CORRECTION: These materials were gathered from a collection of hundreds of pages of unidentified writings and were previously and mistakenly described as *an unpublished work in progress* (which perhaps they were). Instead these pages are hand written excerpts from "Chapter Nine: Nirvana - A Study in Synthetic Buddhism" of the book "Gleanings in Buddha-Fields" by Lafcadio Hearn. The book is available in its entirety at various sites on the internet. Sincere apologies for not properly attributing these materials and the confusion it may have caused.
Nirvana means the extinction of individual sensation, emotion, thought, - the final disintegration of conscious personality, - the annihilation of everything that can be included under the term 'I' – This rightly expresses one side of the Buddhist teaching.

Self to the westerners signifies feelings, ideas, memory, volition, will. The Buddhist, however, declares all that we call Self to be false. He defines the Ego as a temporary aggregate of sensations, impulses ideas, created by the physical + mental experiences of the races - all relating to the perishable body, + all doomed to dissolve with it.

"The mind, the thoughts + all the senses are subject to the law of life + death. With the knowledge of Self + the laws of birth + death there is no grasping, + no sense-perception. Knowing one's self + knowing how the senses act, there is no room for the idea of “I”, or the ground for framing it. The thought of
Nirvana

„Self” gives rise to all sorrows binding the world as with fetters but having found there is no ‘I’, that can be bound, then all these bonds are severed.”

From ‘Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan King

The above text suggests very plainly that consciousness is not the Real Self, + that the mind dies with the body.

We find therein a doctrine of rebirth; but the existence of a soul is denied. We are told that the misfortunes of this life are punishments of faults committed in a previous life. Yet personal transmigration does not take place. We find the statement that beings are re-individualized; yet both individuality + personality are called illusions. How can we reconcile the following quotation from the first volume of “The questions of King Milinda”

“The King said ‘Nagasena, is there any one who after is not re-individualised?’ Nagasena answered ‘A sinful being is re-individualised; a sinless one is not.” p - 50 -

‘Is there such a thing as the soul?’ ‘There is no such thing as soul’ (p - 86-89) (p. III- In the highest sense, O King there is no such thing.
Nirvana (contd) (2)

'Is there any being, Nagasena, who transmigrates from this body to another' – ‘No, there is not.” p 112. ‘Where there is no transmigration, Nagasena, can there be rebirth?’ “Yes, there can.” Does he, Nagasena, who is about to be reborn, know that he will be reborn?” Yes, he knows it, O King (p -113).

The Sutra of the Great Decease furnishes an account of the Eight Stages of Deliverance leading to Nirvana, - the process of absolute annihilation. In 1st stage – one retains the idea of form - subjective + objective

“2nd stage - he loses the subjective idea of form, + views forms an external phenomena only.

“3rd stage the sense of the approaching perception of larger truth comes to him –

“4th stage he passes beyond all ideas of form, ideas of existence + ideas of distinction, + thus remains where only the idea of infinite space,

“5th stage – the idea of infinite space vanishes, + the thought comes, It is all infinite reason.

“6th stage – the thought comes ‘Nothing at all exists’.

“7th stage – the idea of nothingness itself vanishes.

“8th stage – all sensations + ideas cease
Nirvana 2, 2

to exist, And after this comes Nirvana.

Illusion produces action of karma; karma, self-consciousness; self-consciousness, individuality; individuality, the senses; the senses, contact; contact, feeling; feeling, desire; desire, union; union, conception; Conception, birth; birth, sorrow + decrepitude + Death;

By the Cessation of contact feeling is destroyed; by that of feeling, individuality; + by that of individuality, self-consciousness.

In Buddhist philosophy there is no personal transmigration + no individual permanent soul.

“O Bhagvat, the idea of a self is no idea; and the idea of a being or a living person, or a person, is no idea. And why? Because the blessed Buddhas are freed from all ideas –“ The Diamond Cutter

The acts + thoughts are forces integrating themselves into material + mental phenomena, - into what we call objective + subjective appearances – “The aggregate actions of all sentient beings give birth to the
varieties of mountains, rivers, countries, etc. Their eyes, nostrils, ears, tongues, bodies – as well as their gardens, woods, farms, residences, servants, + maids, men imagine to be their own possessions, but they are, in truth, only results produced by innumerable actions.”

