

## PART ONE – THEORY

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## PREFACE

What is Buddhism? What has Buddhism to do with all of us in everyday life? How should we learn and practise Buddhism to attain Enlightenment? In answering these vital questions, this book shows us where lies the great significance of Buddhism.

The correct way to understand Buddhism, as this book points out at the outset, is to look into every aspect of Buddhism objectively, unbiasedly and thoroughly. Buddhism is everyone's Dharma. For us, Buddhism lies nowhere but rightfully in the phenomena of the world.

Imparting general knowledge of Buddhism, this book presents a cursory review of the essential aspects of Buddhism in a broad outline. In Part One some fundamental questions such as the interrelationship of matter, mind and nature, the phenomena of the universe and human life, the Law of Causality, the question of suffering, and others are treated in condensed statements extracted from some popular Mahayana sutras and sastras. What is said in Part Two of the numerous and diversified Buddhist practices on mind-cultivation comes from no other source than those Patriarchs' and those Enlightened Masters' own experiences of self-realization.

This book is a realistic approach towards understanding and practising Buddhism. Understanding Buddhism is understanding the mind and the self-nature. It is only by understanding the mind and realizing the self-nature that we shall not be blind to the causes and effects of the phenomena around us and that we may be free from every illusion and delusion, free from every passion and free from every suffering. From the standpoint of practice, cultivating Buddhism is cultivating the mind and cultivating the mind is cultivating awareness. It is only by cultivating awareness that we can be free from concept and subjective thought and then karma-free. Hence, in Buddhism, there is no Dharma without cultivating awareness.

Prompted by his conviction that the Chinese version, written by Hsu Heng Chi, is intended to clarify the popular misconception about Buddhism and to lead us into right understanding of this vital question, the translator undertakes to render it into English, for the interest of English-speaking readers. Being conscious of his incompetence, he

assumes full responsibility for every error of mistranslation.

To Rev. Lok To of the Buddhist Association of the U.S., whose kind encouragement and support is a strong incentive to his undertaking the translation in question, the translator wishes to express his most grateful thanks.

Peace to All.

Upasaka P. H. Wei,

May 10, 1973.

Translator.

## FOREWORD

Touching on the question of Buddhism, my friends generally opine that Buddhism, based on Theology, is unscientific and superstitious, and apart from its moral teaching, there is not much of it; some of them say that its theory, however profound, is idealistic, impractical and not worth learning; and some others from their year-long study may know something of its profundity and comprehensiveness but without understanding its basic Doctrine, still have not firmly established their faith in it, not to say of putting it into practice or getting any benefit out of it.

Indeed there is much misunderstanding about Buddhism all over the world. However, in view of its world-wide prevalence for over two thousand years, it is evidently clear that its unique special value does not lie in the religious worship, or it would have passed out long ago. Of course, we can never understand Buddhism correctly if we judge it from what it may appear to us: also it is utterly wrong for us to sort out a Buddhist theory and to infer that Buddhism is totally unpracticable and unrealistic to human life. In other words, in order to arrive at right understanding of Buddhism, we must guard ourselves against subjective thought and superficial observation and on the other hand, should look into its every aspect objectively, unbiasedly and thoroughly. But if we do not follow this way, then we shall remain ignorant of Buddhism in our lifetime, to live in delusion and in the dark. Therefore, it is a matter of fundamental importance that we should understand Buddhism correctly, and for this purpose, I think, it is advisable as well as highly desirable that Buddhism should be made intelligible to the public if it is presented in a concise and colloquial manner: above all, we should clearly understand that far from being a superstitious belief, Buddhism is the fundamental Truth of the universe and human life.

# PART ONE

## CHAPTER 1

### What is Cosmic Life?

What is Buddhism? If we want to have a clear understanding of this fundamental question, first of all, it is necessary for us to understand what cosmic life is.

As we know, all human activities such as politics, law, arts, culture and so forth are built on economic basis. In short, the so-called "economic basis" refers to the material needs of life. However, apart from working for those things, what is the true meaning and value of human life? Whither did I come from when I was born? Whither shall I go after my death? Again, who am I? Incidentally, there are but few persons who care to know or to ponder over such questions.

#### (A) Phenomena of the universe

As a matter of fact, all things of the universe including phenomena of objective material things and phenomena of subjective thought, ranging from a speck of dust to the vast world, from the unit of the tiniest living things to man, and from sensation to cognition, undergo moment-to-moment changes from their creation to extinction and transformation continually and unceasingly. In other words, all phenomena before us are nothing but parts of the Sum-total of the ever-continuous, ever-recurring phenomenal transformations of the universe; simultaneously, in the course of such complicated development of each phase of creation, extinction and transformation, not only every phenomenon and its surrounding phenomena are intimately interrelated with each other but also mutually influence each other, and as a result of this, a network of closely-knit and interlocked cause-and-effect relationships is brought about. In Buddhism, the law which deals with the subtle working of the interrelationships of the cosmic phenomena in this manner is called "The Law of Dependent (Conditioned) Origin". Since every phenomenon is causally produced, naturally its destruction or transformation is also brought about by

causation. This explains how the sequence of "formation, existence, destruction and void" works out in this world; how living beings have to undergo "birth, age, illness and death" in their lifetime; and in the realm of thought, how the sequence of "arising, staying, changing and vanishing" is to come about. All these events of creation, development ("staying is favorable development, implying adaptability of things to each other, and "changing" is unfavorable development, implying their conflict with each other) and extinction may be summed up with a Buddhist dictum, "All conditioned things are impermanent", which means that everything tends to change and nothing is fixed and immutable; in the meantime, since all phenomena are produced by causes, they are transient and impermanent, and so they are illusory and unreal - as the Diamond Sutra says: "All forms (phenomena) are unreal and illusory"; although they are illusory, objectively speaking, they are not non-existent for the sequence of their creation, development and extinction always operates alternately and continually in succession, that is why Buddhism says there is only "extinction by mutation" but there is no "total and complete extinction". As Buddhism further points out, the beginningless and endless cyclic movement of phenomenal transformations from creation to extinction by mutation is subject to the continuous and incessant operation of the Law of Cause and Effect, and this is the fundamental truth of all the phenomena of human life and the universe.

### **(B) The Stream of Life**

In the light of the Buddhist tenet from above, the whole entity of living beings of this world and all of them are subjected to rounds of birth and death, life after life, in different states of existence, and such phenomena, working like the turning of a wheel, are called Transmigration. Furthermore, "Karma", which is the reaction of thought attached (and in some cases not attached) to some material things, causes transmigration, and it is because of Karma that the beginningless and endless Stream of Life, interlocked with a series of causes and effects operating incessantly at all times, comes into being; meanwhile, as the formation and development of karmic elements are a very complex matter, hence there are as many as six different states of

transmigratory existence - *dévas*, *asuras*, human beings, ghosts, animals and hells - where the wheel of reincarnations turns on and on.

In Buddhism there is no *dharma* so difficult to explain or to make believe as the question of Reincarnation and Transmigration. After all, as human understanding is rather limited, it is no wonder that a good many things of the universe still remain unknown to us; the remarkable fact is still a puzzle to us that in terms of time the universe is beginningless and endless, and in terms of space is boundless and infinite. To compare with the Milky Way, the diameter of which is estimated to be of 300,000 Light Years (one Light Year equals 6,000,000,000,000 miles), the earth may be said to be even smaller than a particle of dust, and the Milky Way, as compared with the Whole Celestial Body, may look just like a small universe, and in the light of these facts, how wonderful and how marvellous is the spectacle of worlds within worlds of the Infinite Boundless Buddhalands! As our perception is usually limited to the confines of this world, as if we wear colored glasses, logically we cannot see things in their true form, consequently, we are misled to think that what we have seen is all true. This is a joke on ourselves, isn't it?

### (C) Who am "I"?

Considering the fact that it is Man who plays the predominating role in the universe, let us discuss the question of "Man" specifically. Possessed of a body and feelings of all sorts, he may be said to be a physical and emotional being; in other words, the entity of man is composed of material and spiritual components. Under this condition, it is practically impossible to find out either by deduction or by analysis "who is the true "I" at all. If the body composed of hydrogen, oxygen, iron, calcium, iodine and other elements is said to be "I", obviously this hypothesis is wrong, for if each of these components was to be "I", and certainly this cannot be true, then there would be as many "I's as the components. And if thought is said to be "I", such assumption is also wrong. Thoughts come and go in a flash and undergo continuous changes, but all of them, whether past, present or future, are unattainable; the past thought dies out; the present thought is momentary and transient; and the future thought is yet unborn. This

being true, where can “I” be found? Also there is no valid ground to say the emotional man to be the true “I”, for moods of anger, pleasure, sadness and joy, arising and ceasing only too suddenly and quickly, are always changeable and unstable. The Buddhist saying, “All dharmas are without self”, applies to all material and psychic phenomena, where no matter how hard you may try, there is no self to be found.

#### **(D) Delusion, Karma and Suffering**

According to Buddhism, all phenomena of the universe coming and going momentarily and unceasingly at all times are illusory and unreal. The reason why we cannot see the reality of those phenomena is this; instead of looking at them objectively, we are so much blindfolded by our subjective thought, which is our habitual way of thinking, that we are misled to think the petty self known as Ego to be the true “I” and moreover, under the delusion of greed, pride, stupidity and egoism, to take the body, family and things to be our belongings, and thus when we are deluded externally with the phenomena and internally with the mind, we become so much attached to our ego and our belongings that for the purpose of keeping them by all means, we may do any evil, even to lie, slander, attack and harm others. The force of such perverted activities of the body, speech and mind caused by delusion is in Buddhist terms called “Karma”. At first, the karma turns in keeping with the external influence of the phenomena but later having expended its power passively and unconsciously and become sufficiently “fumed”, it turns to inward development and the longer it is fumed in this manner, the more powerful and the more harmful it will become!

In view of the fact that no one, rich or poor, strong or weak, intelligent or foolish, can avoid suffering, it is obviously clear that suffering is universal. Again, considering the fact that in life there are hundreds of afflictions – parting with the beloved, meeting the hated and undesired, illnesses, unfulfilled wishes, broken love, vicissitudes of Life’s Fortune, etc., etc. – that both undermine the body and trouble the mind; with varying effects in every case from nervousness to lunacy, we can see clearly that even in the short span of life there is always a lot of suffering and sorrow! Some may say that they have never known

suffering in their lifetime, but suffering is universal; because they are so used to it and for so long that just like one who forgets the bitterness of a thing because he has tasted it too often, they take suffering for granted and become unconscious of it. After all, the fact that life is short and everything is impermanent is itself the root cause of suffering, and on top of that, another subtle form of suffering, common to everyone, is the fundamental question of life and death!

Suffering is but a reaction of the mind, and both its arising and cessation are separately brought about by the mind, e.g. if the mind is free from hate even in meeting our bitter enemies, we shall not be subject to the karma of hate; if the mind is completely detached from passion, there will be no such tragedies as broken love and suicide. In short, if the mind does not create any karma, consequently there will be no trans-migration or reincarnation and neither will there be any suffering at all; when in delusion, unknowingly the mind becomes discriminating and automatically works out the karma, hence a Buddhist dictum: "Because of delusion, there is Karma and because of Karma, there is suffering."

As Buddhism tells us, at the outset we should grapple with the question of suffering with good understanding and deal with it fearlessly and patiently, and as soon as our bias and subjective thoughts about the phenomena before us are wiped out, suffering would be turned into happiness and klesa into bodhi; in carrying out the work for others' benefit as well as for ourselves and in extending our services to mankind and sentient beings, we should also develop broad-mindedness to the utmost degree so that the significance of living and the value of life may be self-realized. From this, it can be seen that the Buddhist outlook of the universe and human life is active, positive, complete and universal. (From the standpoint of Buddhism, the universe and human life are integrated into one whole.)

## CHAPTER 2

### **A Fundamental Turning-point - Understanding the Nature of Mind**

The nature of mind is a basic problem of Buddhism, and to understand Buddhism, it is necessary for us to understand the nature of mind. What is the nature of mind? For ages this problem has been controversial among the thinkers all over the world. What philosophers and psychologists have probed so far by deduction, induction, introspection and observation only deals with the question of mind, and with some but not the whole aspect of the mind (that is to say, the scope of their study is limited to the Sixth Consciousness only), and so up to now the question of the nature of mind is still unexplored. Because of this omission, all their calculations may go wrong! The empirically-minded scientists are also ignorant how to experiment with the nature of mind, and without being able to come to any conclusion despite one attempt after another, have to let it go “pending without further discussion”.

Thought, volition and mind play such an important role in every aspect of the development and progress of every community that Psychology may rightly claim to be the major study of man, in reality, there is no basic knowledge more important than the fundamental Dharma that helps us to understand our mind and realize its self-nature, and for us to attain such understanding and realization is as important as capital for business and food and fuel for cooking. On the other hand, one who does not understand the nature of mind, is just like a blind man going the wrong direction, and surely would fall into subjective thinking though he may be totally unconscious of doing so.

#### **(A) What is Self-Nature?**

Mind and nature are fundamentally identical, but from the standpoint of the relative aspects of truth and falsehood, motion and stillness, delusion and enlightenment, they are apparently different from each other. The word “Nature” implies Fundamental Nature, also called “Void-Nature”, “Self-Nature”, “True Mind” (prior to thought-arising, True mind is Self-Nature and in this sense the two terms can be

used interchangeably), “Bhutatahata”, “Reality”, “Fundamental Face”, etc.; mind is thought, which may be called deluded mind or illusory mind, and includes feeling, impression, conception, consciousness and so forth. To use a metaphor, nature is to mind as water is to wave. Referring to their substance, water and wave may be said to be identical with each other, because of their common characteristic of wetness; as to their respective phenomenon and functioning, whereas the phenomenon of water is stillness and that of wave is motion, whereas the reflection of moonlight is helped by the stillness of water but is hindered by the motion of the wave, water and wave may be said to be different from each other. In reality, mind and nature are neither identical nor different from each other. Comparatively speaking, it is easier to know one’s own mind, which, like the wave, is always agitated and restless; owing to the non-subsidence of the mind, however, it is impossible to see the nature of mind, same as the phenomenon of stillness of water can never be seen as long as the turbulent waves are in action, and so we do not think there is such a thing as the nature of mind. To refute this fallacy, let us ask, “Is there water or not when waves are at a complete standstill?”

After all, what is nature? From the above metaphor, it may be seen that nature is the fountainhead of all thoughts, concepts and other phenomena of the mind. However, people generally take for granted that thought is worked out by the cerebral brain composed of white grey-nerve cells, but how this assumption is refuted to be unsound may be seen from the following questions reproduced from “What Sukyuni Buddha Teaches us”, an article contributed by a Buddhist scholar Chan Hoi Leung to the Enlightenment Magazine (No. 74 issue): “Where are the films of those innumerable incidents and experiences of our lifetime in store? Is it that each of those incidents and experiences is stored up by each cell or jointly by several cells of the brain? How do old cells, before dying out, pass on thousands of incidents and experiences to newly-born ones? And by what means are those memories and recollections transmitted from the old to the new cells? How is it that those memories are not emitted in the same order of precedence as they have been taken in?” In going over these questions, we can readily see that the cells of the brain are nothing

but the tool of the will and consciousness!

Take electricity for another example. Though it is indivisible and inaudible, surely we cannot deny the existence of electricity. Without electricity the bulb cannot give light; without spirit one is no better than being dead, even though his physical body may be alive! Inversely speaking, when the filament is broken, no amount of electricity can be of any avail; likewise, when the body is dead, nothing can be done.

Every material thing has its own nature, e.g., water has wetness, fire has heat, stone has hardness and herbs even in the state of hot boiling would not lose their medicinal essence at all. Inasmuch as this is true with material things, logically it follows that man, possessed of the ability to think, to understand, to study and to plan, and generally considered to be the most intelligent among all living beings, should be endowed with self-nature of Man. But what is the nature of man? My answer is this: it is "Spirit", and this spiritual nature may be also called Self-Nature or the Fundamental Nature. As Ch'an Buddhism puts it, an Enlightened mind that can realize the Ultimate Reality of the nature of mind is conducive to "understanding the mind and realizing the self-nature" - once the mind is enlightened, instantaneously the self-nature is also realized.

The substance of the self-nature of mind is great, the phenomenon of the self-nature of mind is great and the functioning of the self-nature of mind is great. It is neither created nor annihilated, neither increased nor decreased, but immutable, perfect and complete, and this characterizes the greatness of its substance; it is all-compassion, all-wisdom, happiness and purity, and this characterizes the greatness of its phenomenon; it is productive of good causes and good effects in both this world and other worlds, and also able to manifest its various profound functions, and this characterizes the greatness of its functioning.

