

Sayings of Buddha

Teachings on Spiritual Cultivation

Illustrated & Interpreted by

TSAI CHIH CHUNG

Translated by

E E Ho, Ph.D. & W. L. Rathje, Ph.D.

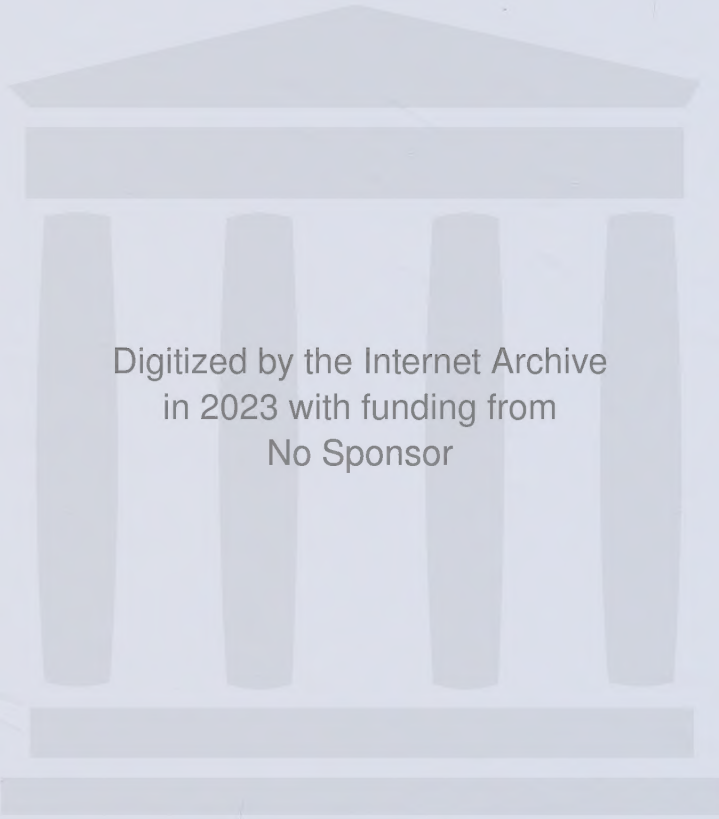
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ASIAPAC COMIC SERIES

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ASIAPAC • SINGAPORE

Publisher

ASIAPAC BOOKS PTE LTD

996 Bendemeer Road #06-08/09

Kallang Basin Industrial Estate

Singapore 339944

Tel: (65) 392 8455

Fax: (65) 392 6455

Email apacbks@singnet.com.sg

Visit us at our Internet home page

www.asiapacbooks.com

First published Apr 1998

Reprinted May 1999, May 2000

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ISBN 981-229-015-X

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Cover design by TAP DESIGN

Body text in 8/9 pt Helvetica

Printed in Singapore by

Kin Keong Printing

Publisher's Note

As a publisher dedicated to the promotion of works on Chinese culture and philosophy, we are pleased to bring you this graphic presentation of *Sayings of Buddha: Teachings on Spiritual Cultivation* 《佛陀说》.

At the time Buddha attained supreme enlightenment, under the Bodhi tree on the bank of the Nairanjanâ River at Bodh Gayâ, he became the ultimate wise one with complete awareness. What kind of truth was he enlightened to? What kind of basic universal wisdom was he teaching? This compendium of Buddha's lessons — dynamically illuminated by Tsai Chih Chung — will bring to light Sakyamuni Buddha's teaching on how to achieve spiritual cultivation if you take a few moments of your time to read, to ponder ... and, perhaps, to practise.

We would like to express our gratitude to Tsai Chih Chung for his lively illustrations and interpretations, Yuen Twung for writing about the interview with Tsai Chih Chung, E E Ho & W. L. Rathje for their translation and for writing the Translators' Introduction as well as the Translators' Notes, and Koh Kok Kiang for his editorial input. Our thanks, too, to the production team for putting in their best effort in the publication of this book.

TRANSCEND YOUR DREAMS, LET YOUR HEART FLY FREELY

*An Interview with Tsai Chih Chung on
the Nurturing of Creative Work
by Yuen Twung 云童*

Spirit, music and images are like small trickling streams that through the movement of talented hands flow together throughout Tsai Chih Chung's daily life as well as his creative work.

In the process of a series of interviews, my surprise kept on increasing. My curiosity, interest and questions intertwined with each other to form a net. Following Tsai's spider-web thinking pattern, I climbed, I excelled and I elevated my level of consciousness. All of a sudden, I would move inward, turning deeper and deeper with every layer, touching my heart, stopping my thinking and yet totally being aware. Then, just as suddenly, I would be moving outward, expanding, stretching, bumping into the universe, the essence of life and superb intelligence. At places of fast turns, I could not help but utter big sighs, while my heart had already flown up above the highest clouds.

I thought of a profound spiritual experience of Sogyal Rinpoche. When he was visiting with Dujom Rinpoche, he murmured to himself, "It happened! It happened!" It is indeed hard to describe with words such an experience of spiritual awakening, as if all boundaries have dissolved completely in the essence of Essential Universal Truths.

Tsai Chih Chung started working independently at age 15 — he jokingly claims that he has not been "polluted by too many institutions". Relying on his own interests and effort, he eventually felt his way out and developed his own unique models of learning and creating. Today, his work is sold all over the globe and has become the pride of ethnic Chinese cartoonists. His most unique feature is that he does not attract readers with sex and violence. On the contrary, he won his applause with his eloquent and wise interpretation of classical Chinese writings, such as *The Sayings of Zhuang Zi* 《庄子说》, *The Sayings of Lao Zi* 《老子说》, *The Sayings of Confucius* 《孔子说》 and Buddhist sutras.

After he turned 35, he came to the realization: "The rest of my life is all a time of extra earning, but it should not belong completely to me. I should serve others more, under the presumption that I need to first please myself. Only after I am moved, can I move others."

NO THOUGHTS IS THE ORIGIN OF THE SPRING OF ALL CREATIVITY

When asked about the source of his abundant creativity, he gave a simple, straightforward answer: “No thoughts.” Well, that does not seem to be easy to understand.

He asked me in turn, “Have you really meditated?”

“Really meditated?” — quite a strange question — “Oh, yes. I do sitting meditation every day.”

“No, I don’t just mean the form of sitting meditation,” Tsai responded. I mean the experience of not having any thoughts in the mind and yet, at the same time, being totally aware of everything.”

Wow! I told myself that I had met a guru this time. He started looking for files and laid out around a dozen notebooks on the floor. He found the relevant notes on “eliminating thoughts and at the same time being totally aware” for me and let his illustrations speak for themselves.

I was totally surprised at the way he dealt with extremely deep and difficult abstract concepts, such as “one thought — three thousand” and “being both quiet and observant at the same time”, with simplicity and clarity in his work. It was as if the most complex and complicated concepts fall into place automatically in his magical hands and become concrete and easy to understand. Is it possible that all of his creative work is so natural and spontaneous that they were like opening a tap and running water just flows out endlessly? Of course not. He also had times when he ran into brick walls and suffered setbacks. His *I Ching* and *Quotes from Zen Masters* took the longest time to develop, and towards the end of his drawing, he decided to give up for the time being, to search for roots and trace origins, to exhaust all possibilities in heaven and earth, and to look afresh at everything again. Otherwise, “if I didn’t understand them myself, how could I help the reader to understand?” Thereafter, he initiated larger plans: the series on *The Origin of the Universe and Life*, the series on *Books of Profound Meaning*, and the series on Buddhist sutras. More than one dozen notebooks of neat and elaborate files completely recorded his thoughts as well as his growth process. Obstacles became for him a hidden power to nurture grander creativity.

PLEASE YOURSELF AND ENJOY THE FUN

“Such great volumes of work! It must have been very hard for you.”

Hey, not at all for Tsai Chih Chung. This character has been having the greatest time “playing” in his work. This is exactly why he repeatedly emphasized the importance of “pleasing yourself”. His usual draft sketches are never sloppy in corners, with all lines and shadings in good order. He makes sure that he always works in a very pleasant environment, both visually and mentally. It is hard to imagine that those neatly organized notebooks, one after another, are his spontaneous draft sketches. After he is completely ready with his ordinary preparatory work, he often will finish the final product all in one go. The record of creating non-stop for 54 hours was not that extraordinary for him: “Finishing everything with one continuous breath is just great fun!” What the famous poet Su Dongpo (AD 1037-1101) referred to as “act when you should act, stop when you have to stop”, is probably like this.

He is really like a child. When talking about something funny, he would laugh so hard that his eyes turn red and his body bends over, before others even start to laugh. He has “eternal curiosity” about almost anything. When we were discussing the meaning of our interview theme, “nurturing”, he got right up, came back with two big volumes (the classic *Chinese Dictionary of the Origin and Meaning of Words* and a contemporary Chinese dictionary) in his arms and started looking up the word. He seemed to be able to focus himself — either quieting down to his centre or thinking broadly about anything — at any time and place. The answer was revealed. He happily told us that the first character meant, most significantly, “pregnant, with child” and “bearing fruit” — both need space and vacancy to contain them, as well as time and a period of patient waiting to complete them. No matter whether it is developmental or creative work, both require returning to the original point of life, starting from zero, allowing the body and mind to sink deeper and deeper ... emptying everything out of the mind, sinking into the deepest part of the mind, becoming one with “universal consciousness”, transcending all boundaries of time and space, just as water from lakes and rivers all flow into the ocean. At this time, it is as if the floodgate is opened for creative potential, which rushes out without control and is so overwhelming that you just can’t react and record fast enough. He said he had once created sixty consecutive sketches without

written words and forty more with written words. He did not want to stop — in fact, he could not stop. It was like he was on automatic pilot. From this, I also understood why he is so diligent in practising “automatic Qi Gong”. He seems to enjoy it so much and never gets tired. Now I know that all of these characteristics are spontaneous manifestations of the nature of our mind.

MANIFEST CASH: EXPRESS THE NATURE OF SELF

“Manifestation” is an important mantra for Tsai Chih Chung’s creative work. He often jokingly refers to himself as “manifest cash from my ancestors’ cultural inheritance”. In fact, “manifestation” is an important ring in his structure of thinking, as well as the last ring. In his conceptualization, wisdom arises from plumbing deeper and deeper into himself. This wisdom expresses itself as know-how and implementation of know-how, and thus the result of “manifestation”. Therefore, “manifestation” is indeed the reflection of the mind’s dynamics and expression.

Frequently moving between “active thinking” and “no thinking”, he became quite adept at the exercise of “manifestation”. The private collection of more than two thousand bronze sculptures of Buddhist statues is the clever manifestation of his diving deeper into his mind. What we saw were Buddhist statues, what he saw was “the genetic DNA code of more than three thousand years of Chinese culture”. He considers the biggest secret of survival of life as “keeping DNA new”. He believes this to be the natural law of manifestation of the whole universe: seeking combinations of new DNA and creating new life forms. He deeply dissolves himself among the facial expressions, gestures, clothing, decorations and platforms of these statues of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. After integration and internalization, he manifested one after another dignified, cute and varied characters for his cartoons. All of these characters are “modern-day Buddhist statues” that are alive and result from combinations of new DNA in the mind.

READING WITH HANDS, EXCEEDING THE LIMITS OF DREAMS

Attentive people would notice that Tsai Chih Chung’s hands seldom rest. “Reading with hands” is a major characteristic of his life. Confused about the

complex pairing of chromosomes across three generations? Well then, draw it out with your hands. Then follow the tree-shaped diagram, and when you reach the end of the lines, the answer will come out automatically. This is how he has completed the readings on genetic engineering step by step. After he finished the drawing of more than one thousand Buddhist statues, the varied characteristics and styles of Buddhist sculpture from each Chinese dynasty became distinctively clear. This is how he completed the reading of Buddhist sculptures with his hands, and at the same time, he completed more than one thousand “disks”. After these disks are entered into a computer, he will be able to produce endless arrangements and combinations. This is yet another secret of his creativity.

“Just do it” almost becomes his slogan. Drawing day after day, writing day after day, he also completes the actualization process of his thinking day after day. His images manifest as words of thoughts, his thoughts also manifest as concrete images. In this criss-crossing, interweaving, melting, rearranging, the boundaries between reality and dreams are no longer clear cut. No wonder one of his favourite pieces of music is “Transcending Dreams”, by gifted Japanese female musician Himekami. Music is another type of manifestation in Tsai’s daily life. He used the music of Himekami and Kitaro as manifestations for nurturing his roomful of green plants, as well as manifestations of thoughts and images. His spirit, music and images are like small trickling streams that, through the movement of talented hands, flow through Tsai’s daily life as well as his creations.

Interviewing Tsai Chih Chung, especially learning about his unique way of linking “three thousand years of Chinese cultural DNA”, was a jolting and moving experience for me. It almost felt like I could not help myself beginning a certain kind of manifestation — going beyond my dreams and letting my heart fly freely.

About the Illustrator

Tsai Chih Chung 蔡志忠 was born in 1948 in Chang Hwa County of Taiwan. He began drawing cartoon strips at the age of 17 and worked as Art Director for Kuang Chi Programme Service in 1971. He founded the Far East Animation Production Company and the Dragon Cartoon Production Company in 1976, where he produced two cartoon films entitled *Old Master Q* 《老夫子》 and *Shao Lin Temple* 《少林寺》.

Tsai Chih Chung first got his four-box comics published in newspapers and magazines in 1983. His funny comic characters such as the Drunken Swordsman, Fat Dragon, One-eyed Marshal and Bold Supersleuth have been serialized in newspapers in Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, Europe and the United States.

He was voted one of the Ten Outstanding Young People of Taiwan in 1985 and was acclaimed by the local media and academic circle.

The comic book *The Sayings of Zhuang Zi* 《莊子說》 was published in 1986 and marked a milestone in Tsai's career. Within two years, *Zhuang Zi* went into more than 70 reprints in Taiwan and 15 in Hong Kong and has to date sold over one million copies.

In 1987, Tsai Chih Chung published *The Sayings of Lao Zi* 《老子說》, *The Sayings of Confucius* 《孔子說》 and two books based on Zen 禪. Since then, he has published more than 20 titles, out of which 10 are about ancient Chinese thinkers and the rest based on historical and literary classics. All these books topped the bestsellers' list at one time or another. They have been translated into other languages such as Japanese, Korean, Thai, Indonesian and many European languages. Asiapac is the publisher for the English version of these comics.

Tsai Chih Chung can be said to be the pioneer in the art of visualizing Chinese literature and philosophy by way of comics.

About the Translators

E E HO, Ph.D.

Dr. Ho completed undergraduate work at Taiwan University and received her Ph.D. from the University of Arizona. During the past twenty years she has published numerous research reports in English in international life science journals. In addition, she has conducted a variety of health education workshops for U.S. school teachers and developed culturally appropriate materials for many U.S. minority groups, the elderly, cancer patients and their families, physicians and other health care professionals as well as paraprofessionals. Dr. Ho has also contributed original essays to major Chinese newspapers. She is committed to introducing the wisdom of Buddhist teachings to English-speaking people to help them cope with the challenges of living in our modern society and to achieve self-actualization.

W. L. Rathje, Ph.D.

Since receiving a Ph.D. from Harvard University, Prof. Rathje has been teaching Anthropology at the University of Arizona. During the last 24 years, he has become an internationally recognized expert in “garbology”—the scientific study of modern garbage—a field which Rathje pioneered. In the process, he has authored best-selling books, contributed to such magazines as *National Geographic* and *The Atlantic Monthly*, and has been a frequent guest on TV and radio talk shows in the U.S., Europe and Latin America. While popularizing his research in these ways, Prof. Rathje became adept at using media to cross cultural lines. As Rathje says, “Communication is a most precious commodity and the ancient Buddhist sutras have so much wisdom to give today’s materialistic and ego-centred world.”

Dr. Ho’s bilingual and multi-cultural exposure and Prof. Rathje’s background in multi-media communication across cultural boundaries complement each other well. In their 15 years of collaboration, they have published scientific papers which have been reprinted both in professional journals and in English-as-a-second-language textbooks in Japan, Germany and mainland China. In

addition to scholarly research, they have occasionally published original poems. Today, as part of their own spiritual cultivation, the translation team has an ongoing commitment to a Buddhist magazine to translate Buddhist texts into English — these include a series on the principles of enlightenment, a storybook series, and a series of Buddhist teachings by Tsai Chih Chung.

Dr. Ho and Prof. Rathje's most recent collaboration was their translation of Tsai Chih Chung's *The Illustrated Heart Sutra*, Asiapac, 1997.

Translators' Introduction

When Master Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch of the Zen Sect, was in his twenties and totally illiterate, he first went to see the Fifth Patriarch Hong Ren. Asked what he wanted, he simply replied, "I want to become Buddha." At that time, this bold statement could have been interpreted either as gross naiveté or as sincere, innate understanding. As history unfolded and Hui Neng became one of the most influential teachers in Buddhism, it was clear that he had taken large strides towards his goal.

Becoming a Buddha is actually a more attainable "degree" of spirituality than many would ever imagine possible. In fact, by following the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha, as presented here in Tsai Chih Chung's reader-friendly illustrations, each one of us could sincerely say, "I am learning to become Buddha."

Buddha is a term which means "the wise one", "the one who is fully aware of the workings of the universe". A human being may become a Buddha by passing through sequential "degrees" of enlightenment by meeting specific criteria at each progression. Although the Buddha-way is an extremely long, refined and rigorous process, it is not unlike the way a person works step by step through academic training to receive an advanced teaching certificate. According to Buddhist scriptures, there have been a myriad Buddhas in the numberless universes which preceded our own — and there will be many more Buddhas in future universes, including ours.

The only Buddha in human history was born around 2,500 years ago in India. Sakyamuni Buddha was a human being who became fully enlightened to Essential Universal Truths by personally practising and verifying them. He is often referred to as "primary teacher" and a role model, but never as God, Heavenly Father, Saviour or Creator.

According to teachings in this book, anything that cannot be tested personally should not be followed. It may surprise many Westerners that the foundation of Buddhism relies — for the most basic proof of its value — on our cognitive evaluation of our own behaviour. This rational process is closely akin to the scientific method of experimentation. As a result, there is no leap of faith required in this guidebook on spiritual cultivation. This is why Venerable Master Chin Kung advocates treating Buddhism not as a religion, but as the "Department of Education" in life.

This particular book is a compendium of the most popular messages, on personal spiritual cultivation, delivered by Sakyamuni Buddha. These teachings were recorded in the Chinese versions of the Theravâda sūtras of the Southern School of Buddhism, which is widespread in South Asian countries. Although the

immediate purpose of the Theravâda School is the attainment of self-salvation (which used to be referred to as the “Small Vehicle of Salvation” or Hî nayâna in Sanskrit) in Nirvâna, it is not necessarily an end in itself.

Two important points should be seriously considered in appreciating the importance of these teachings of the “basics” in Buddhism. First of all, such basic teachings on personal cultivation are the indispensable foundation for building a higher level of salvation that includes all living beings (still referred to as the “Great Vehicle of Salvation” or Mâhayâna in Sanskrit). Secondly, someone starting the cultivation process may only be ready for personal salvation. After enjoying Nirvâna at the first level of salvation for a while, however, one may become ready to move on towards the next level of the Buddha-way.

Those who begin to delve deeper into Sakyamuni’s other teachings are sometimes confused by the fact that statements by the Buddha in one scripture seem to be at odds with statements in another. This, in fact, is something seasoned Buddhists are quite fond of and have named the Principle of Skill in Means. This principle recognizes that the Buddha was a consummate teacher who adjusted his wording and emphasis to the characteristics of each particular audience. This is not unlike the “market segmentation” approach used today by sophisticated marketing firms. In sum, while highly varied, all Buddha’s teachings are also interconnected and lead towards one Buddha-way. In the eloquent words of Venerable Master Yin-shun, “Although there are an infinite number of doors opening to Buddhahood, Buddhahood has only one ‘flavour,’ and one should keep it simple.”

Buddha’s disciples were attracted to him because of his complete understanding of humanity. The teachings of our world’s Buddha, like those of other Buddhas, have been steeped in endless time and cured throughout boundless space. As Venerable Master Taixu observed, the real purpose of the Buddha appearing in this world was to teach people how to enter the Buddha-way from their human lives. The Buddhist methods of spiritual cultivation, as personified by Sakyamuni Buddha, should be worthwhile to read, to ponder and, most importantly, to apply in our daily living.

In our hearts, we who live in today’s fast-paced and stress-crazed world know that the Buddha got it right. The Buddha’s proper spiritual cultivation develops our innate ability to be completely quiet and totally observant at the same time. This complete quietness enables us to readily access our innermost wisdom, but not limit our understandings within the bounds of our own intellectual faculties. In fact, mindfulness training, which is increasingly popular in the Western world, is an integral part of Buddha’s teachings on cultivation. The ability to observe our own

“self” and the world with full clarity enables us to increase our range of possibilities and see new options in problem-solving like never before. It takes us out of the victim role in life and allows us to make informed mental choices to deal with our experiences. The ability to be quiet and clear at the same moment — at any time and any place — gives us an edge in any situation.

These guidelines for cultivation relate to our daily living in practical ways, whatever lifestyle we happen to choose, and wherever we happen to be in our spiritual growth. They can help us to deal with the daily grind of life (such as traffic jams) as well as major traumas (such as the loss of a loved one). Holding the events of our lives — all of the people, places and things — up to the light of Universal Truths can extract their sting before they hurt us. In turn, this procedure enables us to place our problems in their proper perspective.

The greatest value in these guidelines is in their application. They are not meant for mental gymnastics or fancy bookshelves. They are meant for integration into every moment of our daily lives. If we experiment with the recipes in this spiritual cookbook, we may begin to taste the flavour of peace and freedom. We may also feel frustrated by not quickly getting it all right. To discipline the body and the mind takes considerable learning and unlearning of much deeply rooted behaviour. Anyone who has tried to lose weight, or tried to start a new exercise or meditation routine, will testify to this. Only practice will make it perfect, and ...

If we “listen closely and contemplate fully”, the teachings in this book can start us on the path that leads to tranquil Nirvāna, where we can venture even further on the Buddha-way ... and eventually join Sakyamuni as Buddhas.

Translators' Notes

REFERENCES TO GENDER

Buddha taught that all lives occur in particular times and places, each with its own unique qualities. He also taught that to live life to the hilt, we should “dissolve” into our particular time and place. One element specific to Buddha’s time and place was that, while he often taught women and men of all ages and walks of life, most of the teachings that were recorded for posterity were presented to male monks in monasteries. In our role as translators, we have decided to leave his male-oriented statements [basically male pronouns] as they were recorded 2,500 years ago. For consistency, the commentaries also use male pronouns. Nevertheless, keep in mind that the Buddha’s teachings are for all of us — both women and men — and that the Buddhas throughout time and space have started their spiritual cultivation as women and men.

SKILL IN MEANS

As translators, we have also decided to minimize standard Buddhist jargon, such as Dharma and Sangha. We have done this so that Tsai Chih Chung’s exuberant cartoon celebration of the Buddha will attract the widest audience, including total novices. Once the initial contact is made, the interested reader will seek further cultivation and readily learn the appropriate terms used in the teachings of Buddha. We believe that we have simplified and de-jargonized this dynamic translation of the Buddha’s teachings in the spirit of the Buddha Sakyamuni himself. The Buddha was well-known for tailoring his teachings to the level of understanding of his audience.

PHONETIC SYSTEM

The translators used the Pinyin Chinese phonetic system to spell names in English. There are, of course, exceptions. Certain characters (such as 禪 “Zen”) were left in their familiar English version. Some Chinese names were also left in the English form in which they have been written for many years.

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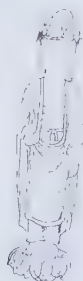
SAYINGS OF BUDDHA

過去、若未來、若現在
比丘！歸觀思惟分別：無所有、
無常、苦、空、非我。所以者何。
「諸比丘！譬如大雨水泡，一起一滅，
有、無卒、無實、無有堅固。所以
若過去、若未來、若現在，若
歸觀思惟分別。歸觀思。」

是時觀其音聲皆得解脫
能燒由是菩薩名者設入大火火所
稱其名號即得淺處若有百千萬億
正為求金銀琉璃磚礫瑪瑙瑠璃
寶入於大海假使黑風吹
其劫告

神及神龍王神母
常隨擁護持大悲神咒
獨宿孤眠是諸尊神善代宿
迷失道路此呪故尊神龍王
若在山林曠野乏少水火龍王
每隨復為擁持者說消除
丹山澤中。達摩





BUDDHA

The saint who awakened to the wisdom of life



According to the *Second Treatise on the Philosophy of the Measurement of Wisdom*:
"Buddha means awakened. Among all who sleep in delusion, a Buddha is the first one to be awakened to the Essential Universal Truths. This is why the Buddha is defined as being awakened."

All living beings
who can eliminate
worries arising from all
realms of manifestations
and end the cycle of
reincarnation are
named Buddha.



The wise one who has
awakened to Truth.





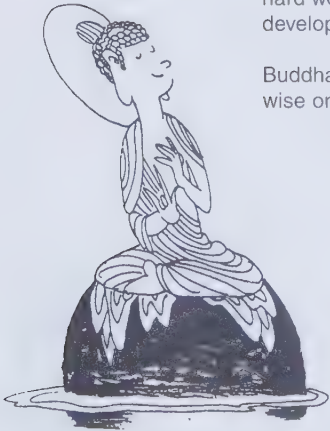
Millions of years ago, our human ancestors walked out of the forests to make a living on the grasslands. Facing harsh environments, humans gathered group force by living in communities and forming the tribal lifestyle.

From living on the grasslands, humans slowly evolved into permanent residence in caves and valleys, and eventually on the plains where they formed the social structure of villages and cities. Their lifestyles also evolved from hunter-gatherers to herding animals and agriculture.

Both animal herding and agricultural societies involved a lot of both hard work and leisure time. Therefore, intelligent humans started developing arts and philosophies.

Buddha means the one who is awakened and wise. What did these wise ones awaken to? They were awakened to the following Truths:

The relationship among humans, time and space;
The meaning of life;
The true nature of time, space and the universe.



SAKYAMUNI BUDDHA

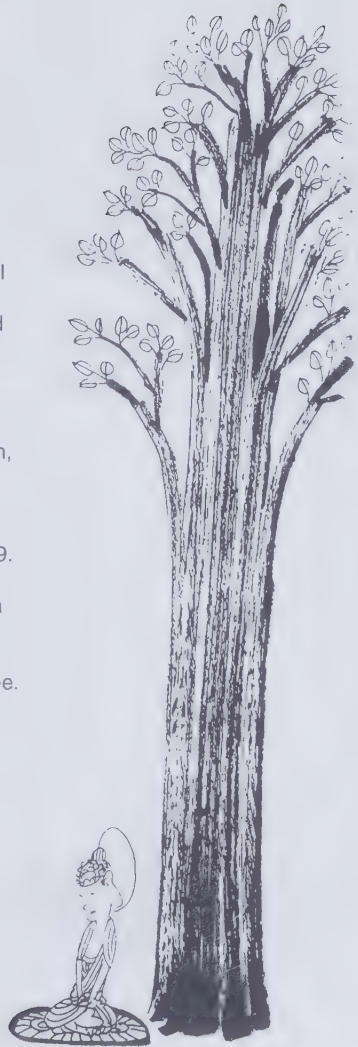
One of the ten titles of "Ultimate Essence Arriving"

According to the *Second Treatise on the Philosophy of the Measurement of Wisdom*:

"Buddha means 'the wise one'. Sitting under the Bodhi tree, Sakyamuni became completely awakened to all kinds of Essential Universal Truths, including what is permanent and what is transient. Therefore, he was named Buddha."

About 565 years before Christ, in what is today Nepal, Kapilavastu's King Suddhodana had a son by the name of Gautama Siddhârtha. Seven days after the prince was born, his mother passed away. Prince Siddhârtha was a sentimental child who received a traditional Brâhman education. He often felt that things were transient and adopted the homeless style of a mendicant at the age of 29.

He first learned meditation from two Sramana gurus, Arada Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputra. Then he spent six years cultivating himself through self-mortification. Eventually, he became enlightened to the Path to Truths under a Bodhi tree.



More than twenty-five hundred years ago, the wisdom of humans took a great leap forward on a global level. Many philosophers all over the world erupted with sparks of wisdom at the same time.

In China, there were the philosophies about humans and the universe by Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi, etc.; the philosophies on the principles of humanity to guide inter-relations among humans and social groups by Confucius and Meng Zi; and, in addition, numerous and glorious fruits of thought by Sun Zi, Mo Zi, Xun Zi, Han Fei Zi, and close to one hundred schools of thought.

In ancient Greece, there were the ancestors of philosophy, such as Telis, Heraclitus and Democritus (the Theory of Atoms), as well as subsequent wise ones, such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, whose theories have been influencing the development of philosophy and science in the Western World for more than two thousand years.

While in ancient India, there was also a flourishing of many schools of thought which bloomed at the same time, including the philosophy of Srmana, as well as the seeds for various religions which developed in India later — Hinduism, Jainism, Yoga, etc. Among these, the most influential for the Eastern World was definitely Sakyamuni Buddha born in Nepal.

Sakyamuni Buddha is regarded by people of later generations as one of the four greatest saintly philosophers of the world. He was a spiritual leader of the same status as Confucius, Socrates and Jesus. For more than two thousand years, he deeply influenced the thinking of people in the Eastern World. Later on, followers of the Buddha even worshipped him as a deity.



BUDDHISM

The Teaching of the Essential Universal Truths by the Buddha Sakyamuni

The Buddha taught all living beings to cultivate themselves:

By distancing themselves from greed, resentment and delusion;

By distancing themselves from all seductive objects and events that pollute the minds;

By centring their minds and severing their thoughts of the material world.

This is how they will reach the state of tranquillity;

This is how they will achieve superb wisdom and ultimate relief.

Would you all please
follow me in practising the proper
methods to move onto the path to the
"Other Shore". These methods are the Three
Imprints of Essential Universal Truths, the
Four Phases of Cultivation, the Eightfold
Proper Path, and the Twelve Laws of
Causal Preconditioning.



Buddhism is the teaching of Sakyamuni Buddha on Essential Universal Truths. Of course, if you wish, you may refer to it as a religious group or sect or denomination led by the Buddha.

In the past one hundred years, scholars such as Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung popularized research into human psychology ...

But more than 2,500 years ago, the thinkers of the Eastern World had already gained great accomplishments in studying the psychology of human nature. These accomplishments were not recognized because they were hidden in philosophy, strategies of war, or precepts of religions.

The Buddha happened to be the wise one who most thoroughly researched psychology. He was also a teacher in applied psychology. By following his methods of practice and cultivation in everyday life, we will be able to walk towards proper concepts and avoid erroneous identification. This is how we can put an end to our suffering as we transcend to eternal joy and peace.



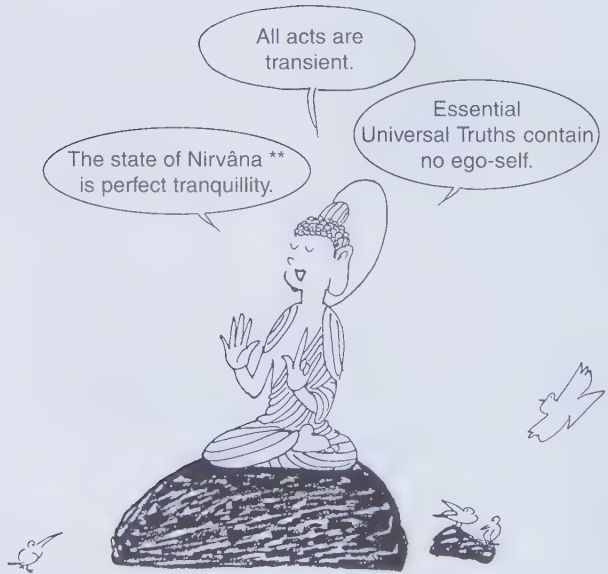
BUDDHA'S TEACHING ON SPIRITUAL CULTIVATION

From the beginning, this was the way I taught ...



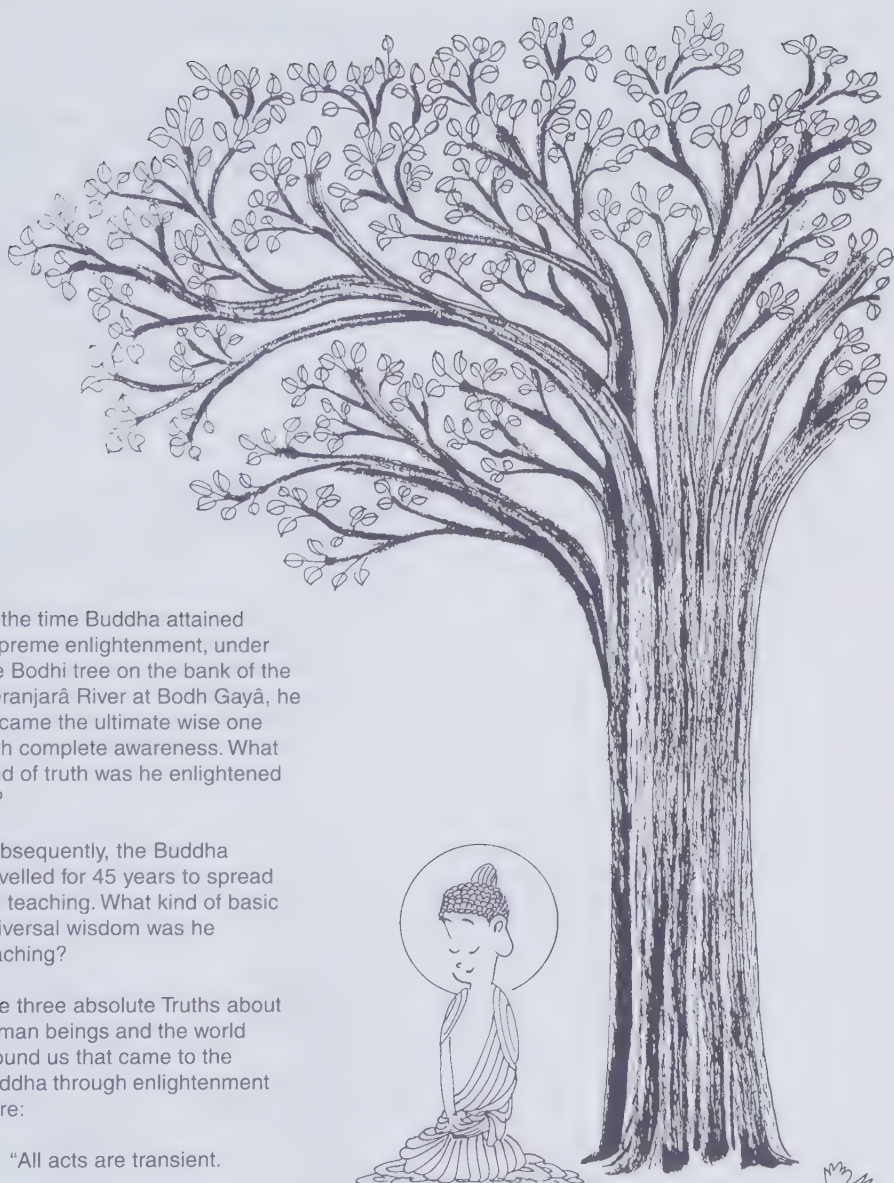
THE THREE IMPRINTS OF TRUTH

The Three Imprints of Truth are the universal laws that the Buddha personally verified. The Buddha spent his whole life seeking the essence of living. Eventually, he was enlightened to the Essential Universal Truths * ...



