

## Extensive Record of Pai-Chang

*(Translated by Thomas Cleary, from Sayings and Doings of Pai-Chang, p 29-82)*

[p29] In language you must distinguish the esoteric and the exoteric; you must distinguish generalizing and particularizing language, and you must distinguish the language of the complete teaching and the incomplete teaching.

The complete teaching discusses purity; the incomplete teaching discusses impurity. Explaining the defilement in impure things is to weed out the profane; explaining the defilement in pure things is to weed out the holy.

Before the nine-part teaching had been expounded, living beings had no eyes; it was necessary to depend on someone to refine them. If you are speaking to a deaf worldling, you should just teach him to leave home, maintain discipline, practice meditation and develop wisdom. You should not speak this way to a worldling beyond measure, someone like Vimalakirti or the great hero Fu.

[p30] If one is speaking to an ascetic, the ascetic has already given his assent three times and his discipline is complete. This is the power of discipline, concentration, and wisdom. To still speak in this way to him is called speaking at the wrong time, because the speech is not appropriate to the situation; it is also called suggestive talk. To an ascetic one must explain the defilement in pure things - you should tell him to detach from all things, existence, non-existent, or whatever, to detach from all cultivation and experience, and even to detach from detachment. While in the course of asceticism, one strips away influences of habit. If an ascetic cannot get rid of the diseases of greed and aversion, he too is called a deaf worldling; still he must be taught to practice meditation and cultivate wisdom.

As for monks of the two vehicles, they have put an end to the disease of greed and aversion, removing them completely; they dwell in the absence of greed and consider that correct. This is the formless realm, this is obstructing Buddha's light, this is shedding Buddha's blood. You must teach them also to practice meditation and develop wisdom.

You must distinguish the terms of purity and impurity. "Impure things" have many names, such as greed, aversion, grasping love, etc. "Pure things" also have many names, such as enlightenment, extinction of suffering, liberation, etc. But while in the midst of the twin streams of purity and impurity, among such standards as profane and holy, amidst form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and phenomena, things of the world or things which transcend the world, the immediate mirror-like awareness should not have the slightest hair of grasping love for anything at all.

If one no longer loves or grasps, and yet abides in not loving or grasping and considers it correct, this is the elementary good; this is abiding in the subdued mind. This is a disciple; he is one who is fond of the raft and will [p31] not give it up. This is the way of the two vehicles. This is a result of meditation.

Once you do not grasp any more, and yet do not dwell in nonattachment either, this is the intermediate good. This is the half-word teaching. This is still the formless realm; though you avoid falling into the way of the two vehicles, and avoid falling into the ways of demons, this is still a meditation sickness. This is the bondage of bodhisattvas.

Once you no longer dwell in nonattachment, and do not even make an understanding of not dwelling either, this is the final good; this is the full-word teaching. You avoid falling into the formless realm, avoid falling into meditation sickness, avoid falling into the way of bodhisattvas, and avoid falling into the state of the king of demons.

Because of barriers of knowledge, barriers of station, and barriers of activity (practice), seeing one's own enlightened nature is like seeing color at night. As it is said, the station of Buddhahood cuts off twofold folly; the folly of subtle knowledge and the folly of extremely subtle knowledge. Therefore it is said that a man of great wisdom smashes and atom to produce a volume of scripture.

If one can pass through these three phases, one will not be constrained by the three stages. The doctrinal schools cite this and liken it to a deer leaping three times and getting out of the net. This is called an enlightened one beyond confinement - no thing can capture or bind him. He is one of the Buddhas succeeding to the Burning Lamp. This is the supreme vehicle, the highest knowledge - this is standing on the way of enlightenment. This person is Buddha, and has the enlightened nature; he is a guide, able to employ the unobstructed wind. This is unimpeded illumination.

After this, one will be able to freely use cause and effect, virtue and knowledge; this is making a cart to [p32] carry cause and effect. In life one is not stayed by life; in death, one is not obstructed by death. Though within the clusters of matter, sensation, perception, coordination, and consciousness, it is as if a door had opened, and one is not obstructed by these five cluster. One is free to go or to stay, going out or entering in without difficulty. If you can be like this, there is no question of stages or steps, or superior or inferior; even down to the bodies of ants - if you can just be like this - all is the land of pure marvel. It is inconceivable.

This is still talk to untie bonds - "They themselves are whole; don't wound them!" (Even) 'Buddha,' 'bodhisattva,' and such are wounds - as long as you speak of anything existent, nonexistent, or whatever, all these are wounds. 'Existence' and 'nonexistence' refer to all things. (Even) those of the tenth stage are (still) beings of the river of impure streams; they create a teaching of a pure stream, and establish characteristics of purity, explaining the afflictions of impurity.

In the past, the ten great disciples (of Shakyamuni Buddha) - Shariputra, Purnamaitrayaniputra, Ananda of true faith, Sunakshatra of false faith, and the rest - each had his individual aspect, each had his individual characteristic condition. One by one they had their errors thoroughly explained away by the Guide. In the four stages of meditation and eight absorptions, even saints and such dwell in absorption for as long as eighty thousand eons - they depend upon and cling to what they practice, intoxicated by the wine of pure things. Therefore people who are disciples, though they hear the teaching of the enlightened one, are not able to conceive the spirit of the unexcelled Way. That is why people who cut off the roots of goodness have no enlightened nature. A scripture says this is called the deep pit of liberation, a fearsome place - if for one instance the mind retreats, it falls into hell as fast as an arrow shot.

[p33] Yet one cannot talk only in terms of retreating or of not retreating. Consider the likes of Manjusri, Avalokitesvara, and Mahasthamaprapta; they come back to the stage of entering the stream (of the way to enlightenment), mingling with various kinds of beings to lead them. You cannot say that they retreat or regress; at such a time they are just called people who have entered the stream. If the immediate mirror awareness is just not concerned by anything at all, existent or nonexistent, and can pass through the three stages as well as through all things, pleasant or unpleasant, then even if one hears of a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, or a hundred million Buddhas appearing in the world, it is just as if one had not heard; yet one does not dwell in not hearing either, nor does one make an understanding of not dwelling. You cannot say that this person retreats - measurements and calculations do not apply to such a one. This is "the Buddha always abiding in the world without being habituated to things of the world."

To say that the Buddha turns the wheel of the teaching and retreats (thereafter) is to slander the enlightened one, his teaching and community. To say that the Buddha does not turn the wheel of teaching and does not retreat is also to slander the enlightened one, the teaching and community. Seng-chao said, "The way of enlightenment cannot be measured or calculated - it is so high that there is nothing above it, so vast that it cannot be limited, so profound that it is bottomless, so deep that it cannot be fathomed. Speaking of it is like setting up a target mound inviting an arrow."

To speak of the mirror awareness is still not really right; by way of the impure, discern the pure. If you say the immediate mirror awareness is correct, or that there is something else beyond the

mirror awareness, this is a delusion. If you keep dwelling in the immediate mirror awareness, this too is the same as delusion; it is called the mistake of naturalism.

[p34] To say the present mirror awareness is one's own Buddha is words of measurement, words of calculation - it is like the crying of a jackal. This is still being stuck as in glue at the gate. Originally you did not acknowledge that innate knowing and awareness are your own Buddha, and went running elsewhere to seek Buddha. So you needed a teacher to tell you about innate knowing and awareness as a medicine to cure this disease of hastily seeking outside. Once you no longer seek outwardly, the disease is cured and it is necessary to remove the medicine. If you cling fixedly to innate knowing awareness, this is a disease of meditation. Such is a thoroughgoing disciple; like water turned to ice, all the ice is water, but it can hardly be expected to quench thirst.

He also said,

With a fatal disease, ordinary physicians fold their arms, unable to do anything. There has never been such a thing as 'Buddha' - do not understand it as Buddha. 'Buddha' is a medicine for sentient beings. Without disease, one shouldn't take medicine. When medicine and disease are both dissolved, it is like pure water; Buddhahood is like a sweet herb mingling with the water, or like honey mixed with the water - it is most sweet and delicious. (But) if you judge from the standpoint of the pure water, it is not affected; it is not that it doesn't exist - it is originally there.

He also said,

This principle is originally present in everyone. All the Buddhas and bodhisattvas may be called people pointing out a jewel. Fundamentally it is not a thing - you don't need to know or understand it, you don't need to affirm or deny it. Just cut off dualism; cut off the supposition "it exists" and the supposition "it does not exist." Cut off the supposition "it is nonexistent" and the supposition "it is [p35] not nonexistent." When traces do not appear on either side, then neither lack nor sufficiency, neither profane nor holy, not light or dark. This is not having knowledge, yet not lacking knowledge, not bondage, not liberation. It is not any name or category at all. Why is this not true speech? How can you carve and polish emptiness to make an image of Buddha? How can you say that emptiness is blue, yellow, red, or white?

As it is said, "Reality has no comparison, because there is nothing to which it may be likened; the body or reality is not constructed and does not fall within the scope of any classification."

That is why it is said, "The substance of the sage is nameless and cannot be spoken of; the empty door of truth as it really is cannot be tarried in." It is like the case of insects being able to alight anywhere, only they can't alight on the flames of a fire - sentient beings' minds are also like this in that they can form relations anywhere, only they cannot relate to transcendent wisdom.

When you call on teachers and seek some knowledge or understanding, this is the demon of teachers, because it gives rise to verbalization and opinion. If you rouse the four universal vows, promising to rescue all living beings, only thereafter to finally attain Buddhahood yourself, this is the demon of the knowledge of the way of the warrior for enlightenment, because the vow is never given up. If you fast and control yourself, practice meditation and cultivate wisdom, these are afflicted roots of goodness. Even if you sit on the site of enlightenment and manifest attainment of complete perfect awakening, and rescue innumerable people so that they all experience individual enlightenment, this is the demon of roots of goodness, since it arouses greedy attachment. If in the midst of all things you are utterly without any defilement by greed, so your aware essence exists alone, dwelling in exceedingly deep absorption, without ever rising or progressing anymore, this is the demon of concentration, because you'll be [p36] forever addicted to enjoying it, until ultimate extinction, detached from desire, quiescent and still. This is still demon work. If your wisdom cannot shed so many demon nets, then even if you can

understand a hundred books of knowledge, all of it is in the dregs of hell. If you seek to be like Buddha, there is no way for you to be so.

