THIỆN PHÚC

ESCAPING THE OCEAN OF LIFE AND DEATH

(VƯỢT THOÁT BIỂN ĐỜI SANH TỬ)

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Preface

In Buddhism, being up and down with overloaded misfortune is the original word for reincarnation which is translated as transmigration or samsara. The passing away from one body to be reborn in another body. Where the being will be reborn depends on his accumulated good or bad karma. The belief that living beings, including man, have a series of bodily lives, only ceasing when they no longer base their happiness on any of the objects of the world. This come about when the Buddha-nature is found. This belief is very common to all Buddhists. Reincarnation means going around as the wheel turns around. Whether the world is Samsara or Nirvana depends entirely on our state of mind. If our mind is enlightened, then this world is Nirvana; if our mind is unenlightened, then this world is Samsara. For those who strive to cultivate, samsara is Nirvana, Nirvana is samsara. According to Buddhism, wheel means a turning wheel or a turning circle, returning means coming back; reincarnation means going around as the wheel turns around and around, non-stop. In other words, transmigation means the passing away from one body to be reborn in another body. Where the beings will be reborn depends on his accumulated good or bad karma.

The Buddha taught: "Not in the sky, nor in mid-ocean, nor in a mountain cave, nowhere on earth where one can escape from death (Dharmapada 128)." Rebirth is the result of karma. The doctrine of rebirth is upheld by all traditional schools of Buddhism. According to this doctrine, sentient beings (sattva) are caught up in a continuous round of birth, death, and rebirth, and their present state of existence is conditioned by their past volitional actions or karma. In Buddhist belief, there is no transmigration of soul or any substance from one body to another. According to the Buddha, rebirth takes place instantaneously after death, consciousness having the nature of arising and passing away unceasingly. There is no interval between death and the next birth. One moment we are dead and the next moment rebirth takes place, either in the human plane, the celestial plane, or the hell plane, the hungry ghost plane, the animal plane and the demon plane. What really happens is that the last active thought (Javana) process of dying

man releases certain forces which vary in accordance with the purity of the five thought moments in that series. These forces are called karmic energy which attracts itself to a material layer produced by parents in the mother's'womb. The material aggregates in this germinal compound must possess such characteristics as are suitable for the reception of that particular type of karmic energy. Attraction in this manner of various types of physical aggregates produced by parents occurs through the operation of death and gives a favourable rebirth to the dying man. An unwholesome thought gives an unfavourable rebirth. Each and every type of sentient being will have different appearance whether it be beautiful or ugly, superior or inferior. This is determined and is manifested based solely on the various karma sentient beings created while alive with their antecedent bodies. Since the cycle inevitably involves suffering and death, Buddhism assumes that escape from it is a desirable goal. This is achieved by engaging in cultivating oneself, and the most important of which is meditation. The doctrine of rebirth has become problematic for many contemporary Buddhists, particularly for converts to Buddhism in Western countries whose culture does not accept the notion of rebirth. However, this doctrine is extremely important in Buddhism, for all sincere attitudes of cultivation originated from the thorough understanding of this doctrine.

What Is the Ocean of Life and Death or the Six Paths that all sentient beings have been being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortune? According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, all creatures in the Saha World are tied to the ceaseless round of birth-death and rebirth, that is, to the law of causation, according to which existence on any one of these planes are determined by antecedent actions. In Buddhism these planes are depicted as the spokes or segments of the "wheel of life." This wheel is set in motion by actions stemming from our basic ignorance of the true nature of existence and by karmic propensities from an incalculable past, and kept revolving by our craving for the pleasures of the senses and by our clinging to them, which leads to an unending cycle of births, deaths, and rebirths to which we remain bound. These are six paths, or six ways or conditions of sentient existence, or six miserable states (sentient beings revolve in the cycle of Birth and Death, along the six paths, life after life. These are paths of hell-dwellers, hungry ghosts,

animals, titanic demons or asuras, human beings and celestials). The Buddha calls this: A Revolve in the Ocean of Life and Death (the Six Paths).

In Buddhist teachings, the Buddha taught that whether the world is Samsara or Nirvana depends entirely on our state of mind. If our mind is enlightened, then this world is Nirvana; if our mind is unenlightened, then this world is Samsara. For those who strive to cultivate, samsara is Nirvana, Nirvana is samsara. What happens to us after death? Buddhism teaches that we remain for some time in the state of intermediate existence in this world after death, and when this time is over, in accordance with the karma that we have accumulated in our previous life, we are reborn in another appropriate world. Buddhism also divides this other world into the following realms: hell, hungry ghosts, animals, demons, human beings, heavens, sravakas, pratyeka-buddhas, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas. If we die in an unenlightened state, our minds (consciousnesses) will return to the former state of ignorance, and we will be reborn in the six worlds of illusion and suffering, and will again reach old age and death through the stages mentioned above. And we will repeat this round over and over to an indefinite time. This perpetual repetition of birth and death is called "Transmigration." But if we purify our minds by hearing the Buddha's teachings and practicing the Bodhisattva-way, the state of ignorance is annihilated and our minds can be reborn in a better world. So, whether the world is Samsara or Nirvana depends entirely on our state of mind. If our mind is enlightened, then this world is Nirvana; if our mind is unenlightened, then this world is Samsara. Thus, the Buddha taught: "For those who strive to cultivate, samsara is Nirvana, Nirvana is samsara." Meanwhile, Six Doors mentioned in this book are six bases of mental activities: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. Devout Buddhists should always remember that the six senses or six organs of sense are likened to six wild creatures in confinement and always struggling to escape. Only when they are domesticated will they be happy. So is it with the six senses and the taming power of Buddha-truth. Otherwise, these six bases of mental activities will become six doors which are wide open for sentient beings to drift ceaselessly in the cycle of births and deaths. According to Bikkhu Piyananda in The Gems of Buddhism Wisdom, you must always be aware of the sense

organs such as eye, ear, nose, tongue and body and the contact they are having with the outside world. You must be aware of the feelings that are arising as a result of this contact: eye is now in contact with forms (rupa), ear is now in contact with sound, nose is now in conatct with smell, tongue is now in contact with taste, body is now in contact with touching, and mind is now in contact with all things (dharma). According to Buddhism, death is not end. After death, the heart ceases to beat, only consciousness generally identified as the soul follows its course determined by the dead's karmic forces to enter the embryo to be reborn. Such a process is called reincarnation. If we understand the Buddha's Teachings, before parting, we can remain as calm as possible; we will not fear, knowing that our next rebirth is dedicated by our own karma, not by any external power. They will have a strong faith on "the way you live is exactly the way you die." In reality, there are so many Buddhists and non-Buddhists who do not thoroughly understand the Buddha's Teachings. For them, death is the end; thinking of death only makes them tired. They just live for the present. This is the way of living for those who do not know how to live a happy and joyful life in accordance with the Buddha's Teachings. They do not understand the relationship between cause and effect, linking generations to generations or successive lives. When they are young and strong, they feel comfortable with everything, but when they become sick, or aged, isolated from kinfolk or short of money, they will be agitated, but it is too late for them to regret. Buddhists should always remember the old proverb "You need to dig the well before you are thirsty" to prevent the feeling of late regret. Since earliest time, Buddhism has asserted that all sentient beings are born, die, and are reborn again in dependence on their past actions (karma) in an endless cycle. The question whether or not beings are actually reborn in this way has become a controversial topic among Western Buddhists, many of whom do not accept that the doctrine of rebirth is literally true. The overwhelming majority of Asian Buddhist teachers, however, consider belief in rebirth to be a central tenet of Buddhism, and contending that it accords with the teachings of the Buddha as reported in the Buddhist canon. It is also widely thought that the doctrine of rebirth is very necessary in order for Buddhist karma theory to make sense, since if there were no rebirth there would be no direct

recompense for any actions. Devout Buddhists should always remember that time flies really fast. The years and months have gone by really fast too. In the same way, people progress from birth to old age and death without being aware of it. Birth, old age, sickness, and death come in quick succession as we pass the years in muddled confusion. If we do not wake up to our own birth and death, then, having been born muddled, we will also die muddled according to the law of karma. What a meaningless life!

This little book titled "Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death" is not a profound study of the Reincarnation in Buddhist teachings, but a book that simply points out the Buddhist teachings on the endless repetition of being sinking in the ocean of life and death that all sentient beings travel back and forth forever; and how to escape this ocean of life and death right now, right here, right in this very life. Devout Buddhists should always remember that the travel to close and to escape from these six doors that cause beings to be sinking in the ocean of life and death is not easy, but not because of these difficulties we don't want to try. We should start to enter right away into practicing and deligently cultivating so that if we cannot escape the ocean of life and death or escape from these six doors that cause beings to be sinking in the ocean of life and death; at least we are able to established daily life patterns, makes our lives more peaceful, mindful, happy. And if we are not able to escape the ocean of life and death, we may be reborn in a better realm to continue to cultivate enlightenment and emancipation.

Respectfully,
Thiện Phúc

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Part One

An Overview of Buddhism-the Universe-Buddhist Point of View on Human Life-The Jambudvipa & The Ocean of Life and Death

Chapter One

Summaries of Buddhism

I. An Overview of Buddhism:

In the year 563 B.C. a baby was born into a royal family in northern India. He grew up in wealth and luxury but soon found that worldly comfort and security do not guarantee real happiness. He was deeply moved by the suffering he saw all around, so He resolved to find the key to human happiness. When he was 29, he left his wife and child and his Royal Palace and set off to sit at the feet of the great religious teachers of the day to learn from them. They taught him much but none really knew the cause of human sufferings and afflictions and how it could be overcome. Eventually, after six years study and meditation he had an experience in which all ignorance fell away and he suddenly understood. From that day onwards, he was called the Buddha, the Awakened One. He lived for another 45 years in which time he traveled all over northern India teaching others what he had discovered. His compassion and patience were legendary and he made hundreds of thousands of followers. In his eightieth year, old and sick, but still happy and at peace, he finally passed away into nirvana. It couldn't have been an easy thing for the Buddha to leave his family. He must have worried and hesitated for a long time before he finally left. There were two choices, dedicating himself to his family or dedicating himself to the whole world. In the end, his great compassion made him give himself to the whole world. And the whole world still benefits from his sacrifice. This was perhaps the most significant sacrifice ever made.

Even though the Buddha is dead but 2,500 years later his teachings still help and save a lot of people, his example still inspires people, his words still continue to change lives. Only a Buddha could have such power centuries after his death. The Buddha did not claim that he was a god, the child of God or even the messenger from a god. He was simply a man who perfected himself and taught that if we followed his example, we could perfect ourselves also. He never asked his followers to worship him as a god. In fact, He prohibited his followers

to praise him as a god. He told his followers that he could not give favors to those who worship him with personal expectations or calamities to those who don't worship him. He asked his followers to respect him as students respect their teacher. He also reminded his followers to worship a statue of the Buddha to remind ourselves to try to develop peace and love within ourselves. The perfume of incense reminds us of the pervading influence of virtue, the lamp reminds us of the light of knowledge and the followers which soon fade and die, remind us of impermanence. When we bow, we express our gratitude to the Buddha for what his teachings have given us. This is the core nature of Buddhist worship. A lot of people have misunderstood the meaning of "worship" in Buddhism, even sincere Buddhists. Buddhists do not believe that the Buddha is a god, so in no way they could possibly believe that a piece of wood or metal is a god. In Buddhism, the statue of the Buddha is used to symbolize human perfection. The statue of the Buddha also reminds us of the human dimension in Buddhist teaching, the fact that Buddhism is man-centered, not god-centered, that we must look within not without to find perfection and understanding. So, in no way one can say that Buddhists worship god or idols. In fact, a long time ago, when primitive man found himself in a dangerous and hostile situations, the fear of wild animals, of not being able to find enough food, of diseases, and of natural calamities or phenomena such as storms, hurricanes, volcanoes, thunder, and lightning, etc. He found no security in his surroundings and he had no ability to explain those phenomena, therefore, he created the idea of gods in order to give him comfort in good times, courage in times of danger and consolation when things went wrong. They believed that God arranged everything. Generations after generations, man continues to follow his ancestors in a so-called "faith in god" without any further thinkings. Some says they in believe in God because God responds to their prayers when they feel fear or frustration. Some say they believe in God because their parents and grandparents believed in God. Some others say that they prefer to go to church than to temple because those who go to churches seem richer and more honorable than those who go to temples.

II. First Sermon:

After the Buddha's Enlightenment at Buddha Gaya, he moved slowly across India until he reached the Deer Park near Benares, where he preached to five ascetics his First Sermon. The Sermon preached about the Middle Way between all extremes, the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. In the Deer Park, Benares, at first the Buddha was ignored by the five brothers of Kaundinya, but as the Buddha approached them, they felt that there was something very special about him, so they automatically stood up as He drew near. Then the five men, with great respect, invited the Buddha to teach them what He has enlightened. So, the Buddha delivered His First Teaching: Turning the Wheel of the Dharma. He began to preach: "O monk! You must know that there are Four Noble Truths. The first is the Noble Truth of Suffering. Life is filled with the miseries and afflictions of old age, sickness, unhappiness and death. People chase after pleasure but find only pain. Even when they do find something pleasant, they soon grow tired of it. Nowhere is there any real satisfaction or perfect peace. The second is the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering. When our mind is filled with greed and desire and wandering thoughts, sufferings of all types follow. The third is the Noble Truth of the End of Suffering. When we remove all craving, desire, and wandering thoughts from our mind, sufferings will come to an end. We shall experience undescribable happiness. And finally, the Noble Truth of the Path. The Path that helps us reach the ultimate wisdom."

III. The Meanings of Buddhism:

To someone it can be only life of the Buddha; the example that the Buddha and his immediate disciples set, that glorious feat of a man, who stood before men as a man and declared a path of deliverance. To others, Buddhism would mean the massive doctrine as recorded in the Buddhist Tripitaka (literature), and it is described a very lofty, abstruse, complex and learned philosophy of life. The name Buddhism comes from the word "Bodhi" which means "waking up," and thus Buddhism is the philosophy of Awakening. Therefore, the real definition of Buddhism is Noble Truth. The Buddha did not teach from theories. He always taught from a practical standpoint based on His understanding, His enlightenment, and His realization of the Truth. This philosophy

has its origins in the experience of the man named Siddhartha Gotama, known as the Buddha, who was himself awakened at the age of 36. Buddhism is now older than 2,500 years old and has more than 800 million followers worldwide (including Chinese followers in Mainland China). People in the West had heard of the Buddha and his teaching as early as the thirteenth century when Marco Polo (1254-1324), the Italian traveler who explored Asia, wrote accounts on Buddhism in his book, “Travels of Marco Polo”. From the eighteenth century onwards, Buddhist texts were brought to Europe and translated into English, French and German. Until a hundred years ago, Buddhism was mainly an Asian philosophy but increasingly it is gaining adherents in Europe and America.

To the Buddha, man is a supreme being, thus, he taught: “Be your own torch and your own refuge. Do not seek refuge in any other person.” This was the Buddha’s truthful word. He also said: “All realizations come from effort and intelligence that derive from one’s own experience. Man is the master of his destiny, since he can make his life better or worse. If he tries his best to cultivate, he can become a Buddha.” Buddhism is the only way that leads people from the evil to the virtuous, from deluded to fully enlightened sagehood. Buddhism is a philosophy, a way of life or a religion. The religion of the awakened one. One of the three great world religions. If was founded by the historical Buddha Sakyamuni over 25 centuries ago. Sakyamuni expounded the four noble truths as the core of his teaching, which he had recognized in the moment of his enlightenment. He had shown people how to live wisely and happily and his teachings soon spread from India throughout Asia, and beyond.

Buddhism is a philosophy, a way of life or a religion. The teaching of Buddha. This is not important. Buddhism is what the Buddha taught. His teaching was based on human inner wisdom. Buddhism always values reason. Blindly believing in everything is contrary to Buddha’s teaching. The Buddha taught: “Do not believe blindly in my teachings. Always test them like using fire to test gold to determine whether it is authentic or counterfeit.” Buddhism is not a religion versed in worshipping and imploring favors from deities. It is different from other religions and doctrines in that it respects personal opinions, beliefs, and intellectual development. Buddhism does not prevent its disciples from

learning other religious teachings. The Buddha said that if there were reasonable and rational teachings in other religions, His followers were free to reapect such things. From that basic principle, the Buddha declared that there was nothing hidden in the sleeve of His saffron robe when referring to His teachings. He also added that His doctrine was consistent with how people understood the Truth. It did not depend on the favors bestowed by any deity or any other spiritual power. The Buddha emphasized the concept of free inquiry when He asked His disciples to judge even the Tathagata in order to have an utter trustfulness in Him. He asked them to study, understand, and believe latter on. Whoever has not yet understood or still has doubt but blindly believes has thus defamed the Buddha. Doubt is not a sin because Buddhism has no creed to be believed. Doubt will automatically dissipate when people fully understand or perceive the Truth. In short, whether the Buddha wanted or not, His teachings and the way of life preached by Him became a religion called "Buddhism." However, Buddhism is not a religion just for discussion, but it is a religion of deliverance for those who diligently cultivate. One needs not be a scholar or a blind devotee to become a Buddhist, all you need is your sincerity of cultivation. In Buddhism, blind faith has no ground, each one of us must know how to find and absorb what is relevant and what is not to our life and to our problems. If we pay a little attention, we'll see that Buddhist doctrines are boundless and timeless, but they are the inconceivable truth for all time. Messages handed down to us by the Buddha remain eternally valuable. No one can argue against or deny the doctrine of impermanence in Buddhism. Impermanence does not mean that things are not existing. Impermanence means that everything continues in a flux, in a process of continuing change and evolution. Thus, Buddhism is able to adjust to different civilizations in different times in the world. Even in modern world, Buddhism is always appropriate in all circumstances. In fact, if you approach any apsect of Buddhism, you will immediately find out that it is something relevant, beneficial and applicable to your daily life. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that in Buddhism there is no such so-called bonds of supernatural ties, nor Godhead, nor creation, nor sin inherited from anyone else, other than what you yourself have done.

IV. Summaries of the Very Cores of Buddhism:

As mentioned in the preface, after the Buddha's Enlightenment at Buddha Gaya, he moved slowly across India until he reached the Deer Park near Benares, where he preached to five ascetics his First Sermon. The Sermon preached about the Middle Way between all extremes, the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. In the Deer Park, Benares, at first the Buddha was ignored by the five brothers of Kaundinya, but as the Buddha approached them, they felt that there was something very special about him, so they automatically stood up as He drew near. Then the five men, with great respect, invited the Buddha to teach them what He has enlightened. So, the Buddha delivered His First Teaching: Turning the Wheel of the Dharma. He began to preach: "O monk! You must know that there are Four Noble Truths. The first is the Noble Truth of Suffering. Life is filled with the miseries and afflictions of old age, sickness, unhappiness and death. People chase after pleasure but find only pain. Even when they do find something pleasant, they soon grow tired of it. Nowhere is there any real satisfaction or perfect peace. The second is the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering. When our mind is filled with greed and desire and wandering thoughts, sufferings of all types follow. The third is the Noble Truth of the End of Suffering. When we remove all craving, desire, and wandering thoughts from our mind, sufferings will come to an end. We shall experience undescribable happiness. And finally, the Noble Truth of the Path. The Path that helps us reach the ultimate wisdom." The path leading to the end (extinction) of suffering, the fourth of the four axioms, i.e. the eightfold noble path. The truth of the PATH that leads to the cessation of suffering (the way of cure). To practice the Eight-fold Noble Truths. The Buddha taught: "Whoever accepts the four dogmas, and practises the Eighfold Noble Path will put an end to births and deaths. In short, finally, the Buddha already discovered supportive conditions leading to bodhi or Buddhahood. The Noble Truth of the Right Way includes the following Noble Paths: The Eightfold Noble Truth, Seven Bodhi Shares, Four Right Efforts, Four Sufficiences, Five Faculties, Five Powers, Four Elements of Popularity, Four Immeasurable Minds, and Four Kinds of Mindfulness.