* "Essential Universal Truths" is often translated as Dharma in Buddhism.

** Nirvâna, "the other shore", is a state of enlightenment attainable in this life by extinguishing all desires and hereby achieving liberation from the cycle of birth and death. One who has attained Nirvâna is called an Arhat.



At the time Buddha attained supreme enlightenment, under the Bodhi tree on the bank of the Naranjarâ River at Bodh Gayâ, he became the ultimate wise one with complete awareness. What kind of truth was he enlightened to?

Subsequently, the Buddha travelled for 45 years to spread his teaching. What kind of basic universal wisdom was he teaching?

The three absolute Truths about human beings and the world around us that came to the Buddha through enlightenment were:

"All acts are transient.

Essential Universal Truths contain no ego-self.

Nirvâna is perfect tranquillity."

ALL ACTS ARE TRANSIENT

Out of tens of thousands of phenomena in the world, nothing is eternally permanent and everlasting.

All manifestations originate from particular causes which, in turn, interact with subsequent conditions to mould and change each other.

Such unenduring variability, formed by the preconditioned synchronicity of time and space, is the true nature of our universe.

So long as there is life,
there is death. All good
things must end someday.
Constant change is the Truth of
the universe. Human beings
suffer because they insist
on seeking permanent
beauty and life, and
don't understand
this basic Truth.



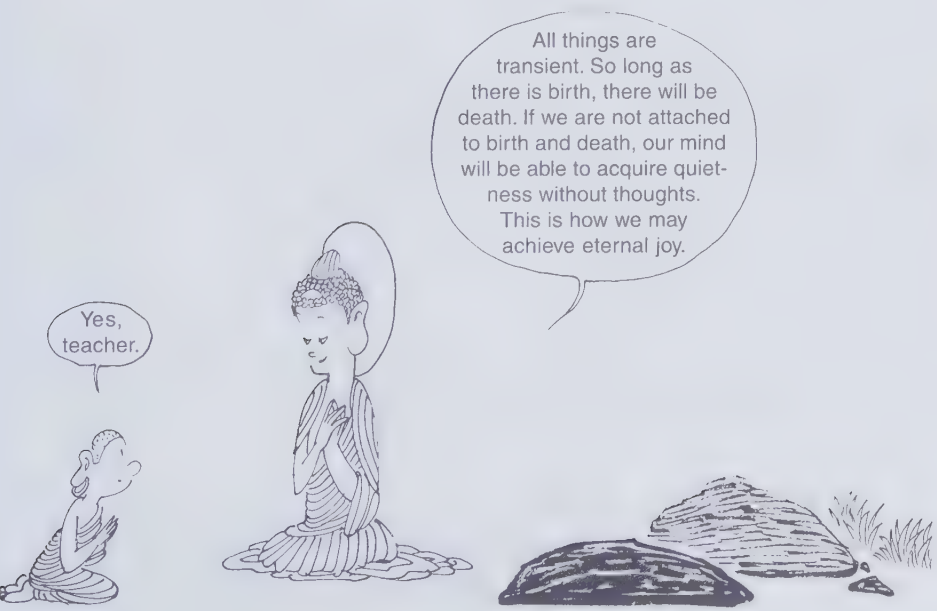
The true nature of the universe is that its essence is forever changing, without stopping, without resting for one moment.

Humans base their judgements on short-term benefits for the ego-self. From the self's point of view, humans often wish that good things would last forever and that bad things would never happen.

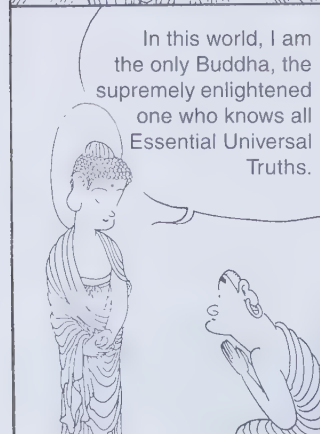
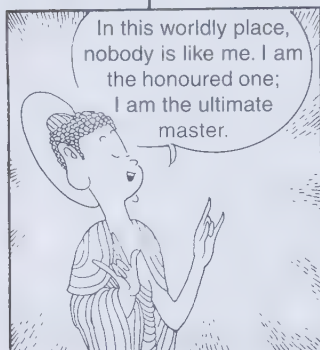
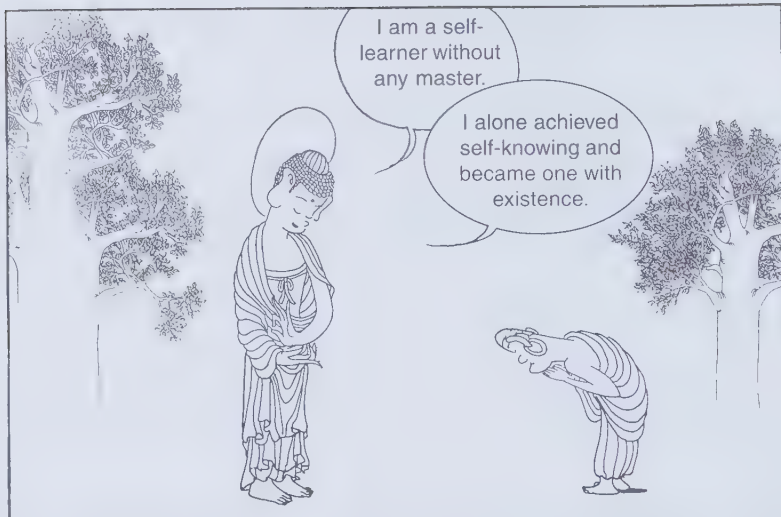
Nevertheless, this kind of single-minded thinking does not make everything go the ego-self's way. That is how suffering originates.

Humans suffer mostly because they have the concept of "self". In addition, they do not really understand that all things, whether physical or mental, internal or external, cannot possibly remain constant forever. In other words, they do not understand the Essential Universal Truth that "all acts are transient".

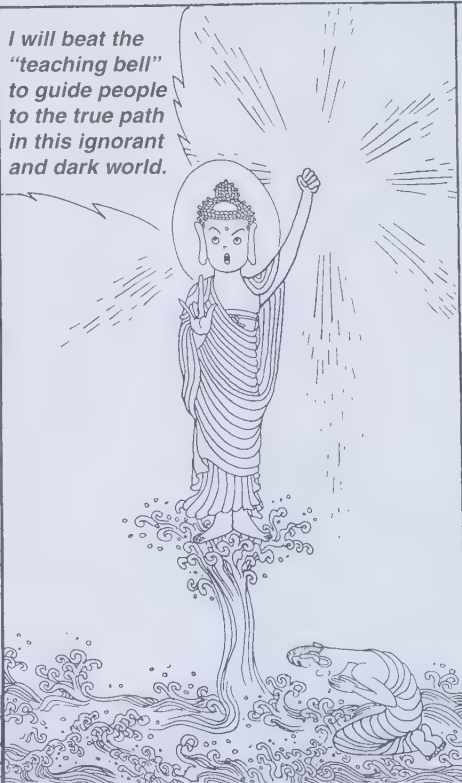
For this reason, before he passed away, Buddha said to Ananda: "My dear Ananda, all that we love will eventually leave us. All that lives will eventually die. Therefore, do not suffer because pretty and lovely things do not last forever."



**I Am
the
One
without
Any
Guide**



I will beat the "teaching bell" to guide people to the true path in this ignorant and dark world.



After meditation, Buddha came to supreme enlightenment on the Universal Laws that were always there. He knew that people live in upside-down delusions while holding onto erroneous attitudes. This is all because people do not recognize and understand Universal Truths. Therefore, he used the rest of his life to communicate these Truths to people living in suffering and thereby developed the philosophies of Buddhism.

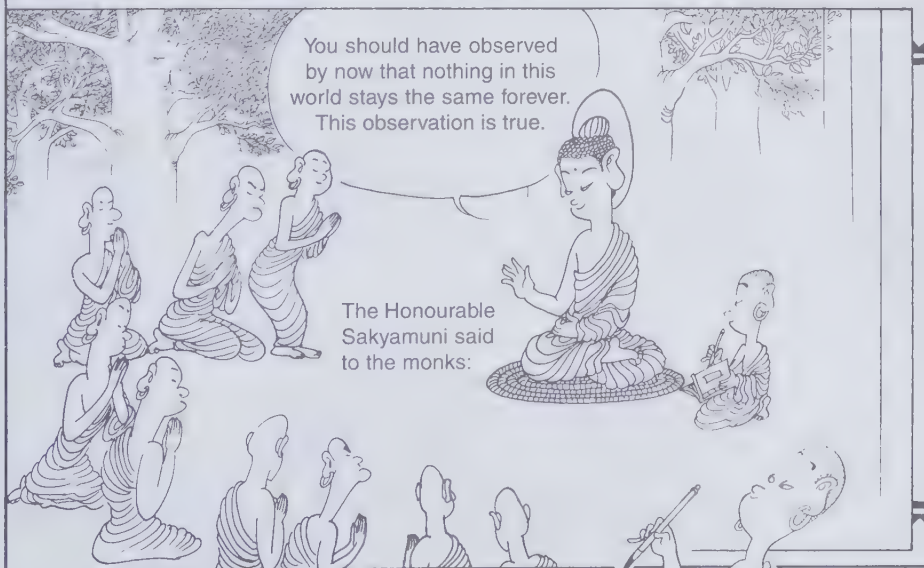
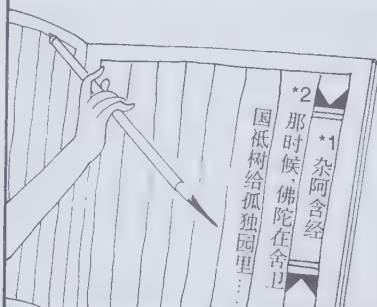




Every Act Is Transient

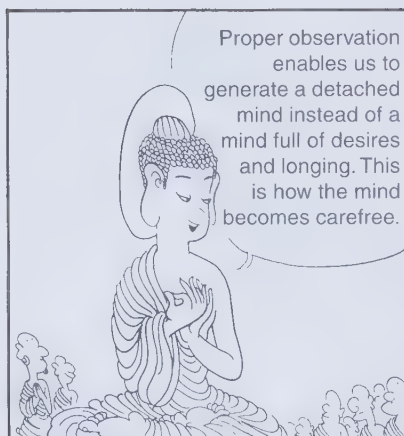


This is how I
have heard it:



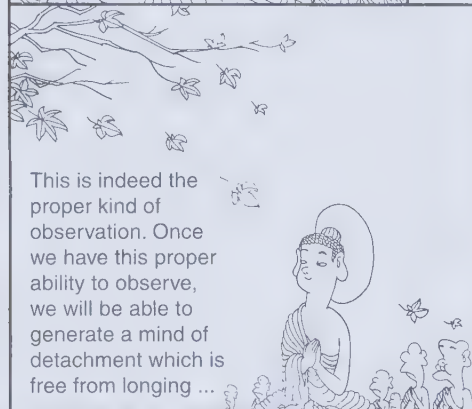
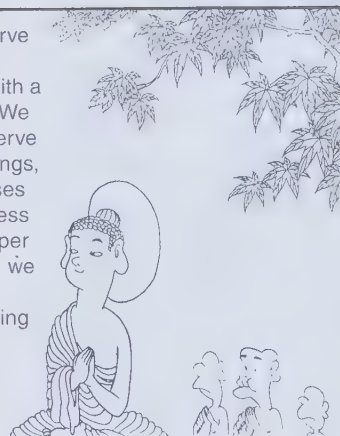
*1 The Sutra of Agama:

*2 At the time, Sakyamuni Buddha was at the Jetavana Monastery in Sravasti, a city in Northern India ...

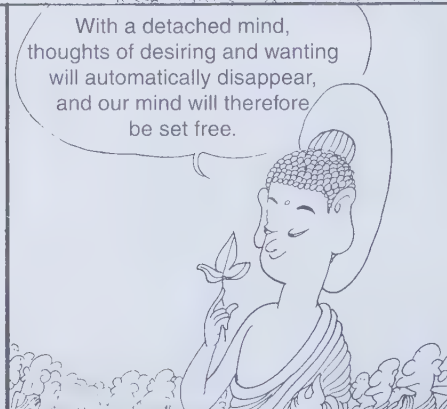


Proper observation enables us to generate a detached mind instead of a mind full of desires and longing. This is how the mind becomes carefree.

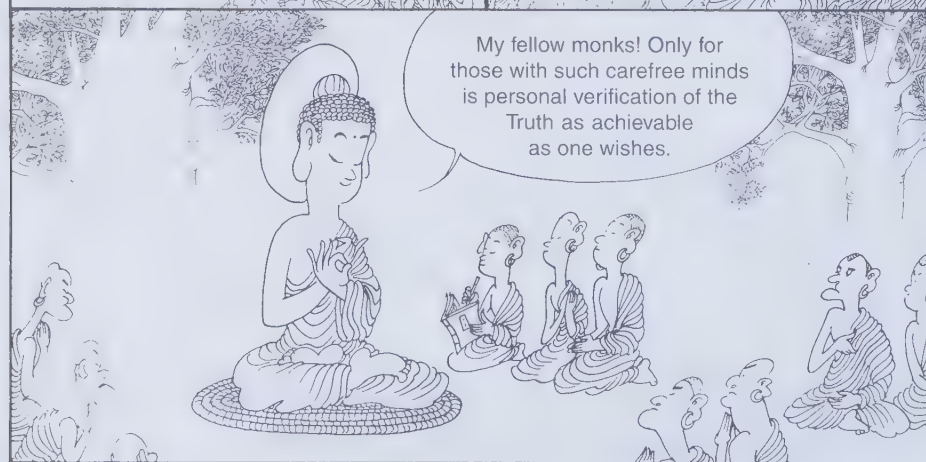
We should observe the colourful external world with a detached mind. We should also observe our internal feelings, thoughts, impulses and consciousness in this same proper way. This is how we can see through their ever-changing nature.



This is indeed the proper kind of observation. Once we have this proper ability to observe, we will be able to generate a mind of detachment which is free from longing ...



With a detached mind, thoughts of desiring and wanting will automatically disappear, and our mind will therefore be set free.

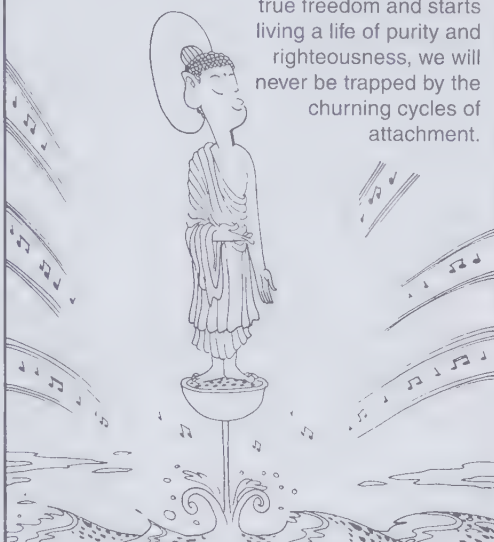


My fellow monks! Only for those with such carefree minds is personal verification of the Truth as achievable as one wishes.

I myself have personally confirmed this Truth and released myself from the bondage of life and death, attachment and desires ...



Once our spirit attains true freedom and starts living a life of purity and righteousness, we will never be trapped by the churning cycles of attachment.



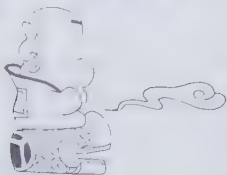
My fellow monks, pay attention to one more thing. Always observe in this same proper manner the transient nature of everything, the suffering in life, the kong * essence of the universe, and the non-existence of the ego-self.



After the monks heard Essential Universal Truths preached by Buddha, they all went on to practise it happily.



All people, places and things in this world are constantly changing: our inner sensations towards the external world also vary due to differences of time, space and our attitudes. If we can see that all worldly existence and our inner consciousness are not absolute, then we will be able to release ourselves from the attachment of longing and obtain freedom of the spirit.



* Kong is the essence of which everything in the universe is composed. According to the Heart Sutra, all events and objects, regardless of their current transient manifestation, are kong. For more on kong, see Tsai Chih Chung's *The Illustrated Heart Sutra*, Asiapac, 1997.

**Wherever
There Is
Existence,
There Is
Change**



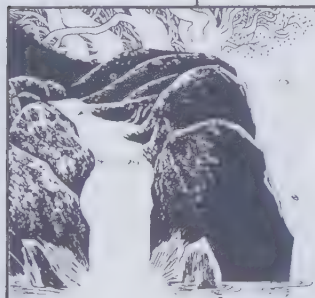
Life is ceaselessly growing, constantly changing. Only death is without change. Any existence is but a temporary manifestation of the ever-changing cycle of life. This is the Law of the Universe. When human beings search for eternal stability in their material world, they violate the universal rhythm of change and naturally can never find what they seek.



**Do not
Ignore
the Pre-
conditioned
Nature of
Events and
Objects**



Everything is always changing and disappearing. As long as there is existence, there is the process and the results of change.



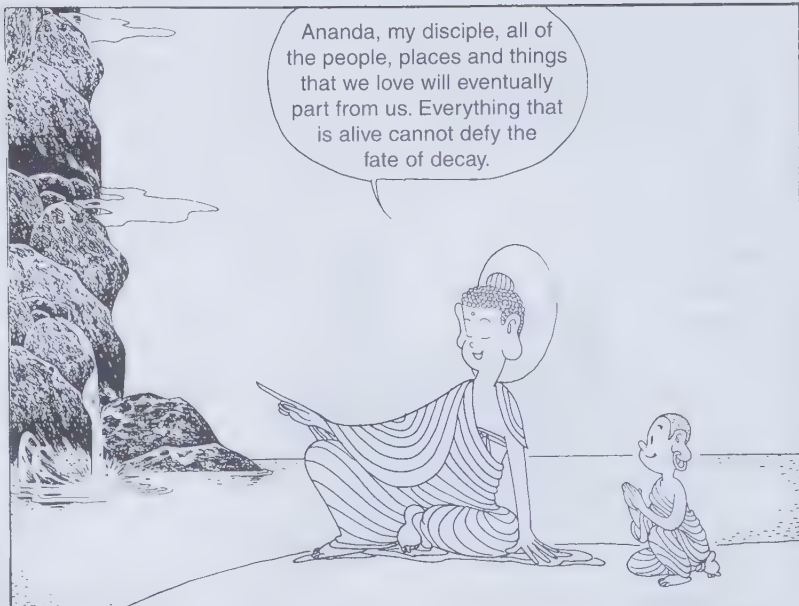
Only when your mind is not bound by such natural cycles of birth and death, can you be in a mental state of calmness and serenity.



Everything in this world is constantly changing and eventually disappears. People often expect that beautiful experiences will stay the same and not pass away; they hope that unpleasant experiences will never happen. But such wishful thinking is an impractical fantasy that keeps people trapped in their own feelings so they cannot move forward.



**All
Acts
Are
Transient**



Ananda, my disciple, all of the people, places and things that we love will eventually part from us. Everything that is alive cannot defy the fate of decay.



Therefore, do not be hurt by the sadness that all good things must end someday.

Everything in this world is ever-changing and never stays the same. If we adopt this proper attitude to observe all worldly changes, then these changes will no longer be able to affect our mind.



ESSENTIAL UNIVERSAL TRUTHS CONTAIN NO EGO-SELF

Every phenomenon in the universe is an ever-changing manifestation due to the cumulative effect of preconditioned meaningful coincidences ...

Therefore, there is no enduring universe. By the same reasoning, human beings are constantly changing during every moment from birth to death. There is no permanent ego-self that manifests the same qualities throughout time and space.



Many people perceive "I" to be an independent entity, without knowing that it is a false illusion of synchronous manifestations. Because this "I" is constantly changing with variations of space and time, there is no "I" entity that endures through eternity. From birth to death, different conditions are associated with the "I" of each particular moment. There is the time of the newborn who is not really capable of independent activities, the time of the adult who moves and shakes the world, and then the later years in life when independent actions are again not possible. Throughout this life cycle, everyone changes according to the capabilities and conditions of a particular stage in the cycle.

Our physical and mental sensations also vary according to time and space. Various emotions, such as happiness, sadness, anger and fear, all fluctuate with variations of time and space.

One of the major Truths personally verified by the Buddha is that "Essential Universal Truths contain no ego-self".

There is no objective universe that is enduring and ever-lasting. There is also no ego-self that is enduring and everlasting and subject to reincarnation over and over again.

Everything is in the process of changing ...

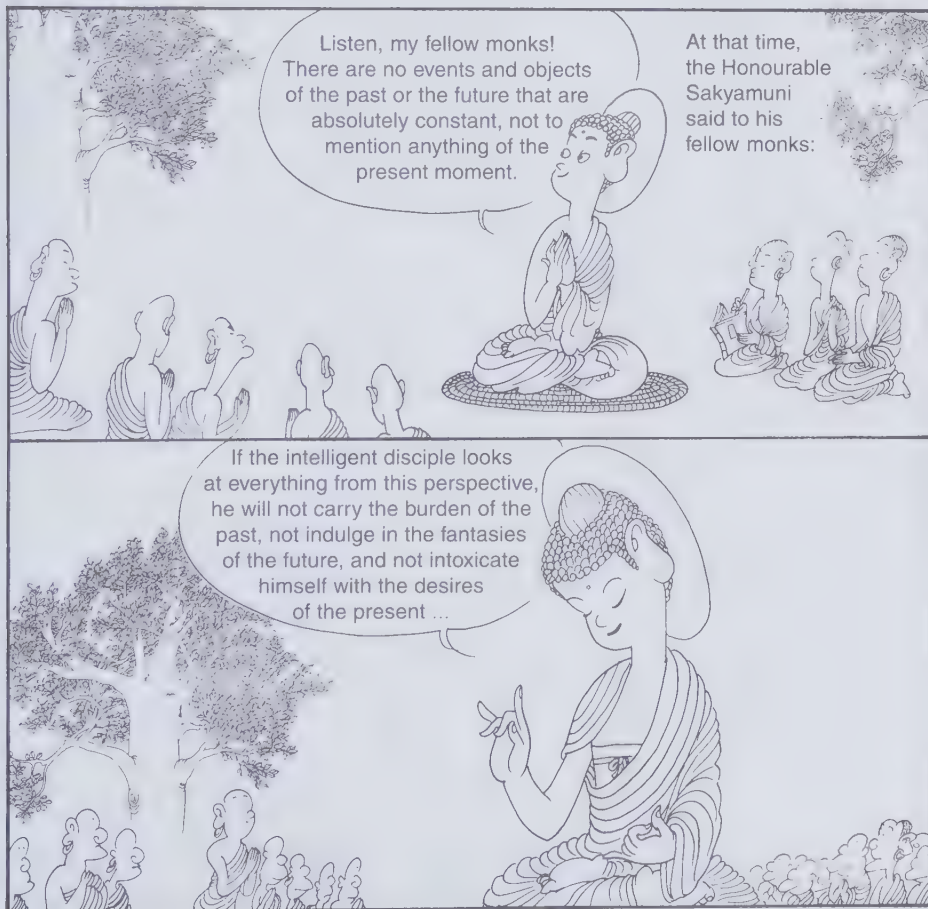


The essence of a human being contains no ego-self. The Essential Truths of the Universe also contain no ego-self ...

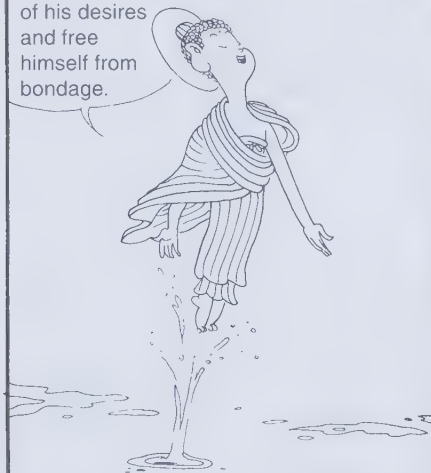




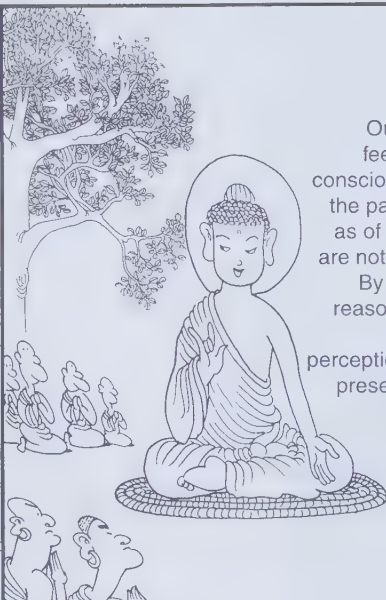
No Universal Truth Contains the Ego-Self



He would be moving
in the right direction.
This is how he will
be able to rid himself
of his desires
and free
himself from
bondage.



Our internal
feelings and
consciousness of
the past as well
as of the future
are not absolute.
By the same
reasoning, how
could our
perceptions of the
present be any
different?

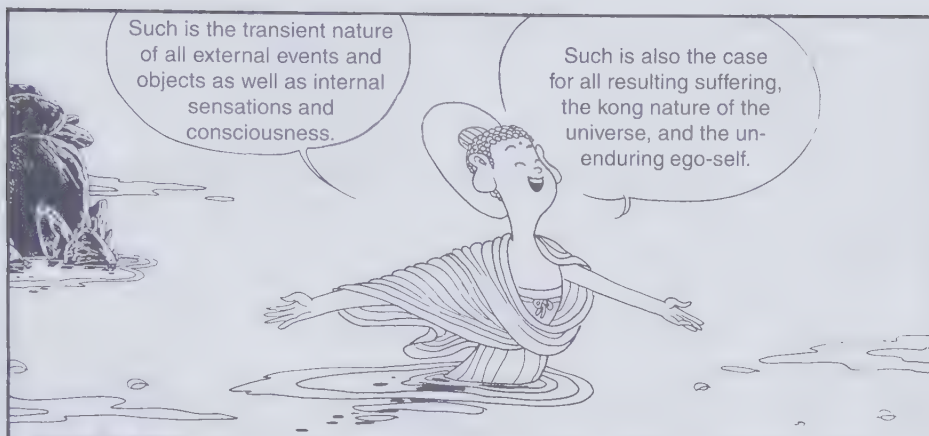


If the intelligent disciple
looks at everything in life from
this perspective, he will not carry
the burden of the past, not
fantasize about the future ...



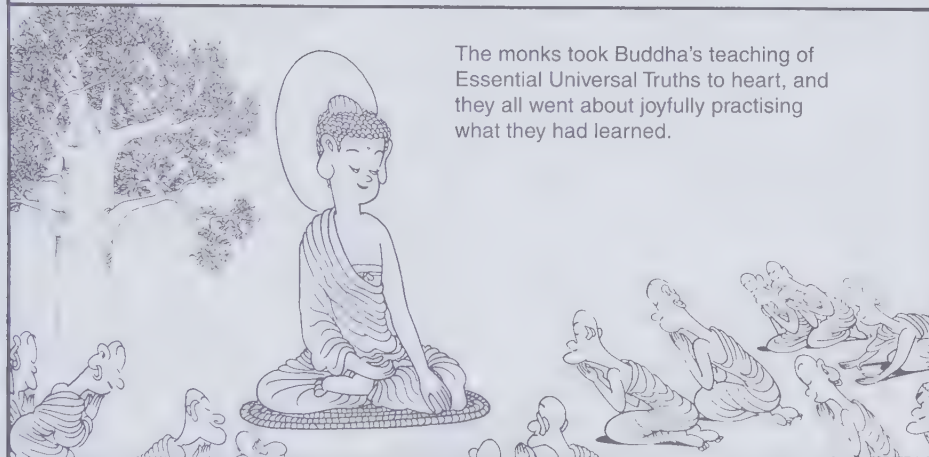
He faces and accepts the
present moment with an open
mind, instead of waiting anxiously for
all desires to be fulfilled. He would
then have moved in the right
direction, extinguished desires,
and acquired freedom.





Such is the transient nature of all external events and objects as well as internal sensations and consciousness.

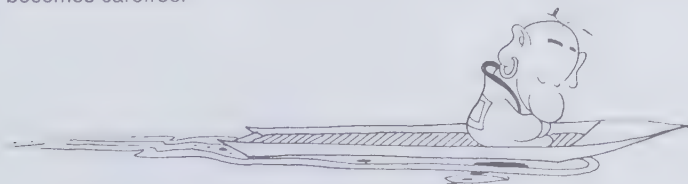
Such is also the case for all resulting suffering, the kong nature of the universe, and the un-ending ego-self.



The monks took Buddha's teaching of Essential Universal Truths to heart, and they all went about joyfully practising what they had learned.

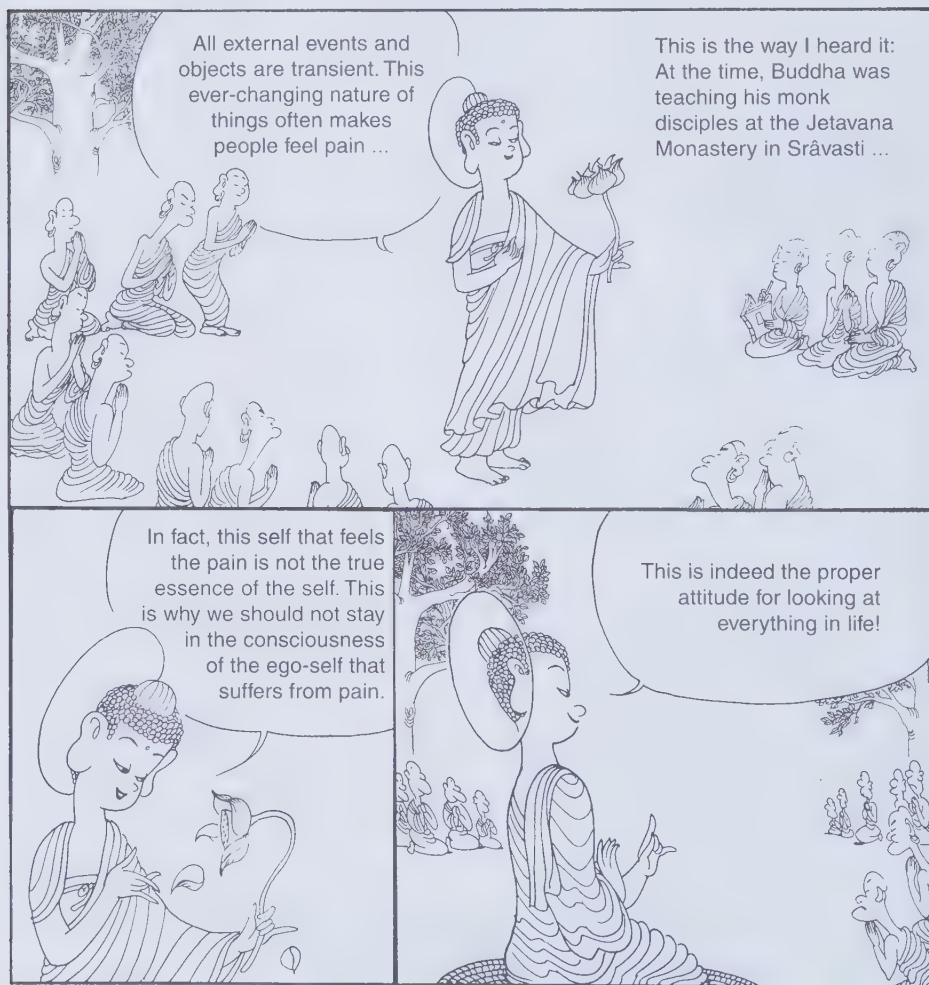
Because human beings have the separate identity of an ego-self, all types of suffering start taking place. From the perspective of self, there is the past versus the present versus the future. There is also good versus bad, and things that go my way versus things that don't go my way. Therefore, we end up living in anticipation and desire.

Every drop of water is the ocean, but each individual drop does not know this truth! When the ego-self becomes selfless, that drop of water then becomes an integral part of the ocean and, at the same time, becomes carefree.

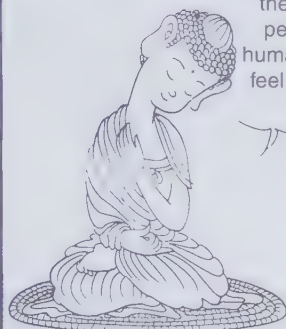




The Human Essence Contains No Ego-Self



In the same way,
all invisible internal
feelings are also
transient. Because
they are not
permanent,
humans often
feel suffering



This self that feels
suffering actually is not
the true essence of the
self. That is why we
should not allow
ourselves to stay in
the consciousness of
this suffering self.



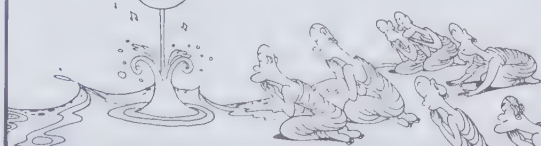
Using this
concept to
understand
is the
only
proper
approach!

If intelligent
disciples can take
this perspective,
then they will be
able to detach
from changes
of external
phenomena
and internal
feelings. This is how
they will
gain relief!



They will also gain
relief in connection with
the grief, sadness, pain
and worries generated
by birth, ageing,
illness and death.

The monks heard Buddha's
teaching of the Essential
Universal Truths and all went
on happily to practise what he
preached.



All phenomena in the world are ever-changing and transient. No times, events, or objects are eternally everlasting.

Once we understand the impermanent nature of things, we will understand that there is neither an "I" that is eternally permanent, nor anything that "I" can possess forever.

Therefore, humans need to transcend external changes by living without an ego-self and by dissolving into the external layer of time and space. It doesn't matter that there is birth, ageing, illness and death.

We will be able to accept them peacefully. This is how we can no longer be bothered by the thought of the life or death of the "ego-self".



Identifying and Ending Five Types of Troubles



There is no real entity that can be called "I"; there is also no entity that can be called "mine".



Given that there is no "I", how can there be any basis for any entity called "mine"?



