

Also by Darryl Bailey

Dismantling the Fantasy

Essence Revisited

A Summary of Existence

Finding Wholeness, Harmony and Rest

“What the ...”

buddhessence

darryl bailey

BUDDHESSENCE

Copyright ©Darryl Bailey 2002, 2004 (revised edition), 2025, 2026

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the author.

With thanks to Link Phillips for the original layout.

Editor: Sandra Stuart.

2025 Cover and interior layout: Julian Noyce.

Cover image from an original painting by Darryl Bailey.

*For those who will lean on
the sun and the moon, and tuck
the universe under their arm.*

Table of Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	xi
<i>Introduction</i>	1
1. Remembered Words	5
2. Child's Play.....	21
3. Old Style.....	45
4. From the Buddha	51
<i>Afterword</i>	57
<i>References</i>	63
<i>Notes</i>	65
<i>About the Author</i>	83
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	84

Foreword

Back when *Buddhessence* was first published, a friend gave me a copy and I was immediately blown away. I had been working on studying translations of the Pali Suttas, and found them difficult going. But when I read what Darryl Bailey considered the essence of the Buddha's teachings, a whole new world opened up for me. Not only was I better able to understand what the translations of the Suttas were teaching, I also found a brilliant teaching on *anicca* (impermanence) that significantly deepened my understanding of this most important topic. And all this was from just the first chapter.

Darryl goes on to show the parallels between the psychological development of an infant into a fully functioning human being and the teachings of the Buddha on Dependent Origination. This naturally leads into a discussion of the generation of a sense of self and the ensuing craving and clinging that leads to so much trouble. This is truly a deep dive into what the Buddha was teaching.

I've found this book so profound that I use parts of it during my dhamma talk on impermanence as well as having been introduced to ideas that, not only had I missed

BUDDHESSENCE

in earlier reading of the Suttas, but that now underpin much of what I consider to be the heart of the Buddha's message of freedom. May your study of this book inspire you as much as it has me.

Leigh Brasington
author of *Right Concentration*

Preface

For over one hundred years, Buddhism has been making its way into North American culture. The majority of people interested in this teaching have not read the Buddhist scriptures and probably never will. Instead, they rely on approaches and overviews presented by popular teachers from various cultures. In this situation, the precision of the original teaching is often lost.

Two examples immediately come to mind. First, the Buddha's teaching is frequently summarized as "Life is suffering." This is different from his version, which states, "The five focuses of clinging are suffering."¹

The second example involves the underlying reason for this affliction. It is often stated that "desire is the cause." The original instruction states, "The cause of suffering is the desire which arises when things have the appearance of being enjoyable and (ultimately) fulfilling."²

In addition to these misrepresentations, some aspects of the teaching are being ignored altogether. As a result, we hear that the doctrine consists of the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, the Five Hindrances, the Five Precepts, and so on. While these are wonderful summaries, there

are threads of thought running throughout the scriptures that offer a more cohesive analysis. This book presents those essential teachings in what I hope is a clear and accessible way while retaining their detail, their subtlety, and their depth.

The translations I have used are a combination of works from The Buddhist Publication Society, The Pali Text Society, and a few others. These are reliable interpretations, but are often stilted in their phrasing. I have adjusted the quotations without changing the meaning, making them easier to read. I have removed unnecessary repetition and added bracketed notes to clarify certain points or to paraphrase a long piece.

The passages chosen are not esoteric; they are very much part of the recorded teaching and their translation is not in question. My choices and comments are based on thirty-six years of exploring the meditative process.

The Buddha often referred to himself as the *Tathagata*, which, nine-hundred years later, had about eight different translations. I have chosen to use “one who knows the truth.” Though not literal, it encompasses the general meaning of all of them. A more exact translation would be “one who is to thusness come” or “one who is to thusness gone.”

For those wishing to read the suttas (scriptures), I would suggest beginning with a reliable anthology such as *The*

BUDDHESSENCE

Life of the Buddha by Bhikkhu Nanamoli. Within the scriptures, some portions are more accessible than others; I recommend the *Majjhima-Nikaya* or the *Sutta-Nipata*.

Much of the information presented in this book is a reworking of articles I first presented in the newsletters of Amaravati Buddhist Monastery, Hertfordshire, England, while living there as a monk.

The quotations often use the general noun “man” and the pronoun “he”. In reading this work, please substitute those old terms for ones appropriate to your gender.

Introduction

The Buddha spent a lifetime offering the same teaching in a number of different ways, so it is difficult to capture its subtleties from one vantage point. This book offers a variety of perspectives. Although the different approaches each have unique qualities, in their overlapping they reinforce each other and the main elements of the doctrine.

The first chapter explains the foundations of the teaching in general terms. The second offers an examination of the same basics from a deeper point of view. In the third chapter, the ideas are freely adapted to an older style similar to the *Vedas* or the *Upanishads*, which were the established religious doctrine of the Buddha's time. The fourth chapter is a collection of scriptural quotations used in sections one and two, with a few additions. Alone, without commentary, these statements have a power that explains why they remain an important teaching to this day.

All scriptural references are from the *Pali Canon*. For a key to sources, see *References*, page 63.

*A human being is part of the whole that we call
the universe. He experiences himself, his
thoughts and feelings, as something separated
from the rest—a kind of optical illusion.
This illusion is a prison. ¹*

Albert Einstein

Chapter 1

Remembered Words

Most of what is taught as Buddhism is presented through the influence of the many traditions that came after the Buddha's death. Each tradition has its own way of using the scriptures, emphasizing some and ignoring others.

One group of teachings, small compared to all that is known as Buddhism, is accepted as the remembered words of the once living Buddha. In the Theravada tradition of Southeast Asia, these teachings are found in the *Pali Canon*; in the Mahayana traditions of China, Tibet, and Japan, they are found in the Chinese *Agamas*. Apart from a few deletions, the only difference between these two collections is in their order of arrangement. What are known as the four great *Nikayas* of the *Pali Canon*, and parts of the fifth, can also be found in the Chinese *Agamas*.

Because of the remarkable agreement between these records, it is presumed they come from teachings remembered by the monks who had lived with the Buddha. They memorized these teachings during his lifetime and

organized them within the months following his death. The Abhidhamma variations were created two-hundred years later, the Mahayana variations arose three-hundred years after the Buddha's demise, and the Theravada Commentaries were compiled one-thousand years after his passing.

Reading the scriptures can be frustrating. They present a confusing array of topics, from labyrinths of ancient cosmology to fantastic tales of supernatural powers or bizarre descriptions of the Buddha's physical appearance. The amount of detail and divergence of information are mind-boggling. Reading pieces at random often produces nothing more than a headache; however, a thorough reading of the entire collection uncovers a simple, repeated message that encompasses, and cuts through, the larger mass of information.

The Buddha described a world of suffering that is born, ages, and dies, only to be reborn again; over and over, it passes away and reappears in the life of every human being. He also described his own escape from this cycle.

*Being, myself, subject to birth, ageing, sickness,
death, sorrow, and defilement, and seeking an
end to this bondage I attained it.¹*

The biggest factor in his escape from this cycle of suffering was the recognition that everything in life is changing.

For the Buddha, this was the most important realization any human being could have.

There will come a time when even the great mountains and the earth itself will be gone. All things are impermanent, unstable, and insecure. Although it is of great benefit to feed Buddhas, to feed the [monastic] community, to build monasteries, to follow the moral precepts, and to practice loving-kindness, it is of more benefit to maintain the perception of impermanence. It is better to live a single day perceiving how things rise and fall than to live a century not perceiving this. Everything is changing. Not even as much as this [pinch of dust] is unchanging. Physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness, all of these arise, pass away, and, while they are present, they change. They are insubstantial, without essence. Physical form is like a lump of froth, and feelings like a water bubble; perception is a mirage; mental activities are like the empty plantain trunk, and consciousness a conjuring trick.²

This teaching of impermanence is more than the notion that everything is changing. It is the deeper understanding that existence is a great, unformed presence. If we examine the movement of smoke, we do not see any objects within its flow. We can identify certain shapes and patterns, but in

the very moment that we identify them, they have already changed. There is no fixed, stable formation, no thing, and no object. There is only an unformed happening.

But what if the smoke was moving at a much slower rate, perhaps as slowly as a mountain? Would it be obvious that there is no lasting formation within the movement? In our daily existence, we perceive the forms of people, things, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness. Do they remain the same from moment to moment or are they changing? Thoughts, feelings, and perceptions change quickly; bodies, cities, and mountains change slowly; however, all of them will eventually grow old and fade away.

No formation stays the same from moment to moment, not even the ones that change slowly. They do not remain the same for hundreds of years and then grow old overnight. Instead, there is a gradual growth and decline. Since they are always changing, no entity of any kind is ever created. If all things arise, only to change and pass away, then no thing comes to stay, to be.

Life is like a flowing river, never pausing for a moment, an instant, or a second. There is an unformed [happening]. It is ignorance [of the unformed] that gives rise to [a belief in] formations. To believe that there is permanence [formation] in the impermanent [flowing] is a distortion of perception, thought, and view.³

Life does not have a specific form; however, just as we can identify patterns in smoke, it is possible to distinguish countless formations in the flow of life. We have a tendency to focus on these as we mature from infancy to adulthood, and the Buddha described this emerging focus in great detail.

