

Let me quote its rules of conduct :

"In him who has intercourse with others affections arise, and then the pain which follows affection ; considering the misery that originates in affection, let one wander alone, like a rhinoceros."

"He who has compassion on his friends and confidential companions loses his own advantage, having a fettered mind ; seeing this danger in friendship, let one wander alone, like a rhinoceros."

The active form of pure individualism is more familiar in western civilization. Here the individual is not satisfied to retire, to leave the world and "wander alone, like a rhinoceros," allowing others to do as they please about it. He wishes to be entirely unhampered ; so he desires to destroy every power that seems to limit him in any way. "Down with all forms of control, away with all government !" is his motto. This is the doctrine of the nihilist.

Directly opposed to the nihilist, we find, in the same country in which they are most numerous, the opposite extreme of autocratic despotism, and this juxtaposition is not a matter of accident, for nihilism is just a violent reaction against the other extreme.

Despotism says, "All power to the government ; let every one be completely dependent upon it." Nihilism says, "No right of power belongs to any government ; each individual should be absolutely independent, unhampered, and uncontrolled."

Despotism may have two forms: Tyranny, where the governing power seeks its own wishes, without any regard for the governed. And paternalism, which is just as autocratic, but wishes to treat the governed in a way that is conceived to be for their good ; not, however, because the governed wish this action, but because the governing power wishes it.

We may find many examples of organizations framed on the despotic (tyrannical or paternal) model. The theory of the divine right of kings in English history was an attempt to give a religious support to this plan of organization. Every army is organized on this model. The general issues the commands, the officers pass it down, the private soldier must act accordingly.

"Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do or die."