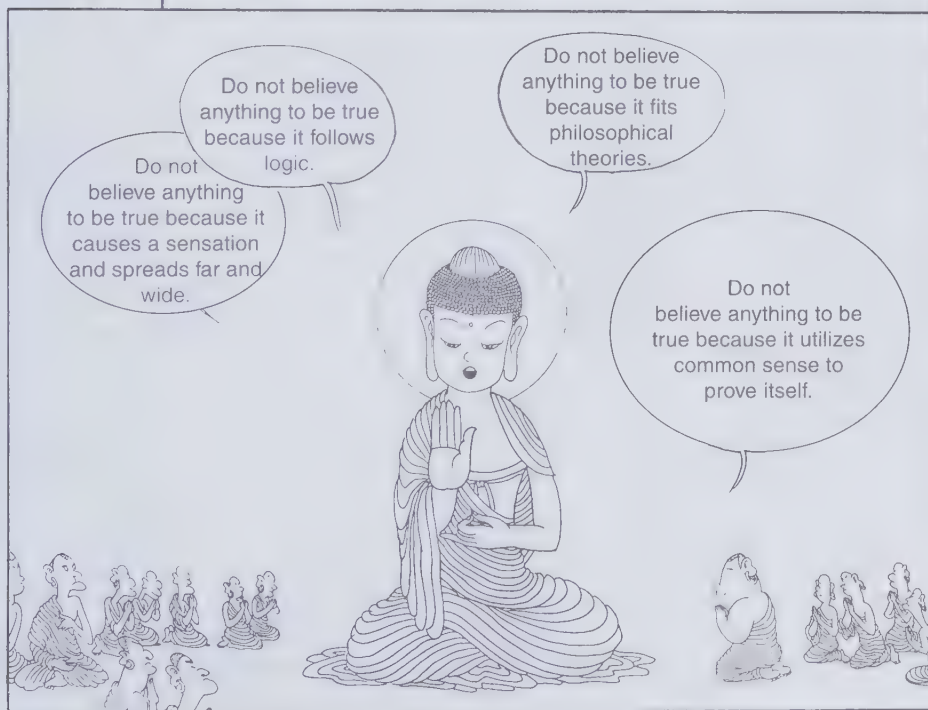
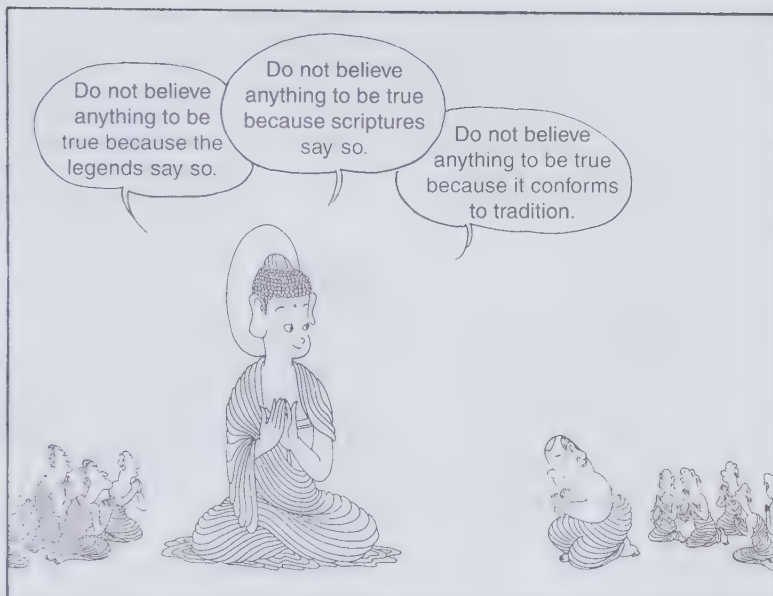
If a human being can approach an understanding of life through this perspective, he will be able to cut himself loose from five kinds of worries that connect him with the consciousness of desires.



Because human beings think they have a body and mind separate from the rest of the universe, we generate the perceptions of self-centredness, such as "I" and "mine". This is the origin of five types of troubles: greed, resentment, righteousness, negligence and doubtfulness. The only way to end these worries is to start by developing the perspectives of selflessness and of not owning anything.



A Discourse on Proper Beliefs



Do not believe anything to be true because it fits your preconceived notions.

Do not believe anything to be true because authority figures say so.

Even though your teacher, "Ultimate Essence Arriving", * says so, do not immediately believe it to be true.

* "Ultimate Essence Arriving", or Tathāgata in Sanskrit, is sometimes translated as "Thus Come One". It also means "one who follows the ways of previous Buddhas" and is a title Sakyamuni Buddha used for himself and his disciples.



Any beliefs that we accept as true without personal verification are called "superstition".



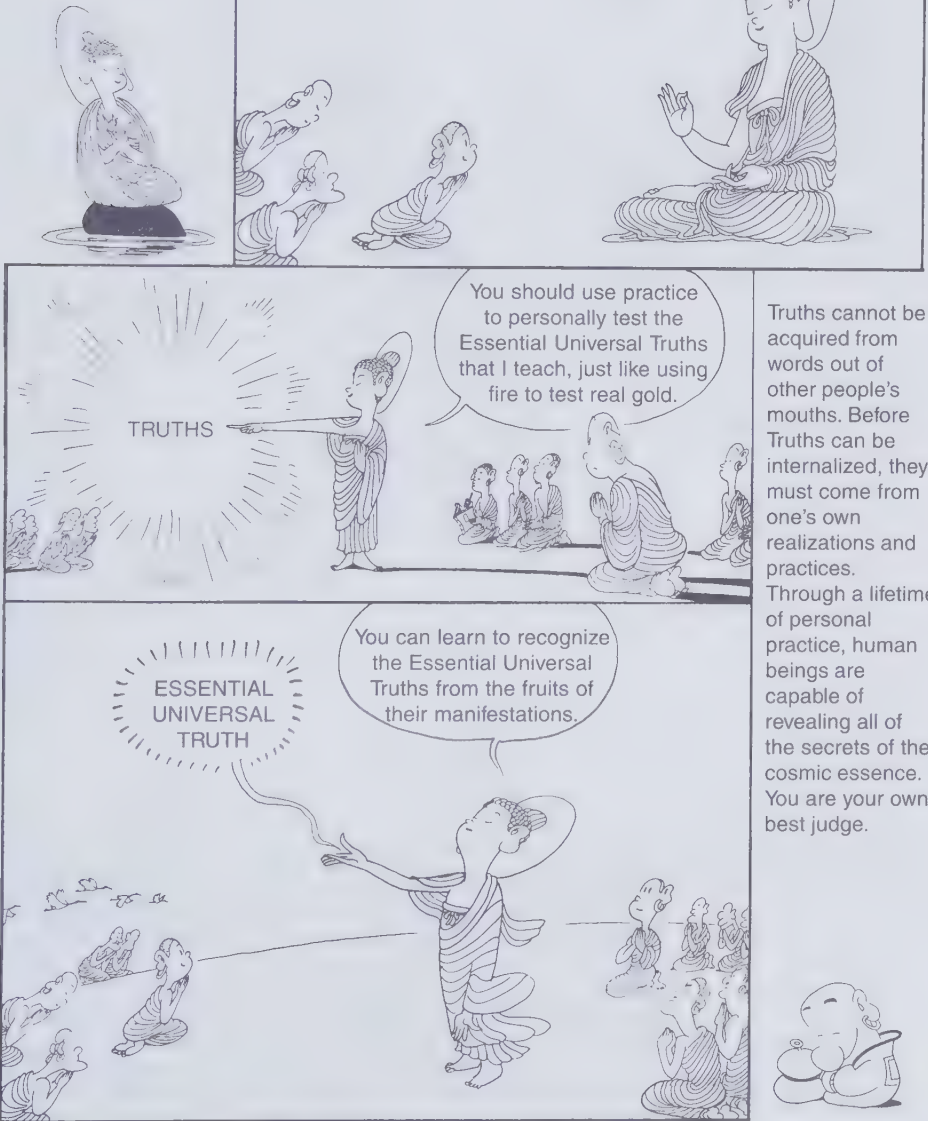
Only when we hold supposed truth to the light of personal verification, can we achieve proper beliefs.



To rid ourselves of our delusions, we have to start from learning to know every belief as it truly is. This knowing of what is true is not obtained by just listening to what others have to say, but only after personal verification. Therefore, the Buddha says, "acquire the proper eyesight for Universal Truths" — this is just like one has personally witnessed what is true.



**Practice Is the
Only Path to
Reach Truth**



Observation



The enlightened wise ones have personally verified the truths in life as well as the means of balancing the body and the mind. Through personal observations and experiences, they treat their own body and mind as objects under observation. Therefore they learn to understand the rise and fall of feelings, such as pain, and eventually acquire the methods of conquering the body and the mind. Every one of us can also treat our emotions as objects of observation and through the experience personally verify effective means of unifying the body and the mind.



Deviant Thinking and Proper Thinking



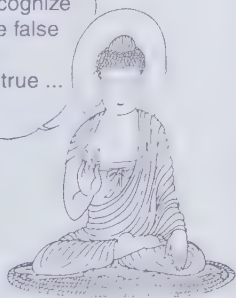
To mistake the false for the true, to mistake the true for the false ...



If one holds onto the wrong concepts, one will never arrive at the destination of Truth.



To recognize the true as true, to recognize the false as untrue ...



Only when one can see through one's own mind and look at everything in this world with the proper perspective, can one arrive at the destination of Truth.



Due to ignorance, many of us look at this world from an incorrect point of view. That is why people live in the painful sea of desires, hostility and delusion. To live in the sea of joy, we should think with a proper mind and look at this world with a proper heart.



**Only
Truths
that
Can
Be
Tested
Are
Real**



There is no better virtue than
a heart of grand compassion;
there is no sweeter joy than
a mind of quiet serenity.

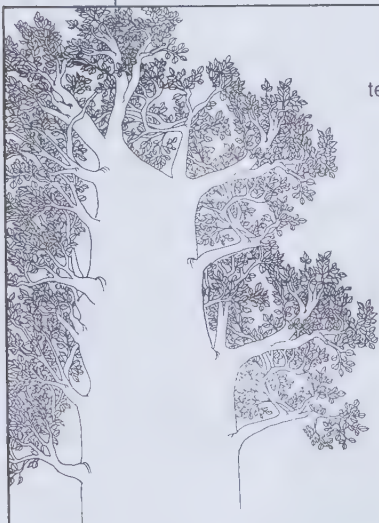


There is no purer Truth
than the existence of
impermanence; there is
no higher religion than
the development of
moral wisdom.



There is no greater philosophy than
the teaching of Truth that can be
tested by all of us right here and now.

Truth is subject
to practice and
testing. If it is
proper Truth,
we definitely
should be able
to acquire
sweet fruits
through
practice right
away. If it only
abstractly
promises a
reward in the
next life, this
may be an
irresponsible
trick to delude
the ignorant.



NIRVÂNA IS PERFECT TRANQUILLITY

Human beings, because of the interests of the ego-self, generate worries, such as desires, dissatisfaction, delusion, depression, grief and boredom ...

Therefore, human beings should learn through proper cultivation to understand the Truth that all acts are transient. We need to understand that there is not a single entity in the universe that is eternally everlasting. There is also not an ego-self that is eternally everlasting. With this kind of viewpoint towards the internal and external worlds, we will no longer generate pain because manifestations of time and space do not follow our wishes. Gradually, we will be able to curtail our personal emotions and reach a place of eternal tranquillity with peace and joy.



Every person has the capacity to reach a place of serene tranquility through a proper viewpoint towards life, a proper lifestyle, and proper methods of cultivation.

This state of eternal joy is the “other shore” of wisdom.

Our sufferings arise from our ignorance — trying to force worldly issues that violate Essential Universal Truths. Because worldly matters cannot always follow our wishful thinking and self-expectations, worries naturally arise.

Every one of us has the choice of reaching a state without suffering and worries. Through an understanding of the Truths of the universe and through practice of proper cultivation, we can slowly march in a direction compatible with Essential Universal Truths.

This state of mind is “the other shore” of wisdom — perfect tranquility is Nirvâna.



One road leads to worldly profits, while a separate road leads the way to Nirvâna.





The Path to Tranquillity

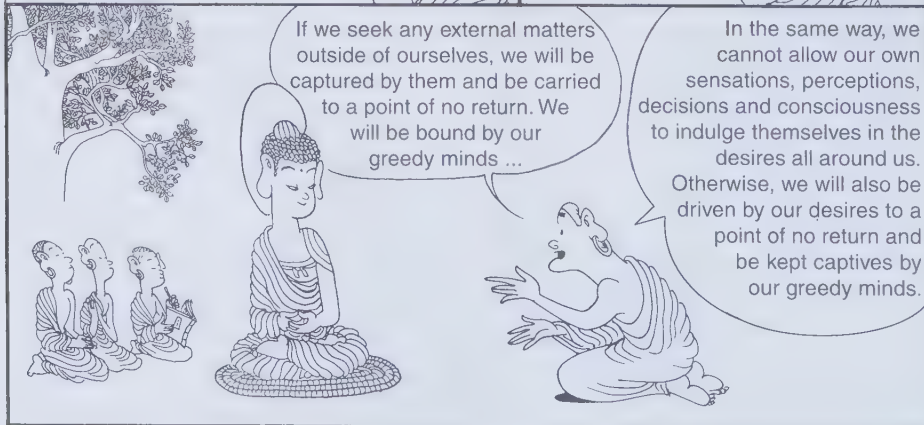
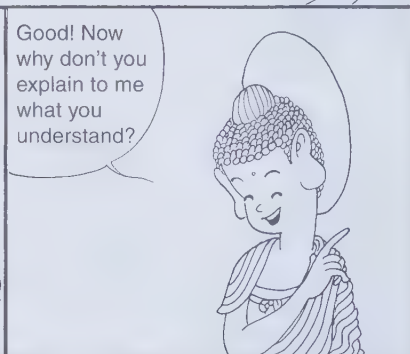
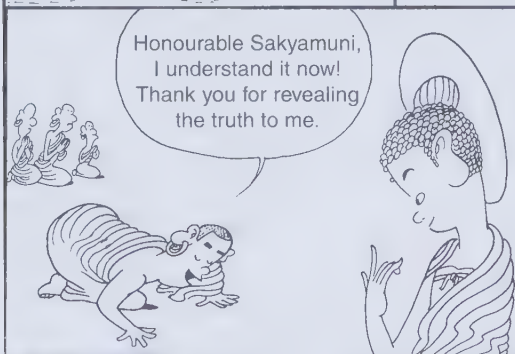
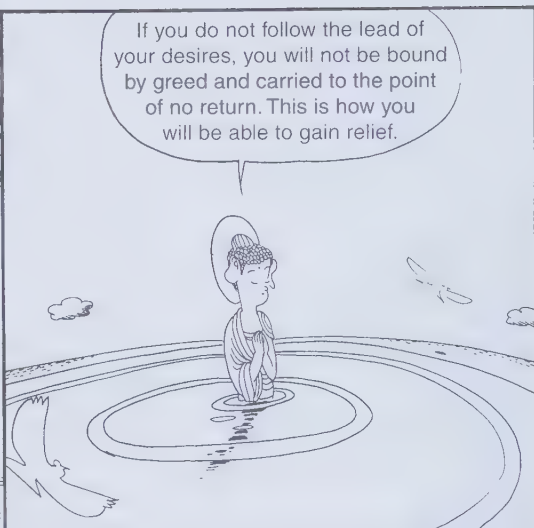
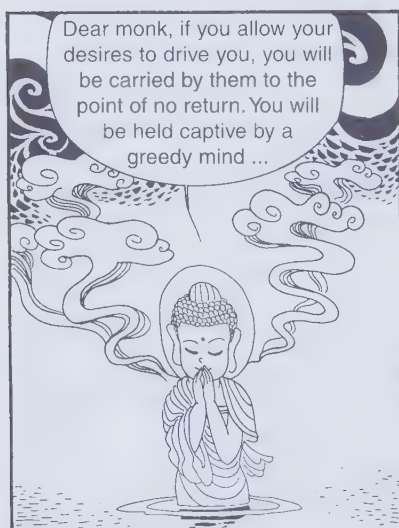
Once, when Buddha was at the Jetavana Monastery in Srāvasti, a monk from another sect came to him for advice ...

Oh, Honourable Sakyamuni, would you please tell me the essence of your teaching of Buddhist truth?

After I hear it, I will find a quiet place to cultivate myself alone. I will purify and concentrate my mind and then meditate until I eventually reach a state of absolute clarity.

All right. I will explain to you in detail. Do take the effort to comprehend and contemplate carefully what I say.

Yes, Your Honour.



Thank you for your guidance, Honourable Sakyamuni. Now I can cultivate the Truth Your Honour has taught me by myself.

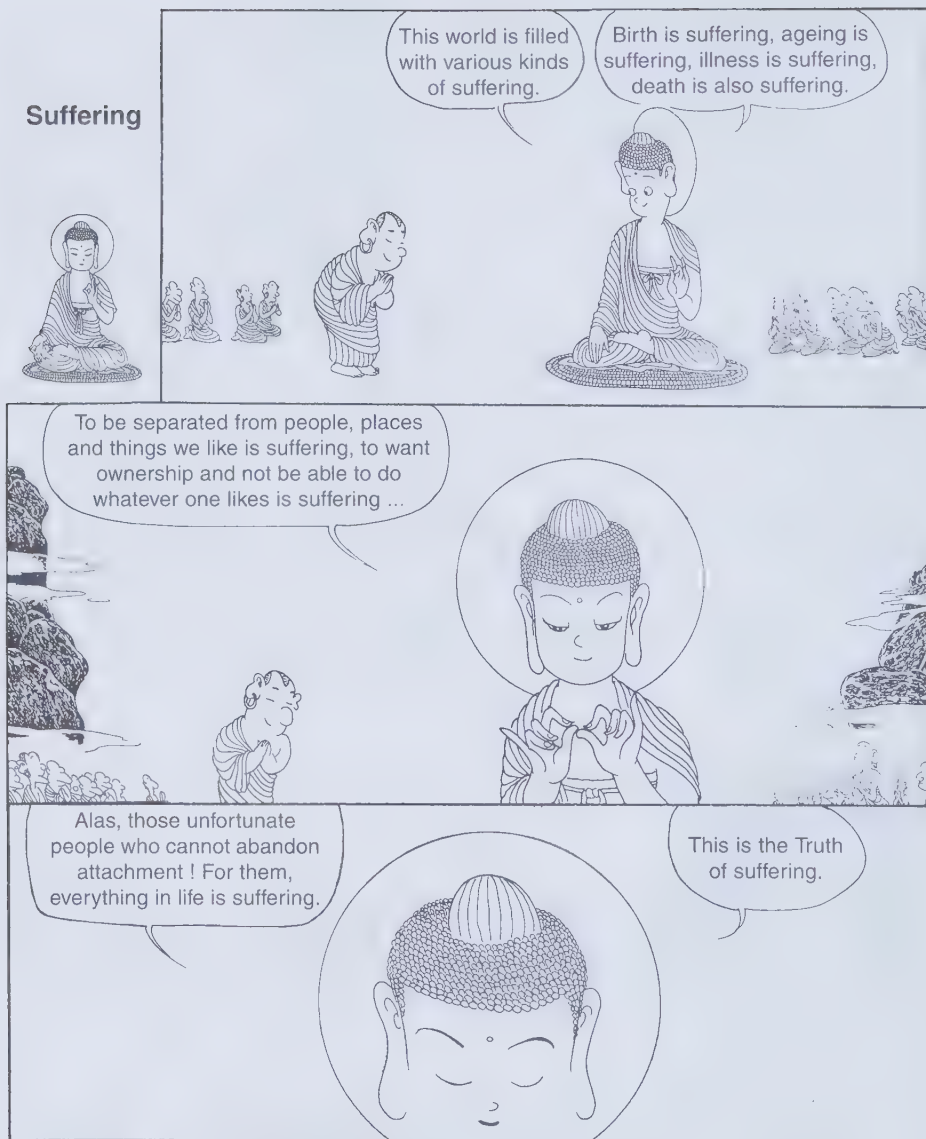
That is wonderful! You comprehend very quickly. My dear monk, in regard to the physical world, if you do not let yourself to be driven by desires, you will not be carried to the point of no return. You will have the opportunity to release yourself from the mind of greed. In the same way, that is also true for your inner sensations, perceptions, decisions and consciousness. If you do not allow yourself to be driven by desires, you will not be carried to the point of no return and you will be able to achieve freedom from a greedy mind.

Later, he went to a quiet place to cultivate himself diligently ...

Before long, his mind gained final release. This is how one monk became an Arhat, one who has attained Nirvāṇa.

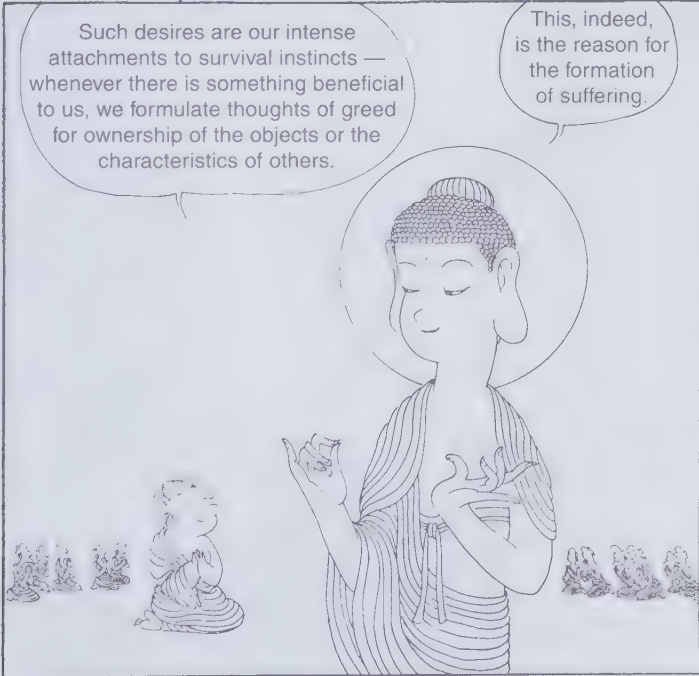
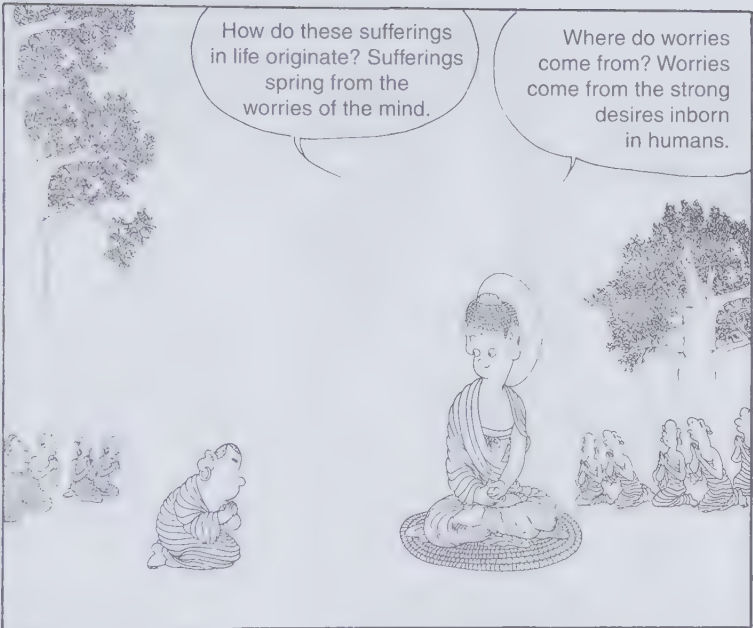
Because human beings pursue all external events and objects, their internal feelings and thoughts fluctuate with these external conditions. As a result, their minds are kept captive by all sorts of external factors and cannot be released.

Suffering



Human beings often use an ego-self perspective to judge everything based on personal perceptions and benefits. Since worldly events cannot always go as we wish, suffering is inevitable. All kinds of sensations of suffering come from the self-perceived existence of the ego-self "I" in our mind. As long as we perceive the "I" to be separate from the rest of the world, suffering will surely follow.

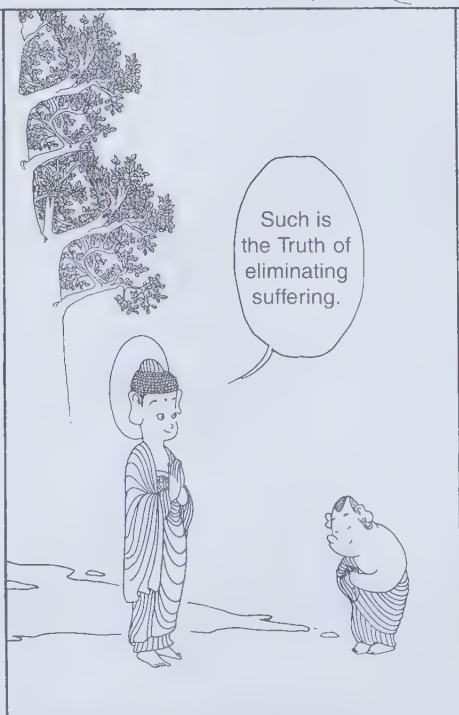
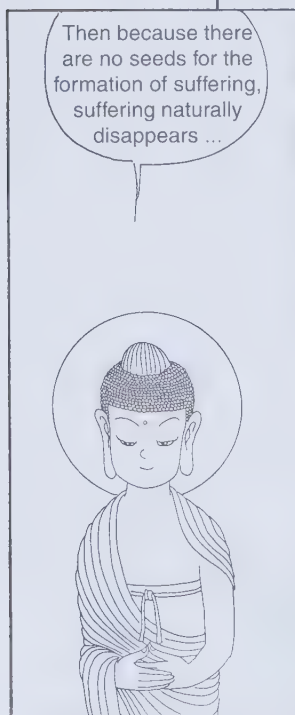
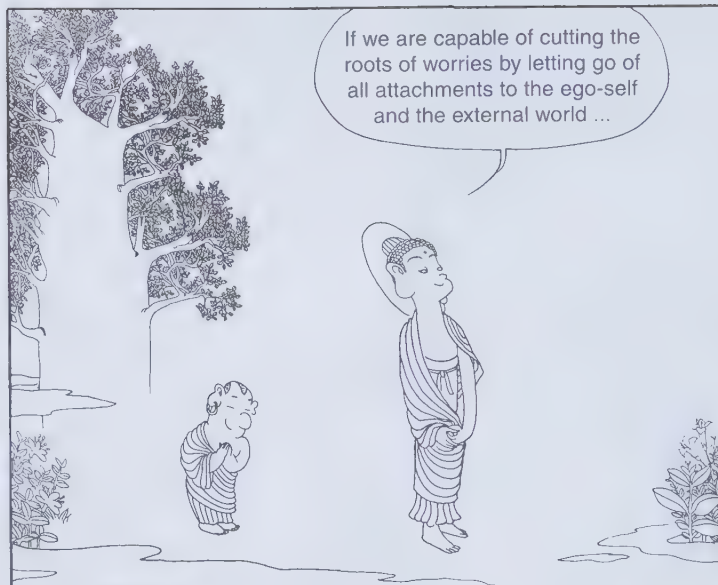
Causes of Suffering



The survival instinct is totally self-serving to ensure that the ego-self and the offspring of the ego-self will continue to thrive. Therefore, whenever there is anything of benefit to the ego-self, we want to have it for ourselves. However, the objective environment outside our ego-self does not usually go as we wish. Because our wishes are not immediately gratified, we start having worries, which in turn lead to suffering.



Ending Suffering



To be free of suffering, we must uproot its source. Without the cause of suffering, there will be no fruit of suffering. What are the seeds for the formation of suffering? They are the ego-self, the desires formed by the ego-self, and, in turn, the worries formed by desires ...



The Path of Cultivation to End Suffering



In order to reach the final goal of being free from suffering, we must adhere to the "Eightfold Proper Path to Cultivation" in our cultivation in daily life. That includes ...



A proper point of view, proper thoughts, a proper way of speaking to others, proper behaviour, a proper lifestyle, proper efforts, proper mindfulness, proper centring of the mind through meditation ...

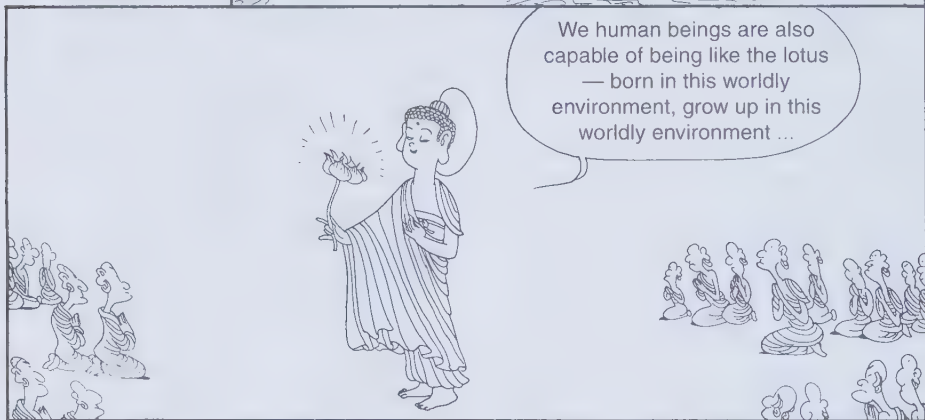
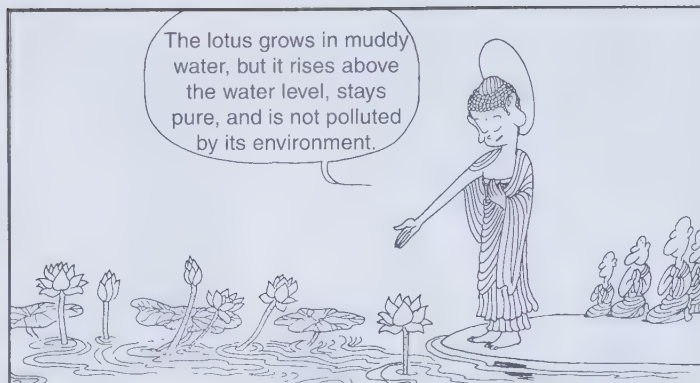
These eight modes of proper cultivation need to be adhered to throughout the twenty-four hours a day, no matter what activities we happen to be engaged in at that time.

This is the ultimate truth of the cultivation path for ridding oneself of suffering!



In order to reach the final goal of freeing oneself of suffering, it is not enough to just understand the Essential Universal Truths if we don't apply them in our daily lives. We must use daily cultivation to slowly modify our body and mind. Eventually we will reach the state of no attachment to self, no desires and wants, and therefore no worries. Only when we have actually practised these principles in daily living will our suffering be uprooted.

Rise above Pollution



We humans are born into a certain time and space and live in our unique time and space. As a result, we should become one with our specific time and space. Meditate on the fact that the particular time and space we face is merely a manifestation of ourselves. Whether it is pain or joy, purity or filth, these are all part of our true essence. Therefore, attachment to pain, joy, purity and filth will no longer pollute you any more.

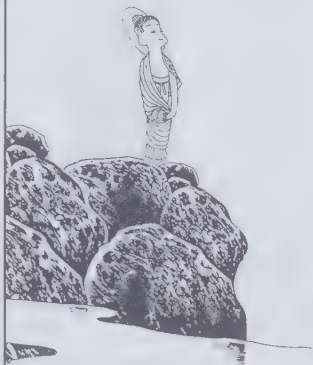
The World Is a Reflection of Your Mind



A gentle breeze, a blossoming flower, messages signalling the arrival of spring ...



Once a person reaches supreme enlightenment, all grasses, trees, mountains, rivers and landscapes in front of the eyes appear as beautiful as scenery from heaven ...



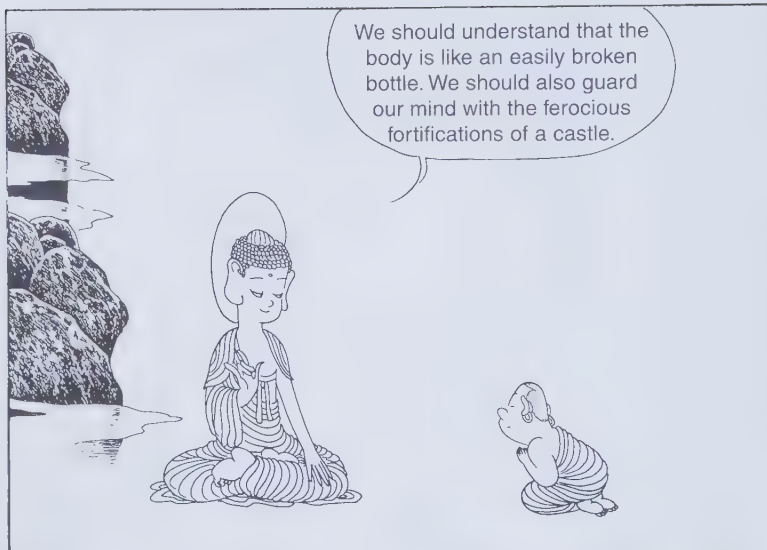
Why is this the case? It is because, if our mind is pure, any place it contacts will be as pure.



How we feel about the world depends completely on how our mind thinks. If our mind believes that the world is dirty and ugly, then we will focus on the part that is dirty and ugly. If our mind believes that the world is wonderful, we will see the wonder.



Cultivating the Mind



We should understand that the body is like an easily broken bottle. We should also guard our mind with the ferocious fortifications of a castle.

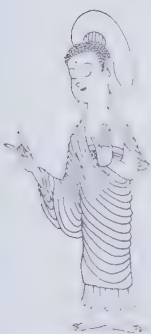
We can fight the evils coming from our own mind by using wisdom as our best weapon. We should always fight for victory in this internal war of protecting our own mind and never back off or give up.



Our physical bodies are very vulnerable and easily controlled by desires. We can only depend on a strong and steady mind to defend against the temptations of the body as well as those of the mind. We need to make the decision to defend ourselves from any evil just as vigorously as any knight would protect his castle.



Keep the Mind Pure



If we start with a muddy and unclear mind, then our outward behaviour will be polluted for sure.



Once our behaviour are polluted, we will encounter endless worries ...



Therefore a pure mind and cautious behaviour are the basic foundation for learning the path to enlightenment.



Our behaviour are the reflections of our minds. Once the mind has negative thoughts, they are bound to be reflected in negative behaviour. In turn, improper behaviour will bring about the fruits of worries and suffering. As a result, our emotions will be disturbed, thus polluting the mind and invariably perpetuating the vicious cycle.



Controlling the Mind



If our mind is filled with the three types of poison — greed, resentment and delusion — then it is not to be trusted.



Our mind cannot be allowed to have everything it desires at will. We must make every effort to restrain the mind, so that it will not indulge in pursuing desires.



The mind is like a monkey that is constantly looking outside every moment and never stops. The mind is also like a wild horse that is continuously galloping all over the place and never rests. Centring the mind through meditation means learning the method of being mindful. This is how our mind can be trained to stay in tranquillity and not scatter its thoughts around. Wherever we are physically, our mind is at exactly the same place. Whatever we are doing physically, our mind is observing and reflecting on the same thing.

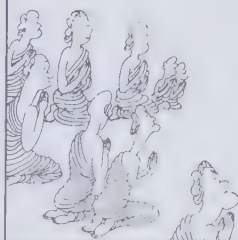
The Poem of the Virtuous One Who Has One More Night to Live

*Do not regret the past,
do not fantasize about the future,
the past is already gone,
while the future has not arrived.
We can only grab onto the present moment,
carefully observing what is in front of our eyes,
without rocking and rolling from side to side.*



We must realistically observe ourselves and the world around us and practise pragmatically what we should do today. Nobody knows whether death will come tomorrow ...

Anybody who can reflect on life this way will focus on practising day and night. This is referred to as "the virtuous one who behaves as if he has one more night to live". This is the state of the centred mind.



