other men that it seems as if God's child were a lunatic."² "God's fool" or "God's lunatic" are expressive terms. Kichibei was surely changed in his appearance and had become a splendid lunatic.

The Passive Life Described

The psychological state of such religious belief can be explained in the language of Madam Guyon as follows:³

"I speak to you, my dear brother, without reserve. And, in the first place, my soul, as it seems to me, is united to God in such a manner that my own will is entirely lost in the Divine Will. I live, therefore, as well as I can express it, out of myself and all other creatures, in union with God, because in union with His will. . . . It is thus that God, by His sanctifying grace, has come to me All in All. The self which once troubled me is taken away, and I find it no more. And thus God, being made known in things and events, which is the only way in which the I AM, or Infinite Existence, can be made known, everything becomes in a certain sense God to me. I find God in everything which is, and in everything which comes to pass. The creature is nothing: God is ALL."

¹ *Anjin Shōwa* (安心小話), XVIII.

² *The Amending of Life*, edited by H. L. Hubbard (1922), p. 91.

³ A letter to her brother Gregory as quoted in Thomas C. Upham's *Life and Experience of Madam Guyon*, p. 305 et seq.

Thomas C. Upham further gives, according to Madame Guyon's autobiography and other literary material, his own version of the conversation which took place between her and Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, at this time confessedly the "leader of the French Church." The conversation is quite illuminating as regards the quietist point of view of religious experience, and I allow myself to quote the following:

Bossuet.—I notice that the terms and phrases which you employ, sometimes differ from those with which I frequently meet in theological writings. And perhaps the reason, which you have already suggested, explains it in part. But still they are liable to be misunderstood and to lead into error; and hence it is necessary to ascertain precisely what is meant. You sometimes describe what you consider the highest state of religious experience as a state of *passivity*; and at other times as *passively active*. I confess, Madame, that I am afraid of expressions which I do not fully understand, and have the appearance at least of being somewhat at variance with man's moral agency and accountability.

Madame Guyon.—I am not surprised, sir, at your reference to these expressions; and still I hardly know what other expressions to employ. I will endeavour to explain. In the early periods of man's religious experience, he is in what may be called a *mixed life*; sometimes acting from God, but more frequently, until he has made considerable advancement, acting from himself. His inward movement, until it becomes corrected by Divine grace, is self-originated, and is characterised by that perversion which belongs to everything coming from that source. But when the soul, in the possession of pure or perfect love, is fully converted, and everything in it is subordinated to God, then its state is always either passive or passively active.

But I am willing to concede, which will perhaps meet your objection, that there are some reasons for preferring the term *passively active*; because the sanctified soul, although it no longer has a will of its own, is never strictly inert. Under all circumstances and in all cases, there is really a distinct act on the part of the soul, namely, *an act of co-operation* with God; although in some cases, it is a simple co-operation with what *now is*, and constitutes the religious

state of submissive acquiescence and patience; while in others it is a co-operation with reference to what *is to be*, and implies future results, and consequently is a state of movement and performance.

Bossuet.—I think, Madame, I understand you. There is a distinction undoubtedly in the two classes of cases just mentioned; but as the term *passively active*, will apply to both of them, I think it is to be preferred. You use this complex term, I suppose, because there are two distinct acts or operations to be expressed, namely, the act of preparatory or *prevenient* grace on the part of God, and the co-operative act on the part of the creature; the soul being passive, or merely perceptive, in the former; and active, although always in accordance with the Divine leading, in the other.

“Passively active,” or “actively passive,” either will describe the mentality of the quietist type of the mystic. He is not generally conscious of his own active part in his religious experience, and may wish to ignore this part altogether on the ground of his religious philosophy. But, as I said before, there is no absolutely passive state of mind, for this would mean perfect emptiness, and to be passive means that there is something ready to receive. Even God cannot work where there is nothing to work on or with. Passivity is a relative term indicating a not fully analysed state of consciousness. In our religious life, passivity comes as the culmination of strenuous activity; passivity without this preliminary condition is sheer inanity, in which there will be no consciousness, from the very first, even of any form of passivity. “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” This is passivism as far as somebody else, and not the self has taken possession of that which liveth, but that which liveth stays there all the time. “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” (Colos. III, 3.) Something in you is dead, which is to die sooner or later, but that which is to live keeps on living. This does not mean that you are altogether annihilated, but that you are living in the most lively sense of the word. Living is an activity, in fact the highest form of activity. Absolute passivity is death itself.

Passivity and Pure Land Buddhism

It is in the Pure Land school that the idea of passivity is most clearly traceable in Buddhism, though even in the Holy Path school it is not quite absent. Shinran, a great advocate of the *Tariki* (other-power) doctrine, naturally upholds passivity in the religious life of his followers. His idea is manifest in such passages as this, in which he repudiates "self-power" or "self-will" (*hakaraï*). "By 'self-power' is meant," says he, "the self-will of the [Holy Path] devotees, relying on which each of them, as he finds himself variously situated in the circumstances of life, invokes the Buddha-names other [than Amida], disciplines himself in good works other [than invoking the name of Amida]; he upholds his own will, by which he attempts to remedy all the disturbances arising from the body, speech, and thought, and, thus making himself wholesome, he wishes to be reborn in the Land of Purity. The 'other-power' devotees, on the other hand, put their whole-hearted faith in the original vow of Amida, as is expressed in the Eighteenth Vow in which he vows to receive all beings to his Land of Purity if they only recite his name and desire to be saved through him. In this, says the Holy One, there is no human scheme because there is here only the scheme of the Tathagata's vow. By 'human scheme' is meant 'self-will', and 'self-will' is self-power which is a human scheme. As to 'other power,' it is a whole-hearted belief in the original vow, and as the devotee is thus assured of his rebirth in Amida's land, there is no human scheme in the whole procedure. And, therefore, again he need not feel any anxiety in his mind as to whether he will be welcomed by the Tathagata because of his sinfulness. Let him remain undisturbed, even with all his passions, because they belong by nature to him as an ignorant and sinful mortal, nor let him imagine himself that he shall be reborn in Amida's land because of his good will and good conduct. For as long as he has the mind of relying on his

'self-will,' he has no chance for rebirth in the Pure Land."¹

Shinran's vocabulary is rich in such phrases as "artless art," or "meaningless meaning," (無義の義), "no scheming whatever" (はからひなき), "naturalness," or "suchness," or "the natural course of things" (自然法爾), "the passage of absolute freedom" or "unobstructed path" (無礙の道), "beyond the intelligence or contrivance of the ignorant" as it is the will of the Buddha, "an absolute trust in the Tathagata's vow which is not tinged with human contrivance," "the great believing heart is Buddhata and Buddhata is the Tathagata," etc.

The ultimate meaning of all these phrases, so common in the lexicon of Shin Buddhism, is the upholding of passivity in the psychology of its followers. Let Amida work out his original vow as he made it in the beginning of his religious career, which means, "Let us believe in it wholeheartedly and it will find its way inevitably, naturally, spontaneously, and without any contrivance on our part, into our sinful hearts and take us up into his Land of Bliss and Purity, after our death." While we are living here on earth as the result of our past Karma, bound by the laws of the flesh and driven by the instinctive and uncontrollable urge of life, we cannot escape its course, but so long as there is the original vow of Amida which has proved efficient in his own attainment of supreme enlightenment, we need not worry about the sinful urge of our earthly life. Absolute faith puts an end to our spiritual tribulations which annoy us on account of our sins. Sins themselves as they are committed by us mortals may not be eradicated, for as long as we are relative existences, limited and governed by forces beyond our "self-power" to control, we cannot rid ourselves completely of defiled passions and desires and impulses. In spite of this fact, we are not troubled about sin, because our sin no more affects our life after death: have we not already been saved by the original vow of Amida which we have un-

¹ *The Mattōshō*, 末證抄.

conditionally accepted? Was it not our worry about our after-death life, or immortality as the Christians would put it, that made us feel concerned about this sinful state of affairs on earth? It is not that we keep on sinning, or that we take delight in sinning, as some antinomians would, indeed we feel gravely concerned about sinning: but this sinning no longer shakes our faith in Amida and our final enlightenment and emancipation. The soul is no more disturbed, and with all its sins and regrets and lamentations it retains its sincerity, its hope, and its transcendental joy.

Richard Rolle, the author of *The Amending of Life*, was a Christian mystic of the fourteenth century. His idea of sin and purity of heart has much to remind us of the view presented above. He writes (pp. 75-76):

“Who can truly say ‘I am free from sin?’ No one in this life; for as Job says, ‘If I wash myself with snow water and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.’ ‘If I washed myself with snow water’ meaning true penitence; ‘and make my hands never so clean’ by works of innocence, ‘yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch’ of venial sins that cannot be avoided, ‘and mine own clothes shall abhor me,’ that is to say, my flesh makes me loathe myself, and sensuality that is so frail, slippery, and ready to love the beauty of this world, often makes me sin. The apostle said, ‘Let not sin reign in your mortal body,’ that is to say, ‘Sin must be in us, but it need not rule over us.’ . . . Though he sometimes commit a venial offence, yet henceforth, because his whole heart is turned to God, sin is destroyed. The fire of love burns up in him all stain of sin, as a drop of water cast into a furnace is consumed.”

Here lies the teaching of “other-power” Buddhism in a nutshell, and here also the signification of passivity in the psychology of Buddhism.

Ichirenin (1788-1860) was a modern follower of the “other-power” school; he used to teach in the following manner:¹ “If you have yet something worrying you, how-

¹ 安心小話, “Talks on Mental Peace.”

ever trivial it may be, your faith in Amida is not absolute. When you have a feeling of unrest, this is of course far from believing in Amida; but even when you are rejoicing as having at last found rest, this is not real rest either. To make strenuous effort because you have not yet gained a restful heart, is also not quite right. To put your belief to a test wishing to know if it is firmly resting on Amida, is again wrong. Why? Because all these are attempts to look into your own mind, you are turned away from Amida, you are wrongly oriented. Indeed, it is easy to say, 'Abandon your self-power,' but after all how difficult it is! I, therefore, repeat over and over again and say, 'Don't look at your own mind, but look straight up to Amida himself.' 'To rely on Amida means to turn towards the mirror of the original vow and see Amida face to face.'