‘Kuroda, outlines of the Mahayana’

“Grass, trees, earth, - all these shall become Budha” ‘Chuin-kyo’

“Even swords + things of metal are manifestations of spirit; within them exist all virtues (or power) in their fullest development + perfection.” Hizo-Ho-Yaku.

“When called sentient or non-sentient, matter is Law-Body”, (or ‘spiritual body’) Chisho-Hisho

“The apparent Doctrine treats of the four great elements (earth, fire, water, air) as non-sentient. But in the Hidden Doctrine these are said to be the Sammya-Shin (Samya-Kenja) or Body-Accordant of the Nyorai (Tathagata)’ (Soku-Shin-Io-Bubu-Gi)

“When every phase of our mind shall be in accord with the mind of Budha ---- then there will not be even one particle of dust that does not enter into Buddhahood” ‘Engaku-SHO’.
Nirvana 3, 2

The Karma – Ego we call Self is mind and is body; both perpetually decay; both are perpetually renewed. There is no other birth or death but the birth + death of karma in some form or condition. There is one Reality; but there is no permanent individual, no constant personality there is only phantom-self, + phantom succeeds to phantom, as undulation to undulation, over the ghostly Sea of Birth + Death. And even as the storming of a sea is a motion of undulation, not of translation, - even as it is the form of the wave only, not the wave itself that travels, - so in the passing of lives there is only the existing + the vanishing of forms, - forms mental, forms material, the fathomless Reality does not pass. “All forms” it is written in the Kongo-Hannya-Haramitsu-Kyo “are unreal; he who rises above all forms is the Budha.”

Beyond the false consciousness of imperfect man – beyond sensation, perception, thought – wrapped in the envelope of what we call soul (which in truth is only a thickly woven veil of illusion) is the eternal + divine, the Absolute Reality; not a soul, not a personality but the All-Self without selfishness ‘the Muga no Taiga – the Budha enwombed in karma
Within every phantom-self dwells this divine; yet the innumerable are but one – within every creature incarnate sleeps the Infinite Intelligence unevolved, hidden unfelt, unknown, - yet destined from all the eternities to waken at last, to rend away the ghostly web of sensuous mind, to break forever its chrysalis of flesh, + pass to the supreme conquest of Space + Time.

It is written in the Kegon-kyo (Avatam-saka-Sutra) - „Child of Budha, there is not even one living being that has not the wisdom of Tathagata – It is only because of their vain thoughts + affections that all beings are not conscious of this - - - - - I will teach them the holy Way; I will make them forsake their foolish thoughts + cause them to see that the vast + deep intelligence which dwells within them is not different from the wisdom of the very Budha.“

The true declaration is that what we perceive is never reality in itself, and that even the ego that perceives is an unstable plexus of aggregate of feelings which are themselves unstable
and in the nature of illusions. This position is scientifically strong – perhaps impregnable. Of substance in itself we certainly know nothing; we are conscious of the universe as a vast play of forces only:

The test of reality is persistence + the Buddhist, finding in the visible universe only a perpetual flux of phenomena, declares the material aggregate unreal because non-persistent, - unreal, at least as a bubble, a cloud, or a mirage.