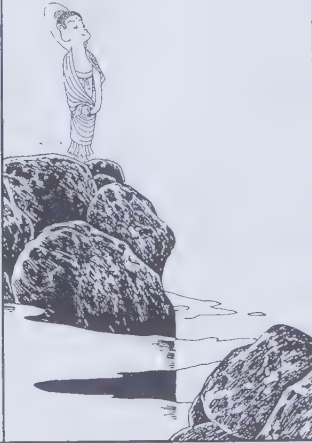
Everyone should cherish what is held in the hands. Do not desire what we do not have or fret over what has past and will not come back. To desire what we do not yet have is a greedy thought. On the contrary, to cherish what we currently have is to treasure our blessings.



The Method of Patient Tolerance



When other
people hurt us, we
should be thinking
this way ...



"This is because he could not help himself."
"This is just because of my own wrong
actions in the past that have led to this
result."
"This is only because of my mistakes in
conduct that have led to such happenings."
"This is only because my own mind was at
the wrong place."



"Nobody is without mistakes!"
"The preconditioning to adversity in life is indeed quite
helpful for my own cultivation!"
"All living beings are messengers bringing me lessons in
cultivation, and I surely owe them a great deal of gratitude!"
"My ability to tolerate adversity patiently is making all
Buddhas happy for my progress in cultivation."
"This will help me accumulate a tremendous amount of
merit and virtue."



What is patient
tolerance? It
means to be
able to keep
our mind
undisturbed,
not angry, not
wanting to hurt
anyone, and
not attached.
This kind of
mindset is
called the
patient and
tolerant mind.



Be One's Own Master

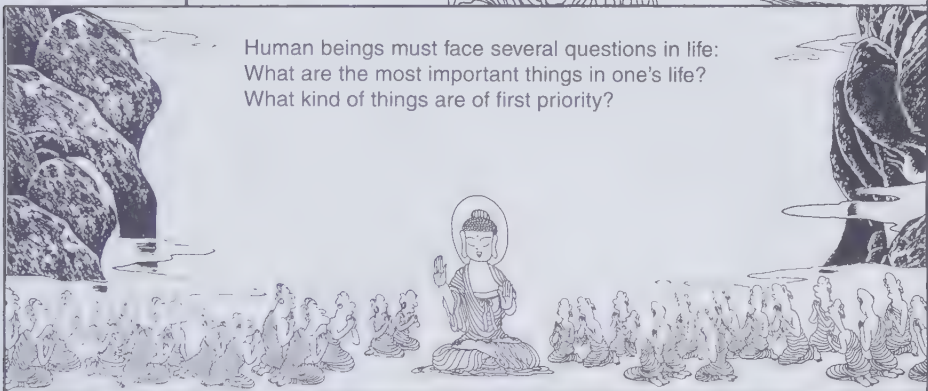


Only say words that are necessary; do not say words that are unnecessary.



Things that need to be severed; get rid of them right away. Things that must be learned; pursue them with full force.

Human beings must face several questions in life: What are the most important things in one's life? What kind of things are of first priority?



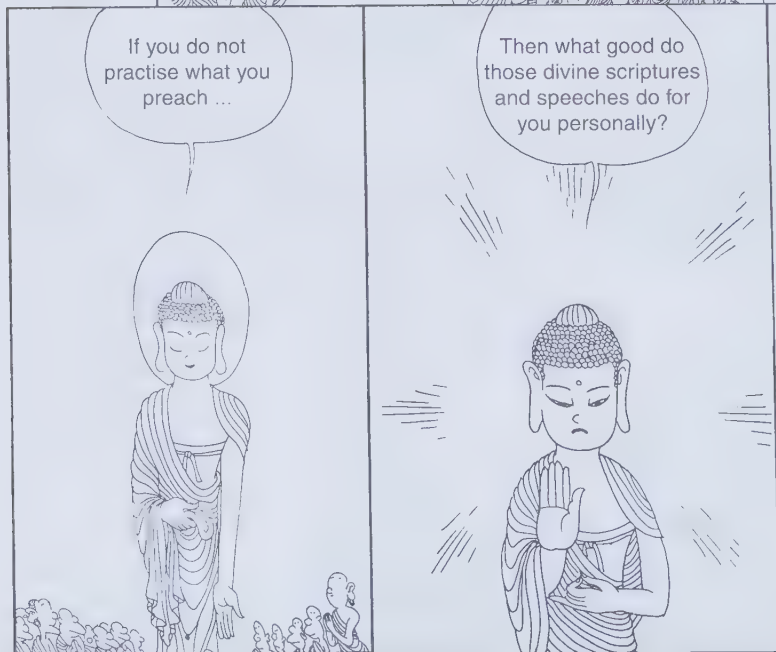
When there is complete clarity, one can adjust attitudes in the mind and focus on proper targets with full force.



We are the masters of our own body and mind. If we are incapable of managing our own mind and unable to control our own body, how can we possibly be our own masters?



**Practice
Is the
Only Way**



Practice is the only way to reach Truth. Bliss is to be felt and is not for intellectual knowing; Truth is to be felt and practised and is not for mental satisfaction.





Practise What Is Preached

Though you only read a few scriptures, you follow their teachings and practise what they preach in daily life ...



... and use the correct methods to eliminate the flames of greed, resentment and delusion. In this way you will be able to acquire a peaceful and serene mind ...



Now, and in the future, you will be in the midst of ultimate joy.



Let go of old ways that no longer work for us. Get rid of desires, hostility and ignorance. These are the three roots of imbalance and pain for our body as well as our mind. This is how we will find the mental state of peace and tranquillity.



**Not Seeing
the Real
“Ultimate
Essence
Arriving”**

If a person has his hand holding onto the end of my clothes, he physically can follow me closely step by step; but if he still possesses a mind of strong desires, passions and resentments and behaves loosely and ignorantly ...

Then he is quite distant from me, and I am quite distant from him. Why do I say that he is quite distant from me?



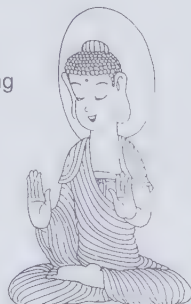
Because he does not see the Essential Universal Truths that I am teaching. Whoever does not see the universal truth also cannot see the true me.

“Buddha” means wise enlightenment. “Buddhism” is a teaching of wisdom. To believe in the Buddha is to follow his teachings. We can choose to use our own efforts to practise and thereby reach the state of a tranquil mind and proper attitude in dealing with the world.



**As If You
Met the
“Ultimate
Essence
Arriving”
in Person**

If a person is physically very far from me but he does not have desperate desires, does not get infatuated easily, does not have a resentful mind, is not driven by wrong attitudes, does not indulge himself, and also has a proper understanding of Truth ...



Then it is as if he is accompanying me by my side, and I am likewise by his side.

This is because he can see the Essential Universal Truths I teach. Anyone who sees these Truths also sees me.



Although the Buddha is 2,500 years removed from us, it is still quite simple to see “Ultimate Essence Arriving” himself because he said: “Anyone who sees Essential Universal Truth, sees me in person; anyone who sees me in person sees Essential Universal Truth.”

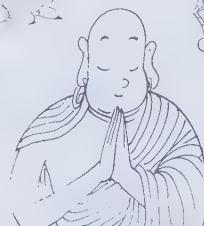


Nirvâna Is Tranquillity



This is the way I heard it: At the time, Sakyamuni Buddha was in the Jetavana monastery in Srāvasti ...

A monk from another sect came to where Buddha lived ...



Very good question! Listen closely and I will explain to you carefully.



Honourable Sakyamuni, you mentioned the term "a teacher of the truth". What do you think are the criteria for "a teacher of the truth"?



He should hold the belief that we need to distance ourselves from all values and desires based in the external world. He should extinguish all desires outside of himself in order to reach the state of perfect tranquillity in Nirvâna.



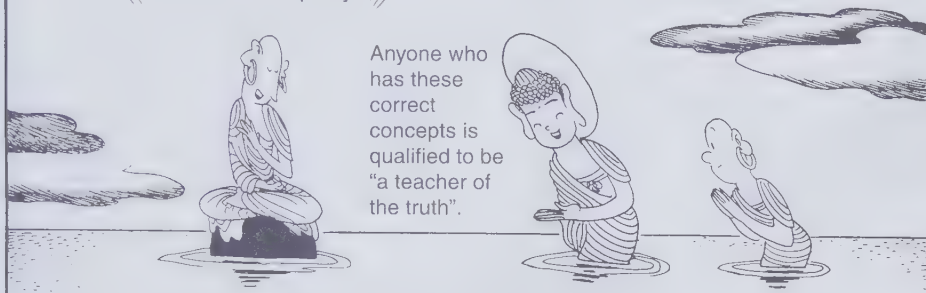
Human beings should detach from the "material world" and try to completely abolish the notion of "material world". This is how we may reach "the other shore" of Nirvâna in perfect tranquillity.



Each person should detach from sensations, perceptions, decisions and consciousness. Only after eliminating these can he reach "the other shore" of tranquillity.

He should choose to stay far away from the feelings and movements of the inner world in order to be free of them and reach the state of tranquil Nirvâna.

Anyone who has these correct concepts is qualified to be "a teacher of the truth".



What are the steps and the direction for moving towards tranquil Nirvâna?



One step at a time, try to abolish all desires. This would be the steps and the direction to march towards tranquil nirvâna. This is how to achieve eternal life.

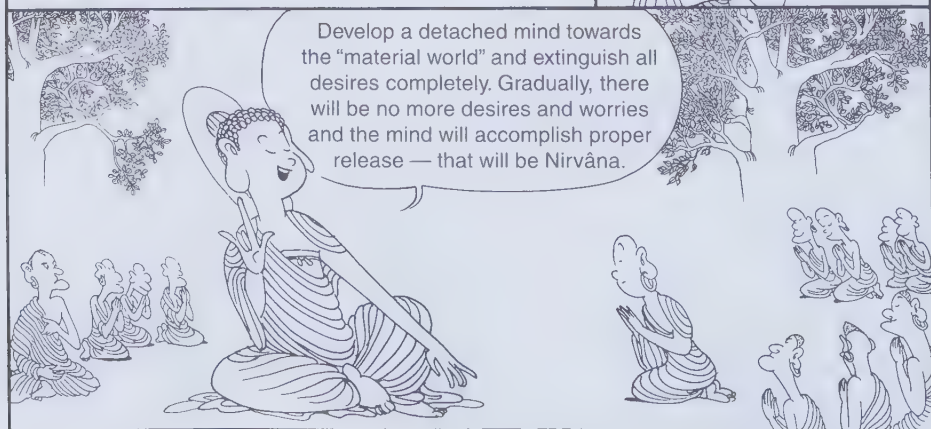
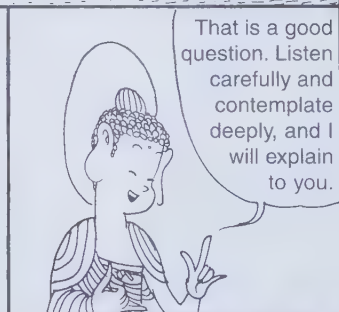
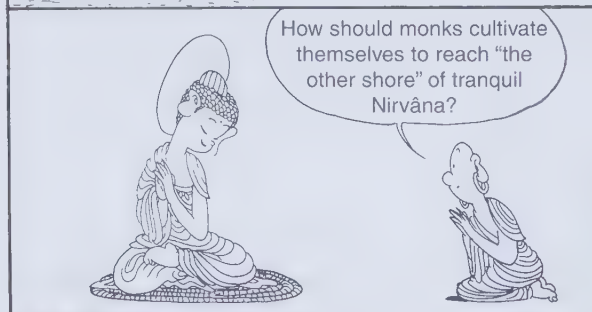
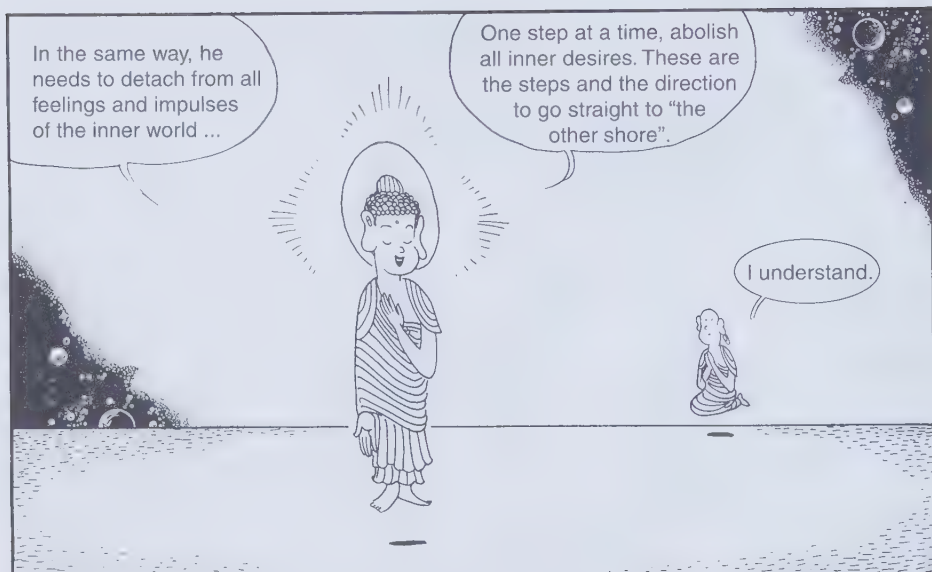
Everything from now on is a new birth.

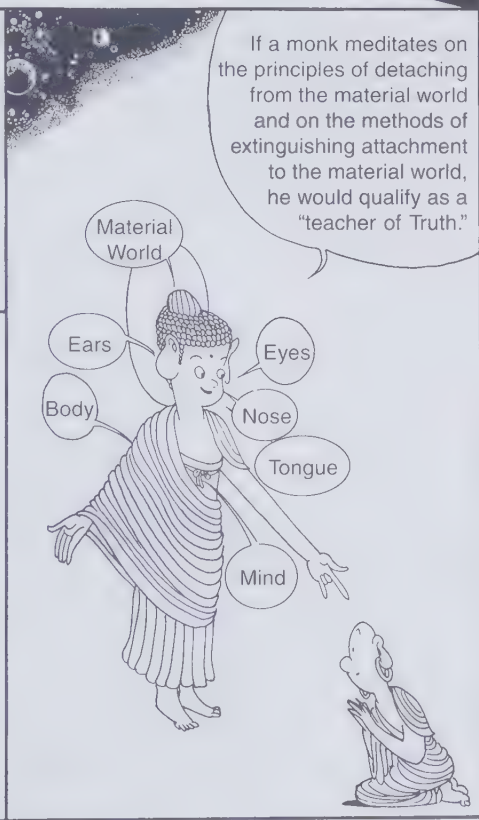
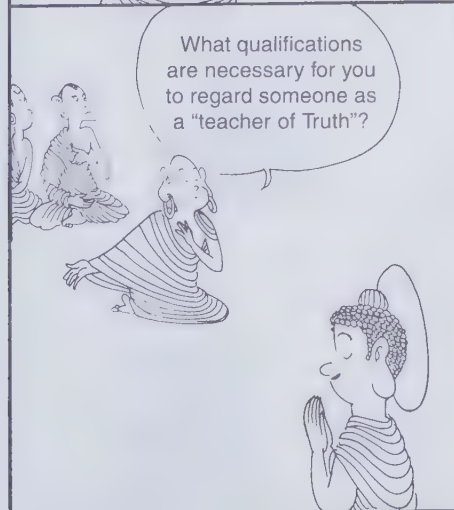
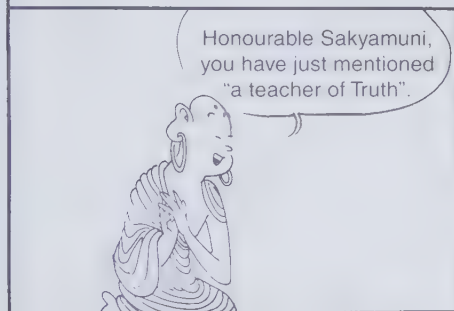
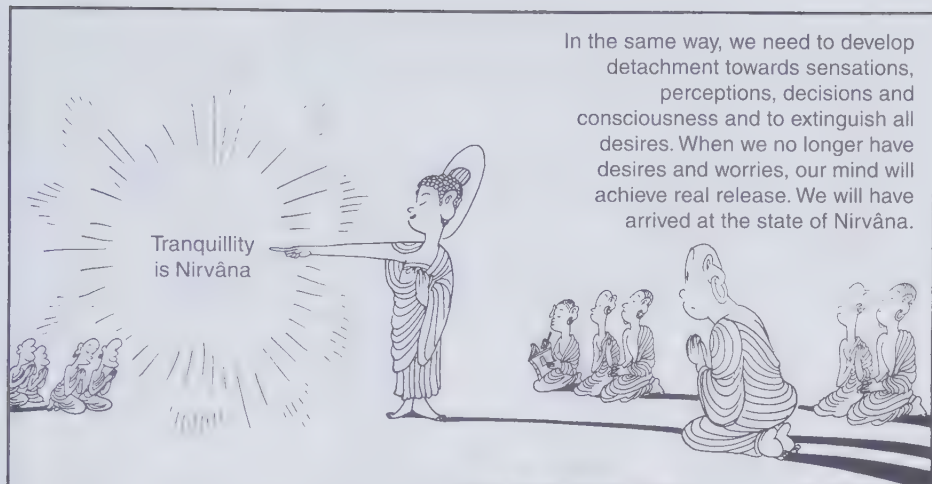
Everything in the past is dead.



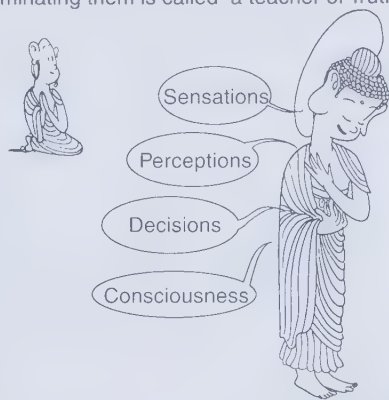
Move far away from all values and standards of the external world.



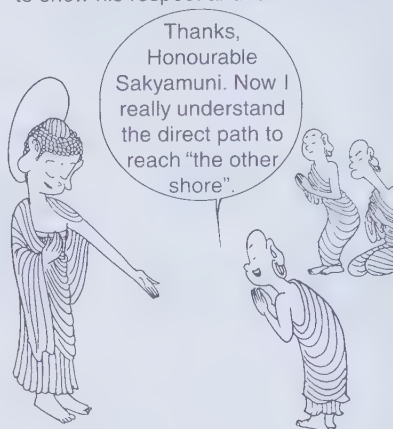




In the same way, one who explains the reasoning for detaching from internal sensations, perceptions, decisions and consciousness, and the methods for terminating them is called "a teacher of Truth".



After the monk finished listening to what Buddha said, he joyfully bowed to show his respect and left.



Be knowledgeable and effective at teaching Essential Universal Truths. Always position the Truth as a guide to point towards Nirvāna. In response to the question of a monk from another sect, this is what "a teacher of Truth" is.



Only after one "vows to return home to" * the awareness of the Buddha, to the proper Truths (Dharma), and to the purity of monks (Sangha) can one truly qualify as a disciple of Buddhism. So, what are the Essential Universal "Truths" that Buddha really meant? What he meant is nothing other than the Essential Universal Truths which lead directly to the state of tranquillity in Nirvāna.

A Buddhist disciple should hold onto the road map Buddha handed over to us and walk on the path Buddha directed us to follow. This is indeed the path to reach "the other shore"!



* "Vows to return home to" is often translated as "finds refuge in".

ALL IS BORN OUT OF CAUSAL PRECONDITIONING

Everything is born out of a causal preconditioning of time and space. Everything also disappears out of causal preconditioning. Every phenomenon in this world is due to an original cause, with preconditioning of correlated factors adding to the completion of the whole picture puzzle.

If we pursue anything to the end, once we reach its source of origin, we will find that there is no existence of an absolute essence that is unchangeable. All things — all in all — are nothing but aggregates of preconditioned factors.



One seed may be the cause of growth. With the proper preconditioning of soil and rain added to the same time and space, it will grow into a big tree. Why is there this big tree? It is because all is born out of causal preconditioning.

This one exists, therefore that one exists.
This one rises, therefore that one rises.
This one no longer exists, therefore that one no longer exists.
This one is extinguished, therefore that one is extinguished.

The nature of the universe is ever-changing and constantly flowing. Change is the true essence of the universe. Therefore, all phenomena of the universe originate from the interaction and synchronicity of preconditioned factors occurring at the same time and space.

These are all Truths of the universe to which Buddha became enlightened and personally testified. Human beings only suffer because we do not understand that all acts are impermanent and that all manifestations arise from causal preconditioning. Therefore we insist on pursuing the impossible — when we are living we just don't want to die; whatever we find pretty and lovely, we wish it would always stay the same. Of course, these unrealistic fantasies will never be realized because they totally violate the principles of the universe.

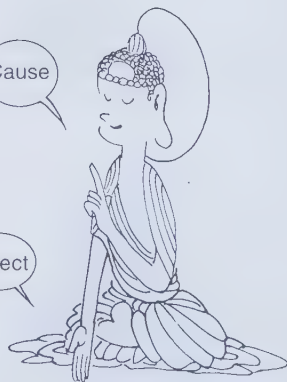
Buddha says: "My fellow monks! What is meant by preconditioned origination? My fellow monks, because there is birth, that's why there is ageing and death. No matter whether wise ones are born or not, whether wise ones have discovered the Truth or not, this basic principle of reality has always governed the motion of the universe. What I was enlightened to — what I have been teaching — is this principle of mutual dependency for the Truth of preconditioned origination. Such is the ruling law of the universe.

So long as there is birth, there is bound to be death.

All phenomena in the world are either birth, existence, deviance and disappearance of all living creatures; formation, existence, decay and emptiness of material objects; or birth, ageing, illness and death of humans. Such principles of interdependent change cannot be stopped by anyone.

Cause

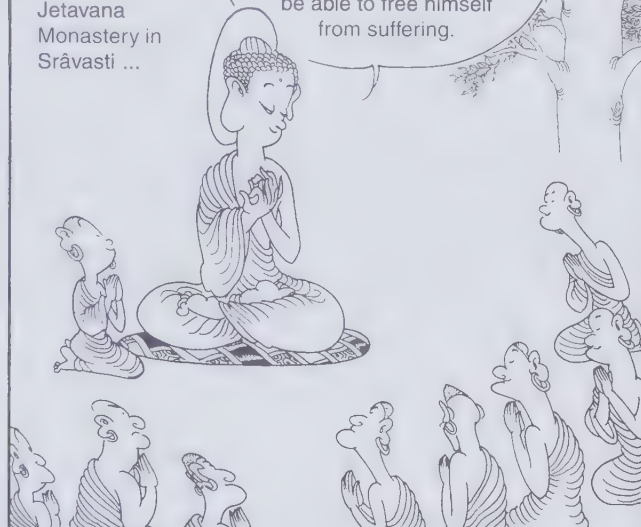
Effect



The Preconditioned Origin of Suffering

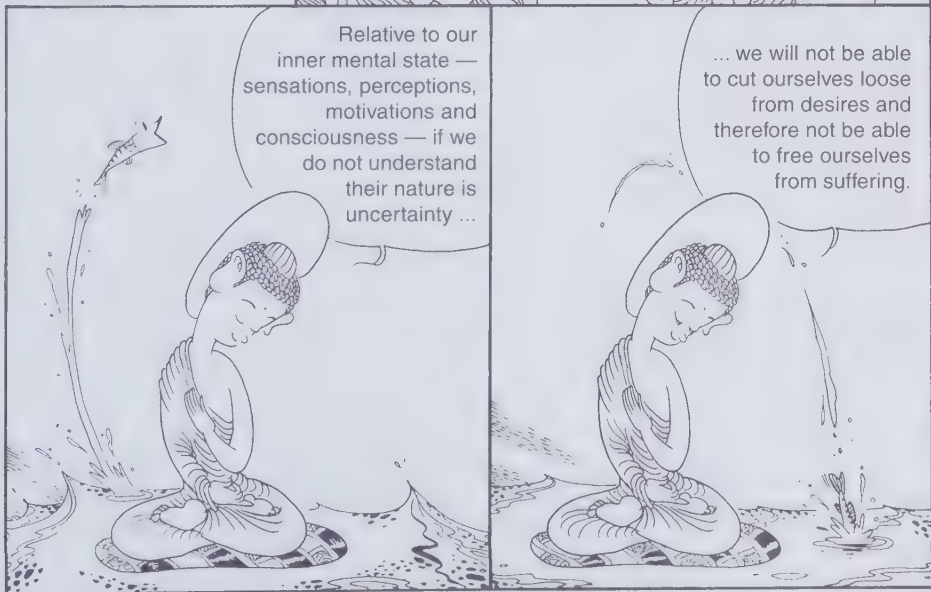
This is how I
have heard it:
At the time,
Buddha was
lecturing to the
monks at the
Jetavana
Monastery in
Srāvastī ...

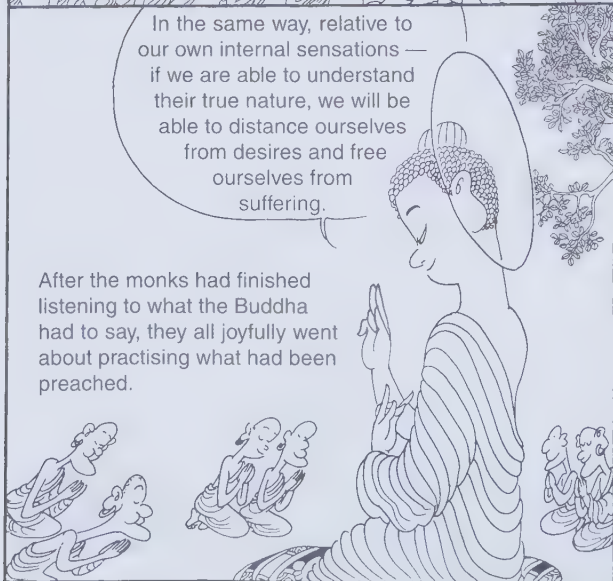
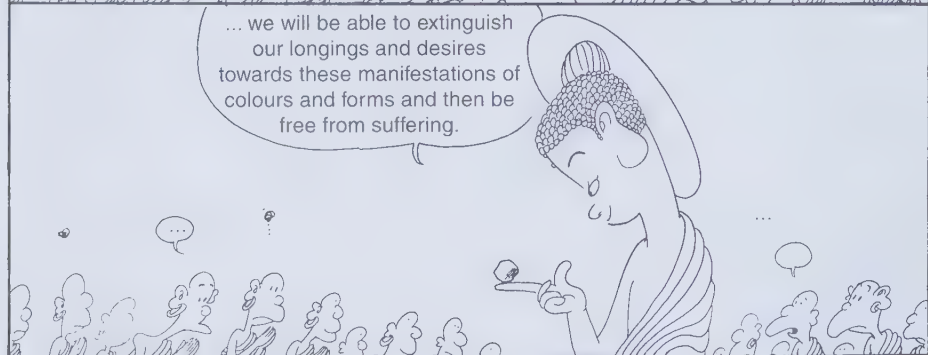
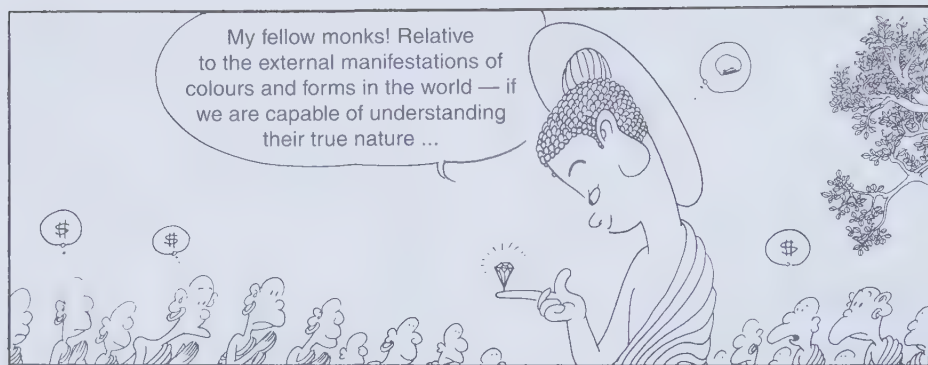
If one person does not
understand the true nature of
all physical events and objects
of the outside world, he will not
be able to sever his longings and
desires towards them and will not
be able to free himself
from suffering.



Relative to our
inner mental state —
sensations, perceptions,
motivations and
consciousness — if we
do not understand
their nature is
uncertainty ...

... we will not be able
to cut ourselves loose
from desires and
therefore not be able
to free ourselves
from suffering.

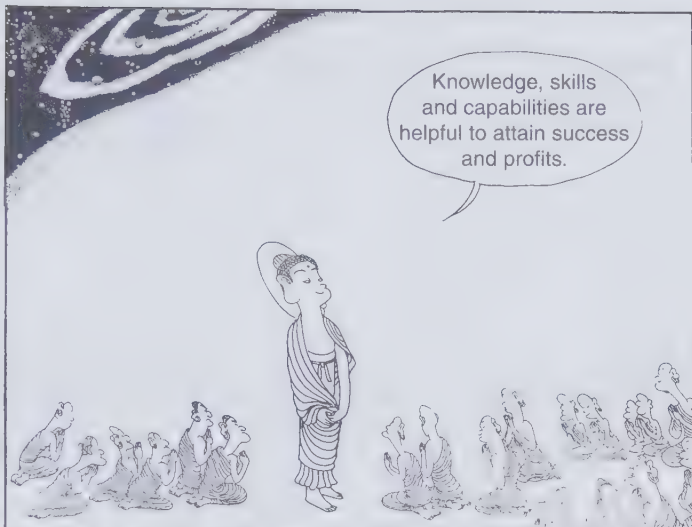




Human beings often allow themselves to generate fluctuating emotions internally in response to all events and objects outside of themselves. This is how suffering originates. Once we can see through the truth that the values of all external manifestations of colours and forms are not absolute, our mind will no longer be stirred up easily by external events and objects. Thus, our mind will no longer be chained to longings and desires.



All Is Born of Causal Preconditioning



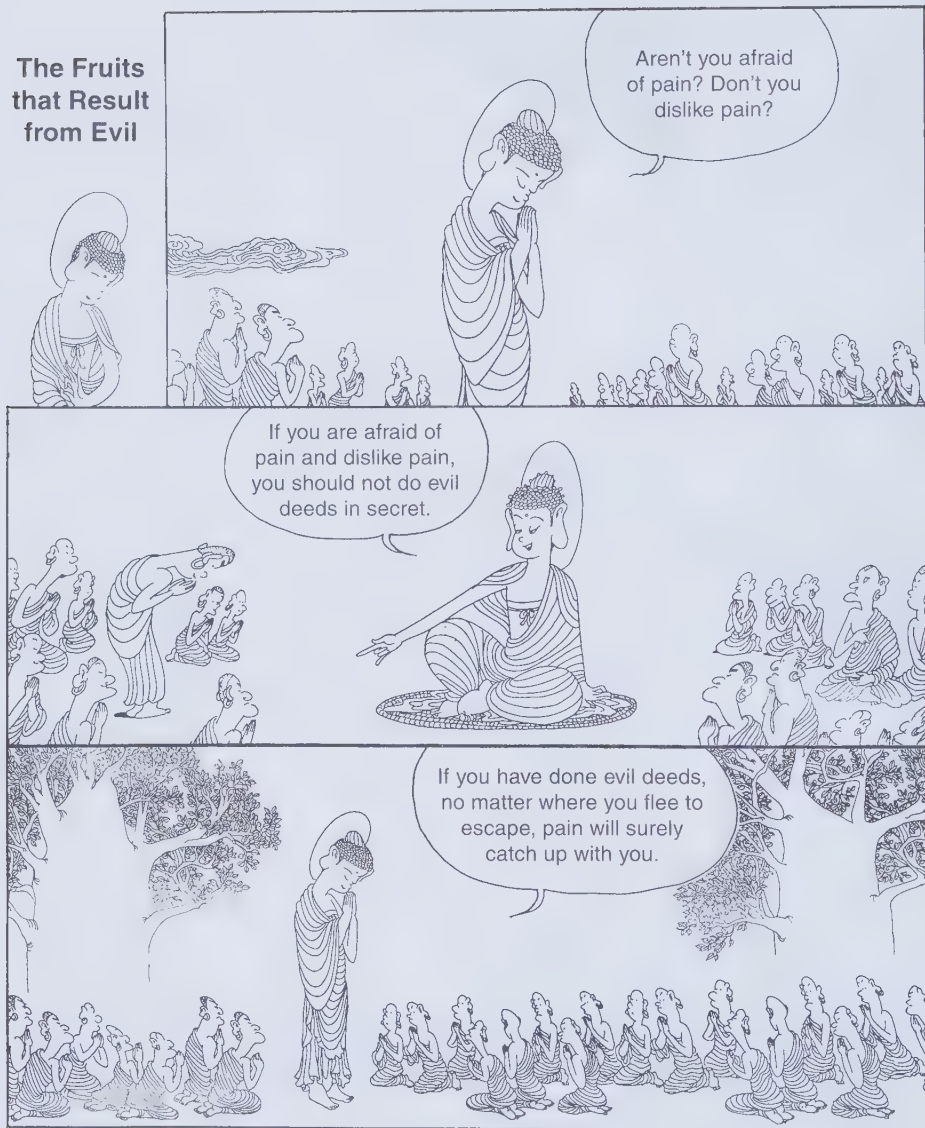
The proper and promising sign of good luck is people's own abilities and conduct. It does not have anything to do with the movement of stars in the universe.

All is based on causal preconditioning. What kind of fruit will we harvest? It completely depends upon manifestations of the cumulative results of our own abilities, qualities, consciousness and conduct, and does not have anything to do with fate and astrology. Every person is the master of his own fate. How well we do is completely up to each of us individually. To blame our fate on mysterious forces is the excuse of the weak.

They are the factors that bring the guarantee of good harvest and good fortune ...