Now that you hear me say not to be attached to anything, whether good, bad, existent, nonexistent, or whatever, you immediately take that to be falling into emptiness. You don't know that to abandon the root and pursue the branches is to fall into emptiness; to seek Buddhahood, to seek enlightenment or anything at all, whether it may exist or not, this is abandoning the root and pursuing the branches.

For now, eat simple food to sustain life, patch rags to keep of the cold, when thirsty scoop up water to drink - beyond this, if one just harbors no thought at all of concern with anything at all, existent, nonexistent, or otherwise, this person will in time have his share of ease and clarity.

A good teacher does not cling to existence or nonexistence; he has abandoned the ten expressions of demon talk, and when he speaks forth he does not entangle or bind others.

Whatever he says, he does not call it a teacher's explanation; like a valley echo, "his words fill the land without fault." He is worthy of trust and association.

If one should say, "I am capable of explaining, I am able to understand - I am the teacher, you are the disciple," this is the same as demon talk and is to speak of the Way pointlessly. Once you have actually seen the existence of the Way, (to say,) "This is Buddha, this is not Buddha, this is enlightenment, this is extinction, liberation," and so forth, tis to pointlessly express partial knowledge, or lift a finger and say, "This is Ch'an! This is the path!" Such words entangle and bind others without end - this only increases the ties of mendicants. And even without speaking [p37] there is still fault of mouth. Rather be master of mind; don't be mastered by mind.

In the incomplete teaching there is a teacher of humans and gods (Buddha), there is a guide; in the complete teaching, he is not "teacher of humans and gods" and doesn't make doctrine the master. If you are not yet able to resort to the mystic mirror, then for the time being, if you can resort to the complete teaching you will still have some share of familiarity with it. As for the incomplete teaching, it is only fitting to speak of it to deaf worldlings.

For now, just do not depend on anything existent, nonexistent, or whatever; and do not dwell in nondependence, and also do not make an understanding of not depending or dwelling. This is called great knowledge.

He also said,

Only a Buddha alone is a great teacher, because there is no second person; the rest are all called outsiders, also called demons talking. Right now this is just to explain away dualism. Just do not be affected by greed for any existent or nonexistent things - when it comes to the matter of untying bonds, there are not special words or phrases to teach people. If you say that there are some particular verbal expressions to teach people, or that there is some particular doctrine to give people, this is called heresy and demon talk.

You must discern the words of the complete teaching and the incomplete teaching; you must discern prohibitive words and nonprohibitive words; you must discern living and dead words; you must discern medicine and disease words; you must discern words of negative and positive metaphor; you must discern generalizing and particularizing words.

To say that it is possible to attain Buddhahood by cultivation, that there is practice and there is realization, that this mind is enlightened, that the mind itself is identical to [p38] Buddha - this is Buddha's teaching; these are words of the incomplete teaching. These are nonprohibitive words, generalizing words, words of a pound or ounce burden. These are words concerned with weeding out impure things; these are words of positive metaphor. These are dead words. These are words for ordinary people.

To say that one cannot attain Buddhahood by cultivation, that there is no cultivation, no realization, it is not mind, not Buddha - this is also Buddha's teaching; these are words of the complete teaching, prohibitive words, particularizing words, words of a hundred hundredweight burden. These are words beyond the three vehicles' teachings, words of negative metaphor or

instruction, words concerned with weeding out pure things; these are words for someone of station in the Way, these are living words.

From entering the stream all the way up to the tenth and highest stage of bodhisattvahood, as long as there are verbal formulations, all belong to the defilement of the dust of the teachings. As long as there are verbal formulations, all are contained in the realm of affliction and trouble. As long as there are verbal formulations, all belong to the incomplete teaching.

The complete teaching is obeisance, the incomplete teaching is transgression - at the stage of Buddhahood there is neither obedience nor transgression, as neither the complete nor the incomplete teachings are admissible.

From the sprouts discern the ground, from the impure discern the pure. Just be aware, mirrorlike, right now; if you assess the mirror awareness from the standpoint of purity, it is not pure, but absence of mirroring awareness is not pure either, neither it is impure. Nor is it holy or not holy. Also it is not seeing the impurity of the water and speaking of the ills of the water's impurity. If the water were pure, nothing could be said; speech instead would defile that water. If there is a questionless question, there is also speechless [p39] speech. A Buddha does not explain the truth for the sake of Buddhas; in the equanimous, truly-so world of reality there is no Buddha - it doesn't save living beings. A Buddha does not remain in Buddhahood; this is called the real field of blessings.

You must distinguish host and guest words. If you are affected by greed for any existent or nonexistent objects, you are confused and disturbed by all existent or nonexistent objects. Your own mind then becomes the king of demons and its shining function belongs to the masses of deluding demons. If your present mirror awareness just does not dwell on anything, whatever may exist or not, mundane or transcendent, and also does not make an understanding of nondwelling, and also does not dwell in the absence of understanding, then your own mind is enlightened, Buddha, and its shining function belongs to the bodhisattvas - master of all mental conditions, its shining function is in the realm of passing phenomena. It is like waves telling of water; it illumines myriad forms without effort. If you can shine quiescently, then you will penetrate not only the hidden essence, but naturally past and present as well. As it is said, "When the spirit has no power to shine, the ultimate power always remains, able to be a guide in all places."

The natural consciousness of sentient beings is of sticky and viscous nature because they have not yet tread the steps to enlightenment; for a long time they have stuck fast to various existent and nonexistent things. While they are partaking of the mystic essence, they cannot use it as medicine; while hearing words beyond conception, they cannot believe completely. That is why Shakyamuni, Gautama Buddha, spent forty-nine days under the tree of enlightenment silently contemplating. Wisdom is obscure, difficult to explain; there is nothing to which it may be likened. To say that sentient beings have enlightened nature is to slander the enlightened ones, their teachings and [p40] communities; to say that sentient beings have no enlightened nature is also to slander the enlightened ones, their teachings and communities. If one says there is an enlightened nature, this is called slander by attachment, but to say there is no enlightened nature is called slander by falsehood. As it is said, to say that enlightened nature exists is slander by presumption, to say that it does not exist is slander by repudiation; to say that enlightened nature both exists and does not exist is slander by contradiction, and to say that enlightened nature is neither existent or nonexistent is slander by meaningless argument. If a Buddha would not speak, then sentient beings would have no hope of liberation; if he would speak, then sentient beings would follow his words to produce interpretations - the benefits would be few and the disadvantages would be many. Therefore Buddha said, "I would rather not explain the truth, but enter extinction right away." But afterwards he thought back upon all the Buddhas of the past, who had all taught the doctrines of three vehicles. Thereafter he made temporary use of verses to explain, and provisionally established names and terms. It is basically not Buddha, but then he said, "This is Buddha;" it is originally not enlightenment, but

he said to them, “this is enlightenment, peace, liberation,” and so forth - he knew they couldn’t bear up a hundred hundredweight burden, so for the time being he taught them the incomplete teaching. And he realized the spread of good ways, which was still better than evil ways - but when the limits of good results are fulfilled, then bad consequences arrive. Once you have “Buddha” then there are “sentient beings” there; once you have “nirvana,” then there is “birth and death” there. Once you have light, then there is darkness there. And as long as cause and effect with attachment are revolving over and over, there is nothing that does not incur a result. If you want to avoid experiencing this reversal, just cut [p41] off dualism; then measurements cannot govern you. You are neither Buddha nor sentient being, not near, not far, not high, not low, not equal, not even, not going, not coming; just do not cling to written letters which obstruct it, and neither side (of any split) can hold you. You will avoid either form of pain or pleasure, and avoid the opposition of light and dark. The true principle is that even reality is not really real, and even falsehood is not false. It is not something calculable; like empty space, it cannot be cultivated. If there occurs any intellectual fabrication in the mind, then it is governed by measurement. This is also like the divination signs, which are governed by metal, wood, water, fire, and earth, or like sticky glue, stuck in five places - the king demon can grab you and freely return home.

The words of the teachings all have three successive steps: the elementary, the intermediate, and the final good. At first it is just necessary to teach them to create a good state of mind. In the intermediate stage, they break through the good mind. The last is finally called really good - “A bodhisattva is not a bodhisattva; this is called a bodhisattva. The truth is not truth, yet is not other than truth.” Everything is like this. Yet if you teach only one stage, you will cause sentient beings to go to hell; if all three stages are taught at once, they will enter hell by themselves. This is not the business of a teacher.

Having explained as far as that the present mirror awareness is your own Buddha, this is the elementary good (“good in the beginning”). Not to keep dwelling in the immediate mirror awareness is the intermediate good (“good in the middle”). Furthermore not to make an understanding of nondwelling is the final good. As mentioned before, this is one of the Buddhas succeeding to the Burning Lamp; he is not an ordinary man nor a sage, but do not wrongly say a Buddha is neither an ordinary man nor a sage. The first patriarch in this country, Bodhidharma, [p42] said, “No ability, no sagacity - this is enlightened sagehood.” But if you say Buddha is a sage, that is also wrong. The nine classes of spirits, dragons, beasts, and such species, from the gods Indra and Brahma on down, are all capable of transmutation, and the highest spirits also know the events of a hundred eons’ time, past and present; but can they be Buddhas? Take the king of the titans for example; his body is immensely huge, comparable to two of Mount Everest, but when he did battle with Indra, king of gods, he knew his strength was not comparable, so he led his army of a million into the hole of a lotus root and hid there. His powers and abilities were not few, but he was not a Buddha.

The gradations of the language of the teachings - haughty, relaxed, rising, falling - are not the same; what is called greed and aversion when one is not yet enlightened, not yet liberated, is called enlightened wisdom after enlightenment. That is why it is said, “He is not different from the man he was before; only his course of action is different from before.”