To someone, all that the Buddha said can only be considered as life of the Buddha Himself. However, in fact, the example that the Buddha

and his immediate disciples set, that glorious feat of a man, who stood before men as a man and declared a path of deliverance. To others, Buddhism would mean the massive doctrine as recorded in the Buddhist Tripitaka (literature), and it is described a very lofty, abstruse, complex and learned philosophy of life. The name Buddhism comes from the word "Bodhi" which means "waking up," and thus Buddhism is the philosophy of Awakening. Therefore, the real definition of Buddhism is Noble Truth. The Buddha did not teach from theories. He always taught from a practical standpoint based on His understanding, His enlightenment, and His realization of the Truth. This philosophy has its origins in the experience of the man named Siddhartha Gotama, known as the Buddha, who was himself awakened at the age of 36. Buddhism is now older than 2,500 years old and has more than 800 million followers world-wide, including Chinese followers in Mainland China. People in the West had heard of the Buddha and his teaching as early as the thirteenth century when Marco Polo (1254-1324), the Italian traveler who explored Asia, wrote accounts on Buddhism in his book, "Travels of Marco Polo". From the eighteenth century onwards, Buddhist texts were brought to Europe and translated into English, French and German. Until a hundred years ago, Buddhism was mainly an Asian philosophy but increasingly it is gaining adherents in Europe and America. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Alan Bennett, an Englishman, went to Burma to become a Buddhist monk. He was renamed Ananda Metteya. He returned to Britain in 1908. He was the first British person to become a Buddhist monk. He taught Dharma in Britain. Since then, Buddhist monks and nuns from Sri Lanka, Thailand, Japan, China and other Buddhist countries in Asia have come to the West, particularly over the last seventy years. Many of these teachers have kept to their original customs while others have adapted to some extent to meet the demands of living in a western society. In recent years, there has been a marked growth of interest in Buddhism in Europe. The membership of existing societies has increased and many new Buddhist centers have been established. Their members include large numbers of professionals and scholars. Today, Britain alone has over 140 Buddhist centers found in most major cities.

To the Buddha, man is a supreme being, thus, he taught: "Be your own torch and your own refuge. Do not seek refuge in any other

person." This was the Buddha's truthful word. He also said: "All realizations come from effort and intelligence that derive from one's own experience. Man is the master of his destiny, since he can make his life better or worse. If he tries his best to cultivate, he can become a Buddha." Buddhism is the only way that leads people from the evil to the virtuous, from deluded to fully enlightened sagehood. Buddhism is a philosophy, a way of life or a religion. The religion of the awakened one. One of the three great world religions. If was founded by the historical Buddha Sakyamuni over 25 centuries ago. Sakyamuni expounded the four noble truths as the core of his teaching, which he had recognized in the moment of his enlightenment. He had shown people how to live wisely and happily and his teachings soon spread from India throughout Asia, and beyond.

The Buddha admitted the presence of sufferings and afflictions in human life because of the ignorant attachment to all things. But it is trully wrong to believe that Buddhism a religion of pessimism. This is not true even with a slight understanding of basic Buddhism. When the Buddha said that human life was full of sufferings and afflictions, he did not mean that life was pessimistic. In this manner, the Buddha admitted the presence of sufferings and afflictions in human life, and by a method of analysis he pointed out to his disciples that attachment to things without a correct view as to their nature is the cause of sufferings and afflictions. Impermanence and change are inherent in the nature of all things. This is their true nature and this is the correct view. He concluded: "As long as we are at variance with this truth, we are bound to run into conflicts. We cannot alter or control the nature of things. The result is 'hope deferred made the heart sick'. The only solution lies in correcting our point of view." In fact, the thirst for things begets sorrow. When we like someone or something, we wish that they belonged to us and were with us forever. We never think about their true nature, in other words, or we refuse to think about their true nature. We expect them to survive forever, but time devours everything. Eventually we must yield to old age and freshness of the morning dew disappears before the rising sun. In the Nirvana Sutra, when Ananda and other disciples were so sad and cried when the Buddha lay on his death-bed, the Buddha taught: "Ananda! Lament not. Have I not already told you that from all good things we love and

cherish we would be separated, sooner or later... that they would change their nature and perish. How then can Tathagata survive? This is not possible!" This is the philosophy which underlies the doctrine of the "Three Marks" (impermanence, suffering and no-self) of existence of the Buddhist view of life and the world. All Buddhist values are based on this. The Buddha expected of his disciples, both laity and clergy, good conduct and good behavior and decent standard of living in every way. With him, a simple living did not amount to degenerate human existence or to suffer oneself. The Buddha advised his disciples to follow the "Middle Path". It is to say not to attach to things nor to abandon them. The Buddha does not deny the "beauty", however, if one does not understand the true nature of the objects of beauty, one may end up with sufferings and afflictions or grief and disappointment. In the "Theragatha", the Buddha brought up the story of the Venerable Pakka. One day, going to the village for alms, Venerable Pakka sat down beneath a tree. Then a hawk, seizing some flesh flew up into the sky. Other hawks saw that attacked it, making it drop the piece of meat. Another hawk grabbed the fallen flesh, and was flundered by other hawks. And Pakka thought: "Just like that meat are worldly desires, common to all, full of pain and woe." And reflecting hereon, and how they were impermanent and so on, he continued to contemplate and eventually won Arahanship. The Buddha advised his disciples not to avoid or deny or attach to objects of beauty. Try not to make objects of beauty our objects of like or dislike. Whatever there is in the world, pleasant or unpleasant, we all have a tendency to attach to them, and we develop a like or dislike to them. Thus, we continue to experience sufferings and afflictions. Buddhists recognize beauty where the sense can perceive it, but in beauty we should also see its own change and destruction. And Buddhist should always remember the Buddha's teaching regarding to all component things: "Things that come into being, undergo change and are eventually destroyed." Therefore, Buddhists admire beauty but have no greed for acquisition and possession.

V. Buddhist Cosmology & Buddhist Outlook on Human Life:

Buddhist Cosmology: According to the Buddhist view on the universe, the universe is infinite. However, if we speak about the

formation of our world system, we can speak about the formation process as follows: “In terms of elements that form the universe, wind is the first one. Its basis is space. Then the wind moves, and in dependence on the moving of the wind, heat occurs; then moisture, then solidity or earth.” Buddhist cosmology not only takes into account the existence of innumerable systems of worlds grouped into what we should call galaxies, but has equally vast conceptions of cosmic time. The Buddha proclaimed that on the highest level of understanding the entire cosmos is the original pure mind. However, on the ordinary level of understanding he painted a picture of a cosmos filled with countless worls systems where countless of living beings of every short reside. Thus, our world system is not the only unique or the only one world system in the universe. Other world systems also have their Buddhas who also teach the path of enlightenment. The most ancient Buddhist texts speak of the various phases in the evolution and devolution over enormous time-periods of these galaxies, how they gradually formed and how after a period or relative stability during which life may be found on their worlds, how, inevitably having come into existence, they must in due course decline and go to destruction. All this is the working of processes, one vent leading quite naturally to another. As you know that although the Buddha discovered the presence of numerous Gods throughout the universe, he never tried to diminish the importance of the God worshipped by the people of his time. He simply preached the truth and that truth does not affect the importance of any Gods. Similarly, the fact that there are numerous suns in the universe does not diminish the importance of the sun of our solar system, for our sun continues to provide us with light every day. To some other religions, Gods can be very powerful compared to human beings, but to Buddhism, they are still not free from sufferings and afflictions, and can be very angry. The life of Gods may be very long, but not eternal as many other religions believe.

Outlook on life and universe has been discussed by a lot of famous scholars in the world. Examination of the origin or nature of life and universe is the task of the metaphysic experts. This problem has a very important position in philosophy. It was examined from the beginning of the Egyptian, Indian and Chinese civilizations. This book is designed to give you only an overview of the Buddhist cosmology. Buddhist

cosmology not only takes into account the existence of innumerable systems of worlds grouped into what we should call galaxies, but has equally vast conceptions of cosmic time. According to Buddhist cosmology, the earth goes through periodic cycles. In some of the cycles it improves, in others it degenerates. The average age of a man is an index of the quality of the period in which the person lives. It may vary between 10 years and many hundreds of thousands of years. At the time of Sakyamuni Buddha, the average life-span was 100 years. After him, the world becomes more depraved, and the life of man shortens. The peak of sin and misery will be reached when the average life has fallen to 10 years. The Dharma of Sakyamuni Buddha will then be completely forgotten. But after that the upward swing begins again. When the life of man reaches 80,000 years, Maitreya Buddha from the Tusita Heaven will appear on the earth. Besides, the most ancient Buddhist texts speak of the various phases in the evolution and devolution over enormous time-periods of these galaxies, how they gradually formed and how after a period or relative stability during which life may be found on their worlds, how, inevitably having come into existence, they must in due course decline and go to destruction. All this is the working of processes, one vent leading quite naturally to another. The Buddha was the Teacher who discovered the real nature of the universal cosmic law and advised us to live in accordance with this law. The Buddha confirmed that it is impossible for anyone to escape from such cosmic laws by praying to an almighty god, because this universal law is unbiased. However, the Buddha has taught us how to stop bad practices by increasing good deeds, and training the mind to eradicate evil thoughts. According to the Buddha, a man can even become a god if he leads a decent and righteous way of life regardless of his religious belief. It is to say a man someday can obtain peace, mindfulness, wisdom and liberation if he is willing to cultivate to perfect himself. The Buddha Sakyamuni himself realized the Noble Truths, considered all metaphysical questions are empty. He often kept silent and gave no answers to such metaphysical questions, because for Him, those questions do not realistically relate to the purpose of Buddhists, the purpose of all Buddhists is the final freedom. According to the Buddha, how can a man know what the universe really is when he cannot understand who he really is? Therefore, the Buddha taught:

"The practical way for a man is turning back to himself and seeing where and who he is and what he is doing so that he can overcome the destruction of all hindrances to the truth of all things. That is to say, he has to cultivate to purify his body and mind." For the universe, the Buddha declared that the material world is formed by the Four Great Elements as many Indian thinkers before Him did. These are Earth element, Water element, Fire element and Air element. These elements are dynamic and impermanent, therefore, all existing things compounded by them must be impermanent too. The problem about the origin of the four elements becomes senseless and is unacceptable to the truth of Dependent Origination which was discovered and taught by the Buddha.

Buddhist Outlook on Human Life: It is wrong to imagine that the Buddhist outlook on life and the world is a gloomy one, and that the Buddhist is in low spirit. Far from it, a Buddhist smiles as he walks through life. He who understands the true nature of life is the happiest individual, for he is not upset by the evanescent (extremely small) nature of things. He tries to see things as they are, and not as they seem to be. Conflicts arise in man when he is confronted with the facts of life such as aging, illness, death and so forth, but frustration and disappointment do not vex him when he is ready to face them with a brave heart. This view of life is neither pessimistic nor optimistic, but the realistic view. The man who ignores the principle of unrest in things, the intrinsic nature of suffering, is upset when confronted with the vicissitudes of life. Man's recognition of pleasures as lasting, leads to much vexation, when things occur quite contrary to his expectations. It is therefore necessary to cultivate a detached outlook towards life and things pertaining to life. Detachment can not bring about frustration, disappointment and mental torment, because there is no clinging to one thing and another, but letting go. This indeed is not easy, but it is the sure remedy for controlling, if not eradicating, unsatisfactoriness. The Buddha sees suffering as suffering, and happiness as happiness, and explains that all cosmic pleasure, like all other conditioned attachings, is evanescent, is a passing show. He warns man against attaching too much importance to fleeing pleasures, for they sooner or later beget discontent. Equanimity is the best antidote for both pessimism and optimism. Equanimity is evenness of

mind and not sullen indifference. It is the result of a calm, concentrated mind. It is hard, indeed, to be undisturbed when touched by the realities of life, but the man who cultivates truth is not upset. Absolute happiness can not be derived from things conditioned and compounded. What we hug in great glee this moment, turns into a source of dissatisfaction the next moment. Pleasures are short-lived, and never lasting. The mere gratification of the sense faculties we call pleasure and enjoyment, but in the absolute sense of the world such gratification is not happy. Joy too is suffering, unsatisfactory; for it is transient. If we with our inner eye try to see things in their proper perspective, in their true light, we will be able to realize that the world is but an illusion that leads astray the beings who cling to it. All the so-called mundane pleasures are fleeting, and only an introduction to pain. They give temporary relief from life's miserable ulcers. This is what is known as suffering produced by change. Thus, we see that suffering never ceases to work, it functions in some form or other and is always at work.

Regarding all beings in general, Buddhism considers all the living, which includes the vegetable kingdom; however, the term "sattva" limits the meaning to those endowed with reason, consciousness, and feeling. Those who are sentient, sensible, animate, and rational (sentient beings which possess magical and spiritual powers). According to Buddhism, what we call the self is simply the collection of mental facts, experiences, ideas and so forth which would normally be said to belong to self but there is no self over and above the experiences. So mentioned does not mean that people are not important. In fact, Buddhism which preached by the Buddha is totally built on human wisdom. The Buddha taught: "Be your own torch, your own refuge. Do not seek refuge in any other person." The Buddha added: "I am the Buddha fully realized, sentient beings will become Buddha." To Buddhism, all realizations come from effort and intelligence that derive from one's own experience. The Buddha asked his disciples to be the master of their destiny, since they can make their lives better or worse. They can even become Buddha if they study and practice his teachings.

Regarding the point of view on Human Beings and deva Vehicle, according to the Mahayana Rebirth among men conveyed by observing the five commandments (Panca-veramani). However, there are many

differences on human destinies in the world. For example, one is inferior and another superior; one perishes in infancy and another lives much longer; one is sick and infirm and another strong and healthy, one is brought up in luxury and another in misery, one is born a millionaire and another in poverty, one is a genius and another an idiot, etc. According to the Buddhist point of view on human life, all of the above mentioned, results are not the results of a "chance." Science nowadays is indeed against the theory of "chance." All scientists agree on the Law of Cause and Effect, so do Buddhists. Sincere and devoted Buddhists never believe that the unevenness of the world is due to a so-called Creator and/or God. Buddhists never believe that happiness or pain or neutral feeling the person experiences are due to the creation of a Supreme Creator. According to the Buddhist point of view on human life, the above-mentioned unevenness that exists in the world are due to the heridity and environment, and to a greater extent, to a cause or causes which are not only present but proximate or remotely past. Man, himself is responsible for his own happiness and misery. He creates his own heaven and hell. He is the master of his own destiny. He is his own child of his past and his own parents of his future. Regarding the point of view on Deva, this is only one of the five vehicles, the deva vehicle or Divine Vehicle. It transports observers of the ten good qualities (thập thiện) to one of the six deva realms of desire, and those who observe dhyana meditation to the higher heavens of form and non-form. Sentient beings are to be reborn among the devas by observing the ten forms of good actions or ten commandments (Dasa-kusala).

Regarding the point of view on the Kaya and Citta, Buddhism talks about the theory of impermanence of the body and mind. Some people wonder why Buddhism always emphasizes the theory of impermanence? Does it want to spread in the human mind the seed of disheartenment, and discourage? In their view, if things are changeable, we do not need to do anything, because if we attain a great achievement, we cannot keep it. This type of reasoning, a first, appears partly logical, but in reality, it is not at all. When the Buddha preached about impermanence, He did not want to discourage anyone, but warning his disciples about the truth. A true Buddhist has to work hard for his own well being and also for the society's. Although he

knows that he is facing the changing reality, he always keeps himself calm. He must refrain from harming others, in contrast, strive to perform good deeds for the benefit and happiness of others. All things have changed and will never cease to change. The human body is changeable, thus governed by the law of impermanence. Our body is different from the minute before to that of the minute after. Biological researches have proved that the cells in our body are in constant change, and in every seven years all the old cells have been totally renewed. These changes help us quickly grow up, age and die. The longer we want to live, the more we fear death. From childhood to aging, human life is exactly like a dream, but there are many people who do not realize; therefore, they continue to launch into the noose of desire; as a result, they suffer from greed and will suffer more if they become attached to their possessions. Sometimes at time of death they still don't want to let go anything. There are some who know that they will die soon, but they still strive desperately to keep what they cherish most. Not only our body is changeable, but also our mind. It changes more rapidly than the body, it changes every second, every minute according to the environment. We are cheerful a few minutes before and sad a few minutes later, laughing then crying, happiness then sorrow.

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Manjusri Bodhisattva obeyed the Buddha's command to call on Upasaka Vimalakirti to enquire after his health, there was a converssation about the "body". Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: "What should a Bodhisattva say when comforting another Bodhisattva who falls ill?" Vimalakirti replied: "He should speak of the impermanence of the body but never of the abhorrence and relinquishment of the body. He should speak of the suffering body but never of the joy in nirvana. He should speak of egolessness in the body while teaching and guiding all living beings (in spite of the fact that they are fundamentally non-existent in the absolute state). He should speak of the voidness of the body but should never cling to the ultimate nirvana. He should speak of repentance of past sins but should avoid slipping into the past. Because of his own illness he should take pity on all those who are sick. Knowing that he has suffered during countless past aeons he should think of the welfare of all living beings. He should think of his past practice of good virtues to uphold (his determination

for) right livelihood. Instead of worrying about troubles (klesa) he should give rise to zeal and devotion (in his practice of the Dharma). He should act like a king physician to cure others' illnesses. Thus, a Bodhisattva should comfort another sick Bodhisattva to make him happy." Manjusri, a sick Bodhisattva should look into all things in this way. He should further meditate on his body which is impermanent, is subject to suffering and is non-existent and egoless; this is called wisdom. Although his body is sick, he remains in (the realm of) birth and death for the benefit of all (living beings) without complaint; this is called expedient method (upaya). Manjusri! He should further meditate on the body which is inseparable from illness and on illness which is inherent in the body because sickness and the body are neither new nor old; this is called wisdom. The body, though ill, is not to be annihilated; this is the expedient method (for remaining in the world to work for salvation).

Regarding the point of view on the impurity of the Kaya and the Citta. Impurity is the nature of our bodies and minds. Impurity means the absence of an immaculate state of being, one that is neither holy nor beautiful. From the psychological and physiological standpoint, human beings are impure. This is not negative or pessimistic, but an objective perspective on human beings. If we examine the constituents of our bodies from the hair on our head to the blood, pus, phlegm, excrement, urine, the many bacteria dwelling in the intestines; and the many diseases present waiting for the opportunity to develop, we can see clearly that our bodies are quite impure and subject to decay. Our bodies also create the motivation to pursue the satisfaction of our desires and passions. That is why the sutra regards the body as the place where misleads gather. Let us now consider our psychological state. Since we are unable to see the truth of impermanence, suffering, and the selfless nature of all things, our minds often become the victims of greed and hatred, and we act wrongly. So, the sutra says, "The mind is the source of all confusion."

Here is another point of view of the Buddhism on the Kaya is "It is difficult to be reborn as a human being". Of all precious jewels, life is the greatest; if there is life, it is the priceless jewel. Thus, if you are able to maintain your livelihood, someday you will be able to rebuild your life. However, everything in life, if it has form characteristics,

then, inevitably, one day it will be destroyed. A human life is the same way, if there is life, there must be death. Even though we say a hundred years, it passes by in a flash, like lightening streaking across the sky, like a flower's blossom, like the image of the moon at the bottom of a lake, like a short breath, what is really eternal? Sincere Buddhists should always remember when a person is born, not a single dime is brought along; therefore, when death arrives, not a word will be taken either. A lifetime of work, putting the body through pain and torture in order to accumulate wealth and possessions, in the end everything is worthless and futile in the midst of birth, old age, sickness, and death. After death, all possessions are given to others in a most senseless and pitiful manner. At such time, there are not even a few good merits for the soul to rely and lean on for the next life. Therefore, such an individual will be condemned into the three evil paths immediately. Ancient sages taught: "A steel tree of a thousand years once again blossom, such a thing is still not bewildering; but once a human body has been lost, ten thousand reincarnations may not return." Sincere Buddhists should always remember what the Buddha taught: "It is difficult to be reborn as a human being, it is difficult to encounter (meet or learn) the Buddha-dharma; now we have been reborn as a human being and encountered the Buddha-dharma, if we let the time passes by in vain, we waste our scarce lifespan."