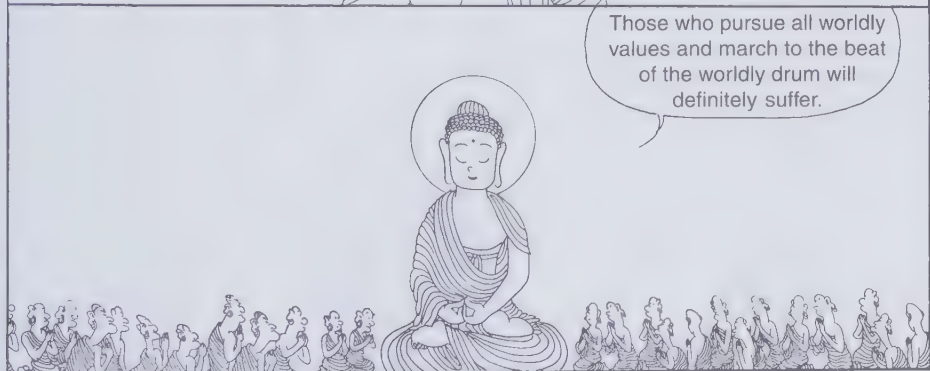
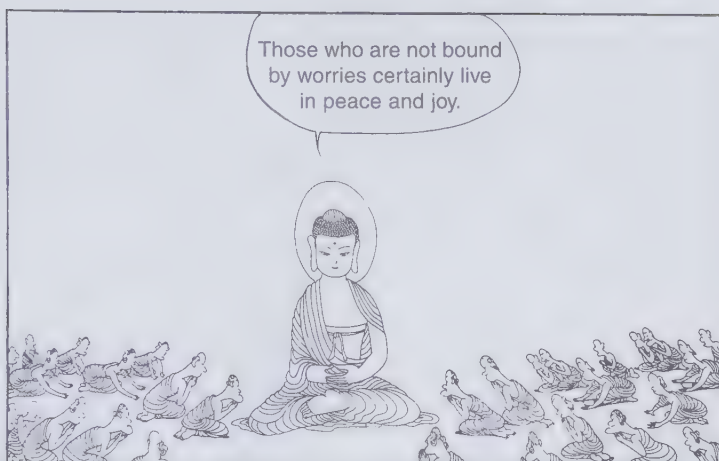


The Fruits that Result from Evil



This one exists, therefore that one exists.
 This one no longer exists, therefore that one no longer exists.
 Everything in the universe has its original cause and resulting fruit.
 Whoever commits evil acts will eventually receive the bitter fruit
 brought about by this evil. No one can ever escape this reality.

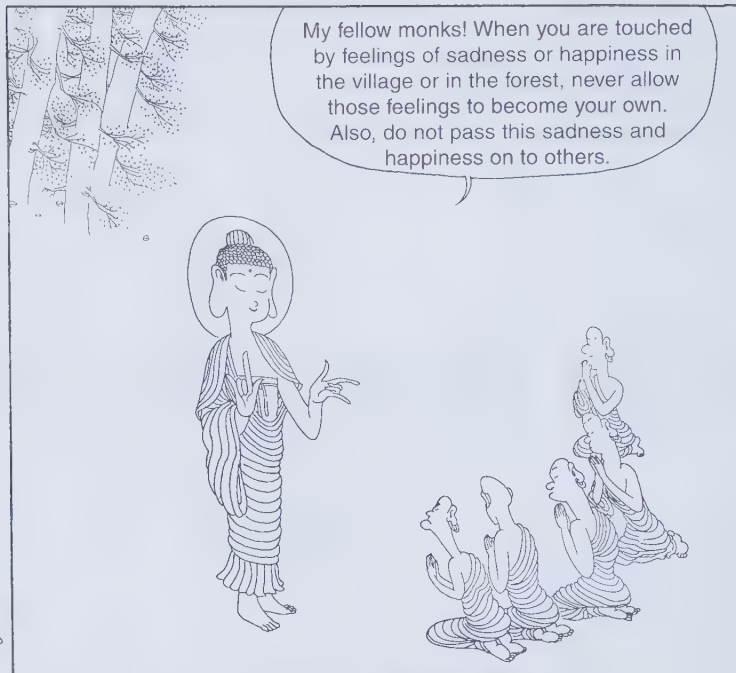
**Those Not
Bound by
Worries
Gain Great
Peace and
Joy**



Whatever people pursue, they will definitely worry about the things that they pursue. If we wish to have a life of peace and joy, we first need to change what we are after: Do not pursue any external values. Seek instead the internal purification of the body and mind. This is how we will gain great peace and joy.



Feelings Are Born Out of the Five Aspects of Existence *



Subjective feelings are based on the analysis and judgement of one's own standards. This is how the difference between good and bad is created. If we do not judge and differentiate between these experiences — and just accept them as they are — then external sadness and happiness will not become internalized as our own feelings.

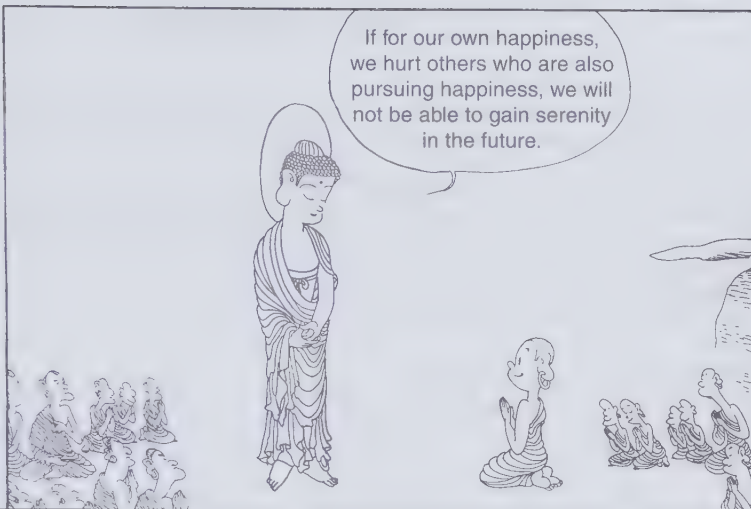


We "feel" because we judge all external experiences based on arbitrary standards ... If we are not led by such judgmental attitudes and discard the restraints of our intellectual mind, then we will be able to find the essence of our true being. This is how our mind can transcend external experiences of sadness and joy.



* The five aspects of existence are (1) the external material world, and the (2) sensations, (3) perceptions, (4) decisions and (5) consciousness of our inner world.

Do Not Hurt Other Living Beings



... in the future, we will definitely receive the happiness that we have been seeking.

If we pursue our own happiness and do not hurt others who are also pursuing happiness ...



People should not step on the bodies of others to accomplish their own goals. In pursuit of happiness, people should not walk on top of the pain of others. In pursuit of abundance, people should not build their gain on the loss of others.



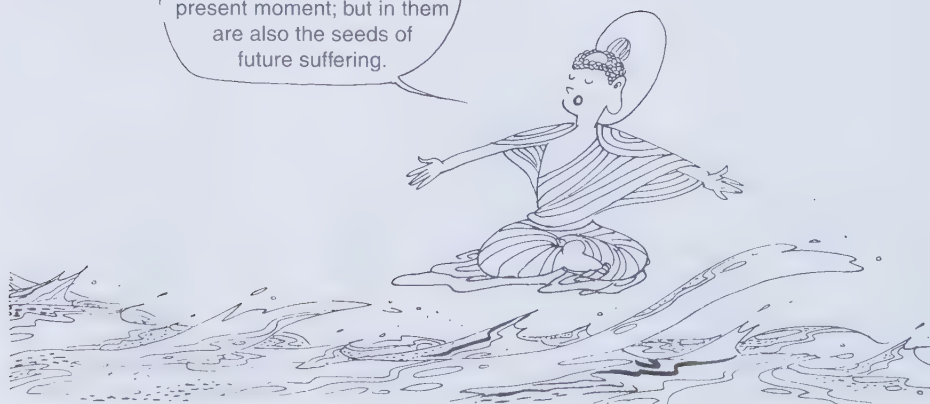
ALL IS SUFFERING

Generally, human beings evaluate everything based on their own perspective of benefit. Anything that is beneficial to me is happiness, while anything that is not beneficial to me is pain.

However, even happiness that is of benefit at the moment is also the cause of future pain. Why is that? Because all living things follow the evolving rule of birth, existence, deviation and disappearance. All things that are pretty and lovely in the present will definitely become different, become worse, and become ruined — thus causing us the pain of separation from all events and objects that we long for. Today's beauty, youth and strength will be the cause of pain when we are no longer beautiful, young and strong.

Therefore, Buddha says, "All is suffering."

All that is not beneficial to me produces immediate pain. All things that are beneficial for me, of course, produce happiness for the present moment; but in them are also the seeds of future suffering.



Buddha says: "My fellow monks, now and as usual, I only teach about suffering and the means to be free of suffering."

Buddha's lifetime teaching did not discuss metaphysical philosophy which has nothing to do with eliminating suffering. He said that these metaphysical theories can neither be tested with our own personal experience, nor help in eliminating pain.

What Buddha wanted was to help his disciples in pragmatic ways to properly recognize Essential Universal Truths and cultivate themselves. This is how they could put an end to the generation of worries in their present life.

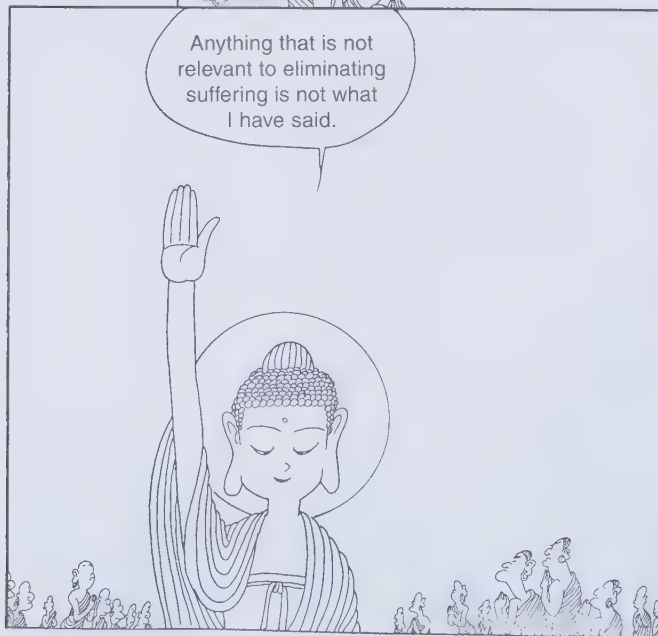
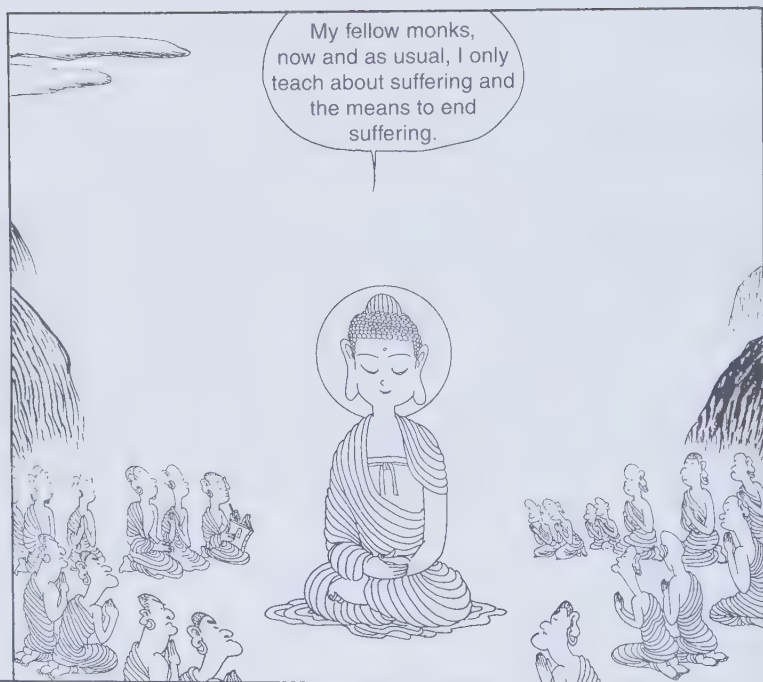
Buddha says: "A person's suffering, the origin of suffering, the ending of suffering, and the methods of cultivation to achieve the elimination of suffering ... They all exist in this several-foot-tall physical body that is fully alive, and that combines 'mind' and 'perceptions'."

Everyone can follow Buddha's guidance to eliminate suffering and reach eternal joy.

The Essential
Universal Truths that I
talk about is the method to
terminate suffering. If everyone
follows and practises along
the road I point to, each one
can become a Buddha.



Suffering and Eliminating Suffering



The purpose of Buddha's lifetime lecturing on Essential Universal Truths is to enable his disciples to cut themselves free of the cyclical law of cause and effect and, in turn, reach the state of Nirvâna with eternal tranquillity and peace. As a student of Buddhism, every one of us is capable of following the methods Buddha has passed down to end suffering and to keep suffering from ever being born again.

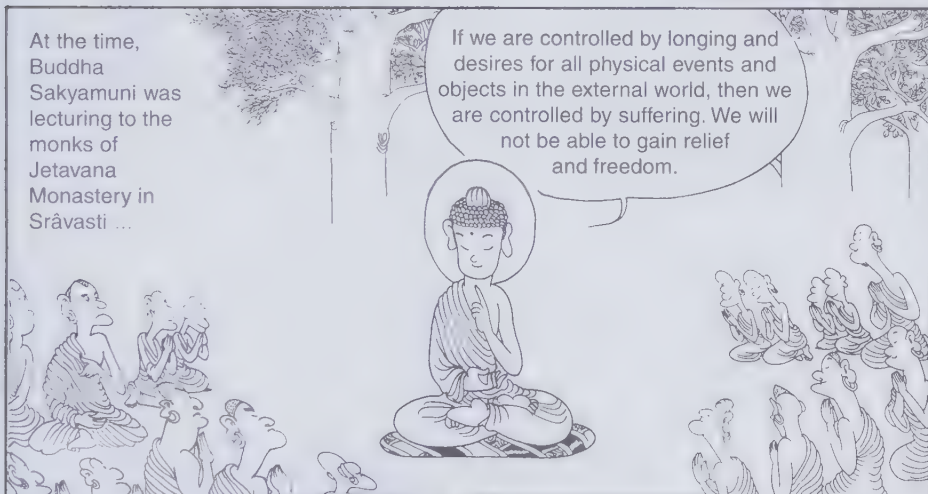


Eliminate Desires and Then Suffering Is Relieved



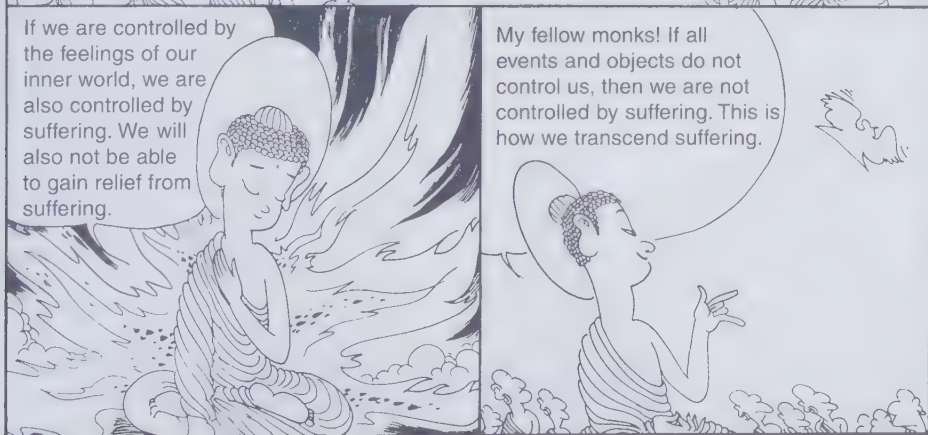
At the time,
Buddha
Sakyamuni was
lecturing to the
monks of
Jetavana
Monastery in
Sāvastī ...

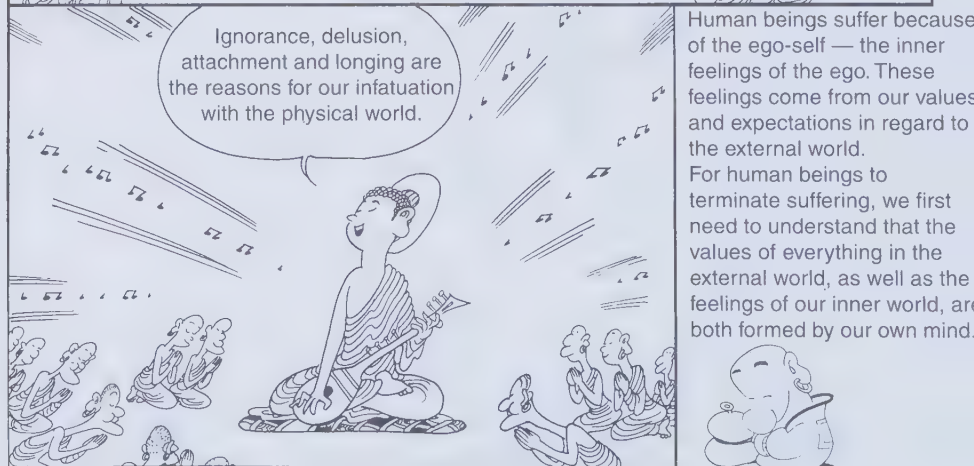
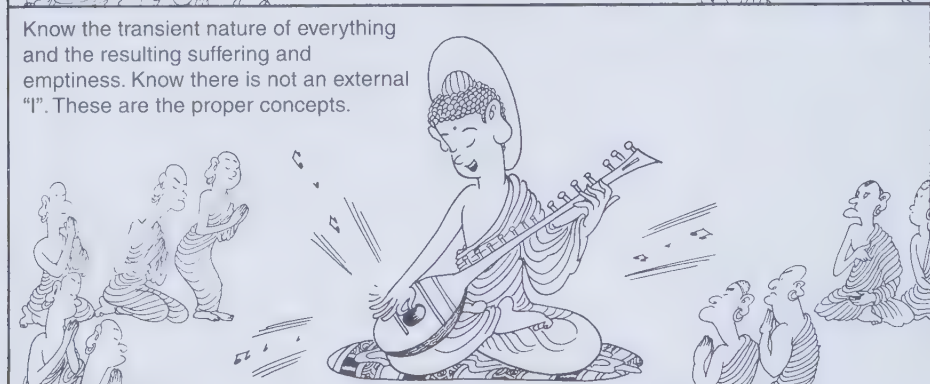
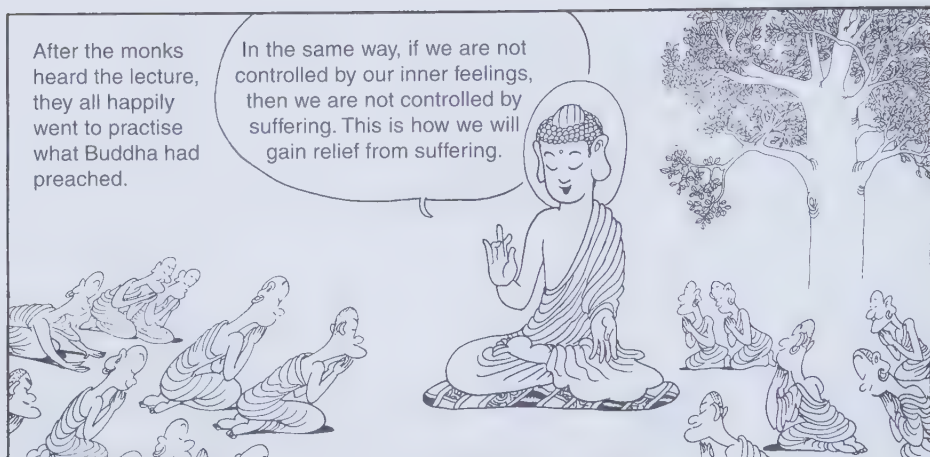
If we are controlled by longing and
desires for all physical events and
objects in the external world, then we
are controlled by suffering. We will
not be able to gain relief
and freedom.



If we are controlled by
the feelings of our
inner world, we are
also controlled by
suffering. We will
also not be able
to gain relief from
suffering.

My fellow monks! If all
events and objects do not
control us, then we are not
controlled by suffering. This is
how we transcend suffering.





Everything Is Burning



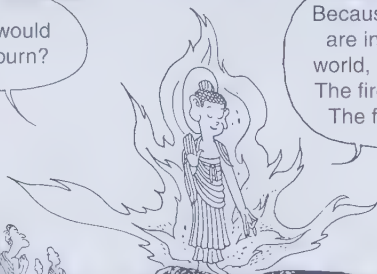
The myriad of events and objects in the universe that are in contact with these senses and consciousness are also burning ...

The pain, joy and no pain, no joy, which are generated by the contact of our body and mind with the external world are also burning!



Why would they burn?

Because once our body and mind are in contact with the external world, the fire of greed is burning. The fire of resentment is burning. The fire of delusion is burning!

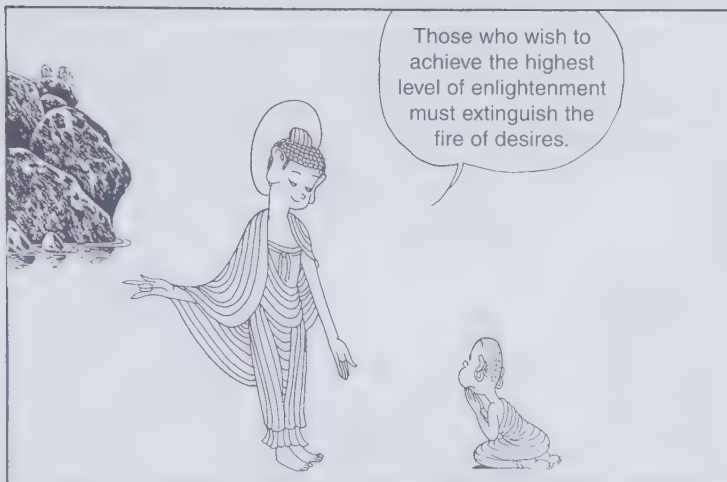


The flames of various worries, such as birth, ageing, illness, death, grief, sorrow, anger and pain are also fiercely burning at every moment.

If our body and mind stand at the point of view of our selfish interest, turning and churning with the external world, then we will generate three fierce fires: greed, resentment and delusion. Only when we extinguish these painful sources of worries, will we gain comfort and peace.

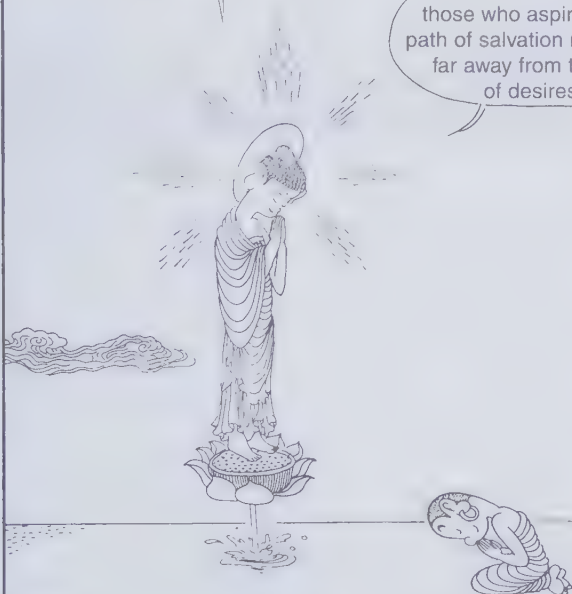


Extinguish the Fire of Desires



Obviously, those who carry dried hay on their backs must run away from the first sign of a wild fire ...

In the same manner, those who aspire to the path of salvation must stay far away from the fire of desires.



The ego-self is the root that causes pain. Our pains are all because of something that has to do with "I". The less any happenings affect me, the less intense the pain. Desire is the most difficult fire for human beings to control. Some desires are physiological, while others are psychological. To control desires we must have a pure mind. We need to keep certain thoughts out of the mind, as well as keep far away from places that generate desires, so that we will not erupt into flames without any chance for salvation.

Desires Are Traps



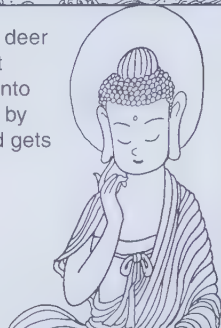
The objects seen by the eyes,
the voices heard by the ears,
the fragrances smelled by the nose,
the flavours tasted by the tongue,
the materials touched by the body,
— these five internal sensations of
the external world are the easiest
to provoke desires.



Whatever our physical
body is fond of, our
mind will automatically
be attracted to, while
ignoring any potential
disaster it may bring.



It is like the deer
in the forest
which falls into
the trap set by
hunters and gets
captured.



No doubt, the five desires I just
mentioned are our traps. If we fall
into these traps, worries will soon
arise and suffering will automatically
follow.

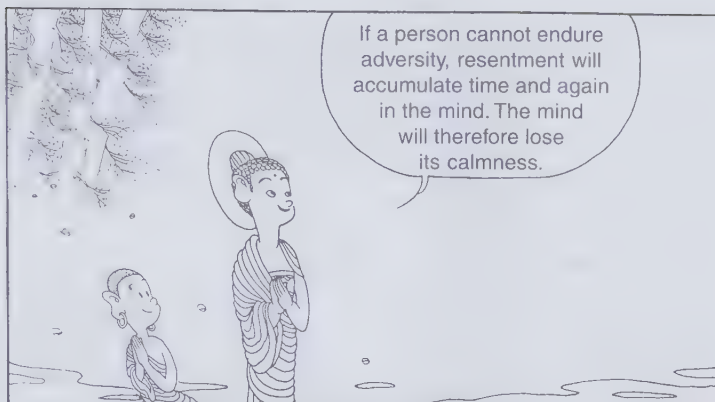
Therefore, after we have seen the
troubles caused by these five
desires, we must have the mind to
avoid being trapped and not get
captured by mistake.

Desires are generated by our own
senses coming into contact with all
external events and objects.

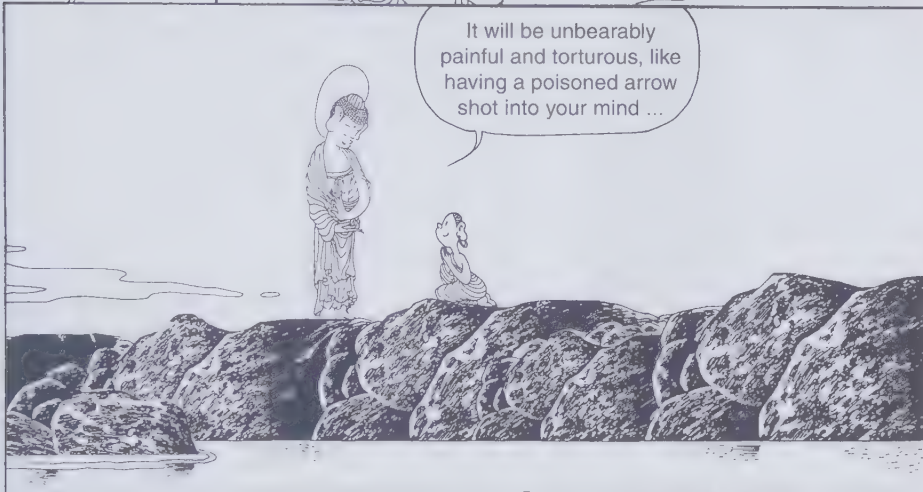


When we come across
anything that we like,
our mind immediately
produces an urgent
longing to own the
object or possess the
characteristic. When
we acquire what our
mind is fond of, or
accomplish something
that our mind wishes
to achieve, we in turn
expect that whatever
we like will not change
its quality or leave
us ...

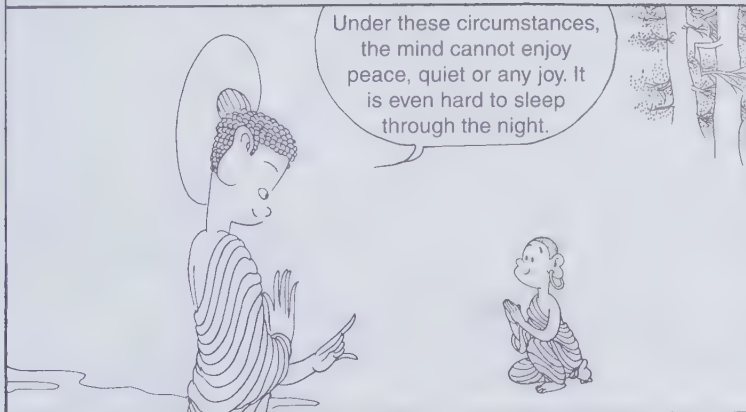
**Without
Endurance
There Is No
Enjoyment**



If a person cannot endure adversity, resentment will accumulate time and again in the mind. The mind will therefore lose its calmness.



It will be unbearably painful and torturous, like having a poisoned arrow shot into your mind ...



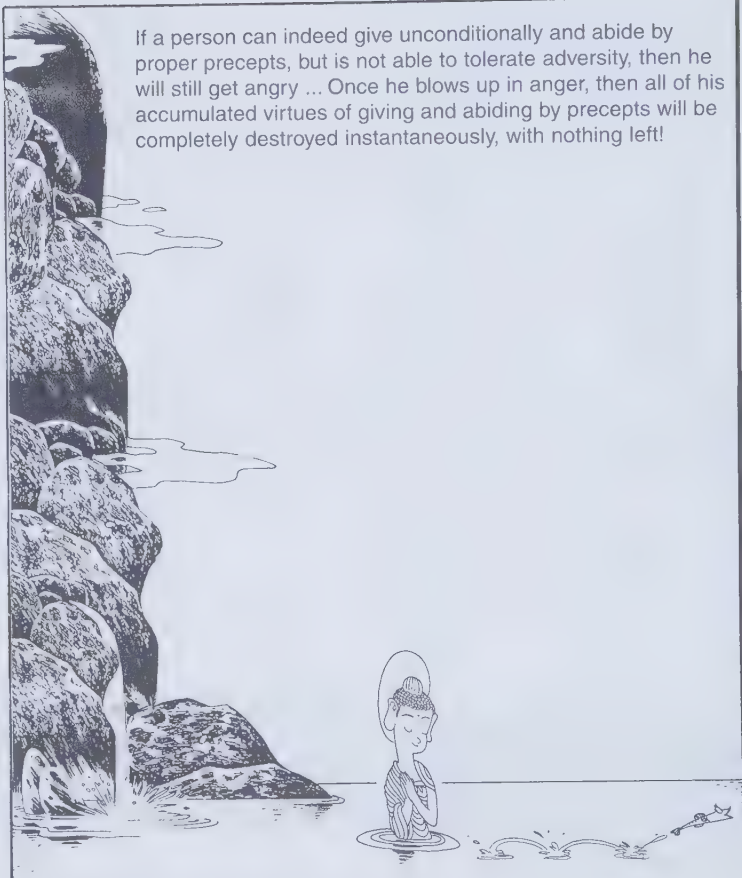
Under these circumstances, the mind cannot enjoy peace, quiet or any joy. It is even hard to sleep through the night.

Resentment fries the mind, which loses quietness and peace. Nothing is a joy to find. And there is not even a good night's sleep.



**Anger
Can
Destroy
Kindness
Back to
Its Very
Roots —
Zillions
of Years
Ago**

If a person can indeed give unconditionally and abide by proper precepts, but is not able to tolerate adversity, then he will still get angry ... Once he blows up in anger, then all of his accumulated virtues of giving and abiding by precepts will be completely destroyed instantaneously, with nothing left!



This is how anger can break down thousands of kind deeds. Indeed, anger is capable of putting an end to the roots of kindness accumulated over zillions of years.*



Zillions of years in time* offering virtuous gifts all together combined with every deed of kindness. One single angry thought of mind destroys all — with nothing left.



* The duration of time given here is a kalpa, one hundred thousand eons. An eon is calculated as 1,344,000,000 human years. It represents the period from the beginning of a universe until its destruction and another begins in its place.

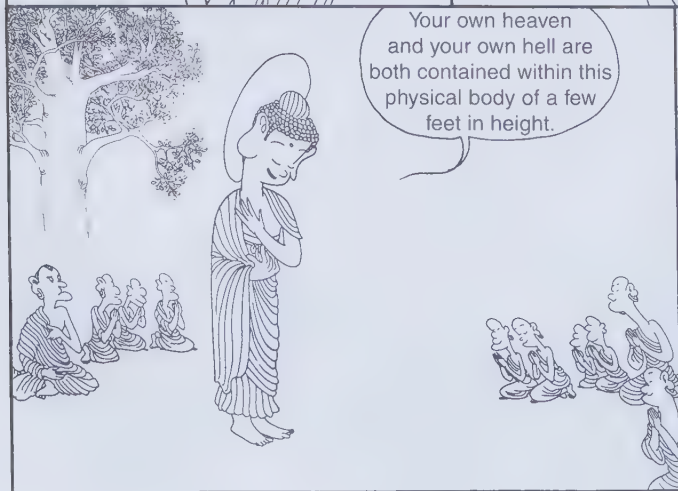
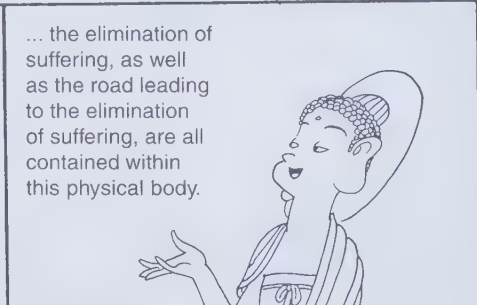
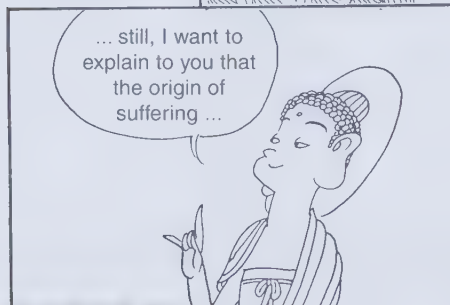
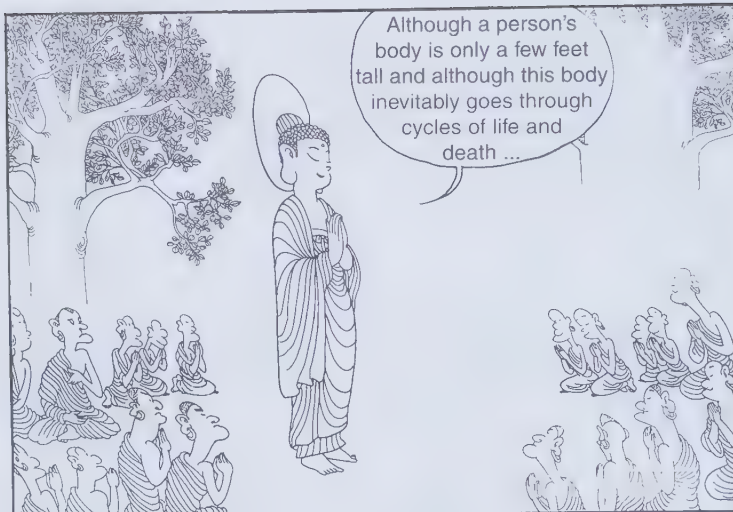
Our Own Body and Mind Are Our Hell



Where is hell? Hell is neither here nor there. Hell is inside our own body and mind. Due to our desires that cannot be fulfilled and due to longings and greed that cannot be satisfied, we generate the fires of greedy desire and resentful anger which burn our own body and mind.



