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Chapter 1

“The Noble Eightfold Path” by Buddha



Brahmin Reading, Caleb Wright, India and Its Inhabitants

About the author...

Attending the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago was a life-changing event for Paul Carus (1852-1919). Not only did Swami Vivekananda (whose paper on Hinduism is in this text) present many talks at this congress, but also D. T. Suzuki (whose chapter on the ox-herding pictures is also here) translated a paper for the event. Carus and Suzuki later worked together on the translation of the *Tao te Ching* as well as several other works.

About the work...

In his *Buddha, The Word*,¹ Paul Carus compiles the fundamental teachings of the Buddha: the four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, and Buddha’s sermons and advice to his disciples. In this reading, Buddha explains how *nirvana* can result from the discipline of the Noble Eightfold Path. In his teachings, Buddha did not claim divine authority, instead he emphasizes that each person should trust his own experience.

From the reading...

“It is the Noble Eightfold Path, the way that leads to the extinction of suffering...”

Ideas of Interest from “The Noble Eightfold Path”

1. List and briefly describe the central characteristics of each of the steps of the Eightfold Path.
2. Explain the parable of the poisoned arrow. Do you think metaphysical questions are worth pursuing? What harm does Buddha think attends metaphysical questioning?
3. Why is the middle path described as “the perfect path”? Why do you think the middle path is given this name?
4. Explain the basis of self-illusion. Does the quest for happiness perpetuate self-illusion? Does Buddha believe the ego is annihilated at death?
5. Who is the *Sotapan*? Describe the fetters from which the *Sotapan* or “stream-enterer” has freed himself.
6. How does Buddha describe the *Arahat*?
7. What are the arguments Buddha advances to the conclusion that there is no ego?

1. Paul Carus. *Buddha, The Word*. 1915.

8. Explain the teaching of “dependent origination.” Is this teaching a metaphysical view of the world?
9. Describe the four-fold characteristics of wrong speech.
10. What are the five methods Buddha describes to avoid harmful thoughts?
11. What are the ten blessings which result from contemplation of the body?
12. What are the differences between thought or thinking and consciousness?
13. Which of the steps are reflective of morality? Why is meditation and not moral conduct the most important aspect of the Eightfold path?
14. What is the difference between mindfulness and non-attachment? What is the true goal of the holy life?

The Reading Selection from “The Eightfold Path”

The Eightfold Path

It is the Noble Eightfold Path, the way that leads to the extinction of suffering, namely:

1. Right Understanding, 2. Right Mindedness, which together are Wisdom.
3. Right Speech, 4. Right Action, 5. Right Living, which together are Morality.
6. Right Effort, 7. Right Attentiveness, 8. Right Concentration, which together are Concentration.

This is the Middle Path which the Perfect One has found out, which makes one both to see and to know, which leads to peace, to discernment, to enlightenment, to *Nirvana*.

Free from pain and torture is this path, free from groaning and suffering; it is the perfect path.

Truly, like this path there is no other path to the purity of insight. If you follow this path, you will put an end to suffering.

But each one has to struggle for himself, the Perfect Ones have only pointed out the way.

Give ear then, for the Immortal is found. I reveal, I set forth the Truth. As I reveal it to you, so act! And that supreme goal of the holy life, for the sake of which, sons of good families rightly go forth from home to the homeless state: this you will, in no long time, in this very life, make known to yourself, realize, and make your own.

The Eightfold Path—First Step—Right Understanding

What, now, is Right Understanding? It is understanding the Four Truths. To understand suffering; to understand the origin of suffering; to understand the extinction of suffering; to understand the path that leads to the extinction of suffering: This is called Right Understanding.

Or, when the noble disciple understands what is karmically wholesome, and the root of wholesome *karma*; what is karmically unwholesome, and the root of unwholesome *karma*, then he has Right Understanding.

[“Karmically unwholesome” is every volitional act of body, speech, or mind which is rooted in greed, hatred, or delusion, and produces evil and painful results in this or any future form of existence]. . .

What, now, is “karmically wholesome?”

In Bodily Action it is to abstain from killing; to abstain from stealing; and to abstain from unlawful sexual intercourse.

In Verbal Action it is to abstain from lying; to abstain from tale-bearing; to abstain from harsh language; and to abstain from frivolous talk.

In Mental Action it is absence of covetousness; absence of ill-will; and right understanding.

And what is the root of wholesome *karma*? Absence of greed (unselfishness) is a root of wholesome *karma*; absence of anger (benevolence) is a root of wholesome *karma*; absence of delusion (wisdom) is a root of wholesome *karma*.

Or, when one understands that corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formation, and consciousness, are transient [subject to suffering, and without an Ego], also in that case one possesses Right Understanding.

Unprofitable Questions

Should anyone say that he does not wish to lead the holy life under the Blessed

One, unless the Blessed One first tells him, whether the world is eternal or temporal, finite or infinite; whether the life principle is identical with the body, or something different; whether the Perfect One continues after death, and so on such a man would die, ere the Perfect One could tell him all this.

It is as if a man were pierced by a poisoned arrow, and his friends, companions, or near relations, should send for a surgeon; but that man should say: "I will not have this arrow pulled out, until I know who the man is that has wounded me: whether he is a noble, a priest, a citizen, or a servant"; or: "what his name is, and to what family he belongs"; or: "whether he is tall, or short, or of medium height." Verily, such a man would die, ere he could adequately learn all this.

Therefore, the man who seeks his own welfare, should pull out this arrow—this arrow of lamentation, pain, and sorrow.

From the reading...

"If there really existed the Ego, there would be also something which belonged to the Ego."

For, whether the theory exists, or whether it does not exist, that the world is eternal, or temporal, or finite, or infinite—certainly, there is birth, there is decay, there is death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair, the extinction of which, attainable even in this present life, I make known unto you.

There is, for instance, an unlearned worldling, void of regard for holy men, ignorant of the teaching of holy men, untrained in the noble doctrine. And his heart is possessed and overcome by Self-Illusion, by Skepticism, by attachment to mere Rule and Ritual, by Sensual Lust, and by will; and how to free himself from these things, he does not really know.

[Self-Illusion may reveal itself as "Eternalism" or "Eternity-belief" *i.e.*, the belief that one's Ego is existing independently of the material body, and continuing even after the dissolution of the latter; or as "Annihilationism," or "Annihilation-belief" *i.e.*, the materialistic belief that this present life constitutes the Ego, and hence that it is annihilated at the death of the material body.]

Not knowing what is worthy of consideration, and what is unworthy of consideration, he considers the unworthy, and not the worthy.

And unwisely he considers thus: "Have I been in the past? Or, have I not been in the past? What have I been in the past? How have I been in the past? From what state into what state did I change in the past?—Shall I be in the future? Or, shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future?"

From what state into what state shall I change in the future?" And the present also fills him with doubt: "Am I? Or, am I not? What am I? How am I? This being, whence has it come? Whither will it go?" And with such unwise considerations, he falls into one or other of the six views, and it becomes his conviction and firm belief: "I have an Ego"; or: "I have no Ego"; or: "With the Ego I perceive the Ego"; or: "With that which is no Ego, I perceive the Ego"; or: "With the Ego I perceive that which is no Ego." Or, he falls into the following view: "This my Ego, which can think and feel, and which, now here, now there, experiences the fruit of good and evil deeds; this my Ego is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change, and will thus eternally remain the same."

If there really existed the Ego, there would be also something which belonged to the Ego. As, however, in truth and reality, neither the Ego, nor anything belonging to the Ego, can be found, is it not therefore really an utter fool's doctrine to say: "This is the world, this am I; after death, I shall be permanent, persisting, and eternal?"