To explain the question of self-nature (of mind) by words and figurative speech, as seen in the above, is a matter of expediency. In reality, the way to realize the self-nature is to undergo for a considerable time intensive training in the course of Thought-halting, and this is the reason why in Buddhism self-realization is most emphatically stressed. In taking up such training, one is apt to run into difficulties, for several reasons; first, those habits accumulated from the past and pas-

sions are too many to be eliminated at once, as the Avatamsaka Sutra says: "If bad karma were to assume a physical form, even the Infinite Void would not be able to contain all of them."; secondly, since what to stop (the rising thought) is the mind and what can stop the mind is also the mind itself, it is important for the practiser to keep oneself in awareness so that all effort of discipline may not lean either to the subject or to the object of the mental process. This is the reason why the Ch'an masters make it a point not to speak of Buddhism directly and plainly in oral or written language, but emphatically stress that the way to realize the self-nature and to attain Enlightenment is to discipline oneself vigorously and consistently in keeping oneself completely detached from mind, volition and consciousness. Above all, one must face difficulties without fear but in the self-confident spirit of "I wish to be virtuous and lo! Virtue is at hand", and regardless of whatever Buddhist Dharma of mind-cultivation, gradual or sudden, expedient or realistic, the nature of mind can be realized and Buddhahood can be attained all the same.

### **(B) Mind**

Because the mind is subjected to be conditioned all the time, it may become happy, unhappy, angry or greedy all suddenly, and all these are illusory minds, for which it is called by different names; "Ignorance" because of its delusion, "Karma-obstruction" because of its impeding the understanding of the self-nature, "Habit" because of its fuming and binding effect, "Klesa" because of its disturbing nature, "Bigoted View" because of its obstinacy and "Passion" because of its grasping and attachment, such minds come and go momentarily, continually and alternately.

The phenomena of mind, on careful analysis, are very complex. For one thing, the formation of every thought does not come about immediately, and for another, every thought varies in its nature. The question of psychological phenomena is treated most elaborately and thoroughly in Buddhism, and far more than what we can learn from books of General Psychology. Functionism, upheld by Western psychologists, is chiefly concerned with the question of mind and consciousness, but all that it covers on this question may be said to be

within the scope of what Buddhism calls “the Sixth Consciousness” and the “Corresponding Mental Qualities”, furthermore, even in this respect its treatment is not entirely free from errors and omissions. Behaviorism, another Western School of Psychology, contends that as there is no workable basis to experiment with the abstract question of human consciousness, we may as well make observation, experimentation and comparison of the complex behaviour of general creatures instead. Though this may help us to learn something of the mystical working conditions of the body and the Eighth Consciousness in a way, yet it presents no definite clue to the issue at all.

According to Buddhism, mind may be divided into Eight Consciousnesses - Eye Consciousness, Ear Consciousness, Nose Consciousness, Tongue Consciousness, Body Consciousness, the Sixth Consciousness (Sense-centre Consciousness), the Seventh Consciousness (Manas), and the Eighth Consciousness (Alaya). The first five Consciousnesses are sense consciousness, working in everyday life like shopmen who look after customers and goods at the door; the Sixth Consciousness, the most active of all, reacts promptly to the activities of the first five Consciousnesses, playing its role like a receptionist or warehouse man taking delivery of goods; the Seventh Consciousness, called “Manas” meaning deliberation, is bent on deliberating and making discriminations because of its obstinate holding on to assuming the Eighth Consciousness to be the self, and for this reason, is the source of suffering, playing its role like one who is prompted by his subjective judgement to receive goods at his own risk; the Eighth Consciousness, “Alaya” translated as “storehouse” of memories since the beginningless time and also of knowledge or skills acquired in the past, is the repository of all good and bad “seeds” like a large warehouse taking in goods of all sorts altogether. Combining truth and falsehood, it is the root of the other Consciousnesses, and when sentient beings undergo reincarnations in the sixfold states of transmigratory existence, it receives rewards and retributions according to the good and bad karma of the first six Consciousnesses, thus in that role it exercises a tremendous and powerful influence. These Eight Consciousnesses are also called eight “Minds”. Besides, in the various mental phenomena of the mind, there are fifty-one Associated Mental Properties.- In a group called “Universal Operative

Associated Mental Properties” there are five Associated Mental Properties necessary in the thought-arising process - contact, arousing of thought, sensation, conception and thinking; another group of mental properties called “Vibhavana”, in which the mental properties are non-associated with one another owing to their different conditions and phenomena, consists of five mental properties - desire, “surpassing interpretation”, thought, meditation, and wisdom; there are eleven good mental properties - faith, shame, humility, non-greed, non-hatred, non-infatuation, energy, serenity, carefulness, indifference and harmlessness; in the group of Fundamental Vexing Passions are lust, anger, stupidity, pride, doubt and erraneous views; in the group of “Subsidiary Vexing Passions” engendered as a result of the arising of the Fundamental Vexing Passions, there are twenty altogether, - anger, enmity, vexation, hypocrisy, dishonesty, deceit, arrogance, harmfulness, envy, selfishness, shamelessness, imprudence, lack of faith, idleness, carelessness, indolence, recklessness, forgetfulness, wrong judgment and confusion; then there are four neutral mental properties, which are neither meritorious nor demeritorious - regret, sleep, seeking and waiting on.

Like an officer in command of his soldiers, the eight Consciousnesses have a certain group and specified number of mental properties allotted under their control, the first five consciousnesses to have thirty-four, the Sixth Consciousness fifty-one, the Seventh Consciousness eighteen and the Eighth Consciousness but only five.

This brief and condensed statement of the eight Consciousnesses and the fifty-one Mental Properties may serve to give us some idea of how the question of psychic phenomena is treated at great length in Buddhism, but in view of their infinite nature, it is impossible to discuss them here elaborately. To make an intensive study of the consciousnesses in question, we may refer to the Dharmalaksana Sect, also called Wei-Shih-Chung, which deals with the subject most thoroughly and elaborately. Since all things are of one entity, we may ask, why should not all the complexity be reduced to simplicity? The answer is this: the aim of this Buddhist Sect to make such a penetrating and comprehensive analysis of this issue is to teach us the fundamental truth that all things are unreal and illusory and it is only with this understanding that we may free ourselves from craving, grasping and attachment;

therefore, to explain the aspects and characteristics of things fully is but to eliminate them completely, and to stress “Mind-Only” is but to transmute consciousness into wisdom, as only the Formless Form is the True Form and only the Mindless Mind is the True Mind!

### **(C) The Interrelationships of Mind, Things and Nature**

Mind and things are generally identified as a pair of duality, but in reality, they are not—two. From the standpoint of Buddhism, mind and things are but two indivisible aspects of one complete and perfect entity. The saying “because of things, there is mind” points to the presence of the Sixth Consciousness, as for example, at the sight of a cup, its image is formed in the mind at once; inversely speaking, “because of mind, things are manifestable” tells us that although the cup is objectively present, “one may look but may not see when the mind is not on the object”; again, in the case of a Buddhist adept who is able to transmute consciousness into wisdom, the mind is used to be detached from things and objective projections of the mind, and so the saying, “because of mind, things are manifestable”, shows how under such condition, the subjective mind, or rather the Sixth Consciousness, is actively at work. From this, we can see that things are where mind is, and mind is where things are; inversely speaking, apart from the mind, nothing exists, and apart from things, there is no mind; thus it may be reiterated that mind and things are no duality at all.

This applies not only to the interrelationship between mind and things, but also to the interrelationships of mind, things and nature; in other words, these three are undifferentiated from one another, for mind and things are nothing but the projections of self-nature. While mind and things are active, causative and relative, nature is passive, non-causative and absolute; however, relativity and the Absolute are not separate things and no duality at all, for apart from relativity there is nothing absolute and only in relativity can the Absolute be realized, inversely speaking, apart from the Absolute, there is no relativity, for “As-It-Is”, opposite to the relative, is the Absolute. Thus the Heart Sutra says: “Matter (material phenomenon) is Void (of its nature) and Void is Matter”. This points out that things and nature are identical with each other. “All material forms, mountains, rivers,

the earth and the Void are but things of the profoundly Enlightened Mind”, says the Surangama Sutra. Describing his own experience of spiritual culture, Mencius said in the same vein: “Everything of the universe is in my possession.” Likewise, the Heart Sutra says: “sensation, conception, predisposition and consciousness (psychic phenomena) are also the same (as matter is to Void). “Besides these sayings, the metaphor of water and waves also corroborates the truth that mind and nature are not two things.

A well-known Buddhist saying “Fundamentally uncreated is the mind but it exists through things” may be considered to be in line with Materialism. But “Fundamentally Uncreated”, which should not be taken as identical with non-being, is a mystical state of “Fundamentally Unborn”, it is something unique in Buddhism as well as the cream of Buddhism. This is totally inexplicable and can be realized only by self-experiencing.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Problem of Practising Buddhism

Knowledge that is purely theoretical but impractical is definitely useless. It is on the aspects of self-cultivation and self-realization that Buddhism stresses most strongly, and from this standpoint, Buddhism may be said to be Empiricism. Indeed, every theory, every tenet and every saying of Buddhism are derived from practical experience; according to Buddhism, theory and cultivation, understanding and practice are fundamentally integrated into one complete whole, thus they are indivisible and complementary to each other. Same as before going out, we have to decide our destination, so before discussing the various methods of cultivation, let us summarize the main points of the objective of Buddhism.

#### (A) The objective of Buddhism

As explained in the previous chapter, all the phenomena of the universe and human life are merely illusions of the mind arising and passing out in succession and as such, are the factor interlocking the triple chain of Ignorance, Karma and Suffering, all of which are also produced by the illusory mind. Therefore, the objective of Buddhism is to rectify conduct, to eliminate conceptual thoughts, to turn ignorance into Enlightenment and to understand the mind and realize the self-nature; to wipe out all subjective illusions and temporary vexing passions and to realize the eternal uncreated indestructible objective Truth of Dharma-realm – the ever-abiding True Mind; to open the mind to the Buddha-Wisdom to realize that samsara and klesa are fundamentally unattainable, and basically to liberate oneself from transmigratory existence in this world and beyond, and eventually to attain the state of Sukhavati where there is no suffering but supreme happiness; and to work actively and broadly to enlighten oneself as well as others and ultimately to realize supreme and perfect Enlightenment, commonly called “Buddha”!

#### (B) Some fundamental prerequisites

For Buddhists to cultivate some basic virtues of manhood is just as important as for a builder to lay a solid foundation for a skyscraper;

1. Be always on the alert to examine one's own faults. Since to err is human, it is necessary for him to undergo self-introspection constantly and diligently, to feel repentent and to do his utmost to rectify his faults; to cultivate honesty and loyalty, to exercise prudence in speech and selection of friends, to overcome greed, hatred and arrogance and to refrain from killing, stealing, carnality and lying, by all means.
2. Be always compassionate, loving and helpful to those in distress, as though their sufferings were our own, for by putting ourselves in their position, the inherent quality of compassion would be spontaneously aroused; the two sayings of the Avatamsaka Sutra, "That which pleases sentient beings also pleases the Tathagata" and "One would rather pray for the deliverance of sentient beings from suffering than for one's own happiness", call upon us to cultivate compassion as broadly as possible in rendering our service to mankind.
3. To set up Right Belief. We should firmly believe that unavoidably birth is to be followed by death, everything before us is changing and impermanent, and as can be verified deductively, there is no self, and also we should believe in the infinity of the worlds and sentient beings and in the Law of Karma (Cause and Effect) operating in and beyond this world, etc.; besides, self-examination, being a vital prerequisite for cultivating Buddhism, should be consistently and regularly practised.
4. To make the Great Vow. Will power and strong determination is a fundamental prerequisite for achieving success, and this is particularly true when we have to deal with the momentous problem of life and death. Therefore, to cultivate Buddhism, we should vow with firm determination to liberate the innumerable sentient beings from suffering, vow to get rid of the innumerable vexing passions, vow to learn the infinite Dharmas and vow to attain Unsurpassable Buddhahood.
5. To put Buddhism into practice. This must be carried out sincerely, perseveringly, energetically in all earnestness, without self-assertion and without deceiving ourselves and others. If learners of Buddhism fulfil all these fundamental requirements, it may be safely assumed that they practically live up to the Buddhist Way of Life.

### **(C) General rules of mind-cultivation**

The word "Buddha", implying Enlightenment, means the Enlightened One. Thus cultivating Buddhism is cultivating awareness, and developing awareness is cultivating the mind. To repair things, we need tools, but to cultivate the mind, we have to depend on the mind itself. In other words, it is only when there is awareness that the mind can be freed of illusion, therefore awareness should be kept up continually and persistently until the mind is completely denuded of conceptual thought and then one may be spontaneously enlightened. From this standpoint, Buddhism may be said to be a Course of Self-education and Self-Rectification.

In reality, there are no hard and fast rules for mind-cultivation, for just as there are different kinds of medicine for different diseases, there are infinite Dharmas to cure the infinite "habits". The Dharma of mind-cultivation, however numerous, may be classified under the Six Paramitas: 1. Charity to eliminate greediness, 2. Discipline to cure laxity, 3. Forbearance to overcome hatred, 4. Energy to cure laziness, 5. Meditation to calm down a confused mind and 6. Wisdom to dispel ignorance. The Six Paramitas may be further simplified under the Triple Studies, namely, Discipline, Concentration and Wisdom. By keeping Discipline, one refrains from evil action, and if there is no bad karma, there will be no bad effect. On the other hand, without discipline, the mind would become defiled by wrong doing and would not be pure at all. From this it can be seen that Discipline is one of the most fundamental things for cultivating Buddhism, and this is the reason why every Dharma said by the Buddha always upholds Discipline. Samadhi means intense concentration. As the mind is usually agitated and unsettled all the time, it is highly important that it should be kept under control by concentration, and this is the reason why every Dharma said by the Buddha always stresses the importance of developing concentration. Wisdom refers to the light of illumination, for it is only when the mind is 'illuminating' (that is, when it is in awareness, it is undifferentiated) that it can be free from illusions, and for this reason, the Buddha says that every Dharma helps us to cultivate wisdom. To use a metaphor, Discipline is like guarding oneself against burglars, Concentration like catching them red-handed on the spot and Wisdom like

putting them to death. Furthermore, any of the Three Studies includes the other two, e.g., Concentration and Wisdom in Discipline, Wisdom and Discipline in Concentration, etc., and all of them, complementary to one another and mutually influencing each other, are integrated into one harmonious Whole. In short, fundamentally Discipline, Concentration and Wisdom are the complete and all-embracing functions of the Self-Nature.

Although the principles of mind-cultivation are generally the same, nevertheless, the methods to put them into practice, are diversified and radically different from one another. According to the Ch'an Sect, the way to attain sudden enlightenment is to point directly to one's own mind, and another Ch'an practice is to concentrate with all attention on a so-called 'Hua-Tou', a profound and unfathomable phrase or sentence to strip the mind of all thoughts so that there remains nothing but the self-mind; the Name-reciting method of the Pure Land Sect is to recite, repeat and hold on to the holy name of Amitabha Buddha with such intense and persistent concentration that as a result of long diligent practice, the mind would become oblivious of both the subject and the object of recitation, and the moment it is completely unperturbed, this is the Pure Mind itself; according to the School of Discipline, one should always observe and live up to the prescribed Laws and tenets of Buddhism at all times in everyday life and if one practises in accord with the principle of Buddhism, the mind will be free of illusions; from its elaborate and penetrating analysis, the Dharmalaksana Sect teaches us the fundamental truth that all phenomena are illusory and in order to understand this clearly, we have to transmute consciousness into Wisdom. Besides, there are other Practices to cultivate Buddhism, such as reciting sutras, ritual performance, preaching and expounding Buddhism, and so forth, which are too many to be described here. Those numerous methods, just like the medicine to be necessarily discontinued after the cure, should be discarded as soon as their common objective has been accomplished.