A young infant does not have ideas of a self, things, rites and rituals, sensual pleasures, or beings. A young infant does not have ideas of body, speech, or intention.⁴

For a newly delivered child, formations have not been identified, and the desires and activities based upon them have not yet arisen. There are no ideas of a self and a world—there is only the buzz and pulse of the moment, without interpretation.

Yet the underlying tendency to [develop] self-view, rites and rituals, sensual desire, and ill-will lies within him. When he grows and his faculties mature, he plays at games. When he grows and his faculties mature [further] the youth habitually enjoys himself with the sensual pleasure [of formations]: sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. On seeing a physical form, he wants it if it is pleasing and dislikes it if it is displeasing. Absorbed in liking and disliking, he clings to any feeling he feels. On hearing a sound, smelling an odour, tasting

BUDDHESSENCE

*a flavour, touching a substance, noticing a mental object, there is clinging.*⁵

In this focus on formations, the essential, unformed flow of life is seen as various mental and physical objects, and we become obsessed with these. In the Buddha's understanding, birth of the self takes place within this development.

*Birth is origin, descent into the womb, delivery, the appearance of the five groups [of formations], and the functioning of the sense faculties [around these formations]. One is called a being when firmly entangled in desiring [these five groups] physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness.*⁶

All of us develop the desire for these formations as children, fascinated by the patterns that can be experienced and habitually clinging to them for satisfaction and security. We carry this focus into adulthood, attempting to find contentment by controlling formations such as people, places, events, ideas, emotions, and states of consciousness. We ignore the fact that everything is changing. These formations alter beyond our control. It was evident to the Buddha that we create unnecessary misery in our lives by fixating on these patterns, because when they change, we suffer.

The five focuses of clinging [the five groups of formations] create suffering. When a man has desire for physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness then, when they change, sorrow, pain, and despair arise in him. This is the cause of suffering. This desire arises when things appear to be enjoyable and [ultimately] fulfilling.⁷

Many things offer pleasure and satisfaction, and we hope to maintain or increase these qualities rather than live with life's unpleasant aspects, such as dissatisfaction and insecurity. Consequently, the desire to control these formations is strong.

There is a tendency to fixate on four types of formations in particular: pleasant sensations, explanations of existence, ideas of a self, and habitual, systematized ways of behaving.

There are four kinds of clinging: clinging to sensual pleasures, clinging to views, clinging to self-theories, and clinging to rites and rituals.⁸

Wanting to make life pleasant, we attempt to grasp enjoyable sensations while pushing away the unpleasant. Wanting to explain life, to have it make sense, to feel secure, we fixate on thinking and this, in turn, generates self-absorption with a focus on ideas of me and mine. We have a tendency to cling to established behaviour, our

systems and techniques, becoming rigid and inflexible with expectations of what life should or should not be.

Seeking our happiness by clinging to this behaviour, there is hope for completion and contentment; there is hope of escaping our confusions and fears. But the pleasures always fade, leaving us wanting more. The ideas alter, one view moving to another, never giving the unquestionable clarity they appear to offer. The sense of self transforms the natural difficulties of life into personal trauma with its “Why me? Poor me. Only me.”

Spending our days wanting this, not wanting that, wanting to be more than what we are, hoping to reach the end of our desires, we are always disappointed. Even when pleasures do not change quickly, our feelings about them do, as satisfaction turns to dissatisfaction. Fulfillment is temporary, and a recurring sense of loss, frustration, and sorrow provokes new cycles in this attachment to formations.

Ignorance [of the flowing, unformed quality of life] gives rise to [a tendency to fixate on] formations and this gives rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair.⁹

What do we do with a situation like this? For the Buddha the answer was simple.

A wise disciple sees this and is no longer

*fascinated by physical forms, feelings,
perceptions, mental activities, and
consciousness.¹⁰*

Seeing beyond the immediate pleasure and fascination of these formations, we can see the long-term frustration and desperation in our attempts to control them. Before seeing this, we strive to acquire and regulate all manner of things (pleasures, possessions, relationships, education, career, and so on). Becoming aggressive and irritated in the pursuit of these formations, and plagued by the sense that they are never enough, we run to many forms of distraction: sexuality, fantasy, drugs, alcohol, food, clothing, and entertainment. Failing to find fulfillment, we can become depressed and apathetic.

The Buddha suggested laying aside these attachments, offering a training with rules of conduct that would interrupt these old habits. By not following their usual pursuits and various distractions, his students became more sensitive to, and mindful of, the processes underlying these drives.

*Rules of morality were proclaimed for the sake
of cultivating mindfulness.¹¹*

Beyond restraining old behaviour and developing a general awareness, he also asked his students to experience a change of focus.

Going to the forest or to an empty room, sitting down, setting the body erect and establishing mindfulness; mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out; experiencing the whole body, calming the bodily formation, experiencing delight, experiencing pleasure; calming the mental formation, experiencing the mind, lightening the mind, concentrating the mind, liberating the mind. Contemplating impermanence, fully aware and mindful. Having set aside worldly wants and grief, he observes with equanimity. When not focusing on perceptions of village, people, forest, earth, consciousness, and nothingness, the disturbances that are caused by these are not present.¹²

Opening to the sensations of the body and the breath allows an experience of the entire moment. No longer obsessed with even subtle objects, such as space, consciousness, or nothingness, we come to the complete flow of sights, sounds, touches, tastes, smells, and thoughts. At times, interpretations and formations can fall away.

Going beyond perceptions of form, not focusing on perceptions of difference, going beyond [ideas of] space, consciousness, and nothingness. Going beyond [ideas of] perception and non-perception. Sitting with awareness extending over the entire body.

Formations have ceased and subsided, the faculties become exceptionally clear.¹³

This absence of ideas and formations is temporary. Whether they are present or not, in the experiencing of the entire moment we step out of our usual fixations and discover an innate capacity to simply attend. In allowing the rising and passing of all sensations, we experience the full, unformed flow of life. No longer caught within the constant push and pull of liking and disliking particular formations, the urge to control is allowed to subside. This is experienced as a sense of freedom. Initially restricted to a period of formal meditation, it offers the possibility of an even greater liberation.

Mindfulness will establish the seven components of enlightenment [attention, investigation of reality, energy, joy, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity]. These seven components will bring freedom through understanding.¹⁴

There is the possibility of new learning. Discovering from direct experience that all things are changing, we begin to question our attachment to various formations. We can no longer hope that pleasant sensations will offer a lasting contentment. Stepping out of our thought realms to experience the fullness of the moment, we are no longer lost in narrow interpretations or self-absorbed fantasies. In dropping the attachments and frustrations of these

old routines and discovering an inborn sense of joy and balance, the misery of the old habits is revealed. Consequently, the attachment to them weakens.

Life is like a flowing mountain river, never pausing for a moment or an instant or a second. Perceiving impermanence in all formations then all formations will be seen as insubstantial [changing, not lasting]. Perceiving impermanence, the mind does not reach for gain [for absolute control]. Knowing that physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness are insubstantial, fading away, and [ultimately] unsatisfying, the attraction to these is given up. With no attachment to physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness then, when they change, no sorrow, pain, grief, and despair arises.

Perceiving [no lasting formation,] no mentality or materiality, the mind is rid of the conceits of I and mine, this body and consciousness. The mind, with understanding, is set free from the stain of sensual desire [ideas of endless pleasure], the stain of being [ideas of self and world], the stain of views [interpretations], and the stain of ignorance [ideas of permanence].

Supreme emptiness [liberation] is the presence of the six sensory fields [the happening of this moment] without the stain of sensual desire, the stain of being, and the stain of ignorance. That which is absent [desire, self, world, and permanence], is absent. That which is present [the happening of the moment], is present. Whoever, in the past, reached and remained in pure emptiness [freedom], it was this that they reached. By not clinging to views, by seeing life clearly and being freed from all sense desires, one is not born again [into delusion and clinging].¹⁵

Understanding the flowing, unformed nature of existence frees us from the obsessive attachment to formations, allowing us to greet the flow of life with flexibility and resilience. We do not refuse the essential parts of life that are unpleasant. We do not become bound in ideas of a world or a self. We do not attempt to restrain the natural flow of things. And we do not cling to rigid, habitual ways of behaving.

In letting go of misguided attachments, interpretations, and futile attempts at absolute control, we let go of this cycle of delusion and suffering. No longer fixating on frustrating activities, we experience a natural sense of peace that permeates every moment.

BUDDHESSENCE

The ending of greed, hatred, and delusion is the naturally non-distressed Nibbana, freedom from dependency [on formations].¹⁶

The Buddha's teaching of liberation does not destroy our ability to perceive form or to think, nor does it lead to an avoidance of responsibilities. Instead, it puts our views into perspective, allowing them to be used in beneficial ways and not for creating misery. Once we are truly aware of the focuses and activities that create unnecessary suffering, we do not create that suffering for anyone.