These are called mere views, a thicket of views, a puppet show of views, a toil of views, a snare of views; and ensnared in the fetter of views, the ignorant worldling will not be freed from rebirth, from decay, and from death, from sorrow, pain, grief, and despair; he will not be freed, I say, from suffering.

The Sotapan, or "Stream-Enterer"

The learned and noble disciple, however, who has regard for holy men, knows the teaching of holy men, is well trained in the noble doctrine, he understands what is worthy of consideration, and what is unworthy. And knowing this, he considers the worthy, and not the unworthy. What suffering is, he wisely considers. What the origin of suffering is, he wisely considers; what the extinction of suffering is, he wisely considers; what the path is that leads to the extinction of suffering, he wisely considers.

And by thus considering, three fetters vanish, namely: Self-illusion, Skepticism, and Attachment to mere Rule and Ritual. But those disciples in whom these three fetters have vanished have "entered the Stream," have forever escaped the states of woe, and are assured of final enlightenment.

More than any earthly power,
More than all the joys of heaven,
More than rule o'er all the world,
Is the Entrance to the Stream.

And, verily, those who are filled with unshaken faith in me, all those have entered the stream.



Indonesian Temple Ruins, Library of Congress

There are ten “Fetters” by which beings are bound to the wheel of existence. They are: Self-Illusion, Skepticism, Attachment to mere Rule and Ritual, Sensual Lust, Ill-will, Craving for the World of pure Form, Craving for the Formless World, Conceit, Restlessness, Ignorance.

A *Sotapan*, or “Stream-Enterer” i.e. “one who has entered the stream leading to *Nirvana*,” is free from the first three fetters.

A *Sakadagamin*, or “Once-Returned”—namely to this sensuous sphere—has overcome the 4th and 5th fetters in their grosser form. An *Anagamin*, or “Non-Returner,” is wholly freed from the first five fetters, which bind to rebirth in the sensuous sphere; after death, whilst living in the sphere of pure form, he will reach the goal. An *Arahat*, or perfectly “Holy One,” is freed from all fetters.]

The Two Understandings

Therefore, I say, Right Understanding is of two kinds:

1. The view that alms and offerings are not useless; that there is fruit and result, both of good and bad actions; that there are such things as this life, and the next life; that father and mother as spontaneously born beings (in the heavenly worlds) are no mere words; that there are monks and priests who are spotless and perfect, who can explain this life and the next life, which they themselves have understood: this is called the "Mundane Right Understanding," which yields worldly fruits, and brings good results.

2. But whatsoever there is of wisdom, of penetration, of right understanding, conjoined with the Path—the mind being turned away from the world, and conjoined with the path, the holy path being turned away from the world, and conjoined with the path, the holy path being pursued;—this is called the "Ultramundane Right Understanding," which is not of the world, but is ultramundane, and conjoined with the Path.

[Thus, there are two kinds of the Eightfold Path: the "mundane," practiced by the "worldling"; and the "ultra-mundane," practiced by the "Noble Ones."]

Now, in understanding wrong understanding as wrong, and right understanding as right, one practices Right Understanding [1st step]; and in making efforts to overcome wrong understanding, and to arouse right understanding, one practices Right Effort [6th step]; and in overcoming wrong understanding with attentive mind, and dwelling with attentive mind in the possession of right understanding, one practices Right-Attentiveness [7th step]. Hence, there are three things that accompany and follow upon right understanding, namely: right understanding, right effort, and right attentiveness.

Complete Deliverance

Now, if any one should put the question, whether I admit any view at all, he should be answered thus:

The Perfect One is free from any theory, for the Perfect One has understood what corporeality is, and how it arises, and passes away. He has understood what feeling is, and how it arises, and passes away. He has understood what perception is, and how it arises, and passes away. He has understood what the mental formations are, and how they arise, and pass away. He has understood what consciousness is, and how it arises, and passes away. Therefore, I say, the Perfect One has won complete deliverance through the extinction, fading-away, disappearance, rejection, and getting rid of all opinions and conjectures, of all inclination to the vainglory of "I" and "mine."

Whether Perfect Ones [Buddhas] appear in the world or whether Perfect Ones do not appear in the world, it still remains a firm condition, an immutable fact and

fixed law: that all formations are "impermanent" that all formations are "subject to suffering"; that everything is "without an Ego."

[The word *sankhara* (formations) comprises all things which have a beginning and an end, the so-called created, or "formed" things, *i.e.*, all possible physical and mental constituents of existence.] A corporeal phenomenon, a feeling, a perception, a mental formation, a consciousness, that is permanent and persistent, eternal and not subject to change: such a thing the wise men in this world do not recognize; and I also say, there is no such thing.

And it is impossible that a being possessed of Right Understanding should regard anything as the Ego.

Now, if someone should say that Feeling is his Ego, he should be answered thus: "There are three kinds of feeling: pleasurable, painful, and indifferent feeling. Which of these three feelings, now, do you consider your Ego?" At the moment namely of experiencing one of these feelings one does not experience the other two. These three kinds of feelings are impermanent, of dependent origin, are subject to decay and dissolution, to fading-away and extinction. Whosoever, in experiencing one of these feelings, thinks that this is his Ego, will, after the extinction of that feeling, admit that his Ego has become dissolved. And thus he will consider his Ego already in this present life as impermanent, mixed up with pleasure and pain, subject to rising and passing away.

If any one should say that Feeling is not his Ego, and that his Ego is inaccessible to feeling, he should be asked thus: "Now, where there is no feeling, is it there possible to say: 'This am I?'"

Or, someone might say: "Feeling, indeed, is not my Ego, but it also is untrue that my Ego is inaccessible to feeling; for it is my Ego that feels, for my Ego has the faculty of feeling." Such a one should be answered thus: "Suppose, feeling should become altogether totally extinguished; now, if there, after the extinction of feeling, no feeling whatever exists, it is then possible to say: 'This am I?'"

To say that the mind, or the mind-objects, or the mind-consciousness, constitute the Ego; such an assertion is unfounded. For an arising and a passing away is seen there; and seeing this, one should come to the conclusion that one's Ego arises and passes away.

It would be better for the unlearned worldling to regard this body, built up of the four elements, as his Ego, rather than the mind. For it is evident that this body may last for a year, for two years, for three years, four, five, or ten years, or even a hundred years and more; but that which is called thought, or mind, or consciousness, is continuously, during day and night, arising as one thing, and passing away as another thing.

Therefore, whatsoever there is of corporeality, of feeling, of perception, of mental formations, of consciousness, whether one's own or external, gross or subtle, lofty or low, far or near; there one should understand according to reality and true wisdom: "This does not belong to me; this am I not; this is not my Ego."

[To show the Egolessness, utter emptiness of existence, *Visuddhi-Magga* XVI quotes the following verse:

Mere suffering exists, no sufferer is found;
The deed is, but no doer of the deed is there;
Nirvana is, but not the man that enters it;
The Path is, but no traveler on it is seen.]

Past, Present, and Future

If, now, any one should ask: "Have you been in the past, and is it untrue that you have not been? Will you be in the future, and is it untrue that you will not be? Are you, and is it untrue that you are not?"—you may say that you have been in the past, and it is untrue that you have not been; that you will be in the future, and it is untrue that you will not be; that you are, and it is untrue that you are not.

In the past only the past existence was real, but unreal the future and present existence. In the future only the future existence will be real, but unreal the past and present existence. Now only the present existence is real, but unreal the past and future existence.