Again, relation is the universal form of thought; but since relation is impermanent, how can thought be persistent? ..... Judged from these points of view, Buddhist doctrine is not Anit-Realism but a veritable Transfigured Realism, finding just expression in the exact words of Herbert Spencer – “Every feeling + thought being but transitory; - an entire life made up of such feelings + thoughts being also but transitory nay, the objects amid which life is passed, though less transitory being severally in the course of losing their individualities, whether quickly or slowly, - We learn that the one thing permanent is the unknowable Reality, hidden under all those changing shapes.
Likewise, the teaching of Buddhism that what we call Self is an impermanent aggregate, - a sensuous illusion, - will prove, if patiently analysed - Mind, as known to the scientific psychologist, is composed of feelings + the relations between feelings; and feelings are composed of units of simple sensation which are physiologically coincident with minute nervous shocks. All the sense-organs are fundamentally alike being evolitional modifications of the same morphological elements - and all the senses are modifications of touch. Or, to use the simplest possible language, the organs of sense - sight, smell, taste, even hearing - have been alike developed from the skin! Even the brain itself, is, at its first beginning, merely an infolding of the epidermic layer and thought physiologically + evolitional, is thus a modification of touch. Certain vibrations, acting through the visual apparatus, cause within the brain these motions which are followed by the sensations of light + colour; other vibrations
acting upon the auditory mechanism give rise to the sensation of sound - other vibrations, setting up changes in specialized tissue, produce sensations of taste, smell, touch.

All our knowledge is derived + developed, directly or indirectly, from physical sensation; - from touch – of course this is no ultimate explanation because nobody can tell us what feels the touch.

„Everything physical“ well said Schopenhauer „is at the same time metaphysical.“ But science fully justifies the Budhic position that what we call Self is a bundle of sensations, emotions, sentiments, ideas, memories, all relating to the physical experiences of the race and the individual, and that our wish for immortality is a wish for the eternity of this mere sensuous + selfish consciousness – And science even supports the Budhist denial of the permanence of the sensuous Ego. „Psychology' says Wandt, ‘proves that not only our sense-perceptions, but the memorized images that renew them, depend for their origin upon the functioning of the organs of sense + movement."
The striving for Nirvana is a struggle perpetual between false + true, light + darkness, the sensual + the super-sensual, + the ultimate victory can be gained only by the total decomposition of the mental and physical individuality. Not one conquest of self can suffice, millions of selves must be overcome.

But what is it that feels the phantom or the reality?

All phenomena of Self-Consciousness belong to the false self - but only as a physiologist might say that sensation is a product of a sensiferous apparatus, which would not explain sensation. In Budhism the only entity is the Absolute; + to that entity the false self stands in the relation of a medium through which light perception is deflected + distorted - in which + because of which, sentiency + impulse become possible. The unconditioned Absolute is above all relations. It has nothing of what we call pain or pleasure; it knows no difference of 'I' + 'Thou', - no distinction of place or time. But while conditioned by the illusion of personality, it is aware of pain or pleasure.
as a dreamer perceives unrealities without being conscious of this unreality. Pleasures + pains + all the feelings relating to self-consciousness are hallucinations – the false self exists only as a state of sleep exists, + sentiency + desire, + all the sorrows + passions of being, exist only as illusions of that sleep –

Here is a point at which science + Budhism diverge. Modern psychology recognizes no feelings not evolutionally developed through the experiences of the race and the individual; but Budhism asserts the existence of feelings which are immortal and divine. It declares that in this Karma State the greater part of our sensations, perceptions, ideas, thoughts, are related only to the phantom self; that our mental life is little more than a flow of feelings + desires belonging to selfishness; that one loves and hates, hopes + fears, pleasures + pains are illusions; but it also declares there are higher feelings more or less latent within us according to our degrees of knowledge which have nothing to do with the false self, + which are eternal -
"Pleasures and pains have their origin from touch; when there is no touch, they do not arise;" Atthaka-vagga, II.

The purely unselfish feelings, impossible to grosser natures, being to the Absolute. In generous natures the divine becomes sentient, - quickens within the shell of illusion, as a child quickens in the womb (whence illusion itself is called The Womb of the Tatthagata.) In yet higher natures the feelings which are not of self find room for powerful manifestation, - shine through the phantom - Ego as light through a vase. Such are purely unselfish love, larger than individual being - supreme compassion, perfect benevolence. They are not of man, but of the Budha within the man. And as these expand, all the feelings of self begin to thin + weaken - the condition of the Phantom - Ego simultaneously purifies; all those opacities which darkened the reality of Mind within the mirage of mind begin to illumine, + the sense of the infinite, like a thrilling light passes thus the dream of personality into the awakening divine.
“To reach the state of the perfect and everlasting happiness is the highest Nirvana; for then all mental phenomena – such as desires, etc. – are annihilated. And as such mental phenomena are annihilated, then appears to the true nature nature of true mind with all its innumerable functions and miraculous actions.”