Passivity is Accepting Life as it is

Passivity is not self-reflection or self-examination. It is an unqualified acceptance of Amida. So long as there is a trace of conscious contrivance (*hakarai*), you are not wholly possessed of Amida. You and the original vow are two separate items of thought, there is no unity, and this unity is to be attained by accepting and not by striving. In this case passivity is identifiable with accepting existence as it is. To believe then is to be and not to become. Becoming implies a dissatisfaction with existence, a wishing to change, that is, to work out "my will" as against "thy will," and whatever we may say about moral ideals of perfection, religion is after all the acceptance of things as they are, things evil together with things good. Religion wants first of all "to be." To believe, therefore, is to exist—this is the fundamental of all religions. When this is translated into terms of psychology, the religious mind turns on the axle of passivity. "You are all right as you are," or "to be well with God and the world," or "don't think of the morrow": this is the final word of all religion.

It was in this spirit that Rinzai, (Lin-chi, died 867), the founder of the Rinzai branch of Zen Buddhism, said: "The truly religious man has nothing to do but go on with his life as he finds it in the various circumstances of this worldly existence. He rises quietly in the morning, puts on his dress and goes out to his work. When he wants to walk, he walks; when he wants to sit, he sits. He has no hankering after Buddhahood, not the remotest thought of it. How is this possible? A wise man of old says, If you strive after Buddhahood by any conscious contrivances, your Buddha is indeed the source of eternal transmigration."¹ "To doubt is to commit suicide; to strive, which means "to negate," is, according to Buddhist phraseology, eternally to transmigrate in the ocean of birth and death.

A man called Joyemon, of Mino province, was much troubled about his soul. He had studied Buddhism but so far to no purpose. Finally, he went up to Kyoto where Ichirenin, who was a great teacher of Shin Buddhism at the time, resided, and opened his heart to him, begging to be instructed in the teaching of Shinran Shonin. Said Ichirenin, "You are as old as you are." (Amida's salvation consists in accepting yourself as you are.) Joyemon was not satisfied and made further remonstrance, to which Ichirenin repeated, "You are saved as you are." The seeker after truth was not yet in a state of mind to accept the word of the teacher right off, he was not yet free from dependence on contrivances and strivings. He still pursued the teacher with some more postulations. The teacher, however, was not to be induced to deviate from his first course, for he repeated, "You are saved as you are," and quietly withdrew. It was fortunate that he was a "tariki" teacher; for if he had been a Zen master, I feel sure that Joyemon would have been handled in an altogether different manner.

John Woolman (1720-1772), a Quaker, died of small

¹ Done after the sense, for a literal translation of Rinzai requires a great deal of comments.

pox and towards the end his throat was much affected and he could not speak. He asked for pen and ink and wrote with difficulty: "I believe my being here is in the wisdom of Christ; I know not as to life or death." This confession exactly tallies with that of Shinran when he says in *The Tannisho*, "I say my Nembutsu as taught by my good teacher. As to my being reborn after death in the Land of Purity or in hell, I have no idea of it." Shinran quite frequently makes reference to the inconceivability of Buddha-wisdom. Our being here is entirely due to it, and it is not in our limited knowledge to probe into its mystery nor is it necessary to exercise our finite will about it; we just accept existence as it is, our trust is wholly placed in the infinite wisdom of Amida, and what we have to do is to get rested with this trust, this faith, this acceptance, and with this ignorance. And the wonderful thing is that this ignorance has such a wisdom in it as to give us entire satisfaction with this life and after.

The mystic knowledge or mystic ignorance and the satisfaction derived from it are also illustrated by the poem of thirty-one syllables composed by Ippen Shōnin (1229–1289). When he was studying Zen under Hōtō (1203–1298), the latter wanted to know how Ippen understood the meaning of the statement that "As a thought is stirred there is an awakening." Ippen's answer was in verse:

"When the Name is invoked,
Neither the Buddha nor the Self
There is:
Na-mu-a-mi-da-bu-tsu—
The voice alone is heard."

The Zen master, however, did not think Ippen rightly understood the point, whereby the latter uttered another verse:

"When the Name is invoked,
Neither the Buddha nor the Self
There is:
Na-mu-a-mi-da-bu-tsu,
Na-mu-a-mi-da-bu-tsu!"

This met the master's approval. In Ippen's religion we find Zen and Shin harmonised in a most practical way. When this *sonomama* (*yathābhūtam*) idea is translated into human relations, we have the following in which self-will is denounced as hindering the work of the All-One, that is, Amida.

“When the rebellious will of your self-power is given up, you realise what is meant by putting trust in Amida. You desire to be saved and the Buddha is ever ready to save, and yet the fact of your rebirth in the Land of Purity does not seem to be so easily establishable. Why? Because your rebellious will still asserts itself. It is like contracting a marriage between a young man and a young woman. The parents on both sides want to see them united in marriage. The one party says, ‘There is no need of the bride's being provided with any sort of trousseau.’ But the other thinks it necessary seeing that the bridegroom belongs to a far richer family, and it would not do for the bride not to be supplied even with one wardrobe. Both are ready and yet the sense of pride is their barrier. If the bride's family took the proposal made by the other party in the same spirit as is made by the latter, the desired end would be accomplished without further fussing. Quite similar to this is the relationship between the Buddha and sentient beings. The Buddha says: ‘Come’; why not then go to him even as you are? But here the rebellious will shakes its head and says, ‘With all his good will, I cannot go to him just as I am; I ought to do something to deserve the call.’ This is self-pride. This is more than what the Buddha requires of you, and anything extraneous coming out of your self-conceit and limited philosophy obstructs the passage of the Buddha's mercy into your hearts. For all that is asked of you is to put your hand forward, into which the Buddha is ready to drop the coin of salvation. The Buddha is beckoning to you, the boat is waiting to take you to the other shore of the stream, no fares are wanted, the only movement you are to make is to step right into the ferry. You cannot protest and say, ‘This

is a difficult task.' Why don't you then give yourself up entirely to the Buddha's vow of salvation and let his will prevail over yours?'¹

Molinos writes to Petrucci: "One of the fundamental rules which serve to keep my soul in constant inner peace is this: I may cherish no desire² for this or that separate good, but only for that good which is the highest of all and I must be prepared for all which this highest good gives me and requires of me. These are few words but they contain much."³ If one asks a Shin teacher what are few words containing so much as productive of the highest good, he will at once say, "Na-mu-a-mi-da-bu-tsu, Na-mu-a-mi-da-bu-tsu!" For this is indeed the magic sesame that carries you right to the other side of birth and death.

Ignorance and Passivity

The significant fact about religious experience, which is to be noticed in this connection, is that it always insists on abandoning all knowledge and learnedness acquired by the seeker of God or truth. Whether it is Christian or Buddhist, whether it is the Pure Land or the Holy Path, the insistence is equally emphatic. It is evident that religious experience stands almost diametrically opposed to intellectual knowledge, for learnedness and scholarship does not guarantee one to be a member of the kingdom of God, but "being like a child" not only in humbleness of heart but in simplicity of thought. The stains of vanity, conceit, and self-love which are so-called human righteousnesses, are indeed "as

¹ Condensed from VIII-XIII, of *Sayings of Shūson*, one of the modern teachers of Shin Buddhism, 1788-1860. Compiled by Gessho Sasaki, 1907.

² That the Catholic monks avow absolute obedience to their superior is also an expression of passivism in our religious life. When a man can submit himself to a life of obedience, he feels a certain sense of relief from the oppressing burden of self-responsibility, which is akin to the religious feeling of peace and rest.

³ Kathleen Lyttleton's Introduction to Molinos' *Spiritual Guide*, p. 25.

a polluted garment," which is to be cast off by every one of us, but why is the use of the intellect too to be avoided? The soul may long for solitude and silence, but why does the constant reading of religious books grow wearisome? Why was Jesus thankful for his Father's hiding "these things" from the wise and prudent and revealing them unto babes, who are incapable of "careful meditations and subtle reasoning"?

St. Bonaventura "teaches us not to form a conception of anything, no, not even of God, because it is imperfection to be satisfied with representations, images, and definitions, however subtle and ingenious they may be, either of the will or of the goodness, trinity and unity; nay, of the divine essence itself."¹ St. Augustine soliloquises: "I, Lord, went wandering like a strayed sheep, seeking thee with anxious reasoning without, whilst thou wast within me. I wearied my self much in looking for thee without, and yet thou hast thy habitation within me, if only I desire thee and pant after thee. I went round the streets and squares of the city of this world seeking thee; and I found thee not, because in vain I sought without for him, who was within my self."¹

The reason why intellection is in disfavour with religious teachers is this: it does not give us the thing itself, but its representations, images, explanations, and references; it always leads us away from ourselves, which means that we become lost in the jungle of endless speculation and imagination, giving us no inner peace and spiritual rest. The intellect always looks outwardly, forgetting that "there is an inward sight which hath power to perceive the One True God." So Gerson expresses himself:² "Though I have spent forty years in reading and prayer, yet I could never find any thing more efficacious, nor for attaining to mystical theology, more direct than that the spirit should become like a little child and a beggar in the presence of God."

¹ Quoted from *The Spiritual Guide*, pp. 76, 77.

² Molinos, p. 72.

Buddhism, however, is fundamentally a religion against ignorance (*avidyā*) and not for it as in the foregoing quotations. The ignorant (*bāla*) and confused (*bhṛānti*) and simple-minded (*prithagjana*) are very much condemned in all Buddhist sutras as not being able to grasp the deepest truths of enlightenment. It is true that Buddhism is more intellectual than Christianity and that the whole drift of Buddhist thought tends to encourage an intuitive grasp of the emptiness of existence instead of being embraced in the love of the highest being. But in spite of this fact there is a strong undercurrent in the Buddhist teaching to uphold the futility of all intellectual attempts in the experience of the Buddhist life which consists really in abandoning every self-centered striving and preconceived metaphysical standpoint. This is to keep the consciousness in utter purity or in a state of absolute neutrality or blankness, in other words, to make the mind as simple as that of the child, which is not at all stuffed with learning and pride.