Verily, he who perceives the Dependent Origination, perceives the truth and he who perceives the truth, perceives the dependent origination. For, just as from the cow comes milk, from milk curds, from curds butter, from butter ghee, from ghee the scum of ghee; and when it is milk, it is not counted as curds, or butter, or ghee, or scum of ghee, but only as milk; and when it is curds, it is only counted as curds—just so was my past existence at that time real, but unreal the future and present existence; and my future existence will be at one time real, but unreal the past and present existence; and my present existence is now real, but unreal the past and future existence. All these are merely popular designations and expressions, mere conventional terms of speaking, mere popular notions. The Perfect One, indeed, makes use of these, without, however, clinging to them.

Thus, he who does not understand corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness according to reality [*i.e.*, as void of a personality, or Ego], and not their arising, their extinction, and the way to their extinction, he is liable

to believe, either that the Perfect One continues after death, or that he does not continue after death, and so forth.

Verily, if one holds the view that the vital principle [Ego] is identical with this body, in that case a holy life is not possible; or, if one holds the view that the vital principle is something quite different from the body, in that case also a holy life is not possible. Both these two Extremes the Perfect One has avoided, and shown the Middle Doctrine, saying:

Dependent Origination

On Delusion depend the *Karma*-Formations. On the *karma*-formations depends Consciousness [starting with rebirth-consciousness in the womb of the mother].—On consciousness depends the Mental and Physical Existence.—On the mental and physical existence depend the Six Sense-Organs.—On the six sense-organs depends the Sensory Impression.—On the sensory impression depends Feeling.—On feeling depends; Craving.—On craving depends Clinging. On clinging depends the Process of Becoming.—On the process of becoming [here: *karma* process] depends Rebirth.—On rebirth depend Decay and Death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. Thus arises this whole mass of suffering. This is called the noble truth of the origin of suffering.



Buddhist Temple, Cambodia, from 1905 French Postcard

In whom, however, Delusion has disappeared and wisdom arisen, such a disciple heaps up neither meritorious, nor demeritorious, nor imperturbable *Karma*-formations.

Thus, through the entire fading away and extinction of this Delusion, the *Karma*-Formations are extinguished. Through the extinction of the *Karma*-formations, Consciousness [rebirth] is extinguished. Through the extinction of consciousness, the Mental and Physical Existence is extinguished. Through the extinction of the mental and physical existence, the six Sense—Organs are extinguished. Through the extinction of the six sense-organs, the Sensory Impression is extinguished. Through the extinction of the sensory impression, Feeling is extinguished. Through the extinction of feeling, Craving is extinguished. Through the extinction of craving, Clinging is extinguished. Through the extinction of clinging, the Process of Becoming is extinguished. Through the extinction of the process of becoming, Rebirth is extinguished. Through the extinction of rebirth, Decay and Death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are extinguished. Thus takes place the extinction of this whole mass of suffering. This is called the Noble Truth of the Extinction of Suffering.

***Karma*: Rebirth—Producing and Barren**

Verily, because beings, obstructed by Delusion, and ensnared by Craving, now here now there seek ever fresh delight, therefore such action comes to ever fresh Rebirth.

And the action that is done out of greed, anger and delusion, that springs from them, has its source and origin there: this action ripens wherever one is reborn; and wherever this action ripens, there one experiences the fruits of this action, be it in this life, or the next life, or in some future life.

However, through the fading away of delusion through the arising of wisdom, through the extinction of craving, no future rebirth takes place again.

For the actions, which are not done out of greed, anger and delusion, which have not sprung from them, which have not their source and origin there—such actions are, through the absence of greed, anger and delusion, abandoned, rooted out, like a palm-tree torn out of the soil, destroyed, and not liable to spring up again.

In this respect one may rightly say of me: that I teach annihilation, that I propound my doctrine for the purpose of annihilation, and that I herein train my disciples; for, certainly, I do teach annihilation—the annihilation, namely, of greed, anger and delusion, as well as of the manifold evil and unwholesome things.

["Dependent Origination" is the teaching of the strict conformity to law of everything that happens, whether in the realm of the physical, or the psychical. It shows

how the totality of phenomena, physical and mental, the entire phenomenal world that depends wholly upon the six senses, together with all its suffering—and this is the vital point of the teaching is not the mere play of blind chance, but has an existence that is dependent upon conditions; and that, precisely with the removal of these conditions, those things that have arisen in dependence upon them—thus also all suffering—must perforce disappear and cease to be.]

Second Step: Right Mindedness

What, now, is Right Mindedness? It is thoughts free from lust; thoughts free from ill-will; thoughts free from cruelty. This is called right mindedness.

Now, Right Mindedness, let me tell you, is of two kinds: 1. Thoughts free from lust, from ill-will, and from cruelty:—this is called the "Mundane Right Mindedness," which yields worldly fruits and brings good results.

2. But, whatsoever there is of thinking, considering, reasoning, thought, ratiocination, application—the mind being holy, being turned away from the world, and conjoined with the path, the holy path being pursued—: these "Verbal Operations" of the mind are called the "Ultramundane Right Mindedness" which is not of the world, but is ultra mundane, and conjoined with the paths.

Now, in understanding wrong-mindedness as wrong, and right-mindedness as right, one practices Right Understanding [1st step]; and in making efforts to overcome evil-mindedness, and to arouse right-mindedness, one practices Right Effort [6th step]; and in overcoming evil-mindedness with attentive mind, and dwelling with attentive mind in possession of right-mindedness, one practices Right Attentiveness [7th step]. Hence, there are three things that accompany and follow upon right-mindedness, namely: right understanding, right effort, and right attentiveness.

Third Step: Right Speech

What, now, is Right Speech? It is abstaining from lying; abstaining from tale-bearing; abstaining from harsh language; abstaining from vain talk.

There, someone avoids lying, and abstains from it. He speaks the truth, is devoted to the truth, reliable, worthy of confidence, is not a deceiver of men. Being at a meeting, or amongst people, or in the midst of his relatives, or in a society, or in the king's court, and called upon and asked as witness, to tell what he knows, he answers, if he knows nothing: "I know nothing"; and if he knows, he answers: "I

know”; if he has seen nothing, he answers: “I have seen nothing,” and if he has seen, he answers: “I have seen.” Thus, he never knowingly speaks a lie, neither for the sake of his own advantage, nor for the sake of another person’s advantage, nor for the sake of any advantage whatsoever.

He avoids tale-bearing, and abstains from it. What he has heard here, he does not repeat there, so as to cause dissension there; and what he heard there, he does not repeat here, so as to cause dissension here. Thus he unites those that are divided; and those that are united, he encourages. Concord gladdens him, he delights and rejoices in concord, and it is concord that he spreads by his words.

He avoids harsh language, and abstains from it. He speaks such words as are gentle, soothing to the ear, loving, going to the heart, courteous and dear, and agreeable to many.

[In *Majjhima-Nikaya*, No. 21, the Buddha says: “Even, O monks, should robbers and murderers saw through your limbs and joints, whoso gave way to anger thereat, would not be following my advice. For thus ought you to train yourselves:”

““Undisturbed shall our mind remain, no evil words shall escape our lips; friendly and full of sympathy shall we remain, with heart full of love, and free from any hidden malice; and that person shall we penetrate with loving thoughts, wide, deep, boundless, freed from anger and hatred.””]

He avoids vain talk, and abstains from it. He speaks at the right time, in accordance with facts, speaks what is useful, speaks about the law and the discipline; his speech is like a treasure, at the right moment accompanied by arguments, moderate and full of sense. This is called right speech. Now, right speech, let me tell you, is of two kinds: 1. Abstaining from lying, from tale-bearing, from harsh language, and from vain talk; this is called the “Mundane Right Speech,” which yields worldly fruits and brings good results.

2. But the abhorrence of the practice of this four-fold wrong speech, the abstaining, withholding, refraining therefrom—the mind being holy, being turned away from the world, and conjoined with the path, the holy path being pursued—: this is called the “Ultramundane Right Speech”, which is not of the world, but is ultramundane, and conjoined with the paths.