Question: In cutting down plants, chopping wood, digging the earth and working the ground, do you think there will be any form of retribution for wrongdoing, or not?

The master said, One cannot definitely say there is wrongdoing, nor can one definitely say there is no wrongdoing. The matter of whether there is wrongdoing or not lies in the person concerned - if he is affected by greed for anything, whether it may exist or not, if he still has a grasping and rejecting mind, and has not passed through the three stages, this person can definitely be said to be doing wrong. If one passes beyond the three stages, inside the mind is empty, yet without making any conception of emptiness; this person can definitely be said to be blameless.

[p43] The master also said, If wrongdoing is committed and you say that you do not see that there is any wrongdoing, this too is not right at all. As it says in the vinaya, the fundamental illusion of killing, up to the point of the arousal aspect of killing, still does not incur the wrongdoings of murder - how much less does the mind communicated in the Ch'an school incur any blame, being like in empty space, but not retaining a single action, yet without even an aspect of empty space - where could you attribute any wrongdoing?

He also said, The way of meditation does not require cultivation; just do not be defiled.

He also said, Just melt the outer and inner mind together completely.

He also said, Just in terms of illumining objects, right now illumine all existing, nonexistent, or other things, utterly without any greedy clinging, and do not grasp.

He also said,

You should study like this: study is like washing a dirty garment - the garment is originally there, the dirt comes from outside. Having heard it said that all existent and nonexistent sound and form are such filth, do not set your mind on any of it at all. The thirty-two marks of greatness and eighty refinements under the tree of enlightenment all belong to form, the twelve-branch teaching of the canon all belongs to sound - right now having cut off the flow of all existent and nonexistent sound and form, the mind will be like empty space. You should "study" in this way as urgently as saving your head afire; only then will you be capable of finding a road prepared already in the past upon which you can go when facing the end of your life. If you have not accomplished that yet, when you get to the moment of death and then try to compose yourself anew to start to learn, you have no hope of succeeding.

[p43] When facing the end, all are beautiful scenes appearing - according to what the mind likes, the most impressive are experienced first. If you do not do bad things right now, then at this time, facing death, there will be no unpleasant scenes. Even if there are any unpleasant scenes, they too will change into pleasant scenes. If you fear that at the moment of death you will go mad with terror and fail to attain freedom, then you should first be free right now - then you'll be all right. Right now, in respect to each and every thing, don't have any loving attachment at all, and do not abide by intellectual understanding; then you will be free.

Right now is the cause; the moment of facing death is the result. When the resultant action is already manifest, how can you fear? Fear is over past and present; since the past had a present, the present must have a past. Since there has been enlightenment in the past, there must also be enlightenment in the present. If you can attain now and forever the single moment of present awareness, and this one moment of awareness is not governed by anything at all, whether existent, nonexistent, or whatever, then from past and present Buddha is just human, humans are just Buddhas. Also this is meditational concentration - don't use concentration to enter concentration, don't use meditation to conceive of meditation, don't use Buddha to search for Buddhahood. As it is said, "Reality does not seek reality, reality does not obtain reality, reality does not practice reality, reality does not see reality, but finds its way naturally." It is not attained by attainment; that is why bodhisattvas should thus be properly mindful, subsisting alone in the midst of things, composed, yet without knowledge of the fact of subsisting alone. The nature of wisdom is such as it is of itself; it is not disposed by causes. It is also called the knot of substance, also the cluster of substance. It is not known by knowledge, not discerned by consciousness - it is entirely beyond mental calculation. [p45] Frozen and silent, the body exhausted, thought and judgement are forever gone - like the flow of the ocean having ended, waves do not rise again.

He also said,

Like the water of the ocean, without wind there are waves all around. Suddenly knowing of the waves all around being the gross with the subtle, letting go of knowledge in the midst of knowing is like the subtle within the subtle. This is the sphere of the enlightened ones, whence you really

come to know; this is called the pinnacle of meditation, the king of meditation. It is also called knowledge of what is knowable, and produces all the various meditational states and anoints the foreheads of all princes of Dharma. In all fields of form, sound, fragrance, flavor, feeling and phenomena, you realize complete, perfect enlightenment. Inside and outside are in complete communion, without any obstruction whatsoever.

One form, one atom, one Buddha, one form, all Buddhas, all forms, all atoms, all Buddhas - all forms, sounds, smells, feelings and phenomena are also like this, each filling all fields. This is the gross within the subtle, this is a good realm. This is the knowledge, discernment, seeing and hearing of all those in progress; this is all those in progress going out in life and entering death, crossing over everything existent, nonexistent, whatever. This is what those in progress speak of, this is the nirvana of those in progress. This is the unexcelled Way, this is the spell which is peer to the peerless.

This is the foremost teaching, and is considered the most exceedingly profound of all teachings; no human being can reach it, but all enlightened ones keep it in meditation, like pure waves able to speak of the purity and defilement of all waters, their deep flow and expansive function. All enlightened ones keep this in mind - if you can be like this all the time, walking, standing, sitting or [p46] lying down, then will be revealed to you the body of pure clear light.

He also said,

As you are inherently equal, your words are equal, and I am also the same - a Buddha field of sound, a Buddha field of smell, a Buddha field of taste, a Buddha field of feeling, a Buddha field of phenomena - all are this. From here all the way to the world of the lotus treasury, up and across all is thus, If you hold onto the elementary knowledge as your understanding, this is called bondage at the pinnacle. This is the basis of all mundane troubles - giving rise to knowledge and opinion on your own, you "bind yourself without rope."

In terms of objects of knowledge, there are twenty-five states of existence which bind the worlds; scattered through the avenues of afflictions, you become entangled in them. This is elementary knowledge; the two vehicles see this and call it knowledge of what can be known, and they also call it subtle affliction; so they cut it off, and when it has been removed completely, this is called "returning the aware essence to the empty cave." It is also called intoxication by the wine of trance, and it is called the delusion of liberation. The world which is bound becomes and decays, but that which the power of concentration holds will leak out to another land, totally unawares. This is also called the deep pit of liberation, a place to be feared; bodhisattvas all stay far away from it.

In reading scriptures and studying the doctrines, you should turn all words right around and apply them to yourself. But all verbal teachings only point to the inherent nature of the present mirror awareness - as long as this is not affected by any existent or nonexistent objects at all, it is your guide; it can shine through all various existent and nonexistent realms. This is adamant wisdom, where [p47] you have your share of freedom and independence. If you cannot understand in this way, then even if you could recite the whole canon and all its branches of knowledge, it would only make you conceited, and conversely shows contempt for Buddha - it is not true practice.

Just detach from all sound and form, and do not dwell in detachment, and do not dwell in intellectual understanding - this is practice. As for reading scriptures and studying the doctrines, according to worldly convention it is a good thing, but if assessed from the standpoint of one who is aware of the inner truth, this (reading and study) chokes people up. Even people of the tenth stage cannot escape completely, and flow into the river of birth and death.

But the teachings of the three vehicles all cure diseases such as greed and hatred. Right now, thought after thought, if you have such sicknesses as greed or hatred, you should first cure them - don't seek intellectual understanding of meanings and expressions. Understanding is in the province of desire, and desire turns into disease. Right now just detach from all things, existent



or nonexistent, and even detach from detachment. Having passed beyond these three phases, you will naturally be no different from a Buddha. Since you yourself are Buddha, why worry that the Buddha will not know how to talk. Just beware of not being Buddha.

As long as you are bound by various existent or nonexistent things, you can't be free. This is because before the inner truth is firmly established, you first have virtue and knowledge; you are ridden by virtue and knowledge, like the menial employing the noble. It is not as good as first settling the inner truth and then afterwards having virtue and knowledge - then if you need virtue and knowledge, as the occasion appears you will be able to take gold and make it into earth, take earth and make it into gold, change sea water into buttermilk, smash Mount [p48] Everest into fine dust, and pick up the waters of the four great oceans and put them into a single hair pore. Within one meaning you create unlimited meanings, and within unlimited meanings you make one meaning.

He also said,

If you lose your footing and become a wheel-turning king, and have everyone in the world practice the ten virtues for one day, this virtue and knowledge still cannot compare to your own mirror awareness; this is called the opportunity of kingship. When thoughts attach to various existent or nonexistent things, it is called the wheel-turning kings. But right now, do not let any existent, nonexistent, or anything at all into your guts - go away beyond the four possibilities of logic. This is called emptiness, and emptiness is called the elixir of immortality, although we say that the elixir of immortality is taken along with the king, yet they are not two things, nor are they one thing. If you make interpretations of one or two, you are also called a wheel-turning king. But right now suppose here is someone with virtue and knowledge who offered the necessities of life to all kinds of beings in four hundred trillion infinities of worlds, satisfying them according to their desires for eighty years; then he forms this thought: "Since these sentient beings are already deteriorating with age, I should teach them and guide them in the way to enlightenment, let them attain to the realization of entering the stream of the Way, on to the path of sainthood." Such a donor, just in giving sentient beings all means of comfort, already has immeasurable merit - how much the more if he cause them to attain the fruit of entering the stream, on to the path of sainthood; this merit is immeasurable, boundless, yet it is not comparable to the merit of the "fiftieth person hearing the scripture and rejoicing in accord."

[p49] The Scripture on Requiting Debt says, "Lady Maya gave birth to five hundred princes, who all attained self-enlightenment, and all became extinct - for each she set up a monument, made offerings, and bowed to them one by one. Sighing, she said, 'This is not as good as to have given birth to a single child who would have realized unexcelled enlightenment and saved me mental energy.'"

Right now, if there is one who attains, his worth is equal to a universe. That is why I always urge everyone to unlock the depths of inherent reality; if the truth within you is profound, you can use virtue and knowledge like a noble employing menials. It is also like a cart which does not stop. If you hold this as your understanding, this is called the jewel in the topknot; it is also called a jewel which has a price, and it is also called carrying excrement. If you do not hold to this as your understanding, this is like the king giving away the bright jewel in his topknot; it is also called a great priceless jewel, and it is also called getting rid of excrement.