Hōnen Shōnin's (1133-1212) "One-Sheet Document" illustrates the Pure Land attitude towards ignorance and simple-heartedness:

"By Nembutsu I do not mean such practice of meditation on the Buddha as is referred to by the wise men of China and Japan, nor is it the invocation of the Buddha's name, which is practised as the result of study and understanding as to the meaning of Nembutsu. It is just to invoke the name of Amida, without doubting that this will issue in the rebirth of the believer in the Pure Land. Just this, and no other considerations are needed. Mention is often made of the threefold heart and the four manners of exercise, but these are all included in the belief that a rebirth in the Pure Land is most conclusively assured by the Namu-amida-butsu. If one imagines something more than this, one will be excluded from the blessings of the two holy ones, Amida and Śākyamuni, and left out of the original vow. Those who believe in the Nembutsu, however learned they may be in all the teachings of Śākyamuni, shall behave themselves like an ignoramus who knows nothing, or like a simple-hearted

woman-devotee; avoid pedantry, and invoke the Buddha's name with singleness of heart."

Shinran Shōnin (1173-1262) as disciple of Hōnen voices the same sentiment in his *Tannishō*:

"[Some say that] the salvation of those who do not read and study the sutras and commentaries is doubtful. Such a view as this is to be regarded as very far from the truth. All the sacred books devoted to the explanation of the truth of the Other-power, show that every one who believing in the original vow recites the Nembutsu will become a Buddha. Excepting this, what learning is needed to be reborn in the Pure Land? Let those who have any doubt on this point, learn hard and study in order to understand the meaning of the original vow. It is a great pity that there are some who in spite of a hard study of the sacred books are unable to understand the true meaning of the sacred doctrine. Since the Name is so formed as to be recited by any simple-hearted person who may have no understanding of even a single phrase in the sacred books, the practice is called easy."

That Zen representing the Holy Path wing of Buddhism too shies learning and sutra-reading can be seen from the way the historians of Zen treat Hui-nēng, the sixth patriarch of Zen; for he is made an ignorant pedlar of kindling as compared with his rival Shēn-hsiu whose scholarship was the object of envy among the five hundred disciples of Hung-jên; and also from one of the chief mottoes adopted by Zen followers, "Depend not on letters!" for it was indeed on this that the T'ien-tai advocates of the Sung concentrated their assaults on Zen. Those who have at all studied Zen know well what attitude is assumed by Zen towards scholarship and intellection. Its literature is filled with such passages as these: "I have not a word to give to you as the teaching of Zen"; "I have not uttered even a syllable these forty-nine years of my preaching"; "That is your learning, let me have what you have discovered within yourself"; "What are you going to do with your sutra-reading, which does not at all belong to your inner self?" "With all your erudition, do you think

you can cope with Death?" "All the sutras and commentaries so reverently studied by you, are they not after all mere rubbish to wipe dirt?" and so on.

Of the reasons why ignorance or simple-mindedness is so exalted in religious experience, the most weighty one is perhaps to be found in the nature of the intellect itself. Being essentially dualistic, it requires a point of reference from which it starts to make a statement, or to advance an argument, or to give a judgment. This mental habit of having a proposition definitely ascertained and holding fast to it goes against the religious frame of mind which principally consists in accepting existence as it is without asking questions, without entertaining doubts. Religious experience depicts in plain, unqualified, and straightforward statements, refusing to do anything with quibblings and dialectics. Whether of the Zen or of the Shin kind of Buddhism, mystic intuition thrives best in a mind which has no predilection, especially nursed by learning. When the mirror of consciousness is thoroughly kept clean of intellectual muddle, it reflects the glory and love of God as the Christians would say. Hence ignorance and naïvity go hand in hand with passivity.

Selflessness and Emptiness

When this doctrine of passivity is rendered into philosophical phraseology, it is the doctrine of Anātma or non-ego, which, when further developed, turns into that of *śūnyatā* or emptiness. As I explained elsewhere, the doctrine of no-self-substance is not so nihilistic as non-Buddhist scholars may imagine, for this denial of the ego is also constantly on the lips of the Christian mystics. When St. Bernard, quoting Isaiah, X, 15, "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood." concludes, "In fact, the ability

to glory in God comes from God alone"; cannot we draw another conclusion, saying, "God is all in all, there is no ego-substance"? or, "In him we live and move and have our being, and therefore all relative existences are as such empty (*śūnya*) and unborn (*anutpanna*)"? Logically speaking, Buddhist scholars are more frank and radical and self-consistent in developing this theme.

Says the author of *Theologia Germanica*, "We must understand it as though God said: 'He who willeth without me, or willeth not what I will, or otherwise than as I will, he willeth contrary to me, for my will is that no one should will otherwise than I, and that there should be no will without me, and without my will; even as without me there is neither substance, nor life, nor this, nor that, so also there should be no will apart from me, and without my will.'" When this is translated into the language of Buddhist psychology, it is "I am nowhere a somewhatness for any one and nowhere for me is there a somewhatness of any one."¹ (Or, according to the *Visuddhimagga* (chap. XVI):

"Misery only doth exist, none miserable,
No doer is there; naught save the deed is found.
Nirvana is, but not the man who seeks it.
The Path exists, but not the traveller on it."

We must remember that the Buddha's teaching of Anātman or Anatta is not the outcome of psychological analysis but is a statement of religious intuition in which no discursive reasoning whatever is employed. The Buddhist experience found out by immediate knowledge that when one's heart was cleansed of the defilements of the ordinary ego-centred impulses and desires, nothing was left there to claim itself as the ego-residium. It was Buddhist philosophy that formed the theory, but that which supplied it with facts to substantiate it was Buddhist experience. We ought always to remember this truth, that religion first starts

¹ Translated by H. C. Warren.

with experience and later philosophises, and, therefore, the criticism of the philosophy must be based on facts and not on the philosophy as such.

The doctrine of Śūnyatā too is a statement of religious intuition, and not an abstract formulation of empty ideas. If this were not so, it could never be the fundamental concept of all the schools of Mahayana Buddhism and have such an inspiring influence upon the religious consciousness of its followers. The subject was treated somewhat fully in my *Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, and I would not repeat it here except that Śūnyatā which is generally translated emptiness or vacuity which is its literal meaning, is not to be interpreted in terms of relative knowledge and logical analysis, but it is the utterance of direct insight into the nature of existence. Whatever philosophy it has gathered about it is later addition and the work of Buddhist scholarship.

IV

Passivity and Patience or Humiliation

While the life of passivity on the one hand tends to libertinism, it shows on the other hand much aloofness from human concerns. There are however some practical moral virtues arising from the experience of passivity, or, stated conversely, where there are these virtues they issue from the experience. They are highly characteristic of the religious life irrespective of its theology, be it Buddhist or Christian. In Buddhism the virtues thus realised are generally estimated at six, called *Pāramitā*: *Dāna*, *Śīla*, *Kṣānti*, *Vīrya*, *Dhyāna*, and *Prajñā*. The latter two, meditation (*dhyāna*) and intuitive knowledge (*prajñā*), may not be in any direct relationship to passivity, and here we will not touch upon them. The first four are important and we may say that the Mahayanist life is summed up in them. Still, of these four, the first, the practice of charity, which in Buddhism also involves the giving up of one's life to the cause, and the second, the

observance of the moral precepts, may not engage our attention here. For I wish to give especial consideration to one or two classical instances of *Kshānti* and *Vīrya*, both of which I take to be closely connected with the life of passivity and the philosophy of Śūnyatā. We may think that *Kshānti* (patience) may have something to do with passivity; but how about *Vīrya* (energy) which is apparently an opposite quality of meek suffering? How could energy be thought of issuing from religious passivity and emptiness? This is a significant point in the life of the Mahayana Buddhist and in the teaching of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. For according to the latter which is lived by the Bodhisattva, an inexhaustible mine of energy obtains just because of the emptiness of things; if there were something determinable at the back of our existence, we could not put forward such an energy exhibited by the Bodhisattva *Sadāprarudita*. And, owing to this energy, patience or humiliation is again made possible. To be patient or to practise *Kshānti* does not mean merely to submit oneself to sufferings of all sorts which are brought upon him from external sources, but it means to exert the virtue of energy (*vīrya*) in the life of emptiness, which is no less than what is known in all the Mahayana sutras as the life of a Bodhisattva (*bodhisattvacaryā*). So we read in the *Diamond Sutra*: "O Subhūti, at the time when Kalirāja cut my flesh from every limb, I had no idea of a self, of a person, of a being, or of a living being; I had neither an idea nor no-idea. And why? Because, O Subhūti, if I at that time had an idea of a self, of a person, of a being, or of a living being, I should also have had an idea of malevolence. And why? Because, O Subhūti, I remember the past five hundred births when I was a Rishi *Kshāntivādin*. At that time also I had no idea of a self, of a person, of a being, or of a living being."¹ . . .

We can thus see that without a philosophical comprehension of Emptiness there will be no real patience or passivity

¹ S.B.E., XLIX, pp. 127-8.

in the life of the Mahayana Buddhist, which never grows weary of seeking for the highest good as supported by energy. *Śūnyatā*, *Kṣhānti*, and *Vīrya* are inseparable. The story of the Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita is in this respect quite illuminating. The story runs as follows.¹

The Story of Sadāprarudita

The Buddha said to Subhūti: If thou shouldst really desire Prajñāpāramitā, thou shouldst behave like the Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita who is at present living the life of a Bodhisattva under the Tathāgata Bhīṣma-garjita-nirghoṣa-svara. When he was intently bent upon realising Prajñāpāramitā, there was a voice from the sky, saying, "If thou goest eastward thou wilt have the chance of listening to Prajñāpāramitā. While proceeding there abandon all thoughts about growing tired, about sleep, eating and drinking, day and night, cold and heat; do not trouble thyself at all about such affairs, have no thought whatever about them; be done away with flattery; cherish no self-conceit, no arrogance; free thyself from the idea of a being, from the desire of making a name, of amassing wealth; free thyself from the five hindrances, from envy; assert no dualistic notions as to subject and object, inner and outer, etc.; while walking along, do not turn either side, left or right; do not think of the points of the compass, front or behind, above or below; do not be disturbed in thy form (*rūpa*), sensation (*vedanā*), thought (*saṃjñā*), conformation (*sanskāra*), and consciousness (*vijñāna*). Why? Because he who is disturbed in these, walks into birth-and-death and not into the Buddhist life, and will never attain Prajñāpāramitā."