When greed, hatred, and delusion are abandoned, a man does not choose for his own afflictions or for the affliction of others.¹⁷

This release does not consist of a single flash of insight. It is a growing understanding that can eventually manifest in every moment of our lives. In one teaching, the Buddha mentioned seven ways of releasing ourselves from all trouble and woe. The root cause of conflict is revealed through insight, discovering any misconceptions and unhealthy behaviour. This new understanding helps to replace old tendencies with wholesome ones. Other problems will be solved through the wise use of life's essentials: food, shelter, clothing, and medicine. Endurance is needed, for no matter how wisely life is lived it holds inherent difficulties such as physical pain. We can also avoid situations and companions that do not support healthful ways of living. And finally, we can continue to use our capacities

BUDDHESSENCE

for awakening: attention, investigation of reality, energy, joy, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity (M 2).

This awakening is the process of meditation. Essentially, it is life expressing itself fully, allowing us to explore and learn. In this, we discover capacities and benefits that have always been available to us if we had simply taken the time to look. In the words of the Buddha,

“Realizing freedom of mind and the freedom of knowing how evil, unprofitable things end.”¹⁸

Chapter 2

Child's Play

The Buddha's teaching on rebirth, which he called Dependent Arising, is a rich vein of discovery. There are those who claim it is a doctrine of reincarnation but his deepest instructions do not support this. There is a well-known story of how he scolded one of his monks who was teaching that consciousness went from this life to another. The Buddha declared this had never been his view (M 38). In other instances he referred to individuals being reborn in various realms. When another of his monks questioned him on this, he explained that he was not trying to deceive anyone with these ideas, but that some people are inspired by such talk (M 68). In one situation he stated that someone who understood the truth could not be regarded as existing (S XXII, 87). In many of these interactions, it is obvious that the teaching of Dependent Arising is not about reincarnation. Perhaps the easiest way to approach it is to consider our own development, from infancy to adulthood.

Imagine what life is like for a newborn. We do not arrive with a head full of ideas; all that exists is the rush of sensation. None of us exits the womb saying, "Hi Mom. Hi

Doc. My name is so-and-so.” Instead, there is a buzzing, swirling event without interpretation. We will spend months learning to focus on shapes and patterns before giving them names. Upon leaving the womb, no one is born because there are no ideas of being someone. There is no world because there is no idea of a world. The moment will eventually contain these ideas, but the mysterious, vibrant pulse and tremble of life is not an idea, it is not a word, and it is present long before any interpretation arises.

It is important to understand how and when the ideas begin. For a detailed description of this we can turn to the people who study human development.

Initially, the baby is conscious of a confused profusion of sounds, feelings, tastes, and, after birth, of sights. They are as senseless as the patterns of a kaleidoscope. Presumably [newborns] experience people and events as simple “streams of impressions.” Apparently the ability to detect and discriminate patterns is innate. Infants begin to form mental representations for [these] patterns. The [patterns of the] senses begin to “differentiate” during the first year [seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling].

The fact that we perceive objects without even seeming to try is extremely misleading. [The

first month,] babies scan the boundaries of faces as if they were trying to “construct” a form and/or determine its location in space. Infants older than two months scan figures as if they were trying to determine what these objects are. Perhaps we are not too far off if we characterize the [newborn] as a form “constructor” and the older infant as a form “interpreter” [material form and mental name].

Infants do not distinguish between the self [the body] and non-self until four to six months of age. Early reaching is a hit-or-miss proposition. In contrast, infants older than 20 weeks can make corrections to guide their hands to the target [contact]. The infant begins to organize sensory experiences and motor responses into behavioural structures [ways of being]. Responses that occur by chance and prove satisfying [pleasant] are now performed over and over [clinging]. They are the first co-ordinated habits to appear. The pleasure they bring stimulates their repetition [craving].

When [the baby] is in the midst of an action, he expects to complete it. If he is stopped, energy overflows into pathways that cause the baby to kick, flail his arms and cry [frustration, irritation, sorrow].¹

These researchers are saying that when we watch a baby being born into the world this is not happening for the baby. For the newborn, there is no baby, no world, no beginning, no ending, no coming, and no going. There is an unformed jumble of sensations and the potential to create ideas from patterns within those sensations. It will take eight months to create the most basic ideas of a baby and a world (WN 232). Along with this interpretation is the development of our first habit—the pursuit of pleasure—as well as the sorrow and anger that arises when we lose that pleasure.

Using the main points, we can summarize this development in a basic formula. While ignoring the flowing, unformed aspect of life, there is a tendency to fixate on patterns (formations). This patterning gives rise to ideas of consciousness (the senses), material form and mental name, the body, contact with other forms, and feelings (pleasant, unpleasant, neutral). The focus on feelings gives rise to craving, clinging, ways of being, loss, and sorrow. These are major, and easily observable, highpoints in the development of every human being.

In the teaching of Dependent Arising, the Buddha made the following observations:

Life is like a flowing mountain river, never pausing for a moment or an instant or a second. There is an unformed [happening]. Ignorance [of the unformed] gives rise to [a

focus on] formations. Formations give rise to consciousness [the senses], mental name and material form, body, contact, feelings [pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral], craving, clinging, being, birth, ageing, and death [change and loss], sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair.²

The similarities between the two teachings are obvious and increase as we go further.

For the [newborn], sensations may combine to produce a global experience, a confused profusion of sounds, feelings, tastes [and] sights. Around eight months things [objects] exist, [then] space [and] time. The self arises. No longer a kaleidoscope of meaningless sensations, it is a world, [an] interpretation.³

—Psychology

A young infant does not have the idea of self, things, rites and rituals, sensual pleasures [and] beings. There is an unformed [happening], a flowing. Ignorance [of the unformed nature of life] gives rise to [a focus on] formations. Formations give rise to physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness. The self is created from [these].⁴

—Buddha

The self is not there at birth but arises in the process of social development. Infants do not distinguish between the [physical] self and non-self [other things] until four to six months of age. [This] is only the first step in the development of a personal identity. They [then] begin to notice some of the ways that people differ and to categorize themselves on these dimensions [mental descriptions]. It appears that children acquire the concept of a private thinking self, that others can't see, between the ages of three- and-a-half and five. Somewhere between the ages of six and eight, children will think of this private self as the true self, self as knower [perceiver, awareness]. Twelve- to fifteen-year-olds face an "identity crisis" in that, no longer sure who they are, [they] must grapple with the question "who will I become?"⁵

—Psychology

A young infant does not have the idea of self, yet the underlying tendency to self-view lies within him. There are three types of self that are acquired. The first has [physical] form, the second is constructed by the mind, [mental descriptions] based on the limbs and faculties [of the physical form]. The third is formless and consists in perception [knowing, awareness]. The untaught ordinary person

BUDDHESSENCE

*[then] wonders “Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going to?”*⁶

—Buddha

For both the psychologists and the Buddha, birth of a self and a world does not occur until long after delivery. It is the birth of an interpretation, an idea, and the activity created by that viewpoint. Some crude patterning probably begins in the womb, but our familiar ideas of existence develop over many years.

*Birth is origin, descent into the womb, delivery, the appearance of the five groups [of formations], and the functioning of the sense faculties [around those formations].*⁷

—Buddha

Both describe this development as interdependent.

*It is important to remember that human development is a holistic process; each of these components of “self” [and world] depends, in part, on changes that are taking place in other areas of development.*⁸

—Psychology

That [component] comes to be when there is this [development]; that arises dependent on the arising of this. That does not come to be

*when there is not this.*⁹

—Buddha

The elements of our world-view and the activities based upon them arise together. We could not have the concept of perception without having the idea of consciousness. Ideas of a body naturally give rise to identifying those patterns that are not the body; thus the two together give rise to notions of contact and feeling. A strong focus on patterns of pleasure gives rise to desire for that pleasure. If one element is missing then others cannot arise. This is why the Buddha called it a Dependent Arising.

One of the most significant aspects of this entire process is the idea of permanence.

*Between eight and twelve months the baby appears to understand that objects are permanent. This understanding does not happen suddenly, it develops gradually. As his understanding develops, things around him stop materializing and dematerializing and stay put. But for everything to stay put takes a certain amount of memory. What was a world of motion now becomes “permanent,” a fixed place of address.*¹⁰

—Psychology

For the child, life is the rush and swirl of changing sensations. To have permanence, he needs to remember those

sensations. The memories are compared to the present and similarities are noticed, giving the impression that things are the same. Ignoring the signs of change and flow, the child focuses on the sameness, creating the sense of permanence. To the Buddha, this was a critical stage of development.

*To believe that there is permanence
[formation] in the impermanent [flow]
is a distortion of perception, thought,
and view.¹¹*

These teachings characterize self and world as ideas, suggesting that these ideas do not describe what is actually happening. Ignoring the fullness of the moment, we focus on parts, on patterns, giving them names and describing their interactions, thus creating the self and the world out of small views. Most people have the idea of being a self, in a body, in a world. Scientists have viewed life as atoms, molecules, chemical processes, or lines of force. Some religions view existence as consciousness itself. All of these are merely points of view.