VI. Man's Place in Religions in Buddhist Point of View:

Most of us are agreed to the fact that among all living beings, human beings are unique beings who can understand what we are and what we should be. Compared to other beings, man is most complete and superior not only in the mentality and thinking, but also in the ability of organization of social life. Human beings' life cannot be substituted nor repeated nor determined by someone else. Once we are born in this world, we have to live our own life, a meaningful and worth living life. Thus, the ancient said: "Man is the most sacred and superior animal." And the Buddha taught in the Upasaka Sutra: "In all beings, man is endowed with all necessary faculties, intelligence. Besides man's conditions are not too miserable as those beings in hell, not too much pleasure as those beings in heaven. And above all, man's mind is not so ignorant as that of the animals." Buddhism views man as

a tiny being not only in strength but also in life span. Man is no more than just another creature but with intelligence that inhabit universe. Man is regarded as a cultured living being because he can harmonize with other creatures without destroying them. Religion was founded by men only for this purpose. Every creature that lives share the same life force which energizes man. Men and other creatures are part of the same cosmic energy which takes various forms during endless rebirths, passing from human to animal, to divine form and back again, motivated by the powerful craving for existence which takes them from birth to death and rebirth again in a never-ending cycle. In Buddhist cosmology, man is simply the inhabitant of one of the existing planes that other sentient beings can go after death. Human world is a good, well-balanced mixture of pleasure and pain. Man is in a favorable position to create or not to create fresh karma, and thus is able to shape his own destiny. Man is in effect his own Creator and Savior. Many others believe that religion has come down from heaven but Buddhists know that Buddhism started on the earth and reached heaven, or Buddha. The difficulty of being born as a man is just the same as the situation of a sea turtle which has only one eye, and that underneath, entered a hollow in a floating log; the log, tossed by the waves, happen to roll over, whereupon the turtle momentarily saw the sun and moon. It is as easy for a blind turtle to find a floating log as it is for a man to be reborn as a man, or to meet with a Buddha and his teaching (The rareness of meeting a Buddha is compared with the difficulty of a blind sea-turtle finding a log to float on, or a one-eyed tortoise finding a log with a spy-hole through it).

Buddhism considers human body as a defiled skin bag. Sincere Buddhists should not care too much for this body, should not treat their skin-bag of a body as a treasure. Only people who are free of this idea can apply effort in cultivating the Way. If we treat our body as a precious thing, then we will become its slave and serve its whims all day long. Therefore, sincere Buddhists should treat the body as a ‘stinking bag of skin’ and do not prize it highly. Valuing the body too high is an obstacle to cultivation. We should merely ‘borrow the false to cultivate what is true,’ and see it as just an expedient means. According to the Sutra in Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 26, the heavenly spirits, desiring to destroy the Buddha’s resolve, offered Jade women

to him. The Buddha said: “Skin-bags full of filth.” What are you doing here? Go away, I am not interested.” Then, the heavenly spirits asked most respectfully about the meaning of the Way. The Buddha explained it for them and they immediately obtained the fruition of Srotaapanna.” However, also according to Buddhism, Manusya is considered to be ideal destiny for the attainment of Buddhahood, because humans are not plagued by the constant sufferings of beings of the lower three destinies (hell beings, hungry ghosts and animals), and they also do not have happy lives of gods to be lax in cultivation. In the contrary, they experience enough suffering to become aware of the real nature of things (impermanence, sffering, and non-self). Thus, the Buddha taught, “a man can decide to devote himself to selfish, unskilful ends, a mere existence, or to give purpose to his life by the practice of skilful deeds which will make others and himself happy.” Still, in many cases, man can make the vital decision to shape his life in this way or that; a man can think about the Way, and it was to man that the Buddha gave most of his important teachings, for men could understand, practice and realize the Way. It is man who can experience, if he wishes, Enlightenment and become as the Buddha and the Arahants, this is the greatest blessing, for not only the secure tranquillity of one person’s salvation is gained but out of compassion the Way is shown in many others. The opportunity to be reborn as a human being is so rare; thus the Buddha taught: “Supposing a man threw into the ocean a piece of wood with a hole in it and it was then blown about by the various winds and currents over the waters. In the ocean lived a one-eyed turtle which had to surface once in a hundred years to breathe. Even in one Great Aeon it would be most unlikely in surfacing, to put its head into the hole in that piece of wood. Such is the rarity of gaining birth among human beings if once one has sunk into the three woeful levels or three lower realms. Also according to Buddhism, man is different from animals because only man alone has developed his intelligence and understanding to reflect his reasoning. Man means a sentient being or one who has the ability or the mind to think. The real and sincere purpose of religion is to help man to think correctly in order to raise him above the level of the animal, to help him reach his ultimate goal of supreme happiness.”

Even though human beings are superior sentient beings, but to Buddhism, any living being's life is precious and of the same value. That is to say no being's life is more precious than the other's. According to the Upasaka Sutra, Buddhism agrees that in all living beings, man is endowed with all necessary faculties, intelligence. Buddhism also agrees that conditions of human beings are not too miserable as those beings in the hell or the hungry ghosts. To Buddhism, human life is difficult to obtain. If we are born as human beings with many qualities, difficult to attain. We should try to make our lives meaningful ones. Besides, human beings have intelligence. This precious quality enables us to investigate the true meaning of life and to practice the path to enlightenment. Devout Buddhists should always remember that what rebirth we will take depends on our present actions and habits. Thus, our purpose in this very life is to attain liberation or enlightenment, either becoming liberated from cyclic existence (Arhats), or becoming fully enlightened Buddhas. Most of all, we should be able to take advantage of our precious human lives to live to the fullest, moment by moment. To achieve this, we must be mindful of each moment, not being in the here-and-now when we act. According to Buddhist point of view, we have precious human lives, endowed with many qualities to attain. Because of this, we can make our lives highly meaningful. We often take our lives for granted and dwell on the things that aren't going the way we would like them to. Thinking this way is unrealistic and makes us depressed. However, if we think about the qualities we do have and everything that is going well, we'll have a different and more joyful perspective on life. One of our greatest endowments is our human intelligence. This precious quality enables us to investigate the meaning of life and to practice to advance on the path to enlightenment. If all of our senses, eyes, ears, mental... are intact, we are able to hear the Dharma, read books on it, and think about its meaning. We're so lucky to be born in an historical era when the Buddha has appeared and taught the Dharma. These teachings have been transmitted in a pure from teacher to student in lineages steming back to the Buddha. We have the opportunity to have qualified spiritual masters who can teach us, and there are communities of ordained people and dharma friends who share our interest and encourage us on the path. Those of us who are fortunate to live in

countries that cherish religious freedom aren't restricted from learning and practicing the path. In addition, most of us don't live in desperate poverty and thus have enough food, clothing and shelter to engage in spiritual practice without worrying about basic material needs. Our minds aren't heavily obscured with wrong views and we are interested in self-development. We have the potential to do great things with our present opportunity. But to appreciate this, we must develop a long-term vision for our cultivation because our present lives are only a short one. Devout Buddhists should always remember that our mindstreams don't cease when our physical bodies die. Our minds are formless entities, but when they leave our present bodies at the time of death, they will be reborn in other bodies. What rebirth we'll take depends on our present actions. Therefore, one purpose of our lives can be to prepare for death and future lives. In that way, we can die peacefully, knowing our minds will be propelled towards good rebirths. The other way that we can utilize our lives is to attain liberation or enlightenment. We can become arhats, beings liberated from cyclic existence, or we can go on to become fully enlightened Buddhas, able to benefit others most effectively. Attaining liberation, our minds will be completely cleansed of all disturbing attitudes. Thus, we'll never become angry, jealous or proud again. We no longer feel guilty, anxious or depressed, and all our bad habits will be gone. In addition, if we aspire to attain enlightenment for the benefit of everyone, we'll have spontaneous affection for all beings, and will know the most appropriate ways to help them. Also, another way to take advantage of our precious human lives is to live life to the fullest, moment by moment. There are several ways to do this. One is to be mindful of each moment, being in the here-and-now as we act. When we eat, we can concentrate on eating, noting the taste and texture of the food. When we walk, we concentrate on the movements involved in walking, without letting our minds wander to any other thoughts. When we go upstairs, we can think, "may I lead all beings to fortunate rebirths, liberation and enlightenment." While washing dishes or clothes, we think, "may I help all beings cleanse their minds of disturbing attitudes and obscurations." When we hand something to another person, we think, "May I be able to satisfy the needs of all beings." We can creatively transform each action by generating the wish to bring

happiness to others. For these above reasons, we can say that human beings play an extremely important role in most religions. The Buddha taught in the Upasaka Sutra: "In all beings, man is endowed with all necessary faculties, intelligence. Besides man's conditions are not too miserable as those beings in hell, not too much pleasure as those beings in heaven. And above all, man's mind is not so ignorant as that of the animals." So, man has the ability to build and improve his own life to the degree of perfection.

VII.The Priceless Message from the Buddha:

Priceless Message from the Buddha or the Four Noble Truths is one of the most important parts in the Buddha's Teachings. The Buddha gave this message to suffering humanity for their guidance, to help them to be rid of the bondage of "Dukkha" and to attain happiness, both relative and absolute (relative happiness or worldly happiness, absolute happiness or Nirvana). These Truths are not the Buddha's creation. He only re-discovered their existence. The Buddha said: "I am neither a vaguely so-called God nor an incarnation of any vaguely so-called God. I am only a man who re-discovers what had been covered for so long. I am only a man who attains enlightenment by completely comprehending all Noble Truths." In fact, the Buddha is a man who deserves our respect and reverence not only as a teacher but also as a Saint. He was a man, but an extraordinary man, a unique being in the universe. All his achievements are attributed to his human effort and his human understanding. He achieved the highest mental and intellectual attainments, reached the supreme purity and was perfect in the best qualities of human nature. He was an embodiment of compassion and wisdom, two noble principles in Buddhism. The Buddha never claimed to be a savior who tried to save 'souls' by means of a revelation of other religions. The Buddha's message is simple but priceless to all of us: "Infinite potentialities are latent in man and that it must be man's effort and endeavor to develop and unfold these possibilities. That is to say, in each man, there exists the Buddha-nature; however, deliverance and enlightenment lie fully within man's effort and endeavor."

Chapter Two

The Jambudvipa & Our Modern World

(A) The Jambudvipa

The Samsara, or worldly world is also called the Jambudvipa. It is so named either from the Jambu trees abounding in it, or from an enormous Jambud tree on Mount Meru visible like a standard to the whole continent. Saha means sufferings and afflictions; it also means worries, binding, unable to be free and liberated. The worldly world is full of storm, conflict, hatred and violence. The world in which we live is an impure field, and Sakyamuni is the Buddha who has initiated its purification. People in this world endure many sufferings stemming from three poisons of greed, anger and delusion as well as earthly desires. The Saha World is filled with dirt, rocks, thorns, holes, canyons, hills, cliffs. There are various sufferings regarding thirst, famine, hot, and cold. The people in the Saha World like wicked doctrines and false dharma; and do not have faith in the proper dharma. Their lives are short and many are fraudulent. Kings and mandarins, although already have had lands to govern and rule, are not satisfied; as they become greedy, they bring forces to conquer other countries causing innocent people to die in vain. In addition, there are other infinite calamities such as droughts, floods, loss of harvest, thirst, famine, epidemics, etc. As for this Saha World, the favorable circumstances to cultivate in peace and contenment are few, but the unfavorable conditions of afflictions destroying path that are rather losing Bodhi Mind they developed in the beginning. Moreover, it is very difficult to encounter a highly virtuous and knowledgeable advisor. According to the Buddha, the planet in which we are currently living is called Virtuous Southern Continent. It is situated to the south of Mount Sumeru and is just a tiniest part of the Great World System of the Saha World in which Sakyamuni Buddha is the ruler. Thus, “Saha” also called the place that which bears, the earth, interpreted as bearing, enduring; the place of good and evil; a universe, or great chiliocosm,

where all are subject to transmigration and which a Buddha transforms; it is divided into three regions and Mahabrahma Sahampati is its lord. World of endurance refers to our world which is filled with sufferings and affections, yet gladly enjoyed and endured by its inhabitants. According to Buddhism, Jambudvipa is the human world, the world in which we are living. Jambudvipa is a small part of Saha World, the realm of Sakyamuni Buddha. The southernmost of the four great land masses (catur-dvipa) of traditional Buddhist cosmology. It is said to be named after the Jambu tree that grows there. It measures 2,000 yojanas on three sides, and its fourth side is only three-and-a-half yojanas long. The Southern Continent, one of the four continents that situated south of Mount Meru, comprising the world known to the early Indian. According to Eitel in The Dictionary of Chinese-English Buddhist Terms, Jambudvipa includes the following countries around the Anavatapta Lake and the Himalayas. The North region includes Huns-Mongolians-Turks; the East region inlcudes China-Korea-Japan; the South region includes Northern India (twenty-seven kingdoms), Eastern India (ten kingdoms), Southern India (fifteen kingdoms), Central India (thirty kingdoms, and Western Indian (thirty-four kingdoms).

(B) Our Modern World

The world today is not what it was half a century ago. Ideas of good and bad are fast changing, attitudes toward moral and immoral conduct are different and the general outlook on men and things is also very different. We are living in an age of rush and speed. It is tension, tension everywhere. If you stand at the corner of a busy street and scan the faces of the people hurrying feverishly by, you will notice that most of them are restless. They carry with them an atmostphere of stress. They are most pictures of rush and worry. Rarely will you find a picture of calm, content and repose in any of these faces. Such is the modern world. The world of today is characterized by inordinate haste leading to quick decisions and imprudent actions. Some shout when they could speak in normal tones and other talk excitedly at a forced pitch for long periods and finish a conversation almost exhausted. Any kind of

excitement is a stress in the psychologist's sense of the word, and stress causes the speeding up of bodily processes. It is not seldom that a person driving a vehicle gets agitated on seeing the green color of the traffic lights giving place to amber. The anxious man regards even a minor event as if it were a crisis or a threat. As a result man is worried and unhappy. Another feature of the modern world is its noisiness. "Music hatch charms," they say, but today, even such music is not agreeable to many if there is no noise; louder the noise greater is the music to them. Those of us who live in big cities have no time to think of the noise, we are conditioned by it and accustomed to it. This noise, this stress, and strain have done much damage by way of ailments: heart disease, cancer, ulcers, nervous tension and insomnia. Most of our illnesses are caused by psychological anxiety states, the nervous tension of modern life, economic distress and emotional unrest.

Nervous exhaustion in man is increasing with the speeding up of life leading to delirious excitement. People often return home after work showing signs of nervous exhausation. As a consequence, man's concentration is weakened and mental and physical efficiency is lowered. Man becomes easily irritated and is quick to find fault and pick a quarrel. He becomes morbidly introspective and experiences aches and pains and suffers from hyper-tension and sleeplessness. These symptoms of nervous exhausation clearly show that modern man's mind and body require rest, rest of a high quality. There is a requisite to mental hygiene for human beings in the modern world. Let us bear in mind that a certain aloofness, a withdrawing of the mind from business of life is a requisite to mental hygiene. Whenever you get an opportunity try to be away from the town and engage yourself in quiet contemplation, call it "yoga," Concentration or meditation. Learn to observe the silence. Silence does so much good to us. It is quite wrong to imagine that they alone are powerful who are noisy, garrulous and fussily busy. Silence is golden, and we must speak only if we can improve on silence. The greatest creative energy works in silence. Observing silence is important. We absolutely do that in our meditation.

Thus in the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "Look upon the world as one would look upon a bubble, just as one would look upon a mirage. If a man thus looks down upon the world, the king of death

does not see him (Dharmapada 170). Supposed this world is like a brilliantly ornamented royal chariot; the foolish are immersed in it, but the wise do not attach to it (Dharmapada 171). Whoever was formerly heedless and afterwards overcomes his sloth; such a person illuminates this world just like the moon when freed from clouds (Dharmapada 172). Whoever was formerly heedless and afterwards does good deeds; such a person illuminates this world just like the moon when freed from clouds (Dharmapada 173). This work is so dark that only a few can see it clearly, like birds escape from a net but very few of them fly up straight (Dharmapada 174)."

2

Part Two
Sentient Beings & the Ocean of Life and Death in Buddhist Point of View

Chapter Three

An Overview of Sentient Beings In Buddhist Point of View

(A) An Overview of Sentient Beings

Sentient beings include the living beings and things. The living beings or the sentient are those with emotions and wisdom; while things, or insentient things are those without emotions nor wisdom. Therefore, sentient beings or those with emtions (the living) or those who possess consciousness; while insentient things or those without emotions. Insentient things survive through the means of their own beings, from sunlight, earth and air. Plants are not considered sentient beings because they do not possess consciousness. Conscious beings or sentient beings which possess magical and spiritual powers. All the living, which includes the vegetable kingdom; however, the term "sattva" limits the meaning to those endowed with reason, consciousness, and feeling; or those who are sentient, sensible, animate, and rational. According to Buddhism, any living being who has a consciousness, including those of the six realms (heaven, human, asura, animal, hungry ghost, and hell). All sentient beings can be said to have inherent enlightenment or Buddha-nature. The term "Living beings" refer to all creatures that possess life-force. Each individual living being comes into being as the result of a variety of different causes and conditions. The smallest living beings as ants, mosquitoes, or even the tiniest parasites are living beings. However, the majority of conscious beings are ordinary people who always examine themselves and realize they are just unenlightened mortal filled with greed, hatred and ignorance, as well as an accumulation of infinite other transgressions in the past, present and future. From realizing this, they develop a sense of shame and then vow to change their way, be remorseful, repent, and give their best to cultivate with vigor such as chanting sutra, reciting the Buddha's name, or sitting meditation,

seeking to quickly end karmic obstructions and to attain enlightenment in a very near future.

In Buddhist philosophy, a sentient being is one who has a mind, that is, something that is aware of its surroundings and is capable of volitional activity. In Buddhist psychological literature, the minimum necessary requirements for something to be a sentient being are the five "omni-present mental factors" (sarvatraga): 1) feeling (vedana); 2) discrimination (samjna); 3) intention (cetana); 4) mental activity (manasikara); 5) contact (sparsa). Beings are different in various ways, including the good and bad seeds they possess. Each being creates karma and undergoes its individual retribution. This process evolves from distinctions that occur in the five skandhas. Every being is a combination of five elements: rupa, vedana, sanna, sankhara, and vinnana. Hence, one being is not essentially different from another, an ordinary man is not different from a perfect saint. But is the nature and proportion of each of the five constituents existing in an individual be taken into account, then one being is different from another, an ordinary man is different from a perfect saint. The combination of elements is the outcome of Karma and is happening every moment, implying that the disintegration of elements always precedes it. The elements in a combined state pass as an individual, and from time immemorial he works under misconception of a self and of things relating to a self. His vision being distorted or obscured by ignorance of the truth he can not perceive the momentary combination and disintegration of elements. On the other hand, he is subject to an inclination for them. A perfect man with his vision cleared by the Buddhist practices and culture realizes the real state of empirical things that an individual consists of the five elements and does not possess a permanent and unchanging entity called soul.

According to Buddhism, physically speaking, there are four kinds of beings, including living and non-living beings: flying, swimming, walking, and plants. Those with blood and breath are called animals, and plants refer to all kinds of grasses, trees, and flower-plants. Where do all those four kinds of beings come from? What is their origin? According to Buddhism, their origin is the Buddha-nature. If there was no Buddha-nature, everything would be annihilated. The Buddha-nature is the only thing that passes through ten thousand generations

and all time without being destroyed. From the Buddha-nature come Bodhisattvas, Hearers (Enlightened to Conditions), gods, asuras, people, animals, ghosts, and hell-beings. Those are beings of the ten dharma realms, and the ten dharma realms are not apart from a single thought of the mind. This single thought of the mind is just the seed of the Buddha-nature. One true-thought is just another name for the Buddha-nature. Those living beings include beings which are born through the womb; those born through eggs; those born through moisture; and those born through transformation or metamorphoses such as a worm transforming to become a butterfly.