When Sadāprarudita heard this voice from the sky, he said: "I will behave indeed in the way I am instructed. For my wish is to become a light for all sentient beings by storing up all the truths of Buddhism." The mysterious voice gives the Bodhisattva further advice regarding the

¹ *The Aśṣasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-Sūtra*, Chapter on the Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita.

Mahayanistic view of the world, absolute confidence to be placed in the teacher of Prajñāpāramitā, the temptations of the Evil One which would appear in various forms to a serious seeker of truth, etc.

Sadāprarudita now following the advice starts on his eastern pilgrimage, but before he is very far off, he thinks again: "Why did I not ask the voice how far east I have to go and of whom to hear about Prajñāpāramitā?" When he was seized with this thought, he felt so grieved over his stupidity that he did not know what to do but giving himself up to intense grief and self-reproach. But he was determined to stay on the spot, no matter how long, if he could only have another advice from the sky. He felt like a person who lost his only child, there was no other thought in his mind than wishing to know about his further procedure, when lo! a form looking like the Tathagata appeared before him and said:

"Well done, Sadāprarudita! All the Buddhas in the past have behaved like thee when they were intently bent upon realising Prajñāpāramitā. Go eastward for a distance of 500 yojanas, where thou wilt come to a city known as Gandhavati which is constructed of seven precious stones and most magnificently decorated in every way. In this city there is a high wide terrace on which stands a splendidly-built palace belonging to a Bodhisattva called Dharmodgata. A large assemblage of gods and men is gathered here, who are desirous of listening to the discourses given by this Bodhisattva on Prajñāpāramitā. Sadāprarudita, he is thy teacher and it is through him that thou comest to the understanding of Prajñāpāramitā. Go, therefore, on thy eastward journey until thou reachest the city. Conduct thyself as if thou wert pierced with a poisonous arrow, have no other thoughts than having it withdrawn from thy flesh at the earliest possible opportunity; have no rest until thou comest into the presence of thy teacher, the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata."

When Sadāprarudita was listening to this voice, he entered upon a state of ecstasy whereby he could see more or less clearly into the spiritual conditions of all the Buddhas. When he came out of the Samādhi, all the Buddhas who were before him suddenly disappeared. He was now troubled with the new question: "Whence are these Buddhas? Whither did they go?" He was grieved but at the same time more determined than ever to reach the palace of Dharmodgata.

He had, however, to think of the offerings¹ he had to make to his teacher. He was poor, and did not know how to get the necessary offerings. But he was not to be daunted, he decided to sell himself, thinking, "I have gone through many a rebirth, but ever being haunted by selfish impulses I have never performed deeds of goodness and purity, which save me from the tortures of purgatories." When he came to a large town, he went up to the market calling out loudly for some one who will buy his person. The Evil One heard the cry and lost no time in keeping the inhabitants of the town away from him, for Mara was afraid of Sadāprarudita's attaining his object and later leading people to the realisation

¹ Offerings are made by Buddhists to their object of devotion for their own spiritual development, which results from giving up all that is regarded as belonging to themselves. Offerings are therefore not meant to please the recipient, for what would the Buddhas do with all those material treasures, musical instruments, or celestial maidens? The practice of self-sacrifice is for the benefit of the donor himself. When this is done in the real spirit of selflessness, the Buddha accepts the offerings. A story is told of a noted Zen master who resided at Engakuji, Kamakura, early in the Tokugawa era, which illustrates the nature of Buddhist donation. When his temple required renovation, a wealthy merchant who was one of his admirers offered him a large sum of money for the work. The master received it nonchalantly, put it aside, and uttered not a word of thanks. The merchant was dissatisfied, and explained how deeply the donation cut into his capital and that it was quite a sacrifice on his part, which perhaps deserved just one word of acknowledgment from the master. The master quietly said, "Why shall I have to thank you for the merit you are accumulating for yourself?" Offerings are thus self-sacrifice, part of the giving-up of selfhood.

of Prajñāpāramitā. There was, however, one maiden of a wealthy householder, whom Mara could not overshadow.

When there was no response, Sadāprarudita was exceedingly mortified: "How heavy my sin is! Even when I am ready to sacrifice myself for the sake of supreme enlightenment, nobody is forthcoming to help me out!" Śakradevendra, god of the gods, however, hearing him conceived the idea of testing the sincerity of this truth-seeker. The god assumed the form of a Brahman and appeared before Sadāprarudita. Finding out what was the reason of his excessive lamentation, the Brahman said, "I do not want your person, but as I am going to conduct a certain religious ritual, I wish to have a human heart, human blood, and human marrow. Would you give them to me?" Sadāprarudita was overjoyed because of the opportunity of gaining some offerings for his teacher and thus enabling him to listen to his discourses on Prajñāpāramitā. He agreed at once to give up everything demanded by the Brahman for any price, he did not care how much it was.

The Brahman took out a sharp knife, and incising it into Sadāprarudita's right arm, he got enough blood needed for his purpose. When he was about to rip up the poor victim's right thigh in order to get the marrow, the maiden of a wealthy householder saw it from her apartment. She at once came down and interfered, "O sir, what is all this for?" Sadāprarudita explained. The maiden was struck with his unselfish motives and promised him that she would see to whatever offerings he needed for his visit to Dharmadgata.

The Brahman then resuming his proper form said to Sadāprarudita, "Well done, indeed, son of a good family! I am now convinced of your devotion to the Dharma. Such was also the devotion of all the Buddhas of the past when they were still seeking after Prajñāpāramitā. My only wish with you was to see how earnest you were in this. What can I do for you now to recompense?"

Said Sadāprarudita, "Give me supreme enlightenment."

The god confessed his inability of giving him this kind of gift, whereupon Sadāpradudita wished to have his mutilated body restored. This was accomplished at once and Śakradevendra disappeared. The maiden of a wealthy householder then took him into her house, where he was introduced to her parents. They were also greatly moved and even permitted their daughter to go along with him. Rich offerings of all sorts were prepared, and accompanied by five hundred attendant-maidens, they proceeded further eastward to the city of Gandhavati.

The city is finally reached, and they see the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata discoursing on the Dharma. As the party of truth-seekers approach him, they are again accosted by Śakradevendra who performs some miraculous deeds over a treasure-casket. The casket is explained to contain Prajñāpāramitā, but nobody is allowed to open it as it is sealed seven times by Dharmodgata himself. Some offerings are made to it.

At the palace of Dharmodgata, Sadāprarudita, the maiden of a wealthy householder, and five hundred maiden-attendants all pay him due respects, flowers, increase of various kinds, necklaces, banners, canopies, robes, gold, silver, precious stones, and other things are offered, accompanied by music. Sadāprarudita informs him of his mission and experiences which he had on his way to Gandhavati; and then he expresses his desire to know whence all those Buddhas came to appear before him and whither they disappeared later, as he wishes to be all the time in their presence. To this answers Dharmodgata:

"From nowhere the Buddhas come and to nowhere they go. Why? Because all things are of suchness and immovable, and this suchness is no less than the Tathagata himself. In the Tathagata there is no going, no coming, no birth, no death; for ultimate reality knows neither coming nor going, and this reality is the Tathagata himself. Emptiness knows

neither coming nor going, and this emptiness is the Tathagata himself. The same can be said of suchness (*yathāvattā*), of detachment (*viragata*), of cessation (*nivodha*), and of space; and all these qualities also belong to the Tathagata. O son of a good family, apart from all these dharmas, there is no Tathagata. As they are of suchness, so is the Tathagata; they are all of one suchness which is neither two nor three; it is above numbers and nowhere attainable.

“Towards the end of the spring when it is warm, there appears a mirage on the fields, which is taken for a sheet of water by the ignorant. Son of a good family, where thinkest thou this vapoury appearance comes? From the eastern sea? or from the western sea? or from the northern sea? or from the southern sea?”

Replied Sadāprarudita, “In the mirage there is no real water, and how can one talk of its whence and whither? The ignorant take it for water where there is really none whatever.”

“And so,” continued Dharmodgata, “it is with the Tathagata. If a man gets attached to his body, form, and voice, and begins to think about his whence and whither, he is an ignoramus who, altogether destitute of intelligence, imagines the presence of real water in a mirage. Why? Because no Buddhas are to be regarded as having the material body, they are the Dharma-body, and the Dharma in its essence knows no whence, no whither.

“Son of a good family, it is again like those magic-created figures—elephants, horses, carriages, foot-soldiers; they come from nowhere, go nowhere. It is again like those Tathagatas who appear to a man in a dream, one, two, ten, twenty, fifty, one hundred, or even over one hundred in number; when he awakes from the dream, he sees not even one of them. All things are like a dream, they have no substantiality. But as the ignorant realise it not, they are attached to forms, names, physical bodies (*rūpakāya*), words, and phrases, they imagine various Buddhas to be coming into

existence and going out of it. They comprehend not the true nature of things nor that of the Buddhas. Such will transmigrate through the six paths of existence, separated from Prajñāpāramitā, separated from all the teachings of Buddhism. It is only those who understand the nature of ultimate reality (*dharmatā*) that will cherish no discrimination as regards the whence and whither of the Tathagata. They live Prajñāpāramitā, they attain supreme enlightenment, they are true followers of the Buddha, they are worthy of being revered by others, they are indeed the fountain of blessings to the world.

“Son of a good family, it is like those treasures in the sea which have not come from the east, from the west, from the south, or from the north, or again from above or below. They grow in the sea owing to the good meritorious deeds of sentient beings. They are there not independent of the chain of causation, but when they disappear they do not go east or west or anywhere. When conditions are so combined, they come into existence; when they are dissolved, things disappear. Son of a good family, it is even so with the Tathagata-body which is not a fixed existence. It does not come from any definite direction, nor does it exist outside the chain of causation, for it is the product of previous Karma (*pūrvakarmavipāka*).