**(D) To look into the mind - a fundamental simple method of mind-cultivation.**

Since the fundamental objective of Buddhism is to liberate oneself

from the suffering of birth and death, and the practical way to achieve this goal is to understand the mind and to realize the self-nature, therefore, the first thing to attain such understanding and realization, just like cutting a tree to begin with its root, is to discipline oneself vigorously in the practice of looking into the mind. From the saying of the Mahayana Meditation Sutra "If one can see one's own mind, his deliverance will be absolute and complete, but if he cannot do so, he will be held in bondage forever.", the importance of this practice may be clearly seen. But how to practise the method of looking within? First of all, lay down everything in your mind and refrain from thinking of anything, good or bad, of the past or the future. Then look directly of what is in your mind and instantly you will find momentary thoughts coming and going alternately in succession; meanwhile, neither grasp them nor cling to them nor reject them deliberately but look into them objectively and attentively (to be aware means to look into). The moment you are aware of a thought, at once it disappears, but only to be followed too soon by another and many more, therefore, as long as the process of the arising and vanishing of thought is going on, and even when there is no arising of thought, still effort of awareness must not be relaxed at all. Given sufficient practice in due course of time (by that time awareness becomes illumination), the mind would be totally free of thought, and then the state of Void would be realized. Now all the various phenomena before us, which we can clearly perceive by seeing or hearing (non-void), are nothing but objective realities (as they are), yet we are entirely unperturbed and free of any conceptual thought (non-being), and this is the so-called Fundamental Face of the Self-Nature. (Please note: such state is absolutely beyond words). It is vitally important that we should see the reality of all phenomena clearly and correctly so that we may correspond with them without fail, and this may be called realizing the self-nature (from this, it may be seen that understanding the mind and realizing the self-nature is but a matter-of-fact-ness, common, ordinary and nothing unusual about it). As soon as the self-nature of the mind is realized, we can easily see that Ignorance, Karma and Suffering, produced and conditioned by causes, are devoid of self-nature, thereby the mind would be detached from the influence of the phenomena and gradually

would be free of delusions. This method of mental discipline is called Prajnaparamita, meaning Wisdom to carry oneself to the Other Shore.

Though the aforementioned method may be practised at any time of the day, however, to intensify awareness, it should be consistently practised at all times, whether walking, standing, sitting or lying down, at least a good many times everyday. But for those usually too much occupied with wandering thoughts, the practice of sitting-meditation may be recommended as a measure of remedy. This meditation may be either single cross-legged sitting, that is, by putting right toes on the left thigh, or preferably, double cross-legged sitting. During the sitting, the posture of the body should be upright and not bent, balanced and not leaning to either side. With the right palm placed over the left one and the thumbs joined at tip-ends, assuming a particular form of mandala, both hands are put at the place, which is below the navel and above the center between the cross-legged ends. With eyes closed barely enough to shut off the light and the tip of the tongue slightly touching the upper part of the closed mouth, breathing should be natural and easy, and not to be hindered by tight clothing and underwear. Avoid sitting where draught may be accessible, and also take care to keep the knees warm during the meditation. As soon as meditation is over, rub the hands against each other and also the face all over to help blood circulation to good effect. Time allotted for meditation should be from half to one hour at least, and of course, the longer, the better. In meditation awareness is developed, and so at the advanced stage of meditation, one can be spontaneously and alertly aware of everything anywhere at any time. Inversely speaking, the more highly developed is the capacity of awareness, the more intensified is the power of meditation, and when the mind is completely free of delusions, as a result of this development, the self-nature can be seen very clearly.

#### **(E) People and events are opportunities for mind-cultivation.**

To have realized the self-nature is by no means the ending of mind-cultivation, on the contrary, it is the high time that one should develop awareness all the more so as to wipe out those long accumulated habits gradually, and also should look upon people and affairs in the daily

life as opportunities to intensify his mental and spiritual discipline so as to overcome passions and vexations at last; indeed, it is nowhere but in difficulties and adversities that he may best enhance awareness, as the great Chinese Sage says: “distressed in mind and perplexed in (their) thoughts, and then they arise to vigorous reformation.”

While practising the method of looking into the mind to wipe out the manifold habits, to empty the mind of subjective views, illusions and ego-attachment and to reduce craving and passions, not only should one develop resolute firmness, courage and self-reliance but also should exercise extraordinary patience to tackle difficulties and to remove obstacles in the way, and the greater difficulty, the greater determination and the greater patience, then and only then, may he achieve good progress in the development of Buddhahood. Again, when awareness is at the advanced stage of development, more often than not, the mind is beset with confusion, vexation and frustration, but such phenomenon shows that because of the remarkable development of awareness, all the remaining habits, one and all, cannot help emerging from the Eighth Consciousness, where they are stored, and considering that they are illusory and devoid of self-nature, one should neither grasp them nor reject them but look into them calmly and objectively, and the more they emerge, the more they are removed, and once they have been thoroughly cleaned up in this manner, the mind will be spontaneously and completely tranquil, as the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment says: “One who can perceive that (Ignorance is illusory like) a flower in the sky, will not be turned by the samsara’s wheel.”

#### **(F) The Name-Reciting Method - another miraculous, efficacious method**

Though the Buddhist Dharmas of mind-cultivation are various and numerous, yet none of them may be said to be superior or inferior to the others since the adoption of every method is largely determined by the question of whether it is adaptable to the learners or not. To a good many people, who may think that those Dharmas, which depend on self-effort entirely, may be too difficult for them to overcome their deepseated habits, the Name-reciting Method - very simple yet highly efficacious and universally adaptable to learners of Buddhism at all levels - is therefore presented here for their attention.

Genuine faith and firm resolution are the two important elements for carrying out the Reciting Method successfully and should be fostered by the reciter who holds on to "Nam-Mo-Amita-Buddha" earnestly and consistently with all attention, whether in walking, standing, sitting lying down in daily life, and whether he is happy or sad, at leisure or doing something of non-mental work, he should carry on the repetition without break. At the beginning of the practice likely he may experience a lot of interruptions, but as soon as he is aware of them, he should carry on his recitation with single-minded devotion and undivided attention. The most fundamental thing of recitation is to keep his mind free from conceptual thought, and then the recitation can be sincerely held on. In due course of time when the mind is clarified in this manner, at once a tranquil mind would be realized.

Unfortunately, the Reciting Method is generally misunderstood to be a superstition, but how one may overcome greed, hatred and stupidity by every repetition of the holy name is but little realized. Again, how this profound and miraculous Dharma works out under the principle that the moment the mind is free from illusion, at once it is self-illuminating with wisdom, is utterly incomprehensible to outsiders. Some Buddhists may think that the practice is too simple to produce such far-reaching results, but there should be no doubt about it if they understand the truth that just because it is in the chores of everyday life, Buddhism is fundamentally universal, perfect and all embracing, and should they aspire to something higher, this simply shows that they are still not free from concepts. In reality, the Name-reciting Method brings all the Six Paramitas into operation simultaneously at one stroke; to recite wholeheartedly without abiding in any thought is Charity; to recite without greed and hatred is Discipline; to recite without making distinctions of "I" and "others" is Forbearance; to recite with all attention and single-minded devotion is energy; to recite with an unperturbed mind is Meditation and to recite with complete intense awareness is Wisdom. While from the Reciting Method only adepts may know how to cultivate the Six Paramitas at one stroke, however, those of inferior intellect and dull mentality who practise it persistently and diligently, may also enjoy at the time of their accomplishment its benefits to the full extent.

The Mahasamghata-Sutra says: "To recite the Holy Name of Amita Buddha may be said to be tantamount to cultivating the profound and supreme Ch'an." The Ch'an meditational practice, relying solely on self-effort, however, is no easy accomplishment, for according to Dharma, if one is to liberate oneself from rebirth into the sixfold states of transmigration, it is necessary for him to remove subjective views, perceptions and conceptions totally and completely; moreover, as a great variety of illusory phenomena, elusive and unpredictable like the hidden sun behind dark clouds, may emerge and disappear once and again during the meditation, and unless the meditator has the power of insight to perceive them clearly, most likely he would be deceived by them and thereby obstructed from making progress towards Enlightenment. The Name-reciting Method, however, involves both self-effort and other-effort. If repetition is piously, vigorously and persistently practised and held on, positively, the mind would be completely free of illusion. Meanwhile, with his genuine faith and firm resolution, added to the Blessings of the Buddha's Great Vow, the reciter, once he has squared up all his retributions in this life, would be karma-free and then would transcend beyond the Three Realms to put up in the Pure Land. The fact is noteworthy that all sutras and sastras speak with one voice to commend the Reciting Method, because of its inconceivable profound functioning.

## CHAPTER 4

### Refuting some Erraneous Criticisms of Buddhism

**(A) Buddhism is NOT a treatise on “Mind-only”.**

In the view of those who think that it deals with Mind-only, Buddhism should be obsolete at the present age of Dialectical Materialism. However, as far as their essence is concerned, Philosophy and Buddhism are fundamentally different from each other, whereas the former is primarily concerned with the interrelationship of beings to thought, the latter deals with self-realization of the True Mind so as to deliver oneself from the fundamental question of birth and death, therefore the two issues should not be mixed up at all. To clarify this misunderstanding, it is deemed necessary to reiterate here, as previously explained, what Buddhism is.

According to Buddhism, there are two kinds of Truth, the Absolute and the Relative. The Absolute Truth (of the Void) manifests “illumination but is always still”, and this is absolutely inexplicable. On the other hand, the Relative Truth (of the Unreal) manifests “stillness but is always illuminating”, which means that it is immanent in everything. In taking up the question of Mind-only and Things-only, let us understand clearly that here the word “only” means “chiefly” in the order of the first and the second. Buddhism tells us that the six Consciousnesses (minds) formed by the six sense-organs responding to the six sense-objects respectively (things), and the Buddhist saying “The mind is fundamentally uncreated but exists through environments”, point out to us that all human perceptions are the projections of the objective phenomena, firstly of things and secondly of the mind, and it is because of the co-existence of these two that the Sixth Consciousness comes into being. Furthermore, incidentally what Buddhism expounds on the various phenomena of Nature also corresponds with the tenets of Dialectical Materialism. In view of the extremely active nature of subjective thought, however, Buddhism has this saying: “Everything is nothing but the manifestation of the mind”, and by pointing out that “Mind-only” refers to illusions and bias arising from conceptual thought, Buddhism warns us that not only we should be always aware of them

but also should take every positive action to wipe them out altogether. From this stand-point, it is obvious that Buddhism not only proves itself to be positively uncompromising with the School of Mind-only but is also fundamentally different from Western philosophers' Theory of Mind-only. From its elaborate exposition of the Five Aggregates, the Twelve Entrances and the Eighteen Realms, Buddhism not only deals with the intimate relationship of being and thought at great length, but on that subject also contributes some profound principles, such as "mind and things are identical and not dualistic", for which it may be said that Buddhism deals with mind as well as things. Considering that mind and things are but illusory phenomena arising and ceasing alternately and continually in succession, as the Sutra of the Mean says, "Thus, everything is void", also it may be said that Buddhism is neither Mind-only nor Things-only. Now we may see that whatever it says of mind or things, it does not abide to the theory of Mind-only or to Things-only, for its objective, pure and simple, is to call upon everyone to get rid of one's subjective thoughts, bias and attachments and to return to the perception of objective reality. For the followers of Buddhism, there is nothing to grasp, nothing to reject, both being and non-being are on a par with each other, and thus, in terms of time and space one can be absolutely unhindered and free. Therefore those who say that Buddhism deals with mind-only, only show their partial and limited understanding of the issue.

Engels says in "The Natural Dialectic Method": "The Dialectic Method deals with the study of concepts, and among the highly advanced level of mankind, only the Sakyumuni's School and Greek philosophers are the unique possessors of that sort of knowledge." From this, it may be confidently anticipated that in keeping with the anthropological, socio-historical development of mankind and the mind or consciousness, the Dharma of Buddhism would in the course of time be more and more substantiated and disseminated.

### **(B) Buddhism goes further than moral preaching**

The criticism that Buddhism merely urges people to do good is paradoxical. Considering that its all-inclusive function has to do with everything, great or small, of the universe, there is no question that

Buddhism preaches and promotes morality at all levels. In view of the fact that the world is dominated by greed, hatred, stupidity, arrogance and selfishness everywhere, Buddhism therefore prescribes the Five precepts of Discipline and the Ten Meritorious Deeds to cure human ills. But the fundamental thing of Buddhism is that not only it teaches us to practise virtues but also NOT to abide in the virtues, this is to say, to attain the goal of Enlightenment, every good act should be carried out in the spirit of “selflessness”, otherwise enlightenment can never be absolute and complete. But this lofty principle of Buddhism is rather difficult for the average man to grasp and understand.

**(C) Buddhism is NOT negative and pessimistic Escapism.**

To say that “Buddhism is negative Escapism” is both wrong and untrue. As a matter of fact, like other human beings, Buddhists have to care for their basic wants of the body and to work for their living all the same everyday, and on the top of that, not only should they maintain their living in that remarkable self-reliant spirit as shown in the Buddhist dictum, “No work for the day, no food for the day”, but also they should cultivate awareness at all times in everyday life so as to keep themselves from going wrong and to free themselves from all suffering. Thus the Six Patriarch says: “Buddhism is inseparable from the world but also aware of the world”; The Lotus Sutra also says in the same vein: “Buddhism lies nowhere but rightfully in the phenomena of the universe.” and “Speech and undertakings beneficial to others and necessary for maintaining one’s own living are in accord with Buddhism”. Furthermore, wherever they are, Buddhists should not be away from sentient beings, as The Avatamsaka Sutra says: “If there are no sentient beings, no Bodhisattva will ever attain Supreme Perfect Enlightenment”, this teaches us to be always in close touch with sentient beings and not to forsake them on any account. A saying from The Vimalakirti-nirdesa Sutra, “to be at the service of sentient beings with all humility”, shows clearly that in Buddhism the spirit of self-sacrifice is a thing of fundamental importance in rendering service to others. Positively, Buddhism is no escapism from the world. Meanwhile, as a result of cultivating Buddhism, when power of concentration is highly developed and the mind is well-disciplined, we can overcome difficulties

fearlessly, look into problems deeply and deal with them correctly. Thus in conducting daily affairs, in learning, in rendering help and services to mass of people, Buddhism exerts tremendous beneficial influence, and as a result, a great, positive, bright, happy life, embodying the spirit of true freedom and equality, would be realized. The benefits of Buddhism are well-summed up in the precise words of the late Buddhist scholar Mr. Li Shek-tsung: "Buddhism aims at the realization of the truth that the nature of everything is void and every phenomenon is illusory and unreal, and when this is realized, then and only then, it may be said that there is really something to do and worth doing." Would we still say that Buddhism is unrelated to life?

When applying to vain-glorious material things and the Five Passions, however, Buddhism is not without the passive quality of indifference. If this is conceded to be the negative aspect of Buddhism, in reality, it teaches us that to move on with big strides towards the Path of Enlightenment calls for the exertion of every energetic, positive and intensive effort!

#### **(D) Buddhism is NOT established on the basis of Theology.**

Buddhism is a rational belief, pure and simple, and also may be said to be a living practical knowledge of empirical metaphysics. All in all, what it expounds on the question of the cosmic life comes from the wisdom of self-experiencing and is fundamentally different from irrational, blindly-accepted dogmas. Furthermore, from the standpoint of Buddhism, Mind, Buddha and sentient beings are undifferentiated and on a par with one another, and to every activity of the Sixth Consciousness, the Law of Causality, generally interpreted as "reap as you sow", automatically applies: from these Buddhist tenets it may be seen that to the concept of some religion that the "Creator" has the highest authority over everyone and everything, Buddhism is fundamentally and diametrically opposed. Though Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are at different levels regarding their development of awareness, both of them are classified in the same category of Buddhists, who practise the Dharma to benefit others as well as themselves and in the spirit of self-abnegation dedicate themselves to serve sentient beings and mankind. However, owing to the fact that many heretical beliefs and superstitious

practices in connection with demons and spirits handed down from social customs over thousand years ago, are wrongly attributed to be something of Buddhism, not only the Truth of Buddhism is obscured consequently but understanding of Buddhism is also badly distorted, and what a gross injustice this has done to the Buddhist Cause. Again, because of the misbehaviour of some corrupt and degrading Buddhists, not infrequently Buddhism is open to unfair criticism and blasphemous attack. Obviously, this has nothing to do with Buddhism itself, for no one but those black sheep themselves should be held fully responsible for their own doing.

## CONCLUSION

From the preceding chapters, we may sum up that Buddhism is not a superstition but a rational belief, it is not out of touch with the world, but in and beyond the world, it is not finite but infinite, and rather than oneself alone, it serves to benefit others; because of this, for over two thousand years it has been able to stand firmly in the world and to carry on its great work unceasingly and continually to the present day. Indeed, since its inception into China in the reign of Emperor Han Ming-ti, the long duration and the vast extent of its propagation may be said to be unparalled and incomparable, and the impact of its contribution to the culture, academy and thinkers of the world is tremendous and remarkable. Also, the wonderful profound and elaborate works of the Tripitaka of Sutra, Vinaya and Sastra consisting of more than eight thousand volumes, no amount of words can praise. Suffice to say, Buddhism embodies Philosophy, Science and Religion, yet is neither Philosophy, nor Science nor Religion. Buddhism is Buddhism.

Although Buddhism is actively and intimately related to our everyday life, we do not think the common people can grasp a clear understanding of its teaching at all, unless it is presented in such a simple colloquial way as to make it easily readable. With this end in view, therefore I attempt to introduce this vital subject as concisely and plainly as possible, for the kind attention of my readers.

Should readers take up Buddhism in good faith and go deeply into it, there is no telling how abundantly and richly their worthy efforts of cultivation would be rewarded!