Our Body Is Indeed a Hall of Worship



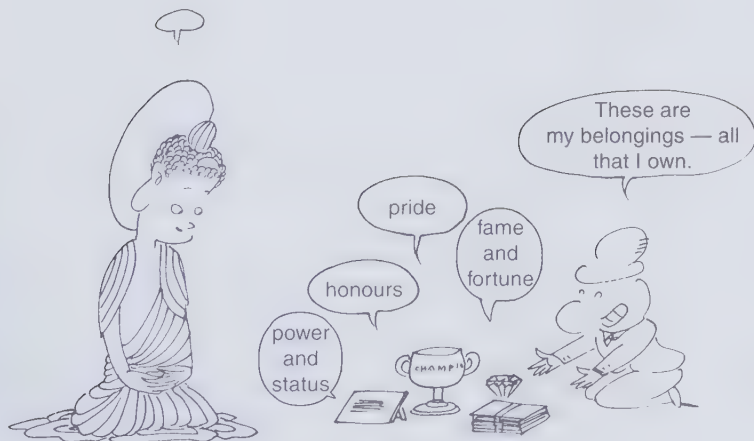
Do not worry about the past or future, and do not ponder challenging questions, such as the beginning and the end of this world. Focus all of your attention and effort on "the origin and elimination of pain in this body". If a person can achieve spiritual awakening and relief, then he is becoming one with his own divinity.



ATTACHMENT TO THE EGO-SELF OF “I”

Most pains are produced by people's perception of the ego-self

Human beings are attached to “I”, attached to “mine” ... Therefore, anything that is adverse to “I” and “mine” becomes pain.



People are attached and infatuated with everything concerning “self” ... My desires, my profits, my belongings, my honours, my pride, and my own self ...

As a result, anything that has to do with me will produce feelings of happiness and sadness; also, because of this self, the whole of life is bounded by “I” and “mine”.

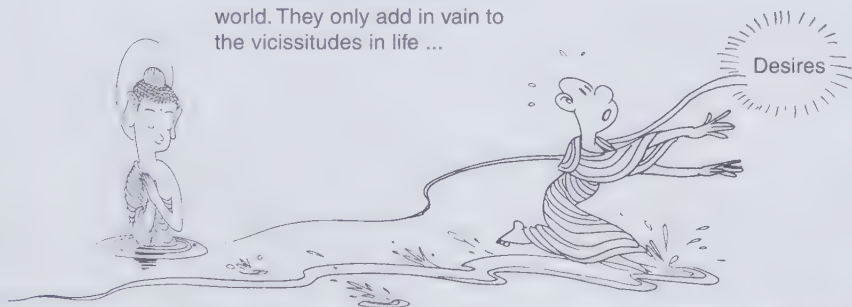
Attachment to the ego-self of “I” is the biggest source of pain. Therefore, Buddha says: “There is really no existence of ‘I’ as a person; there is nothing that belongs to ‘me’”. If we already know that there is no ‘I’, on what basis do we believe that there are ‘my belongings’? If we can understand everything from this point of view, then we will be empowered to sever all worries.”





Abandon the False Ego-Self of "I"

Driven by desires and worries,
human beings chase after their
inner world as well as the outer
world. They only add in vain to
the vicissitudes in life ...



Material World

Sensations

Perceptions

Decisions

Consciousness

Material World

The "I" that is the
transitional collective
manifestation of the material
world, sensations, perceptions,
decisions and consciousness,
is neither the real essence
of "I" nor of "non-I" ...

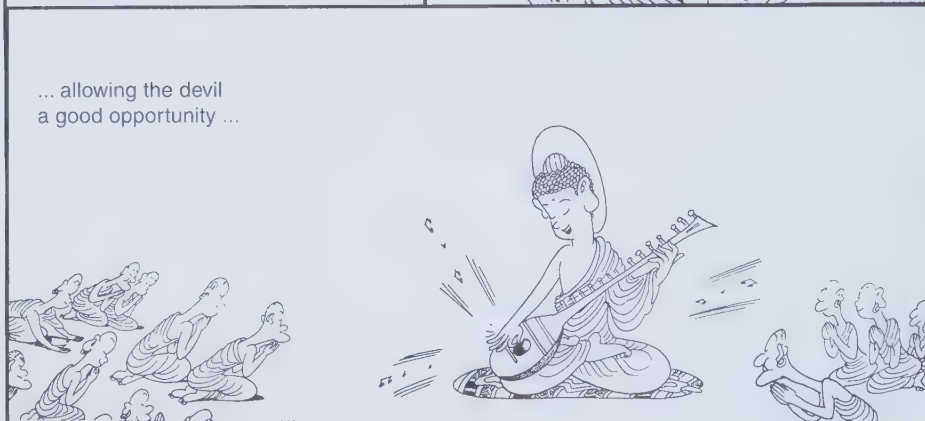
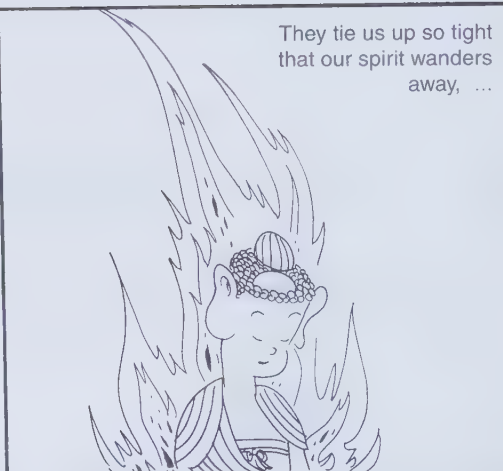
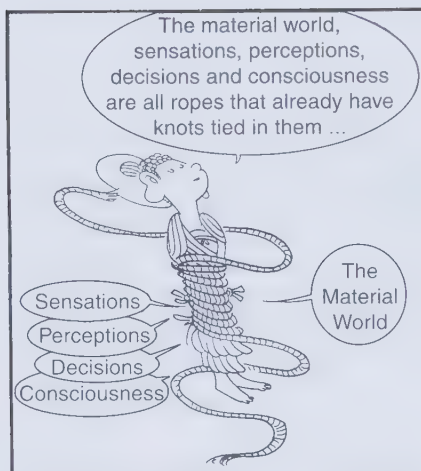
Material World

Material World

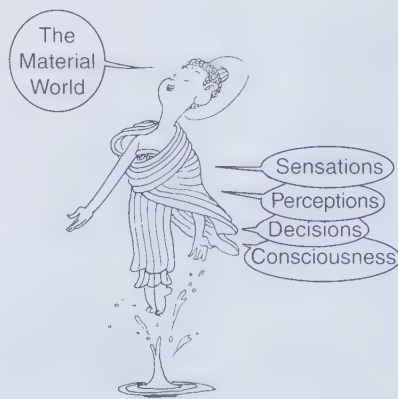
Material World

Material World

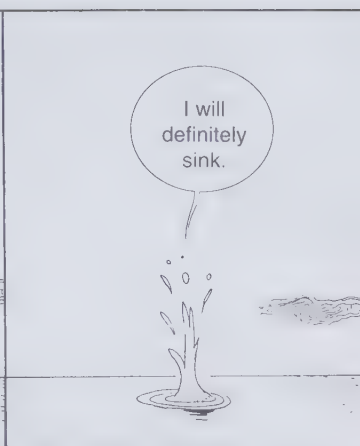
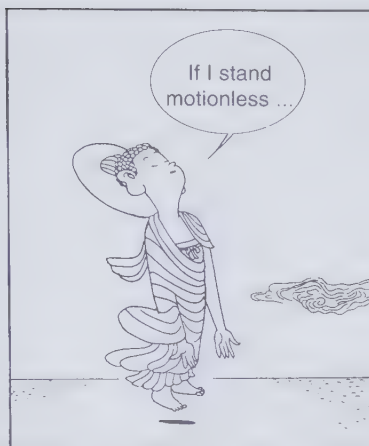
Material World



Human beings put together a false ego-self of "I", a fantasy of "I" due to the material world externally and the sensations, perceptions, decisions and consciousness internally. All their lives they are driven as slaves by this false self, this fantasy of self. Humans should give up this fantasy of self and dissolve into the space and time they happen to find themselves in the present moment selflessly. When the fantasy of "I" disappears, you will gain the whole world.



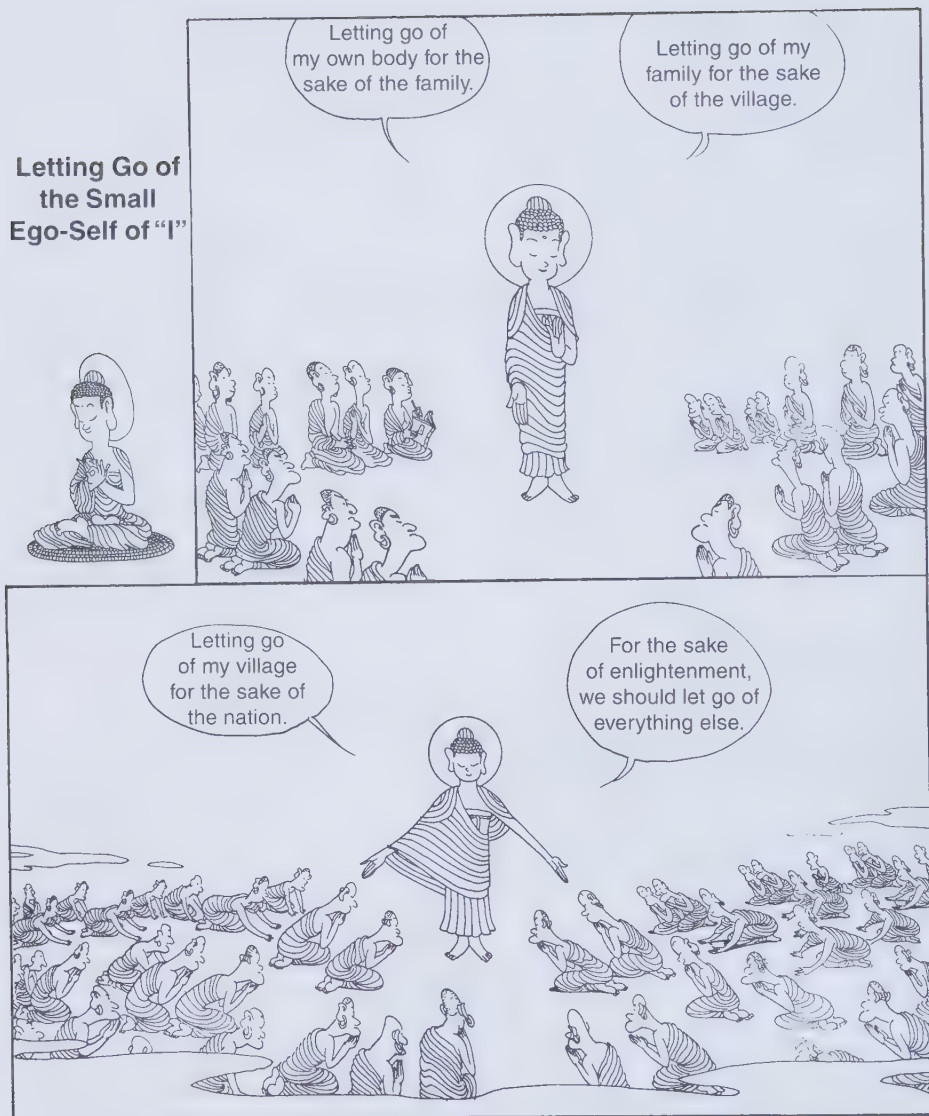
**Dissolving
into ...**



A human being has the concept of a separate "I". Therefore, when he faces a certain time and space, he thinks about changing that particular time and space and positioning himself against that time and space. If a human at any time and place can dissolve into that particular time and space, then he will become one with the essence of that time and space.



Letting Go of the Small Ego-Self of "I"

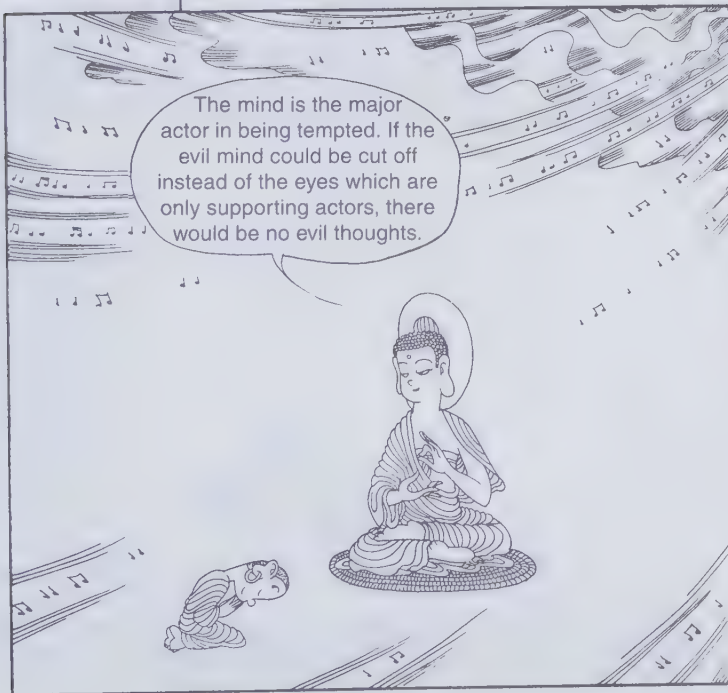


Each one of us is made up of layers of self. Among these are: the small ego-self of "I", the "I" at a medium level, and the highest sense of self ... Ordinary people often only consider the short-term benefit of the ego-self of "I". They calculate those menial and short-lived benefits inch by inch, becoming ecstatic over them and worried sick over them. The wise ones choose to let go of one small ego-self and orient themselves towards the long-term goal of wholeness.

The Mind Is the Guide of the Body



Upon encountering
beauty and lust, digging
out your eyes for fear of
being tempted is
stupid behaviour.



The mind is the major
actor in being tempted. If the
evil mind could be cut off
instead of the eyes which are
only supporting actors, there
would be no evil thoughts.

The mind is the
guide of the body.
The mind thinks,
and the body
follows in action.
Humans need to
conquer their body
and mind and be
their own master.
The first important
thing is to discipline
your mind. Once
your own mind
submits to control,
the body will
naturally obey.



The Mind Follows the Will



A person's mind leans towards the direction that his will pursues.

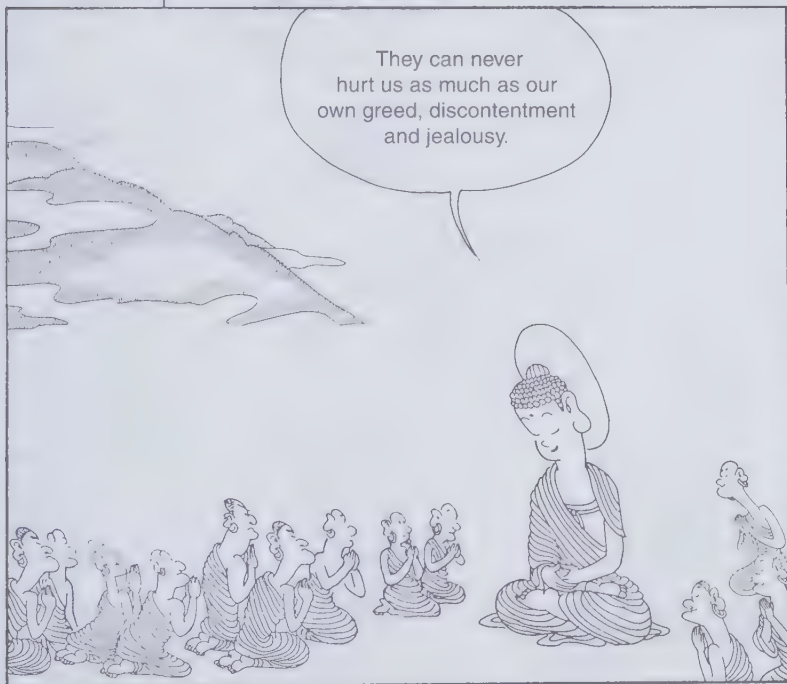
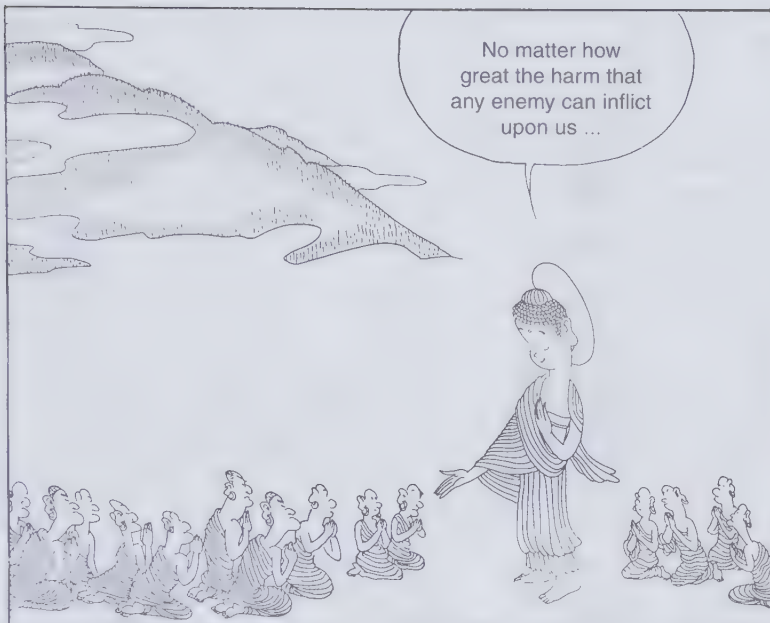


Thinking of greed, his greedy mind immediately arises; thinking of resentment, his discontentment becomes especially strong; thinking of hurting people, his thoughts about injuring others grow right away.



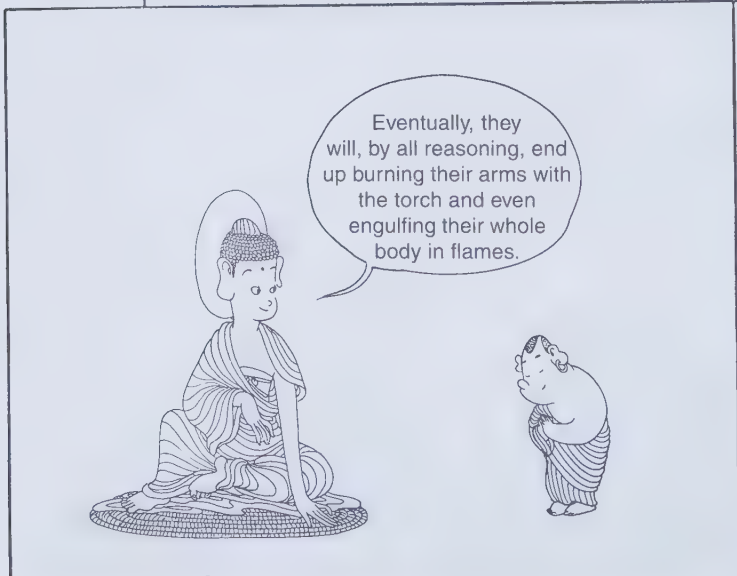
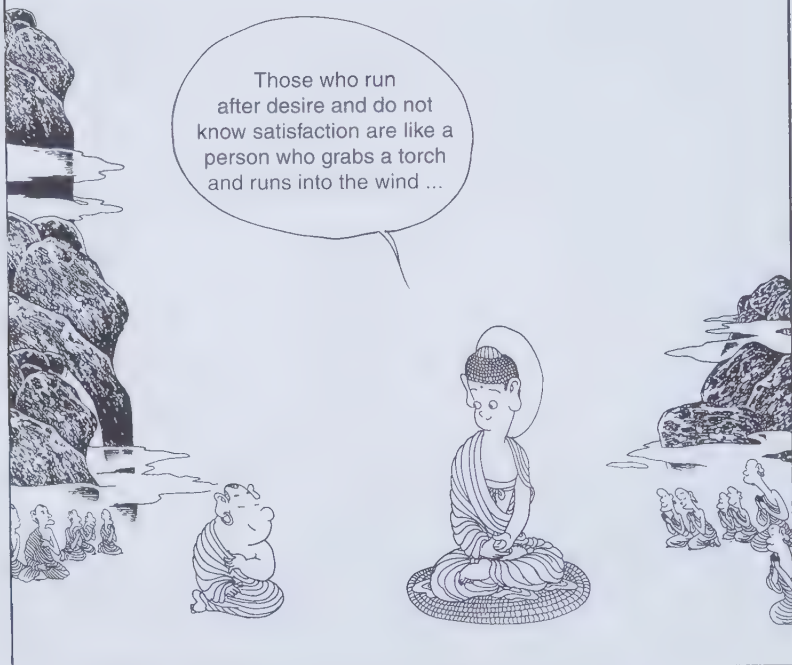
The mind of an ordinary person does not usually stay with his body at one place, rather it follows his will and gallops around. Therefore, humans should cleanse the consciousness of the ego-self. Do not allow greed, resentment and a vicious mind to remain in the existence of self-consciousness. This is how the mind automatically becomes pure.

The Self Acts and the Self Receives



Our biggest enemy is ourselves. Poor results in our encounters are usually caused by our own mistakes. "Those who win over others are merely forceful, those who win over their own selves are really strong." To be able to conquer one's own body and mind is the act of the bravest warrior.

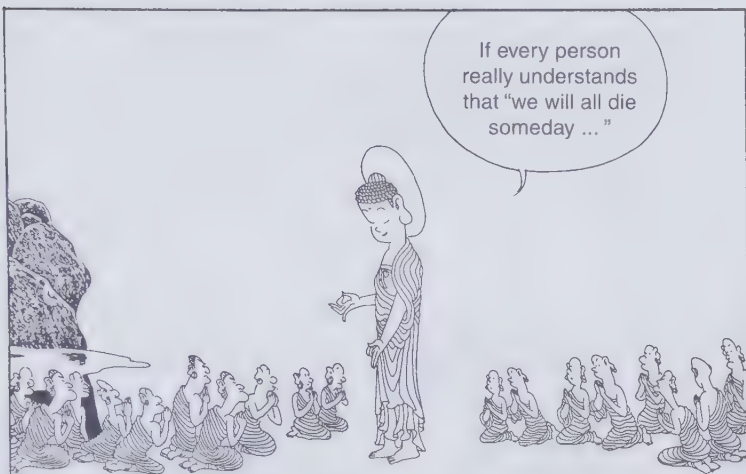
**Desires
Are
Fires
that
Burn**



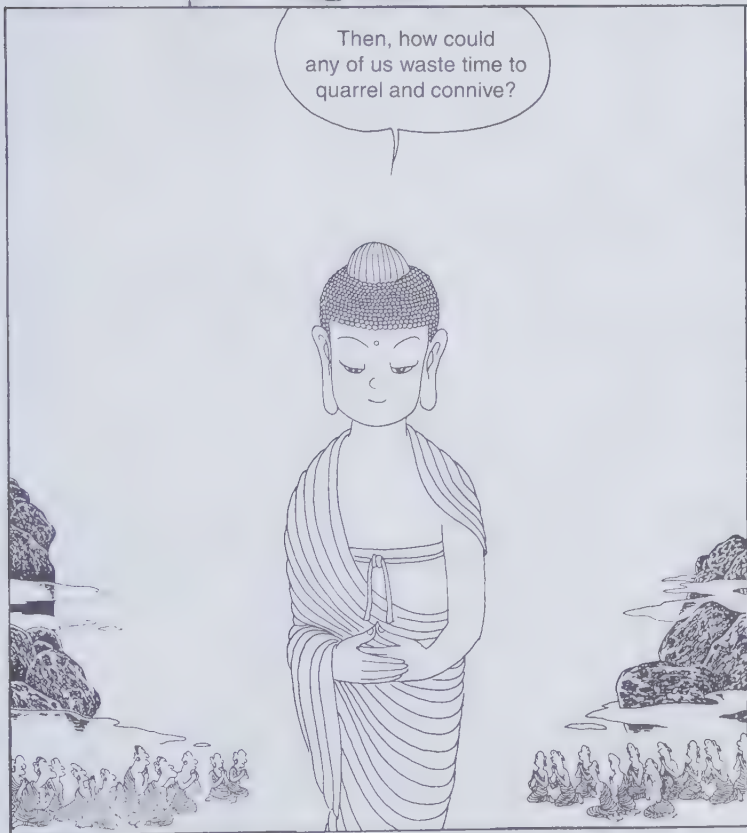
Desires are like the ocean — they can never be filled up. When people run after their desires, they will definitely form another greater desire after the last one has been fulfilled. In the end, they are going to be utterly destroyed by their own desires.



We Will All Perish



Then, how could any of us waste time to quarrel and connive?

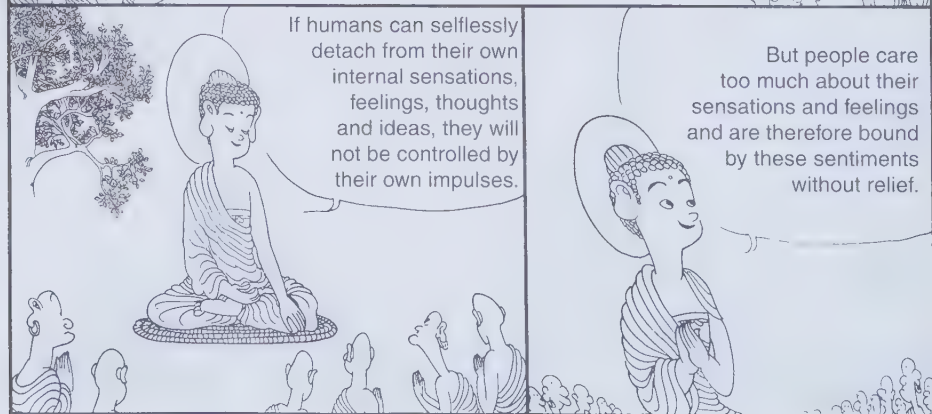
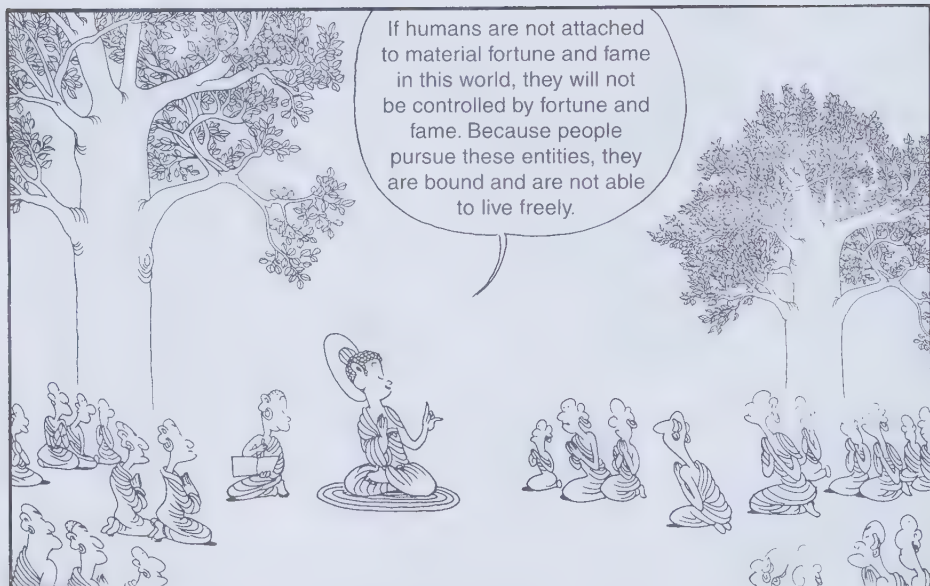


As a matter of fact, everyone knows that "our whole life is quite limited in length". But due to ignorance, we waste our lives worrying about events and objects. Only when we look at this world with a pure spirit, will we be able to enjoy life with the proper concepts of joy and peace.





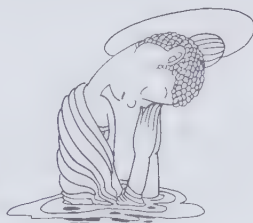
Do Not Become Attached to Anything





My fellow monks!
If external materials
and internal desires
are benign to people,
then people do not
need to detach
from them ...

The fame and fortune
of the external world as well
as internal desires are quite
harmful to people. This is
why people must abandon
them with disgust!



My fellow monks,
if one cannot see
through the
external materials
and internal
desires while
infatuated with
pursuing and
indulging in
them ...



Then he will always stay
in his mistaken upside-
down thinking and will
have no way of obtaining
correct wisdom and
achieving freedom
and relief.



If humans pursue material fame and fortune, they will be kept hostage by fame and fortune. If humans indulge in their inner desires, then they will be driven wild by their desires. If humans can see through the external materials and internal desires, then they will be able to walk on the road of wisdom correctly. They will no longer be controlled by these entities and will achieve freedom and relief.



KONG

All manifestations in the world are born out of preconditioned meaningful coincidences ...

If we search for the very origin of occurrences in regard to the resulting development of any events and objects, we will find that there is no real entity which produced it. There is only the interaction of related characteristics brought about by preconditioned synchronous coincidences.

All phenomena appear because of cause and effect. They have no real essence and are distorted by each ego-self's mindset. This is what is meant by "kong".

All is born out of
preconditioned meaningful
coincidences. All disappears
due to preconditioned meaningful
coincidences. Except for these
principles, there is no real entity that
is truly everlasting and eternally
enduring ... This Universal
Truth is defined
as "kong".



Kong is not emptiness without anything.

Kong is definitely not being uncaring.

Kong is the essence of the universe, the real nature of the universe.

All sorts of phenomena in the universe originate from the change and interaction of various characteristics. The intrinsic nature of the universe does not consist of any substantial and eternally enduring entity. The essential quality of the universe is referred to by Buddha as the nature of kong.

Kong:

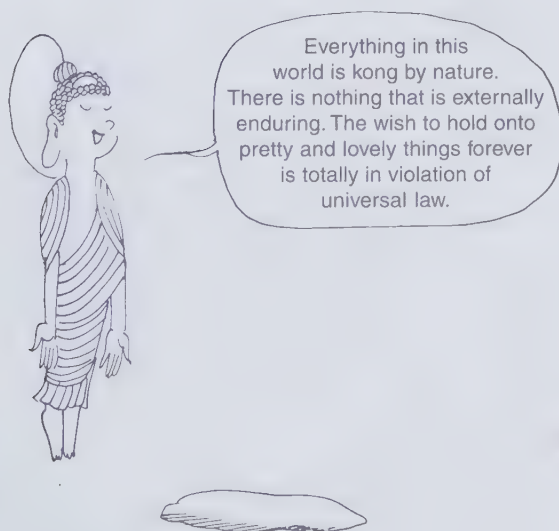
Is a state;

Is a concept;

Is an attitude of living.

When a person understands the truth about the kong of the universe, his practice in life will not be to fantasize about holding onto any unchanging and eternal things. He will no longer suffer pain because of the natural cycles of change — such as the formation, existence, destruction and emptiness of material objects and the birth, existence, deviation and disappearance of lives.

This is because he knows by now that constant change is the rhythm of the universe.



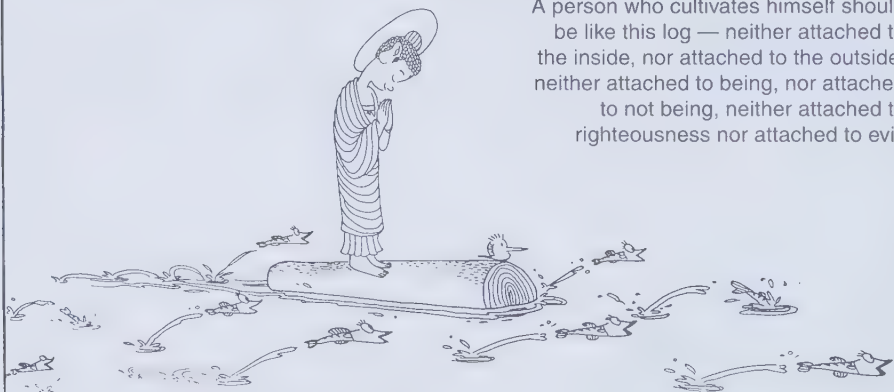
Not Steering to Either Side of the Road



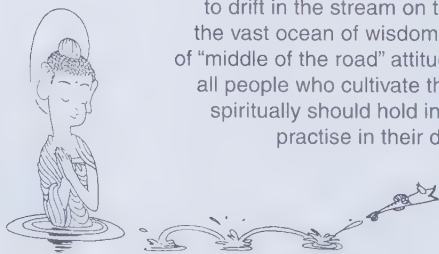
One log flows down a big river —
It does not run aground,
neither does it sink.
It does not drift ashore,
nor is it caught by people.
It is not drawn into a whirlpool,
nor does it rot from inside.
Eventually, it is guaranteed to
flow into the vast ocean.



A person who cultivates himself should
be like this log — neither attached to
the inside, nor attached to the outside,
neither attached to being, nor attached
to not being, neither attached to
righteousness nor attached to evil.



Although he distances himself from
confusion, he is not obsessed with
enlightenment. He just allows himself
to drift in the stream on the path to
the vast ocean of wisdom. This kind
of "middle of the road" attitude is what
all people who cultivate themselves
spiritually should hold in mind and
practise in their daily living.

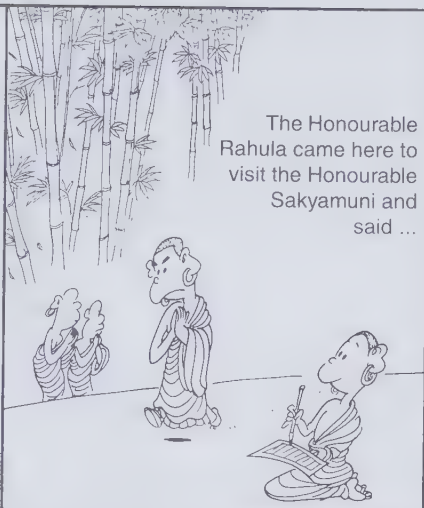


Attachment is a
trap. Whatever
people are attached
to will entrap them.
Even those attached
to the notion of
enlightenment
will be trapped by it.



I and the Other Party

This is how I heard it ...
At the time, Buddha Sakyamuni was staying at the Venuvana Bamboo Grove in the City of Rājagriha ...

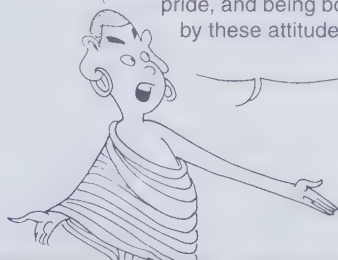


The Honourable Rahula came here to visit the Honourable Sakyamuni and said ...

May I ask the Honourable Sakyamuni what attitude and concept should people use to look upon their inner self and the outer world surrounding them ...



... in order to avoid the formation of "I," the other party, my ego-self's pride, and being bound by these attitudes?



Good question, Rahula. Listen carefully and I will give you the answer ...



All external objects — no matter whether past, future or present, whether big or small, pretty or ugly, far or near — they are all not me, but also are not separated from me.

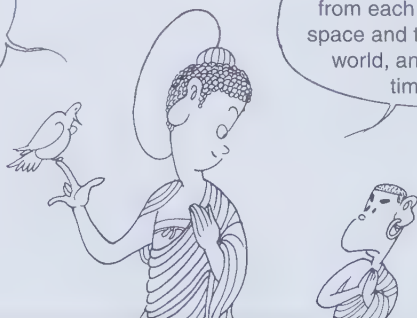


When you happen to be in any particular space and time, you need to completely dissolve into one essence with that space and time — you belong to that space and time, while that space and time also belongs to you.