“Son of a good family, it is like the musical sound of a lute which issues from the combination of its frame, skin, strings, and stick as it is played by the human hand. The sound comes not from any one of these parts when they are disconnected. Their concordant action is needed to produce the sound. In a similar manner, the Tathagata is the outcome of numberless meritorious deeds of the past, apart from which his whence and whither cannot be conceived. From any one single cause nothing takes place, there must be several of them which when combined produce a result. When they discontinue to act conjointly, the Tathagata goes out of existence. This being the case, the wise do not talk

of his appearance and disappearance. Indeed, with all things, not only with the Tathagata, there is no birth, no death, no coming, no going. This is the way to reach supreme enlightenment and also to realise Prajñāpāramitā.’

When this discourse was finished, the whole universe trembled violently, including the abodes of the gods and those of the evil ones. All the plants at once burst out in full bloom, and Śakradevendra with his four guardian-kings showered a rain of flowers over the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata. These miraculous phenomena were explained to have taken place owing to the fact that the discourse given by the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata on the whence and whither of the Tathagata opened the spiritual eyes of ever so many beings leading to supreme enlightenment. This pleased the Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita immensely, for he was now more than ever confirmed in his belief in Prajñāpāramitā and his destiny of attaining Buddhahood. More offerings were given to Dharmodgata who, first accepting them in order to complete the meritorious deeds of the Sadāprarudita, returned them to him. He then retired into his own palace not to come out of it again before seven years elapsed; for it was his habit to enter upon a profound Samādhi for that space of time.

Sadāprarudita was, however, determined to wait for seven years by the palace of Dharmodgata in order to listen to his discourses again on Prajñāpāramitā and its skilful means (*upāyakaśālya*). He was so devoted to his teacher that all the while he never laid himself in bed, never tasted any delicious food, never gave himself to his own sensuous pleasures, he anxiously waited for the rise of Dharmodgata from his deep meditation.

Dharmodgata finally awoke from his meditation. Sadāprarudita prepared the ground for his teacher’s discourse by shedding his own blood, for he was again frustrated by the Evil One in his attempt to obtain water. But Śakradevendra came to his assistance once more, and all the due decora-

tions and offerings were supplied. Dharmodgata then gave a further discourse on the identity of all things, and, therefore, of Prajñāpāramitā, in which there is neither birth nor death, being free from all sorts of logical predicates. While listening to this profound discourse on the transcendental nature of Prajñāpāramitā, Sadāprarudita realised 6,000,000 Samādhis and came into the presence of the Buddhas numbering even more than the sands of the River Gaṅgā, who, surrounded by a large assemblage of great Bhikshus, were discoursing on Prajñāpāramitā. After this, the wisdom and learning of the Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita was beyond the conceivability of an ordinary mortal, it was like a boundless expanse of ocean, and wherever he went he was never separated from the Buddhas.

V

Prayer and Nembutsu

The Christian method of awakening the religious feeling of passivity is prayer. "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to the Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret will reward thee openly."¹ This is the example shown by the founder of Christianity how to bring about the state of religious consciousness in which "thy will" and not "my will" is to prevail. And the author of the *Imitation of Christ* simply follows this when he says, "If thou desirest true condition of heart, enter into thy secret chamber and shut out the tumults of the world, as it is written, 'Commune with your own heart and in your chamber, and be still.' In thy chamber thou shalt find what abroad thou shalt too often lose." (Book I, Chapter XX, 5.) To retire into solitude and devote oneself to praying if one is a Christian, or to meditating if one is a Buddhist, is one of the necessary conditions

¹ Matthew, iv, 6.

for all religious souls to gain access to the ultimate reality which it is always seeking to be in communion with.

The following story of three monks is taken from the Introduction to Rolle's *Amending of Life*, by H. L. Hubbard in which each of them "seeks to exercise his vocation in a different direction. One chose the part of peace-making between men, the second to visit the sick, and the third to dwell in quietness in the desert. The first two, finding it impossible to fulfil their self-chosen tasks, went and recounted their failures to the third. The latter suggested that each of them should fill a vessel with water and pour it into a basin. Then he bade them look into the basin immediately and tell him what they saw. They replied that they saw nothing. After the water had ceased to move he told them to look again. Then they told him that they could see their faces clearly reflected in the water. 'So is it with you and me,' said the hermit, 'you who live in the world can see nothing because of the activities of men. I who dwell alone in peace and quietness can see both God and men.'"

Evidently God shuns to cast his image in a body of disturbed water. To use Buddhist terminology, as long as *jiriki* (self-power) is trying to realise itself, there is no room in one's soul for the *tariki* of God to get into it, in whatever intellectual way this concept may be interpreted. A Catholic Father Tissot writes in his *Interior Life*, that "God wishes himself to be the life of my life, the soul of my soul, the all of my being, he wishes to glorify himself in me and to beautify me in himself." To effect this state of spirituality, "my" mind must be like a mirror, freshly polished and with no stain of "self-dust" on it, in which God reflects himself and "I" see him then "face to face."

As regards the spiritual training of the mind so that it may finally experience passivity in the communion with God, Catholics seem to have a fuller literature than the Protestants. It is natural seeing that the latter emphasise faith

¹ Quoted from *The Life of Prayer*, by W. A. Brown, p. 157.

in the scheme of salvation more than any form of mental training. Catholics may tend towards formalism and ritualism, but their "spiritual exercises" are psychologically quite an effective means to induce the state they contrive to bring about, as long as they have no intellectual difficulties in taking in all they teach. The mystical experiences which they consider to be special gifts of God require, no doubt, some such preliminary steps for the devotee, which are variously designated by them as "preparation," "purgation," "consideration," "meditation," or "contemplation."

In Buddhism, the Shin, like Protestantism, emphasises faith and as the result its followers have no special psychological method with which they attempt to strengthen the the subjective force of faith, except attending religious discourses given by the preacher and being interviewed by him on doubtful points. It is true, however, that it is in Shin more than in any other school of Buddhism that the *tariki* (other-power) or passivity side of experience is most persistently insisted on. As far as their teaching goes, Shin tells us not to put forward anything savouring of "self" but just to listen to the teacher and accept him, that is, his message as transmitted from Śākyamuni onward, who was the first historically to get us acquainted with the original vow of Amida. The Shin is really a consistent passivity-religion.

The Jōdo, however, from which the Shin branched off as a special sect of the Pure Land school of Buddhism, has a way to prepare the mind for the final experience for what is known in Buddhism as *anjin* (*an*=peace, *jin* or *shin*=mind), that is, a restful state of mind, or "interior quiet." This is saying the Nembutsu, that is, invoking the name of Amida: *Namu-amida-butsu* (in Sanskrit, *namo 'mitābhāya*), "Adoration to the Buddha of Infinite Light." The formula or phrase is to be repeated in its Chinese form (*na-mo-o-mi-to-fu*) or in the Japanese (*na-mu-a-mi-da-bu-tu*), and not in the original Sanskrit nor in any other translation. Some earnest

devotees are reported to have repeated the phrase ten hundred thousand times a day, for instance, Donran (476-542), Hōnen (1133-1212), etc. The conscious object of course is to be embraced in the grace of Amida by repeatedly pronouncing his name, but psychologically it is to prepare the mind in such a way as to suspend all the surface activities of consciousness and to wake from its unconscious sources a power greater than the empirical ego. Theologically or metaphysically, it may mean many things, but from the psychological point of view the Nembutsu is like a certain kind of prayer¹ an attempt to tap new life for the mind that has reached as it were the end of its rope. The Nembutsu is thus meant to exhaust the power of a finite mind which, when it comes to this pass or *impasse*, throws itself down at the feet of something it knows not exactly what, except that the something is an infinite reality.

The Practice of Zazen and Passivity

In Zen there is apparently no passivity traceable. As it claims, it is the strong "self-power" wing of Eastern Mahayana Buddhism, and besides it is intellectual in the

¹ Prayer is divided, according to the author of *Des Grâces d'Oraison* into two categories, ordinary and extraordinary or mystic. Ordinary prayer may be called natural against the mystic which is supernatural, for the Catholic theologians retain the word mystic for what they designate as supernatural states of prayer which are absolutely impossible to be realised by the human will alone. Psychologically, no doubt the "supernatural" is the continuation of the "natural," but from the theological point of view the Catholics would naturally desire to reserve a special room for the "supernatural." Ordinary prayer is regarded to have four degrees: 1. vocal prayer which is a recitation; 2. meditation where there is a chain of distinct reflections or arguments; 3. affective prayer in which affections are made predominant; and 4. the prayer of simplicity where intuition replaces reasoning and affections are not varied and are expressed in few words. The Nembutsu is, to use Catholic terminology, sometimes vocal prayer, sometimes prayer of simplicity, and sometimes even mystic prayer when the devotee is embraced in the original vow of Amida. The character of the Nembutsu varies according to the individuality of the devotee and also to his mental attitude at the time.

sense that it puts its whole stress on the intuitive apprehension of the truth. It is almost a kind of philosophy. But as far as psychology is concerned, things cannot be any different with Zen than with any other religions; the way it works in our empirical mind is the same as in other religious experiences. Whatever metaphysical interpretations and contents we may give to its experience, there is a certain feeling of passivity in it. To go beyond the realm of limited intellection is not to use the strength of the intellect itself; it comes from something more than that, and as long as there is something transcending the mind, and yet its working is manifested in and through the mind, the latter must play the rôle of passivism, there is no other choice for it. The consciousness of "self-power" (*jiriki*) may be too prominent in the Zen mind, but this cannot overrule the principle of the experience by which alone the mind is made to realise what is beyond itself. "Passively active" or "actively passive"—the choice of one term or the other depends upon the individual psychology more than upon the fact itself, for the fact always lends itself to alternative interpretations. To understand the position of Zen in this matter we must have the knowledge of its practice of *dhyāna*¹ or *zazen*, as it is called in China and Japan. Zen does not exactly coincide with Indian Dhyāna, though *zen* is an abbreviation of *zenna*, (*channa* in Chinese), which is in turn the transliteration of the Sanskrit *dhyāna*; in practice however the same bodily posture is assumed. The following directions² given by a Zen master may throw light on what Zen proposes to do.