## PART TWO

### CHAPTER 5

#### The Frustrated and Despairing Buddhists

On the basis of their cultivation, Buddhists may be classified into the following groups. Firstly, some learned Buddhists take up Buddhism merely for academic learning and all their cultivation is to study the Scripture and to attend sermons, but they make no serious and determined effort to put it into practice at all. Defending their indifference toward cultivation, they distort the Buddhist saying, "Fundamentally Buddhahood is immanent in everyone and needs neither cultivation nor verification." Owing to their lack of cultivation, they cannot tackle their life problems in the right way, nor can they prevent themselves from suffering frustrations at all. Secondly, a number of Buddhist devotees, who have little or no understanding of the principle of cultivation, usually do their cultivation rather ignorantly, e.g. if the cultivation deals with things, they cling to the notion of things, and if it deals with the mind, they cling to the notion of the self; from their point of view, cultivation depends on external aids, and if they have the fortune to meet a celebrated Buddhist Master and to learn the supreme Dharma from him, they would be able to remove their vexing passions and accumulated habits. As they are totally unaware of their own passions and habits emerging in everyday life, they allow themselves to be dominated and carried away by them all the time. As long as their cultivation is dependent on external help, rather than the practice of self-introspection, they have missed the crucial point of cultivation, consequently, no matter how hard they may try, they can get nowhere in the quest of Enlightenment. Thirdly, some Buddhists who have long experienced Life's hardship are firmly entrenched in the belief that Buddhism would help them to liberate themselves from suffering in and beyond this world and so they take up the Dharma of cultivation in all earnestness. However, despite their long and diligent practice in reciting sutra and mantra, in Name-Reciting, or in meditation, to their bitter disappointment they find that they have made no

progress at all; in fact, the more methods they practise, the more confusion and the more frustration they have. In desperation one may say "I'm bound to fail. It is all due to my bad karma. What can I do? I'm so helpless, etc. etc."

If the cultivation of those aforementioned groups of Buddhists is to be assessed, it may be said that the first group does not understand the importance of practising Buddhism, the second group is ignorant of the fundamental objective of practising Buddhism and the third group does not know clearly how to practise intensively and thoroughly the methods of cultivation. Consequently, though seekers of Dharma are many, yet understanding practisers are comparatively few, and practisers who can realize the mind and the self-nature are still less. These frustrated and depressed Buddhists who are ignorant of the way of Buddhism may be aptly described "to return from the vast Storehouse of Treasury empty-handed", and how deplorable this is!

## CHAPTER 6

### The Importance of Cultivation

In the Three Treasuries also called the Tripitaka (the Sutra, Vinaya and Sastra) and the Twelve Divisions of Mahayana Canons, is Buddhism most comprehensively embodied and treated, and in the main, these Buddhist Classics are classified under four Headings, namely, Doctrine, Principle, Cultivation and Fruition. The first category covers all the Teachings of Buddha, the second expounds all the principles and precepts of Buddhism, the third includes the various methods of cultivation and the fourth deals with development of Buddhahood by cultivation leading to the attainment of Enlightenment. Apparently, the first two categories fall within the scope of theory, pure and simple, and the last two are concerned with the practical aspects of Buddhism. As a matter of fact, all the theories of Buddhism come from self-experience and self-realization, therefore all of them are practical and practicable. In other words, in Buddhism there is no doctrine that is merely theoretical and impractical, and also there is no cultivation that is blindly accepted and not based on some working principle. Thus these four aspects of Buddhism, Doctrine, Principle, Cultivation and Fruition, are interrelated and complementary to one another, individually, they are separate by themselves, yet collectively they are integrated as a whole.

From this it may be clearly seen that the objective of Buddhism not only calls for understanding its Doctrine but also for translating understanding into action. The necessity of cultivation cannot be too strongly stressed; to what extent we may be benefited by Buddhism entirely depends on how intensive is our effort of cultivation. It is only by practising Buddhism wholeheartedly and by self-experiencing that we may realize the theory of Buddhism is complete, perfect and absolutely impartial; also it is only by persistent and vigorous cultivation that we may wipe out illusions and attachments gradually, that we may experience by self realization the objective reality of the True Nature to be in harmony with the reality of the phenomena of the universe. It is only by cultivation that we may attain right understanding of Buddhism, and the more the practice, the better the understanding; it is because

the theoretical and practical aspects of Buddhism are mutually complementary with each other and mutually influencing each other that understanding and experiencing, principle and practice, are integrated into one complete whole.

## CHAPTER 7

### The Aim of Cultivation

The Buddhist methods of self-cultivation such as sutra-reading, ritual worship, abundant offering and charitable practices, strict observance of the Canons of Discipline, Name-reciting, Ch'an Meditation, taking a journey to visit venerable monks living in secluded places, and so forth are numerous and diversified. Now one may ask, what induces those enthusiastic learners to cultivate Buddhism? It is vitally important for us to know the correct answer to this fundamental question, for if we do not understand the object of cultivation, most likely our cultivation would be perfunctory and careless, and even long hard practice would be fruitless and wasteful. In short, without understanding the true aim of cultivation, no matter how hard we may practise, our cultivation would be hardly productive.

"It is for that Fundamental Matter, that Great Cause," says the Lotus Sutra, "that the Buddha appears in this world." That Fundamental Matter, that Great Cause, is this: "In order that sentient beings may open the sight of Buddha-Wisdom to attain purity, the Buddha appears in this world; in order to show them the sight of Buddha-Wisdom, he appears in this world; in order to awaken them to the sight of Buddha-Wisdom, he appears in this world; in order that they may enter themselves into the sight of Buddha-Wisdom, he appears in this world." The fact is noteworthy that since the propagation of Buddhism in this world for over two thousand years, all the Dharmas aim at accomplishing this fundamental mission: to open, to show, to awaken and to enter Buddha-Wisdom. What is Buddha-Wisdom? It is Enlightenment that is immanent in every one. Broad, extensive, all-embracing, illuminating, eternal and immutable — this is the substance of Enlightenment; pure, still, tranquil and omnipresent in terms of time and space — this is the phenomenon of Enlightenment; responding spontaneously to concurrent conditions and illuminating freely and unobtrusively everywhere — this is the functioning of Enlightenment. Because it reflects the true form of everything, it is called Reality; because it is also the absolute nature of all things, it is called Dharma-nature. Owing to the fact that it has been

made obscured by our deep-rooted habits of prejudice and subjective thinking, not only it is not easily known and detected by us, but also the truth as expounded by Buddhism, that it is immanent in all of us, is considered to be incredible. In delusion, we are unable to see the reality of everything before us, consequently ignorance causes suffering. In coping with this situation, it is absolutely necessary for us to go the Way of Buddhism so that we may know how to open Buddha-Wisdom, how to reveal Buddha-Wisdom, how to awaken to Buddha-Wisdom and how to enter into Buddha-Wisdom ourselves. Though carrying out these four-some steps may involve different working processes, in the main, all of them work for the fundamental goal, that is, to understand the mind and the self-nature and then, with this understanding, we come to realize the mind and the self-nature by self-experiencing. It is only by understanding the mind and the self-nature that we shall not be blind to the causes and effects of all the phenomena around us, that we shall be able to overcome our passions and habits, and then we may advance more and more in the quest of Enlightenment until the highest development of Buddhahood is attained. But if we do not understand the mind and the self-nature, we can never be free from the evil influence of our habits and passions and also we can never be free from suffering at all, and in that event, all our effort of cultivation would come to nothing and would be as inefficient and ineffective as the attempt to put things in order in a dark room. The Avatamsaka Sutra says: "If one does not understand one's own mind, how can he know the Right Way? It is because of the perverted mind that he only increases his evil deeds." The Sandinirmocana Sutra also says: "If one does not understand the Dharma of Formlessness, he can hardly wipe out contaminations." According to the Vairocana Sutra, "Bodhi means understanding the reality of self-mind." From this, it may be clearly seen that to practise Buddhism, we should cultivate self-awareness; by developing awareness, we can also develop concentration and wisdom to understand the mind and the self-nature, so that we may wipe out our various habits and realize the Truth of Life by self-experiencing; so that we may turn subjective thinking into objective awareness and look deeply into things before us from their phenomena to their substance, liberate ourselves from the suffering of birth and death in this world and then attain the supreme

and perfect **Enlightenment** — this is practically the gist of **Buddhism**, and mind you, it is also the fundamental objective of **Buddhism**!

Some of us may say that to realize the mind and the self-nature is too high a goal for the ordinary people to understand. But we should not forget for a moment that **Buddhism** has turned out a variety of methods of cultivation to meet the needs of all people of varying root and mentality, and that is **why**, besides the **One Vehicle**, the **Buddha** also talked of the **Two Vehicles** and the **Three Vehicles**, which are but expedient means to help learners to proceed to the path of **Enlightenment** by different ways; although the **Dharma** are infinite in number, nevertheless, they are all derived from the root of the **One Vehicle**, as the **Lotus Sutra** says: “Only the **One Vehicle** is **Truth**, but the other two (The **Two Vehicles** and the **Three Vehicles**) are not.” Furthermore, we should also understand that the so-called root, great or small, is by no means fixed, as a popular **Buddhist** saying tells us, “**Mind** makes **karma**; **mind** can also change **karma**.” This being true, therefore logically it follows that the higher we aspire to the goal, the quicker we would turn our **karma** toward that end, and this is the reason why we should strive for the development of **Buddhahood** confidently. On the other hand, while practising **Buddhism**, if we think lowly of ourselves and do not go by the **One Vehicle**, it is utterly impossible for us to attain the fruit of **Buddhahood** out of a poor casual-ground, for the simple reason that never can we reap what we do not sow. In reality, if we practise cultivation according to this fundamental **Doctrine**, we shall attain **Right Knowledge** and **Right Understanding** of **Buddhism**, and the seeds of wisdom, once they are sown, will bear fruit in due time and thereby we shall be liberated from delusion, **karma** and suffering. Accordantly, ignorance causes **karma** and **karma** causes suffering. If we understand this fundamental truth, then we can readily see the importance and necessity of understanding the mind and the self-nature. But if we are ignorant of this, most likely we would cultivate **Buddhism** in the same way as the lay people and the heterodoxists do their own cultivation, by seeking **Dharma** outside the mind, that is to say, to seek and rely on external help instead of seeking to understand the mind, and this can only have the adverse effect of turning us round and round in **samsara** and transmigration consequently.

From the saying that “mind, Buddha and sentient beings are not different from one another” it may be seen that for us to attain the highest development of Buddhahood by cultivation is but a natural aspiration and there is nothing mysterious and extraordinary about it. All sufferings arise from ignorance and there is no happiness greater than understanding the mind, thus one who can carry out his aspiration for Buddhahood sincerely and conscientiously is a true Buddhist indeed!

Next, we should understand: it is because its spirit and essence is imbued with this fundamental Truth that Buddhism spreads far and wide in this world and also transcends above everything, but if it lost the basic truth today, then it would only exist in form and in that disastrous event, what would become of it and its teaching after some years, we should feel but too gloomy to say!

## CHAPTER 8

### The Significance of Cultivation

Theoretically speaking, as the Self-nature of the mind is fundamentally bright and illuminating, and its substance and function, inseparable from each other and complementary to each other, are of one integrated whole, to say of cultivating it by Buddhist Dharma seems to be rather superfluous, as said in the Diamond Sutra: "If one says that the Tathagata has something to teach us, he is slandering the Tathagata."; in reality, however, the self-nature of the True Mind, when in delusion, is no other than the Eighth Consciousness, keeping both truth and falsehood together. Because it has been infected and defiled by the various activities of the first seven consciousnesses and because it is the storehouse of numerous karmic seeds since the beginningless past, the Eighth Consciousness itself is a very powerful potential force, for as soon as the seeds emerge under favorable conditions, they produce the perverted activities of the body and the mind at present and in the meanwhile, these activities, in turn, become seeds to produce the perverted activities of the body and the mind in the future. As long as the processes of 'cause-produces-effect and effect-produces-cause' operate alternately in this manner, automatically the self-nature would be subject to violent disturbance and would not be still for a moment. As the mind is always in this agitated condition, what should we do about it? It is only by practising Buddhism that consciousness may be turned into wisdom and the perfect True nature of the mind may return to tranquillity. Now if someone still argues against cultivation, consequently he would be unaware of his own greed, hatred, stupidity, passions, prejudices and subjective thoughts, and also ignorant of the objective reality of those phenomena, in that event, he would be as foolish as a patient in serious condition refusing to take medical treatment, and what a blind, stubborn fool!

To practise Buddhism is called "Hsiu Hsing" in Chinese. "Hsiu" means to repair; when the perfect true nature of the mind, which is fundamentally pure and clean, is obscured and defiled by habits and passions, it is important that its purity should be restored: "Hsing" is to

act persistently and continuously. In short, cultivating Buddhism calls for intensive and incessant practice. It is only by cultivating more and more that one may advance nearer and nearer toward the goal of Enlightenment.

All human activities generally are included in the three aspects of the body, mouth and mind, and although the mind is the dominant factor of all, yet only through the body and the mouth can its activities be manifested, thus all the three aspects are indivisible and inseparable from one another. Furthermore, when the self-nature turns from truth to illusion, it manifests consciousness; in other words, illusion is not separate from truth, same as wave is not separate from water and itself is also water. In reality, all activities, cultivating Buddhism included, are the manifestation of the True Nature, this is to say, every cultivation implies the cultivation of the whole aspect of the Self-Nature; inversely speaking, it is also true to say that all Dharmas of cultivation have to do with cultivation of the Self-Nature exclusively. Hence, the more cultivation, the more manifestation of the True Nature and the more benefits of the cultivation. Cultivation may be classified into two aspects; the phenomenal aspect of cultivation such as sutra-reading, ceremonial worship etc. and so forth refers to visible outward cultivation, and the mental aspect of cultivation is subtle intangible inward cultivation such as self-introspection and looking into the mind. Since the body and the mind are correlated and inseparable from each other, and the cultivation of the one aspect necessarily involves that of the other, so in the mental aspect there is the phenomenal and in the phenomenal aspect there is the mental, thus the better we understand the principle of cultivation, the more serious would be our cultivation, and inversely speaking, the more serious our cultivation, the better our understanding of the principle. From this it may be seen that principle and practice should go together and there should be no leaning to the one to the neglect of the other. As long as we can integrate the two aspects of cultivation harmoniously and are always mindful of the Law of Karma operating the process of cause and effect at all times, there is no question that we can understand the mind and the self-nature at last.

When the self-nature is pure and stainless, it is Discipline; when it is calm and still, it is Concentration; when it illuminates unobtrusively

and freely, it is Wisdom. After all, Discipline, Concentration and Wisdom are but the triple functions inherent in the self-nature; in other words, they are but three aspects of the one and same thing. By evoking these functions, the fundamental objective of cultivation is to revert the mind to the self-nature. In Buddhism there is no cultivation without discipline, concentration and wisdom and also there is no Dharma without discipline, concentration and wisdom, in short, positively, the Triple Studies are the basic tenet for learning and cultivating Buddhism. It is only by cultivating Buddhism in accordance with this fundamental principle that the beneficial effects of turning the mind from defilement into purity, from chaos into stability, and from delusion into understanding may be achieved; and then one may realize that there is neither purity nor impurity, neither motion nor stillness, neither wisdom nor attainment of any sort, this is the Fundamental Face of the Self-Nature indeed.

## CHAPTER 9

### Methods of Cultivation

#### (A) General Cultivation

The reason why Buddha is free from all suffering but sentient beings are not, has to do with the question of awareness, that is to say, it is because the Buddha is aware of suffering but sentient beings are not. This shows that all Dharmas stress the practice of cultivating awareness by keeping oneself to be aware. Therefore it is essential that we should be alertly aware at all times, and to discipline ourselves with this end in view, we should keep our mind under control so that if we want to do so, we may bring our thought to a halt and relax our mind by sheer will-power. The importance of awareness may be seen in this Buddhist saying, "What one should be concerned with is not the arising of thought but the question of being late to be aware of it", therefore, the sooner we are aware of it, the sooner we would turn it away, and only by awareness can we get rid of our passions effectively. Generally speaking, owing to the obstruction of karma and habits, to be aware of one's own thoughts and to turn them away is by no means an easy thing, at any rate, the importance of cultivating awareness must not be overlooked. It is only by cultivating awareness diligently and vigorously that the mind may be freed of illusions and contaminations from time to time.