Now, in understanding wrong speech as wrong, and right speech as right, one practices Right Understanding [1st step]; and in making efforts to overcome evil speech and to arouse right speech, one practices Right Effort [6th step]; and in overcoming wrong speech with attentive mind, and dwelling with attentive mind in possession of right speech, one practices Right Attentiveness [7th step]. Hence, there are three things that accompany and follow upon right attentiveness.

Fourth Step: Right Action

What, now, is Right Action? It is abstaining from killing; abstaining from stealing; abstaining from unlawful sexual intercourse.

There, someone avoids the killing of living beings, and abstains from it. Without stick or sword, conscientious, full of sympathy, he is anxious for the welfare of all living beings.

He avoids stealing, and abstains from it; what another person possesses of goods and chattels in the village or in the wood, that he does not take away with thievish intent.

He avoids unlawful sexual intercourse, and abstains from it. He has no intercourse with such persons as are still under the protection of father, mother, brother, sister or relatives, nor with married women, nor female convicts, nor, lastly, with betrothed girls.

This is called Right Action.



Temple Wat Prakeu

Now, Right Action, let me tell you, is of two kinds: 1. Abstaining from killing, from stealing, and from unlawful sexual intercourse—this is called the “Mundane Right Action,” which yields worldly fruits and brings good results. But the abhorrence of the practice of this three-fold wrong action, the abstaining, withholding, refraining therefrom—the mind being holy, being turned away from the world, and conjoined

with the path, the holy path being pursued—: this is called the "Ultramundane Right Action," which is not of the world, but is ultramundane, and conjoined with the paths.

Now, in understanding wrong action as wrong, and right action as right, one practices Right Understanding [1st step]; and in making efforts to overcome wrong action, and to arouse right action, one practices Right Effort [6th step]; and in overcoming wrong action with attentive mind, and dwelling with attentive mind in possession of right action, one practices Right Attentiveness [7th step]. Hence, there are three things that accompany and follow upon right action, namely: right understanding, right effort, and right attentiveness.

Fifth Step: Right Living

What, now, is Right Living? When the noble disciple, avoiding a wrong way of living, gets his livelihood by a right way of living, this is called Right Living.

Now, right living, let me tell you, is of two kinds: 1. When the noble disciple, avoiding wrong living, gets his livelihood by a right way of living—this is called the "Mundane Right Living," which yields worldly fruits and brings good results.

2. But the abhorrence of wrong living, the abstaining, withholding, refraining therefrom—the mind being holy, being turned away from the world, and conjoined with the path, the holy path being pursued—: this is called the "Ultramundane Right Living," which is not of the world, but is ultramundane, and conjoined with the paths.

Now, in understanding wrong living as wrong, and right living as right, one practices Right Understanding [1st step]; and in making efforts to overcome wrong living, to arouse right living, one practices Right Effort [6th step]; and in overcoming wrong living with attentive mind, and dwelling with attentive mind in possession of right living, one practices Right Attentiveness [7th step]. Hence, there are three things that accompany and follow upon right living, namely: right understanding, right effort, and right attentiveness.

Sixth Step: Right Effort

What, now, is Right Effort? There are Four Great Efforts: the effort to avoid, the effort to overcome, the effort to develop, and the effort to maintain.

What, now, is the effort to avoid? There, the disciple incites his mind to avoid the arising of evil, demeritorious things that have not yet arisen; and he strives, puts

forth his energy, strains his mind and struggles.

Thus, when he perceives a form with the eye, a sound with the ear, an odor with the nose, a taste with the tongue, a contact with the body, or an object with the mind, he neither adheres to the whole, nor to its parts. And he strives to ward off that through which evil and demeritorious things, greed and sorrow, would arise, if he remained with unguarded senses; and he watches over his senses, restrains his senses.

Possessed of this noble "Control over the Senses," he experiences inwardly a feeling of joy, into which no evil thing can enter. This is called the effort to avoid.

What, now, is the effort to Overcome? There, the disciple incites his mind to overcome the evil, demeritorious things that have already arisen; and he strives, puts forth his energy, strains his mind and struggles.

He does not retain any thought of sensual lust, ill-will, or grief, or any other evil and demeritorious states that may have arisen; he abandons them, dispels them, destroys them, causes them to disappear.

Five Methods of Expelling Evil Thoughts

If, whilst regarding a certain object, there arise in the disciple, on account of it, evil and demeritorious thoughts connected with greed, anger and delusion, then the disciple should, by means of this object, gain another and wholesome object. Or, he should reflect on the misery of these thoughts: "Unwholesome, truly, are these thoughts! Blameable are these thoughts! Of painful result are these thoughts!" Or, he should pay no attention to these thoughts. Or, he should consider the compound nature of these thoughts. Or, with teeth clenched and tongue pressed against the gums, he should, with his mind, restrain, suppress and root out these thoughts; and in doing so, these evil and demeritorious thoughts of greed, anger and delusion will dissolve and disappear; and the mind will inwardly become settled and calm, composed and concentrated.

This is called the effort to overcome.

From the reading...

"One may enjoy the different 'Magical Powers.'"

What, now, is the effort to Develop? There the disciple incites his will to arouse meritorious conditions that have not yet arisen; and he strives, puts forth his energy, strains his mind and struggles.

Thus he develops the "Elements of Enlightenment," bent on solitude, on detachment, on extinction, and ending in deliverance, namely: Attentiveness, Investigation of the Law, Energy, Rapture, Tranquility, Concentration, and Equanimity. This is called the effort to develop.

What, now, is the effort to Maintain? There, the disciple incites his will to maintain the meritorious conditions that have already arisen, and not to let them disappear, but to bring them to growth, to maturity and to the full perfection of development; and he strives, puts forth his energy, strains his mind and struggles.

Thus, for example, he keeps firmly in his mind a favorable object of concentration that has arisen, as the mental image of a skeleton, of a corpse infested by worms, of a corpse blue-black in color, of a festering corpse, of a corpse riddled with holes, of a corpse swollen up.

This is called the effort to maintain.

Truly, the disciple who is possessed of faith and has penetrated the Teaching of the Master, he is filled with the thought: "May rather skin, sinews and bones wither away, may the flesh and blood of my body dry up: I shall not give up my efforts so long as I have not attained whatever is attainable by manly perseverance, energy and endeavor!"

This is called right effort.

The effort of Avoiding, Overcoming,
Of Developing and Maintaining:
These four great efforts have been shown
By him, the scion of the sun.
And he who firmly clings to them,
May put an end to all the pain.

Seventh Step: Right Attentiveness

What, now, is Right Attentiveness? The only way that leads to the attainment of purity, to the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, to the end of pain and grief, to the entering upon the right path and the realization of *Nirvana*, is the "Four Fundamentals of Attentiveness." And which are these four? In them, the disciple dwells in contemplation of the Body, in contemplation of Feeling, in contemplation

of the Mind, in contemplation of the Mind-objects, ardent, clearly conscious and attentive, after putting away worldly greed and grief.

Contemplation of the Body

But, how does the disciple dwell in contemplation of the body? There, the disciple retires to the forest, to the foot of a tree, or to a solitary place, sits himself down, with legs crossed, body erect, and with attentiveness fixed before him.

With attentive mind he breathes in, with attentive mind he breathes out. When making a long inhalation, he knows: "I make a long inhalation"; when making a long exhalation, he knows: "I make a long exhalation." when making a short inhalation, he knows: "I make a short inhalation"; when making a short exhalation, he knows: "I make a short exhalation." Clearly perceiving the entire [breath]-body, "I will breathe in": thus he trains himself; clearly perceiving the entire [breath]-body, "I will breathe out": thus he trains himself. Calming this bodily function, "I will breathe in": thus he trains himself; calming this bodily function, "I will breathe out": thus he trains himself.