According to The Lankavatara Sutra, from the religious point of view, there are five orders of beings. First of all, those who belong to the Sravaka order are delighted at listening to such doctrines as concern the Skandhas, Dhatus, or Ayatanas, but take no special interest in the theory of causation, who have cut themselves loose from the bondage of evil passions but have not yet destroyed their habit-energy. They have attained the realization of Nirvana, abiding in which state they would declare that they have put an end to existence, their life of morality is now attained, all that is to be done is done, they would not be reborn. These have gained an insight into the non-existence of an ego-substance in a person but not yet into that in objects. These philosophical leaders who believe in a creator or in the ego-soul may also be classified under this order. Second, the Pratyekabuddha order comprises those who are intensely interested in anything that leads them to the realization of Pratyekabuddhahood. They would retire into solitude and have no attachment to worldly things. When they hear that the Buddha manifests himself in a variety of forms, sometimes in group, sometimes singly, exhibiting miraculous powers, they think these are meant for their own order, and immensely delighted in them they would follow and accept them. Third, those of the Tathagata order, or those who may listen to discourse on such subjects as manifestations of mind, or transcendental realm of the Alaya, from which starts this world of particulars, and yet they may not at all feel astonished or frightened. The Tathagata order may be again divided into three: those who gain an insight into the truth that there is no individual reality behind one perceives; those who know that there is an immediate perception of the truth in one's inmost consciousness;

those who perceive that besides this world there are a great number of Buddha-lands wide and far-extending. Fourth, those who belong to no definite order, or those who are of the indeterminate nature. For those who belong to it may take to either one of the above three orders according to their opportunities. Fifth, those who are altogether outside these orders. There is still another class of beings which cannot be comprised under any of the four already mentiond; for they have no desire whatever for emancipation, and without this desire no religious teaching can enter into any heart. They belong to the Icchantika order. Icchantika is a Sanskrit word which means "incomplete faith" and "lacking good roots." A class of beings who have cut off all their virtuous roots (kusala mula) and so have no hope of attaining buddhahood. The status of icchantikas was once an important topic of debate in East Asian Buddhism, with some groups claiming that they are unable to attain liberation, while others asserted that all beings, including icchantikas, have the buddha-nature, and so the virtuous roots may be re-established. Bhiksus who refuse to enter upon their Buddhahood in order to save all beings. Icchantika is one who cuts off his roots of goodness. The Atyantika are people who are extremely evil and wicked, having lost all senses of goodness. It is impossible to change, transform, or influence them to take a cultivated path. However, this also applied to a Bodhisattva who has made his vow not to become a Buddha until all beings are saved. In the Lankavatara Sutra, the Buddha reminded Mahamati: "Oh Mahamati, the Bodhisattva-icchantika knowing that all things are in Nirvana from the beginning refrains forever from entering into Nirvana. Two sub-classes, however, may be distinguished here. Those who have forsaken all roots of merit, or those who vilify the doctrines meant for the Bodhisattvas, saying that they are not in accordance with the sacred texts, rules of morality, and the doctrine of emancipation. Because of this vilification they forsake all the roots of merit and do not enter into Nirvana. Those who have vowed at the beginning to save all beings. They are Bodhisattvas who wish to lead all beings to Nirvana. Deny themselves of this bliss. They vowed in the beginning of their religious career that until everyone of their fellow-beings is led to enjoy the eternal happiness of Nirvana, they themselves would not leave this world of pain and suffering, but must strenuously and with every

possible means work toward the completion of their mission. But as there will be no termination of life as long as the universe continues to exist, Bodhisattvas may have no chance for ever to rest themselves quietly with their work finished in the serenity of Nirvana. The time will come even to those who speak evil of the Bodhisattvayana when through the power of the Buddhas they finally embrace the Mahayana and by amassing stock of merit enter into Nirvana, for the Buddhas are always working for the benefit of all beings no matter what they are. But as for Bodhisattvas they never enter into Nirvana as they have a deep insight into the nature of things which are already in Nirvana even as they are. Thus, we know where Bodhisattvas stand in their never-ending task of leading all beings into the final abode of rest.

According to the Mahanidana sutta and the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are seven stations of consciousness: there are beings different in body and different in perception, such as human beings, some evas and some states of woe; there are beings different in body and alike in perception, such as the devas of Brhama's retinue, born there (on account of having attained) the first jhana; there are beings alike in body and different in perception, such as the Abhassara Devas; there are beings alike in body and alike in perception, such as the Subhakinna devas; there are beings who have completely transcended all perception of matter, by the vanishing of the perception of sense-reactions and by non-attention to the perception of variety; thinking: "Space is infinite," they have attained to the Sphere of Infinite Space; there are beings who, by transcending the Sphere of Infinite Space, thinking: "Consciousness is infinite," have attained to the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness; and there are beings who, having transcended the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness, thinking: "There is nothing," have attained to the Sphere of No-Thingness. There are seven stages of existence in a human world or in any desire world. They are being in the hells, animals, the hungry ghosts, the devas, the human beings, beings of karma, and beings in the intermediate stage. Besides, there are still seven other kinds of sentient beings: hells, hungry ghosts, animals, demons of higher order, humans, non-humans, and gods (a genius or higher spiritual being). According to the Lotus Sutra, there are still

eight other beings: deva, naga, yaksa, asura, gadura, kinnara, gandharva, and mahogara.

According to Buddhist tradition, there are nine kinds of beings. First, sense-desire becoming, the kind of becoming possessed of sense-desires; second, fine-material becoming, the kind of becoming possessed of fine material; third, immaterial becoming, the kind of becoming possessed of immaterial; fourth, percipient becoming, the kind of becoming possessed of perception; fifth, non-percipient becoming, the kind of becoming possessed of non-perception; sixth, neither-percipient-nor-non-percipient becoming, the kind of becoming possessed of neither perception nor non-perception; seventh, one-constituent becoming, the kind of becoming possessed of one constituent; eighth, four-constituent becoming, the kind of becoming possessed of four constituents; ninth, five-constituent becoming, the kind of becoming possessed of five constituents. According to the Sangiti Sutta, there are nine more kinds of sentient beings: beings different in body and different in perception such as human beings, some devas and hells; beings different in body and alike in perception such as new-rebirth Brahma; beings are alike in body and different in perception such as Light-sound heavens (Abhasvara); beings alike in body and alike in perception such as Heavens of pure dwelling; the realm of unconscious beings such as heavens of no-thought; beings who have attained the Sphere of Infinite Space; beings who have attained to the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness; beings who have attained to the Sphere of No-Thingness; and beings who have attained to the Sphere of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-Perception.

In the Surangama Sutra, book Seven, the Buddha reminded Ananda about the twelve categories of living beings: 1) Egg-born beings or beings born through egg. Through a continuous process of falseness, the upside-down state of movement occurs in this world. It unites with energy to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts that either fly or sink. From this there come into being the egg kalalas which multiply throughout the lands in the form of fish, birds, amphibians, and reptiles, so that their kinds abound. 2) Womb-born beings or beings born through womb. Through a continuous process of defilement, the upside-down state of desire occurs in this world. It unites with stimulation to become eighty-four thousand kinds of

random thoughts that are either upright or perverse. From this there come into being the womb arbudas, which multiply throughout the world in the form of humans, animals, dragons, and immortals until their kinds abound. 3) Moisture-born beings or beings born through moisture. Through a continuous process of attachment, the upside-down state of inclination occurs in this world. It unites with warmth to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts that are vacillating and inverted. From this there come into being through moisture the appearance of peshis, which multiply throughout the lands in the form of insects and crawling invertebrates, until their kinds abound. 4) Transformation-born beings or beings born through transformation. Through a continuous process of change, the upside-down state of borrowing occurs in this world. It unites with contact to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of new and old. From this there come into being through transformation the appearance of ghanas, which multiply throughout the lands in the form of metamorphic flying and crawling creatures, until their kinds abound. 5) Form-born beings or beings born through form. Through a continuous process of restraint, the upside-down state of obstruction occurs in this world. It unites with attachment to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of refinement and brilliance. From this there come into being the ghanas of appearance that possess form, which multiply throughout the lands in the form of auspicious and inauspicious essences, until their kinds abound. 6) Formless-born beings or beings born through formlessness. Through a continuous process of annihilation and dispersion, the upside-down state of delusion occurs in this world. It unites with darkness to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of obscurity and hiding. From this there come into being the ghanas of formless beings, which multiply throughout the lands as those that are empty, dispersed, annihilated, and submerged until their kinds abound. 7) With thought-born beings or beings born with thoughts. Through a continuous process of illusory imaginings, the upside-down state of shadows occurs in this world. It unites with memory to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts that are hidden and bound up. From this there come into being the ghanas of those with thought, which multiply throughout the lands in the form of spirits, ghosts, and weird essences, until their kinds abound. 8)

Without thought-born beings or beings born without thought. Through a continuous process of dullness and slowness, the upside-down state of stupidity occurs in this world. It unites with obstinancy to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts that are dry and attenuated. From this there come into being the ghanas of those without thought, which multiply throughout the lands as their essence and spirit change into earth, wood, metal, or stone, until their kinds abound. 9) Not endowed with form-born beings or beings born not endowed with form. Through a continuous process of parasitic interaction, the upside-down state of simulation occurs in this world. It unites with defilement to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of according and relying. From this there come into being those not totally endowed with form, who become ghanas of form which multiply throughout the lands until their kinds abound, in such ways as jellyfish that use shrimp for eyes. 10) Not lacking form-born beings or beings born not toally lacking form. Through a continuous process of mutual enticement, an upside-down state of the nature occurs in this world. It unites with mantras to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of beckoning and summoning. From this there come into being those not totally lacking form, who take ghanas which are formless and multiply throughout the lands, until their kinds abound, as the hiden beings of mantras and incantations. 11) Not totally endowed with thought-born beings or beings born not totally endowed with thought. Through a continuous process of false unity, the upside-down state transgression occurs in this world. It unites with unlike formations to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of reciprocal interchange. From this come into being those not totally endowed with thought, which become ghanas possessing thought and which multiply throughout the lands until their kinds abound in such forms as the varata, which turns a different creature into its own species. 12) Not totally lacking thought-born beings or beings born through not totally lacking thought. Through a continuous proces of empty and harm, the upside-down state of killing occurs in this world. It unites with monstrosities to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of devouring one's father and mother. From this there come into being those not totally lacking thought, who take ghanas with no thought and multiply throughout the lands, until their kinds abound in such forms as the dirt

owl, which hatches its young from clods and dirt, and which incubates a poisonous fruit to create its young. In each case, the young thereupon eat the parents.

(B) Sentient Beings in the Six Paths

I. An Overview of Six Paths of the Samsara:

"Samsara" is a Sanskrit term for "Cyclic existence." This is the beginningless cycle of birth, death, rebirth and death again and again without ending, in which ordinary beings (prthag-jana) are trapped. The cycle of births and deaths, the cycle of existence. The ocean of births and deaths, the wheel of becoming in the phenomenal universe. Imprisonment in samsara is conditioned by the three "unwholesome roots" of greed, hatred and ignorance. Only human beings have the ability to depart from samsara and enter into nirvana because they can recognize and eliminate the three poisons of greed, hatred and ignorance. According to Buddhism, the universe is beginningless and endless, and the beings who dwell within it transmigate going up and down from life to life in dependence upon their volitional actions (karma). Due to ignorance (avidya) of the true nature of reality, they are generally predisposed toward actions and attitudes that lead to negative consequences. This process inevitably results in repeated suffering (duhkha), disappointment, and death, and so the main goal of Buddhism is to extricate oneself (tự giải thoát) from the cycle of existence, which can only be done through cultivation (religious practice) that enables one to transform one's negative attitudes and proclivities (xu hướng) and develop direct intuitive understanding of the nature of reality. This serves to break the cycle and leads to full liberation (Nirvana).

The six ways or conditions of sentient existence in the Saha World[(1)], or six miserable states sentient beings revolve in the cycle of Birth and Death, along the six paths, life after life. These are paths of hell-dwellers, hungry ghosts, animals, titanic demons or asuras, human beings and celestials. Six paths of sentient existence comprise of two parts. The first part is the three lower gatis, or three evil paths (tri-akusala (skt)) include the path of hell, the path of hungry ghosts, and

the path of animals. The second part is the three upper gatis, or three good paths include the path of angry demons, the path of human-beings, and the path of Gods.

We are living in a realm of desire. From the time we wake up untill the time we go to sleep at night, and even throughout our dreams, we are driven by desire. Each of our senses is hungry for its own particular food. Our eyes crave to see interesting shapes and colors; our ears want to hear pleasing sounds; our nose actively sniffs out agreeable odors and dislikes smells that offend it; our tongue seeks exciting new tastes; and our sense of touch is craving smooth contact. Meanwhile, our mind itself runs after ideas as greedily as our eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body. Then, we cannot obtain what we wish which causes suffering (due to unfulfilled wishes). In addition, there are other sufferings such as the sufferings of birth, of aging, of illnesses, of death, the suffering of being separated from the loved ones, or facing with what we hate, or the suffering caused by the ills of the five aggregates. Although we wish to have nothing but happiness, our life is full of pain and dissatisfaction. We wish to have a job to work but that very job occupies all our time and energy. We wish to live a noble life but our reputation is smeared, etc. It seems that the more we try to cling to happiness, the more miserable we become. Our efforts to find happiness lead us around in circles until we end up frustrated and exhausted. The Buddha referred to this condition of repeated dissatisfaction as "Samsara". Then, He prescribed many different methods for liberating ourselves from it. He said: "Ignorance is the main source that causes all of our problems and disappointments. The best way to liberate ourselves is to eliminate ignorance and to uproot all such craving desire from our heart.

II. Sentient Beings in the Six Paths:

An Overview of Sentient Beings in the Six Paths: The term "Living beings" refer to all creatures that possess life-force. Each individual living being comes into being as the result of a variety of different causes and conditions. The smallest living beings as ants, mosquitoes, or even the tiniest parasites are living beings. Every being is a combination of five elements: rupa, vedana, sanna, sankhara, and vinnana. Hence, one being is not essentially different from another, an

ordinary man is not different from a perfect saint. But is the nature and proportion of each of the five constituents existing in an individual be taken into account, then one being is different from another, an ordinary man is different from a perfect saint. The combination of elements is the outcome of Karma and is happening every moment, implying that the disintegration of elements always precedes it. The elements in a combined state pass as an individual, and from time immemorial he works under misconception of a self and of things relating to a self. His vision being distorted or obscured by ignorance of the truth he can not perceive the momentary combination and disintegration of elements. On the other hand, he is subject to an inclination for them. A perfect man with his vision cleared by the Buddhist practices and culture realizes the real state of empirical things that an individual consists of the five elements and does not possess a permanent and unchanging entity called soul.

According to Buddhism, sentient beings include the living beings and things. The living beings or the sentient are those with emotions and wisdom; while things, or insentient things are those without emotions nor wisdom. Therefore, sentient beings or those with emtions (the living) or those who possess consciousness; while insentient things or those without emotions. Insentient things survive through the means of their own beings, from sunlight, earth and air. Plants are not considered sentient beings because they do not possess consciousness. Conscious beings or sentient beings which possess magical and spiritual powers. All the living, which includes the vegetable kingdom; however, the term “sattva” limits the meaning to those endowed with reason, consciousness, and feeling; or those who are sentient, sensible, animate, and rational. According to Buddhism, any living being who has a consciousness, including those of the six realms (heaven, human, asura, animal, hungry ghost, and hell). All sentient beings can be said to have inherent enlightenment or Buddha-nature. The term “Living beings” refer to all creatures that possess life-force. Each individual living being comes into being as the result of a variety of different causes and conditions. The smallest living beings as ants, mosquitoes, or even the tiniest parasites are living beings. However, the majority of conscious beings are ordinary people who always examine themselves and realize they are just unenlightened mortal filled with greed, hatred

and ignorance, as well as an accumulation of infinite other transgressions in the past, present and future. From realizing this, they develop a sense of shame and then vow to change their way, be remorseful, repent, and give their best to cultivate with vigor such as chanting sutra, reciting the Buddha's name, or sitting meditation, seeking to quickly end karmic obstructions and to attain enlightenment in a very near future.

A Summary of Sentient Beings in the Six Paths of the Samsara: The six ways or conditions of sentient existence in the Saha World[(1)], or six miserable states sentient beings revolve in the cycle of Birth and Death, along the six paths, life after life. These are paths of hell-dwellers, hungry ghosts, animals, titanic demons or asuras, human beings and celestials. Six paths of sentient existence comprise of two parts: the first part is the three lower gatis, or three evil paths (tri-akusala (skt)). ***The three lower gatis include hells, hungry ghosts and animals:*** *First, the Realm of Hells:* The Sanscrit term forthe realm of hells is "Naraka-gati". This is the state of being miserable of being in hells. This is the lowest and most miserable condition of existence. Sentient being (alaya-consciousness) is condemned to stay in Hell due to his worse karma. In the hellish path, the sufferings there are so great that no words can describe them. In Buddhism, Naraka-gati symbolizes ignorance, greed and aggression. Depraved men or "hellish beings" who are in the lowest stage. *Second, the State of Hungry Ghosts:* The Sanscrit term for the state of hungry ghosts is "Preta-gati". This realm of starved ghosts where greedy, selfish and deceitful souls are reborn. In the path of hungry ghosts, beings have ugly, smelly bodies, with bellies as big as drums and throats as small as needles, while flames shoot out of their mouths. They are subject to hunger and thirst for incalculable eons. Hungry ghosts symbolize greed, departed beings, otherwise called "hungry spirits." Besides, hungry ghosta also include "asura" or fighting spirits, though partially heavenly, they are placed in the lower realm. *Third, the Animality:* Also called the state of animals, the Sanscrit term is Tiryagyoni. The animals' realm reserved for those souls who are dull-witted, depraved, or have committed fornication. The path of animals, such as buffaloes, cattle, donkeys and horses, is subject to heavy toil. Other domestic animals, such as goats, pigs, chicken and ducks, are subject to be killed to make food for human

beings. Still other animals suffer from stupidity, living in filth, and killing one another for food. These beings symbolize ignorance or innocent in nature, including the whole animal kingdom. ***The three upper gatis, or three good paths:*** Among the three upper gatis, rebirth in the celestial or human paths is difficult, while descend into Asura path and other three lower gatis is easy and common. *First, the Asura:* The Sanscrit term for the Asura is "Asura". This is the state of angry demons. Asuras' realm where those who are wicked, hot-tempered, violent or are initiated into paganism (the path of asuras is filled with quarrelling and acrimonious competition). *Second, the State of Human-Beings:* The Sanscrit term forthe state of human-beings is "Manusya-gati". This is our earth, place where those who keep the basic five precepts are reborn. Human beings are neutral in nature, and symbolizing social virtue. *Third, the Celestials:* Also called the state of gods, the Sanscrit term is "Deva-gati". The Gods' realm is reserved to those who observe the five basic commandments and have practiced the Ten Meritorious Action and abstained to do the Ten Evil Deeds. Although the celestial path is blessed with more happiness than our world, it is still marked by the five signs of decay and the things that go against our wishes. Heavenly beings, though superhuman in nature they cannot get perfectly enlightened without the teaching of the Buddha. Celestials symbole meditation abstractions.

Birth and Death in the Six Paths of the Samsara: In Buddhist belief, birth and death are only two points in the cycle of "Birth and Death". The passing away from one body to be reborn in another body. Where the being will be reborn depends on his accumulated good or bad karma. There is no transmigration of soul or any substance from one body to another. What really happens is that the last active thought (Javana) process of dying man releases certain forces which vary in accordance with the purity of the thought moments in that series. These forces are called karma vega or karmic energy which attracts itself to a material layer produced by parents in the mother's womb. The material aggregates in this germinal compound must possess such characteristics as are suitable for the reception of that particular type of karmic energy. Attraction in this manner of various types of physical aggregates produced by parents occurs through the operation of death and gives a favourable rebirth to the dying man. An unwholesome

thought gives an unfavourable rebirth. Each and every type of sentient being will have different appearance whether it be beautiful or ugly, superior or inferior. This is determined and is manifested based solely on the various karma sentient beings created while alive with their antecedent bodies. The original word for reincarnation is translated as transmigration. The passing away from one body to be reborn in another body. Where the being will be reborn depends on his accumulated good or bad karma. The belief that living beings, including man, have a series of bodily lives, only ceasing when they no longer base their happiness on any of the objects of the world. This come about when the Buddha-nature is found. This belief is very common to all Buddhists.