A Buddha is just someone outside of bondage who comes back inside of bondage to be a Buddha in this way; he is someone beyond birth and death, just someone on the other side of mystic annihilation, but comes back to this shore to act thus as a Buddha. Neither humans nor apes can practice this. "Human" symbolizes the bodhisattvas of the highest, tenth stage; "ape" symbolizes ordinary people.

Reading the scriptures, studying the teachings, seeking all knowledge and understanding are not to be completely forbidden, but even if you can understand the teachings of the three

vehicles, skillfully obtain pearl necklaces of adornment and get the cave of the thirty-two marks of greatness, if you seek Buddhahood you won't find it.

The teachings say that even those students who greedily cling to the canon of the lesser vehicle should not be [p50] approached, let alone self-accredited immoral monks and nominal saints. In the Scripture of the Great Decease they are categorized among the sixteen wrong modes of behavior, the same as hunters and fisherfolk who purposely kill for profit.

The universally equal branch of the great vehicle teachings is like ambrosia; it is also like poison - if you can digest it, it is like ambrosia, but if you can't digest it, it is like poison. In reading scriptures and studying the teachings, if you do not understand their living and dead words, you will certainly not penetrate the meanings and expressions therein. Then in that case, not to read is best.

He also said,

You should study the teachings, and you should also call on good teachers; foremost of all, you must have eyes yourself. You must discriminate those living and dead words before you can understand (scriptures and teachers); if you cannot discern clearly, you will certainly not penetrate them - this just adds to monks' bonds. That is why in teaching them to study the mystic essence, people are not made to read written letters. As it is said, speak of substance, do not speak of form; speak of meaning, not of wording - speaking like this is called true speech. If you talk about the written letters, all of this is slander; this is called false speech. If bodhisattvas speak, they should speak according to the truth; this is also called true speech; they should make sentient beings hold to the heart, not hold to things, hold to practice, not hold to doctrine, speak of the person, not speak of the letter, speak of cultivation, not of literary embellishment.

"There is no meditation in the realm of desire" are also words of someone with one eye. Once it is said that there is no meditation in the realm of desire, how could one reach the realm of form? First, on the causal ground one cultivates two kinds of mental focus, after which one is able to [p51] reach the first meditation - focus with mental images and focus without mental images. Focus with mental images produces the realm of forms and such heavenly states as the four meditation heavens. Focus without mental images produces the formless realm and such heavenly states as the four empty realms. In the realm of desire clearly there is no meditation (ch'an); meditation begins in the realm of form.

Question: How is it that now they say there is meditation (ch'an) in this land?

The master said,

Unmoved, not meditating, this is the meditation of those who come to realize thusness; it has nothing to do with producing meditational perceptions.

Question: How is it that "sentient beings have no enlightened nature, but insentient beings have enlightened nature"?

The master said,

From humanity to Buddhahood is the grasping of holy sentiments; from humanity to hell is the grasping of ordinary sentiments. Right now as long as you have any mind of attached love in either realm, holy or ordinary, this is what is called sentient beings without enlightened nature. Right now if you have no grasping or rejecting mind for either realm, holy or ordinary, or for anything existent or nonexistent, and you have no awareness of not grasping or rejecting, this is called insentient being having enlightened nature. It's just that there are no emotional bonds, that's why it's called "insentient" - it's not the same as the insentience of wood or stone or space, of yellow flowers or green bamboo or considering these to possess enlightened nature. If you say that they have it, why do we not read in the scriptures of any one of them that received a [p52] prophecy and attained Buddhahood? But the present mirror awareness, as long as it is not

changed by having feelings, may be likened to green bamboo which never fails to conform with the situation; never failing to be aware of the time, it is likened to yellow flowers.

He also said,

If they tread the steps to Buddhahood, the insentient have enlightened nature; as long as they have not tread the steps to Buddhahood the sentient have no enlightened nature.

Question: How is it that the Buddha who was Victorious by Great Superknowledge sat on the site of enlightenment for ten aeons, but the attributes of Buddhahood did not become manifest in him and he could not fulfill the way of enlightenment?

The master said,

“Aeon” means lingering, and it also means dwelling - dwelling in one virtue, lingering in ten virtues. What is called Buddha in India is called enlightened here. When their own mirror awareness lingers attached to goodness, those with faculties for goodness have no enlightened nature - that is why it is said that the attribute of Buddhahood didn’t appear and he would not fulfill the way of enlightenment.

To dwell on evil when encountering evil is called the enlightenment of sentient beings; to dwell on goodness when encountering goodness is called the enlightenment of Buddhist disciples. Not dwelling on either side, good or bad, yet not making nondwelling and understanding, is called the enlightenment of bodhisattvas. Only neither dwelling nor making an understanding of nondwelling can finally be called the enlightenment of the Buddhas. As it is said, a Buddha does not dwell in Buddhahood; this is the real field of blessings.

[p53] If there is one in a million who attains this, he is called a priceless jewel, able to be a guide in all places - where there is no Buddha, he says, “This is Buddha,” where there is no truth he says, “This is the true teaching,” and where there is no community he says, “This is the community.” This is called turning the great wheel of Dharma.

Question: Since high antiquity the ancestral schools have all had esoteric sayings handed down successor to successor; what about it?

The master said,

There are no secret sayings; those who come to realize thusness do not have a secret treasure. In the present mirror awareness, speech is distinctly clear; but if you seek formal characteristics, ultimately they cannot be found. This is an “esoteric saying,”

From the stage of entering the stream up to the tenth stage of bodhisattvahood, as long as there are verbal formulations, all belong to the defilement of doctrine; as long as there are verbal formulations, all are contained within the realm of affliction; as long as there are verbal formulations, all belong to the incomplete teaching. As long as there are verbal formulations, all are impermissible. Even the complete teaching is wrong - what further esoteric saying do you seek?

Question: What is the meaning of the saying in the Surangama Scripture, “Space is born within great awareness, like a bubble from the ocean”?

The master said,

Space is symbolized by the bubble; the ocean is likened to nature. The nature of inherent, radiant awareness is greater than empty space, and therefore it is said that space is born within great awareness like a bubble from the ocean.

[p54] Question: What does it mean that one should “chop down the forest, not chop down the tree?”

The master said,

The forest symbolizes mind; the tree symbolizes body. Because of talk about the forest, fear is aroused; therefore it is said, "Chop down the forest, don't chop down the tree."

Question: Seng-chao said that "words are like a target mound inviting an arrow" - since talk is like a target, it is impossible to avoid injury. Since the trouble involved is the same, how can the adept and the naive be distinguished?

The master said,

Just shoot back an arrow to stop the other on the way; if they (the arrows) miss each other, there is bound to be some injury sustained. If you seem echoes in a valley, they are forever formless; the echo is in the mouth, gain and loss is in the coming question. If you then ask what it goes back to, instead you get hit by an arrow. It's also like, "If you know the illusion, it's not illusion." The third patriarch of Ch'an said, "If you don't know the hidden essence, you'll uselessly work at concentrating on stillness."

If you recognize things and consider that seeing, this is like holding tiles and pebbles; what do you want to hold on to them for? If you say you don't see, then how are you different from wood or stone? That is why seeing and not seeing both have their fault. I have quoted an example of that.

Question: How is it that "there are originally no afflictions, nor the thirty-two marks of greatness"?

The master said,

This is a matter pertaining to Buddhahood. Originally there were afflictions, now there are the thirty-two marks of greatness; the ordinary state of mind at present is what these are.

[p55] How is it that a bodhisattva with a boundless body does not see the mark on the Buddha's forehead?

The master said,

Because he entertains views of bounds and boundlessness, therefore he does not see the mark on Buddha's forehead. Right now if you have no views such as of existence, and also have no views of nothingness, this is called the appearance of the mark on the forehead.

Question: Nowadays monks all say, "We follow the Buddhist teaching, and study a scripture, a treatise, a meditation, a rule, a knowledge, an understanding - we should receive the offerings of the four necessities of life from patrons." Do you think they can digest the offerings?

The master said,

Just going by the present shining function, in each sound, form, fragrance and taste, in the midst of all various existent and nonexistent things, in every realm, if one has not the slightest spot of grasping indulgence, and yet does not abide in nongrasping, and does not even have any understanding of nonabiding, this person can eat ten thousand ounces of gold's worth and still be able to digest it.

But right now as you shine on all things existent, nonexistent, etc., even if you cut off accretions in the gates of the senses, if there is the slightest hair of greedy love remaining unconquered, then if you beg even a single grain of rice or a single thread of cloth from a patron, for each you will wear fur and horns, pull plows and bear burdens; one by one you must repay him before you can say you don't depend on Buddha.

A Buddha is someone with no attachments, someone with no seeking, someone without resort - now if you longingly search for Buddha here and there, then you have totally turned away from him. Therefore it is said, "Though long having been closely associated with Buddha, [p56] they do not know the enlightened nature." For those who only look at the saviour of the world, to say that one sees Buddha only after evolving in the six dispositions for a long time is in order to explain that a Buddha is hard to meet. Manjusri is the ancestral teacher of the seven Buddhas of antiquity.

Manjusri is the principal, leading bodhisattva of this world, yet because he pointlessly created the idea of seeing Buddha and the idea of hearing the Dharma, he was overcome by the Buddha's inconceivable power and cast down between the two iron enclosing mountains. It is not that he does not know how to specially act as a standard for students; he is commanding all students of later times not to create such seeing and hearing. Just have no doctrines of existence, nonexistence, etc., no views of existence, nonexistence, etc. - one by one pass through and beyond the three states. This is called the wish-fulfilling jewel; this is called jewel flowers supporting your feet.

If you create a view of Buddha or a view of Dharma, or views of anything at all, existent, nonexistent, or whatever, these are called the (illusory) visions of the eye-diseased; because of what is seen, they are also called the enclosure of views, the lid of views, and also the affliction of views.