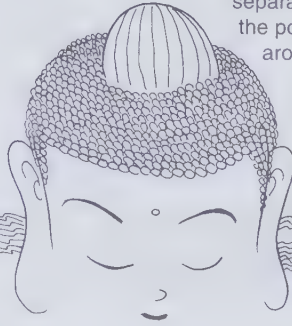


To use this attitude to look upon "I" and the external world is indeed "selflessly dissolving into the ultimate wisdom".

You and your space and time should not be separated from each other. You are the space and time of the external world, and the space and time are you.



With regard to our internal feelings and thoughts, it is the same. No matter whether past, future or present, whether big or small, pretty or ugly, far or near — they are all not me, but also are not separated from me. We should not hold the point of view that I and any objects around me are two opposite parties.

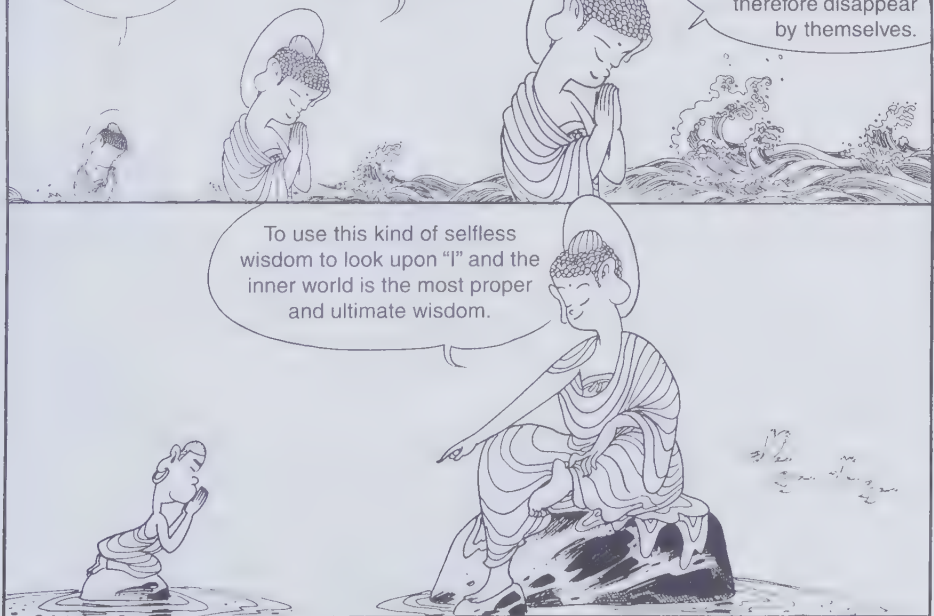


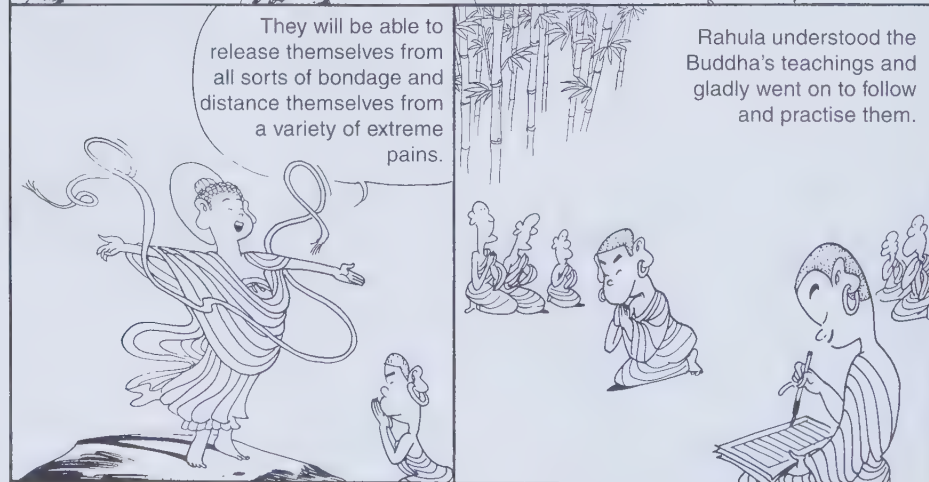
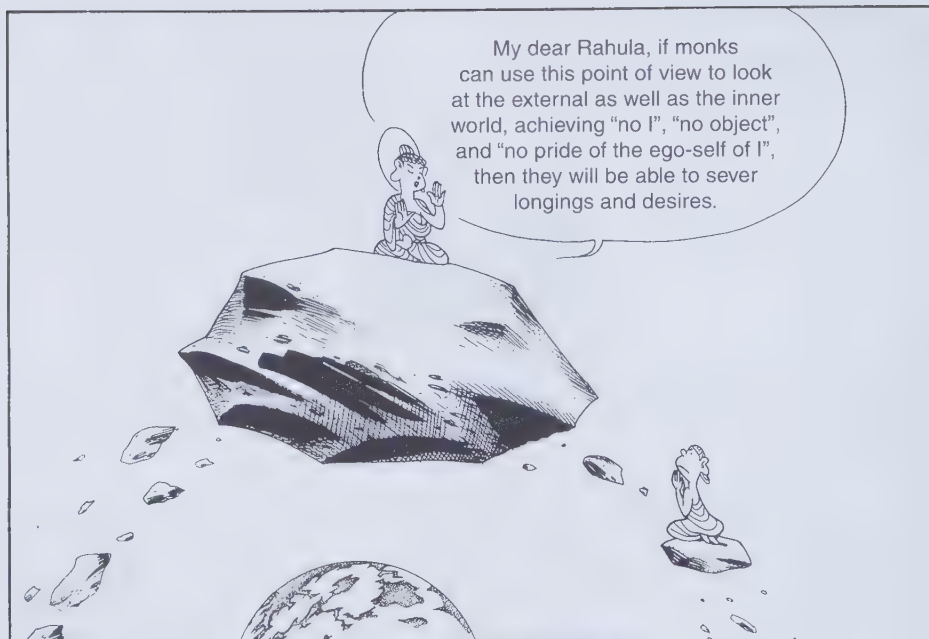
Dissolve oneself into the internal mental world selflessly ...

The internal world is me, and I am the internal mental world ...

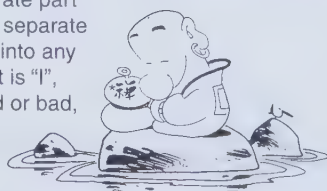
That is how it is possible for there to be no "I" and no internal world. The sensations, perceptions, decisions and consciousness will therefore disappear by themselves.

To use this kind of selfless wisdom to look upon "I" and the inner world is the most proper and ultimate wisdom.





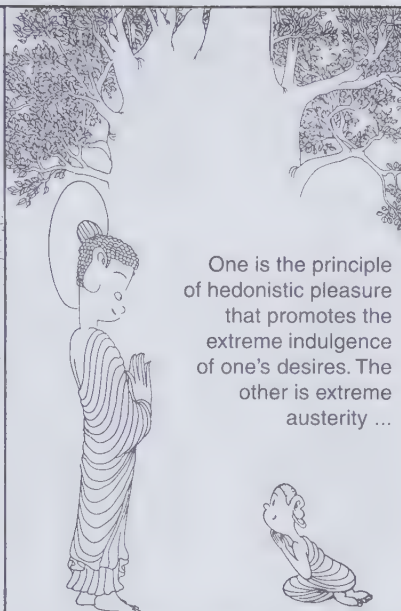
Humans live in space and time. There is really not a separate part of the universal essence that is "I" and another part of the separate essence that is the opposing objects. We should dissolve into any space and time in which we find ourselves. Every moment is "I", and every piece is also "I". There is not judgement of good or bad, my way or not my way. Let us just treasure the taste of all experiences.



* Zen

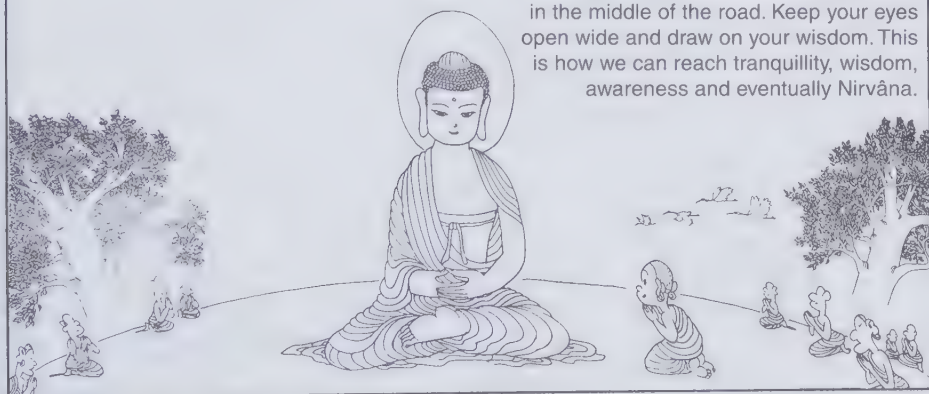
The Middle of the Road

My fellow monks, there are two extremes in the world that the ordained ones should not come close to:

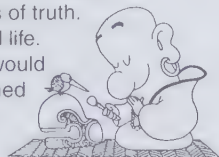


One is the principle of hedonistic pleasure that promotes the extreme indulgence of one's desires. The other is extreme austerity ...

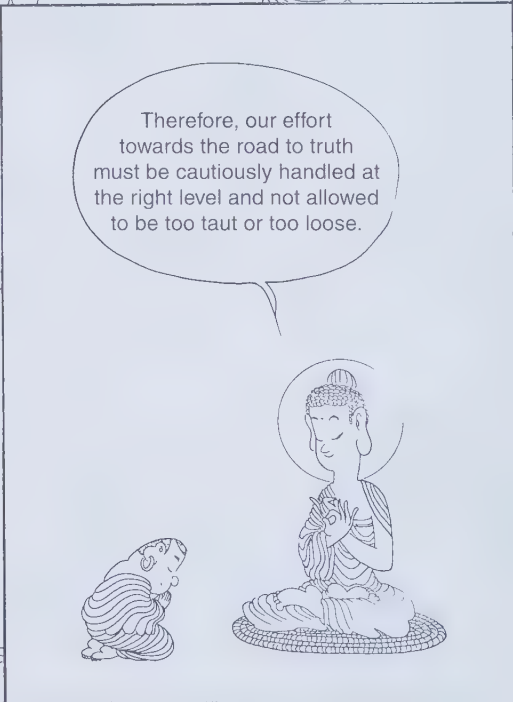
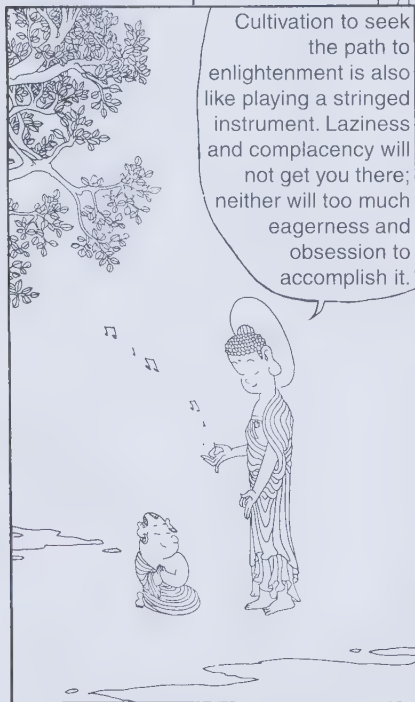
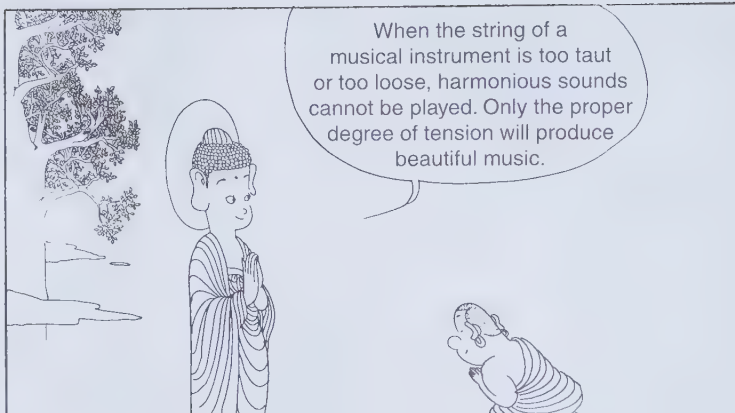
My fellow monks! "Ultimate Essence Arriving" gives up both extremes and walks in the middle of the road. Keep your eyes open wide and draw on your wisdom. This is how we can reach tranquility, wisdom, awareness and eventually Nirvāna.



Neither those who only care about satisfying desires nor those who simple-mindedly practise religious self-mortification are following the right path for seekers of truth. When Buddha was young, he lived an extremely luxurious and pampered life. Afterwards, he practised self-mortification for six years, thinking that he would obtain enlightenment to Truth this way, but in vain. Therefore, he abandoned both extremes and came to enlightenment through the middle way that is the right path for reaching enlightenment.



Seeking the Road to Truth Is Like Playing a Stringed Instrument

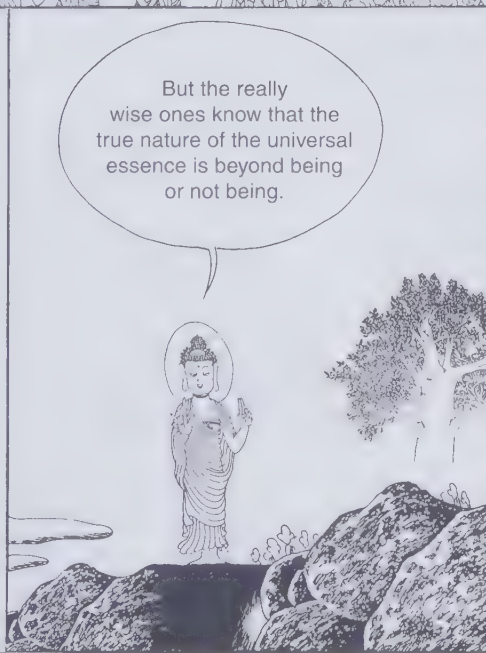
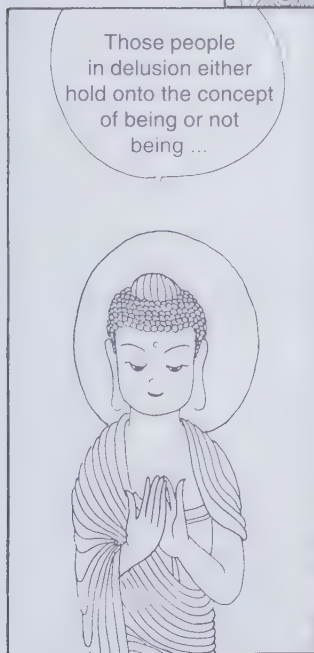
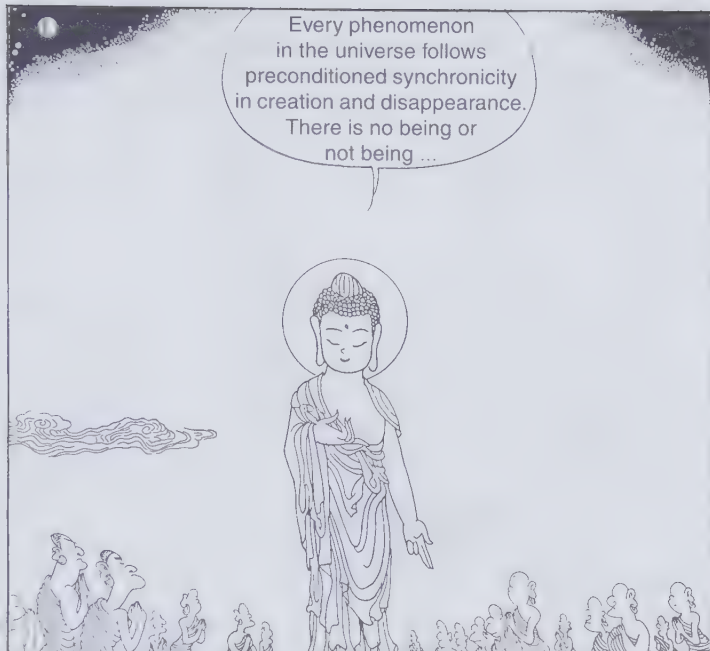


Someone who cultivates spirituality should get away from both extremes of lifestyle. This is how the heart is opened up, wisdom is cultivated, and one gets to walk in the lifestyle leading to enlightenment.

What is the middle-of-the-road lifestyle? A proper point of view,

proper thoughts,
a proper way of speaking to others,
proper behaviour,
a proper lifestyle,
proper efforts,
proper mindfulness, and
a proper centring of the mind through meditation.
These eight components are the middle-of-the-road lifestyle.

**Not Being
and Not
Not Being**



If we feel the opposite party is bigger and stronger, that means we are using the external point of view to observe things. If we feel that we are smaller and weaker, then we are using the point of view of the ego-self to observe everything. Truth is beyond both sides, neither on this side nor on that side ...

Acceptance Is Acceptance, Whether of Fortune or Disaster



So long as there is birth, there is death.
So long as there is good fortune, there is disaster.
So long as there are lucky events, there are unlucky events.
Humans must acknowledge this principle.



People in delusion only
anticipate happiness
and hate disasters.



A person who is cultivating
spirituality will transcend
both and not attach himself
to either side.



Intelligent people
know that every
needs to be look
at from both sid
there is always
positive side an
negative side. P
in delusion alwa
anticipate the
positive side an
complain about
negative side. T
wise ones trans
both sides and
dissolve into go
and bad, good
fortune and disa
Because they a
capable of bein
without the ego
they can also b
space of no goo
and bad, no goo
fortune and disa

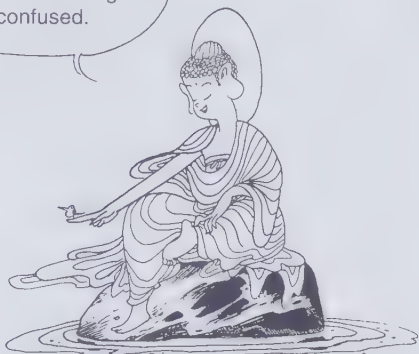


* Buddha

**Do Not
Attach
to
Anything**



When the mind
of attachment arises,
humans start to get
confused.



Therefore, a person
practising cultivation and
walking along the path of
enlightenment should be
walking the path of no
insistence, possessiveness,
stubbornness, or excessive
restraint.



If we are attached to anything, then it is impossible to dissolve into the present ... The meaning of life is that no matter when and where we happen to be we should always dissolve selflessly into it. Then, although it may look like one has gained nothing ... indeed, we have acquired "everything".



* Buddha

**Neither
Slander
Nor Praise
Changes
the Truth**

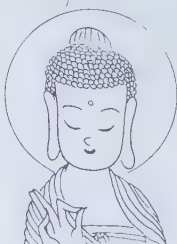


If somebody slanders me, or the meanings of my teaching, or my disciples ... do not get depressed or irritated.

Because this way of reacting will only bring about more damage.



If somebody praises me, or the meanings of my teaching, or my disciples ...



... do not become joyous and proud, because this way of reacting will interfere with the proper evaluation.



Humans must have the awareness and ability to be their own master. How we are is completely based on the quality of ourselves. It is not because others praise us that we become good all of a sudden, and it is not because others despise us that we change our qualities and become bad.



A Wise Person Dissolves into All

This is how I have heard it: At the time, Buddha was living at the Jetavana Monastery in Srāvasti and lecturing to the monks.

Listen carefully. I am going to explain to you what is the known Essential Truth of the universe, what is wisdom, and what makes a wise person.



the material world

To be able to see through all external phenomena in the world and to recognize correctly the sensations, perceptions, decisions and consciousness of the inner world of oneself, this is the known Essential Truth of the universe.

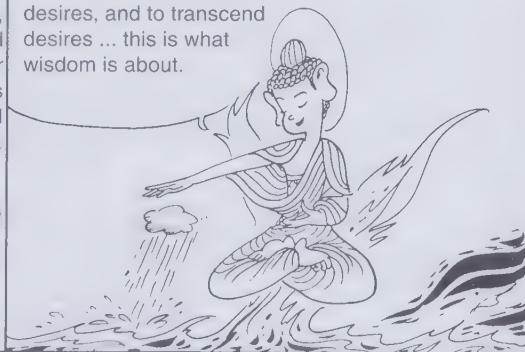
perceptions

consciousness

decisions

sensations

To be able to tame desires, to cut off the temptations of desires, and to transcend desires ... this is what wisdom is about.



What makes a wise person? One who has attained nirvāna is a wise one.*



* One who has attained Nirvāna is an Arhat, someone who has used particular methods of spiritual cultivation, such as the Noble Eightfold Path, to gain release from desires and defilement, as well as the ever-repeating cycle of reincarnation.

The level of this Arhat is that there is no past, present, future ...
 there is also no not having a past, present and future ...
 It is also not having a past, present and future ...
 It is also no not having a past, present and future ...

past



present



future



He dissolves himself without ego into all space, into all time. Because he can achieve this kind of state of mind, he is therefore referred to as a wise one.



I am the mountain.
 I am the water.
 I am the cloud.
 I am the bird.

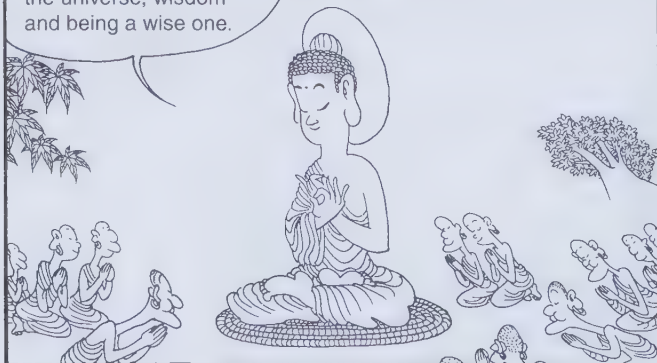


The foregoing teaching was my explanation of the Essential Truth of the universe, wisdom and being a wise one.

After the monks heard the Buddha's words, they all joyfully went out to practise.

To be able to correctly see through all five aggregates of activities in the universe is kong: including all the material world and all sensations, perceptions, decisions and consciousness. This means understanding the truth about life.

To be able to tame desires, to detach from desires, and to transcend desires is the state of "wisdom". To transcend time and space, to dissolve into time and space, to melt without ego into unity with thousands of phenomena is being "a wise one".



PURIFYING ONE'S OWN WILL

Thousands of things in the world all manifest their natural qualities with their own individual variations of conditions. This is also the case with humans since every person has his own conditions, abilities, personality, orientation and opportunities. Therefore, different results consequently develop. However, each person's outlook on life, whether happy and fortunate or painful and sad, is not determined by his own conditions and circumstances. Instead, his outlook is based on what kind of thoughts are in his mind ... If our mind incorrectly holds negative concepts, then we will live in pain; if our mind correctly holds assertive concepts, then we will in turn live in joy.



Buddha says: "Heaven and hell are not outside of this world. Heaven and hell are actually inside our own bodies that are several feet tall."

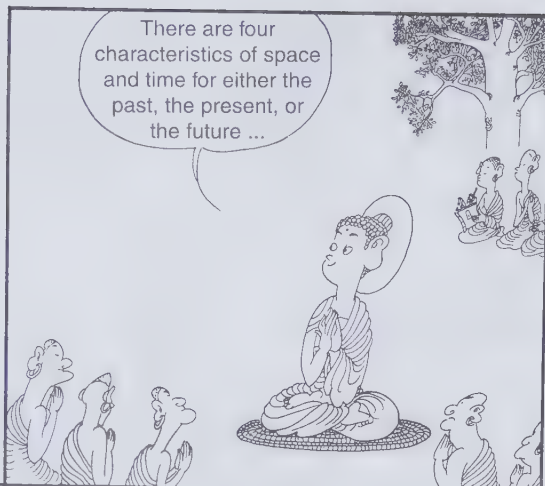
Each human often relies on his previous life experiences to judge everything as good versus bad. In regard to everyday encounters, he will always use this mental standard of good versus bad to make contrasts.

Anything that is beneficial to him brings his mind delight, and anything against his will brings dissatisfaction to his mind. The inner emotions also generate greed, resentment, delusion, pleasure, anger, sadness and happiness in response to external encounters ... Both the body and the mind are therefore bonded to changes in time and space in the external environment and cannot be their own master. When he cannot control his own body and mind, he becomes the place of manifestation for heaven and hell according to changes in objective conditions.

The world we know
is actually in the constant
process of creation, existence,
destruction and emptiness, and
is the cumulative manifestation
of mental and material
components.



**Distance
Oneself
from Desires**



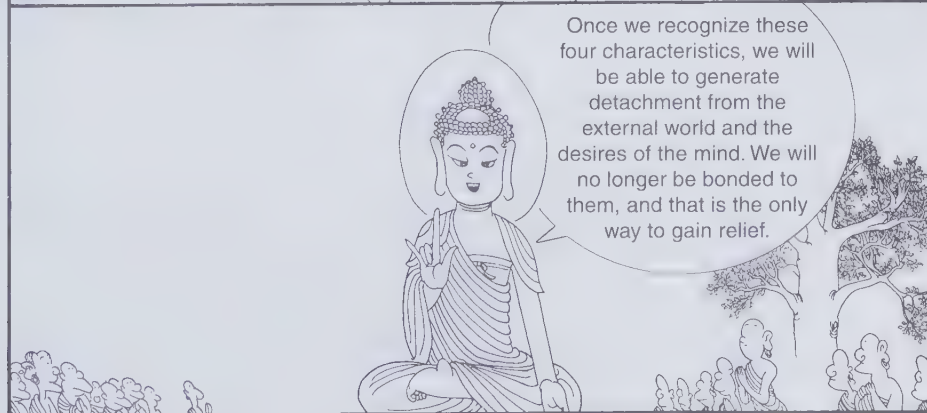
These four characteristics are:

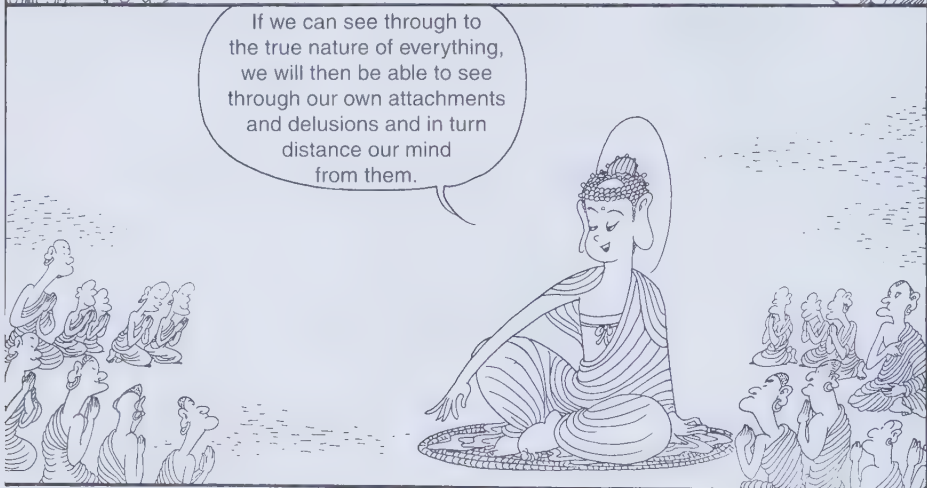
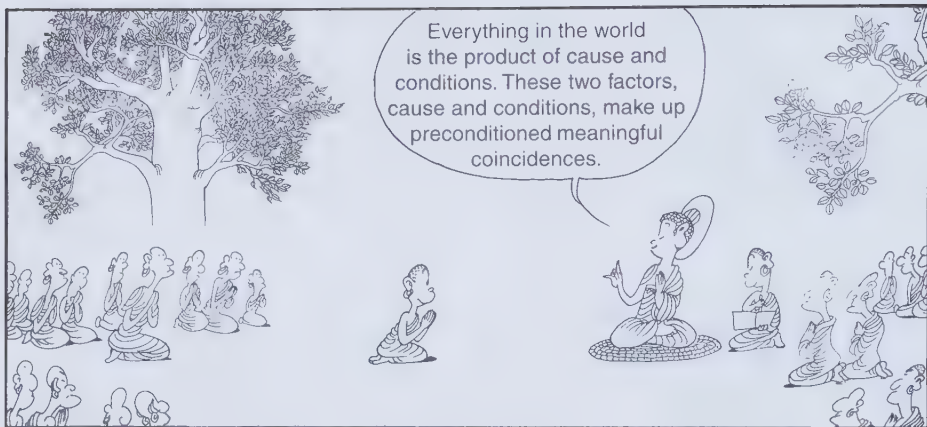
Transitional change without eternal permanence;

The pain generated by transitions;

Time and space are manifestations of kong and do not exist in essence by themselves;

My ego is only a part of time and does not own either time or space.



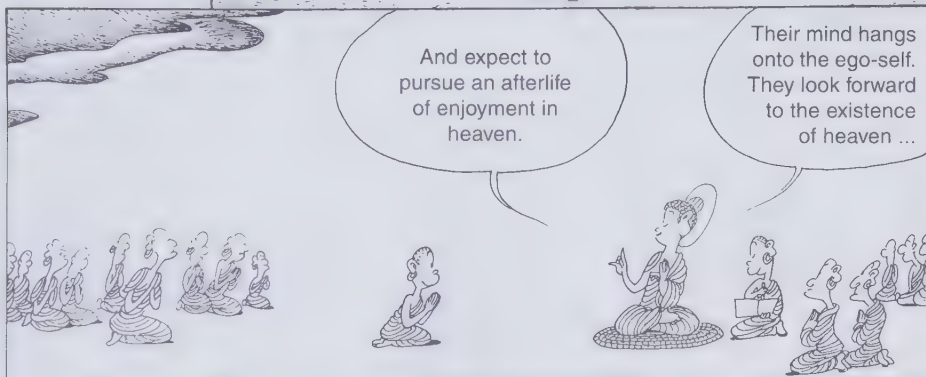
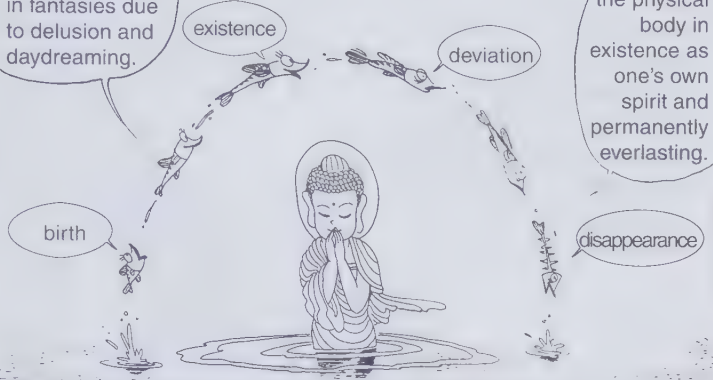


Once we are able to see through to the true nature of time, space and thousands of manifestations, we will be able to rid ourselves of attachment to the external world and our desires and thereby acquire relief. Recognize that the origins of everything are only the combined manifestations of causes and characteristics which make up preconditioned synchronicity. This will enable us to see through our own delusions and attachments, and subsequently be able to generate the mindset to distance ourselves from desires. This is how we can eventually get rid of our bondage to the external world and our egocentric impulses.

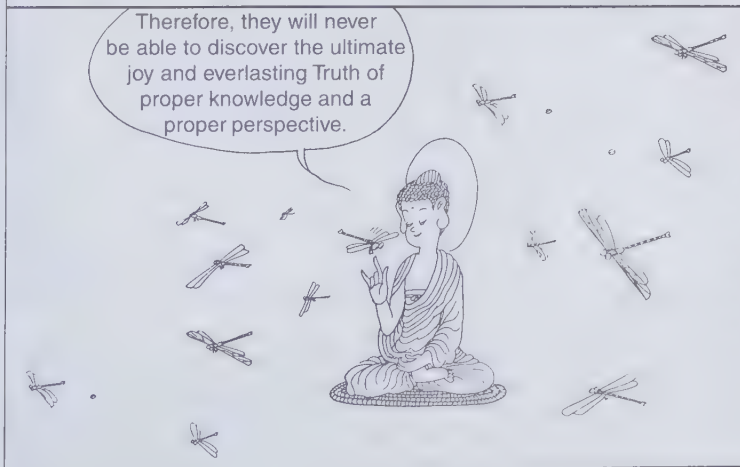
Delusion



Humans often indulge in fantasies due to delusion and daydreaming.

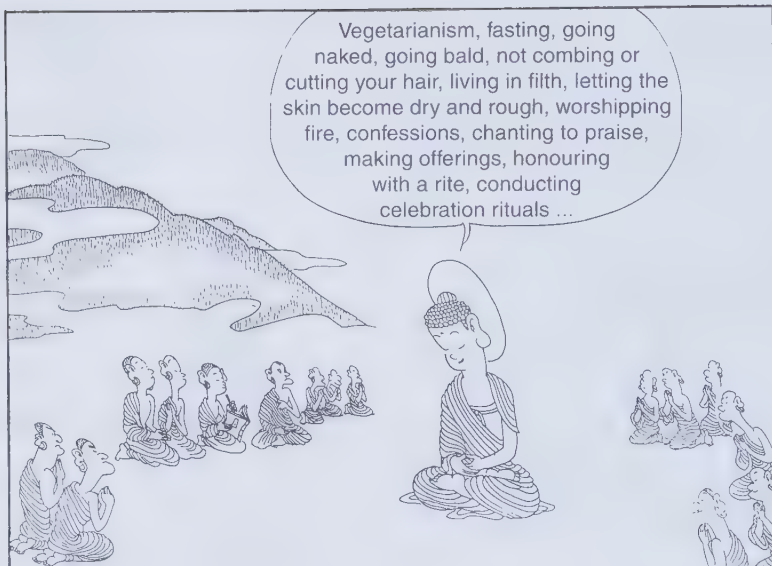


Therefore, they will never be able to discover the ultimate joy and everlasting Truth of proper knowledge and a proper perspective.

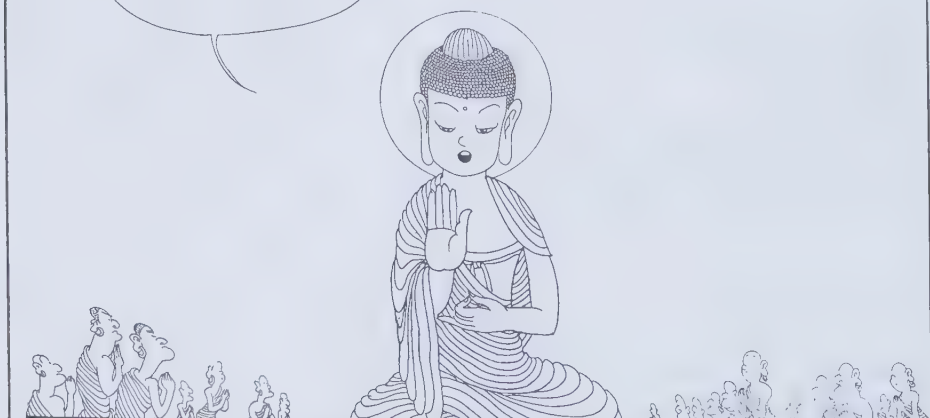


Due to ignorance, humans single-mindedly wish to obtain impossible results. Due to delusion, they only believe in the theories and things that they themselves want to believe. Therefore, it becomes even more impossible to obtain true knowledge.