In Buddhism, the Dharmas of cultivation, however numerous, are of one integrated whole. However, in view of the fact that the people of the world are different from one another in respect of their root, disposition, environment, etc., it is necessary that various Buddhist Methods of cultivation have to be used expediently so that they may be adaptable to their own objective conditions. In reality, since every Buddhist practice is to revert the mind to the self-nature and every Dharma helps to develop wisdom all the same, it is for this reason that every Buddhist sect speaks highly of its own practice. Since everything Buddhism teaches us flows from the self-nature and also returns to the self-nature, therefore every Buddhist not only should not cherish bias toward any Dharmas but also should understand clearly that every

Dharma and every method of cultivation is as good as the others and if he perceives this truth and acts on the basis of this understanding, certainly he will develop broadmindedness and make rapid progress. But if he adheres to "only this Dharma but not the others" then he may form this "habit" and his cultivation would be obstructed consequently.

Though their aim of cultivation is all the same, the various Buddhist Sects are different from one another, as far as their standpoints and methods of cultivation are concerned. The fact that Patriarchs always uphold their own sect should not be mistaken to be blowing their own trumpet, for this is but an ingenious expedient to encourage learners to keep on with one Dharma only for intensive practice. The saying of the Sixth Patriarch Hui Nang that "The Oriental people seek to expatriate their sins by reciting the name of Buddha to take refuge in the Western Paradise, but where will the Occidental sinners go if they adopt the same method?" tells us that this Name-Reciting Dharma is so liberal that it may apply to people at all levels. In short, in cultivating, we learners should stand firm and must not be influenced by others, or we would slack off in our cultivation, if not abandoning it altogether. Therefore, it is essential that from the very beginning we should attempt to practise the chosen method of cultivation intensively and sufficiently well, and also should keep ourselves often in the company of teachers and learned friends of the same sect and it is not until the mind is freed of illusions and broadened with right understanding that we may come in contact with teachers and learned Buddhists of the other sects in order to understand Buddhism more broadly and more extensively; in other words, it is only when we have good understanding as well as intensive practice of the Dharma of a particular sect that later we may also take up the Dharma of some other sects so as to understand from its various diversified aspects the integrated Whole of Buddhism as much as possible.

In cultivating Buddhism, the most fundamental thing, upon which all the various methods are based, is the will-power. In other words, our resolution to practise Buddhism should be genuinely sincere and fundamentally correct, and we should resolve to liberate ourselves from rebirth and death and from transmigration, and out of compassion also resolve to help sentient beings and ourselves to attain the Perfect Supreme

**Enlightenment.** With the Great Vow to forge our will, and to be always alertly vigilant over ourselves, as if we were under the supervision of a stern teacher, thus we can keep up our effort of awareness for long time. Next, another important condition of cultivating Buddhism is sincerity. A sincere mind and earnest effort are fundamentally important for practising every Dharma, including reading sutra and ritual practice. As long as cultivation is done in all earnestness, one may find out himself how helpful it would turn out to be. However, at the beginning he must not overdo it, otherwise he would be tired out too easily and would drop out too soon, as the saying goes: "When you have recited Buddha for three days, he appears to be right in front of you, but if you have done so for three years, it seemed he were as far away as the sky." In the course of the cultivation it is well to remember that it should be practised intensively but not perfunctorily, perseveringly but not too quickly and too slowly, and the more perseverance, the stronger and the more effective it is. After one has realized the true nature of the mind, all the more he should cultivate awareness diligently so that regardless of favourable or unfavourable situation, he is always aware of how his mind is working.

Furthermore, awareness is cultivated for twofold purposes; to offset the past efforts and to be prudent with sowing new seeds. "To neutralize the effect of the past karma by the present concurrent causes" means that by practising Buddhism, one would counteract the the bad effect of one's karma of the past; "Never again to sow new bad seeds" means that one should be aware of the daily activities of the body, mouth and mind all the time and if he takes every precaution not to sow any new bad seeds, then he will be free from bad karma. However, if he merely attempts to eliminate the past habits but does not care to rectify his present thoughts and behaviour, he is like a patient eating carelessly whereas the latter would not easily recover, the former would hardly be able to deliver himself from suffering at all. Discipline is the foundation of Buddhism, therefore to discipline oneself regularly and diligently is a matter of fundamental importance to every Buddhist. Master Yun Chi says "Discipline is the level ground and Dhyana (meditation) is the dwelling. The Light of Wisdom ensued by Discipline and Meditation illuminates the one as well as the other, by

turns. The inherent great power of Concentration and Wisdom and the attainment of Buddhahood are based on Discipline." If we cultivate discipline in silence or in speech, in motion or in stillness, the perfect, profound and illuminating Mind will appear spontaneously; again, if the mind is pure, there will never be such evil thoughts as killing, stealing, carnality and lying. Therefore one who can keep his mind entirely free from internal and external influences is absolutely a true disciplinarian!

### **(B) Some Fundamental Methods of Cultivation.**

Fundamentally, what is needed for cultivating Buddhism is really not much, but in order to meet the various needs of different types of learners, it may be advisable as well as desirable to present here a concise account of some fundamental methods of cultivation to our readers for their understanding, selection and adoption. While one may choose for oneself any of these methods he thinks best adaptable to his root, interest and inclination, however, it is vitally important that he should firmly adhere to his chosen method all the time and practise it vigorously till practice makes perfect, and then same as diligent practicers of other methods would do, he will come to understand Buddhism broadly and extensively. Without intensive practice, however, no method can be worked out successfully.

#### **(1) Ch'an Practice (Zen)**

Ch'an Buddhism is the core of Buddhism. Fundamentally, inexplicable by words, it is the mind-to-mind transmission. Once, after a sermon, Gautama Buddha held up a flower before the assembly and the only person who understood the profound meaning of this gesture was Mahakasypa; he responded with a smile. Subsequently, the Buddha said "Here the Tathagata's Dharma-Eye, profound Nirvanic Mind, formless Reality, profound and mystical Dharma, the wordless Doctrine, Special Transmission outside the Scriptures, now I transmit to Mahakasypa to be my successor." Thus Mahakasypa became the First Patriarch of Ch'an in India. The founder of Ch'an in China is Bodhidharma who came to that country from India during the reign of the Emperor of Liang Wu-ti in the sixth century A.D. Since then down to the Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng, Ch'an had a large number of followers. At that

time, the general practice of Ch'an was to point directly at one's mind with just a few understanding words and one became enlightened instantly. From this it can be seen that the Ch'an practice depends on no words and emphasizes no setting up of words and letters. Let me cite some examples to clarify this point; The Second Patriarch Hui Ko asked his master, Bodhidharma, "My mind is ill at ease. Please pacify it for me." The First Patriarch replied, "Give me your heart and I'll do to comfort you." Realizing that it is physically impossible to show the mind, which is all illusory in its creation and cessation, Hui Ko hesitated for a moment and said, "Master, I cannot find my mind." Bodhidharma said instantly, "Now I have comforted your mind already." These words illumined the disciple's understanding at once and he became enlightened since then. Again, at the age of fourteen, Tao Hsim, the Fourth Patriarch, came to Seng Ts'an, the Third Patriarch, saying, "I beg you, Master, to show your compassion and lead me to the Dharmagate of liberation." Seng Ts'an asked, "Who has bound you?", Tao Hsin replied, "Nobody has bound me." Seng Ts'an said, "If so, why should you seek for liberation?" Thereupon, Tao Hsin was enlightened by these words. The Sixth Patriarch spoke to Wei Ming, a monk, in the same vein, "Refrain from thinking of anything and keep your mind blank and free of conceptual thought." and he added, "Do not think of good or evil, and when there is no thought in your mind, at that particular moment, what is your Fundamental Face?" At these words Wei Ming was thoroughly enlightened. From this it may be clearly seen how simple, direct and to the point is Ch'an practice of transmission from mind to mind. In his book "On the Transmission of Mind" Huang Po said: "If one can free oneself of conceptual thought, at that instant that essence of the self-mind would manifest itself spontaneously." The Third Patriarch in his essay "On Believing in Mind" says: "When nothing whatsoever remains, there is nothing to remember. The mind is void, bright, self-reflecting; it does not labour its energy." In reality, a blank and empty mind is nothing unusual in everyday life but because it comes in a flash, we are unaware of it and so let it slip by unknowingly, thus missing the opportunity of self-experiencing when we would probably say "Oh! there you are." as a mark of recognition. However, as thoughts come and go in succession, there is bound to be

an interval in which the preceding thought has gone while the succeeding thought is still unborn, so we cannot help asking this question, "What sort of phenomenon is this?" If we look into the mind pointedly and vigilantly, we will realize our understanding of its reality spontaneously and instantaneously. (Please note that all that is said in the above is 'only verbal communication and nothing of concrete value', but the moment you experience self-realization, Truth is right before you.)

Now we may see that the Ch'an practice is to realize the true nature of the mind, to point directly to it and to be aware of what it is here and now, and from this standpoint, fundamentally the so-called "Ch'an Hua Tou" and "raising a doubt" methods of cultivation should have been out of place in the Ch'an practice. However, in view of the fact that at later period practisers, generally of inferior root and dull mentality and being unable to see the mind directly, used to indulge themselves in the verbal Ch'an practice (they merely talked about Ch'an) to outwit each other, the Patriarchs and Ch'an Masters had to rectify them by adopting the expedient means of Ch'an Hua Tou. The practice of Ch'an Hua Tou is to halt the mind, usually distracted by the external influence of the environment, and to turn it to look inward and to concentrate with the utmost attention on that thought-provoking sentence known as Hua Tou. (If one cannot evoke one's attention in the practice, this simply shows one's lack of sincerity). Hence, the greater doubt, the greater understanding and inversely speaking, the less doubt, the less understanding. Because of its power of illuminating wisdom and intensifying concentration, the practice of Ch'an Hua Tou is really a profound Dharma to discipline the mind. Some of the popular thought-provoking sentences for practising Ch'an Hua Tou are as follows: "All things return to the One, but where does the One return?", "Before I was born, where is that Fundamental Face?" "Who is reciting Buddha?", etc. etc. "Who" is the most important word among those Hua Tou, for as soon as it is said, instantly it raises the point of doubt.

How is it that the Ch'an practice can lead one to probe into Truth? Master Hsu Yun says: "Regarding the question 'Who is reciting Buddha?', everyone knows that "Who" refers to the reciter himself. But is recitation done by the mouth or by the mind? If he does it by the mouth, why can't he do it after death? And if it is done by the mind,

who knows that the mind does it since the mind is unattainable? So the practiser should concentrate his attention on the question word "Who", the key word of the Hua Tou, and also should recite softly and not harshly; the softer, the better; he should look into that question-word with awareness all the time. As long as the point of doubt remains, concentrate your awareness of it but if the doubt is not present, try to recall it gently. The practice of Ch'an Hua Tou does not call for vigorous and persistent repetition as the Name-reciting method does; also it is different from the way of solving a riddle for it defies all subjective thinking and conceptualization for dialectical purpose; in the view of Ch'an Masters, even the thought to attain wisdom and enlightenment is itself a hindrance to the practice of Ch'an Hua Tou, and all worldly views and saintly interpretations should be done away with totally! In short, every practiser should look inward and give full attention and intense concentration on the point of doubt so as to be aware of it continuously without break. At the beginning of the practice, most likely wandering thoughts would come about only too frequently, but if the practiser may just ignore them and concentrate on the enquiry, he should be able to keep up his awareness. The longer the practice, the better he will develop and enhance his awareness, and when the moment of perfect practice arrives, all thoughts and even the point of doubt would drop out automatically, then by self-experiencing, the fundamental still and illuminating Self-Nature would be spontaneously realized. Now that we can realize the substance of the mind, we should extend its functions to all activities of daily life, and so much we may wipe out our passions, so much we may enhance the power of concentration and wisdom and so much we would liberate ourselves from the environmental influence and enjoy true freedom, this may be said to be the crowning achievement of cultivating Buddhism.

## **(2) Looking into the Mind**

As said in all Mahayana Scriptures, Prajna is where there is awareness, therefore the practice of looking into the mind is of fundamental importance for disciplining the mind. Because we are not used to revert ourselves to awareness of the mind in daily life, we are hardly aware

that illusions and conceptual thoughts, uncontrollable like an unbridled horse, run wild within us all the time. The fundamental way of cutting off those illusory thoughts at the very root is to look at the self-nature of the mind. Thus the Nibbana Sutra says: "To realize the self-nature of the mind is superlative meditation." According to this method, whenever and wherever possible, first lay down all thoughts, good or bad, right or wrong, and then look into the present moment-to-moment thoughts vigilantly. As these thoughts come and go all suddenly and are fundamentally unreal and illusory, there is no need of rejecting them, but we should neither accept them nor grasp them nor follow them. All we have to do is to look into them dispassionately and objectively, and this is the way we should be aware of them, for as soon as there is awareness, every thought comes to a standstill and soon goes out; however, at the initial period of training, most likely we may forget maintaining our awareness all the time, but with consistent and regular practice, say, at least a good many times every day, surely we can intensify our awareness in no time. During the practice it may happen that some thought may linger for as long as three or more days but this only shows that the seeds of some 'habits' are emerging from within and now turning active. But the practiser not only should pay no attention to this psychic phenomenon and should bear patiently and firmly with it, but also should concentrate on continuing awareness by adopting a "neither grasp nor reject" attitude. In this way the mind would be cleared more and more of illusions till it turns to be pure and void. In short, according to the principle of Looking Into the Mind, that which is capable of awareness is prajna, and every objective phenomenon of awareness is Ignorance: as Ignorance arises because of its correlation with Reality, logically, looking into the deluded mind is virtually the same as looking into the self-nature of the Pure Mind. If we have the wisdom to perceive Ignorance in this way, we can gradually dispel Ignorance, just like a thick ice melt by sunlight, and then the mind would return automatically and spontaneously to the self-nature, as The Perfect Enlightenment Sutra says: "The Enlightened Mind is pure and all-illuminating." Also; the Mahayana "Meditation on the Mind" Sutra says that the Dharma of looking into the mind is "the Way leading to the development of Buddhahood and attainment of Sudden

**Enlightenment.”**

Next, as a method of looking into the mind, the perfect and sudden Chih-Kuan practice of the Tien T'ai School is most praiseworthy; while it cultivates 'Chih' by fixing the mind to meditate on the ten Dharma-realms and cultivates 'Kuan' by looking into underlying reality of all things, no priority of cultivation is given to the one or the other, but both should be cultivated simultaneously; both its principle and practice aim to realize sudden Enlightenment, and this is the fundamental thing of this Dharma. It may be desirable, I think, to present here concisely for preliminary practice, the Three Meditations of the One Mind. Among the ten categories of phenomena enumerated as objects of meditation in the Treaties of Moho Chih Kuan, the Sixth Consciousness, because it is the illusory mind always working actively with the Five Aggregates and emerging in everyday life and because it is also the root cause of the paramount question of life and death, should be the first object of meditation we may choose for cultivation. And among the ten Vehicles (subject) of meditation, the Vehicle meditating on the Inconceivable Virtue of the Self-Mind is most profound and complete. The Virtue of the Self-Mind consists of the three aspects of the Void, the Unreal and the Mean. The Self-Mind neither increases nor decreases and is fundamentally still and void, this is the Dogma of the Void; it can function without limit and is ever present in all profound and unreal things, this is the Dogma of the Unreal; it is both void and unreal, and also neither void nor unreal, this is the Dogma of the Mean. In reality, all the three dogmas are one and one dogma includes all the three; in other words, they are the three interrelated and indivisible aspects of the Self-Mind, because fundamentally the Self-mind embodies the three interrelated and integrated dogmas, it can hold all the phenomena of the mind and all things of this world and other worlds, the causes and effects, and the form, substance and functions of everything. In short, the fundamental nature of the Self-Mind embraces everything of our everyday life in a flash of thought, and it is not that it exists only now, nor that it did not exist before, nor that it exists 'vertically' nor 'horizontally'; inconceivably, however, it does integrate the Void, the Unreal and the Mean, all in all.

Now to practise the Tien T'ai's Chih-Kuan Method, we may begin with meditation on the three aspects of the Void, the Unreal and the Mean of the inconceivable phenomena of the Virtue of the Self-Mind, and we may also use two sets of four-question arguments (with reference to time and space respectively) to deductively reason out how the self-mind can embrace everything. Here are the four-question arguments of the first set;

1. Is it that 'the mind covers everything' is a subjective thought?
2. Is it that 'the mind covers everything' is to be caused by external conditions?
3. Is it that 'the mind covers everything' is to be caused jointly by the mind and external conditions?
4. Is it that 'the mind covers everything' comes about spontaneously without any cause at all?