*[It] is a superstructure of ideas [creating]
various concepts and functions, some of which
are self, world, other people, time, space, logic,
purpose, various inhibitions, conscious fears
and defenses. These patterns are only some
of many possible patterns that could have
formed.¹²*

—Psychology

Ignorance [of the unformed swirl of life] gives rise to [a focus on] formations. Formations form physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness. The self is created from physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness. Rebirth is the persistent attachment to [these five groups of patterns]. This field of views is called the wilderness of views, the thicket of views, the fetter of views.¹³

—Buddha

All of us construct ideas about existence. In the early stages of our growth, we are not strongly attached to these interpretations. As children, we are still connected to the larger happening of life, which is not an idea. Most of us can remember childhood being joyous, having a natural sense of well-being that we seldom experience in adulthood. Growing older, we live more within our worlds of thought, focusing on particular forms and the interpretations created around them. Lost in narrow views and habitual reactions, we ignore the vibrant, pulsing fullness of the moment.

Early infant development has four basic tendencies. The first is to fixate on specific sensations, clinging to those that are pleasant while rejecting the unpleasant. The second tendency is to turn away from directly experiencing life as attention focuses on mental interpretations,

becoming lost in worlds of thought. The third tendency is to develop the idea of a self, an invisible, inner being that is separate from everything and everyone else. The fourth is to develop habitual modes of behaviour, rites and rituals, systems and techniques. These tendencies continue into adulthood.

*There are four kinds of clinging: clinging to sensual pleasures, clinging to views, clinging to self-theories, and clinging to rites and rituals.*¹⁴

Clinging to pleasure, we struggle with a changing, flowing life that offers both the pleasant and the unpleasant. There is a constant mental complaint about the unpleasant qualities as we search for pleasant distractions. This permeates every moment of our day. Whether we complain about the minor dislikes of the weather and our job, or we complain about the major traumas of our health and our relationships, we have an ongoing attachment to the pleasant, a refusal of the unpleasant, and the psychological conflict of that preoccupation.

Living in the habit of focusing on particular forms, naming them, and describing their interactions, we fail to notice that life is a vibrant pulse and tingle, not an idea. We come to believe that only thinking will bring clarity to our lives. Hoping to find an ultimate explanation of existence, it becomes difficult to remain with the actual happening of life itself. Clinging to a world of small views

and conflicting opinions, we feel fragmented, losing touch with the inherent sense of wholeness experienced in childhood.

Lost in ideas of a self, we feel isolated, making every incident a personal one. “What’s wrong with me? Why me? Poor me. Only me. Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? What happens when I die?” As a result, we embark on various courses for self-improvement, hoping to create a sense of belonging and confidence, a sense of self that will never feel lonely, inadequate, or insecure.

We incline to habitual ways of behaving, creating routines, systems, and standards for living. We then react from these ideas and habits rather than responding sensitively to the moment. Staying within technique and tradition, we refuse the insecurities of exploring life beyond these boundaries.

In the attachment to pleasure, opinion, self, and habit, we attempt to find security and fulfillment. But everything is changing. The pleasures fade, and we inevitably race off in search of another distraction. The concepts can never explain the broader happening of life, offering instead the conflict of shifting and opposing views. If it arrives at all, self-satisfaction is short-lived, and we run to the next program or therapy that promises improvement. The standard is always raised in the desire to be something more.

We are forever frustrated in our attempts to reach lasting contentment and security through these usual routines, always feeling that more pleasure, more knowledge, more self-development, and more refined techniques are needed. No matter what we get, the end of our searching seems just out of reach. We are almost there but not quite.

These focuses give rise to five mental/emotional by-products. The first is wanting: an ongoing yearning for something more because our pursuits never ultimately satisfy us.

The second is a growing anger and resentment from the frustration of never being fulfilled, never reaching the end of our quest. The third is an increasing anxiety and fear related to the sense of self. The fourth is the laziness and insensitivity of living in mindless routines; it is the natural sloth and torpor of unquestioned habit and tradition. The fifth is a growing uncertainty and doubt regarding our ability to find happiness as our hopes for contentment are repeatedly frustrated. Our situation becomes muddled with conflict and emotion.

In Buddhism, these five by-products are known as the coverings because, once lost in them, it is difficult to examine our situation clearly (A V, 193). They become a strong focus of our lives. We experience them as the upset stomachs, hunched shoulders, gritted teeth, headaches, and emotional upheavals that are so common.

The five focuses of clinging [physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness] are suffering.¹⁵

Most of us take the development of our fixations, frustrations, and sorrow for granted, assuming that any healthy human being has this same experience. Functioning on viewpoints and activities established in our infancy, we seldom consider whether they are beneficial or not. Interminably lost within this development, we are not even aware of its existence despite feeling the unpleasant effects of it in conflict and emotional upheaval.

This is what the Buddha asks us to consider, suggesting that we live in illusions that create unnecessary suffering. He also suggests that seeing the situation clearly can dissolve both the illusions and the suffering. Consequently, the teaching of Dependent Arising points to the root cause of our unnecessary sorrows.

Ignorance [of the unformed, flowing nature of existence] gives rise to [a tendency to fixate on] formations. This gives rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair. That both you and I have had to travel and trudge through this long cycle [of delusion] is due to not discovering, not penetrating the truth. The cause of suffering is the desire that arises when things [formations] appear to be enjoyable and [ultimately] fulfilling. If a man has

BUDDHESSENCE

desire for [and attachment to] physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness then when they change, sorrow, pain, and despair arise in him. A wise [person] sees this and is no longer fascinated by physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness.

The mind with understanding is set free from the stain of desire [ideas of constant pleasure], the stain of being [ideas of self and world], the stain of views [interpretations], and the stain of ignorance [ideas of permanence]. Formerly, he acquired and developed attachments [to formations]. He experienced envy, desire, anger, ill will, ignorance and delusion; now he has abandoned them. It is like being freed from debt, disease, prison, and bondage.¹⁶

This is the freedom offered by this ancient tradition.

Questions now arise. How do we get this freedom? Are we being asked to adopt some strange belief system? Are we being offered another self-improvement course that ignores, or attempts to repress our confusion? Not at all—the answer is more direct and more effective.

It is only when we become absorbed in reality that we begin to approach the disintegration of the [old] orientation. Most of the time

[interpretation] is essentially non-conscious and even seemingly “automatic.” De-automatization [is] the undoing of [old interpretations] by re-investing actions and percepts with attention.

Contemplative meditation permits a different experience, permitting the adult to obtain a new, fresh perception of the world, freeing him from a stereotyped organization built up over the years. [It is the] undoing of a pattern in order to permit a new and perhaps more advanced experience.¹⁷

—Psychology

By paying attention to what is happening, we awaken from our old interpretations and see life as it actually is. For psychology, the subject of meditation and the freedom that comes from it is a recent consideration; but for the great meditative traditions, such as Buddhism, it is based on thousands of years of experience. The Buddha stated that he had discovered an ancient path. It was already ancient in his time.

This body [and this world] is [past] activity that must be experienced to be seen. This is the only way to end sorrow, pain, and grief—paying attention to and clearly comprehending the body, feelings, states of mind, and mental objects.

Life is like a flowing, mountain river, not pausing for a moment or an instant or a second. There is an unformed [happening]. When the mind sees that all things change, it does not reach for gain [for control]. If a man has desire for physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness, then, when they change, there is sorrow, pain, and despair. When one is freed from attachment to [these things] then, when they change, no sorrow arises in him.

[One who knows the truth] is freed from measuring [the unformed flow] in terms of physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness, and lives [knowing that it is] beyond measure, beyond explanation. Descriptions do not apply. [One who knows the truth] cannot be described as truly existing. How can you speak of existence or non-existence after death. When all ideas [about life] have been abolished, then all ways of explaining [life] have also been abolished.

Supreme emptiness [freedom] is the presence of the six sensory fields [the unformed happening of this moment] without the stain of sensual desire [the hope for constant

pleasure], without the stain of being [belief in ideas of self and world], and without the stain of ignorance [ideas of permanence]. That which is absent [desire, self, world, and permanence], is absent. That which is present [the happening of the moment], is present.

Feelings, thoughts, and perceptions still arise in an awakened one but he knows them as they arise, as they are present, and as they pass away. The ending of greed, hatred, and delusion is peace, the naturally, non-distressed Nibbana [the extinction of illusions and fixations].¹⁸

This liberation is a practical one. Too often, the teachings of these great traditions are given a mystical quality that makes them appear foolish or escapist. Contemplative meditation allows life to express itself fully and in experiencing this fullness, right down to the barest physical sensations, we have the opportunity to let fixations drop. We experience the entire process that we are, encountering an unformed flow, as physical sensations, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and states of consciousness arise and pass. In one instance, we are open to that flux; in another, we are absorbed in one small part of it. There are moments of freedom and moments of attachment, as the focus shifts from an open awareness to the usual preoccupations with specific forms, interpretations, tensions, emotions, and the restless urge to action these old fixations provoke.

When directly experiencing life, we discover a harmony and vitality in the simple happening of the moment. Initially, this is temporary; once the formal meditation ends, we fall back to our usual obsessions. However, in the move from freedom to attachment we notice that this behaviour creates suffering. Noticing the fixations on pleasures, viewpoints, and ideas of self, we meet the recurring frustration of these habits. They never satisfy us, and we begin to question the fascination with them. Will they ever lead to contentment, or is it their nature to leave us frustrated, confused, and wanting?