Birth and Death or Rebirth is the result of karma. The doctrine of rebirth is upheld by all traditional schools of Buddhism. According to this doctrine, sentient beings (sattva) are caught up in a continuous round of birth, death, and rebirth, and their present state of existence is conditioned by their past volitional actions or karma. In Buddhist belief, there is no transmigration of soul or any substance from one body to another. What really happens is that the last active thought (Javana) process of dying man releases certain forces which vary in accordance with the purity of the five thought moments in that series. These forces are called karma vega or karmic energy which attracts itself to a material layer produced by parents in the mother's'womb. The material aggregates in this germinal compound must possess such characteristics as are suitable for the reception of that particular type of karmic energy. Attraction in this manner of various types of physical aggregates produced by parents occurs through the operation of death and gives a favourable rebirth to the dying man. An unwholesome thought gives an unfavourable rebirth. Each and every type of sentient being will have different appearance whether it be beautiful or ugly, superior or inferior. This is determined and is manifested based solely on the various karma sentient beings created while alive with their antecedent bodies. Since the cycle inevitably involves suffering and death, Buddhism assumes that escape from it is a desirable goal. This is achieved by engaging in cultivating oneself, and the most important of which is meditation. The doctrine of rebirth has become problematic for many contemporary Buddhists, particularly for converts to

Buddhism in Western countries whose culture does not accept the notion of rebirth. However, this doctrine is extremely important in Buddhism, for all sincere attitudes of cultivation originated from the thorough understanding of this doctrine.

Rebirth is the recombination of mind and matter. After passing away of the physical body or the matter, the mental forces or the mind recombine and assume a new combination in a different material form and condition in another existence. Rebirth is the result of karma. In Buddhist belief, there is no transmigration of soul or any substance from one body to another. What really happens is that the last active thought (Javana) process of dying man releases certain forces which vary in accordance with the purity of the five thought moments in that series. These forces are called karma vega or karmic energy which attracts itself to a material layer produced by parents in the mother's'womb. The material aggregates in this germinal compound must possess such characteristics as are suitable for the reception of that particular type of karmic energy. Attraction in this manner of various types of physical aggregates produced by parents occurs through the operation of death and gives a favourable rebirth to the dying man. An unwholesome thought gives an unfavourable rebirth. Each and every type of sentient being will have different appearance whether it be beautiful or ugly, superior or inferior. This is determined and is manifested based solely on the various karma sentient beings created while alive with their antecedent bodies.

Birth and Death also mean "Reincarnation", which means going around as the wheel turns around. The state of transmigration or samsara, where beings repeat cycles of birth and death according to the law of karma. What happens to us after death? Buddhism teaches that we remain for some time in the state of intermediate existence in this world after death, and when this time is over, in accordance with the karma that we have accumulated in our previous life, we are reborn in another appropriate world. Buddhism also divides this other world into the following realms: hell, hungry ghosts, animals, demons, human beings, heavens, sravakas, pratyeka-buddhas, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas. If we die in an unenlightened state, our minds (consciousnesses) will return to the former state of ignorance, and we will be reborn in the six worlds of illusion and suffering, and will again

reach old age and death through the stages mentioned above. And we will repeat this round over and over to an indefinite time. This perpetual repetition of birth and death is called "Transmigration." But if we purify our minds by hearing the Buddha's teachings and practicing the Bodhisattva-way, the state of ignorance is annihilated and our minds can be reborn in a better world. So, whether the world is Samsara or Nirvana depends entirely on our state of mind. If our mind is enlightened, then this world is Nirvana; if our mind is unenlightened, then this world is Samsara. Thus the Buddha taught: "For those who strive to cultivate, Samsara is Nirvana, Nirvana is Samsara."

Rebirth in hells where beings undergo sufferings at all times. This is one of the eight conditions or circumstances in which it is difficult to see a Buddha or hear his dharma; or eight special types of adversities that prevent the practice of the Dharma. Rebirth as a hungry ghost, or the ghost-world, where beings never feel comfortable with non-stop greed. This is one of the eight conditions or circumstances in which it is difficult to see a Buddha or hear his dharma; or eight special types of adversities that prevent the practice of the Dharma. Rebirth in an animal realm where beings has no ability and knowledge to practice dharma. Rebirth in the men realm includes rebirth with impaired, or deficient faculties such as the blind, the deaf, the dumb and the cripple. This is also one of the eight conditions or circumstances in which it is difficult to see a Buddha or hear his dharma; or eight special types of adversities that prevent the practice of the Dharma, or rebirth as a man in the intermediate period between Sakyamuni Buddha and his successor, or life in a realm wherein there is no Tathagata, or in the intermediate period between a Buddha and his successor. During this period of time, people spent all the time to gossip or to argue for or their own views on what they heard about Buddha dharma, but not practicing. This is also one of the conditions or circumstances in which it is difficult to see a Buddha or hear his dharma; or eight special types of adversities that prevent the practice of the Dharma. Besides, sentient beings can be reborn among rich and honorable men; or be reborn as worldly philosophers (intelligent and well educated in mundane sense) who think that they know everything and don't want to study or practise anymore, especially practicing dharmas. This is also one of the eight conditions or circumstances in which it is difficult to

see a Buddha or hear his dharma; or eight special types of adversities that prevent the practice of the Dharma. Sentient beings can be reborn among men, become monks, and obtain the truth. Sentient beings can be reborn in Uttarakuru (Northern continent) where life is always pleasant and desires that beings have no motivation to practice the dharma. This is also one of the eight conditions or circumstances in which it is difficult to see a Buddha or hear his dharma; or eight special types of adversities that prevent the practice of the Dharma. Sentient beings can be reborn in the heavens from the Four Dhyana Heavens to the Four Heavenly Kings, such as the Suyama-heavens, the Indra heavens, the Tusita Heaven, the nirmanarati heaven, the Brahma-heavens, the paranirmita-vasavartin, any long-life gods or heavens, or the heavens of the four deva kings.

According to the Buddhist tradition, on the night of His enlightenment, the Buddha provided us with testimony on the matter of birth, death and rebirth. He acquired three varieties of knowledge[(2)] and the first of these was the detailed knowledge of His past lives. He was able to recollect the conditions in which He had been born in His past lives. Besides the Buddha's testimony, His eminent disciples were also able to recollect their past lives. Ananda, for example, acquired the ability to recollect his past life soon after his ordination. Similarly, throughout the history of Buddhism, so many Zen masters and Saints have been able to recollect their past lives. In Buddhism, the process of "birth, death, and rebirth" is part of the continuous process of change. In fact, we are not only reborn at the time of death, we are born, died, and reborn at every moment. This process is no difference from the process of change in our body, for example, the majority of the cells in the human body die and are replaced many times during the course of one's life. The Buddha observed that disturbing attitudes and karma cause our minds to take one rebirth after another. At the time of death, we ordinary people usually crave for our bodies. We are afraid to lose our bodies and to be separated from everything around us. When it becomes obvious that we are departing from this body and life, we try to grasp for another body. The state of transmigration or samsara, where beings repeat cycles of birth and death according to the law of karma. Living beings are absolutely free to choose their own future. If they wish to be reborn in the Western Pureland, they can make a vow

to that effect, then, vigorously recite the name of the Buddhas. If they prefer the hells, they simply do evil deeds and they will fall into the hells for sure. All life, all phenomena have birth and death, beginning and end. The Madhyamika School deny this in the absolute, but recognize it in the relative. The Madhyamika-Sastra believed that all things coming into existence and ceasing to exist, past and future, are merely relative terms and not true in reality. Birth and death are a grove for Enlightening Beings because they do not reject it. This is one of the ten kinds of grove of Great Enlightening Beings. Enlightening Beings who abide by these can achieve the Buddhas' unexcelled peaceful, happy action, free from sorrow and affliction. Birth-and-death is a weapon of enlightening beings because they continue enlightening practices and teach sentient beings. Enlightening Beings who abide by these can annihilate the afflictions, bondage, and compulsion accumulated by all sentient beings in the long night of ignorance. The birth and death of saints, i.e. without action and transformation, or effortless mortality, or transformation such as that of Bodhisattva. Time flies really fast. The years and months have gone by really fast too. In the same way, people progress from birth to old age and death without being aware of it. Birth, old age, sickness, and death come in quick succession as we pass the years in muddled confusion. If we do not wake up to our own birth and death, then, having been born muddled, we will also die muddled according to the law of karma. What a meaningless life!

Notes:

(1) Saha means sufferings and afflictions; it also means worries, binding, unable to be free and liberated. The worldly world is full of storm, conflict, hatred and violence. The people in the Saha World like wicked doctrines and false dharma; and do not have faith in the proper dharma. Their lives are short and many are fraudulent. Kings and mandarins, although already have had lands to govern and rule, are not satisfied; as they become greedy, they bring forces to conquer other countries causing innocent people to die in vain. In addition, there are other infinite calamities such as droughts, floods, loss of harvest, thirst, famine, epidemics, etc. As for this Saha World, the favorable circumstances to cultivate in peace and contenment are few, but the unfavorable conditions of afflictions destroying path that are rather losing Bodhi Mind they developed in the beginning. Moreover, it is very difficult to encounter a highly virtuous and knowledgeable advisor. According to the Buddha, the planet in which we are currently living is called Virtuous Southern Continent. It is situated to the south of Mount Sumeru and is just a tiniest part of the Great World System of the Saha World in which Sakyamuni Buddha is the ruler.

(2) Three kinds of knowledge which can be obtained by observing precepts (according to The Path of Purification by Bhadantacariya Buddhaghosa): First, insight into the mortal conditions of self and others in previous life. Knowledge of former lives of oneself and others. Second, ability to know future destiny of oneself and others. Supernatural insight into future mortal conditions (deaths and rebirths). Third, Nirvana insight. Ability to know all about the miseries of the present life and to remove their root-cause. Insight into present mortal sufferings so as to overcome all passions or temptations.

(C) Human Beings in Buddhist Point of View

I. An Overview of the Creation of Human Beings:

According to the Buddha, human beings have not created by a creator god, nor have they been the result of a long process of evolution, as suggested by Darwinian and Neo-Darwinian evolutionary theory. According to the Buddha's teachings, there have always been people, though not necessarily on this planet. The appearance of physical human bodies in any particular location begins with the mental generation of "human karma." Mind, not physical body, is primary in that process. Human beings are not independent of the other forms of sentient life in the universe and can be reborn in others of the Six Paths of Rebirth. Likewise, other sentient beings can be reborn as human beings. What is ultimately real about all living beings is their Buddha-Nature and that cannot be created or destroyed. At the very beginning, before heaven and earth came into being, there were not any people. There was no earth, no living beings, nor anything called a world. Basically, none of those things existed at all. And then, at the outset of the kalpa, when things were coming into being, people gradually came to exist. Ultimately, where do they come from? Some say that people evolved from monkeys. But what do the monkeys evolve from? If people evolved from monkeys, then why are there no people evolving from monkeys right now? This is really strange. People who propagate this kind of theory basically do not have any understanding. They are just trying to set up some special theory. Why could it not be the case that people evolved from other living beings?

II. Human Beings in Buddhist Point of View:

According to Buddhism, the state of human-beings, our earth, place where those who keep the basic five precepts are reborn. In terms of

matter, the Buddhist view of the origin of the universe is energy. In terms of the sentient beings, the force that produces them is that of the actions they have accumulated, which cause them to be reborn in that way. If a human being keeps the five basic precepts, he or she will continue to be reborn in the human path. People are neither completely good nor completely bad, but human beings are harmonious by nature and can get along with other people. If they were completely good, they would ascend to the heavens. If they were completely bad, they would become either animals, or hungry ghosts, or even fall into the hells. Human beings have both merits and offenses. Either their merit exceeds their offenses, or their offenses exceed their merit. When a person's merit is greater than his offenses, he will be born in a rich and respectable family; but with little merit and many offenses he will be born into a poor and miserable family. Generally speaking, Buddhism believes that birth as a human being is one of the most ideal forms of existence because it is conducive to cultivation. So compared to human beings, gods would in fact be considered inferior, even though gods may have some abilities that human beings do not have, such as some supernatural powers. In fact, the realm of gods is still a part of this world where human beings also live, but that form of existence is less effective for cultivation of the Buddha-dharma. Human beings are living beings in this realm have sharp or developed minds, capable of weighty moral and immoral action than any other living beings. The human realm is a mixture of both pain and pleasure, sufering and hapiness. Bodhisattvas always choose this realm as their last existence because it offers opportunity for attaining Buddhahood. The human realm is one of the six destinies (gati) within cyclic existence (samsara) into which beings may be born. The sentient thinking being in the desire realm, whose past deeds affect his present condition. Man occupies a very important place in the Buddhist cosmos because he has the power of decision. Human life is a mixture of the happy with a good dash of the bitter. The sentient thinking being in the desire realm, whose past deeds affect his present condition. Man occupies a very important place in the Buddhist cosmos because he has the power of decision. Human life is a mixture of the happy with a good dash of the bitter. According to the Buddha, a man can decide to devote himself to selfish, unskilful ends, a mere existence, or to give purpose to his life

by the practice of skilful deeds which will make others and himself happy. Still, in many cases, man can make the vital decision to shape his life in this way or that; a man can think about the Way, and it was to man that the Buddha gave most of his important teachings, for men could understand, practice and realize the Way. It is man who can experience, if he wishes, Enlightenment and become as the Buddha and the Arahants, this is the greatest blessing, for not only the secure tranquillity of one person's salvation is gained but out of compassion the Way is shown in many others. The opportunity to be reborn as a human being is so rare; thus the Buddha taught: "Supposing a man threw into the ocean a piece of wood with a hole in it and it was then blown about by the various winds and currents over the waters. In the ocean lived a one-eyed turtle which had to surface once in a hundred years to breathe. Even in one Great Aeon it would be most unlikely in surfacing, to put its head into the hole in that piece of wood. Such is the rarity of gaining birth among human beings if once one has sunk into the three woeful levels or three lower realms." According to the Tibetan Mahayan Buddhism, there are four states of a human being's life: the birth state is said to be momentary, just at the point of conception; the next moment is the beginning of the prior time state, ranging from when the coarse body starts to form until death; then during the death state, even though it is taking place within the old body, the relationship of support and supporter of consciousness abiding in the body has been severed; At the point of death, the relationship of consciousness supported by a physical base takes place only on the subtlest level. At this point, individual consciousness is conjoined with the subtlest inner energy or "air". For one who is going to pass through the intemediate states, as soon as the death state stops, the intermediate state begins. In the intermediate states, although one does not have a gross physical body, one does have a form achieved through the inetraction of inner air and consciousness. It is grosser than the most subtle body, but more subtle than the usual physical one we see. It will have the shape of the being which one will be reborn.

Virtuous conduct in Man's Virtues means conduct that is not going against what is proper and right. In whatever you do, you should make it your obligation to help others. If you hinder others and cannot benefit them in terms of profit, time, culture, wisdom, or any other aspect, you

are acting contrary to morality. Therefore, in every move and action, every word and deed, we should always make "not going against morality" our basic rule. If you want to cultivate the Buddhist Way, you must first foster virtuous conduct of Man's Virtues. Without virtuous conduct of Man's virtues, you cannot cultivate the Buddhist Way. Some people who want to cultivate will encounter demonic obstacles as soon as they start. That is due to a lack of virtuous conduct. So, it is said, "Virtue is fundamental Wealth is incidental." Morality is equivalent to the sun and moon, to Heaven and Earth, and to our very life. Lacking morality is equivalent to being without life, without the sun and moon, and without Heaven and Earth. What is morality? Morality means to take benefiting others as most important, and to take not hindering others as our principle. It is filled our minds with humaneness, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness. According to Confucianism, "humaneness" means having a heart of humane benevolence, you will not kill. "Righteousness" means to be righteous in spirit and courageously do what should be done. When people are in difficulty, do our best to help them resolve their problems. Treat our friends with a sense of right and honor. Help them unconditionally, without any motives. "Righteousness" also means endowed with common sense, everything you do will be just right, exactly in accord with the Middle Way, neither too much nor too little, and neither too far to the left nor too far to the right. All affairs will be carried out in accord with the Middle Way. If you understand what is right, you will not steal. People who value righteousness will not steal what belongs to others. "Civility" or "Propriety" refers to etiquette. We should treat people with courtesy. If we are discourteous, then we are no better than a savage. A minimum propriety for us is to be able to greet our elders. Propriety is a kind of courtesy and etiquette. If you honor the rules of etiquette, you will not be lewd. Stealing and lewdness are phenomena which occur because one is not in accord with righteousnessand propriety, and because one is acting contrary to the rules of proper conduct. To ordinary people, wisdom means good knowledge. Wise people will not recklessly drink or take drugs. Only stupid people will do all sorts of upside-down things. Loyalty means faith or sincerity. When we are with our friends, we should be trustworthy up to our words. Our actions should be sincere and

respectful, and we should not cause others to lose faith in us. Furthermore, trustworthy people will not tell lies. Incorruptibility refers to being pure and honest. No matter what they see, incorruptible people are never greedy or opportunistic. Rather, they are public-spirited and unselfish. Shame means a sense of shame. Never do anything that goes against reason and conscience. Loyalty means to be loyal. A good man should be loyal to our own country. Filiality means to be pious to parents. Filiality is the basic duty of any children. By being filial, we are repaying our parents' kindness for raising us. Fraternal respect means to pay respect to the elderly. Younger people should be respectful to their elder siblings and elders.

Material components which man is made are the four tanmatra. Four great elements of which all things are made (produce and maintain life). These four elements are interrelated and inseparable. However, one element may preponderate over another. They constantly change, not remaining the same even for two consecutive moments. According to Buddhism, matter endures only for 17 thought-moments, while scientists tell us that matter endures only for 10/27th of a second. No matter what we say, a human body is temporary; it is created artificially through the accumulation of the four elements. Once death arrives, the body deteriorates to return to the soil, water-based substances will gradually dry up and return to the great water, the element of fire is lost and the body becomes cold, and the great wind no longer works within the body. At that time, the spirit must follow the karma each person has created while living to change lives and be reincarnated into the six realms, altering image, exchange body, etc in the cylce of births and deaths. Solid matter or Earth. Prithin means the element of extension, the substratum of matter. Without it objects have no form, nor can they occupy space. The qualities of hardness and softness are two conditions of this element. After death, these parts will decay and deteriorate to become soil. For this reason, they belong to the Great Soil. Water, fluidity, or liquid. Unlike the earth element it is intangible. It is the element which enables the scattered atoms of matter to cohere together. After death, these water-based substances will dry up. In other words, they have returned to water. Fire or heat. Fire element includes both heat and cold, and fire element possesses the power of maturing bodies, they are vitalizing

energy. Preservation and decay are due to this element. After death, the element of fire is lost and the body gradually becomes cold. Air, wind, motion, or energy of motion. Air element is the element of motion in the body. After death, breathing ceases, body functions become catatonic or completely rigid because the great wind no longer works within the body.