Referring to the first question, "Is 'the mind covers everything' a subjective thought?", should the arising of that thought depend on external conditions and in that event, since the mind itself is unattainable, how can it hold everything? As to the second argument, "if 'the mind covers everything' is due to external conditions", since fundamentally one has nothing to do with all external conditions, how can the mind hold everything? Regarding the third question, since the mind does not hold everything before its integration with the external conditions, how can it do so after the integration? To say that 'the mind covers everything' is without cause, is pointless, for what is devoid of cause is same as void, and if the mind is void, how can it hold everything? From this set of four-question arguments, it is obviously clear that so far as the mind itself is unattainable, how can there be everything in the mind? Thus the Madhyamika Sastra says: "Everything does not exist by itself, nor by other causes, nor jointly with the causes, nor without cause. Thus it is known to be non-existent (void)". If we find that the mind would correspond with any of the four-question arguments, we may put aside the others, for then the Sixth Consciousness, empty of illusions, would be in the void, but if the Sixth Consciousness is not free of illusions and therefore not in the void, we would try the other questions, one by one, and also the second set of questions in the following:

1. Is it that everything is created and annihilated by thought?

2. Is it that everything is not created and annihilated by thought?
3. Is it that everything both is and is not, created and annihilated by thought?
4. Is it that everything neither is nor is not, created and annihilated by thought?

And we may also extend four-question arguments in some other way, e.g., 1. Is thought horizontal? 2. Is thought vertical? 3. Is thought both horizontal and vertical? 4. Is thought neither horizontal nor vertical? and so on, until the mind is completely free of all illusions and returns to the Void. If the mind is pure, still and void, it will be free and completely detached, and then every thought will also be pure and void, and this is called Meditation of the Inconceivable Void on the Phenomena of the Void, where one is void, all is void. While it is still and void, the Self-Mind, fundamentally immanent in all things, is by no means static like a stone or wood, but is totally and completely aware of everything because of the infinity of its profound function, this is called Meditation of the Inconceivable Unreal on the Phenomena of the Unreal, where one is unreal, all is unreal. As long as things are perceived as they are, the mind, while illuminating yet still, is completely void and, while still, yet illuminating, is immanent of everything; thus on the one hand, it is neither void nor unreal, and on the other hand, it is both void and unreal; this is called Meditation of the Inconceivable Mean on the Phenomena of the Mean, where one is mean, all is mean. From the fore-going, we may think that the self-mind embodying the three Dogmas is to be cultivated in the order of the three Meditations, but in reality, none of the dogmas and meditations should precede the others since what they teach us is to intensify awareness to get rid of illusions; if we cultivate our mind in this manner, the three integrated and interrelated Meditations would be all realized at once. If the mind corresponds with the phenomena, the three Delusions (false perceptions and subjective thinking, subtle and coarse illusions, and Ignorance), will be all eliminated, the three Wisdoms (Sravaka and Pratyeka-Buddha Knowledge, Bodhisattva-Knowledge and Buddha-Knowledge) will be all realized and the triple Virtues of Prajna, Deliverance and Dharmakaya all accomplished. By that time all the three profound Truths of the substance, phenomenon and function of the Self-Mind will be simultan-

ously manifested. Master Fu Chi said: "Whereas phenomena are the Profound Unreal and meditation is the (Profound) Void, to be detached from both phenomena and meditation is the (Profound) Mean. However, as fundamentally neither meditation nor non-meditation precedes the other, the mind that integrates both of them is nowhere traceable." This is called the Inconceivable Profound Meditation. And if by the Meditation on the phenomena of the Sixth Consciousness we still cannot understand the Self-Mind, we may resort to the ten Vehicles of meditation to meditate on the remaining nine categories of phenomena (of meditation), one by one, so as to attain Enlightenment, this is called "by observing the phenomena, the mind is thereby observed." If the readers wish to go into details of those Vehicles, they may refer to the tenth volume of Moho Chih Kuan.

Though the two aforementioned methods of looking into the mind differ in practice, they are fundamentally identical in principle, and readers may choose for intensive practice either one that is agreeable to their own inclination. However, as Moho Chih Kuan, broad, extensive, elaborate and meticulous, may be too difficult for busy people and beginners to practise, the first method of cultivating the mind, much simple and feasible, is all the more preferable.

### **(3) Tantric Practice**

The profound mystical Dharma of Tantra Buddhism is to coordinate mutually and harmoniously the triple activities of the mouth reciting the True Word, the hands posing the symbol of a mantra, and the mind entering into profound meditation on mandalas with Form and without Form (mandala, meaning complete and perfect turning, is an object of meditation). During the practice, when the benevolent power of Sakyamuni Buddha's three pure mystical elements (Mudra, Mantra and Dhyana) flows into the activities of the body, mouth and mind of the practiser and as a result of the integration of his divine power and one's self-power and with the body, mouth and mind all in the inconceivable state, the practiser is at one with him and of one substance with him, the karmic seeds of the Eighth Consciousness are turned karma-free at once and return to their original state (karma-free seeds are fundamentally inherent in everything, Ch'eng Wei Shih Lun, vol. 2),

and while we open our eyes to Buddha-wisdom, the mind turns to be the pure and illuminating Bodhi. However, except those well-trained adepts, the excellent Tantric practice is not easily comprehensible. In History, the Lotus Bodhisattva founded the 'Red Hats' Sect and its teaching is based on the Lotus of Good Law of the Tantric Lotus Division, emphasizing the Tathagata Ambitabha's profound-Observing Wisdom to be the fundamental Wisdom. The Lotus Division covers a wide range of cultivation and practices vary according to the substance and form of the Tathagata. However, the objective of the various Practices is all the same. The cultivation of the Red Hats Sect is considered to be the most complete because of its great working efficacy, but if it is passed into the wrong hands, it will be abused and become corrupted.

At later time, the 'Yellow Hats' Sect' was founded and set up by Tsong Ka Pa, with the view of reforming the teaching of Tantric Buddhism. In fact, there is no essential difference between the two sects, as the Dharma of the Yellow Hats Sect is also based on the Lotus Division in line with the teaching of Nargajuna; moreover, both sects hold that the fundamental objective of cultivation is Pure Bodhi. However, the latter sect puts more emphasis on Discipline, which, as expounded in the Lotus Division, is considered to be necessary for achieving the self-realization of Purity and Enlightenment. After all, what is said in the above is but a cursory view of the basic issue of the Tantric Buddhism.

Tantric practices may be classified into four divisions: 1. Activities to prevent calamities and to increase blessings; 2. Preliminary meditational practice for beginners; 3. Yogic practice to coordinate the triple mystic element with the triple activities of the practiser; and 4. advanced yoga, the most advanced of the four. The last division may be graded at three levels; 1. Great Response (Mahayoga), to enter the profound luminous state by holding on to the True Word; 2. Intermediate Response (Anuyoga), the profound and luminous state is no other than the meditator himself; and 3. the Great Complete and Perfect Response (Atiyoga), this includes the advanced practice of the "Essentials of the Great and Perfect" and "Heart of Hearts" method, and the fundamental thing of this practice is to realize the Truth that all things are embraced by the mind, and that mind and Buddha are

identical and not two, and ultimately, nothing is to be attainable. As a rule, as those various mystical Tantric practices with their respective mudras and mantras are only known to the guru and the initiated, it is utterly impossible for us to present them fully here at all. However, the yogic practice of the Mind pertaining to the Formless Path of the Vijrayana Sect (The Heart of Buddha Sutra of the Tantric Mysticism of the Tripitaka, vol. 2) may be singled out and concisely presented here as it may be of interest to those readers who are inclined to take up that practice. This yogic practice consists of six mudras and one mantra, each mudra to take eight sittings and each sitting to take two full hours. After completing the six mudras, it calls for specific and intensive practices of the fourth and the second mudras (the fourth helps the initiated to be born in the Buddhaland of Supreme Happiness), and all the rituals involved in the practice are very simple. During the two-hour practice, the initiate keeps on reciting the mantra, with the hand holding on to the mudra and the mind intensely concentrated on the mantra and completely indifferent to any external influence or rising thought. Because of its holding on to the mantra and the mudra, the mind is not Non-Being (void); because of the nature of non-interpretation and non-conceptualization of mantras and mudras, it is not Being. Neither Being nor Non-Being, it is detached from thoughts, and in this way it wipes them out as soon as they arise; this may carry on until it is completely free from thought and then the state of Samadhi will be realized. After four or five hundred sittings in this manner, when those of superior root are able to realize the fundamental Dharma of the mind, they can make use of the profound wisdom to good effect. For those, weak in concentration, who may find it too difficult to do the Ch'an practice or the Name-reciting method, it may be advisable and feasible to take up this yogic practice, for during the two-hour sitting the persistent and intense discipline may quickly and effectively do away with those timeless dormant habits, and concentration and wisdom would be highly developed. The Buddha's Heart Sutra says: "If one holds on to the Heart of Hearts, 'Recognition of Non-arising' will be quickly realized". The celebrated Tantric Master Naropa once said that the Formless Dharma is superb and unexcelled. Deplorable to say, those who take up this yogic practice are exceedingly

few, for the opportunity of obtaining such initiation largely depends on the question of causes and conditions, which always vary from person to person.

#### **(4) The Name-Reciting Method**

Last but not the least, the Name-Reciting Method of the Pure Land Sect, embracing both the Dharmas of Being and Non-Being, is broad, extensive and miraculous. Besides, there are other various practices such as Contemplating the Buddha's Image, as taught in Pratyutpanna-samadhi Sutra; the Name-Reciting Method as said in the Smaller Sukhavati-Vyuha Sutra; and Contemplating the Reality cum the Reciting Method as said in Mahasamghata Sutra, and among all these practices, the common objective of which is to be born in the Pure Land, the Name-Reciting Method has the widest appeal to its followers because of its flexible adaptability to Buddhists of different levels and varying good roots. Undoubtedly, the Ch'an practice, the Method of Looking into the Mind, the Tantric practice are by themselves perfect and profound, but some of them either call for intensive study of their doctrine, or are adaptable only to people of superior root and intellect, or may take considerable long time for cultivation or may require special personal instructions from competent Buddhist teachers, and moreover, even granting that these requirements may be fully met, the question of whether the followers may be successful in their practice or not, depends on their respective causes and conditions as well as their own exertion. The Name-Reciting Method, however, imposes none of these requirements, except self-exertion, which is absolutely necessary for every practice, of course; besides, whether from the phenomenal or the doctrinal aspects, it is always adaptable to every learner and practicable by everyone, indeed, the Dharma attracts the simple-minded by its simplicity as much as it does the brilliant by its profundity, and really it is everybody's Dharma. It is not too much to say that had not this Dharma been included in Buddhism, a great many people of the world would not have been able to learn Buddhism nowadays.

As long as we cannot keep anger, greed and passions in control, never can we free ourselves from suffering, but if the mind is free from attachment and detached from thought, then it will revert itself to

Buddha-Wisdom in no time; however, as it is exceedingly difficult for us to be free from conceptual thought, then, among all things of and beyond this world, what can be better than the thought of reciting the Buddha? Moreover, whenever we think of reciting the Buddha, we can always do so anytime anywhere, and every time we recite the Buddha, every time we think of the Buddha, as the saying puts it: "If the practice of Name-reciting is repeated once and again, even an agitated mind will revert itself to the thought of Buddha." One who "holds on to the holy name" till "his mind is completely free from any influence" may be said to be working unconsciously towards understanding the nature of the self-mind, which is the fundamental keynote of Buddhism. Generally speaking, it is rather difficult for anyone to achieve tranquillity of mind at this stage of development, nevertheless, as long as this Dharma is practised with genuine faith and firm resolution, one can be assured that one would not be reborn in the three Realms any more. (Note: according to the Dharma of Name-reciting, it is absolutely necessary that the power of faith and resolution must be stronger than the karmic force of those recurring conceptual thoughts, or one would surely be carried away by the latter into transmigration, and from this, it may be clearly seen that it is only on the solid foundation of genuine faith and firm resolution that the Reciting Method is laid), and if he sees the Buddha, certainly he will realize Enlightenment at last. Because it is adaptable to people at all levels, the Reciting Method may be said to impart the Dharma of the Pure Land Sect to people of superior, intermediate and low levels by Special Transmission.

In practice, however, the Name-reciting Method is by no means so simple as it is thought to be, for it calls for single-minded concentration and intensive practice at all times, whether at sitting, standing, walking or sleeping, at work or at leisure, and in any favourable or unfavourable situation, it must be recited and repeated in such a way that it comes not only from the mouth but also from the heart; and in case of some unavoidable interruptions, it should be picked up and carried on again. It is only by practising the Reciting Method in this manner that bad karma would be eliminated in due time and the mind would be tranquil and pure eventually. On the other hand, if, under the wrong notion that it is easy of accomplishment, the practice is perfunctory and often

off and on, or if it is merely a verbal recitation, then no matter how long it may be practised, certainly there can be no progress at all. For the poor result, the fault does not lie in the Reciting Method itself but in the lack of the necessary effort on the part of the practiser.

The Reciting Method is to be worked out jointly by self-effort and other-effort, this means that by reciting the Nam-Mo 'Amita Buddha, we sow in our casual ground the seed for the fruit of perfect Enlightenment. Recitation may be done in three ways: silent, loud and the Vajra repetition. Whereas silent repetition may lead the practiser to be easily distracted of mind and loud repetition also has the bad effect of wearing out his voice unnecessarily, the Vajra recitation done between the lips and teeth enables him to carry on the repetition easily and effortlessly and for this reason, is feasible for everyone to practise; despite the lack of a rule, one may well decide the right kind of recitation for himself insofar as it is best adaptable to his own environment and conditions. As concentration is vitally important for practising the Reciting Method effectively, it is recommended that in order to develop concentration, beginners should practise the Vajra Recitation for an hour every day. (Generally speaking, any Dharma may be practised in any of the foursome ways, e.g., sitting, walking, standing and sleeping, but as beginners can recite better at sitting than in motion, therefore meditation is an important supplementary aid.) To achieve quick results, we may practise the following four ways: 1. To recite with intense concentration. In order to control a wandering mind, it is essential for one to concentrate with undivided attention during the recitation, and one effective measure to discipline the reciter in developing profound concentration is the method of Hearing, by which every word-for-word repetition, whether continued or broken up, may be instantly checked up; in other words, the Method of Hearing is in keeping with the fundamental principle that if one sense-organ is intensely concentrated, all the other five sense-organs would be also held still automatically. This is the most fundamental tenet of the Reciting Method, as said in the Surangama Sutra: "When the six sense-organs are simultaneously held in concentration, there will be every pure thought in succession". 2. To recite with rejoicing and renunciation. Renouncing the mundane world and aspiring joyfully for the Buddhaland of

Supreme Happiness should go together during the recitation, and as long as recitation is sufficiently practised in this manner, rejoicing and renunciation would manifest themselves spontaneously. In due time the reciter would be totally free from any karma-forming conceptual thought and thus would be in a state where there is neither grasping nor renouncing, as the Extracts of the Lotus School put it: "When carried to the utmost degree, acceptance and renunciation are virtually in the same course as non-acceptance and non-renunciation". 3. To recite with remarkable diligence and energy. At the moment when the reciter, overpowered by the overwhelming karmic force, feels too despondent to go on with the recitation, he should stand up like a man to fight out every obstruction fearlessly and even at the risk of death, without retreat. 4. To recite with sincere devotion and affectionate remembrance. While reciting, he should cherish his most affectionate and respectful memory of Amita Buddha as if a son, long separated from his beloved mother and now meeting difficulties on his way home, would think dearly of her. The Surangama Sutra says: "If sentient beings remember and recite the Buddha with affection and devotion, surely they will see him presently and bring themselves near to him, now that Enlightenment is at hand, there is no need to employ any other means to achieve this end." In short, if the Reciting Method is practised wholeheartedly, there is no doubt that in due time of perfect practice, every repetition would move towards Enlightenment and harmoniously correspond with the objective reality of every phenomenon, thus soon after the attainment of Samadhi, the wish to be born into the Pure Land at the nine levels would become a reality!

### (C) The Common Characteristic of Integration of All Dharmas

In practice, the aforementioned methods of cultivation differ from one another, but in essence, they are one and the same, since every Dharma deals with the momentary thoughts of the mind and, moreover, the mind is fundamentally undifferentiated. But should we think "this mountain isn't so high as that one", consequently our belief in the Dharma in question would be wavering and our effort of cultivation would be deteriorating. As the common characteristic of integration of all Dharmas is an important aspect of cultivation, I think, a word of

explanation is necessary for our understanding.

Among these four Dharmas, the Ch'an Meditation, Looking Into the Mind, Name-Reciting and the Tantric Practice, let us find out the area of their common agreement. The Ch'an Practice calls for "looking into the mind" and the latter, in turn, requires single-minded concentration on thought as the former does. In other words, the moment you are doing the Ch'an Meditation, it involves "looking within" (Kuan); "Kuan" also involves "Nien" (thought). For apart from meditation, there is no thought and apart from thought, there is no meditation; in short, meditation and thought are interchangeable and indivisible; all these four verbs, "look", "recite", "meditate" and "Hsueh" (cultivate), refer to the mind that is the subject of cultivation. The so-called "Ch'an (Dhyana) corresponds to the "True Mind"; also, the True Mind is "Buddha"; the triple Tantric "Mystics" of all Buddhas are inseparable from the Enlightened Mind, and all these four nouns also refer to the mind as the object of cultivation. In view of the above explanation, it may be seen that though the four Dharmas are called by different names, yet in essence of cultivation, they are fundamentally identical.