Have you ever found a possession, a self-theory, or a viewpoint that kept you free from [disappointment]?¹⁹

The usual fixations are experienced, along with the tensions and disappointments they produce. Discovering that we have been creating needless grief, we stop doing this. No effort is required to stop; the understanding of what we are doing brings this activity to an end. Without the greed and hatred of delusion we experience a sense of ease and contentment whether the moment is pleasant or unpleasant.

There is an ancient Hindu story that illustrates this. It tells of a man who enters a forest and sees a snake out of the corner of his eye. He leaps back in fear. After a moment of confusion, he looks again. He realizes that it is not a snake: it is a rope. In that moment, the snake, the

fear, and the fearful behaviour dissolve. In the same way, our own misunderstandings of life can dissolve. In taking an open and sensitive look, the beliefs and activities that are producing frustration and sorrow can be seen. When the beliefs are seen to be false and the activities are seen to produce disappointment, they come to an end. They end because the mind realizes a more healthful way of relating to life.

As a result of this learning, we have a more relaxed and vibrant existence. The pleasant and the unpleasant are received without struggle, in the understanding that both are valid parts of life. Seeing more clearly what can be influenced and what cannot, we govern what we can, and do not worry about the remainder. We use our thoughts effectively without floundering in narrow points of view, without believing opinions to be absolute truths or clinging to them for security, and no longer at odds with those who have different views. In organizing our lives, we remain alert to rigid reactions that tend to override sensitive responses. No longer wallowing in the vain, hopeful, and fearful thoughts about a self, we find an essential peace in the vibrant fullness of the moment, a presence beyond measure, beyond explanation.

When ignorance is abandoned, he no longer clings to sensual pleasures, views, rites and rituals, and self-theories.²⁰

This does not destroy our ability to experience pleasant

sensations. It does not destroy our ability to have a thought, think of the self, or create a routine. It does not destroy emotions. Instead, we are released from excessive attachment to these things, no longer hoping to find ultimate fulfillment in them. Seeing their limitations, we no longer obsess about them.

The tides of conceiving no longer sweep over one who stands on [wisdom, truth, detachment, and peace].²¹

We do not attempt to leap over, or get rid of, any aspect of what we are. Release comes through understanding the entire process that we are.

Understanding, as it actually is, suffering, the cause of suffering, the end of suffering, and the way leading to the end of suffering.

Understanding freedom of mind and understanding how evil, unprofitable things end, that is how there is an end to this whole collection of suffering.²²

Life has enough pain and difficulty without adding unnecessary misery. It also has an essential joy and wonder that we can experience when not fixating on other things.

Once there is clear understanding of the focuses and activities that create unnecessary suffering, we can examine

the areas of our life that might contain this behaviour—our thoughts, words, and actions.

*This is the way leading to the end of suffering:
right understanding, right intention, right
speech, right action, right work, right effort,
right mindfulness, and right concentration.²³*

Here, the word *right* does not refer to a rigid sense of moral judgment. Instead, it means clear and healthy. Having a clear understanding of our situation allows us to live in a wholesome way. The gradual waking from illusions and fixations is an experience of ever deepening freedom, and involves a new understanding of life. It is not something we can obtain through thinking or willpower. Instead, we need a willingness to explore our lives. This is what the teaching of Dependent Arising points to: through exploration, ignorance is abandoned, along with the suffering it creates. To discover the freedoms described here, we must see our usual behaviour patterns, paying attention to the life we are living. In this mindfulness, we can discover misguided notions and unhealthy behaviour. In the Buddha's opinion, it was the only way to end our confusions and conflicts.

Ignorance

*of the flowing, unformed nature of existence
creates a focus on
formations,
patterns in the flow, such as patterns of*

BUDDHESSENCE

consciousness

(seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling, thinking),

forms and names

(physical and mental divisions),

the body,

patterns of

contact

with other forms and the outline of

feelings

associated with that contact.

Fixating on the above formations creates

craving

for pleasant feelings,

clinging

to particular situations and habits, and

being,

(a belief in ideas of self and world

plus the clinging activities based on that belief).

This is

birth.

It leads to

ageing and death

(change and loss),

sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair,

wanting / yearning

frustration / anger

anxiety / fear

laziness / insensitivity

uncertainty / doubt.

Chapter 3

Old Style

The many forms of existence are ever changing. Like ripples on water, they rise, flow, and fade away. Some change quickly, some change slowly, but they all change. Life does not have a specific form. There is only a vital and vibrant dance without form.

Since this movement has no lasting shape, its appearance as a body, an object, an activity, a time, or a place is false. Not understanding this, the restless mind seeks out patterns of a self and a world, hoping to find something stable within the flow.

The mind seduces us with patterns of the senses and a perceivable world. It creates identification with these formations and cravings for the things of this world. It creates the sense of me and mine. It causes us to run in spirals of fear, hope, and frustration. When we move beyond this limited view, the phenomenal world gives way to reality.

All things are merely ripples in the river of life, an event beyond form or explanation. Most people are obsessed,

lost in ideas of a self and its difficulties in an insecure world. If we relax the fixation with forms and thoughts, realization of a greater truth is possible. Cease to obsess with ideas of body, mind, spirit, and world. Let go of these partial views and false identifications. Come to the broad and present happening of this moment and come to be the open sensitivity that is this great occurrence. Allow this pure and present fullness to reveal itself. This happening includes thinking but is not a thought; this happening is, even when thought subsides.

All forms are merely appearances of an unformed presence. This vital dance is not subject to birth and death. Attachment to formations is disappointing, subject to loss; the unformed is abiding peace, not subject to change. It is ever present, ever unformed. This essence is not touched in story and thought. It comes to those who know it beyond thought. Allow the full and vibrant happening of this moment to express itself.

Less definite than material form is the form of space. More subtle than the form of space is the form of consciousness. Less tangible than the form of consciousness is the form of nothingness. More refined than the form of nothingness is the form of pure being, neither perception nor non-perception. But beyond the limits of this wide-ranging obsession with finding and naming formations is the actual happening of the moment. It cannot be grasped by thought; it is not an idea. Those fixated on ideas and formations cannot realize it, but those

unattached to appearances and thought shall awaken to this broader event.

Just as waves upon the ocean are never more than the ocean itself, the various things of existence are the many appearances of a great, unformed, and inexplicable presence. It cannot be avoided. It is everywhere. It is the sun, the moon, and the stars. It is the old woman on the corner and the tree in the forest. Its shining is the shining of all things. Its power is immeasurable. It is beyond the idea of the senses. It is the ground of all experience. To realize this is to awaken to reality; not a me, not a you.

Fixating on forms misses the unformed. This vital occurrence is not matter, energy, or space. It is not past, present, or future. It is not consciousness. These are small and limiting views. Thoughts come and thoughts go. Use them skillfully when you must, but when they are not needed, why remain lost in these stories?

If we imagine castles in clouds, is that what clouds really are? There is no body. There is no mind. Ultimately, these forms are as changing as passing clouds. Like circles of smoke, or mist in the early morning, they rise and fall, ebb and flow, grow and fade. This great, unformed swirl is all that ever was and is.

From this ever-present fullness comes the persistent interest in particular formations, of you and me, of pain and pleasure. Not seeing the supreme and vital dance, we

become bound in illusions of form and formlessness with their subsequent desire and loss.

When the veil of illusion is removed, all appearances are recognized as appearances only and reality shines forth. All doubts and imaginings are corrected, and actions based on ignorance are brought to an end.

The wise understand the play of the real. They are not lost in dreams. They perceive and care for the body, yet they do not identify with it. They appear to be individuals, yet know their unformed essence to be in all things, everywhere. They act, yet they are not committed to old ways of acting. They receive the effects of past action with composure. While others run in efforts to satisfy the ego, the wise have stopped. No longer obsessed with views of a self and a world, they know these views for what they are.

The awakened let go of preferences, receiving all that life offers: pleasure or pain, gain or loss, praise or blame, joy or sorrow. No longer stuck in habit and opinion, they do what they must, letting go of the rest, supporting those around them in ways of clarity and well-being. As they open to what is, gone are the notions of what they should be, what life should be, what others should be.

Unfolding, enfolding, the ten thousand appearances of an unformed presence intertwine and mingle. Seasons come and go; flowers bloom and fade; thoughts, skills, and urges rise and pass—all moving to one great pulse.

BUDDHESSENCE

Summer does not compare itself to other summers, nor a rose to other roses. Each is perfect in its own way, in its own time.

Understanding this, the wise awaken to our own perfection. They can see our being unfolded—mere waves upon an ocean that ever rests unformed.

Chapter 4

From the Buddha

A young infant does not have the idea of self, things, rites and rituals, sensual pleasures, or beings. A young infant does not have the idea of body, speech, or intention, yet the underlying tendency to self-view, rites and rituals, sensual desire, and ill-will lies within him. When he grows and his faculties mature, the child plays at games. When he grows, and his faculties mature further, the youth enjoys himself with the sensual pleasure [of formations], with sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches.

On seeing a form, he lusts after it if it is pleasing and he dislikes it if it is displeasing. Absorbed in liking and disliking, he clings to whatever feeling he feels. On hearing a sound, smelling an odour, tasting a flavour, touching a substance, noticing a mental object, there is clinging. One is called a being when firmly entangled in physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness.