Thus he dwells in contemplation of the body, either with regard to his own person, or to other persons, or to both. He beholds how the body arises; beholds how it passes away; beholds the arising and passing away of the body. "A body is there—"

"A body is there, but no living being, no individual, no woman, no man, no self, and nothing that belongs to a self; neither a person, nor anything belonging to a person"—

this clear consciousness is present in him, because of his knowledge and mindfulness, and he lives independent, unattached to anything in the world. Thus does the disciple dwell in contemplation of the body.

And further, whilst going, standing, sitting, or lying down, the disciple understands the expressions: "I go"; "I stand"; "I sit"; "I lie down"; he understands any position of the body.

[The disciple understands that it is not a being, a real Ego, that goes, stands, etc., but that it is by a mere figure of speech that one says: "I go," "I stand," and so forth.]

And further, the disciple is clearly conscious in his going and coming; clearly conscious in looking forward and backward; clearly conscious in bending and stretching; clearly conscious in eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting; clearly conscious

in discharging excrement and urine; clearly conscious in walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep and awakening; clearly conscious in speaking and in keeping silent.

From the reading...

“... it is by a mere figure of speech that one says: ‘I go,’ ‘I stand,’ ...”

“In all the disciple is doing, he is clearly conscious: of his intention, of his advantage, of his duty, of the reality.”

And further, the disciple contemplates this body from the sole of the foot upward, and from the top of the hair downward, with a skin stretched over it, and filled with manifold impurities: “This body consists of hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, bowels, stomach, and excrement; of bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, lymph, tears, semen, spittle, nasal mucus, oil of the joints, and urine.”

Just as if there were a sack, with openings at both ends, filled with all kinds of grain—with paddy, beans, sesamum and husked rice—and a man not blind opened it and examined its contents, thus: “That is paddy, these are beans, this is sesamum, this is husked rice”: just so does the disciple investigate this body.

And further, the disciple contemplates this body with regard to the elements: “This body consists of the solid element, the liquid element, the heating element and the vibrating element.” Just as a skilled butcher or butcher’s apprentice, who has slaughtered a cow and divided it into separate portions, should sit down at the junction of four highroads: just so does the disciple contemplate this body with regard to the elements.

And further, just as if the disciple should see a corpse thrown into the burial-ground, one, two, or three days dead, swollen-up, blue-black in color, full of corruption he draws the conclusion as to his own body: “This my body also has this nature, has this destiny, and cannot escape it.” And further, just as if the disciple should see a corpse thrown into the burial-ground, eaten by crows, hawks or vultures, by dogs or jackals, or gnawed by all kinds of worms—he draws the conclusion as to his own body: “This my body also has this nature, has this destiny, and cannot escape it.”

And further, just as if the disciple should see a corpse thrown into the burial-ground, a framework of bones, flesh hanging from it, bespattered with blood, held together by the sinews; a framework of bones, stripped of flesh, bespattered with blood, held together by the sinews; a framework of bones, without flesh and blood, but still held together by the sinews; bones, disconnected and scattered in all direc-

tions, here a bone of the hand, there a bone of the foot, there a shin bone, there a thigh bone, there the pelvis, there the spine, there the skull—he draws the conclusion as to his own body: "This my body also has this nature, has this destiny, and cannot escape it."

And further, just as if the disciple should see bones lying in the burial ground, bleached and resembling shells; bones heaped together, after the lapse of years; bones weathered and crumbled to dust;—he draws the conclusion as to his own body: "This my body also has this nature, has this destiny, and cannot escape it."

Thus he dwells in contemplation of the body, either with regard to his own person, or to other persons, or to both. He beholds how the body arises; beholds how it passes away; beholds the arising and passing of the body. "A body is there" this clear consciousness is present in him, because of his knowledge and mindfulness; and he lives independent, unattached to anything in the world. Thus does the disciple dwell in contemplation of the body.

The Ten Blessings

Once the contemplation of the body is practiced, developed, often repeated, has become one's habit, one's foundation, is firmly established, strengthened and well perfected, one may expect ten blessings:

Over Delight and Discontent one has mastery; one does not allow himself to be overcome by discontent; one subdues it, as soon as it arises. One conquers Fear and Anxiety; one does not allow himself to be overcome by fear and anxiety; one subdues them, as soon as they arise. One endures cold and heat, hunger and thirst, wind and sun, attacks by gadflies, mosquitoes and reptiles; patiently one endures wicked and malicious speech, as well as bodily pains, that befall one, though they be piercing, sharp, bitter, unpleasant, disagreeable and dangerous to life. The four "Trances," the mind bestowing happiness even here: these one may enjoy at will, without difficulty, without effort.

One may enjoy the different "Magical Powers." With the "Heavenly Ear," the purified, the super-human, one may hear both kinds of sounds, the heavenly and the earthly, the distant and the near. With the mind one may obtain "Insight into the Hearts of Other Beings" of other persons. One may obtain "Remembrance of many Previous Births." With the "Heavenly Eye," the purified, the super-human, one may see beings vanish and reappear, the base and the noble, the beautiful and the ugly, the happy and the unfortunate; one may perceive how beings are reborn according to their deeds.

One may, through the "Cessation of Passions," come to know for oneself, even in this life, the stainless deliverance of mind, the deliverance through wisdom.

Contemplation of the Feelings

But how does the disciple dwell in contemplation of the feelings?

In experiencing feelings, the disciple knows: "I have an indifferent agreeable feeling," or "I have a disagreeable feeling," or "I have an indifferent feeling," or "I have a worldly agreeable feeling," or "I have an unworldly agreeable feeling" or "I have a worldly disagreeable feeling," or "I have an unworldly disagreeable feeling," or "I have a worldly indifferent feeling," or have an unworldly indifferent feeling.

Thus he dwells in contemplation of the feelings, either with regard to his own person, or to other persons, or to both. He beholds how the feelings arise; beholds how they pass away; beholds the arising and passing away of the feelings. "Feelings are there": this clear consciousness is present in him, because of his knowledge and mindfulness; and he lives independent, unattached to anything in the world. Thus does the disciple dwell in contemplation of the feelings.

From the reading...

"... and he lives independent, unattached to anything in the world."

[The disciple understands that the expression "I feel" has no validity except as an expression of common speech; he understands that, in the absolute sense, there are only feelings, and that there is no Ego, no person, no experience of the feelings.]

Contemplation of the Mind

But how does the disciple dwell in contemplation of the mind? The disciple knows the greedy mind as greedy, and the not greedy mind as not greedy; knows the angry mind as angry, and the not angry mind as not angry; knows the deluded mind as deluded, and the undeluded mind as undeluded. He knows the cramped mind as cramped, and the scattered mind as scattered; knows the developed mind as developed, and the undeveloped mind as undeveloped; knows the surpassable mind as surpassable, and the unsurpassable mind as unsurpassable; knows the concentrated mind as concentrated, and the unconcentrated mind as unconcentrated; knows the freed mind as freed, and the unfreed mind as unfreed.

["Mind" is here used as a collective for the moments of consciousness. Being identical with consciousness, it should not be translated by "thought." "Thought" and "thinking" correspond rather to the so-called "verbal operations of the mind"; they

are not, like consciousness, of primary, but of secondary nature, and are entirely absent in all sensuous consciousness, as well as in the second, third and fourth Trances. (See eighth step).]