‘Kuroda, outlines of the Mahayana’

As name + form, the false self dissolves, but its impulse live on and recombine; and the final destruction of these impulses – the total extinction of their ghostly vitality, - may require a protraction of effort through billions of centuries. Perpetually from the ashes of burnt-out passions subtler passions are born – from the graves of illusions new illusions arise. The most powerful of human passions is the last to yield; it persists far into superhuman conditions. Even when its grosser forms have passed away; its tendencies still lurk in those feelings Originally derived from it or interwoven with it; - the sensation of beauty, for example; + the delight of the mind in graceful things. On earth these are classed among the higher feelings,
But in a supra-mundane state their indulgence is fraught with peril; a touch or a look may cause the broken fetters of sensual bondage to reform. Beyond all worlds of sex there are strange zones in which thoughts + memories become tangible + visible objective facts, - in which emotional fancies are materialized, - in which the least unworthy wish may prove creative - throughout the greater part of this vast pilgrim-age, and in all the zones of desire, the temptations increase according to the spiritual strength of existence. With every successive ascent there is a further expansion of the possibilities of enjoyment, an augmentation of power, a heightening of sensation, immense the reward of self-conquest: but whosoever strives for that reward strives for emptiness: One must not desire heaven as a state of pleasure; "Erroneous thoughts as to the joys of heaven are still entwined by the fast cords of lust. One must not wish to become god or an angel - etc. –

**URDU**

"Non-existence is only the entrance to the Great Vehicle."

(Daikon-Kyoi)
‘Nin mité, hôtoké’ (see first the person, then preach the law) – is a Japanese proverb signifying that Buddhism should be taught according to the capacity of the pupil –

Higher Regions

The way of spiritual progress from the world of men upto Nirvana – rises from terrestrial conditions to other + superior worlds, - passing first through the Six Heavens of Desire (Yoku Ten), thence through the seventeen Heavens of Form (Shiki-kai) – and lastly through the Four Heavens of Formlessness (Inushiki-kai), beyond which lies Nirvana.

The requirements of physical life – the need of food, rest, + sexual relations – continue to be felt in the Heavens of Desire, - which would seem to be higher physical worlds rather than what we commonly understand by the expression ‘heavens’.

Some Budhist texts actually place them in remote constellations - declaring that the Path leads from star to star, from galaxy to galaxy, from universe to universe, upto the limit of Existence.
Nirvana contd. (9)

Description of Regions

In the first heaven of this zone called Heaven of the Zone-kings (Shi-Tenno-Ten), life lasts 5 times longer than life on this earth according to no. of years, + each year there is equal to fifty terrestrial years. But its inhabitants eat + drink, + marry + give in marriage, - In the succeeding heaven (Sanjiu-San-Ten), the duration of life is doubled, while all other conditions are correspondingly improved; + the grosser forms of passion disappear. The union of the sexes persists – a simple embrace producing a new being,
into objective can be presented to others, or shared with others, - like material gifts. But the look of an instant, - one glance of the eye, - may generate a new karma.

The Yoku-kai are all heavens of sensuous life, - heavens such as might answer to the dreams of artists + lovers + poets. But those who are able to traverse them without falling – pass into the Supercausal Zone, first entering the Heavens of Luminous Observation of Existence + of Calm Meditation upon Existence (Ujin-ushi-shonyo, or kate-kwan)

(3) These are in number three – each higher than the preceding, and are named the Heaven of Sanctity, + the Heaven of Higher Sanctity, + the heaven of Great Sanctity. After these come the heavens of Non-Existence, + of Calm Meditation upon Non-Existence – (Mujin-munshe Shoryo). These also are three + their names signify ‘Lesser Light’, ‘Light Unfathomable’, + Light ‘Making Sound’ or ‘Light Sonorous’. Here there is attained the highest degree of supersensuous joy possible to temporary conditions.