Right now, in moment after moment of awareness, if all seeing, hearing, discerning and knowing, and all defiling dusts of afflictions and passions are thoroughly cleared away, then even be it one atom, one form, always it is one Buddha; even one moment of thought is always the past, present, and future five clusters of life elements of one Buddha. Thought after thought - who knows how many - this is what is called Buddhas filling empty space; this is called the Buddha dividing his body; this is called the previous shrine appearing.

Therefore I always sadly say that, as we see the life we depend on today, it depends on a grain of rice, a blade of [p57] vegetable to eat - if we do not get food from time to time we starve, if we do not get water we die of thirst, and if we do not have fire we freeze to death. If we lack for one day we don't live, yet if we lack for one day we don't die either - we are in the grip of the gross elements. This is not as good as our predecessors, who entered fire without being burnt, entered water without drowning; yet if they wanted to burn, they burnt, and if they wanted to drown, they drowned. When they wanted to live, they lived, and when they wanted to die they died - they were free to go or stay. Such people have their share of freedom; if the mind is not disturbed, there is no need to seek Buddha, to seek enlightenment or extinction from suffering. If you seek with attachment to Buddha, you are in the province of greed, and greed turns into disease.

Therefore it is said, "The Buddha disease is most difficult to cure; only by slandering the Buddha and reviling the Dharma can you take food." "Food" means your own purely aware essence - the meal of non-indulgence, the food of liberation; these words cure the illness of the bodhisattvas of the tenth stage. From the first to the tenth stage of bodhisattvahood they are still disciples - right now as long as they have any seeking mind at all, they're all called immoral monks, nominal saints; they're all called jackals. Clearly they can't digest the offerings of others.

But right now if one hears sound as an echo, smells odor as wind, detached from all existent, nonexistent, or any things at all, and yet does not dwell in detachment, and has no understanding of not dwelling either, this person cannot be affected by any moral defilement.

For one to be called renunciant because of the search for unsurpassed enlightenment and ultimate peace is still a false aspiration - how much the more so is worldly disputation, seeking victory and defeat, saying "I am able, I understand," seeking a following, liking a disciple, being fond of a dwelling place, making a pact with a patron (for) [p58] a robe, a meal, a name, a gain; and they say, "I have attained total unimpeded freedom." They are only fooling themselves.

Right now if you are capable, within your own five clusters of mortal being, of not acting as the owner - though cut to pieces joint by joint by others, yet not having any thought of resentment or regret, and also not suffering, and so on, even when your own disciples are beaten head to foot by others - in each case of events such as these, if you do not have even a single thought giving rise to ideas of others and self, yet abide in the absence of even a single thought and consider that right, this is called defilement by the dust of the Dharma. Even people in the tenth stage of bodhisattvahood cannot get rid of this completely, and flow into the river of birth and death. This is why I always urge everyone to fear the affliction by the dust of Dharma as you would fear the states of hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals - they you will have a share of independence.

If one surpassed nirvana, if he did not arouse the slightest notion of marvel or esteem therefore, this person, step after step, would be a Buddha; he does not need for his feet to tread upon lotus flowers or to divide his body into a hundred million. But right now, if you have the slightest bit of love for anything existent or nonexistent defiling your mind, then even if your feet did tread upon lotus flowers, it would still be the same as demon's work.

If one clings to "original purity, fundamental liberation" and considers himself a Buddha, considers his own self to be Ch'an and the Way, then he belongs to the naturalist outsiders. If one clings to causality, the perfection of practice and attainment of realization, then he belongs to the outsiders who believe in causality. If you cling to existence, then you belong to outsiders with the notion of eternity; if you cling to nonexistence, you belong to outsiders with the notion of annihilation. If you cling to both existence and nonexistence, then you belong to outsiders [p59] with extreme views. If you cling to neither existence nor nonexistence, then you belong to outsiders with a notion of emptiness.

You ignorant, stupid outsiders, right now you just do not create any views of Buddha or views of nirvana; when you have no views at all of existence, nonexistence, or whatever, and yet do not lack vision, this is called true vision. To have no hearing at all, yet not to lack hearing, is called true hearing. This is called smashing down outside ways. No bedevilments of the two vehicles befall - this is the "greatest enlightening charm." None of the bedevilment of bodhisattvas befalls - this is the "unexcelled charm." None of the bedevilment of Buddhas befalls - this is the "peerless charm."

One transformation, into sentient beings from fawning, deceitful titans; second transformation, into members of the two vehicles from fawning, deceitful titans; third transformation, into bodhisattvas from fawning, deceitful titans. These are the three transformed pure lands. But all things, existent, nonexistent, ordinary, sacred, may be likened to gold ore; the self is like the veins of gold. When the gold and ore are separated, the real gold is exposed. If there is someone who is seeking money or treasure, you then turn the gold into money and give it to them. It's also like wheat flour, its substance pure, without any mineral salts; if someone wants cake, you turn the flour into cake and give it to them. It's also like a wise minister who skillfully interprets the meaning of the king - when the king is going to travel and asks for saindhava, then the minister brings a horse; at mealtime, when the king wants saindhava the minister serves salt. These all symbolize people who study the hidden essence, who are skillfully able to communicate and respond to situations faultlessly. It's also called the six absolute lions. Master Chi said, "There are a hundredfold differences in what is made, according to the person." [p60] Bodhisattvas of the tenth stage are not hungry, not satisfied; they enter water without drowning, enter fire without burning - yet if they want to burn, they cannot burn; they are governed by limitations. A Buddha is not like this - he enters fire without burning, but if he wants to burn, then he burns; if he wants to drown, he drowns. He is able to use the four elements, wind and water, freely. "All forms are the form of Buddha, all voices are the voice of Buddha"; when your own defiled, hypocritical, devious mind is exhausted completely, and you pass beyond the three states, you will be able to say such words.

The pure disciples of bodhisattvas are lucid and clear; whatever they say, they do not cling to nonexistence or existence - all their awareness and activity is not contained by either purity or impurity.

He who has disease but does not take medicine is a fool. He who has no disease but takes medicine is someone who is a disciple; one who clings fixedly to the teaching is called a disciple of fixed nature. One wholly devoted to much learning is called a disciple who is conceited. Obviously these are what are called disciples with something yet to learn. Those sunk in emptiness, lingering in stillness and self-knowledge, are called disciples with nothing more to learn.

Greed, anger, folly, and the like, are poisons; the Buddhist teachings are medicine. When the poison is not yet dispersed, the medicine should be removed. If you take medicine when you

have no illness, the medicine turns into illness. When the disease is gone but the medicine is not dissipated, 'unborn and imperishable' then has the meaning of impermanence.

The Nirvana Scripture says that there are three evil desires: one is the desire to be surrounded by monks, nuns, and men and women devotees, the second is the desire to have everybody as your own followers, the third is the desire to have everyone know you as a sage and saint. The [p61] Kasyapa Scripture says that one evil desire is to obtain sight of the Buddhas of the future, a second is the desire to obtain world monarchy, a third is the desire to obtain a great name as a warrior, the fourth is the desire to obtain a great name as a priest. And so on, even to despising birth and death and seeking nirvana; such wrong desires as this must first be cut off. Right now, as long as you have grasping attachment and wandering thoughts, all are called wrong desires; all are in the realm of the six heavens of desire, all governed by the Evil One.

Question: What is "constantly clearing away excrement for twenty years"?

The Master said,

Just put to rest all knowledge and views of existence and nonexistence; just put an end to all greedy seeking - one by one pass through the three stages of liberation in respect to everything. This is called clearing away excrement.

But now if you seek Buddha, seek enlightenment, or seek anything, existent, nonexistent, or otherwise, this is called carrying excrement in, it is not called carrying excrement out. Now if you create an idea of Buddha, create an understanding of Buddha, as long as there is anything envisioned, anything sought, it's all called the excrement of fabricated conceptualizations. It's also called rough speech, and it is called dead words. As it is said, "The great ocean does not retain a dead corpse." idle talk is not what is called fabricated conceptualizations; if the speaker discussed purity and impurity, that is called fabricated conceptualization. The written teachings contain twenty-one kinds of emptiness in all, to clear away the passions and afflictions of all sentient beings.

An ascetic maintains discipline of diet and behavior, is tolerant, gentle, compassionate, rejoices in abandonment. This has always been the norm for monks; once one has [p62] conformed in this way, clearly he is in accord with the Buddhist teaching - but one should not cling greedily or hold fast to it. If you long to attain Buddhahood, or to obtain such a thing as enlightenment, it is like your hand touching fire.

Manjusri said, "If one creates ideas of Buddha or Dharma, that person will surely harm himself." For this reason Manjusri wielded a sword before Gautama, and Angulimalya brandished a knife against the Shakya. As it is said, a bodhisattva commits the five acts which bring immediate uninterrupted retribution, yet does not enter uninterrupted hell - that is the uninterrupted of mystical experience; it is not the same as the uninterrupted hell of those sentient beings who commit the five deadly crimes.

From evil demons right up to Buddhas, all is defilement; when there is not a trace of dependent clinging anywhere, such is called the way of the two vehicles. How much less (should anyone cling to) disputation, looking for victory and defeat, saying, "I am able, I understand" - such are just argumentative monks, they are not to be called nonstriving monks.

For now just do not be influenced by greed for anything at all, existent or nonexistent; this is called birthlessness, and it is called true faith. To believe insistently in all things is called incomplete faith; it is also called imperfect faith, and it is called biased faith. Because faith is incomplete, one is called hopeless.

Now if you wish to be able to be immediately enlightened, just let person and things both disappear, person and things both be cut off, person and things both be empty - passing through beyond the three stages, this is called someone who doesn't fall within any categorizations. This is believing in Dharma; this is discipline and liberality, learning and wisdom, and so forth.

Bodhisattvas are willing to forego fulfilling Buddhahood, are willing to [p63] forego being sentient

beings, are willing to forego holding to discipline, are willing to forego violating discipline - therefore it is said that they neither obey nor transgress.