As mentioned above, according to Buddhism, man is only a temporary combination formed by the five skandhas, the six elements (earth, water, fire, air, space and mind), and the twelve nidanas, being the product of previous cause, and without a real self or permanent soul. Spiritual elements of a human being are very complicated, they comprise of the eight consciousnesses, among them the Alayavijnana and Manas play crucial roles. Karma is one of the fundamental doctrines of Buddhism. Everything that we encounter in this life, good or bad, sweet or bitter, is a result of what we did in the past or from what we have done recently in this life. Good karma produces happiness; bad karma produces pain and suffering. So, what is karma? Karma is a Sanskrit word, literally means a deed or an action and a reaction, the continuing process of cause and effect. Moral or any good or bad action (however, the word 'karma' is usually used in the sense of evil bent or mind resulting from past wrongful actions) taken while living which causes corresponding future retribution, either good or evil transmigration (action and reaction, the continuing process of cause and effect). Our present life is formed and created through our actions and thoughts in our previous lives. Our present life and circumstances are the product of our past thoughts and actions, and in the same way our deeds in this life will fashion our future mode of existence. A karma can by created by body, speech, or mind. There are good karma, evil karma, and indifferent karma. All kinds of karma are accumulated by the Alayavijnana and Manas. Karma can be cultivated through religious practice (good), and uncultivated. For sentient being has lived through inumerable reincarnations, each has boundless karma. Whatever kind of karma is, a result would be followed accordingly, sooner or later. No one can escape the result of his own karma. Living beings in this realm have sharp or developed minds, capable of weighty moral and immoral action than any other living beings. The human realm is a mixture of both pain and pleasure, sufering and hapiness.

Bodhisattvas always choose this realm as their last existence because it offers opportunity for attaining Buddhahood. The human realm is one of the six destinies (gati) within cyclic existence (samsara) into which beings may be born. The sentient thinking being in the desire realm, whose past deeds affect his present condition. Man occupies a very important place in the Buddhist cosmos because he has the power of decision. Human life is a mixture of the happy with a good dash of the bitter. Today there is ceaseless work going on in all directions to improve the world. Scientists are pursuing their methods and experiments with undiminished vigor and determination. Modern discoveries and methods of communication and contact have produced startling results. All these improvements, though they have their advantages and rewards, are entirely material and external. Within this conflux of mind and body of man, however, there are unexplored marvels to occpy men of science for many years. Really, the world, which the scientists are trying to improve, is, according to the ideas of Buddhism, subject to so much change at all points on its circumference and radii, that it is not capable of being made sorrowfree. Our life is so dark with aging, so smothered with death, so bound with change, and these qualities are so inherent in it, even as greenness is to grass, and bitterness to quinine, that not all the magic and power of science can ever transform it. The immortal splendor of an eternal sunlight awaits only those who can use the light of understanding and the culture of conduct to illuminate and guard their path through life's tunnel of darkness and dismay. The people of the world today mark the changing nature of life. Although they see it, they do not keep it in mind and act with dispassionate discernment. Though changes again and again speak to them and make them unhappy, they pursue their mad career of whirling round the wheel of existence and are twisted and torn between the spokes of agony.

According to Buddhist tenets, the life cycle of a sentient being begins when the consciousness enters the womb, and traditionally this has been considered the moment of conception, another life cycle begins. The Eastern ancient said: "Man is the most sacred and superior being," however, to Buddhism, any living being's life is precious and of the same value. That is to say no being's life is more precious than the other's. According to the Upasaka Sutra, Buddhism agrees that in all

living beings, man is endowed with all necessary faculties, intelligence. Buddhism also agrees that conditions of human beings are not too miserable as those beings in the hell or the hungry ghosts. To Buddhism, human life is difficult to obtain. If we are born as human beings with many qualities, difficult to attain. We should try to make our lives meaningful ones. Besides, human beings have intelligence. This precious quality enables us to investigate the true meaning of life and to practice the path to enlightenment. Devout Buddhists should always remember that what rebirth we will take depends on our present actions and habits. Thus, our purpose in this very life is to attain liberation or enlightenment, either becoming liberated from cyclic existence (Arhats), or becoming fully enlightened Buddhas. Most of all, we should be able to take advantage of our precious human lives to live to the fullest, moment by moment. To achieve this, we must be mindful of each moment, not being in the here-and-now when we act. According to Buddhist point of view, we have precious human lives, endowed with many qualities to attain. Because of this, we can make our lives highly meaningful. We often take our lives for granted and dwell on the things that aren't going the way we would like them to. Thinking this way is unrealistic and makes us depressed. However, if we think about the qualities we do have and everything that is going well, we'll have a different and more joyful perspective on life. One of our greatest endowments is our human intelligence. This precious quality enables us to investigate the meaning of life and to practice to advance on the path to enlightenment. If all of our senses, eyes, ears, mental... are intact, we are able to hear the Dharma, read books on it, and think about its meaning. We're so lucky to be born in an historical era when the Buddha has appeared and taught the Dharma. These teachings have been transmitted in a pure from teacher to student in lineages steming back to the Buddha. We have the opportunity to have qualified spiritual masters who can teach us, and there are communities of ordained people and dharma friends who share our interest and encourage us on the path. Those of us who are fortunate to live in countries that cherish religious freedom aren't restricted from learning and practicing the path. In addition, most of us don't live in desperate poverty and thus have enough food, clothing and shelter to engage in spiritual practice without worrying about basic material needs. Our

minds aren't heavily obscured with wrong views and we are interested in self-development. We have the potential to do great things with our present opportunity. But to appreciate this, we must develop a long-term vision for our cultivation because our present lives are only a short one. Devout Buddhists should always remember that our mindstreams don't cease when our physical bodies die. Our minds are formless entities, but when they leave our present bodies at the time of death, they will be reborn in other bodies. What rebirth we'll take depends on our present actions. Therefore, one purpose of our lives can be to prepare for death and future lives. In that way, we can die peacefully, knowing our minds will be propelled towards good rebirths. The other way that we can utilize our lives is to attain liberation or enlightenment. We can become arhats, beings liberated from cyclic existence, or we can go on to become fully enlightened Buddhas, able to benefit others most effectively. Attaining liberation, our minds will be completely cleansed of all disturbing attitudes. Thus, we'll never become angry, jealous or proud again. We no longer feel guilty, anxious or depressed, and all our bad habits will be gone. In addition, if we aspire to attain enlightenment for the benefit of everyone, we'll have spontaneous affection for all beings, and will know the most appropriate ways to help them. Also, another way to take advantage of our precious human lives is to live life to the fullest, moment by moment. There are several ways to do this. One is to be mindful of each moment, being in the here-and-now as we act. When we eat, we can concentrate on eating, noting the taste and texture of the food. When we walk, we concentrate on the movements involved in walking, without letting our minds wander to any other thoughts. When we go upstairs, we can think, "may I lead all beings to fortunate rebirths, liberation or enlightenment." While washing dishes or clothes, we think, "I may help all beings cleanse their minds of disturbing attitudes and obscurations." When we hand something to another person, we think, "May I be able to satisfy the needs of all beings." We can creatively transform each action by generating the wish to bring happiness to others. Although seeing it, sentient biengs seldom keep it in mind and act with dispassionate discernment. Though changes again and again speak to them and make them unhappy, they pursue their

mad career of whirling round the wheel of existence and are twisted and torn between the spokes of agony.

III. Components of a Human Being in Buddhist Point of View:

Material Components of a Human Being: Material components which man is made are the Four tanmatra. Four great elements of which all things are made (produce and maintain life). These four elements are interrelated and inseparable. However, one element may preponderate over another. They constantly change, not remaining the same even for two consecutive moments. According to Buddhism, matter endures only for 17 thought-moments, while scientists tell us that matter endures only for $10/27^{th}$ of a second. No matter what we say, a human body is temporary; it is created artificially through the accumulation of the four elements. Once death arrives, the body deteriorates to return to the soil, water-based substances will gradually dry up and return to the great water, the element of fire is lost and the body becomes cold, and the great wind no longer works within the body. At that time, the spirit must follow the karma each person has created while living to change lives and be reincarnated into the six realms, altering image, exchange body, etc in the cylce of births and deaths. Solid matter or Earth. Prithin means the element of extension, the substratum of matter. Without it objects have no form, nor can they occupy space. The qualities of hardness and softness are two conditions of this element. After death, these parts will decay and deteriorate to become soil. For this reason, they belong to the Great Soil. Water, fluidity, or liquid. Unlike the earth element it is intangible. It is the element which enables the scattered atoms of matter to cohere together. After death, these water-based substances will dry up. In other words, they have returned to water. Fire or heat. Fire element includes both heat and cold, and fire element possesses the power of maturing bodies, they are vitalizing energy. Preservation and decay are due to this element. After death, the element of fire is lost and the body gradually becomes cold. Air, wind, motion, or energy of motion. Air element is the element of motion in the body. After death, breathing ceases, body functions become catatonic or completely rigid because the great wind no longer works within the body.

Spiritual Elements of a Human Being: When talking about the spiritual elements of human beings, immediately people think about the Mind, for the mind is the root of all dharmas. In fact, the spiritual elements of human beings are formed by three prongs: Mind, Mana, and the Storehouse Vijnana. These above three prongs are interweaving together and this causes people think that they are just only one. In Contemplation of the Mind Sutra, the Buddha taught: "All my tenets are based on the mind that is the source of all dharmas." The mind has brought about the Buddhas, the Heaven, or the Hell. It is the main driving force that makes us happy or sorrowful, cheerful or sad, liberated or doomed. Mind is also the storehouse of karma, wholesome or unwholesome. Karma is one of the fundamental doctrines of Buddhism. Everything that we encounter in this life, good or bad, sweet or bitter, is a result of what we did in the past or from what we have done recently in this life. Good karma produces happiness; bad karma produces pain and suffering. So, what is karma? Karma is a Sanskrit word, literally means a deed or an action and a reaction, the continuing process of cause and effect. Moral or any good or bad action (however, the word 'karma' is usually used in the sense of evil bent or mind resulting from past wrongful actions) taken while living which causes corresponding future retribution, either good or evil transmigration (action and reaction, the continuing process of cause and effect). Our present life is formed and created through our actions and thoughts in our previous lives. Our present life and circumstances are the product of our past thoughts and actions, and in the same way our deeds in this life will fashion our future mode of existence. A karma can by created by body, speech, or mind. There are good karma, evil karma, and indifferent karma. All kinds of karma are accumulated by the Alayavijnana and Manas. Karma can be cultivated through religious practice (good), and uncultivated. For sentient being has lived through inumerable reincarnations, each has boundless karma. Whatever kind of karma is, a result would be followed accordingly, sooner or later. No one can escape the result of his own karma. *Mind:* The mind is so closely linked with the body that mental states affect the body's health and well-being. Some doctors even confirm that there is no such thing as a purely physical disease. Unless these bad mental states are caused by previous evil acts, and they are unalterable, it is possible so to

change them as to cause mental health and physical well-being to follow thereafter. Man's mind influences his body profoundly. If allowed to function viciously and entertain unwholesome thoughts, mind can cause disaster, can even kill a being; but it can also cure a sick body. When mind is concentrated on right thoughts with right effort and understanding, the effect it can produce is immense. A mind with pure and wholesome thoughts really does lead to a healthy and relaxed life. "Mind" is another name for Alaya-vijnana. Unlike the material body, immaterial mind is invisible. We are aware of our thoughts and feelings and so forth by direct sensation, and we infer their existence in others by analogy. According to Buddhism, mind or heart, as the seat of thought or intelligence or mental factors, is defined as core spiritual element for clarity and knowing. It is formless which no one can see it; however, it is our mind which has created the actions which cause us to experience suffering and to be born in cyclic existence or samsara. All our physical, verbal and mental actions depend on our mind. The function of the mind is to perceive, to apprehend and to know its objects. It discerns and discriminates between forms, qualities, aspects and so forth. Mind consists of fleeting mental states which constantly arise and perish with lightning rapidity. "With birth for its source and death for its mouth, it persistently flows on like a river receiving from the tributary streams of sense constant accretions to its flood." Each momentary consciousness of this everchanging lifestream, on passing away, transmits its whole energy, all the indelibly recorded impressions, to its successor. Every fresh consciousness therefore consists of the potentialities of its predecessors and something more. As all impressions are indelibly recorded in this everchanging palimpsest-like mind, and as all potentialities are transmitted from life to life, irrespective of temporary physical disintegrations, reminiscence of pst births or past incidents become a possibility. Mind is like a double-edged weapon that can equally be used either for good or evil. One single thought that arises in this invisible mind can even save or destroy the world. One such thought can either populate or depopulate a whole country. It is the mind that creats one's paradise and one's hell. According to the Buddhist point of view, the mind or consciousness is the core of our existence. All our psychological experiences, such as pain and pleasure, sorrow and happiness, good

and evil, life and death, are not attributed to any external agency. They are only the result of our own thoughts and their resultant actions. Mind actually influences the body in every minute of life. If we allow it to function with the vicious and unwholesome thoughts, mind can cause disaster; it can even kill another being. However, when the mind is concentrated on right thoughts with right effort and understanding, it can produce an excellent effect. Thus, the Buddha taght: "No enemy can harm one so much as one's own thoughts of craving, thoughts of hate, thoughts of jealousy, and so on." A mind with pure and wholesome thoughts really lead to a peaceful and relaxed life. *Manas Vijnana:* The seventh vijnana, intellection, reasoning. A Sanskrit term for "sentience." In Buddhism, it is called "mental faculty" for it constitutes man as an intelligent and moral being. It is commonly thought to be equated with the terms "citta" or "consciousness." It is derived from the Sanskrit root "Man," which means "to think" or "to imagine" and is associated with intellectual activity of consciousness. This acts like the collection station for the first six consciousnesses. The seventh of the eight consciousnesses, which means thinking and measuring, or calculating. It is the active mind, or activity of mind, but is also used for the mind itself. The waves will be seen ruffling the surface of the ocean of Alayavijnana when the principle of individuation known as Vishaya blows over it like the wind. The waves thus started are this world of particulars where the intellect discriminates, the affection clings, and passions and desires struggle for existence and supremacy. This particularizing agency sits within the system of Vijnanas and is known as Manas; in fact, it is when Manas begins to operate that a system of the Vijnanas manifests itself. They are thus called "object-discriminating-vijnana" (vastu-prativikalpa-vijnana). The function of Manas is essentially to reflect upon the Alaya and to creat and to discriminate subject and object from the pure oceans of the Alaya. The memory accumulated (ciyate) in the latter is now divided into dualities of all forms and all kinds. This is compared to the manifoldness of waves that stir up the ocean of Alaya. Manas is an evil spirit in one sense and a good one in another, for discrimination in itself is not evil, is not necessarily always false judgment (abhuta-parikalpa) or wrong reasoning (prapanca-daushthulya). But it grows to be the source of great calamity when it creates desires based upon its

wrong judgments, such as when it believes in the reality of an ego-substance and becomes attached to it as the ultimate truth. For manas is not only a discriminating intelligence, but a willing agency, and consequently an actor. Manyana is a kind of intuition, the sense that there is a separate self which can exist independently of the rest of the world. This intuition is produced by habit and ignorance. Its illusory nature has been constructed by vijnapti, and it, in turn, becomes a basis for vijnapti. The object of this intuition is a distorted fragment of alaya which it considers to be a self, comprised of a body and a soul. It of course is never reality in itself, but just a representation of reality. In its role as a self as well as consciousness of the self, manyana is regarded as the basic obstacle to penetrating reality. Only contemplation performed by vijnapti can remove the erroneous perceptions brought about by manyana. *Alaya Vijnana:* Alaya means the preconsciousness, or the eighth consciousness, or the store-consciousness. It is the central or universal consciousness which is the womb or store consciousness (the storehouse consciousness where all karmic seeds enter and cause all thought activities). All karma created in the present and previous lifetime is stored in the Alaya Consciousness. This is like a storage space receiving all information collected in the Mana consciousness. When a sentient being dies, the first seven consciousnesses die with it, but the Alaya-Consciousness carries on. It is the supreme ruler of one existence which ultimately determines where one will gain rebirth in the six realms of existence. The function of Alayavijnana is to look into itself where all the memory (vasana) of the beginningless past is preserved in a way beyond consciousness (acintya) and ready for further evolution (parinama); but it has no active energy in itself; it never acts, it simply perceives, it is in this exactly like a mirror; it is again like the ocean, perfectly smooth with no waves disturbing its tranquillity; and it is pure and undefiled, which means that it is free from the dualismof subject and object. For it is the pure act of perceiving, with no differentiation yet of the knowing one and the known. In the Lankavatara Sutra, the Buddha told Mahamati: “Oh Mahamati! The Tathagata-garbha contains in itself causes alike good and not-good, and from which are generated all paths of existence. It is like an actor playing different characters without harboring any thought of ‘me and mine.’” The ideation-store itself is an existence of causal

combination, and in it the pure and tainted elements are causally combined or intermingled. When the ideation-store begins to move and descend to the everyday world, then we have the manifold existence that is only an imagined world. The ideation-store, which is the seed-consciousness, is the conscious center and the world manifested by ideation is its environment.

IV. Human Beings Are Living Beings That Have Developed Minds:

Living beings in this realm have sharp or developed minds, capable of weighty moral and immoral action than any other living beings. The human realm is a mixture of both pain and pleasure, sufering and hapiness. Bodhisattvas always choose this realm as their last existence because it offers opportunity for attaining Buddhahood. The human realm is one of the six destinies (gati) within cyclic existence (samsara) into which beings may be born. The sentient thinking being in the desire realm, whose past deeds affect his present condition. Man occupies a very important place in the Buddhist cosmos because he has the power of decision. Human life is a mixture of the happy with a good dash of the bitter. Today there is ceaseless work going on in all directions to improve the world. Scientists are pursuing their methods and experiments with undiminished vigor and determination. Modern discoveries and methods of communication and contact have produced startling results. All these improvements, though they have their advantages and rewards, are entirely material and external. Within this conflux of mind and body of man, however, there are unexplored marvels to occpy men of science for many years. Really, the world, which the scientists are trying to improve, is, according to the ideas of Buddhism, subject to so much change at all points on its circumference and radii, that it is not capable of being made sorrowfree. Our life is so dark with aging, so smothered with death, so bound with change, and these qualities are so inherent in it, even as greenness is to grass, and bitterness to quinine, that not all the magic and power of science can ever transform it. The immortal splendor of an eternal sunlight awaits only those who can use the light of understanding and the culture of conduct to illuminate and guard their path through life's tunnel of darkness and dismay. The people of the world today mark the changing

nature of life. Although they see it, they do not keep it in mind and act with dispassionate discernment. Though change again and again speaks to them and makes them unhappy, they pursue their mad career of whirling round the wheel of existence and are twisted and torn between the spokes of agony.