Next, as the self-nature of the mind embraces the three Dogmas of the Noumenal, the Phenomenal and the Mean and is inseparable from both the subject and the object of cultivation of any Dharma, thus cultivation of the self-nature necessarily involves the three Meditations of the Void, the Unreal and the Mean. If we practise the Dharma of Non-Being, we should understand that in reality, the Profound Non-Being is not void; if we go by the Dharma of Being, the Profound Being is non-being. It is because things come into being by causation that their self-nature is said to be void; inversely speaking, it is because their self-nature is void that it is possible for them to come into being by causation. From this standpoint, it holds true with every Dharma that the more void, the more being, and the more being, the more void, the two are integrated, interrelated and mutually dependent, and ultimately return to the Mean. Thus, Master Yung Ming says: "Regarding the nature of form, function is inseparable from substance; as to the form of nature, substance is inseparable from function." In a gatha on "Three Thousand Dharma Doors on Being" Chan Kuan says: "The Inconceivable Unreal does not lean to the Unreal but is fundamentally inherent

in everything. The True Void, complete, perfect and all-embracing, is neither Void, nor merely Void nor merely Mean."

Dhyana Master Hsu Yun says: "The so-called Hau Tou is the ante-thought, but as soon as the thought arises, it becomes after-thought." Again, he says: "To look inward all the time upon that very thing which is "neither created nor destructed" (Self-Nature) may be said to be identical with looking into the Hau Tou." To look into the mind is to meditate on this neither created nor destructed Self-Nature with attention and concentration, so much so that the three Meditations may be freely and fully manifested right on the spot, thus the manifestation of the three Meditations is also the manifestation of the three Dogmas of Self-Nature.

From this standpoint, the Ch'an practice and the Tien T'ai's Chih-Kuan Method are fundamentally the same. Also, the so-called Pure Land may be said to be identical with the pure Self-Mind, for the moment mind is detached from thought, it turns to be the Pure Land. The Virmirakirtinedesa Sutra says: "Po Chi, you should realize, a straight mind is the Pure Land of Bodhisattvas, for when they become Buddhas, they never offer sentient beings any inducement that the latter may be born in their Buddhahands; a Profound Mind is also the Pure Land of Bodhisattvas, for when they become Buddhas, their Buddhahands are where the Mahayanists will be born". According to the Recorded Sayings of Ch'an Mirror, "The Self-Mind is all-pervading, and if you see a Buddha, this means that you can see your own Buddha." That which is Fundamentally Unborn is existent but its existence does not alter the fact that it is Fundamentally Unborn, and so Ch'an may be said to be the Ch'an of the Pure Land and The Pure Land may also be said to be the Pure Land of Ch'an. From this point of view, Dhyana and Name-Reciting are in common with each other. It may be reiterated that in reciting the Buddha, the substance of that which is capable of reciting, is fundamentally still and void, whileas the Buddha, the object of recitation, is also immaterial and formless, this is the aspect of the Void; in reciting, though the subject and the object of recitation are void, yet both of them exist, this is the aspect of the Unreal; in reciting, while both the subject and the object are void, yet they are existent, and inversely speaking, while they are existent, yet they are void, thus the

Void and the Unreal depend upon each other and influence each other, this is the aspect of the Mean. Thus, from Dhyana Master Wan Ning's saying "By reciting the Buddha, one enters the three Dharma Doors (Meditations)", it may be seen that the Dharmas of Name-reciting and Looking into the mind stand on the common ground.

Mantras, the True Words of Dharmakaya Tathagata, are one of the triple mystical yogic practices of the Esoteric Sect, nevertheless, they are also used by Buddhists of the various Exoteric Sects, as seen from the fact that some well-known Mantras such as the Great Compassion Dharani, the "Wish to be born in the Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha" Mantra, The Surangama Mantra and others may rightly claim to be as popular with Buddhists of the Pure Land Sect as the Dharma of Name-Repetition. Furthermore, the Pure Land Sect's Meditation on the Trinity of the Western Paradise may be said to be in line with the Tantric Meditation on Sakyamuni Buddha, as verified by the fact that Amita Buddha and Avoleskitsvera Bodhisattva, the principal Entity of worship, are as much venerated by Buddhists of the Pure Land Sect as by those of Tantric Buddhism. In the Ch'an practice, the Buddha Amita's Mudra (Seal) (with the right palm put on the left one and the two thumbs conjoined each other to form a straight line, this is called the Buddha's Seal, also called the Meditation Seal of all Buddhas of the Ten Directions) is generally used to intensify concentration during the Ch'an practice. The yogic practice of the four Forms of Tantric Mandolas (Moho, Samadha, Dharma and Karma) is to meditate from the Void to the Profound Unreal (the Unreal that is both the Void and the Mean is called the Profound Unreal) and then to converge both the Void and the Unreal into the Mean. If one, irrespective of his sect, meditates with Prajnaparamita on the pure Bodhi as often as possible, he will enter and realize "the Fundamentally Unborn" in due time. Again, the perfect and complete "Severance" (meaning elimination) and "Heart of Hearts" of the Tantric practices also have something in common with Ch'an. As shown in the above, despite their difference in ritual performance, the Exoteric and the Esoteric Sects, however, are in common with each other so far as the fundamental way of cultivation is concerned.

The practice of Samadhi may be differentiated in three ways: 1. To

recite Self-Buddha only, 2. to recite Other-Buddha only, and 3. to recite both Self-Buddha and Other-Buddha. Looking into the mind and the Ch'an practice, where the six sense-organs are their objects of meditation, and the Profound Observing Wisdom and the corresponding mind are respectively their subjects of meditation, may be cited as examples of reciting the Self-Buddha only, and in both practices, if we are aware of every momentary thought, we can see that it is beyond time and space, neither existent nor non-existent, neither created nor destructed, fundamentally immanent and at par with all Buddhas. If meritorious deeds are accumulated from time to time, the five fundamental conditions of delusions and passions will be overcome, the six sense-organs will become pure and free from defilement, Ignorance will be eliminated and the profound Treasures of the triple mystic virtues of Prajna, Deliverance and Dharmakaya (the threefold aspects of the substance, form and function of the self-nature) will be all realized. The Mahaparamita-prajna Sutra says: "Mahahisattvas do not recite the Buddha's name with form, with feeling, with conception, with predisposition and with consciousness, because the self-nature of everything is void, and it is because the self-nature of everything is void that there is nothing to recite, and this may be called "Reciting the Buddha." According to the practice of the Pure Land Sect, which is 'reciting the Other-Buddha', if the six sense-data, held under control by the Sixth Consciousness, concentrate intensely on the recitation, the form or other things of Amita Buddha, then what one sees is nothing but the form of Buddha, what one hears is nothing but the voice of Buddha and all that the mind is conditioned to is nothing but the Dharma of Buddha. The combined practices of Ch'an Meditation and the Pure Land Sect's Name-Reciting Method are an example of the third category of recitation of both the Self-Buddha and Other-Buddha, and according to this Dharma, with broad and thorough understanding of the Truth that Buddhahood is immanent in everyone and that mind, Buddha and sentient beings, self and others, the direct retributions of one's previous life and the consequences of past deeds of this life are fundamentally identical and not dualistic, and then with merits derived from the Buddha Virtues, one should be able to manifest the fundamental immanent Buddha-Nature at the opportune time. The

Esoteric practice, another example of the third category of recitation, is to coordinate and integrate the practiser's triple mystical activities with one another and when this is done, the blissful protecting power of the Honored One of the Nichirin Sect and the fundamental Buddha-Nature inherent in the practiser will be integrated and mutually adaptable to each other, and through the physical body of the latter, the virtues of all Buddhas will become manifestable. From the above, we can see that the Name-Reciting Method corresponds practically with the Dharma of every Buddhist Sect, and this is the reason why the Pure Land Sect always makes strong and popular appeal to Buddhists everywhere.

In the light of the above explanation, it is crystal clear that we may take up any Dharma for practice as long as it is agreeable to our interest and inclination, and since every Dharma is perfect and complete, therefore in the course of cultivation, we should not think of changing from one Dharma to another, nor should we think that a certain Dharma may be superior or inferior to the others. As no medicine may be called good or bad as long as it can cure, likewise, no Dharma may be said to be high or low as long as it is adaptable to its followers.

Above all, the true spirit of Mahayana Buddhism lies not so much in seeking to liberate oneself from the samsara as in dedicating oneself to serve others and to be compassionate and helpful to all sentient beings. In other words, self-interest is the means to benefit others and to benefit others is the very aim of self-interest; in reality, to benefit others may be said to be virtually the same as doing good deeds to keep the self-mind pure and clean. The Avatamsaka Sutra says: "By sprinkling the Water of Compassion on sentient beings, surely the benefactor will attain the fruit of Buddha-Wisdom or Bodhisattva-Wisdom." Also, the Awakening of Faith Sastra says: "If the great Mori pearl was cast in a mine, it would be tainted by the dirt, despite its substance being fundamentally pure and clean, and unless some expedient means to restore its purity was used, it would hardly be pure and clean. Similarly, the Pure Mind of sentient beings, though in itself intrinsically pure, would be contaminated in one way or another as there is infinite defilement in everything and everywhere. Therefore, to keep the mind free from defilement, it is essential that one should cultivate good deeds from time

to time till the Pure Mind spontaneously returns to its fundamental purity". By and large, should we be firmly determined to cultivate Buddhism, we may begin the basic resolution with the Four Great Vows, and afterwards, as far as it is commensurate with our capacity and condition to do so, we may also practise the Six Paramitas, the Four All-Embracing Virtues and other profound Dharmas, in order that the aim of self-interest and others'-benefit may be successfully worked out:

1. Charity, which consists of giving financial and material help to those in distress; of propagating the Truth to educate and enlighten people individually or collectively; and of helping sentient beings to meet calamities courageously and fearlessly.
2. Keeping Sila (Laws of Discipline), which, negatively, is to refrain from doing any evil and to lead a life of rigid discipline; and positively, to observe every precept and to practise every virtuous deed leading to the highest moral and spiritual development; for the purpose of carrying out "The Law Benefitting All Sentient Beings", one should practise compassion actively, extensively and vigorously from day to day.
3. Ksanti (Forbearance), this is to say, not only one should take whatever insult or malice inflicted upon him with forbearance and without resentment, but also share the common hard lot with others and struggle bravely in adverse circumstance "with that typical endurance which enhances itself every time it meets greater difficulty".
4. Virya (Zeal and progress), in undertaking any work for both self-benefit and others'-benefit, one should go at it resolutely, persistently and patiently, without pride and without indolence.
5. Dhyana (Meditation), this calls for intensive meditation effort to keep the distracted mind concentrated on one object only and to lead oneself from single-minded concentration to complete liberation of the mind.
6. Prajna (Wisdom), As a result of advanced meditational practice, one has developed awareness to such an extent that not only one can perceive the reality of the numerous things and phenomena of the universe with good understanding but also can deal with every one of them in accord with the Truth of Universality.

Next, supplementary to the six Paramitas, are the Four All-Embracing Virtues:

1. Charity, this is to extend material help to the needy, with whom one is in sympathy.
2. Affectionate Words, if one says comforting, encouraging words to sentient beings one would lead them to love and

receive the Truth. 3. Conduct profitable to others, if the activities of the body, mouth and mind are undertaken with this end in view, it will draw out the practiser's tremendous potential power automatically. 4. Cooperation with others, if one gets close to the mass, works together with the mass and sets oneself as a model to the mass, one will convince them of the Truth. If one cultivates Buddhism according to this saying of the Avatamsaka Sutra, "As soon as you realize that both yourself and sentient beings are fundamentally subject to extinction, at once you will set yourself to cultivate meritorious deeds and wisdom diligently and tirelessly; one will realize not only the self-nature of the mind but also the reality of the universe, and such is the Path of Enlightenment that all Mahayanists should be most determined to go!

## CHAPTER 10

### In The Course of Practising Buddhism

#### (A) In the Course of eliminating habits

In reality, cultivating Buddhism is tantamount to the practice of keeping one's passions and habits under control and eventually wiping them out, and in what degree one may be opened up with Buddha-Knowledge and Buddha-Wisdom is largely determined by how much and how far one may have overcome one's passions and habits. Generally, habits are of three kinds, good, bad and neutral, and all of them are illusory activities of the mind, for as long as the mind is conditioned to the six sense-data and thereby infected and contaminated by them, habits will be formed. We cannot do away with passions and habits by ignoring them or by suppressing them but as soon as they are manifested, we should be alertly aware of them and look at them in the face; furthermore, as habits usually come out in daily life, where people, things and affairs are involved, therefore we should look upon the emergence of habits on every occasion as a self-made opportunity to cultivate the mind actively and vigorously and should also overcome difficulties and obstacles most patiently. This is the fundamental way to deal with the question of habits thoroughly and effectively. The Second Patriarch Hui Ko is a case in point. After his enlightenment, he always disguised himself incognito in his own typical way, e.g., to have a drink at wineshop or to talk the same language as the man of the street. Once habits good or bad have been formed and if we grasp them or if we do not overcome them, consequently they would be the root cause of all suffering in the samsara, therefore, not only we should fight them out with the utmost of effort and patience, but also should develop a non-abiding and non-attached mind, so that we may carry on our combat with them from a battle to a war, from a small to a big victory, and the greater the effort, the more advanced the cultivation, and this may be said to be the Way to turn ourselves to be Patriarchs and Buddhas.

The saying "Understanding of a Doctrine may be instantaneous but cultivation need to be gradual" tells us that to eliminate habits

is by no means easy, for in cultivation, the higher development is attained, the more habits are manifested, and inasmuch as their sudden emergence may not be easily detected at all unless we have had long intensive discipline in awareness, it is imperative that we should tackle this problem by every expedient means with a great deal of patience, and this is a test of our fighting power and strong will. In a word, to get rid of all habits, one will have to undergo the following stages of development; because people always indulge in conceptual thought and regard the illusory phenomena around them as real, they are unaware of passions and habits working unceasingly in the mind and it is not until they have suffered from the consequences that they may begin to realize the need of cultivating Buddhism as a measure of remedy. At the beginning of their cultivation, with a mind half-believing and half-unbelieving, suddenly clear and suddenly confused, and with their understanding also limited to the theoretical and doctrinal aspects of Buddhism, they are utterly in lack of experience of self-realization, and so in cultivating discipline they may be attached to form, in cultivating meditation, they may be as stiff as wood and in cultivating wisdom, they may merely repeat the dialogue of the Ch'an School, consequently they are too incompetent and too inexperienced to overcome their habits, as aptly depicted in these words, "Verbally, there is cultivation, but practically there is none." With adequate and intensive practice at later stage when the mind is more and more clarified and awareness is more and more intensified, they come to realize the substance of their own fundamental self-nature and also the truth that all things, right or wrong, favorable or unfavorable, beautiful or ugly and so forth are merely illusions and discriminations of the mind, and in the meanwhile, as they are detached from any external influence, they may remove their habits in the following manner: on the one hand, habits would change from serious to slight nature, their retention from long to short, their impact from strong to weak and their effect from large to small scale, and on the other hand, awareness would change from compulsion to spontaneity, from weakness to strength and from attention to indifference. In short, now that the deepseated habits are more or less uprooted and no longer so firmly held as before, we should move a step further to enhance our awareness

and to wipe out our habits by highly developed concentration and wisdom, for when there is awareness, not only would habits be speedily removed, but the power of concentration and wisdom would be also highly developed; at this stage of development, the self-mind gradually becomes a luminous entity, calm, still, detached from thought yet inconceivably active, unperturbed yet without deliberate concentration, ungraspable whether in delusion or in enlightenment, neither in motion nor in stillness, neither ordinary nor saintly, transcendental and non-conceptual, and this is called "the Perfect and Complete Enlightenment".

There is no Dharma without cultivating awareness, for if there is no awareness when the mind comes in contact with the phenomena, there will be no turning (to the Void); if there is no turning (to the Void), there will be no (realization of the) Void (of all phenomena); if there is no (realization of the) Void, there will be no concentration; and if there is no concentration, there will be no wisdom. How habits may be eliminated by awareness may be seen in the following stages of its progressive development: 1. When awareness comes after thought, it is necessary to do one's utmost to arouse awareness as soon as possible; 2. Even though it comes after the arising of the thought, however, awareness must not be evoked by force; 3. Though there may be awareness as soon as thought arises, it is possible that in sequence of time, either one may be a little ahead of the other; 4. Awareness begins simultaneously with the thought; 5. Awareness is before the arising of the thought, but sometimes there may be no awareness at all; 6. Awareness is always before thought-arising and is concerned with nothing but itself (awareness) (the above deals with the practice of awareness); 7. One should keep oneself in awareness but without being conscious of it. On perceiving the reality of phenomena, one is fundamentally free; 8. Awareness at this stage of development is always still and radiant. To check up the development of our awareness, let us ask ourselves "To which of these stages are we progressing now?"