BUDDHESSENCE

[These] five focuses of clinging are suffering. When a man has desire for physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness then, when they change, sorrow, pain, and despair arise in him. The untaught ordinary person [also] sees physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness as a self. He wonders: Am I? Am I not? What am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going to? This field of views is called the thicket of views, the wilderness of views, the contortion of views, the vacillation of views, the fetter of views.

In brief, the five focuses of clinging are suffering.

An enlightened being may appear and announce a holy life that is perfect and purified [of this suffering]. Some householder hears this and considers, suppose I go forth [into the holy life]. Possessing a training and way of living, he abandons what is not the holy life, abandons killing breathing things, abandons taking what is not offered, abandons false speech, slander, abuse, gossip, food at night and late meals, abstaining from dancing, singing, music, and theatrical shows, from wearing garlands, scents, from accepting gold and silver, from buying and selling.

These rules of morality are declared for the purpose of cultivating mindfulness. This is the only way for ending sorrow, lamentation, pain, and grief: paying attention to and clearly comprehending the body, feelings, consciousness, and mental objects; contemplating impermanence, fully aware and mindful; observing with equanimity; being fully aware when moving to and fro, having set aside the five coverings that hinder understanding. On seeing a form, hearing a sound, smelling an odour, tasting a flavour, noticing an idea, he does not lust after it, or reject it, having abandoned favouring and opposing.

Perceiving impermanence in all formations, then all formations will be seen as insubstantial. Everything is changing. There is an unformed [happening]. With the mind perceiving impermanence, it does not reach for gain. With the mind perceiving [no true formation,] no mentality and no physicality, it is rid of the fantasies of "I and mine, this body and consciousness".

[One who knows the truth] is freed from measuring [the unformed] in terms of physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness, and lives beyond measure,

BUDDHESSENCE

beyond explanation. [One who knows the truth] cannot be regarded as existing. How can you talk of existence or non-existence after death? Descriptions do not apply.

I see in this world this [human] race obsessed with craving for existences, wailing in the jaws of death. I see them floundering with respect to their cherished possessions, for no possessions are permanent. The purified do not form a view of existence. The wise do not incline to possessiveness. Feelings, thoughts, and perceptions still arise in an awakened one but he knows them as they arise, as they are present, and as they pass away.

There is a base where there is no solid, no liquid, no heat, no air, no space, no consciousness, no perception, no non-perception, no this world, no other world, no moon, no sun, no coming, no going, no dying, no reappearance, no base [element], no evolution, no support. It is the end of suffering. It is difficult to see. To see it is to put an end to owning [no ideas of me and mine]. There is an unformed [happening].

The ending of greed, hatred, and delusion is the unformed, the very hard to see, the naturally non-distressed Nibbana, freedom

BUDDHESSENCE

from dependency [on formations]. For those relying [on formations] there is instability. For those not relying, there is no instability; there is peace. There is no dependence [on formations].

Supreme emptiness [liberation] is the presence of the six sensory fields [the unformed happening of this moment] without the stain of sensual desire [the hope for constant pleasure], without the stain of being [belief in ideas of self and world], and without the stain of ignorance [ideas of permanence]. That which is absent [desire, self, world, and permanence] is absent. That which is present [the unformed], is present. Whoever, in the past, reached and remained in pure emptiness [liberation] it was this that they reached. It is like being freed from debt, disease, prison, and bondage.

Afterword

Alan Watts:

It is not true that you came into this world. You came out of it, in the same way a flower comes out of a plant, or a fruit comes out of a tree. An apple tree apples, the solar system peoples. People, therefore, are an expression of its energy and of its nature.

You are your thoughts and your feelings, and they are running along, running along, running along. Just sit and watch them. There they go.

You are still breathing aren't you? Still growing your hair; still seeing and hearing. Are you doing that? Is breathing something that you do? Do you organize the operation of your eyes, and know exactly how to work those rods and cones in the retina? Do you do that?

It [simply] happens...your breathing is happening. Your thinking is happening. Your feeling is happening. Your hearing, your seeing, the clouds are happening across the sky. The sky is happening blue, the sun is happening shining.

BUDDHESSENCE

*You are a function of this total galaxy,
bounded by the Milky Way, and this galaxy is
a function of all other galaxies.*

*You are something the whole universe is doing
in the same way that a wave is something the
whole ocean is doing.*

*You do not exist, that is, as a separate will. It
is just not so. When you understand that, you
are liberated.*

*Here we come to the real problem, because we
are always telling each other that we should be
different.*

*We are just like the clouds, rocks, and stars.
Look at the way the stars are arranged. Do you
criticize the way the stars are arranged?*

*Things just do what they do. The flower goes
puff, and people go this way and that, and so
on, and that is what is happening.*

Alan Watts, excerpted from two books: *Myth and Religion* (C.E. Tuttle Co.: Boston, 1996) and *Taoism, Way Beyond Seeking* (Thorsons: London, 1999).

Albert Einstein:

I do not believe in human freedom in the philosophical sense.

A human being is part of the whole that we call the universe.

... He cannot be responsible [for his actions] any more than an inanimate object is responsible for the motion it undergoes.

Albert Einstein, *New York Times Magazine* (November 9, 1930).

U. G. Krishnamurti:

A man in whom enlightenment has taken place is not a perfect being—it has nothing to do with that.

From the point of view of the man who imagines that enlightenment is permanent happiness, permanent bliss, permanent this and permanent that, it is a calamity, because he is expecting one thing whereas what happens is altogether unrelated to that.

Society has put before you the ideal of a perfect man... and so you try to control your behavior, to control your thoughts, to be something unnatural.

You want to be a cheap imitation of Buddha; you don't want to be yourself.

There are so many flowers—look at them. Each flower is unique in its own way. Nature's purpose seems to be to create flowers, human flowers like that.

You want to turn everything into one model. What for?

BUDDHESSENCE

*Man has no freedom of action. Life guides you.
Thought and life are one interfluent movement.*

*I have no regrets, no apologies; whatever I am
doing is automatic. In a given situation I am
not capable of acting in any other way.*

*Life has no beginning and no end; it is a
beginningless and endless movement, and you
are only an expression of it. You are only an
expression of life, like a bird or a worm or a
cloud.*

U.G. Krishnamurti, *The Mystique of Enlightenment* (www.well.com/user/jct/)

References

All scriptural references are from the *Pali Canon*. They are followed by letters and numbers enclosed in parentheses. For example, (A IX, 20) refers to the *Anguttara-Nikaya*, sutta number 9, section 20. Quotations from modern sources are followed by letters and numbers such as (WN 218). This refers to page 218 of the book titled *World of the Newborn*.

Quoted Sources

Sections of the *Pali Canon*, (translated by the Pali Text Society and the Buddhist Publication Society):

- (D) *Digha-Nikaya*
- (M) *Majjhima-Nikaya*
- (S) *Samyutta-Nikaya*
- (A) *Anguttara-Nikaya*
- (SN) *Sutta-Nipata*
- (Ud) *Udana*
- (Dhp) *Dhammapada*

(AS) Tart, Charles T. *Altered States of Consciousness: A Book of Readings*. John Wiley and Sons, Inc.: New York, 1969.

(DP) Shaffer, David R. *Developmental Psychology: Theory, Research, and Applications*. Brooks-Cole Publishing Company: Monterey, 1985.

(EM) Mitchell, Stephen. *The Enlightened Mind: An Anthology of Sacred Prose*. Harper Collins Publishers: New York, 1991.

(OM) Gregory, Richard L. *The Oxford Companion to the Mind*. Oxford University Press: England, 1987.

(WN) Maurer, Daphne and Charles. *World of the Newborn*. Penguin Books: London, 1988.

Other Sources

Bodhi, Bhikkhu and Bhikkhu Nanamoli (translation). *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima-Nikaya*. Wisdom Publications: Boston, 1995.

Nanamoli, Bhikkhu. *The Life of the Buddha: According to the Pali Canon*. Buddhist Publication Society: Sri Lanka, 1988.

Walshe, Maurice. *Thus Have I Heard: The Long Discourses of the Buddha*. Wisdom Publications: London, 1987.

Notes

Preface

1. The five focuses of clinging are suffering (D 22).
2. The cause of suffering is desire that arises when things have the appearance of being enjoyable and fulfilling (D 22).

Introduction

1. A human being is part of the whole that we call the universe. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest—a kind of optical illusion. This illusion is a prison (EM 191).

Chapter 1 - Remembered Words

1. Being, myself, subject to birth, ageing, sickness, death, sorrow, and defilement and seeking an end to this bondage I attained it (M 26).
2. There will come a time when even the great mountains and the earth itself will be gone. All things are

impermanent, unstable, and insecure. Although it is of great benefit to feed Buddhas, to feed the community, to build monasteries, to follow the moral precepts, and to practice loving-kindness, it is of more benefit to maintain the perception of impermanence (A IX, 20). It is better to live a single day perceiving how things rise and fall than to live a century not perceiving this (Dhp 113). Everything is changing (S XXXV, 43). Not even as much as this [pinch of dust] is unchanging (S XXII, 97). Physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness, all of these arise, pass away, and, while they are present, they change (S XXII, 37). They are insubstantial, without essence. Physical form is like a lump of froth, and feelings like a water bubble; perception is a mirage, mental activities are like the empty plantain trunk, and consciousness a conjuring trick (S XXII, 95).