Knowledge is impure, illumination is pure; wisdom is pure, consciousness is impure. What in Buddhas is called illuminating wisdom is called knowledge in bodhisattvas; in the two vehicles and ordinary sentient beings it is called consciousness, and it is also called affliction. In Buddhas it is called speaking of cause from within the state of result; in sentient beings it is called speaking of result from within the state of cause. In Buddhas it is called turning the wheel of Dharma; in sentient beings it is called the wheel of Dharma turning. In bodhisattvas what is called precious adornments is called the thicket of the mortal cluster in sentient beings - in Buddhas it is called the original ground of ignorance; because this ignorance is itself illumination, therefore it is said that ignorance is the substance of the Way. It is not the same as the dark-enshrouded ignorance of sentient beings.

That is object, this is subject; that is heard, this is the hearer. "Not one, not different, not restricted, not eternal, not coming, not going" - these are living words; these are words which have gotten out of the rut - not light, not dark, not Buddha, not sentient beings; all is like this. "Coming, going, annihilation, eternity, Buddha, sentient being" - these are dead words; "universal, non-universal, same, different, finite, eternal," and so forth, are all irrelevant theories. The transcendent wisdom is your own enlightened nature.

In Mahayana, maha means "great" and yana means "vehicle." If you hold fast to your own inherent knowing and awareness, you too will become a naturalist heretic. Do not remain in your immediate mirror awareness, but do not seek enlightenment elsewhere. If you still seek elsewhere in some special way, you subordinate yourself [p64] to the heretics who believe in causality. The first patriarch in this country, Bodhidharma said, "If the mind affirms something, it must deny something too." If you value a single thing, you are deluded by that thing; esteem anything and you are confused by it. Believe, and you are deluded by belief; disbelief still amounts to repudiation. Do not value, do not devalue; do not believe, do not disbelieve. Buddhahood is also not inactivity; though it is not inactive, yet it is not dark quiescence. Like empty space, the Buddha is a great-bodied being with much reflective awareness; but although his reflective awareness is great, his awareness is pure and clear - the demons of greed and aversion cannot hold him. Buddha is someone beyond confinement; he has not a trace of lust or attachment, and yet has no knowledge of having no lust or attachment. This is known as fulfilling myriad practices through six ways of transcendence. If he needs articles of adornment, he has all kinds; if he doesn't need them and doesn't use them, still he hasn't lost them. He can use virtue and knowledge as cause and effect freely. This is cultivation; it is not that taking on laborious works and shouldering a burden are what is called cultivation - on the contrary, it is not so.

The three bodies (of Buddha) are one substance; the single substance has three bodies. One is the body of reality, the real aspect of Buddha. The real aspect of Buddha is not bright, not dark - illumination and obscurity both are in the realm of illusion. The real aspect, or real character, gets its name from being contrasted to emptiness; originally there were no names at all. As it is said, the Buddha Body is uncreated and does not fall within the scope of any categories. Attaining Buddhahood, being offered a canopy, etc., are words of a pound or ounce burden; the names derive from the need to distinguish the pure by means of the impure. This it is said that the body of reality in its [p65] genuine aspect is called Vairocana Buddha as the pure and clear reality body. It is also called the empty reality-body Buddha, and it is called the great perfect mirror knowledge, and it is called the eighth consciousness. It is also called the source of nature, and it is also called the empty source. It is called the Buddha dwelling in the land which is neither pure nor defiled. It is also called the lion in his den. It is also called adamant applied knowledge, and it is called the spotless altar. It is also called the primary void, and it is called the



hidden essence. The third patriarch of Ch'an said, "Without knowing the hidden essence, it is useless to work at concentration on stillness."

Secondly, the reward-body Buddha is the Buddha under the tree of enlightenment. This is also called the illusory transformation Buddha, and it is called the beatified Buddha. This is called Locana Buddha as the completely fulfilled body of reward. It is also called the knowledge of the essential equality of things, and it is also called the seventh consciousness. It is also called the Buddha as responding result in accordance with cause. It is equal in all the fifty-two stages of meditation, equal in saints and self-enlightened ones, equal in all bodhisattvas, and is equally subject to such pains as birth and death, but is not equally subject to the misery of sentient beings' binding activities.

Third is the manifestation-body Buddha. Now in the midst of all things, existent and nonexistent, when there is utterly not stain of longing, and there is no nonstaining, detached from four logical possibilities (of being, nonbeing, neither, both) such words and intelligence as there may be is called the manifestation-body Buddha. This is called Shakyamuni Buddha with a thousand hundred hundred thousand manifestation bodies. It is also called the great miraculous transformation, and it is called wandering at play in spiritual powers. It is also called the subtle analytic observation knowledge, and it is called the sixth [p66] consciousness.

To make offerings means to purify the threefold activity (of body, mouth, mind) - before, there is no affliction to cut off; in the meantime there is no inherent nature to be preserved; afterwards there is no Buddhahood to obtain. This is the three times cut off, threefold action being pure.

This is the emptiness of the three spheres (of activity of body, mouth, and mind), and the emptiness of the three elements of giving (giver, receiver, gift).

How does a monk serve Buddha? That which is called the nonindulgent six senses is also called "adornments." Emptiness has no indulgence; forests and trees adorn it. Emptiness has no defilement; flowers and fruits adorn it. Emptiness has no Buddha eye; it depends on the reality eye of someone who cultivates it to distinguish the pure and defiled without any understanding that he is discriminating the pure and defiled - this is called "ultimately no eye."

In the Ratnakuta Scripture it says, "The body of reality cannot be sought by means of seeing, hearing, discernment or knowledge. It is not that which is seen by the physical eye, because it has no form. It is not that which is seen by the divine eye, because it has no falsehood. It is not that which is seen by the eye of wisdom, because it is outside of attributes. It is not that which is seen by the eye of objective reality, because it is beyond all activity and configuration. It is not that which is seen by the enlightened (Buddha) eye, because it is beyond all modes of consciousness." If one does not produce such views as these, this is called the view of Buddha. Same as matter, yet not matter; same as emptiness, yet not emptiness - this is what is called true emptiness. 'Matter' and 'emptiness' are also expressions of medicine and disease quelling each other. In the Analysis of the Real Universe, Tu-shun says, "It is not proper to say either 'identical to matter' or 'not identical to matter.' And then again it is not proper to say [p67] either 'identical to voidness' or 'not identical to voidness.'"

When the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind do not admit anything existent or nonexistent, this is called evolving into the seventh stage. Bodhisattvas of the seventh stage do not fall back from the seventh stage; on the three stages above this, bodhisattvas' mind ground is clear and pure, easily stained; when speaking of fire, they are immediately burned.

Going upward from the realm of form, liberality is sickness and parsimony is medicine; going downward from the realm of form, parsimony is sickness and liberality is medicine.

The discipline of doing is to cut off the things of the world. Just do not do anything yourself, and there is no fault - this is called the discipline of nondoing. It is also called unmanifested discipline, and it is also called the discipline of nonindulgence. As long as there is arousal of mind and movement of thoughts, this is called breaking discipline.

For now just do not be confused and disturbed by any existent or non-existent objects; and do not stop and abide in disillusion, and yet have no understanding of nonabiding. This is called all-

embracing study; this is called effort, praise, and remembrance, and it is called widespread circulation of truth.

When not yet enlightened, not yet liberated, it is called mother; after enlightenment, it is called child. When there is not even any knowledge or understanding of the absence of enlightenment or liberation, that is called "mother and child both perish." There is no confinement by good, no confinement by evil, no confinement by Buddha, no confinement by sentient beings. The same goes for all assessments or measurements, to the extent that there is no confinement by any calculating measurements at all. Therefore it is said that a Buddha is someone who has left confinement and goes beyond measure.

[p68] To be greedily fond of knowledge and understanding of meanings and expressions is like a mother loving her child - she only gives the child a lot of refined milk to drink, without knowing at all whether the child can digest it or not. These words describe the affliction of those on the tenth stage of bodhisattvahood receiving the honor of people and gods - producing the meditation states of the form and formless realms, the affliction of prosperity and happiness; not having attained free use of supernatural powers to fly aloft, concealing and revealing oneself, the affliction of going to all the pure lands of the Buddhas everywhere to listen to their teachings, cultivating love, compassions, joy and equanimity, the affliction of the middle way; learning the three illuminations and six super-knowledges, the affliction of the four aspects of unhindered intellect; cultivating the mind of the great vehicle, the affliction of undertaking the four universal vows.

The first, second, third, and fourth stages have the affliction of clear understanding; the fifth, sixth, and seventh stages have the affliction of various kinds of knowledge, the eighth, ninth, and tenth stages have the afflictions of bodhisattvas simultaneously illumining both realities, on up to the affliction of cultivating the fruit of Buddhahood and its innumerable practices - you only care for knowledge and understanding of meanings and expressions, and don't realize that instead these are binding afflictions. Therefore it is said that the river of views can float a scent-bearing elephant.

Question: (Do you) see or not?

The master said, (I) see.

Question: How is it after seeing?

The master said,

Seeing is nondual. Since I say seeing is nondual, one [p69] does not see sight by means of sight. If you see upon seeing, is the prior seeing veritable, or is the latter seeing veritable? As it is said, when seeing seeing, seeing is not seeing. Since seeing is even apart from seeing, seeing cannot reach it. Therefore, if you do not exercise a way of seeing, do not exercise a way of hearing, and do not exercise a way of discernment, all the Buddhas will quickly give you a prediction of complete enlightenment.

Criticism: Since seeing is not giving prediction of enlightenment, what is the use of giving the prediction?

The master said,

People of the past who awakened to the source were not trammled by anything existent or nonexistent, like having washed a dirty garment. Thus it is said that detachment from form is called Buddha. When falsehood and truth do not remain at all, the central essence is the solitary mystery; mystically arriving on a single road, later followers of the same path accord with that stage. Thus we speak of giving prediction, that's all.