¹ *Dhyāna* is generally translated as meditation, but it is really the practice of mental concentration, in which the reasoning process of the intellect is cut short and consciousness is kept clear of all other ideas except the one which is given as the subject of meditation.

² The author of these "Directions" is not known, but they are generally regarded as coming originally from the "Regulations of the Meditation Hall" compiled by Pai-chang (720-814), the founder of the Zen monastery in China. The original "Regulations" were lost with the

“The Bodhisattva who disciplines himself in Prajñā should first of all awaken a great compassionate heart, make great universal vows, and thoroughly be versed in all Samādhis, in order to deliver all beings; for the Bodhisattva does not seek emancipation for his own benefit. Let him renounce all external relations and put a stop to all worldly doings, so that his mind and body becoming one can be kept in perfect harmony whether moving or sitting quiet. His food should be regulated, neither too much nor too little; and his sleep also should be moderate, neither too long nor too short.

“When he wishes to practise meditation, let him retire into a quiet room where he prepares a thick well-wadded cushion for his seat, with his dress and belt loosely adjusted about his body. He then assumes his proper formal posture. He will sit with his legs fully crossed, that is, place the right foot over the left thigh and the left foot over the right thigh. Sometimes the half-cross-legged posture is permitted, in which case simply let the left leg rest over the right. Next, he will place the right hand over the left leg with its palm up and over this have the right-hand palm, while the thumbs support against each other over the palm. He now raises the whole body slowly and quietly, moves it repeatedly to the left and to the right, backward and forward, until the proper seat and straight posture are obtained. He will take care not to lean too much to one side, either left or right, forward or backward; his spinal column stands erect with the head, shoulders, back, and loins each properly supporting others like a chaitya. But he is cautious not to sit too upright or rigidly, for he will then feel uneasy before long.

downfall of the T'ang dynasty; they were compiled again by Tsung-I, 1103, in the Sung. The work now known as *Pai-chang Ching-kuei* (百丈清規) is a modern compilation in the year 1265 under the auspices of the Emperor Tai-tsu of Yüan. The present “Directions” are found in these works. The reference to Yüan-tsung of Fa-yüan in them shows that they contain some insertions of Tsung-I himself because Yüan-tsung was his own master.

The main thing is to have the ears and shoulders, nose and naval stand to each other in one vertical plane, while the tongue rests against the upper palate and the lips and teeth are firmly closed up. The eyes are slightly open in order to avoid falling asleep. When meditation advances the wisdom of this practice will grow apparent. Great masters of meditation from of old have their eyes kept open. Yüan-tung, the Zen master of Fa-yün, has also had a strong opinion against the habit of closing the eyes and called such practisers 'dwellers of the skeleton cave in the dark valley.' There is a deep sense in this, which is well understood by those who know. When the position is steadied and the breathing regular, the practiser will now assume a somewhat relaxed attitude, he will not be concerned with ideas good or bad. When a thought is awakened, there is awareness; when there is awareness, the thought vanishes. When the exercise is kept up steadily and for a sufficient length of time, disturbing ideas naturally cease and there prevails a state of oneness. This is the essence of practising meditation.

"Meditation is the road leading to peace and happiness. The reason why there are so many people who grow ill, is because they do not know how to prepare themselves duly for the exercise. If they well understand the directions as given above, they will without straining themselves too much acquire not only the lightness of the body but the briskness of spirit, which finally brings about the clarification of the consciousness. Further, the understanding of the Buddha's teaching will be a great help to the practiser whose mind thus nourished will now enjoy the pure bliss of tranquillity. If he has already a realisation within himself, his practice of meditation will be like a dragon getting into water, or a tiger crouching against a hill-side. In case he has yet nothing of self-realisation, the practice will be like fanning up the fire with the wind, not much effort is needed, [he will soon get enlightened]. Only let him not too easily be deceived as to what he may regard as self-realisation.

“When there is an enhanced spiritual quality, there is much susceptibility to the Evil One’s temptation which comes in every possible form both agreeable and disagreeable. Therefore, the practiser must have his consciousness rightly adjusted and well in balance; then nothing will prevent his advancement in meditation. Concerning various mental aberrations worked out by the Evil One, a detailed treatment is given in *The Lêng-yen Sūtra* (楞嚴經), the *T’ien-tai Chih Kwan* (天台止觀), and Kuei-fêng’s *Book on Practice and Realisation* (圭峯修証儀). Those who wish to prepare themselves against the untoward events, should be well informed of the matter.

“When the practiser wants to rise from meditation, let him slowly and gently shake his body and quietly rise from the seat; never let him attempt to rise suddenly. After the rising let him always contrive to retain whatever mental power he has gained by meditation, as if he were watching over a baby; for this will help him in maturing the power of concentration.

“[In the study of Buddhism], the practice of meditation comes foremost. When the mind not being sufficiently brought under control no tranquillity obtains in it, the practiser will entirely be at a loss with the arrival of the critical moment. When looking for a gem, the water must not be stirred up; the waves make it difficult to get hold of the gem. Let the waters of meditation be clear and undisturbed, and the spiritual gem will all by itself shine forth. Therefore, we read in the *Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment* (圓覺經), that ‘Prajñā pure and flawless is produced by means of meditation’; in the *Sūtra of the Lotus of the Good Law* (法華經) that ‘Retire into a solitary place and have your mind under full discipline, and let it be as steady and immovable as Mount Sumeru.’ We thus know that the sure way to realise saintliness which goes beyond worldly trivialities is attained by means of a quiet life. It is all through the power of concentration, indeed, that some of the old masters have

passed away into eternity even while sitting cross-legged or standing upright. There are many chances of interruption and failure even when one is devoting one's life [to the realisation of the truth]; how much more if illness gains the hold of you! How can you cope with the assault of Karma? So says an ancient teacher, 'If you have not acquired the power of concentration strong enough to destroy the camp of death, you will have to come back with your eyes blindfolded and with nothing achieved. Your life will thus be utterly wasted.'

"Good friends of Zen be pleased to read these words repeatedly, and whatever benefit that accrues [from the practice of meditation] will be not only yours but others' too, for you will thus all finally attain enlightenment."

The Function of Kōan in Zen

When it is said that Buddhism, Mahayana as well as Hinayana, is rich in the intellectual element, it does not mean that Buddhism lays its principal stress on logic or philosophy in the unfoldment of religious consciousness, but that it upholds an intuitive understanding of ultimate religious truth rather than a merely faithful acceptance of the teaching of its founder. And as the most efficient means to come to this intuitive understanding it teaches the practice of meditation known as *dhyāna* or *zazen*. The direction given above is thus followed by all Buddhists Indian, Tibetan, Chinese, and Japanese, except the adherents of the Pure Land school of Buddhism. For they believe that the understanding grows by itself from within when the practice of *zazen* is brought to perfection. As is stated, Prajñā reflects itself on the serene undisturbed water of *dhyāna*. When, however, in the history of Zen the system of Kōan came to be in vogue, meditation so called was pushed behind in order to bring the intuition more to the foreground. Daiye (大慧, Tai-hui, 1089-1163) boldly declares, "Others give priority to *dhyāna* rather than to intuition (*prajñā*),

but I give priority to intuition rather than to *dhyāna*.' He was one of the strong advocates of Kōan in China in opposition to his great contemporary Wanshi (宏智 Hung-chih 1091-1157). As I have explained in my *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, First Series, and will do so more in detail in the Second Series, the Kōan students of Zen are almost violently aggressive in their attitude towards the realisation of the passivity phase of the religious experience.

No signs of passivity seem to be noticeable in their exercise, but what is aimed at here is intellectual passivity and not an emotional one which comes out in view so much in Christian mystics and also in the followers of the Pure Land school of Buddhism. The method of Kōan, on the other hand, is to blot out by sheer force of the will all the discursive traces of intellection whereby students of Zen prepare their consciousness to be the proper ground for intuitive knowledge to burst out. They march through a forest of ideas thickly crowding up into their minds, and when thoroughly exhausted in their struggles they give themselves up, the state of consciousness, psychologically viewed, which they have so earnestly but rather blindly sought after, unexpectedly prevails. This last giving-up is what I would term a state of passivity in our religious experience. Without this giving-up, whether intellectually or conatively or emotionally or in whatever way we may designate this psychological process, there is generally no experience of a final reality. Let me give here some quotations from a book known as *Zenkwan Sakushin* (禪關策進),¹ which may be freely translated "The Breaking Through the Frontier Gate of Zen," and which is very much read by Zen students as a most energising stimulant to their wearied nerves.

"Have the two characters 'birth and death' pasted on your forehead until you get an understanding into their meaning; if you spend your time among idlers talking and laughing, the lord of death will surely demand of you a

¹ Compiled by Chu-hung, 祿宏, 1531-1615.

strict account of your life when you have to appear before him. Don't say then, 'I have never been reminded of this!'

"When you apply yourself to the study of Zen, what is necessary is to examine yourself from moment to moment and to keep the subject (*kōan*) always before your mental eye so that you can see by yourself when you have gained strength and when not, and also where your concentration is needed more and where not.

"There are some who begin to doze as soon as they are on the cushion and allow all kinds of rambling thoughts to disturb them if they are at all wakeful; and when they are down from the cushion their tongues are at once set loose. If they try to master Zen in this fashion, they would never succeed even if they are alive unto the day of Maitreya. Therefore, you should, exerting all your energy, take up your subject (*kōan*) and endeavour to get settled with it, you should never relax yourself day and night. Then you are not merely sitting quietly or vacantly as if you were a corpse. If you find yourself in a maze of confusing thoughts and unable to extricate yourself in spite of your efforts, drop them lightly, and coming down from the seat, quickly run across the floor once, and then resume your position on the cushion. Have your eyes open, hold your hands clasped, and keeping your backbone straight up, apply yourself as before to the subject (i.e., *kōan*), when you will feel greatly refreshed. It will be like pouring one dipperful of cold water into a boiling cauldron. If you go on thus exercising yourself, you will surely reach the destination."