3. Life is like a flowing river, never pausing for a moment, an instant, or a second (A VII, 70). There is an unformed (Ud VIII, 3). It is ignorance that gives rise to formations (A III, 61). To believe that there is permanence in the impermanent is a distortion of perception, thought, and view (A IV, 49).
4. A young infant does not have ideas of a self, things, rites and rituals, sensual pleasures, and beings (M 64). A young infant does not have ideas of a body, speech, or intention (M 78).

5. Yet the underlying tendency to self-view, rites and rituals, sensual desire, and ill-will lies within him (M 64). When he grows and his faculties mature, he plays at games. When he grows and his faculties mature the youth enjoys himself with the sensual pleasure: sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. On seeing a physical form, he wants it if it is pleasing and dislikes it if it is displeasing. Absorbed in liking and disliking, he clings to any feeling he feels. On hearing a sound, smelling an odour, tasting a flavour, touching a substance, noticing a mental object, there is clinging (M 38).

6. Birth is origin, descent into the womb, delivery, the appearance of the five groups of formations, and the functioning of the sense faculties (D 22). One is called a being when firmly entangled in desiring physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness (SXXIII, 2).

7. The five focuses of clinging create suffering (D 22). When a man has desire for physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness then, when they change, sorrow, pain, and despair arise in him (S XXII, 2). This is the cause of suffering. This desire arises when things appear to be enjoyable and fulfilling (D 22).

8. There are four kinds of clinging: clinging to sensual pleasures, clinging to views, clinging to self-theories,

and clinging to rites and rituals (M 9).

9. Ignorance gives rise to formations and this gives rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair (A III, 61; S XII, 1-93).
10. A wise disciple sees this and is no longer fascinated by physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness (S XXII, 59).
11. Rules of morality were proclaimed for the sake of cultivating mindfulness (S XLVII, 21).
12. Going to the forest or to an empty room, sitting down, setting the body erect and establishing mindfulness; experiencing delight, experiencing pleasure; calming the mental formation, experiencing the mind, lightening the mind, concentrating the mind, liberating the mind. Contemplating impermanence, fully aware and mindful. Having set aside worldly wants and grief, he observes with equanimity (M 118). When not focusing on perceptions of village, people, forest, earth, consciousness, nothingness, the disturbances that are caused by these are not present (M 121).
13. Going beyond perceptions of form, not focusing on perceptions of difference, going beyond space, consciousness, nothingness (M 8). Going beyond perception or non-perception (M 25). Sitting with awareness extending over the entire body (M 39).

Formations have ceased and subsided, the faculties become exceptionally clear (M 43).

14. Mindfulness will establish the seven components of enlightenment. These seven components will bring freedom through understanding (S XLVI, 6).

15. Life is like a flowing mountain river, never pausing for a moment or an instant or a second (A VII, 70). Perceiving impermanence in all formations then all formations will be seen as insubstantial (A VI, 102). Perceiving impermanence, the mind does not reach for gain (A VII, 46). Knowing that physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness are insubstantial, fading away, and unsatisfying, the attraction to these is given up (M 112). With no attachment to physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness then, when they change, no sorrow, pain, grief, and despair arises (S XXII, 2). Perceiving no mentality or materiality, the mind is rid of the conceits of I and mine, this body and consciousness (A VII, 46). The mind with understanding is set free from the stain of sensual desire, the stain of being, the stain of views, and the stain of ignorance (D 16). Supreme emptiness is the presence of the six sensory fields ...without the stain of sensual desire, the stain of being, and the stain of ignorance. That which is absent is absent. That which is present, is present. Whoever, in the past, reached and remained in pure emptiness it was this that they

reached. By not clinging to views, by seeing life clearly and being freed from all sense desires, one is not born again (M 121).

16. The ending of greed, hatred, and delusion is the naturally non-distressed Nibbana, freedom from dependency (S XLIII, 12-44).
17. When greed, hatred, and delusion are abandoned, a man does not choose for his own affliction or for the affliction of others (A III, 55).
18. Realizing freedom of mind and the freedom of knowing how evil, unprofitable things end (M 38).

Chapter 2 - Child's Play

1. Initially, the baby is conscious of a confused profusion of sounds, feelings, tastes, and, after birth, of sights. They are as senseless as the patterns of a kaleidoscope (WN 194). Presumably [newborns] experience people and events as simple "streams of impressions" (DP 468). Apparently the ability to detect and discriminate patterns is innate (DP 205). Infants begin to form mental representations for patterns (DP 238). The senses begin to "differentiate" during the first year (DP 220). The fact that we perceive objects without even seeming to try is extremely misleading (OM 568). [The first month] babies scan the boundaries of faces as if they were trying to "construct" a

form and/or determine its location in space (DP 210). Infants older than two months scan figures as if they were trying to determine what these objects are. Perhaps we are not too far off if we characterize the [newborn] as a form “constructor” and the older infant as a form “interpreter” (DP 207). Infants do not distinguish between the self and non-self until four to six months of age (DP 507). Early reaching is a hit-or-miss proposition. In contrast, infants older than 20 weeks can make corrections to guide their hands to the target (DP 178). The infant begins to organize sensory experiences and motor responses into behavioural structures. Responses that occur by chance and prove satisfying are now performed over and over. They are the first co-ordinated habits to appear. The pleasure they bring stimulates their repetition (DP 339). When [the baby] is in the midst of an action, he expects to complete it. If he is stopped, energy overflows into pathways that cause the baby to kick, flail his arms and cry (WN 218).

2. Life is like a flowing mountain river, never pausing for a moment or an instant or a second (A VII, 70). There is an unformed (Ud VIII, 1-3). Ignorance gives rise to formations. Formations give rise to consciousness, mental name and material form, body, contact, feelings, craving, clinging, being, birth, ageing, and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair (A III, 61; S XII, 1- 93).

3. For the [newborn], sensations may combine to produce a global experience (DP 238), a confused profusion of sounds, feelings, tastes [and] sights (WN 194). Around eight months things exist, [then] space [and] time (WN 232). The self arises (DP 468). No longer a kaleidoscope of meaningless sensations. It is a world (WN 232), [an] interpretation (DP 203).

4. A young infant does not have the idea of self, things, rites and rituals, sensual pleasures, beings (M 64). There is an unformed (Ud VIII, 1-3), a flowing (A VII, 70). Ignorance gives rise to formations (A III, 61; S XII, 1-93). Formations give rise to physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness (S XXII, 79). The self is created from physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness (S XXII, 83).

5. The self is not there at birth but arises in the process of social development (DP 468). Infants do not distinguish between the [physical] self and non-self [other things] until four to six months of age (DP 507). [This] is only the first step in the development of a personal identity (DP 469). They [then] begin to notice some of the ways that people differ and to categorize themselves on these dimensions (DP 470). It appears that children acquire the concept of a private thinking self, that others can't see, between the ages of three-and-a-half and five (DP 471). Somewhere between the ages of six and eight, children will think

of this private self as the true self (DP 473), self as knower (DP 470). Twelve to fifteen year-olds face an “identity crisis,” in that no longer sure who they are, [they] must grapple with the question “who will I become?” (DP 475).

6. A young infant does not have the idea of self yet the underlying tendency to self-view lies within him (M 64). There are three types of self that are acquired. The first has form, the second is constructed by the mind, based on the limbs and faculties...the third is formless and consists in perception (D 9). The untaught ordinary person wonders “Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going to?” (M 2).
7. Birth is origin, descent into the womb, delivery, the appearance of the five groups, and the functioning of the sense faculties (S XII, I, 2).
8. It is important to remember that human development is a holistic process; each of these components of “self” depends, in part, on changes that are taking place in other areas of development (DP 8).
9. That comes to be when there is this; that arises dependent on the arising of this. That does not come to be when there is not this (M 38).
10. Between eight and twelve months the baby appears

to understand that objects are permanent. This understanding does not happen suddenly, it develops gradually. As his understanding develops, things around him stop materializing and dematerializing and stay put. But for everything to stay put takes a certain amount of memory (WN 191-2). What was a world of motion now becomes “permanent,” a fixed place of address (WN 201).

11. To believe that there is permanence in the impermanent is a distortion of perception, thought, and view (A IV, 49).
12. [It] is a superstructure of ideas [creating] various concepts and functions, some of which are self, world, other people, time, space, logic, purpose, various inhibitions, conscious fears and defenses (AS 239-40). These patterns are only some of many possible patterns that could have formed (OM 429).
13. Ignorance gives rise to formations (A III, 61; S XII, 1- 93). Formations form: physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness (S XXII, 79). The self is created from physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness (S XXII, 83). Rebirth is the persistent attachment to physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness (S XXIII, 3). This field of views is called the wilderness of views, the thicket of views, the fetter of views (M 2).

14. There are four kinds of clinging: clinging to sensual pleasures; clinging to views; clinging to self-theories; and clinging to rites and rituals (M 9 and M 11).