#### **(B) Stages of progressive development and order of positions**

In grouping and numbering the stages of development toward Enlightenment a discrepancy is shown in some sutras. The Benevolent

King Prajna Sutra gives the total number of stages at fifty-one; the Gem Sutra adds the Universal Perfect Enlightenment to the total at fifty-two; the Surangama Sutra, adding several more development, totals the number at sixty; and the Vairocana Sutra begins the grouping from the ten stages of mental development of the mind to the ten stages of the ten grades of Abiding-places. In order that the Dharma may be adaptable to meet the needs of different people of varying root, Master Chih-I, founder of the Tien T'ai Buddhist Sect, systemmatized the Teaching of Buddhism into four categories, namely, the Tripitaka Doctrine, the Interrelated Doctrine, the Differentiated Doctrine, and the Complete Doctrine. For our reader's reference, let me say a few words regarding the extent the Complete Doctrine may help Buddhists to remove delusions and illusions, and the order of their position of progressive development toward Enlightenment to be commensurate with their effort of exertion.

According to Master Chih-I's profound exposition, in order to realize the self-nature of the mind, there are the following six aspects of Enlightenment. 1. To realize the fundamental principle of Buddhahood. This is: although sentient beings, owing to their ignorance, have to undergo rounds of birth and death in the samsara, nevertheless, since from the standpoint of the inconceivable essence of Buddha-Nature they are identical with Buddha inasmuch as every Dharma unfolds the Dharmahatu (Dharma-Realms), there is no question of their realization of Enlightenment. 2. To realize Buddhahood as a name for Self-nature. This is: if one learns from friends, teachers or sutras that Self-nature is a synonym of Buddha, then he will understand that everything is the Mean, in other words, everything is inseparable from Self-Nature and everything is Dharma. This stage of development is called by the Tien T'ai School "The Great Revelation of the Perfect Enlightenment", and by the Ch'an School "Realizing the Fundamental". 3. To realize Buddhahood by meditational practice. Following one's understanding of the principle of Buddhahood, one has to translate that understanding into practice, and when practising the Profound Meditation at this stage of development, the meditator is at par with the phenomena. In the meanwhile, all passions arising from perception, subjective thought and Ignorance are overcome, and this is

the accomplishment of the five Grades of Discipleship, also called External Grades, of the Perfect Doctrine of the Tien T'ai School. 4. Semblance to Buddhahood. This stage of development covers the Ten Stages of Faith of the Perfect Teaching, also called Inner Higher grades, and also the Purification Stage of the six sense organs: at the First Faith Stage when illusions from perception, e.g. doubt, heretical views, misconception of the self, extreme views, viewing inferior things as superior, views in favour of ignorant ascetic prohibitions, etc., have been all eliminated and at any event, there would be no receding to the position of the commoner, for which it may be also called the Non-receding Stage; at the Seventh Faith Stage when all illusions from thought, e.g. greed, hatred, stupidity, arrogance, etc., have been wiped out, no longer would one be subjected to be reborn in the Three Realms and in this world, where saints and commoners live together, but would live in the Temporary Realm, where only those who have got rid of the evils of all unenlightened views and thoughts may stay; at the Tenth Faith Stage with the subtlest illusions and temptations of the Three Realms and beyond all eradicated, there is nothing to obstruct one's further development, thus by compassion and wisdom one goes a long way to help sentient beings actively and positively, and this is called the Action of Non-receding. 5. To realize Buddhahood by self-experiencing. This stage of development includes the Ten Abiding-places, the Ten Activities, the Ten Stages of Merit-Transference and the Ten Grades of Merits, and also Universal Enlightenment; proceeding from overcoming Ignorance of the First Stage (subtle illusion), one reaches the first Abiding-place, dwells in the Realm of Permanent Reward and Freedom, and meanwhile, also in the Realm of Eternal Rest and Light, where he realizes Buddha-nature by progressive experiential proofs, thereby attaining the wisdom and power of Unperturbed Uncreated Endurance and holding onto the Mean without receding, and this is called Non-receding from Right Discipline"; (this is the Mahayanist Way of beholding the Truth and the Sravaka's fruit of overcoming illusion from perception). To what extent one may realize Enlightenment is entirely commensurate with the effort he may exert in breaking up the different levels of Ignorance, and so the work of elimination is carried on until the forty-two Grades of Ignorance

have been all removed and the Universal Enlightenment is realized.

6. To realize Absolute Perfect Enlightenment. This is the stage of Wonderful Enlightenment leading to dwelling in the Buddhaland of Absolute Eternal Light and Tranquillity, where one may claim to have accomplished Dharmakaya of absolute purity and to have experienced and verified the Perfect Truth by self-realization. (According to the Complete Doctrine, one act includes all acts and one stage covers all stages, but fundamentally there is neither stage nor grade, thus the above classification of the six stages of development is but a means of expediency. The division of five Grades of Disciples is based on the Lotus Sutra, and the other groupings, based on the Gem Sutra, are taken from the Differentiated Teaching.)

Now let us turn to the development, by the Name-reciting method, of the nine grades of Buddhists to be born in the Pure Land. Those of genuine faith and firm resolution, who are still distracted of mind during reciting, will be born into the lowest low of the Buddhaland; those who have overcome their distractions more or less will be born into the middle low; those who are free from distractions will be born into the upper low; the aforementioned three grades of beings, though still subjected to illusions of perceptions, would be born in the Buddhaland where saints and commoners live together (the four Buddhalands of Supreme Happiness are all Pure Lands), and once born there, never will they recede. (According to the doctrine of some other Buddhist Sect, however, one must wipe out all illusions from perception if he is to attain the coveted Never-Receding Position.) Those who can recite without negligence and distraction at all times and also recite with an unperturbed mind like an Arbat, shall be born into the Temporary Realm and shall be graded in the upper, middle and lowest, middle; Those who can realize, by self-experiencing, the ultimate reality underlying everything, and non-differentiation between mind and Buddha, and who, like the Ignorance-free Bodhisattvas, are detached from any influence, shall be graded in the upper superior, middle superior or lowest superior and shall be born in The Realm of Permanent Reward and Freedom and the Realm of Eternal Light and Tranquillity. Because it is both profound and simple and therefore adaptable to its followers at all levels, the Reciting Method is popular, appealing and universal.

**(C) When may Sambodhi (Enlightenment) be attainable?**

How long does it take to attain Enlightenment? In answering this question, Buddhism tells us that to complete the cultivation methodically and systematically from the beginning to the end would take no less than three kalpas, same as going through the course of education from primary to high school and to university, one cannot skip over the various stages of development by leaps and bounds. The Ten Stages of Faith, the Ten Stages of Abiding, the Ten Stages of Activities and the Ten Stages of Merit-Transference are to be completed in the first kalpa; the first seven Grades of Merits in the second kalpa; and from the eighth to the tenth in the third kalpa (according to the stages of the Differentiated Doctrine). Kalpa, meaning unlimited length of time, implies that there is no time-limit for cultivating Buddhism because the long-accumulated defilements of the self-nature of the mind would necessarily take considerable time to be removed. Moreover, the question of how soon one may complete the cultivation depends on the extent of one's bondage, the causes and conditions of one's cultivation and the effort of one's cultivation, and these factors determining the time of accomplishment usually vary from person to person; after all, as people generally do not expect to complete their development of Buddhahood in this very life, it does not make sense that they should speculate on the time of attaining Buddhahood by the conventional standard. The Tantra Buddhism says nothing of the three kalpas for completing the Buddha development, but gives three grades of coarse, fine and subtlest illusions instead. According to the theory of this school, for those people of superior root and intellect "implanted in former life", who are bestowed with the three mystic powers of the Enlightened one, besides their own intensive practice of the special expedient means of this Tantric Sect, it is not impossible to rid the three Grades of illusion and to open, to reveal, to awake and to enter themselves into the Buddha-Wisdom at last so that they would complete their Buddhahood development in this life, just like one obtaining diploma and degree after having fully met the credits requirements but without being restricted by the academic school years (By the way, the qualifying phrase "the superior root formerly implanted" implies that cultivation has been carried on from previous lives and

now may be mature for completing this stage of Buddhahood development). Besides, the Tantra Buddhism also lays down three ways for attainment of Buddhahood in the present life: 1. To realize Buddhahood by understanding the principle that fundamentally our body and mind are themselves the substance of Vairocana and Vajrayana. In other words, apart from our mind and body, there is no essence of enlightenment, and this is in line with the Tien T'ai's first aspect of "Enlightenment by Realizing the Principle" that in respect of Buddha-nature, sentient beings are not different from Buddha; 2. To realize Buddhahood by empowerment. If the omnipresent self-nature of the mind corresponds to the three mystic protecting powers of the Enlightened One and is integrated with them both His transcendental activities and fundamental virtues would be manifested, and this may be said to be identical with the Tien Tai's Semblance Stage of Buddhahood development; 3. To realize Buddhahood by self-experiencing. If the three mystic profound activities are accomplished, then the fundamental immanent virtues and the reality of the True Nature would be automatically manifested, and this may be said to correspond with the last two of the six aspects of Enlightenment of the Tien T'ai's Teaching, by self-experiencing the progressive stages of different realms and by Absolute Perfect Enlightenment. Apparently, the Tantric practice "to become Buddha in this life" and the Tien T'ai's Complete Teaching "to be identical with Buddha" are in common with each other.

Next, according to the Ch'an's teaching and practice of sudden enlightenment, "if one realize Self-Nature, thereby one will attain Buddhahood" because as soon as Ignorance, the root cause of suffering, is eliminated, all the lesser delusions would be automatically removed, as the saying has it, "to destroy the One is to destroy all", and from this, it may be seen why the Ch'an's practice is not to be cultivated by stages nor to be restricted by time-limits, and also why the moment one realises Self-Nature, one may also attain Buddhahood simultaneously. This Dharma of perfect and sudden Enlightenment is well said in the Avatamsaka Sutra: "Primary Awareness is conducive to Sambodhi (Enlightenment) and it is by this expedient means and not others, that Buddha-Wisdom is thereby attained." In fact, though to realise the self-nature of the mind is the common goal of every Buddhist, yet

the time to pass through the three Gates of Understanding, which correspond to the three grades of illusion, coarse, fine and subtle, usually varies with everyone, By the Name-reciting method, however, sentient beings are blessed with Amita Buddha's gracious and compassionate response to their call, just like an iron being drawn to a powerful magnet, and either in this or next life will be born in the Buddhaland of Supreme Happiness, where under the special and highly favorable conditions they would advance from one to the three Non-receding positions and also from one Buddhaland to transcend beyond the other three and so would complete their Buddhahood development in their present life, and this is where the complete and perfect Reciting method of the Pure Land Sect wins its universal appeal.

To sum up, in both the Ch'an and the Tantric practices, there is no time-limit involved, nor is there such a thing as to realise Buddhahood by stages, and this is called "all the Six are but One"; according to the Doctrine of Buddhism in general, however, "The One is all the Six" upholds that the principle of Buddhahood and the six aspects of realising Buddhahood are not two things but mutually integrated and complementary to each other. From the standpoint that cultivating Buddhism should not lean to one side, e.g., either to the principle or to the practice, and regardless of the outcome of cultivation, should be carried on as vigorously as possible, may our aspiration for Buddhahood, unlimited and undiminished despite the finite void, lead us precisely to the Way of Buddhism!

## EPILOGUE

I am fully aware of the fact that those practical aspects of Buddhism presented in this book are far from being exhaustive and too inadequate for enunciating its profound Doctrine, moreover, as they are expressed in words and letters, they would tend to confuse rather than to clarify learners' understanding, so in case of inaccuracies, of course, I am fully responsible for every error. It is my sincerest wish, however, that while seeing the moon by the pointed finger, my beloved readers would thereby free themselves from any bondage and instead of talking about it, would carry their understanding into practice. In cultivating Buddhism, not only should we attempt our best to explore and to develop potential spiritual energy and wisdom, but for delivering sentient beings from suffering into blissful happiness, we should also transmit the Lamp of Wisdom for the Buddhist cause to every corner of the universe and beyond in the Infinitesimal, and Infinitesimal future!

Here is my humble prayer:

For the glory of the Pure Buddhaland, this book is presented to express my fourfold deep gratitude to those above and to help those of the three realms below to deliver themselves from suffering. May those who hear or see this, strive to the end of their mortal life to save themselves and others and be born in the Paradise of Supreme Happiness!

## NOTES AND GLOSSARY

### Chapter 1

"Formation, existence, destruction and void": In the Mahayana, a cycle of existence in four stages.

"Birth, age, illness and death": some of the eight categories of human suffering.

"Arising, staying, changing and vanishing": indicates changes in thoughts, feelings and mental phenomena.

### Chapter 2

"The Law of Dependent Origin": Conditioned Genesis in the chain of the twelve links of causation.

"All things are impermanent": Because things are conditioned, they are subject to change.

"All dharmas are without self": All things have no self therefore they are interdependent.

Karma: moral action causing future retribution and either good or evil transmigration.

Reality: The True Mind is unchanging and immutable.

Bhutatathata: Reality; thus always so; suchness.

Ignorance: primordial ignorance; delusion; illusion.

Dharma: Law, Truth, Doctrine taught by Buddha.

dharma: anything, concrete or abstract, phenomenal or noumenal, material or spiritual.

Dharmadhatu: The Absolute; the Dharma-Realm.

Klesa: vexations, passion, defilement.

Bodhi: Supreme Enlightenment.

The Eight Consciousnesses: The eight Minds.

Samsara: The ever-recurring round of life-and-death.

### Chapter 4

The Absolute Truth: Ultimate Reality. There is no "I" or being in reality.

**The Relative Truth:** The conventional truth. There is no self or being but we speak of truth conforming to the convention.

**The Dharmalaksana Sect:** This Buddhist Sect holds that all is mind in its ultimate nature.

**The Five Aggregates:** Form or matter, sensations, perceptions, volition or mental activities, and consciousness.

**The Twelve Entrances:** The six sense-organs and the six sense-objects.

**The Eighteen Realms:** The realms of the six sense-organs, their sense-objects and their perceptions.

**“Illuminating yet still”:** Dharma-nature of Bhutatathata.

**“Still yet illuminating”:** Essence of Bhutatathata; Dharma-body.

## **Chapter 6**

**The Tripitaka:** The three main canonical divisions of the Buddha’s teaching into Codes of Discipline, Discourses and Higher Doctrine, Philosophy and Psychology.

**Sukhavati:** The Buddhaland of Supreme Happiness, where devotees of the Pure Land Sect vow to be born by reciting the Holy name of Amitabha Buddha.

## **Chapter 7**

**Ch’an:** Name of mind.

**Bodhisattva:** A Mahayanist seeking enlightenment to enlighten others; devoid of egoism and devoted to helping all living beings.

**Mahayana:** The Great Vehicle, which indicates Universalism or salvation for all.

**Hinayana:** The Small Vehicle, preliminary teaching based on the three Dharma Seals: Impermanence, Egolessness and Peace in Nirvana.

**The One Vehicle:** The Buddha-Vehicle.

**The Two Vehicles:** Sravakas and Pratyeka-Buddhas.

**The Three Vehicles:** Sravakas, Pratyeka-Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

## **Chapter 8**

Tathagata: "Thus-Come", He-Who-Is-Suchness; The Suchness-of all-Dharmas".

Samadhi: Concentration attained through higher meditation.

The Void: It is not nothingness but a marvellous substance devoid of own characteristics and yet capable of manifesting every kind of form.

## Chapter 9

Ch'an Hua Tou: Intense concentration on a question-word which defies any answer and allows no answer at all.

Chih-Kuan: Chih means silencing the active mind to stop all thinking. Kuan means looking into the mind, thus disengaged from discriminations and concepts to restore our inherent Buddha-Nature.

"Recognition of Non-Arising": Realization that all things in the world-neither arise nor cease in actuality.

Avoleskitsvera Bodhisattva: The Bodhisattva popularly known as "Kuan Yin", embodying the principle of boundless compassion.

Nirvana: The final state into which beings enter when, becoming Enlightened, they are no longer bound by the consciousness of an illusory ego.

The Esoteric Sect: The School of Tantric Buddhism.

The Exoteric Sect: The Doctrine School.

"Vertical": Indicates time. According to Buddhism, the past, the present and the future are all illusory.

"Horizontal": Indicates space. This is also illusory.