Thus he dwells in contemplation of the mind, either with regard to his own person, or to other persons, or to both. He beholds how consciousness arises; beholds how it passes away; beholds the arising and passing away of consciousness. "Mind is there"; this clear consciousness is present in him, because of his knowledge and mindfulness; and he lives independent, unattached to anything in the world. Thus does the disciple dwell in contemplation of the mind.

Contemplation of Phenomena (Mind-objects)

But how does the disciple dwell in contemplation of the phenomena? First, the disciple dwells in contemplation of the phenomena, of the "Five Hindrances."

He knows when there is "Lust" in him: "In me is lust"; knows when there is "Anger" in him: "In me is anger"; knows when there is "Torpor and Drowsiness" in him: "In me is torpor and drowsiness"; knows when there is "Restlessness and Mental Worry" in him: "In me is restlessness and mental worry"; knows when there are "Doubts" in him: "In me are doubts." He knows when these hindrances are not in him: "In me these hindrances are not." He knows how they come to arise; knows how, once arisen, they are overcome; knows how, once overcome, they do not rise again in the future.

[For example, Lust arises through unwise thinking on the agreeable and delightful. It may be suppressed by the following six methods: fixing the mind upon an idea that arouses disgust; contemplation of the loathsomeness of the body; controlling one's six senses; moderation in eating; friendship with wise and good men; right instruction. Lust is forever extinguished upon entrance into Anagamiship; Restlessness is extinguished by reaching Arahathship; Mental Worry, by reaching Sotapanship.]

And further: the disciple dwells in contemplation of the phenomena, of the five Groups of Existence. He knows what Corporeality is, how it arises, how it passes away; knows what Feeling is, how it arises, how it passes away; knows what Perception is, how it arises, how it passes away; knows what the Mental Formations are, how they arise, how they pass away; knows what Consciousness is, how it arises, how it passes away.

And further: the disciple dwells in contemplation of the phenomena of the six Subjective-Objective Sense-Bases. He knows eye and visual objects, ear and sounds, nose and odors, tongue and tastes, body and touches, mind and mind objects; and the fetter that arises in dependence on them, he also knows. He knows how the

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fetter comes to arise, knows how the fetter is overcome, and how the abandoned fetter does not rise again in future.

And further: the disciple dwells in contemplation of the phenomena of the seven Elements of Enlightenment. The disciple knows when there is Attentiveness in him; when there is Investigation of the Law in him; when there is Energy in him; when there is Enthusiasm in him; when there is Tranquility in him; when there is Concentration in him; when there is Equanimity in him. He knows when it is not in him, knows how it comes to arise, and how it is fully developed.

And further: the disciple dwells in contemplation of the phenomena of the Four Noble Truths. He knows according to reality, what Suffering is; knows according to reality, what the Origin of Suffering is; knows according to reality, what the Extinction of Suffering is; knows according to reality, what the Path is that leads to the Extinction of Suffering.

Thus he dwells in contemplation of the phenomena, either with regard to his own person, or to other persons, or to both. He beholds how the phenomena arise; beholds how they pass away; beholds the arising and passing away of the phenomena. Phenomena are there; this consciousness is present in him because of his knowledge and mindfulness; and he lives independent, unattached to anything in the world. Thus does the disciple dwell in contemplation of the phenomena.



Rice Boat, Library of Congress

The only way that leads to the attainment of purity, to the overcoming of sorrow

and lamentation, to the end of pain and grief, to the entering upon the right path, and the realization of *Nirvana*, is these four fundamentals of attentiveness.

Nirvana Through Watching Over Breathing

“Watching over In-and Out-breathing” practiced and developed, brings the four Fundamentals of Attentiveness to perfection; the four fundamentals of attentiveness, practiced and developed bring the seven Elements of Enlightenment to perfection; the seven elements of enlightenment, practiced and developed, bring Wisdom and Deliverance to perfection.

But how does Watching over In-and Out-breathing, practiced and developed, bring the four Fundamentals of Attentiveness to perfection?

I. Whenever the disciple is conscious in making a long inhalation or exhalation, or in making a short inhalation or exhalation, or is training himself to inhale or exhale whilst feeling the whole [breath]-body, or whilst calming down this bodily function—at such a time the disciple is dwelling in “contemplation of the body,” of energy, clearly conscious, attentive, after subduing worldly greed and grief. For, inhalation and exhalation I call one amongst the corporeal phenomena.

II. Whenever the disciple is training himself to inhale or exhale whilst feeling rapture, or joy, or the mental functions, or whilst calming down the mental functions—at such a time he is dwelling in “contemplation of the feelings,” full of energy, clearly conscious, attentive, after subduing worldly greed and grief. For, the full awareness of in—and outbreathing I call one amongst the feelings.

III. Whenever the disciple is training himself to inhale or exhale whilst feeling the mind, or whilst gladdening the mind or whilst concentrating the mind, or whilst setting the mind free—at such a time he is dwelling in “contemplation of the mind,” full of energy, clearly conscious, attentive, after subduing worldly greed and grief. For, without attentiveness and clear consciousness, I say, there is no Watching over in-and Out-breathing.

IV. Whenever the disciple is training himself to inhale or exhale whilst contemplating impermanence, or the fading away of passion, or extinction, or detachment at such a time he is dwelling in “contemplation of the phenomena,” full of energy, clearly conscious, attentive, after subduing worldly greed and grief.

Watching over In-and Out-breathing, thus practiced and developed, brings the four Fundamentals of Attentiveness to perfection. But how do the four Fundamentals of Attentiveness, practiced and developed, bring the seven Elements of Enlightenment to full perfection?

Whenever the disciple is dwelling in contemplation of body, feeling, mind and phenomena, strenuous, clearly conscious, attentive, after subduing worldly greed and grief—at such a time his attentiveness is undisturbed; and whenever his attentiveness is present and undisturbed, at such a time he has gained and is developing the Element of Enlightenment "Attentiveness"; and thus this element of enlightenment reaches fullest perfection.

And whenever, whilst dwelling with attentive mind, he wisely investigates, examines and thinks over the Law—at such a time he has gained and is developing the Element of Enlightenment "Investigation of the Law"; and thus this element of enlightenment reaches fullest perfection.

And whenever, whilst wisely investigating, examining and thinking over the law, his energy is firm and unshaken—at such a time he has gained and is developing the Element of Enlightenment "Energy"; and thus this element of enlightenment reaches fullest perfection.

And whenever in him, whilst firm in energy, arises supersensuous rapture—at such a time he has gained and is developing the Element of Enlightenment "Rapture"; and thus this element of enlightenment reaches fullest perfection.

From the reading...

"... just as if the disciple should see a corpse thrown into the burial-ground, one, two, or three days dead, swollen-up... he draws the conclusion as to his own body: 'This my body also has this nature, has this destiny, and cannot escape it...'"

And whenever, whilst enraptured in mind, his spiritual frame and his mind become tranquil—at such a time he has gained and is developing the Element of Enlightenment "Tranquility"; and thus this element of enlightenment reaches fullest perfection.

And whenever, whilst being tranquilized in his spiritual frame and happy, his mind becomes concentrated—at such a time he has gained and is developing the Element of Enlightenment "Concentration"; and thus this element of enlightenment reaches fullest perfection. And whenever he thoroughly looks with indifference on his mind thus concentrated—at such a time he has gained and is developing the Element of Enlightenment "Equanimity."

The four fundamentals of attentiveness, thus practiced and developed, bring the seven elements of enlightenment to full perfection.

But how do the seven elements of enlightenment, practiced and developed, bring Wisdom and Deliverance to full perfection? There, the disciple is developing the elements of enlightenment: Attentiveness, Investigation of the Law, Energy, Rapture, Tranquility, Concentration and Equanimity, bent on detachment, on absence of desire, on extinction and renunciation.