**Doctrines
Based on
Formality
Will Not
Produce
Fruits of
Success**



None of these acts can help people solve their problems, nor purify their bodies and minds.



In order to purify the self, in addition to knowing the sequential methods for purification, the most important thing is to personally practise in one's own daily life. Although Buddha had pointed out the path to "the other shore" of enlightenment, those who cultivate can only possibly reach the final destination by personal experience and practice. The road has to be walked by one's own feet. All rituals, chanting and worshipping cannot enable us to arrive at the ultimate goal.

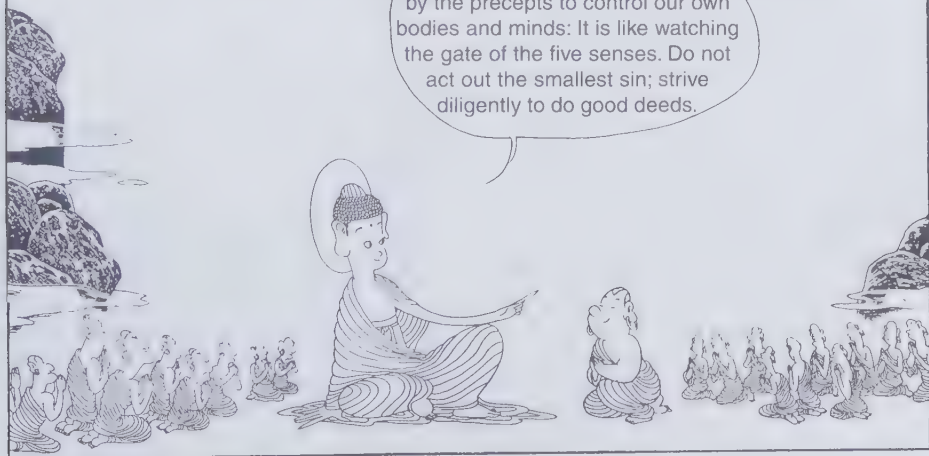
**Abiding
by
Precepts,
Centring
the Mind,
and
Developing
Wisdom**



Pursuing the path
to enlightenment requires
that we first concentrate on the
following three goals: abiding by
precepts, centring the mind
through meditation, and
developing wisdom.



What are precepts? We abide
by the precepts to control our own
bodies and minds: It is like watching
the gate of the five senses. Do not
act out the smallest sin; strive
diligently to do good deeds.



What is meant by centring the mind through meditation? It means to distance oneself from desires, to rid oneself of all things that make one emotional, and to guide the mind into a state of tranquillity and stability by meditation.



What is meant by developing wisdom? That means to understand what suffering is, the reasons for suffering, the ways to be free of suffering, and how to reach the state of no suffering.



After we are able to achieve these three goals — of commandments, stability and wisdom — then we can say we have walked onto the correct path for enlightenment.

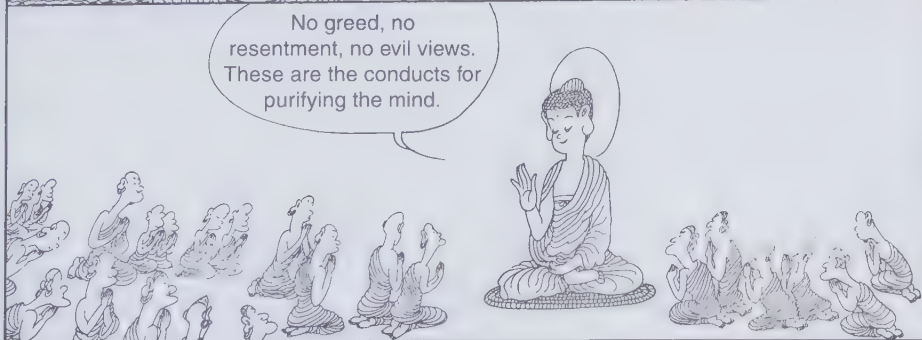
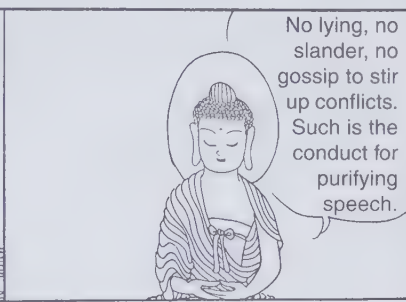
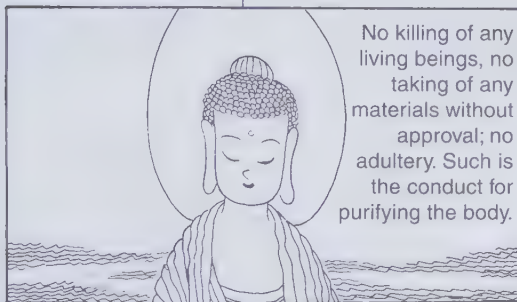
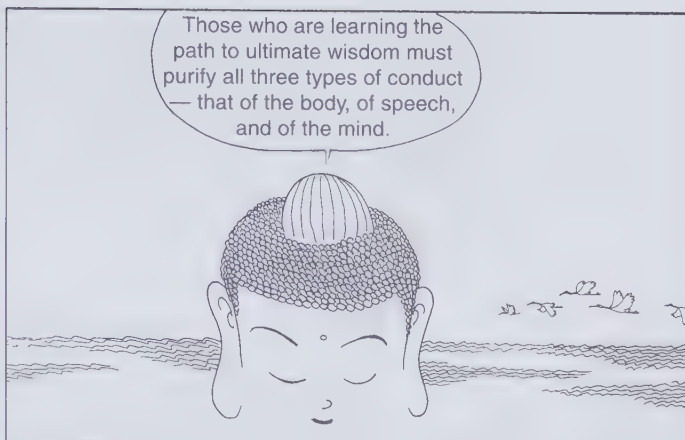


Yes

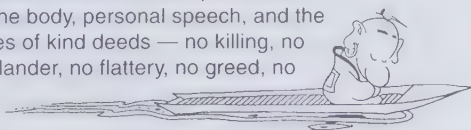


To reach the other shore of wisdom as well as eternal peace and joy, the sequence of learning is abiding by precepts, centring the mind through meditation, and developing wisdom. Abiding by the precepts and living a simple lifestyle, as well as staying away from evil deeds, will minimize any emotions. Centring the mind through meditation — without any daydreaming — will keep desires and greed far away. By observing our own mind carefully, we will come to the true understanding of the formation of suffering, as well as the disappearance of suffering — the ultimate wisdom.

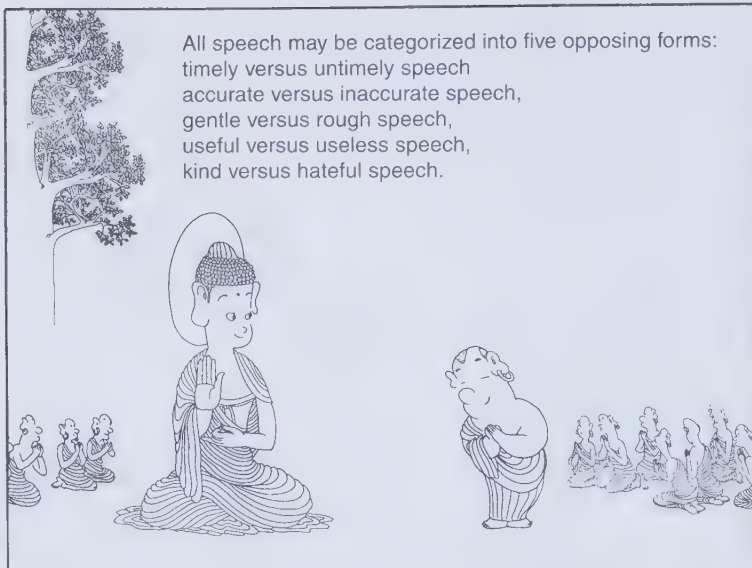
Purification of Body, Speech and Mind



Abiding by precepts, centring the mind through meditation, and the development of wisdom — this is the sequence for cultivation to reach the other shore of Nirvāṇa. Abiding by precepts requires that one first achieve self-control and purification concerning three areas of personal conduct: the body, personal speech, and the mind. This also means to carry on the ten types of kind deeds — no killing, no stealing, no adultery, no lying, no gossip, no slander, no flattery, no greed, no resentment, and no delusion.



Proper Speech



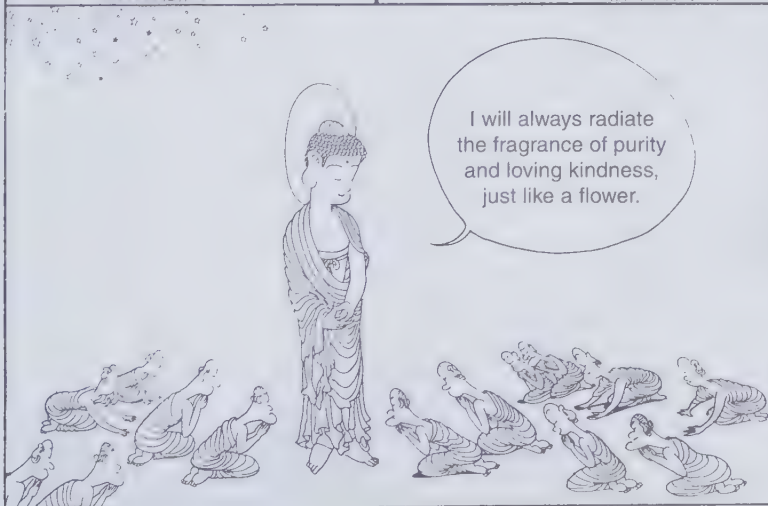
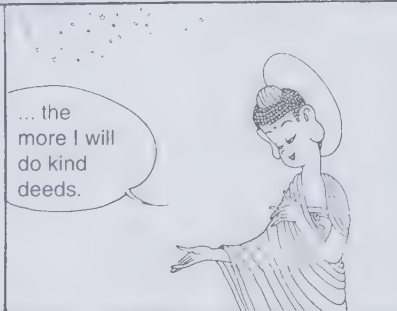
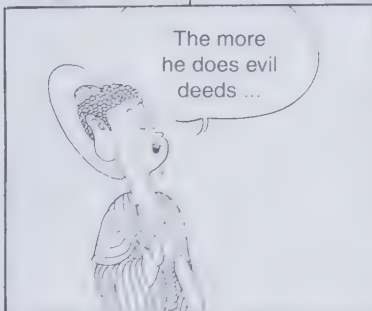
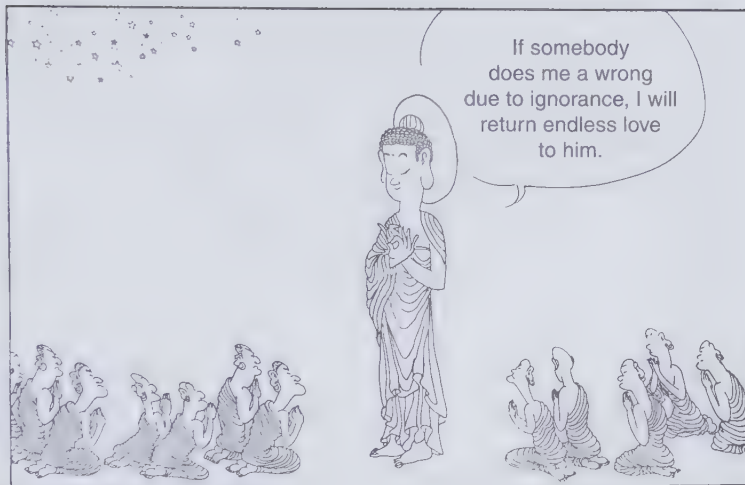
All speech may be categorized into five opposing forms:
timely versus untimely speech
accurate versus inaccurate speech,
gentle versus rough speech,
useful versus useless speech,
kind versus hateful speech.

During our daily conversations, we want to encourage ourselves all the time: My mind is not affected by external things; rough words should never slip out of my mouth; empathy and compassion will stay in my mind forever; anger and hatred will not be allowed to emerge in my mind.



The behaviour of humans bring about external reactions and, in turn, these reactions bring about further inner feelings in people. A person who works on cultivation needs self-control to conduct the body, speech and the mind. Incorrect or compulsive behaviour will attract worries and pain. Among the three types of conduct — the body, speech and the mind — the easiest one, to attract external conflicts and therefore affect our own mood is our speech.

Kindness Does Not Change Because of Others

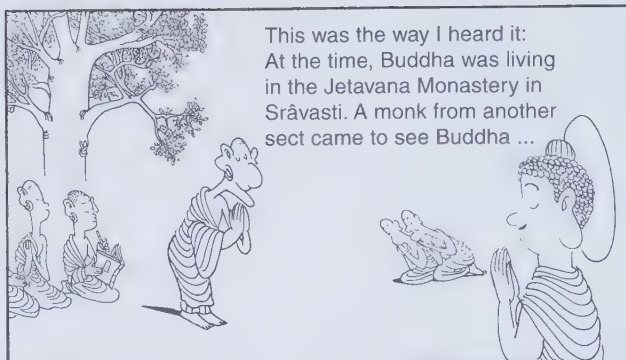


Every person needs to be his true nature, instead of changing this true nature according to variations in time, space and encounters. A fragrant flower will not change its own aroma and beauty because others think it pretty or ugly. This should also be the case for a person. If we are kind, then we should not become evil ourselves because of other people's evil.

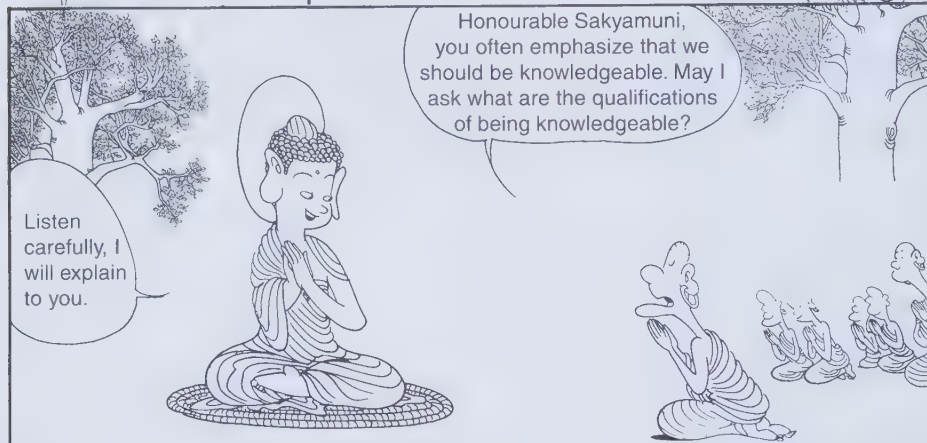




Be Knowledgeable

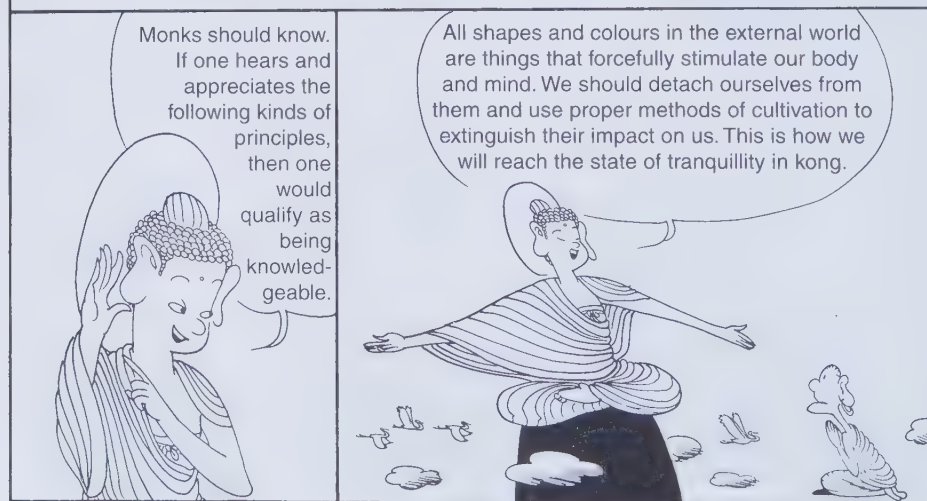


This was the way I heard it:
At the time, Buddha was living
in the Jetavana Monastery in
Srāvasti. A monk from another
sect came to see Buddha ...



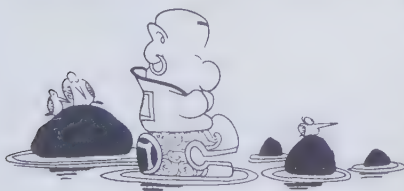
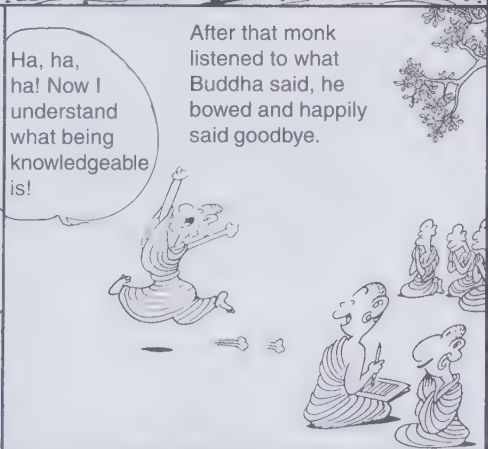
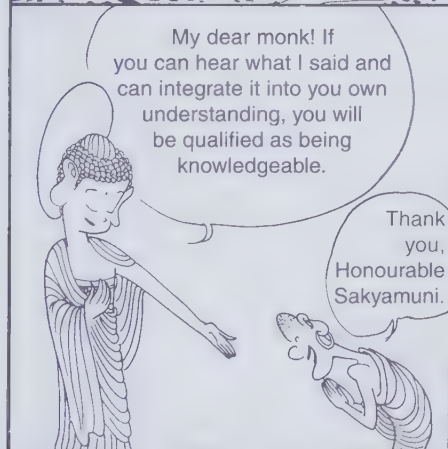
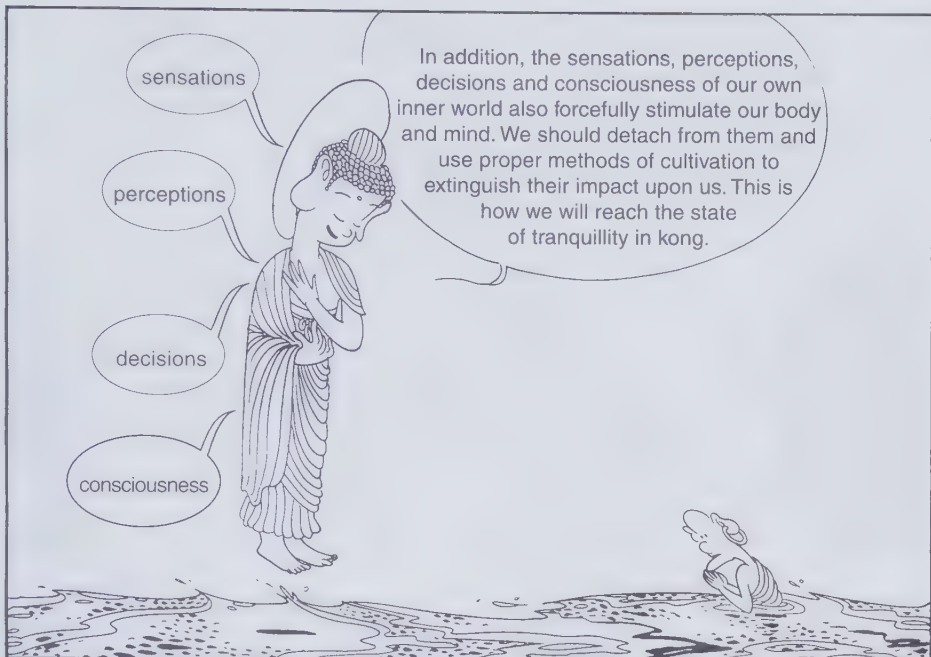
Listen
carefully, I
will explain
to you.

Honourable Sakyamuni,
you often emphasize that we
should be knowledgeable. May I
ask what are the qualifications
of being knowledgeable?



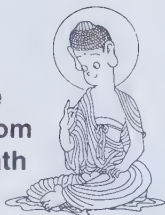
Monks should know.
If one hears and
appreciates the
following kinds of
principles,
then one
would
qualify as
being
knowled-
geable.

All shapes and colours in the external world
are things that forcefully stimulate our body
and mind. We should detach ourselves from
them and use proper methods of cultivation to
extinguish their impact on us. This is how we
will reach the state of tranquillity in kong.

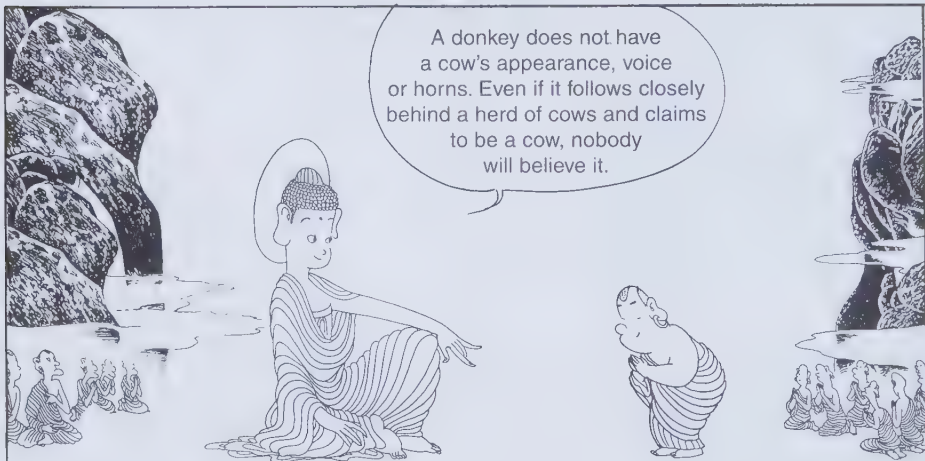


Buddha lectured about Universal Truths for decades in his life. His emphasis was on one subject — how to find the causes of suffering and how to exterminate it in order to reach the state of tranquillity in kong! "Being knowledgeable" is knowing about this Truth explained by Buddha and being able to integrate and practise it in daily life. It does not mean to know about a great deal of incorrect or useless information that is irrelevant.

**Those Who Do Not
Cultivate Precepts, Centre
the Mind, and Develop Wisdom
Are Not Seeking the True Path**



A donkey does not have a cow's appearance, voice or horns. Even if it follows closely behind a herd of cows and claims to be a cow, nobody will believe it.



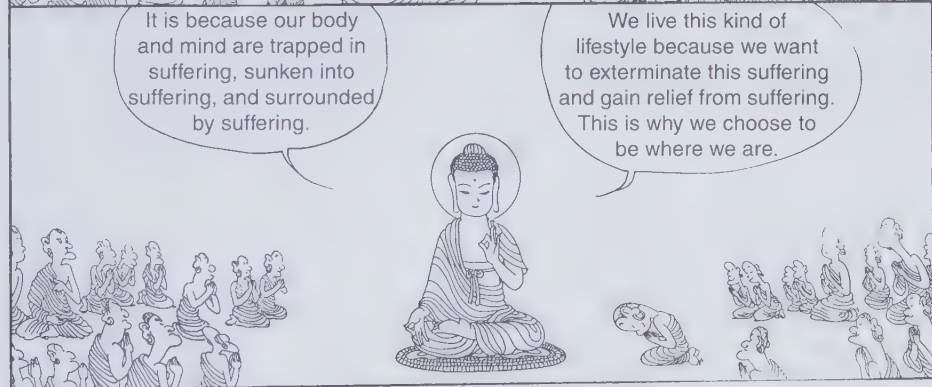
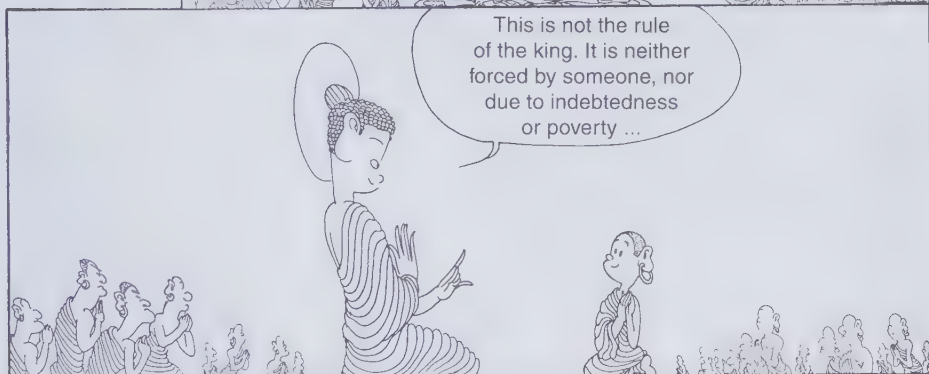
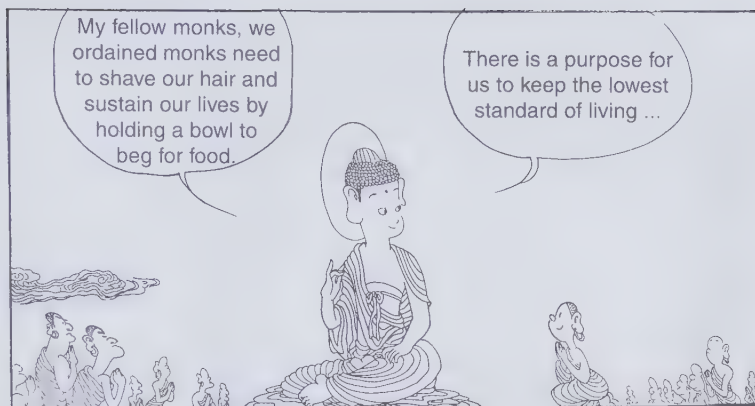
By the same principle, consider a person who does not cultivate spirituality by following the precepts, centring the mind through meditation and developing wisdom. Even if this person claims to be a disciple of Buddhism, the result is a totally ignorant delusion.



For those seeking the path to enlightenment, the most important part is to practise what is preached. This means to take the road directed by the wise ones who came before and forge ahead towards the goal. Learning Buddhism means to practise the precepts, centre the mind and develop wisdom. If we do not actually practise what we preach, how could empty talk get us to our goal?



Relief from Suffering



The purpose of spiritual cultivation is to rid ourselves of our own suffering and worries to reach eternal joy. Cultivation is not for achieving accomplishments or fame, nor is it for the sense of being "holier than thou", or for becoming a guru to others. If one is not capable of relieving one's own suffering, then one is deviating from the road of cultivation and not really cultivating spirituality.

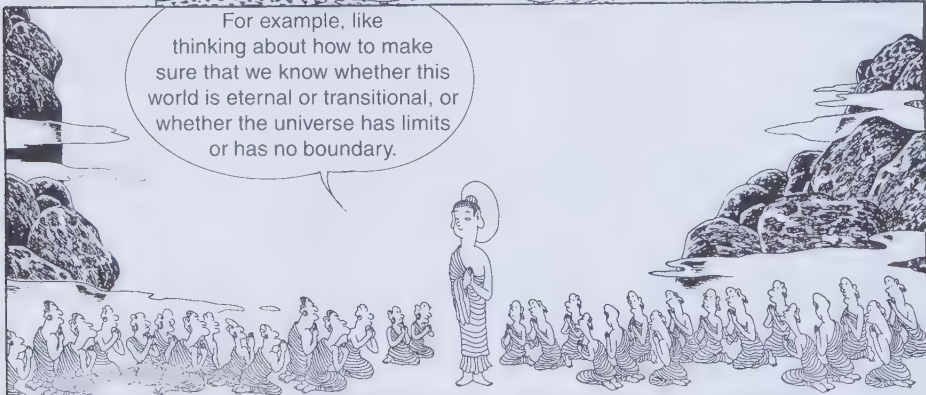
Hold to Practising What Is Preached



Brothers! Do not be infatuated with worldly thoughts and waste time on things that do not help you end suffering.



For example, like thinking about how to make sure that we know whether this world is eternal or transitional, or whether the universe has limits or has no boundary.



You must focus your mind on the Four Noble Truths of suffering, the causes of suffering, the state of no ego-self and no suffering, and the path of cultivation to end suffering. Come to realize and practise the methods to exterminate suffering.



Supernatural theories and metaphysics that go beyond our sensory experiences only add to human confusion. They do not benefit the spiritual cultivation which extinguishes suffering. Practising the principles is the only means of reaching Truth. Once we have arrived there and have acquired wisdom, we will naturally understand many things without effort.

**When One's
Inner Light
Is On, the
Light of
Truth Is On**



Ananda, you should
use your inner guidance
as your beacon. Nobody
else can always be
depended upon.



Use Essential Universal Truths
as your beacon; use Essential
Universal Truths as what you
can depend upon. You can
depend upon nothing else.



Those who are able to use the
inner self as their beacon —
Essential Universal Truths as
the beacon — to guide their
path ...



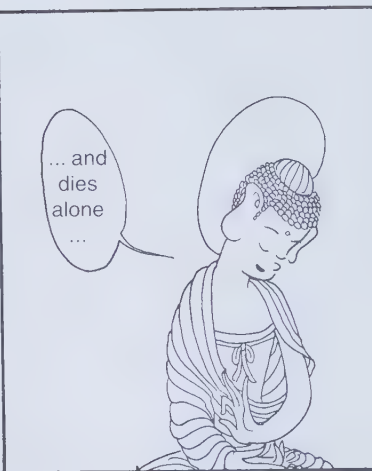
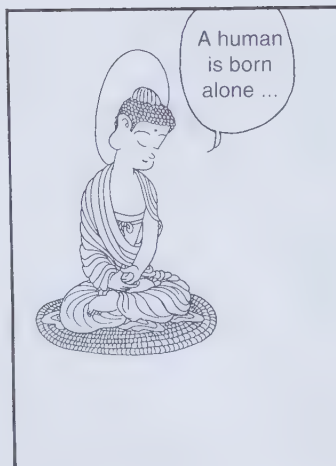
They are
the ones who
have reached
the highest
level among the
monks who
cultivate
spirituality.



We must
depend upon
our inner
guidance to
direct us to
the right
path; We
must depend
upon the
proper
method to
march in the
right
direction.
Each of us
has to help
ourselves to
salvation;
nobody else
is capable of
our salvation.



Walk the Road with Your Own Feet



A human must walk alone
towards the path to Nirvāna ...



I can only direct
your path, but you
must walk it with
your own feet.



Buddha is not a deity, not the saviour god of the world. Rather Buddha is a teacher, a role model for proper living. He was born a human and died as a human. Every person can learn from him. Every person can become Buddha, become an enlightened one.



DO NOT BE DRIVEN BY MATERIAL DESIRES

Essential Universal Truths (*Dharma*) in Buddhism is the teaching of the Buddha.

More than twenty-five hundred years ago, the Buddha was already enlightened to the truth in life. He said:

"To endlessly expand our material desires while ignoring the purification of the spirit is unwise, as well as unsatisfying. If we do not expand the abundance of the spirit and enable the body and mind to keep their inner peace and joy, we will never be able to obtain internal health and happiness. Blindly and single-mindedly chasing after fame, fortune, wealth, indulgence in lust, and greed over material enjoyment, will never get us where we want to go."

With awareness, we should seek the secrets of our own spirits and enrich our inner content. We should march towards inner evolution and development in mental quality.

Eventually, we will find that the joy brought about by modifying our body and mind, and developing mental treasures is so surprisingly sweet and permanent ...



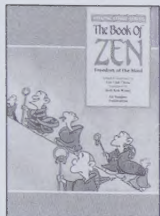


BE THE REAL MASTER OF ONE'S OWN BODY AND MIND

Every person has the inner ability to evolve. So long as one follows proper means to practise the principles diligently, one will definitely obtain the fruits of success. So long as one puts his mind to it, one will be able to distinguish goodness from evil. So long as one has a physical body with arms and legs, one will be able to implement the principles taught by the Buddha. An ordinary person is often deeply pained and troubled by changes in the time and space of his environment. The same person can be purified into an enlightened one who is carefree and always stays in peace and joy. This is how one becomes the real master of one's own body and mind.

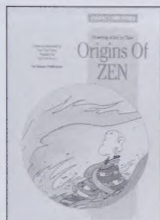


Comics on Zen and Buddhism



Book of Zen

Zen is life. Zen makes the art of spontaneous living the prime concern of the human being. Tsai Chih Chung depicts Zen with unfettered versatility. His illustrations span a period of more than 2,000 years from the beginning of Zen with the Buddha's enlightenment in India to the time of the Japanese Zen masters of the pre-modern era.



Origins of Zen

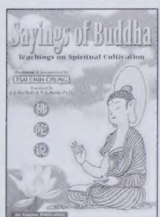
The Zen teaching, introduced by Bodhidharma in AD 527, flourished and reached its zenith in Tang China, whereas Buddhism was eventually to die out in the land of its birth. Tsai in this comic version traces the origins and development of Zen in China, with a lighthearted touch.



100 Parables of Zen

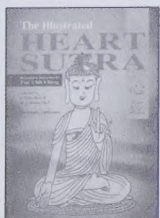
This is a popular Buddhist classic compiled from 12 sutras by an Indian monk in the fifth century.

All the accounts here are crisp, entertaining and meaningful. The stories appear unbelievable and almost absurd, but they are actually full of wisdom and provide a clear mirror for reflection of the inner self.



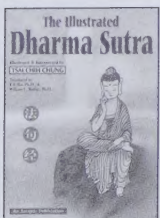
Sayings of Buddha

This compendium of Buddha's lessons — dynamically illuminated by Tsai Chih Chung — provides practical guidelines for disciplining the mind and behaviour.



Illustrated Heart Sutra

Written in only 260 Chinese characters, *The Heart Sutra* contains the most profound wisdom in Buddhism. Here, Buddhism is presented not as a religion but as the accumulated wisdom of "enlightened ones" who contemplated the trials and mysteries of life.



Illustrated Dharma Sutra

The Dharma, "The Law", is the essential Truths of the universe and human life. The Truths are available to us today, as told to Sakyamuni's disciples. In simple terms, the Buddha describes the path to spiritual cultivation and shows how to incorporate the Truths in our daily life.

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翻譯：何怡頤與雷士杰

亞太圖書有限公司出版



Sayings of Buddha

Teachings on Spiritual Cultivation

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In today's world, where serenity seems to be both desirable and unattainable, Sakyamuni Buddha's teaching on how to achieve spiritual cultivation can be immediately applied in daily living.

This compendium of Buddha's lessons – dynamically illuminated by Tsai Chih Chung – provides practical guidelines for disciplining the mind and behaviour. Proven by 2,500 years of practice, the Buddha's road map to stress reduction, decision-making, and a life of tranquillity is worth a few moments of our time to read, to ponder ... and, perhaps, to practise.



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