According to Buddhist tenets, the life cycle of a sentient being begins when the consciousness enters the womb, and traditionally this has been considered the moment of conception, another life cycle begins. The Eastern ancient said: "Man is the most sacred and superior being," however, to Buddhism, any living being's life is precious and of the same value. That is to say no being's life is more precious than the other's. According to the Upasaka Sutra, Buddhism agrees that in all living beings, man is endowed with all necessary faculties, intelligence. Buddhism also agrees that conditions of human beings are not too miserable as those beings in the hell or the hungry ghosts. To Buddhism, human life is difficult to obtain. If we are born as human beings with many qualities, difficult to attain. We should try to make our lives meaningful ones. Besides, human beings have intelligence. This precious quality enables us to investigate the true meaning of life and to practice the path to enlightenment. Devout Buddhists should always remember that what rebirth we will take depends on our present actions and habits. Thus, our purpose in this very life is to attain liberation or enlightenment, either becoming liberated from cyclic existence (Arhats), or becoming fully enlightened Buddhas. Most of all, we should be able to take advantage of our precious human lives to live to the fullest, moment by moment. To achieve this, we must be mindful of each moment, not being in the here-and-now when we act. According to Buddhist point of view, we have precious human lives, endowed with many qualities to attain. Because of this, we can make our lives highly meaningful. We often take our lives for granted and dwell on the things that aren't going the way we would like them to. Thinking this way is unrealistic and makes us depressed. However, if we think about the qualities we do have and everything that is going well, we'll have a different and more joyful perspective on life. One of our greatest endowments is our human intelligence. This precious quality enables us to investigate the meaning of life and to practice to advance on the path to enlightenment. If all of our senses, eyes, ears,

mental... are intact, we are able to hear the Dharma, read books on it, and think about its meaning. We're so lucky to be born in an historical era when the Buddha has appeared and taught the Dharma. These teachings have been transmitted in a pure from teacher to student in lineages steming back to the Buddha. We have the opportunity to have qualified spiritual masters who can teach us, and there are communities of ordained people and dharma friends who share our interest and encourage us on the path. Those of us who are fortunate to live in countries that cherish religious freedom aren't restricted from learning and practicing the path. In addition, most of us don't live in desperate poverty and thus have enough food, clothing and shelter to engage in spiritual practice without worrying about basic material needs. Our minds aren't heavily obscured with wrong views and we are interested in self-development. We have the potential to do great things with our present opportunity. But to appreciate this, we must develop a long-term vision for our cultivation because our present lives are only a short one. Devout Buddhists should always remember that our mindstreams don't cease when our physical bodies die. Our minds are formless entities, but when they leave our present bodies at the time of death, they will be reborn in other bodies. What rebirth we'll take depends on our present actions. Therefore, one purpose of our lives can be to prepare for death and future lives. In that way, we can die peacefully, knowing our minds will be propelled towards good rebirths. The other way that we can utilize our lives is to attain liberation or enlightenment. We can become arhats, beings liberated from cyclic existence, or we can go on to become fully enlightened Buddhas, able to benefit others most effectively. Attaining liberation, our minds will be completely cleansed of all disturbing attitudes. Thus, we'll never become angry, jealous or proud again. We no longer feel guilty, anxious or depressed, and all our bad habits will be gone. In addition, if we aspire to attain enlightenment for the benefit of everyone, we'll have spontaneous affection for all beings, and will know the most appropriate ways to help them. Also, another way to take advantage of our precious human lives is to live life to the fullest, moment by moment. There are several ways to do this. One is to be mindful of each moment, being in the here-and-now as we act. When we eat, we can concentrate on eating, noting the taste and texture of the food.

When we walk, we concentrate on the movements involved in walking, without letting our minds wander to any other thoughts. When we go upstairs, we can think, "may I lead all beings to fortunate rebirths, liberation and enlightenment." While washing dishes or clothes, we think, "may I help all beings cleanse their minds of disturbing attitudes and obscurations." When we hand something to another person, we think, "May I be able to satisfy the needs of all beings." We can creatively transform each action by generating the wish to bring happiness to others.

V. Woman in Buddhist Point of View:

According to Buddhism, to be born into a woman's body was considered a cause of special suffering on account of menstruation, childbirth and menopause, etc. According to the Nirvana Sutra, the Buddha described Woman as the "abode of all evil". The Buddha always taught: "There is no impediment in women to enable them to practice religion as men do and attain the highest state in life, which is Arahanthood or Sainthood, the highest level of mental purity. However, it has been almost 26 centuries since the time the Buddha liberated the women in Indian society, women are still struggling to gain equality with men in all fields." According to the Sutra In Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 29, the Buddha said: "Be careful not to look at women and do not talk with them. If you must speak with them, be properly mindful and think: 'I am a Sramana living in a turbid world. I should be like the lotus flower and not be defiled by the mud.' Regard old women the way you regard your mother. Regard those who are older than you the way you regard your elder sisters. Regard those who are younger as your younger sisters and regard children as their own. Bring forth thoughts to rescue them and put an end to negative (bad) thoughts." As for Woman beauty, the Buddha said: "Woman beauty is a chain of serious delusion, a grievous calamity." According to the sastra on the Prajna-Paramita-Sutra, it is better to burn out the eyes with a red-hot iron than behold woman with unsteady heart.

On various occasions, the Buddha mentioned to Visakha the eight qualities that make a woman seek birth in happy states; or she will be born again where lovely devas dwell: First, always active, and alert to cherish her husband. Second, even though he is not the man who brings

her every joy. Third, she offers slight, nor will a good wife, move to wrath her husband by some spiteful word. Fourth, she reveres all whom her husband honour. Fifth, for she is wise, deft, nimble, up bedtimes. Sixth, she mind his wealth amid his folk at work. Seventh, sweetly orders all. Eighth, who complies with her husband's wish and will. There are eight qualities in a woman that tend to wealth and happiness in this world and in the next world. In Gradual Sayings, the Buddha commented to Visakha the eight qualities in a woman that tend to wealth and happiness in this world and in the next world: Herein, Visakha, first, a woman is capable at her work. Second, a woman is capable to manage the servants. Third, in her ways she is lovely to her husband. Fourth, she guards his wealth. Herein, Visakha, fifth, a woman is accomplished in trustful confidence. Sixth, accomplished in virtue. Seventh, accomplished in charity. Eighth, accomplished in wisdom.

According to Buddhism, to be born into a woman's body was considered a cause of special suffering on account of menstruation, childbirth and menopause, etc. While according to the Nirvana Sutra, the Buddha described Woman as the "abode of all evil". The Buddha also said: "Woman beauty is a chain of serious delusion, a grievous calamity." According to the Sastra on the Prajna-Paramita Sutra, woman as a robber, the cause of sexual passion, stealing away the riches of religion. As a matter of fact, for sentient beings, woman as lock or chain or the binding power of sex is always badly strong. According to the sastra on the Prajna-Paramita-Sutra, it is better to burn out the eyes with a red-hot iron than behold woman with unsteady heart. Woman is considered as a robber, the cause of sexual passion, stealing away the riches of religion. However, at the time of the Buddha, the Buddha always taught: "Although woman beauty is a chain of serious delusion, a grievous calamity, there is no impediment in women to enable them to practice religion as men do and attain the highest state in life, which is Arahanthood or Sainthood, the highest level of mental purity. However, it has been almost 26 centuries since the time the Buddha liberated the women in Indian society, women are still struggling to gain equality with men in all fields." A typical example is Nagakanya (Dragon-maid), a naga maiden, daughter of sagar-nagaraja, the dragon king at the bottom of the ocean. She is

presented in the Lotus sutra, though a female and only eight years old, as instantly becoming a Buddha, under the tuition of Manjusri.

Another example of giving respect to women in Buddhism was emphasized by the Buddha in the Sigalaka Sutra, when the Buddha reminded that bowing in the West denotes wife and children. There are five ways in which a husband should minister to his wife as the Western direction: by honouring her, by not disparaging her, by not being unfaithful to her, by giving authority to her, and by providing her with adornments. There are five ways in which a wife, thus ministered to by her husband as the Western direction, will reciprocate: by properly organizing her work, by being kind to the relatives, by not being unfaithful, by protecting husband's property, and by being skillful and diligent in all she has to do. In this way the Western direction is covered, making it at peace and free from fear. The Buddha himself taught in the Sutra In Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 29, the Buddha taught about women in Buddhist view as follows: "Be careful not to look at women and do not talk with them. If you must speak with them, be properly mindful and think: 'I am a Sramana living in a turbid world. I should be like the lotus flower and not be defiled by the mud.' Regard old women the way you regard your mother. Regard those who are older than you the way you regard your elder sisters. Regard those who are younger as your younger sisters and regard children as their own. Bring forth thoughts to rescue them and put an end to negative (bad) thoughts."

According to Buddhist legendary, there is a story of a woman named Li-I who was so deeply in samadhi before the Buddha that Manjusri could not arouse her; she could only be aroused by a bodhisattva who has sloughed off the skandhas and attained enlightenment. The story of a woman named Li-I who was so deeply in samadhi before the Buddha that Manjusri could not arouse her; she could only be aroused by a bodhisattva who has sloughed off the skandhas and attained enlightenment. Once Majusri went to a place where many Buddhas had assembled with the World-Honored One. When he arrived, all the Buddhas had returned to their original dwelling place. Only a young woman remained, seated in samadhi, near the Buddha's seat. Manjusri approached the Buddha and asked, "How can the young woman get near the Buddha's seat when I

cannot?" The Buddha replied to Manjusri, "Awaken this young woman from her samadhi and ask her yourself." Manjusri walked around the young woman three times, snapped his fingers once, took her to the Brahma Heaven and exerted all his supernatural powers, but he could not bring her out. The World-Honored One said, "Even a hundred thousand Majusris cannot awaken her. Down below, past twelve hundred million lands, as immeasurable as sands of the Ganges, lives the Bodhisattva of Delusive Wisdom. He will be able to bring her out of her samadhi." Instantly the Bodhisattva of Delusive Wisdom emerged from the earth and made bows before the World-Honored One, who gave him his imperial order. Delusive Wisdom stepped before the young woman, snapped his fingers once, and at this sha came out of samadhi. According to Wu Men Hui-Kai in the Wu-Men-Kuan, old Sakyamuni put on a disorderly comedy this time, no better than a child. Manjusri is teacher of the Seven Buddhas; why couldn't he bring the young woman out of samadhi? Delusive Wisdom is a Bodhisattva at the beginning level. How could he bring her out? If you can see into this intimately, then in the flurry of karma and discrimination you are a dragon of great samadhi.

VI. Human's Place in Religions:

In terms of matter, the Buddhist view of the origin of the universe is energy. In terms of the sentient beings, the force that produces them is that of the actions they have accumulated, which cause them to be reborn in that way. If a human being keeps the five basic precepts, he or she will continue to be reborn in the human path. People are neither completely good nor completely bad, but human beings are harmonious by nature and can get along with other people. If they were completely good, they would ascend to the heavens. If they were completely bad, they would become either animals, or hungry ghosts, or even fall into the hells. Human beings have both merits and offenses. Either their merit exceeds their offenses, or their offenses exceed their merit. When a person's merit is greater than his offenses, he will be born in a rich and respectable family; but with little merit and many offenses he will be born into a poor and miserable family. Generally speaking, Buddhism believes that birth as a human being is one of the most ideal forms of existence because it is conducive to cultivation. So compared

to human beings, gods would in fact be considered inferior, even though gods may have some abilities that human beings do not have, such as some supernatural powers. In fact, the realm of gods is still a part of this world where human beings also live, but that form of existence is less effective for cultivation of the Buddha-dharma.

Human beings are living beings in this realm have sharp or developed minds, capable of weighty moral and immoral action than any other living beings. The human realm is a mixture of both pain and pleasure, sufering and hapiness. Bodhisattvas always choose this realm as their last existence because it offers opportunity for attaining Buddhahood. The human realm is one of the six destinies (gati) within cyclic existence (samsara) into which beings may be born. The sentient thinking being in the desire realm, whose past deeds affect his present condition. Man occupies a very important place in the Buddhist cosmos because he has the power of decision. Human life is a mixture of the happy with a good dash of the bitter.

The sentient thinking being in the desire realm, whose past deeds affect his present condition. Man occupies a very important place in the Buddhist cosmos because he has the power of decision. Human life is a mixture of the happy with a good dash of the bitter. According to the Buddha, a man can decide to devote himself to selfish, unskilful ends, a mere existence, or to give purpose to his life by the practice of skilful deeds which will make others and himself happy. Still, in many cases, man can make the vital decision to shape his life in this way or that; a man can think about the Way, and it was to man that the Buddha gave most of his important teachings, for men could understand, practice and realize the Way. It is man who can experience, if he wishes, Enlightenment and become as the Buddha and the Arahants, this is the greatest blessing, for not only the secure tranquillity of one person's salvation is gained but out of compassion the Way is shown in many others. The opportunity to be reborn as a human being is so rare; thus the Buddha taught: "Supposing a man threw into the ocean a piece of wood with a hole in it and it was then blown about by the various winds and currents over the waters. In the ocean lived a one-eyed turtle which had to surface once in a hundred years to breathe. Even in one Great Aeon it would be most unlikely in surfacing, to put its head into the hole in that piece of wood. Such is the rarity of gaining birth among

human beings if once one has sunk into the three woeful levels or three lower realms."

Most of us are agreed to the fact that among all living beings, human beings are unique beings who can understand what we are and what we should be. Compared to other beings, man is most complete and superior not only in the mentality and thinking, but also in the ability of organization of social life. Human beings' life cannot be substituted nor repeated nor determined by someone else. Once we are born in this world, we have to live our own life, a meaningful and worth living life. Thus, the ancient said: "Man is the most sacred and superior animal." And the Buddha taught in the Upasaka Sutra: "In all beings, man is endowed with all necessary faculties, intelligence. Besides man's conditions are not too miserable as those beings in hell, not too much pleasure as those beings in heaven. And above all, man's mind is not so ignorant as that of the animals." So man has the ability to build and improve his own life to the degree of perfection. Buddhism views man as a tiny being not only in strength but also in life span. Man is no more than just another creature but with intelligence that inhabit universe. Man is regarded as a cultured living being because he can harmonize with other creatures without destroying them. Religion was founded by men only for this purpose. Every creature that lives share the same life force which energizes man. Men and other creatures are part of the same cosmic energy which takes various forms during endless rebirths, passing from human to animal, to divine form and back again, motivated by the powerful craving for existence which takes them from birth to death and rebirth again in a never-ending cycle. In Buddhist cosmology, man is simply the inhabitant of one of the existing planes that other sentient beings can go after death. Human world is a good, well-balanced mixture of pleasure and pain. Man is in a favorable position to create or not to create fresh karma, and thus is able to shape his own destiny. Man is in effect his own Creator and Savior. Many others believe that religion has come down from heaven but Buddhists know that Buddhism started on the earth and reached heaven, or Buddha. The difficulty of being born as a man is just the same as the situation of a sea turtle which has only one eye, and that underneath, entered a hollow in a floating log; the log, tossed by the waves, happen to roll over, whereupon the turtle momentarily saw the

sun and moon. It is as easy for a blind turtle to find a floating log as it is for a man to be reborn as a man, or to meet with a Buddha and his teaching (The rareness of meeting a Buddha is compared with the difficulty of a blind sea-turtle finding a log to float on, or a one-eyed tortoise finding a log with a spy-hole through it).

Buddhism considers human body as a defiled skin bag. Sincere Buddhists should not care too much for this body, should not treat their skin-bag of a body as a treasure. Only people who are free of this idea can apply effort in cultivating the Way. If we treat our body as a precious thing, then we will become its slave and serve its whims all day long. Therefore, sincere Buddhists should treat the body as a 'stinking bag of skin' and do not prize it highly. Valuing the body too high is an obstacle to cultivation. We should merely 'borrow the false to cultivate what is true,' and see it as just an expedient means. According to the Sutra in Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 26, the heavenly spirits, desiring to destroy the Buddha's resolve, offered Jade women to him. The Buddha said: "Skin-bags full of filth." What are you doing here? Go away, I am not interested." Then, the heavenly spirits asked most respectfully about the meaning of the Way. The Buddha explained it for them and they immediately obtained the fruition of Srotaapanna." However, also according to Buddhism, Manusya is considered to be ideal destiny for the attainment of Buddhahood, because humans are not plagued by the constant sufferings of beings of the lower three destinies (hell beings, hungry ghosts and animals), and they also do not have happy lives of gods to be lax in cultivation. In the contrary, they experience enough suffering to become aware of the real nature of things (impermanence, sffering, and non-self). Thus, the Buddha taught, "a man can decide to devote himself to selfish, unskilful ends, a mere existence, or to give purpose to his life by the practice of skilful deeds which will make others and himself happy." Still, in many cases, man can make the vital decision to shape his life in this way or that; a man can think about the Way, and it was to man that the Buddha gave most of his important teachings, for men could understand, practice and realize the Way. It is man who can experience, if he wishes, Enlightenment and become as the Buddha and the Arahants, this is the greatest blessing, for not only the secure tranquillity of one person's salvation is gained but out of compassion

the Way is shown in many others. The opportunity to be reborn as a human being is so rare; thus, the Buddha taught: “Supposing a man threw into the ocean a piece of wood with a hole in it and it was then blown about by the various winds and currents over the waters. In the ocean lived a one-eyed turtle which had to surface once in a hundred years to breathe. Even in one Great Aeon it would be most unlikely in surfacing, to put its head into the hole in that piece of wood. Such is the rarity of gaining birth among human beings if once one has sunk into the three woeful levels or three lower realms. Also, according to Buddhism, man is different from animals because only man alone has developed his intelligence and understanding to reflect his reasoning. Man means a sentient being or one who has the ability or the mind to think. The real and sincere purpose of religion is to help man to think correctly in order to raise him above the level of the animal, to help him reach his ultimate goal of supreme happiness.”

Chapter Four

The Ocean of Life and Death in Buddhist Point of View

In Buddhism, being up and down in the ocean of birth and death with overloaded misfortune is the original word for reincarnation which is translated as transmigration or samsara. The passing away from one body to be reborn in another body. Where the being will be reborn depends on his accumulated good or bad karma. The belief that living beings, including man, have a series of bodily lives, only ceasing when they no longer base their happiness on any of the objects of the world. This come about when the Buddha-nature is found. This belief is very common to all Buddhists. Reincarnation means going around as the wheel turns around. Whether the world is Samsara or Nirvana depends entirely on our state of mind. If our mind is enlightened, then this world is Nirvana; if our mind is unenlightened, then this world is Samsara. For those who strive to cultivate, samsara is Nirvana, Nirvana is samsara. Transmigation means the passing away from one body to be reborn in another body. Where the beings will be reborn depends on his accumulated good or bad karma. What is the ocean of birth and death that all sentient beings have been being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortune? According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, all creatures in the Saha World are tied to the ceaseless round of birth-death and rebirth, that is, to the law of causation, according to which existence on any one of these planes are determined by antecedent actions. In Buddhism these planes are depicted as the spokes or segments of the "wheel of life." This wheel is set in motion by actions stemming from our basic ignorance of the true nature of existence and by karmic propensities from an incalculable past, and kept revolving by our craving for the pleasures of the senses and by our clinging to them, which leads to an unending cycle of births, deaths, and rebirths to which we remain bound. These are six paths, or six ways or conditions of sentient existence, or six miserable states (sentient beings revolve in the cycle of Birth and Death, along the six paths, life after life. These are paths of hell-dwellers, hungry ghosts,

animals, titanic demons or asuras, human beings and celestials). The six realms of the samsara include the three lower gatis, or three evil paths; and the three upper gatis, or three good paths.

The Buddha taught: “Not in the sky, nor in mid-ocean, nor in a mountain cave, nowhere on earth where one can escape from death (Dharmapada 128).” Rebirth is the result of karma. The doctrine of rebirth is upheld by all traditional schools of Buddhism. According to this doctrine, sentient beings (sattva) are caught up in a continuous round of birth, death, and rebirth, and their present state of existence is conditioned by their past volitional actions or karma. In Buddhist belief, there is no transmigration of soul or any substance from one body to another. According to the Buddha, rebirth takes place instantaneously after death, consciousness having the nature of arising and passing away unceasingly. There is no interval between death and the next birth. One moment we are dead and the next moment rebirth takes place, either in the human plane, the celestial plane, or the hell plane, the hungry ghost plane, the animal plane and the demon plane. What really happens is that the last active thought (Javana) process of dying man releases certain forces which vary in accordance with the purity of the five thought moments in that series. These forces are called karmic energy which attracts itself to a material layer produced by parents in the mother's’womb. The material aggregates in this germinal compound must possess such characteristics as are suitable for the reception of that particular type of karmic energy. Attraction in this manner of various types of physical aggregates produced by parents occurs through the operation of death and gives a favourable rebirth to the dying man. An unwholesome thought gives an unfavourable rebirth. Each and every type of sentient being will have different appearance whether it be beautiful or ugly, superior or inferior. This is determined and is manifested based solely on the various karma sentient beings created while alive with their antecedent bodies. Since the cycle inevitably involves suffering and death, Buddhism assumes that escape from it is a desirable goal. This is achieved by engaging in cultivating oneself, and the most important of which is meditation. The doctrine of rebirth has become problematic for many contemporary Buddhists, particularly for converts to Buddhism in Western countries whose culture does not accept the notion of rebirth. However, this

doctrine is extremely important in Buddhism, for all sincere attitudes of cultivation originated from the thorough understanding of this doctrine.