Ignorance is father, greed is mother. Self is the disease, yet self is the medicine too. The self is a sword, and it kills one's own father and mother, ignorance and greed. Therefore I say you should kill your father and mother. One expression categorically smashes through all things. "Eating food at the wrong time" is also like this - right now, be it anything existent, nonexistent, whatever,

all are “eating the wrong food.” They’re also called bad food. This is impure food placed in a precious vessel; this is breaking discipline, this is defiling the vessel, this is mixed (impure) food. A Buddha is someone who does not seek; right now if you greedily seek anything, existent or nonexistent, whatever you have, whatever you do, all goes against (Buddhahood) - instead this is repudiating Buddha. As [p70] long as there is affection of greed, it’s all called “giving the hands.”

Right now, just do not be affected by greed; and do not abide in not being affected by greed, and yet have no understanding of nonabiding. This is called the fire of wisdom. This is burning the hands and fingers, this is not sparing bodily life, this is being dismembered joint by joint, this is leaving the world, this is lifting the world in another quarter in the palm of the hand.

But right now, of the twelve branches of the canonical Buddhist teaching, or anything existent or nonexistent, if you have the slightest hair kept in your guts, you have not gotten out of the net. As long as there is something sought, something gained, as long as there is arousal of mind and stirring of thought, all are called jackals.

If within one’s guts there is absolutely nothing sought, absolutely nothing gained, this person is a great donor. This is the lion’s roar. If one still doesn’t dwell in nonpossession and also has no understanding of not dwelling, this is called the six absolute lions. When selfhood is not conceived, various evils do not arise - this is “putting Mount Everest into a mustard seed.” Not arousing any greed, anger, or the eight winds or such, is being able to sip all the waters of the four oceans into the mouth. Not accepting any false speech is not letting it into the ears. Not letting the body cause evil deeds toward others is containing all fire within the belly.

Right now, in regard to each object, not being confused, not disturbed, not angered, not joyful, removing the accretions in the gates of one’s own six senses until they’re purified, this is a person with no concern over anything. This surpasses all knowledge and understanding, asceticism and effort. This is called the divine eye. This is called the nature of the cosmos. This is making a cart to carry cause and effect.

When a Buddha appears in the world to rescue sentient [p71] beings, then the prior thought is not born; the succeeding thought should not be continued. When the activity of preceding thoughts vanishes, this is called rescuing sentient beings. If the preceding thought was angry, he uses the medicine of joy to cure it. Then it is said that there is a Buddha saving sentient beings. However, all verbal teachings just cure disease; because the diseases are not the same, the medicines are also not the same. That is why sometimes it is said there is Buddha, and sometimes it is said there is no Buddha. True words cure sickness; if the cure manages to heal, then all are true words - if they can’t effectively cure sickness, all are false words. True words are false words insofar as they give rise to views; false words are true words insofar as they cut off the delusions of sentient beings. Because disease is unreal, there is only unreal medicine to cure it.

(To say that) “the Buddha appears in the world and saves sentient beings” are words of the nine-part teachings; they are words of the incomplete teaching. Anger and joy, sickness and medicine, are all oneself; there is no one else. Where is there a Buddha appearing in the world? Where are there sentient beings to be saved? As the Diamond Cutter Scripture says, “In reality, there are no sentient beings who attain extinction and deliverance.”

Not to love Buddhas or bodhisattvas, not to be affected by greed for anything existent or nonexistent, is called “saving others.” Also not to keep dwelling in the self is called “saving oneself.” Because the sicknesses are not the same, the medicines are not the same, and the prescriptions are also not the same - you should not one-sidedly hold fast (to any of them). If you depend on such things as Buddhas or bodhisattvas, all this is dependence upon the prescription. Therefore it is said, “One who has arrived at wisdom cannot be one-sided.” That which is discussed in [p72] the teachings is likened to yellow leaves; it is also like an empty fist deceiving a small child (pretending there is something in it). If someone does not realize this principle, this

is called the same as ignorance. As it is said, "Bodhisattvas who practice transcendent wisdom should not grasp my words or depend on the commands of the teachings."

Anger is like a rock, love is like river water. Right now, just have no anger, no love; this is passing through mountains, rivers, and stone walls. Just to cure the illnesses of deaf worldlings, much learning and intellectual explanation cure the diseases of the eyes.

Going from humanity to Buddhahood is "gain," going from humanity to hell is "loss." "Right and "wrong" are also the same. The third patriarch said, "Throw away gain and loss, right and wrong, all at once." When you don't keep clinging to anything existent or nonexistent, this is called not abiding in conditioning. When you do not even abide in nonabiding, this is called tolerance of not abiding in emptiness. To cling to oneself as Buddha, oneself as Ch'an or the Way, and make that an understanding, is called clinging to the inward view; attainment by causes and conditions, practice and realization, is called the outward view. Master Pao-chih said, "The inward view and the outward view are both mistaken."

When eye, ear, nose and tongue are each unaffected by greed for all things, existent or nonexistent, this is called "accepting and upholding a four line stanza." It's also called the four attainments. The six sense media without traces are also called the six superknowledges. Right now just do not be obstructed by any existent or nonexistent things; also do not abide in nonobstruction, and have no knowledge or understanding of nonabiding - this is called supernatural power. When you do not hold to this supernatural power, because it is called having no supernatural powers, it is like the saying, "The traces of the feet of a [p73] bodhisattva with no supernatural power cannot be found." This is someone beyond Buddha, the most inconceivable.

Humanity is oneself, divinity is wisdom's illumination. Praise is joy, rejoicing is in the objective realm. The realm is heaven, the praiser is humanity; humanity and heaven embrace each other, both can see each other.

Pure knowledge is heaven, correct knowledge is human. What is originally not Buddha, to others he said, "This is Buddha." This is called the knot of substance. Right now just do not create knowledge or understanding of Buddha, and also have no knowledge or understanding of nonabiding, this is called annihilation of the knot. It is also called true thusness, and it is called substantial thusness. If you seek Buddha, seek enlightenment, this is called manifesting body and mind. But right now as long as you have any thought of seeking at all, it's called manifesting body and mind. As it is said, "Although the quest for enlightenment is an excellent quest, it adds double to mundane troubles." Seeking Buddha is the mass of Buddhas; seeking all various things existent or nonexistent is the mass of sentient beings. But if the present mirror awareness just does not dwell on anything existent or nonexistent, this "not entering into the categories of the masses."

Right now, in the midst of each sound, fragrance, flavor, feeling, phenomenon, and so forth, not to love and not to covet anything in any realm, just having none of the ten forms of defiled mind, this is attaining Buddhahood on the basis of comprehension; studying the written word and seeking understanding is called the attainment of Buddhahood on the basis of conditions. To see Buddha and know Buddha is possible, but if you say that Buddha knows, Buddha sees, Buddha hears, Buddha speaks, that's all right - seeing fire is possible, but it is impossible for fire [p74] to see; it's like a sword, which can cut things, but things cannot cut the sword.

People who know Buddha, people who see Buddha, people who speak of Buddha, are as numerous as the sands of the Ganges river; but as for those who are Buddha knowing, who are Buddha seeing, who are Buddha speaking, there is not one in ten thousand. Because one has no eyes himself he depends on another for eyes; in the teachings this is called deductive knowledge. Now if you covet knowledge and understanding of Buddha, this too is called deductive, inferential knowledge (not direct knowledge).

Worldly metaphor is by positive example; the incomplete teaching is by positive example. The complete teaching is by negative example; to “abandon your head, eyes marrow and brain” is negative example. Now not craving such things as Buddhahood or enlightenment is negative example; that which is hard to abandon is likened to the head, eyes, marrow, and brain. If you shine fixedly upon all existent and nonexistent things, this is called the “head”; to be captured by any existent or nonexistent things is called “hands.” The time before you have illumined the objects before you is called “marrow and brains.”

In the sanctified state cultivating profane causes, a Buddha enters among sentient beings, becoming like them in kind to invite, lead, teach and guide them; joining those hungry spirits, his limbs and joints afire, he expound the transcendence of wisdom to them, inspiring them with the will for enlightenment. If he only stayed in the sanctified state, how could he go there and talk with them? Buddha enters into various classes and makes a raft for sentient beings; like them he feels pain, unlimited toil and stress. When a Buddha enters a painful place, he too feels pain, the same as sentient beings; a Buddha is not the same as sentient beings only in that he is free to go or to stay. A Buddha is not empty space; feeling pain, how could he not [p75] suffer? If one says he does not suffer, these words are contradictory; do not speak idly and wrongly say that a Buddha’s spiritual powers are free or not free. Other than praising a medicinal prescription, he does not want to have the ugliness of duality showing. The teachings say, “If a man places Buddha and enlightenment in the realm of affirmation, he incurs a great fault.”

If in the presence of someone who doesn’t know of Buddha, there is no fault in speaking this way. It is like undefiled cow’s milk - that cow does not stay on the high plain, nor does it abide in the low marsh; this cow’s milk can be medicine. The high plain symbolizes Buddhahood, the low marsh symbolizes sentient beings. As it is said, the real body of true wisdom of those who realize thusness no longer has this disease - their intellect and eloquence are uninhibited, free to leap up, unborn, imperishable; this is called birth, old age, sickness, and death.

Pain and suffering are darkness; having eaten mushroom soup, Shakyamuni Buddha suffered dysentery and met his end. This is darkness as repository; light reveals traces. With light and darkness all removed, do not grasp them, In nongrassing there is also no nongrassing. He is neither light nor dark - his birth in the royal palace, marriage to Yasodhara, and eight aspects of attainment to the Way, are the judgments of the false conceptions of disciples and outsiders. Since it is said that his is not a body (nourished by) mixed food, Chunda said, “I know the Realized One will certainly not accept or eat it.”

Most important, it is necessary to have two eyes, to shine through the affairs of both sides. Do not just wear one eye and go on one side; for then there will be another side to arrive. The goddess of fortune and the girl of darkness accompany each other; a wise host does not admit either of them.