Above are the states
named Riki-Shonyo, or the Heavens of the Meditation of the Abandonment of Joy. Their names in their ascending order are: L Purity, Purity unfathomable, + Purity Supreme. In them neither joy nor pain, nor forceful feeling or any sort exist. There is a mild negative pleasure only, the pleasure of heavenly Equanimity.

Higher than these are the 8 spheres of calm meditation upon the Abandonment of all joy + pleasure, (Riki-raku-Shoryo). They are called the Cloudless, Holiness Manifest, Vast Results, Empty of Name, Void of Heat, Fair-appearing, Vision-Perfecting, + the Limit of Form. Herein pleasure + pain, Name + Form, pass utterly away – But their remain ideas + thoughts.

He who can pass through these supersensual realms enters at once into the Mushiki-kai the spheres of Formlessness –

These are four. In the first state all sense of individuality is lost; even the thought of name + form becomes extinct, and there survives only the idea of Infinite Space, or Emptiness. In the second state this idea of space vanishes, + its place is filled by the Idea of Infinite Reason. But this idea of reason is anthropomorphic, it is an illusion + it
fades out in the third state, which is called the 'State-of-Nothing-to-take-hold-of' or Mu-sho-in-Sho-jo. Here is only the Idea of Infinite Nothingness. But even this condition has been reached by the aid of the personal mind. This action ceases; then the fourth state of Mushiki kai is reached, - the Hiso-hihiso-sho-, or the state of 'neither-namelessness-nor-namelessness.' Something of personal mentality continues to float vaguely here – the very uttermost expiring vibration of karma, - the last vanishing cage of being. It melts; + the immeasurable revelation comes. The dreaming Buddha, freed from the last ghostly bond of Self, rises at once into the 'infinite bliss' of Nirvana.

But every being does not pass there: all the states above enumerated the power to rise swiftly or slowly, it depends on the acquisition of merit + the character of the karma to be overcome - some pass to Nirvana immediately after the present life; some after a single new birth; some after two or three births; while many rise directly from this world into one of the supersensuous Heavens – All such are called Cho - the Corpus of the whom the highest class reach Nirvana after death as man or women –
Planes contd. (11)

There are two great divisions of Cho – the Fu-kwan, or never-returning ones, + the kwan, Returning ones, or revenants.

The first men at the origin of the world, were beings who had fallen from Kwo-on-Ten, or Heavens of Sonorous Light.

Three stages of attainment –

All beings who attain the highest enlightenment, acquire certain faculties such as:

1) Shin-Kyo-Tsu – the power of passing any whether through any obstacles, - through solid walls, -
2) Tengen-Tsu – the power of infinite vision –
3) Tenni-Tsu, the power of infinite hearing:
4) Tashin-Tsu – the power of knowing the thoughts of all other beings: -
5) Shuku-ju-Tsu – the power of remembering former births
6) Rojin Tsu – infinite wisdom with the power of entering at will into Nirvana –

Three degrees: -

Knows Shomon – may exert powers certain over two thousand worlds.
Faculties Engaku or Bosatsu
Knows All former
Births
(They are not capable of any serious error) all past powers of Buddahood extend future over the total cosmos.

The Supernatural Powers must never be used for personal pleasure, but only for the highest beneficence, - the propagating of doctrine, the saving of men.

Nirvana is no cessation, but an emancipation. It means only the passing of conditioned being into unconditioned being; - the fading of all mental + physical phantoms into the light of Formless Omnipotence + Omniscience.

The Budhist doctrine of impermanency is the doctrine also of modern science – Huxley wrote, „Natural knowledge tends more + more to the conclusion that all the ‘choir of heaven + furniture of the earth’ are the transitory forms of parcels of cosmic substance wending along the road of evolution from nebulous potentiality, - thus; endless growths of sun + planet + satellite, - thus: all varieties of matter, - thus; modes of being of which we neither have a conception nor are competent to form any, - back to the indefinable latency from which they arose. Thus the most obvious attribute of the cosmos is its impermanency. (Evolution + Ethics)