15. The five focuses of clinging are suffering (S LVI, 2).

16. Ignorance gives rise to formations. This gives rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair (A III, 61; S XII, 1-93). That both you and I have had to travel and trudge through this long cycle is due to not discovering, not penetrating the truth (D 16). The cause of suffering is the desire that arises when things appear to be enjoyable and fulfilling (D 22). If a man has desire for physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness then when they change, sorrow, pain, and despair arise in him (S XXII, 2). A wise [person] sees this and is no longer fascinated by physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness (S XXII, 59). The mind with understanding is set free from the stain of desire, the stain of being, the stain of views, and the stain of ignorance (D 16). Formerly, he acquired and developed attachments. He experienced envy, desire, anger, ill will, ignorance and delusion; now he has abandoned them (M 140). It is like being freed from debt, disease, prison, and bondage (M 39).

17. It is only when we become absorbed in reality that we begin to approach the disintegration of the [old] orientation (AS 240). Most of the time [interpretation]

is essentially non-conscious and even seemingly “automatic” (AS 238). De-automatization [is] the undoing of [this] by re-investing actions and percepts with attention (AS 31). Contemplative meditation permits a different experience, permitting the adult to obtain a new, fresh perception of the world, freeing him from a stereotyped organization built up over the years. [It is the] undoing of a pattern in order to permit a new and perhaps more advanced experience (AS 217-18).

18. This body is activity that must be experienced to be seen (S XII, 37). This is the only way to end sorrow, lamentation, pain and grief, paying attention to and clearly comprehending the body, feelings, states of mind, and mental objects (D 22; M 10). Life is like a flowing, mountain river, not pausing for a moment or an instant or a second (A VII, 70). There is an unformed (Ud VIII, 1-3). When the mind sees that all things change, it does not reach for gain (A VII, 46). If a man has desire for physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness, then, when they change, there is sorrow, pain, and despair. When one is freed from attachment to [these things] then, when they change, no sorrow arises in him (S XXII, 2).

[One who knows the truth is] freed from measuring in terms of physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness, and lives beyond measure, beyond explanation (M 72). Descriptions do not apply (SN V, 7). [One who knows the truth]

cannot be described as truly existing. How can you speak of existence or non-existence after death (S XXII, 85)? When all ideas have been abolished, then all ways of explaining have also been abolished (SN V, 7). Supreme emptiness is the presence of the six sensory fields without the stain of sensual desire, without the stain of being, and without the stain of ignorance. That which is absent, is absent. That which is present, is present (M 121). Feelings, thoughts, and perceptions still arise in an awakened one but he knows them as they arise, as they are present, and as they pass away (M 123). The ending of greed, hatred, and delusion is peace, the naturally, non-distressed Nibbana (S XLIII, 12-44).

19. Have you ever found a possession, a self-theory, or a viewpoint that kept you free from [disappointment] (M 22)?
20. When ignorance is abandoned, he no longer clings to sensual pleasures, views, rites and rituals, and self-theories (M11).
21. The tides of conceiving no longer sweep over one who stands on [wisdom, truth, detachment, and peace] (M 140).
22. Understanding, as it actually is, suffering, the cause of suffering, the end of suffering, and the way leading to the end of suffering (D 22; M 10). Understanding

freedom of mind and understanding how evil, unprofitable things end, that is how there is an end to this whole collection of suffering (M 38).

23. This is the way leading to the end of suffering: right understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right work, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration (D 22).

Chapter 4 - From the Buddha

A young infant does not have the idea of self, things, rites and rituals, sensual pleasures, beings (M 64).

A young infant does not have the idea of body, speech or intention (M 78).

Yet the underlying tendency to self-view, rites and rituals, sensual desire, and ill-will lies within him (M 64).

When he grows, and his faculties mature, the child plays at games. When he grows, and his faculties mature further, the youth habitually enjoys himself with sensual pleasure: with sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. On seeing a form, he lusts after it if it is pleasing and he dislikes it if it is displeasing. Absorbed in liking and disliking, whatever feeling he feels, he clings to it. On hearing a sound, smelling an odour, tasting a flavour, touching a substance, noticing a mental object there is clinging (M 38).

One is called a being when firmly entangled in physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness (S XXIII, 2).

[These] five focuses of clinging are suffering (S LVI, 2).

When a man has desire for physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness then, when they change, sorrow, pain, and despair arise in him (S XXII, 2).

The untaught ordinary person sees physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness as a self (M 44).

He wonders: Am I? Am I not? What am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? This field of views is called the thicket of views, the wilderness of views, the contortion of views, the vacillation of views, the fetter of views (M 2).

In brief, the five focuses of clinging are suffering (S LVI, 2).

An enlightened being may appear and announce a holy life that is perfect and purified. Some householder hears this and considers, suppose I go forth. Possessing a training and way of living, he abandons what is not the holy life, abandons killing breathing things, abandons taking what is not offered, abandons false speech, slander, abuse,

gossip, refraining from food at night and late meals, abstaining from dancing, singing, music, and theatrical shows, from wearing garlands, scents, from accepting gold and silver, from buying and selling (M 38).

These rules of morality are declared for the purpose of cultivating mindfulness (S XLVII, 21).

This is the only way for ending sorrow, lamentation, pain, and grief: paying attention to and clearly comprehending the body, feelings, consciousness, and mental objects (D 22; M 10).

Contemplating impermanence, fully aware and mindful, observing with equanimity (M 118).

Being fully aware when moving to and fro. Having set aside the five hindrances, which weaken understanding. On seeing a form, hearing a sound, smelling an odour, tasting a flavour, noticing an idea, he does not lust after it or reject it, having abandoned favouring and opposing (M 38).

Perceiving impermanence in all formations then all formations will be seen as insubstantial (A VI, 102).
Everything is changing (S XXV, 43).

There is an unformed (Ud VIII, 1-3).

With the mind perceiving impermanence, it does not

reach for gain; with the mind perceiving no mentality and physicality, it is rid of the fantasies of “I and mine, this body and consciousness” (A VII, 46).

[One who knows the truth] is freed from measuring in terms of physical forms, feelings, perceptions, mental activities, and consciousness and lives beyond measure, beyond explanation (M 72).

[One who knows the truth] cannot be regarded as existing; how can you talk of existence or non-existence after death (S XXII, 87)?

Descriptions do not apply (SN V, 7).

I see in this world this race obsessed with craving for existences, wailing in the jaws of death. I see them floundering with respect to their cherished possessions, for no possessions are permanent. The purified do not form a view of existence. The wise do not incline to possessiveness. They do not form; they do not prefer (SN 776-813).

Feelings, thoughts, and perceptions still arise in an awakened one but he knows them as they arise, as they are present, and as they pass away (M 123).

There is a base where there is no solid, no liquid, no heat, no air, no space, no consciousness, no perception, no non-perception, no this world, no other world, no moon, no sun, no coming, no going, no dying, no reappearance, no base,

no evolution, no support. It is the end of suffering. It is difficult to see. To see it is to put an end to owning. There is an unformed, an unborn, an uncreated, an un-brought-to-being (Ud VIII, 1-3).

The ending of greed, hatred, and delusion is the unformed ... the very hard to see ... the naturally non-distressed Nibbana ... freedom from dependency (S XLIII, 12-44).

For those relying there is instability, for those not relying there is no instability; there is peace. There is no dependence (Ud VIII, 1-4).

Supreme emptiness is the presence of the six sensory fields ... without the stain of sensual desire, the stain of being, and the stain of ignorance. That which is absent, is absent. That which is present, is present. Whoever, in the past, reached and remained in pure emptiness it was this that they reached (M 121).

It is like being freed from debt, disease, prison, and bondage (M 39).

About the Author

Spontaneously drawn to meditation at age fourteen, Darryl spent the next seventeen years exploring awareness and concentration practices from Christian, Hindu, Sufi, Buddhist, and Western psychology sources. At thirty-one, he began a nine year



apprenticeship with mindfulness teacher Ruth Denison. He then spent six years as a Buddhist monk in the Thai meditation traditions, under the guidance of Tan Chao Khun Sumedhacarya (Ajahn Sumedho), before returning to lay life. He considers his time with the unaffiliated teacher, Jiddhu Krishnamurti, and the Vedantic sage, Robert Adams, as significant events along the way.

Darryl currently lives in Winnipeg Canada. He is unaffiliated with any organisation or tradition.

Acknowledgments

To my mother Gwen, father Ed, and brother Brent, for their love and understanding. To Jiddhu Krishnamurti, Ruth Denison, Ajahn Sumedho, and Robert Adams for their presence in my life and the wisdom they offered. To Gotama Buddha and Ramesh Balsekar for their words. To Osbert Moore for his translations. To Mary Wall, Nick Herzmark, Debbie Stamp, Jeannie Bendik, Keith Millan, Dianne Wilt, Toan Tran, and Sheilagh Konyk for their friendship and encouragement. To the Amaravati Community and the Western Sangha for the opportunity of their company. To Jon Mousley for his help in difficult times. To Rick Wood for his editing skills. And to innumerable others for their various and unique contributions along the way.

Special thanks to Sandra Stuart and Link Phillips for their efforts in producing this edition. Many thanks to Catherine and Julian Noyce, at New Sarum Press, for publishing this work.