Another Zen master advises thus: "Some masters there are these days who in spite of their eyes not being clearly opened teach people to remain satisfied with mere empty-mindedness; then there are others who teach people to accept things blindly as they are and contemplate on them as such; there are still others who advise people not to pay any attention to anything at all. These are all one-sided views of Zen. their course of exercise is altogether on the wrong track, it

will never come to a definite termination. The main idea in the study of Zen is to concentrate your mind on one point; when this is done, everybody will get it; that is, when thus the proper time comes and conditions are fully matured, realisation will come by itself all of a sudden like a flash of lightning.

“Let your everyday worldly consciousness be directed towards Prajñā, and then you will avoid coming under the control of your past evil Karma at the moment of death even if you may not attain to realisation while in this life. In your next life, you will surely be in the midst of Prajñā itself and enjoy its full realisation; this is a certainty, you need not cherish any doubt about it.

“Only let your mind have a good hold of the subject without interruption. If any disturbing thoughts assail you, do not necessarily try to suppress them too vigorously; rather try to keep your attention on the subject itself. Whether walking or sitting, apply yourself surely and steadily on it, give no time to relaxation. When your application goes on thus constantly, a period of indifference [literally, tastelessness] will set in. This is good, do not let go, but keep on and the mental flower will abruptly come to full bloom; the light illuminating the ten quarters will manifest the land of the treasure-lord on the tip of a single hair; you will then be revolving the great wheel of the Dharma even when you are sitting in the midst of the world.”

VI

The Perfection of Passivism in Buddhist Life

When the religious experience just described is matured, i.e., when it accompanies moral perfection, Buddhists will finally acquire what is technically known as *anābhogacaryā*, and its wonderful achievements as most elaborately detailed in the *Daśabhūmika Sūtra* will take place in the life of a Bodhisattva, the ideal being of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The effortless life is the perfection of passivism.

According to the *Daśabhūmika Sūtra*, the effortless life is attained when a Bodhisattva passes from the seventh to the eighth stage of spiritual life by realising what is known as the "acceptance of all things as unborn" (*anutpattika-dharmakshānti*). To quote the Sūtra:

"The Bodhisattva Vajragarbha said. O son of the Buddha, when the Bodhisattva, while at the seventh stage, has thoroughly finished examining what is meant by cleansing the paths with transcendental wisdom and skilful means (*prajñopāya*), has accumulated all the preparatory material (*sambhāra*), has well equipped himself with the vows, and is sustained by the power of the Tathagatas, procuring in himself the power produced from the stock of merit, attentively thinking of and in conformity with the powers, convictions, and unique characteristics of the Tathagatas, thoroughly purified, sincere in heart, and thoughtful, elevated in virtue, knowledge, and power, great in pity and compassion which leaves no sentient beings unnoticed, and in pursuit of the path of wisdom that is beyond measurement; and, further, when he enters, truly as it is, upon the knowledge that all things are, in their nature, from the first, unborn (*anutpanna*), unproduced (*ajāta*), devoid of individualising marks (*alakṣaṇa*), have never been combined (*asambhūta*), are never dissolved (*avināśita*), nor extinguished (*aniśṭhita*), nor changing (*apavṛitti*), nor ceasing (*anabhinivṛitti*), and are lacking in self-substance (*abhāva-svabhāva*); when he enters upon the knowledge that all things remain the same in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end, are of suchness, non-discriminative, and entering into the knowledge of the all-knowing one; [and finally] when he thus enters upon the knowledge of all things as they really are; he is then completely emancipated from such individualising ideas as are created by the mind (*citta*) and its agent (*manovijñāna*); he is then as detached as the sky, and descends upon all objects as if upon an empty space; he

¹ Edited by Rahder, p. 63 et seq.

is then said to have attained to the acceptance of all things as unborn (*anutpattika-dharma-kshānti*).

“O son of the Buddha, as soon as a Bodhisattva attains this Acceptance, he enters upon the eighth stage called Immovable (*acalā*). This is the inner abode of Bodhisattvahood, which is difficult to comprehend, which goes beyond discrimination, separated from all forms, all ideas, and all attachments; which transcends calculation and limitation as it lies outside [the knowledge of] the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas and above all disturbances and ever in possession of tranquillity. As a Bhikshu furnished with supernatural faculties and freedom of mind and gradually entering into the Samādhi of Cessation, has all his mental disturbances quieted and is free from discrimination; so the Bodhisattva now abides in the stage of immovability, that is, detached from all works of effort (*ābhoga*), he has attained effortlessness, has put an end to strivings mental, verbal, and physical, and is beyond discrimination as he has put away all forms of vexation, he is now established in the Dharma itself which he enjoys as the fruit of his past work.

“It is like a man who, in a dream finding himself in a great river, attempts to go to the other side; he musters all his energy and strives hard with every possible means. And because of this effort and contrivance, he wakes from the dream, and being thus awakened all his strivings are set at rest. In like manner, the Bodhisattva seeing all beings drowning themselves in the four streams, and in his attempt to save them, exerts himself vigorously, unflinchingly; and because of his vigorous and unflinching exertion, he attains the stage of immovability. Once in this stage, all his strivings are dropped, he is relieved of all activity that issues from the notion of duality or from an attachment to appearance.

“O son of the Buddha, as when one is born in the Brahman world, no tormenting passions present themselves in his mind; so when the Bodhisattva comes to abide in the

stage of immovability, his mind is entirely relieved of all effortful activities which grow out of a contriving consciousness. In the mind of this Bodhisattva there is indeed no conscious discrimination of a Bodhisattva, or a Buddha, or enlightenment, or Nirvana; how much less the thought of things worldly. O son of the Buddha, on account of his original vows the Bodhisattva sees all the Buddhas, the Blessed Ones personally presenting themselves before him in order to confer upon him the wisdom of Tathagatahood whereby he is enabled to get into the stream of the Dharma. They would then declare: 'Well done, well done, O son of a good family, this is the Kshānti (acceptance) of the first order which is in accordance with the teaching of the Buddhas. But, O son of a good family, thou hast not yet acquired the ten powers, the fourfold fearlessness, and the eighteen special qualities possessed by all the Buddhas. Thou shouldst yet work for the acquirement of these qualities, and never let go thy hold of this Kshānti.

“ ‘O son of a good family, though thou art established in serenity and emancipation, there are ignorant beings who have not yet attained serenity, but are being harassed by evil passions and aggrieved by varieties of speculation. On such ones thou shouldst show thy compassion. O son of a good family, mindful of thy original vows, thou shouldst benefit all beings and have them all turn towards inconceivable wisdom.

“ ‘O son of a good family, the ultimate essence of all things is eternally such as it is, whether or not Tathagatas have come to appear; they are not called Tathagatas because of their realisation of this ultimate essence of things. All the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas too have indeed realised this essence of non-discrimination. Again, O son of a good family, thou shouldst look up to our body, knowledge, Buddha-land, halo of illumination, skilful means, and voice of purity, each of which is beyond measurement; and with these mayest thou too be completely equipped.

“ ‘Again, O son of a good family, thou hast now one light, it is the light that sees into the real nature of all things as unborn and beyond discrimination. But the light of truth the Tathagatas have is beyond all measurement, calculation, comparison, and proportion, as regards its infinite mobility, activity, and manifestation. Thou shouldst raise thy intention towards it in order to realise it.

“ ‘O son of a good family, observing how boundlessly the lands extend, how numberless beings are, and how infinitely divided things are, thou shouldst know them all truthfully as they are.’

“In this manner, O son of the Buddha, all Buddhas bestow upon the Bodhisattva who has come up to this stage of immovability infinitude of knowledge and make him turn towards knowledge of differentiation and work issuing therefrom, both of which are beyond measurement. O son of the Buddha, if the Buddhas did not awake in this Bodhisattva a desire for the knowledge of the all-knowing one, he would have passed into Parinirvana abandoning all the work that will benefit beings. As he was however given by the Buddhas infinitude of knowledge and work issuing therefrom, his knowledge and work that is carried on even for a space of one moment surpasses all the achievements that have been accomplished since his first awakening of the thought of enlightenment till his attainment of the seventh stage; the latter is not comparable even to one-hundredth part of the former, no indeed even to one immeasurably infinitesimal part of it; no comparison whatever is possible between the two. For what reason? Because, O son of the Buddha, the Bodhisattva who has now gained this eighth stage after starting first with his one body in his course of spiritual discipline, is now provided with infinite bodies, infinite voices, infinite knowledge, infinite births, and infinite pure lands, and has also brought infinite beings into maturity, made offerings to infinite Buddhas, comprehended infinite teachings of the Buddhas, is furnished with infinite supernatural

powers, attend infinite assemblages and sessions, and, by means of infinite bodies, speeches, thoughts, and deeds, acquires perfect understanding of everything concerning the life of the Bodhisattva, because of his attainment of immovability.

“O son of the Buddha, it is like a man going into the great ocean in a boat; before he gets into the high sea he labours hard, but as soon as it is pulled out to sea, he can leave it to the wind, and no further efforts are required of him. When he is thus at sea, what he can accomplish in one day would easily surpass what is done even after one hundred years’ exertion in the shallows. In like manner, O son of the Buddha, when the Bodhisattva accumulating a great stock of meritorious deed and riding in the Mahayana boat gets into the ocean of the life of a Bodhisattva, he enters in one moment and with effortless knowledge into the realm of knowledge gained by the omniscient. As long as he was dependent upon his ordinary knowledge which is always striving, he could not achieve it even after the elapsing of innumerable kalpas.”¹ . . .