Right now, if your mind is like empty space, for the first time your study has some accomplishment. An eminent [p76] patriarch in India said, “The Himalaya is compared to great nirvana.” The first patriarch in this country, Bodhidharma, said, “Mind and mental conditions like wood or stone.” The third patriarch said, “Immobile, forgetting conditions.” Ts’ao-ch’i (the sixth patriarch) said, “Do not think good or bad at all.” My late master (Ma-tsu) said, “Be like a lost man, unable to tell his whereabouts.” Master Seng-chao said, “Shutting off knowledge, blocking perception, solitary awareness, something obscure and unfathomable.” Manjusri said, “Mind is like empty space, therefore respectful obeisance has nothing to look upon; the most profound scripture is neither heard nor accepted and upheld.”

Right now if you just don’t see or hear anything at all, existent or not, your six sense faculties shut off; if you can study in this way, if you can “uphold the scripture” in this way, then for the first time you have some accomplishment in practice. These words offend the ears and pain the mouth, but here if you can act this way until the second or third lifetime, then you can go to where there is no Buddha and manifest perfect enlightenment on the site of the Way, changing evil into good and good into evil, using evil ways to edify bodhisattvas of the tenth stage and

using good ways to teach creatures of hell and hungry ghosts. Where there is illumination, you untie the bonds of illumination; in darkness you unties the bonds of darkness. Picking up gold and turning it into dirt, picking up dirt and turning it into gold, you can do a hundred things, transforming and playing freely.

Beyond worlds as numerous as river sands, if there is anyone who seeks deliverance, the Blessed One assumes the thirty-two marks of greatness and appears in front of them, speaking in the same language they do, expounding the truth for them, enlightenment them according to their capacities, changing forms in response to beings, transforming and manifesting various dispositions, detached [p77] from “I” and “mine.”

Yet these are all peripheral matters - this is still small function, and it is contained within the gate of Buddhist service. As for the great function, the great body hides in formlessness, the great sound is concealed in the rarified sound - like the fire within wood, like the sound of a bell or a drum, before the causes and conditions are fully present, you cannot speak of its existence or nonexistence. Whether born as an animal or in heaven, he abandons it like snot; bodhisattvas' ten thousand practices through six ways of transcendence are like riding a dead corpse to cross over to the shore, like being in a prison latrine hole and getting out. The Buddha puts on the thirty-two marks of a great being and calls them a robe of filth.

If you say that the Buddha absolutely does not experience the mortal cluster, you are in no way right. Buddha is not empty space - how could he absolutely not sense it? A Buddha is only different from sentient beings in that he is free to go or stay. Going from heavenly world to heavenly world, from Buddha field to Buddha field, is the constant practice of all enlightened ones.

It's like fire; seeing fire, just don't touch it with your hands, and the fire won't burn anyone. Right now just have none of the ten states of impure mind - greedy mind, lustful mind, defiled mind, angry mind, clinging mind, dwelling mind, dependent mind, attached mind, grasping mind, longing mind. But in each of these states there are the three stages, and then all your awareness and activity, whether they be transcendent or conventional, all movement and action, speech, silence, crying and laughing, all are enlightened wisdom. You have been standing a long time. Take care.

Question: What is the essential method for sudden enlightenment in the great vehicle?

[p78] The master said,

You all should first put an end to all involvements and lay to rest all concerns; do not remember or recollect anything at all, whether good or bad, mundane or transcendental - do not engage in thoughts. Let go of body and mind, set them free.

With mind like wood or stone, not explaining anything with the mouth, mind not going anywhere, then the mind ground becomes like space, wherein the sun of wisdom naturally appears. It is as though the clouds had opened and the sun emerged.

Just put an end to all fettering connections, and feelings of greed, hatred, craving, defilement and purity all come to an end. Unmoved in the face of the five desires and eight influences, not choked up by seeing, hearing, discerning or knowing, not confused by anything, naturally endowed with all virtues and the inconceivable use of all paranormal powers, this is someone who is free.

In the presence of all things in the environment, to have a mind neither still nor disturbed, neither concentrated nor distracted, passing through all sound and form without lingering or obstruction, is called being a wayfarer.

Not setting in motion good, evil, right or wrong, not clinging to a single thing, not rejecting a single thing, is called being a member of the great vehicle.

Not bound by any good or evil, emptiness or existence, defilement or purity, doing or nondoing, mundane or transcendental, virtue or knowledge, is called enlightened wisdom.

Once affirmation and negation, like and dislike, approval and disapproval, all various opinions and feelings come to an end and cannot bind you, then you are free wherever you may be; this is called a bodhisattva at the moment of inspiration immediately ascending to the stage of Buddhahood.

[p79] Question: How can one attain a mind which is like wood or stone in the presence of all situations?

The master said,

All various things have never of themselves spoken of emptiness; nor do they themselves speak of form, and they do not speak of right, wrong, defilement, or purity. Nor is there mind which binds and fetters people; it is just because people themselves give rise to vain and arbitrary attachments and that they create so many kinds of understanding, produce so many kinds of opinion, and give rise to so many various loves and fears.

Just understand that the many things do not originate of themselves; all of them come into existence from one's own single mental impulse of imagination mistakenly clinging to appearances. If you know that mind and objects fundamentally do not contact each other, you will be set free on the spot. Each of the various things is in a state of quiescence right where it is; this very place is the site of enlightenment.

Inherent nature cannot be named; originally it is not mundane, nor is it holy; it is neither defiled nor pure. Also it is neither empty nor existent, and it is neither good nor bad. When it is involved with impure things, it is called the two vehicles of divinity and humanity. When the mind of purity and impurity is ended, it does not dwell in bondage, nor does it dwell in liberation; it has no mindfulness of doing, nondoing, bondage or liberation - then, though it is within birth and death, that mind is free; ultimately it does not come in contact with all the vanities, the empty illusions, sensual passions, the mortal clusters and the elements of existence, life and death, or the sense media. Transcendent and without abode, nothing at all constrains it; it goes and comes through birth and death as through an open door.

When someone who is studying the Way comes in contact with various kinds of pain or pleasure, with things agreeable or disagreeable, his mind is not wearied; he does [p80] not think at all of fame, profit, clothing or food. He does not long for the benefits of merit and virtue; he is not hindered or obstructed by the various things of the world. Nothing is dear to him, nothing lovely; he is equanimous through pain and pleasure.

Simple clothing to keep off the cold, coarse food to sustain life; by unbending and intent, as though stupid, as though deaf and mute - then you will have some fulfillment. If in your mind you widely study knowledge and interpretation, seeking merit and seeking knowledge, all this is birth and death - it is of no benefit in respect to inner reality. On the contrary, blown up and down by the winds of understanding, you will return to the sea of birth and death.

A Buddha is one who does not seek; seek this and you turn away. The principle is the principle of nonseeking; seek it and you lose it. If you cling to nonseeking, this is still the same as seeking; if you cling to nondoing, this is the same again as doing. Therefore the Diamond Cutter Scripture says, "Do not grasp truth, do not grasp untruth, and do not grasp that which is not untrue." It also says, "The truth which those who realize thusness find has no reality or unreality."

If you are able to spend your whole life with a mind like wood or stone, then you will not be buoyed up and submerged by the mortal clusters, the elements of conscious existence, the media of sense, the five desires and eight winds. Then the cause of birth and death is cut off, and you are free to go or stay, unhindered by any causes or effects of doing; you will not be constrained by any indulgence. At that time to make a cause of causeless bondage, to share concerns as a benefactor, to respond to all creatures with an unattached heart, to open all fetters with unhindered wisdom - this is called giving medicine according to the disease.

[p81] Question: Renunciants today, having received the precepts, are clean and pure in body and mouth; already invested with all the standards, do they attain liberation or not? The master said, A little bit of liberation; but they have not yet attained liberation of mind and liberation in all places.

Question: What is liberation of mind and liberation in all places?

The master said,

Don't seek Buddha, don't seek the teaching, don't seek the community, and so forth; don't seek virtue and knowledge, intellectual understanding and so forth. When feelings of defilement and purity are ended, still don't hold to this non-seeking and consider it right - do not dwell at the point of ending, and do not long for heavens or fear hells. When you are unhindered by bondage or freedom, then this is called liberation of mind and body in all places.

You should not say you have a little bit of discipline, purity of body, mouth, and mind, and immediately consider that enough. You don't know that innumerable gates of discipline, concentration, wisdom and nonindulgent liberation have never gotten involved with so much as a single hair.

Work hard! Henceforth you must take hold and investigate vigorously. Do not wait till your ears are deaf, your eyes dim, your face wrinkled and your hair white - when the pains of old age overtake your body, sadness and affection enshroud you, your eyes flow with tears, and in your heart is fear and dread. Without anything to rely upon at all, you do not know where you are going. At this time, you won't be able to coordinate your hands and feet; even if you have merit, knowledge, name, fame, profit and support, none of them will save you.

Because your mind's wisdom is not yet opened, you only think of various objects; you do not know how to [p82] reflect back, and you don't see the way of enlightenment. All the good and bad active affinities of your whole life will appear before you - you may be glad, you may be afraid; the mortal clusters of the six states of being will appear before you all at once, all spread with adornments, houses, boats, carts, brilliant shining light. Everything is what is manifest of the greed and craving of your own mind; all bad visions turn into surpassingly beautiful visions, but according to the heavy weight of greed and craving, compelled by your habitual active consciousness, you experience birth accompanied by attachments - you have no freedom at all. Whether you'll be a dragon or an animal, freeman or slave, is entirely uncertain.

Question: How is it possible to realize a share of freedom?

The master said,

Right now you have it if you have it. Otherwise, in the face of the five desires and eight winds, if there is no grasping or rejection in your feelings, when feelings of possessiveness, jealousy, greed and craving, of self and possessions, all come to an end, defilement and purity are both forgotten - you will be like the sun or moon in the sky, shining independently. When mind and mental conditions are like earth, wood, or stone, moment after moment, like saving your head were it ablaze, also like the great scent-bearing elephant crossing a river, cutting off the flow as he passes, causing there to be no doubt or error, this person neither heaven nor hell can contain.