Thus practiced and developed, do the seven elements of enlightenment bring wisdom and deliverance to full perfection.

Just as the elephant hunter drives a huge stake into the ground and chains the wild elephant to it by the neck, in order to drive out of him his wonted forest ways and wishes, his forest unruliness, obstinacy and violence, and to accustom him to the environment of the village, and to teach him such good behavior as is required amongst men: in like manner also has the noble disciple to fix his mind firmly to these four fundamentals of attentiveness, so that he may drive out of himself his wonted worldly ways and wishes, his wonted worldly unruliness, obstinacy and violence, and win to the True, and realize *Nirvana*.

Eighth Step: Right Concentration

What, now, is Right Concentration? Fixing the mind to a single object ("One-pointedness of mind"): this is concentration.

The four Fundamentals of Attentiveness (seventh step): these are the objects of concentration.

The four Great Efforts (sixth step): these are the requisites for concentration.

The practicing, developing and cultivating of these things: this is the "Development" of concentration.

[Right Concentration has two degrees of development: 1. "Neighborhood-Concentration," which approaches the first trance, without however attaining it; 2. "Attainment Concentration," which is the concentration present in the four trances. The attainment of the trances, however, is not a requisite for the realization of the Four Ultramundane Paths of Holiness; and neither Neighborhood-Concentration nor Attainment-Concentration, as such, in any way possesses the power of conferring entry into the Four Ultramundane Paths; hence, in them is really no power to free oneself permanently from evil things. The realization of the Four Ultramundane Paths is possible only at the moment of insight into the impermanency, miserable nature, and impersonality of phenomenal process of existence. This insight is attainable only during Neighborhood-Concentration, not during Attainment-Concentration.

He who has realized one or other of the Four Ultramundane Paths without ever having attained the Trances, is called a "Dry-visioned One," or one whose passions are "dried up by Insight." He, however, who after cultivating the Trances has reached one of the Ultramundane Paths, is called "one who has taken tranquility as his vehicle."]

The Four Trances

Detached from sensual objects, detached from unwholesome things, the disciple enters into the first trance, which is accompanied by "Verbal Thought," and "Rumination," is born of "Detachment," and filled with "Rapture," and "Happiness."

This first trance is free from five things, and five things are present. When the disciple enters the first trance, there have vanished [the 5 Hindrances]: Lust, Ill-will, Torpor and Dullness, Restlessness and Mental Worry, Doubts; and there are present: Verbal Thought, Rumination, Rapture, Happiness, and Concentration. And further: after the subsiding of verbal thought and rumination, and by the gaining of inward tranquility and oneness of mind, he enters into a state free from verbal thought and rumination, the second trance, which is born of Concentration, and filled with Rapture and Happiness.

And further: after the fading away of rapture, he dwells in equanimity, attentive, clearly conscious; and he experiences in his person that feeling, of which the Noble Ones say: "Happy lives the man of equanimity and attentive mind"—thus he enters the third trance. And further: after the giving up of pleasure and pain, and through the disappearance of previous joy and grief, he enters into a state beyond pleasure and pain, into the fourth trance, which is purified by equanimity and attentiveness.

[The four Trances may be obtained by means of Watching over In-and Out-breathing, as well as through the fourth sublime meditation, the "Meditation of Equanimity," and others.

From the reading...

"That unshakable deliverance of the heart: that, verily, is the object of the Holy Life, that is its essence, that is its goal."

The three other Sublime Meditations of "Loving Kindness," "Compassion", and "Sympathetic Joy" may lead to the attainment of the first three Trances. The "Cemetery Meditations," as well as the meditation "On Loathsomeness," will produce only the First Trance. The "Analysis of the Body" and the Contemplation on

the Buddha, the Law, the Holy Brotherhood, Morality, etc., will only produce Neighborhood-Concentration.]

Develop your concentration: for he who has concentration understands things according to their reality. And what are these things? The arising and passing away of corporeality, of feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness.

Thus, these five Groups of Existence must be wisely penetrated; Delusion and Craving must be wisely abandoned; Tranquility and Insight must be wisely developed.

This is the Middle Path which the Perfect One has discovered, which makes one both to see and to know, and which leads to peace, to discernment, to enlightenment, to *Nirvana*. And following upon this path, you will put an end to suffering.

Development of the Eightfold Path—Confidence and Right-Mindedness (2nd Step)

Suppose a householder, or his son, or someone reborn in any family, hears the law; and after hearing the law he is filled with confidence in the Perfect One. And filled with this confidence, he thinks: "Full of hindrances is household life, a refuse heap; but pilgrim life is like the open air. Not easy is it, when one lives at home, to fulfill in all points the rules of the holy life. How, if now I were to cut off hair and beard, put on the yellow robe and go forth from home to the homeless life?" And in a short time, having given up his more or less extensive possessions, having forsaken a smaller or larger circle of relations, he cuts off hair and beard, puts on the yellow robe, and goes forth from home to the homeless life.

Morality (3rd, 4th, 5th Step)

Having thus left the world, he fulfills the rules of the monks. He avoids the killing of living beings and abstains from it. Without stick or sword, conscientious, full of sympathy, he is anxious for the welfare of all living beings.—He avoids stealing, and abstains from taking what is not given to him. Only what is given to him he takes, waiting till it is given; and he lives with a heart honest and pure.—He avoids unchastity, living chaste, resigned, and keeping aloof from sexual intercourse, the vulgar way.—He avoids lying and abstains from it. He speaks the truth, is devoted to the truth, reliable, worthy of confidence, is not a deceiver of men.—He avoids tale-bearing and abstains from it. What he has heard here, he does not repeat there, so as to cause dissension there; and what he has heard there, he does not repeat here, so as to cause dissension here. Thus he unites those that are divided, and those that are united he encourages; concord gladdens him, he delights and rejoices in

concord, and it is concord that he spreads by his words.—He avoids harsh language and abstains from it. He speaks such words as are gentle, soothing to the ear, loving, going to the heart, courteous and dear, and agreeable to many.—He avoids vain talk and abstains from it. He speaks at the right time, in accordance with facts, speaks what is useful, speaks about the law and the disciple; his speech is like a treasure, at the right moment accompanied by arguments, moderate, and full of sense.

He keeps aloof from dance, song, music and the visiting of shows; rejects flowers, perfumes, ointments, as well as every kind of adornment and embellishment. High and gorgeous beds he does not use. Gold and silver he does not accept. Raw corn and meat he does not accept. Women and girls he does not accept. He owns no male and female slaves, owns no goats, sheep, fowls, pigs, elephants, cows or horses, no land and goods. He does not go on errands and do the duties of a messenger. He keeps aloof from buying and selling things. He has nothing to do with false measures, metals and weights. He avoids the crooked ways of bribery, deception and fraud. He keeps aloof from stabbing, beating, chaining, attacking, plundering and oppressing.

He contents himself with the robe that protects his body, and with the alms with which he keeps himself alive. Wherever he goes, he is provided with these two things; just as a winged bird, in flying, carries his wings along with him. By fulfilling this noble Domain of Morality he feels in his heart an irreproachable happiness.

Control of the Senses (6th Step)

Now, in perceiving a form with the eye—a sound with the ear—an odor with the nose—a taste with the tongue—a touch with the body—an object with his mind, he sticks neither to the whole, nor to its details. And he tries to ward off that which, by being unguarded in his senses, might give rise to evil and unwholesome states, to greed and sorrow; he watches over his senses, keep his senses under control. By practicing this noble "Control of the Senses" he feels in his heart an unblemished happiness.

Attentiveness and Clear Consciousness (7th Step)

Clearly conscious is he in his going and coming; clearly conscious in looking forward and backward; clearly conscious in bending and stretching his body; clearly conscious in eating, drinking, chewing and tasting; clearly conscious in discharging excrement and urine; clearly conscious in walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep and awakening; clearly conscious in speaking and keeping silent.