When the assertion is made that what has been described in the *Daśabhūmika Sūtra* somewhat diffusely is the Buddhist life of passivity, we may think it to be very different from what is ordinarily, and especially in the Christian sense, understood to be passive or God-intoxicated or wholly resigned to “thy will” or to *Tariki* (other-power). But the fact is that Buddhism is highly tinged with intellectualism as is seen in the so frequent use of the term “knowledge” (*jñāna* or *prajñā*) though it does not mean knowledge in its relative sense but in its intuitive, supra-intellectual sense. Even in the Pure Land school of Buddhism where the senti-

¹ Rather freely done, for a literal translation would be quite unintelligible to most readers. The text goes on still further into details of the life of the Bodhisattva at the eighth stage of immovability. But the above may be sufficient to show what the spirituality of the Bodhisattva is like when he realises a life of effortless activities.

ment-aspect of the religious life is very much in evidence. the giving-up of the self to the unfathomable wisdom (*acītyajñāna*) of the Tathagata goes on hand in hand with the trust in the all-embracing love of Amitābha. Indeed, the final aim of the Shin followers is to attain supreme enlightenment as much as any other Buddhists, though the former's ambition is to do it in the Land of Purity presided over personally by Amitābha Buddha, and in order to be permitted to his Land they put themselves unconditionally under his loving guardianship. As a matter of fact, the two sides of the religious experience, sentiment and intellect, are found commingled in the heart of the Shin devotee. The consciousness of sin is its sentimental aspect while the seeking after enlightenment is its intellectual aspect. While passivism is more strongly visible in the sentiment, it is not at all missing in the Buddhist intellect either, as when the intellect is compelled to abandon its logical reasonings in order to experience the supreme enlightenment attained by the Buddha, or the life of the Bodhisattva which is purposeless, effortless, and above teleological strivings.

To show the difference between the Christian and the Buddhist point of view concerning the fundamental notion of passivism, whereby followers of the respective religions attempt to explain the experience, I quote a suggestive passage from *Theologia Germanica* (p. 96), which stands in close relation to the Buddhist sentiment and yet misses the central point of it.

“Dost thou say now: ‘Then there was a Wherefore in Christ?’ I answer: ‘If thou wert to ask the sun, Why shinest thou? he would say, ‘I must shine and cannot do otherwise, for it is my nature and property, and the light I give is not of myself, and I do not call it mine.’” So likewise is it with God and Christ and all who are godly and belong unto God. In them is no willing, nor working nor desiring but has for its end, goodness as goodness, for the sake of goodness, and they have no other Wherefore than this.’”

With this the Buddhists are in sympathy no doubt, but "goodness" is too Christian and besides does not touch the ultimate ground of all things which is "emptiness." Sings P'ang,¹ therefore, in the following rhythm:

"Old P'ang requires nothing in the world:
 All is empty with him, even a seat he has not,
 For absolute emptiness reigns in his household;
 How empty indeed it is with no treasures!
 When the sun is risen, he walks through emptiness.
 When the sun sets, he sleeps in emptiness;
 Sitting in emptiness he sings his empty songs,
 And his empty songs reverberate through emptiness:
 Be not surprised at emptiness so thoroughly empty,
 For emptiness is the seat of all the Buddhas;
 And emptiness is not understood by men of the world,
 But emptiness is the real treasure:
 If you say there's no emptiness,
 You commit grave offence against the Buddhas."

Emptiness and the Zen life

"Emptiness" (*śūnyatā*) is the gospel of the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* and also the fountain-head of all the Mahayana philosophies and practical disciplines. It is indeed owing to this emptiness as the ground of existence that this universe is at all possible with its logic, ethics, philosophy, and religion. Emptiness does not mean relativity as is sometimes interpreted by Buddhist scholars, it goes beyond that, it is what makes relativity possible; emptiness is an intuitive truth whereby we can describe existence as related and multifarious. And the Buddhist life of passivity grows out of this intuition which is called *Prajñāpāramitā* in the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* and *Pratyātmarajjūāna* in the *Lai-*

¹ Towards the end of the eighth century and early in the ninth, a younger contemporary of Ma-tsu.

kāvatāra-sūtra. The intuition is enlightenment as the culmination of Buddhist discipline and as the beginning of the life of a Bodhisattva. Therefore, we read in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* that all things are established in "non-abiding", which is emptiness, *apratishṭhiti*=*śūnyatā*, and in the *Vajracchedikā-sūtra* that *na kvacit pratishṭhitam cittam utpādayitavyam*. "thoughts should be awakened without abiding anywhere." When a thing is established (*pratishṭhita*), there is something fixed, definitely settled, and this determination is the beginning at once of order and confusion. If God is the ultimate ground of all things, he must be emptiness itself. When he is at all determined in either way good or bad, straight or crooked, pure or impure, he submits himself to the principle of relativity, that is, he ceases to be God but a god who is like ourselves mortal and suffers. "To be established nowhere," thus means "to be empty," "to be unattached," "to be perfectly passive," "to be altogether given up to other-power," etc.

This Buddhist or Zen life of emptiness may be illustrated in three ways, each of which has its own signification as it depicts a particular aspect of the life.

1. When Subhūti was sitting quietly in a cave, the gods praised him by showering celestial flowers. Said Subhūti, "Who are you that shower flowers from the sky?"

Said the gods, "We are the gods whose chief is Śakradevendra."

"What are you praising?"

"We praise your discourse on Prajñāpāramitā."

"I have never uttered a word in the discourse of Prajñāpāramitā, and there is nothing for you to praise."

But the gods asserted, "You have not discoursed on anything, and we have not listened to anything; nothing discoursed, nothing heard indeed, and this is true Prajñāpāramitā." So saying, they shook the earth again and showered more flowers.

To this Hsieh-tou (慧透) attaches his poem:

“The rain is over, the clouds are frozen, and day is
 about to break:
 A few mountains, picture-like, make their appear-
 ance: how blue, how imposing!
 Subhūti, knowing nothing, in the rock-cave quietly
 sits;
 Lo, the heavenly flowers are pouring like a rain,
 with the earth shaking!”

This poem graphically depicts the inner life of emptiness, from which one can see readily that emptiness is not relativity, nor nothingness. In spite of, or rather because of, Subhūti's "knowing nothing," there is a shower of celestial flowers, there tower the mountains huge and rugged, and they are all like a painting beautiful to look at and enjoyable by all who understand.

2. While Vimalakīrti was discoursing with Mañjuśrī and others, there was a heavenly maiden in the room who was intently listening to all that was going on among them. She now assumed her original form as a goddess and showered heavenly flowers over all the saintly figures assembled here. The flowers that fell on the Bodhisattvas did not stick to them, but those on the Śrāvakas adhered and could not be shaken off though they tried to do so. The heavenly maiden asked Śāriputra, one of the foremost Śrāvakas in the group and well-known for his dialectic ability, "Why do you want to brush off the flowers?" Replied Śāriputra, "They are not in accordance with the Law, hence my brushing." "O Śāriputra," said the maiden, "think not that the flowers are not in accordance with the Law. Why? Because they do not discriminate and it is yourself that does the discriminating. Those who lead the ascetic life after the teaching of the Buddha commit an unlawful deed by giving themselves up to discrimination. Such must abandon discrimination, whereby their life will be in accord with the Law. Look at those Bodhisattvas, no flowers can touch them, for they are above all thoughts of discrimination. It is a timid person that affords a chance for an evil spirit to take hold of him.

So with the Śrāvakas, as they dread the cycle of birth and death, they fall a prey to the senses. Those who have gone beyond fears and worries, are not bound by the five desires. The flowers stick where there is yet no loosening of the knots, but they fall away when the loosening is complete." That is to say, when emptiness is realised by us, nothing can take hold of us, neither the flower nor dirt has a point to which it can attach itself.

The life of emptiness, thus we can see, is that of non-discrimination, where the sun is allowed to rise on the evil and on the good, and rain is sent on the just and on the unjust. Discrimination is meant for a world of particulars where our relative individual lives are passed, but when we wish to abide beyond it where real peace obtains, we have to shake off all the dust of relativity and discrimination, which has been clinging to us and tormented us so long. Emptiness ought not to frighten us as is repeatedly given warning in the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*.

"When all is done and said,
In the end thus shall you find:
He must of all doth bathe in bliss
That hath a quiet mind."¹

Where to find this quiet mind is the great religious problem and the most decided Mahayana Buddhist answer is "In Emptiness."

3. According to the *Transmission of the Lamp* by Tao-yüan, it is recorded that before Fa-yung (594-657) interviewed Tao-hsin, the fourth patriarch of Zen in China, birds used to visit him in a rock-cave where he meditated and offered flowers. Though history remains silent, tradition developed later to the effect that Fa-yung after the interview no more received flower-offerings from his flying admirers of the air. Now a Zen master asks, "Why were there flower-offerings to Fa-yung before his interview with the fourth patriarch? and why not after?" Fa-yung was a great

¹ Lord Vaux Thomas, 1510-1566.

student of the Prajñāpāramitā, that is, of the doctrine of emptiness. Did the birds offer him flowers because he was holy, so empty-minded? But after the interview he lost his holiness for some reason, and did the birds cease to revere him? Is holiness or saintliness the same as emptiness? Is there still anything to be called holy in emptiness? When emptiness is thoroughly realised, does not even holiness or godliness or anything else disappear? Is this not a state of shadowlessness (*anābhāsa*)?

Fa-yen of Wu-tsu Shan was asked this question. "Why were there the flower-offerings to Fa-yung before the interview?" Answered the master, "We all admire the rich and noble." "Why did the offerings cease after the interview?" "We all dislike the poor and humble." Does Wutsu mean that Fa-yung was rich before the interview and therefore liked by all beings belonging to this world, but that, growing poor and empty after the interview, he was no more honoured by anything on earth?

Tao-ch'ien (道潛) who was a disciple of Wên-i (文益, 885-958), however, gave one and the same answer to this double question: "Niu-t'ou." Niu-t'ou is the name of the mountain where Fa-yung used to retire and meditate. Does this mean that Fa-yung is the same old hermit-monk no matter what experience he goes through? Does he mean that the ultimate ground of all things remains the same, remains empty for ever, whether or not diversity and multiplicity characterise its appearances? Where Zen wants us to look for a life of passivity or that of emptiness as it is lived by the Buddhist, will be gleaned from the statements of Subhūti and the heavenly maiden and from the remarks on the flower-offering to Fa-yung.