Now, being equipped with this lofty Morality, equipped with this noble “Control of the Senses,” and filled with this noble “Attentiveness and Clear Consciousness,” he chooses a secluded dwelling in the forest, at the foot of a tree, on a mountain, in a cleft, in a rock cave, on a burial ground, on a woody table-land, in the open air, or on a heap of straw. Having returned from his alms-round, after the meal, he sits himself down with legs crossed, body erect, with attentiveness fixed before him.

Absence of the Five Hindrances

He has cast away Lust; he dwells with a heart free from lust; from lust he cleanses his heart.

He has cast away Ill-will; he dwells with a heart free from ill-will; cherishing love and compassion toward all living beings, he cleanses his heart from ill-will.

He has cast away Torpor and Dullness; he dwells free from torpor and dullness; loving the light, with watchful mind, with clear consciousness, he cleanses his mind from torpor and dullness.

He has cast away Restlessness and Mental Worry; dwelling with mind undisturbed, with heart full of peace, he cleanses his mind from restlessness and mental worry.

He has cast away Doubt; dwelling free from doubt, full of confidence in the good, he cleanses his heart from doubt.

The Trances (8th Step)

He has put aside these five Hindrances and come to know the paralyzing corruptions of the mind. And far from sensual impressions, far from unwholesome things, he enters into the Four Trances.

Insight (1st Step)

But whatsoever there is of feeling, perception, mental formation, or consciousness—all these phenomena he regards as “impermanent,” “subject to pain,” as infirm, as an ulcer, a thorn, a misery, a burden, an enemy, a disturbance, as empty and “void of an Ego”; and turning away from these things, he directs his mind towards the abiding, thus: “This, verily, is the Peace, this is the Highest, namely the end of all formations, the forsaking of every substratum of rebirth, the fading away of craving; detachment, extinction: *Nirvana*.” And in this state he reaches the “Cessation of Passions.”

Nirvana

And his heart becomes free from sensual passion, free from the passion for existence, free from the passion of ignorance. "Freed am I!": this knowledge arises in the liberated one; and he knows: "Exhausted is rebirth, fulfilled the Holy Life; what was to be done, has been done; naught remains more for this world to do."

Forever am I liberated,
This is the last time that I'm born,
No new existence waits for me.

This, verily, is the highest, holiest wisdom: to know that all suffering has passed away.

This, verily, is the highest, holiest peace: appeasement of greed, hatred and delusion.

The Silent Thinker

"I am" is a vain thought; "I am not" a vain thought; "I shall be" is a vain thought; "I shall not be" is a vain thought. Vain thoughts are a sickness, an ulcer, a thorn. But after overcoming all vain thoughts, one is called "silent thinker." And the thinker, the Silent One, does no more arise, no more pass away, no more tremble, no more desire. For there is nothing in him that he should arise again. And as he arises no more, how should he grow old again? And as he grows no more old, how should he die again? And as he dies no more, how should he tremble? And as he trembles no more, how should he have desire?

The True Goal

Hence, the purpose of the Holy Life does not consist in acquiring alms, honor, or fame, nor in gaining morality, concentration, or the eye of knowledge.

And those, who formerly, in the past, were Holy and Enlightened Ones, those Blessed Ones also have pointed out to their disciples this self-same goal, as has been pointed out by me to my disciples. And those, who afterwards, in the future, will be Holy and Enlightened Ones, those Blessed Ones also will point out to their disciples this self-same goal, as has been pointed out by me to my disciples. However, Disciples, it may be that (after my passing away) you might think: "Gone is the doctrine of our Master. We have no Master more." But you should not think;

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for the Law and the Discipline, which I have taught you, Will, after my death, be your master.

The Law be your light,
The Law be your refuge!
Do not look for any other refuge!

Disciples, the doctrines, which I advised you to penetrate, you should well preserve, well guard, so that this Holy Life may take its course and continue for ages, for the weal and welfare of the many, as a consolation to the world, for the happiness, weal and welfare of heavenly beings and men.



Buddhist Room, Library of Congress

From the reading...

“That unshakable deliverance of the heart: that, verily, is the object of the Holy Life...”

Topics Worth Investigating

1. Explain whether you think that the notion of “karmically wholesome” as used in this reading is meant primarily in a moral (*i.e.*, having to do with right and wrong) or in a psychological sense (*i.e.*, having to do with behavioral consequences).
2. Could it be argued that suffering ought *not* be extinguished? Doesn’t suffering actually serve a helpful service in life? For example, Franz Kafka writes, “Suffering is the positive element in this world, indeed it is the only link between this world and the positive.”² Or Miguel de Unamuno writes, “There is no true love save in suffering, and in this world we have to choose either love, which is suffering, or happiness. . . . Man is the more man—that is, the more divine—the greater his capacity for suffering, or rather, for anguish.”³
3. Discuss whether or not you think Buddha would agree with Krishnamurti’s distinction between “introspection” and “awareness”:

Introspection is self-improvement and therefore introspection is self-centeredness. Awareness is not self-improvement. On the contrary, it is the ending of the self, of the “I,” with all its peculiar idiosyncrasies, memories, demands, and pursuits. In introspection there is identification and condemnation. In awareness there is no condemnation or identification; therefore, there is no self-improvement. There is a vast difference between the two.⁴

4. Explain how the achievement of non-attachment in Buddhism is unlike Søren Kierkegaard’s ethico-religious stage embodying the “teleological suspension of the ethical” or Friedrich Nietzsche’s master morality of “standing beyond good and evil.”
5. After studying this chapter, do you think the following criticism of Buddhism by Immanuel Kant is well founded?

We men know very little *a priori*, and have our senses to thank for nearly all our knowledge. Through experience we know only appearances. . . but not the *modum noumenon*. . . not things as they are in themselves. . . God knows all things as they are in themselves *a priori* and immediately through an intuitive understanding. . . If we were to flatter ourselves so much as to claim that we know the *modum*

2. Franz Kafka. *Dearest Father: Stories and Other Writings*. Trans. Ernst Kaiser and Eithne Wilkins. New York: Schocken Books, 1954.

3. Miguel de Unamuno. *The Tragic Sense of Life*. Trans. J. E. C. Fitch. New York: Macmillan, 1921.

4. Jiddu Krishnamurti. “On Awareness,” in *First and Last Freedom*. New York: Harper & Row, 1975.

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noumenon, then we would have to be in community with God so as to participate immediately in the divine ideas. To expect this in the present life is the business of mystics and theosophists. Thus arises the mystical self-annihilation of China, Tibet, and India, in which one is under the delusion that he will finally be dissolved in the Godhead.⁵

6. Explain and amplify the meaning of Pirsig’s assertion:

The Buddha, the Godhead, resides quite as comfortably in the circuits of a digital computer or the gears of a cycle transmission as he does at the top of a mountain or in the petals of a flower.⁶

7. Buddha states the Noble Eightfold Path is “the way that leads to the extinction of suffering.” Is it clearly the case that suffering ought to be extinguished? For example, Kafka writes:

Suffering is the positive element in this world, indeed it is the only link between this world and the positive.⁷

Is Kafka referring to the same kind of suffering as is the Buddha?

5. Immanuel Kant. *Lectures on Philosophical Theology*. Trans. Allen W. Wood and Gertrude M. Clark. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978. 86.

6. Robert M. Pirsig. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. New York: William Morrow, 1974.

7. Franz Kafka. *Dearest Father: Stories and Other Writings*. Trans. Ernst Kaiser and Eithne Wilkins. New York: Schocken Books, 1954.

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