According to Buddhism, rebirth is the recombination of mind and matter. After passing away of the physical body or the matter, the mental forces or the mind recombine and assume a new combination in a different material form and condition in another existence. Rebirth is the result of karma. In Buddhist belief, there is no transmigration of soul or any substance from one body to another. What really happens is that the last active thought (Javana) process of dying man releases certain forces which vary in accordance with the purity of the five thought moments in that series. These forces are called karmic energy which attracts itself to a material layer produced by parents in the mother's'womb. The material aggregates in this germinal compound must possess such characteristics as are suitable for the reception of that particular type of karmic energy. Attraction in this manner of various types of physical aggregates produced by parents occurs through the operation of death and gives a favourable rebirth to the dying man. An unwholesome thought gives an unfavourable rebirth. Each and every type of sentient being will have different appearance whether it be beautiful or ugly, superior or inferior. This is determined and is manifested based solely on the various karma sentient beings created while alive with their antecedent bodies.

According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are four forms of birth by which the beings of the six modes of existence can be reborn (all births take place in four forms and in each case causing a sentient being to enter one of the six gati or paths of transmigration). The first type of birth is "Birth from the womb", or uterine birth or womb-born, as with mammalia. This is one of the four modes of yoni. Uterine birth is a form of viviparous birth, as with mammalia. Before the differentiation of the sexes birth is supposed to have been transformation. In Buddhism, the term is also applied to beings enclosed in unopened lotuses in paradise, who have not had faith in the Amitabha but trusted to their own strength to attain salvation; there they remain for proportionate periods, happy, but without the presence of the Buddha, or Bodhisattvas, or the sacred host, and do not hear their teaching. The condition is also known as the womb-place. The second type of birth is "Egg-born", or birth from

eggs, as with birds. Egg-born, or birth from eggs. Oviparious, as is the case with chicken, goose, birds, etc. The third type of birth is the "Moisture or water born," as with worms and fishes. Moist and Wet Conditions Born or, spawn-born, or birth from moisture (wetness). Moisture or water-born, as is the case with worms, fishes, shrimps, etc. The fourth type of birth is the "Metamorphic," as with moths from the chrysalis. Birth by transformation as in the case of deities and superior beings of the Pure Lands. It is said that such beings, after the end of their previous lifetime, suddenly appear in this fashion due to their karma, without the help of parents or any other intermediary agency. Metamorphosis, as is the case with maggot transforms into fly, moths from the chrysalis, caterpillar becomes butterfly, or deities and superior beings of the Pure Land. It is said that such beings, after the end of their previous lifetime, suddenly appear in this fashion due to their karma, without the help of parents or any other intermediary agency. One of the four forms of birth. Any form of existence by which required form is attained in an instant in full maturity. By this birth bodhisattvas residing in Tusita can appear on earth any time at will to save beings (the dhyani-buddhas and bodhisattvas are also of such miraculous origin). Form of metamorphic birth, as with moths, asuras, hungry ghosts, and inhabitants of hells, and the Pure Lands, or first newly evolved world. One of the four forms of birth, which is by transforming, without parentage, attained in an instant in full maturity.

According to Tantric traditions, through his deep insight into how things exist, the Buddha observed that disturbing attitudes and karma cause our minds to take one rebirth after another. At the time of death, ordinary beings crave and grasp for bodies and at the same time afraid to lose bodies and separated from everything around us. When it becomes obvious that we're departing from this body and life, we grasp for another body. The two attachments of craving and grasping act as the cooperative conditions for karmic imprints to ripen at the time of death. As these karmic imprints start to mature, our minds are attracted to other bodies and we seek to take rebirth in them. In the case of a human rebirth, after passing through an immediate state between one life and the next, our consciousness then enters a fertilized egg. We develop the aggregates of a human being, a human body and mind. In this new rebirth, we perceive people and things through our senses.

Experiencing pleasant or unpleasant feelings from them, we generate attachment, aversion or indifference. These motivations cause us to act, and our actions leave more imprints on our mindstreams, and at the time of death, we're again propelled to take rebirth in another body. This cycle of rebirth is called "Samsara." Samsara isn't a place, nor is it a world. It is a cyclic existence. It is our situation of taking one rebirth after another under the control of disturbing attitudes and karmic actions. Thus, our own energy causes us to be reborn who we are, in our present circumstance. However, karma isn't "cast in concrete," and our lives aren't predetermined. Which karmic imprints ripen depends on our environment and our state of mind. In addition, we have the ability to control our actions, and thus shape our future. This is the law of karma, which is the functioning of cause and effect within our mindstreams. Whether we experience pain or pleasure depends on what we have done in the past. Our previous actions or karma were motivated by our minds. In this way, our minds are the principal creator of our experience.

The idea of rebirth is not unique to Buddhism, but it plays an important role in both its doctrine and its practice. The Buddha himself is said to have attained nirvana after a long series of rebirths, and on the night of his enlightenment, according to the Pali Canon, he remembered more than 100,000 previous lives. All beings are continuously reborn in a seemingly endless cycle of birth and death. Just as a person's birth is not the beginning of his or her fortunes, so death is not the end, because all beings 'wander' through successive incarnations: gods can become humans, humans can become gods, animals or hell beings, animals can become humans or 'hungry ghosts,' and so on. Advanced beings, such as Bodhisattvas, are able to avoid disadvantageous rebirths, but only Buddhas and arhats are fully liberated from samsara, because after their last lives they will never again be reborn. The countless sentient beings who pass through samsara are accommodated in successive world systems "as numerous as there are sands on the banks of the Ganges." Each world system is divided into three "spheres of existence. The crudest of these spheres is the World of Sense-Desire, governed by the five senses and inhabited by lesser gods or devas, humans, animals and the various hell beings. More refined is the World of Pure Form, where the greater

gods dwell. This sphere corresponds to the four meditational absorptions and its beings are without the sense of touch, taste and smell. The most refined samsaric sphere of existence is the Formless World, a purely mental realm, devoid of physical. Accomplished great gods are born here, but even these rebirths end, because although these gods have reached "summits of existence," they have not attained nirvana. Each of the world systems lasts incalculable aeons: the Samyutta Nikaya of the Pali Canon, part of the Buddha's discourses, explained that if a mountain of granite, seven miles high, were stroked every century with a piece of silk, it would be worn away before such a great aeon would pass. Not every form of Buddhism subscribes to this exact cosmology, but all agree that rebirth is not a haphazard process. Just as a physical object is governed by a causal physical law, so a person's "spiritual" development is governed by a natural law, karma, which is inherent in the cosmos. According to the law of karma, every action or deed "ripens" as a certain of result. This law in itself is neither normal nor retributive but merely a feature of the constituent elements of samsara. Without karma any talk of enlightenment would be senseless: one could not strive toward enlightenment if there were no way to affect one's development. Karma operates on intentional deeds and creates residual impressions or tendencies that bear fruit or "ripen" with time. Its effects are not limited to the present life but unfold over longer periods by creating favorable or unfavorable rebirths. In the Milindapanha, around the first or second century A.D., a dialogue between the monk Nagasena and king Milinda. Nagasena explains that deeds are linked to their outcomes in the same way that a mango tree's seed is linked to its fruit. A man who steals from another man's tree deserves a beating, even though he did not take the seed of the tree, because the stolen fruit could not have grown if the seed had not been planted. The outcome of karma can be affected by good or bad deeds. Which bring about favorable or unfavorable results. This gives rise to the psychological and ethical dimensions of karma. Every intentional deed is accompanied by a different kind of state of mind. If these states of mind are rooted in empathy, wisdom and lack of greed, then they are considered morally unwholesome, and can lead to bad karma. For example, although generosity is a morally wholesome deed, it is the attitude behind the deed, be it mere friendliness or deep

compassion that determines the “karmic seed” which will generate the deed’s “fruit.” Ultimately, the goal of Buddhism is to teach sentient beings gradually to extinguish the fires of hatred, delusion and greed, thereby ceasing to generate bad karmic seeds, and finally, in realizing nirvana, to blow them out completely (nirvana literally means “blow out.”). We take rebirth according to our karma. If we have led a good life we will generally get a good rebirth. A wholesome state of mind at the death moment is likely to be enabling a good rebirth to come about. If we have led an evil life, then a bad rebirth is more than likely to come about. But whenever we may be reborn, we will not be there forever. On the expiry of our lifespan, we die and undergo new rebirth. Deaths and rebirths keep repeating forever in a cycle that we call “the cycle of birth and death.” Karma underscores the importance of human life, because most of good or bad deeds are performed in the human realm. Gods enjoy the fruit of their previous good deeds, while those reborn in the sub-human realms have little scope for making virtuous deeds. As karma runs its course, these less fortunate beings may eventually obtain a more advantageous rebirth.

Chapter Five

Human's Life in the Ocean of Life and Death in Buddhist Point of View

I. An Overview of Human's Life in Buddhist Point of View:

According to Buddhist point of view, human's life in the ocean of life and death means the present birth which is brought about by the craving and clinging karma-volition (tanha-upadana) of past births, and the craving and clinging acts of will of the present birth bring about future rebirth. According to Buddhism, it is this karma-volition that divides beings into high and low. According the Dhammapada (135), beings are hiers of their deeds; bearers of their deeds, and their deeds are the womb out of which they spring, and through their deeds alone they must change for the better, remark themselves, and win liberation from ill. According to modern biology, a new human life begins in that miraculous instant when a sperm cell from the father merges with an egg cell or ovum within the mother. This is the moment of birth. Science speaks of only these two physical common factors. Buddhism, however, speaks of a third factors which is purely mental. According to the Mahatanhasamkhaya-sutta in Majjhima Nikaya, by the conjunction of three factors does conception take place. If mother and father come together, but it is not the mother's proper season, and the being to be reborn (gandhabba) does not present itself, a gern of life is not planted. If the parents come together, and it is the mother's proper season, but the being to be reborn is not present, then there is no conception. If the mother and father come together, and it is the mother's proper season and the being to be reborn is also present, then a germ of life is planted there. The third factor is simply a term for the rebirth consciousness (patisandhi-vinnana). It should be clearly understood that this rebirth consciousness is not a "self" or a "soul" or an "ego-entity" that experiences the fruits of good and evil deeds. Consciousness is also generated by conditions. Apart from condition there is no arising of consciousness.

According to Most Venerable Piyadassi in "The Buddha's Ancient Path", life according to Buddhism is suffering; suffering dominates all

life. It is the fundamental problem of life. The world is suffering and afflicted, no being is free from this bond of misery and this is a universal truth that no sensible man who sees things in their proper perspective can deny. The recognition of this universal fact, however, is not totally denial of pleasure or happiness. The Buddha, the Lord over suffering, never denied happiness in life when He spoke of the universality of suffering. The psycho-physical organism of the body undergoes incessant change, creates new psycho-physical processes every instant and thus preserves the potentiality for future organic processes, and leaves the gap between one moment and the next. We live and die every moment of our lives. It is merely a coming into being and passing away, a rise and fall (udaya-vaya), like the waves of the sea. This change of continuity, the psycho-physical process, which is patent to us this life does not cease at death but continues incessantly. It is the dynamic mind-flux that is known as will, thirst, desire, or craving which constitutes karmic energy. This mighty force, this will to live, keeps life going. According to Buddhism, it is not only human life, but the entire sentient world that is drawn by this tremendous force, this mind with its mental factors, good or bad.

"Life is uncertain, death is certain." This is a well-know saying in Buddhism. Knowing fully well that death is certain and is the natural phenomenon that veryone has to face, we should not be afraid of death. Yet all of us fear death because we do not think of its inevitability. We like to cling to our life and body and develop too much craving and attachment. A German monk named Nyanatiloka, reiterated the momentariness of existence from Visuddhi-Magga as follows: "All beings have only a very short instant to live, only so long as a moment of a slash of a lightning. When this is extinguished, the being is also extinguished. The beings of the last moment are now no longer living, and does not live now or will not live again later. The being of the present moment did not live previously, lives just now, but later will not live any more. The being of the future has not lived yet in the past, does not yet lived now, and will only live later." In fact, this life is a long dream. Even when we wake up after our night sleep, is there any difference among the dreams we had last night and the years of our childhood? We feel that we are reincarnating every morning after the sleep or we feel that we are reincarnating every moment after the

breath. Thus, is there any real us in this process of reincarnation? Surely, not at all! As a matter of fact, we have been changing endlessly. And we know we are the thoughts being manifested. That's all!

Human beings have both pleasure and suffering, thus it's easy for them to advance in cultivation and to attain Buddhahood; whereas the beings in the Deva realm enjoy all kinds of joy and spend no time for cultivation; beings in the realms of animals, hungry ghosts and hells are stupid, living in filth and killing one another for food. They are so miserable with all kinds of sufferings that no way they can cultivate. However, of all precious jewels, life is the greatest; if there is life, it is the priceless jewel. Thus, if you are able to maintain your livelihood, someday you will be able to rebuild your life. However, everything in life, if it has form characteristics, then, inevitably, one day it will be destroyed. A human life is the same way, if there is life, there must be death. Even though we say a hundred years, it passes by in a flash, like lightening streaking across the sky, like a flower's blossom, like the image of the moon at the bottom of a lake, like a short breath, what is really eternal? Sincere Buddhists should always remember when a person is born, not a single dime is brought along; therefore, when death arrives, not a word will be taken either. A lifetime of work, putting the body through pain and torture in order to accumulate wealth and possessions, in the end everything is worthless and futile in the midst of birth, old age, sickness, and death. After death, all possessions are given to others in a most senseless and pitiful manner. At such time, there are not even a few good merits for the soul to rely and lean on for the next life. Therefore, such an individual will be condemned into the three evil paths immediately. Ancient sages taught: "A steel tree of a thousand years once again blossom, such a thing is still not bewildering; but once a human body has been lost, ten thousand reincarnations may not return." Sincere Buddhists should always remember what the Buddha taught: "It is difficult to be reborn as a human being, it is difficult to encounter (meet or learn) the Buddha-dharma; now we have been reborn as a human being and encountered the Buddha-dharma; if we let the time passes by in vain, we waste our scarce lifespan."

According to the Sutra in Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 38, the Buddha asked a Sramana: "How long is the human lifespan?" He replied: "A few days." The Buddha said: "You have not yet understood the Way." The Buddha asked another Sramana: "How long is the human lifespan?" The other replied: "The space of a meal." The Buddha said: "You still have not yet understood the Way." The Buddha then asked another Sramana: "How long is the human lifespan?" The last one replied: "The length of a single breath." The Buddha said: "Excellent! You understand the Way." The Buddha taught on many occasions: "Human life is only as long as one breath, for breathing out (exhaling) without breathing (inhaling) means we have already died and stepped over into a new lifetime." In fact, our lives are like the breath, or like the growing and falling leaves. In the old days, at temples, the novices always must sweep falling leaves together on the open grounds and walkways of the monasteries. The leaves fall, the novices sweep, and yet, even while the sweeping continues and the near end of a long path is being clear, the novices can look back to the far end they have already swept and see a new scattering of leaves already starting to cover their work. When we can really understand about falling leaves, we can sweep the paths every day and have great happiness in our lives on this changing earth.

In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "It is difficult to obtain birth as a human being; it is difficult to have a life of mortals; it is difficult to hear the Correct Law; it is even rare to meet the Buddha (Dharmapada 182). Here I shall live in the rainy season, here in the winter and the summer. These are the words of the fool. He fails to realize the danger (of his final destination) (Dharmapada 286). Death descends and carries away that man of drowsy mind greedy for children and cattle, just like flood sweeps away a sleeping village (Dharmapada 287). Nothing can be saved, nor sons, nor a father, nor even relatives; there is no help from kinsmen can save a man from death (Dharmapada 288)." Thus, the Buddha continued to teach: "To live a hundred years, immoral and uncontrolled, is no better than a single-day life of being moral and meditative (Dharmapada 110). To live a hundred years without wisdom and control, is no better than a single-day life of being wise and meditative (Dharmapada 111). To live a hundred years, idle and inactive, is no better than a single-day

life of intense effort (Dharmapada 112). To live a hundred years without comprehending how all things rise and pass away, is no better than a single-day life of seeing beginning and end of all things (Dharmapada 113). To live a hundred years without seeing the immortal state, is no better than a single-day life of one who sees the deathless state (nirvana) (Dharmapada 114). To live a hundred years without seeing the Supreme Truth, is no better than a single-day life of someone who see the highest law (Dharmapada 115)."

II. It's Difficult to Be Reborn as a Human Being:

The opportunity to be reborn as a human being is so rare; thus, the Buddha taught: "Supposing a man threw into the ocean a piece of wood with a hole in it and it was then blown about by the various winds and currents over the waters. In the ocean lived a one-eyed turtle which had to surface once in a hundred years to breathe. Even in one Great Aeon it would be most unlikely in surfacing, to put its head into the hole in that piece of wood. Such is the rarity of gaining birth among human beings if once one has sunk into the three woeful levels or three lower realms." Of all precious jewels, life is the greatest; if there is life, it is the priceless jewel. Thus, if you are able to maintain your livelihood, someday you will be able to rebuild your life. However, everything in life, if it has form characteristics, then, inevitably, one day it will be destroyed. A human life is the same way, if there is life, there must be death. Even though we say a hundred years, it passes by in a flash, like lightening streaking across the sky, like a flower's blossom, like the image of the moon at the bottom of a lake, like a short breath, what is really eternal? Sincere Buddhists should always remember when a person is born, not a single dime is brought along; therefore, when death arrives, not a word will be taken either. A lifetime of work, putting the body through pain and torture in order to accumulate wealth and possessions, in the end everything is worthless and futile in the midst of birth, old age, sickness, and death.

Human beings have both pleasure and suffering, thus it's easy for them to advance in cultivation and to attain Buddhahood; whereas the beings in the Deva realm enjoy all kinds of joy and spend no time for cultivation; beings in the realms of animals, hungry ghosts and hells are stupid, living in filth and killing one another for food. They are so

miserable with all kinds of sufferings that no way they can cultivate. Of all precious jewels, life is the greatest; if there is life, it is the priceless jewel. Thus, if you are able to maintain your livelihood, someday you will be able to rebuild your life. However, everything in life, if it has form characteristics, then, inevitably, one day it will be destroyed. A human life is the same way, if there is life, there must be death. Even though we say a hundred years, it passes by in a flash, like lightening streaking across the sky, like a flower's blossom, like the image of the moon at the bottom of a lake, like a short breath, what is really eternal? Sincere Buddhists should always remember when a person is born, not a single dime is brought along; therefore, when death arrives, not a word will be taken either. A lifetime of work, putting the body through pain and torture in order to accumulate wealth and possessions, in the end everything is worthless and futile in the midst of birth, old age, sickness, and death. After death, all possessions are given to others in a most senseless and pitiful manner. At such time, there are not even a few good merits for the soul to rely and lean on for the next life. Therefore, such an individual will be condemned into the three evil paths immediately. Ancient sages taught: "A steel tree of a thousand years once again blossom, such a thing is still not bewildering; but once a human body has been lost, ten thousand reincarnations may not return." Sincere Buddhists should always remember what the Buddha taught: "It is difficult to be reborn as a human being, it is difficult to encounter (meet or learn) the Buddha-dharma; now we have been reborn as a human being and encountered the Buddha-dharma, if we let the time passes by in vain, we waste our scarce lifespan."

III.An Instance of Life in Buddhist Point of View:

According to Buddhism, the psycho-physical organism of the body of a being undergoes incessant change, creates new psycho-physical processes every instant and thus preserves the potentiality for future organic processes, and leaves the gap between one moment and the next. We live and die every moment of our lives. It is merely a coming into being and passing away, a rise and fall (udaya-vaya), like the waves of the sea. This change of continuity, the psycho-physical process, which is patent to us this life does not cease at death but continues incessantly. It is the dynamic mind-flux that is known as will,

thirst, desire, or craving which constitutes karmic energy. This mighty force, this will to live, keeps life going. According to Buddhism, it is not only human life, but the entire sentient world that is drawn by this tremendous force, this mind with its mental factors, good or bad. Also according to Buddhism, "life is uncertain, death is certain," this is a well-know saying in Buddhism. Knowing fully well that death is certain and is the natural phenomenon that veryone has to face, we should not be afraid of death. Yet all of us fear death because we do not think of its inevitability. We like to cling to our life and body and develop too much craving and attachment. A German monk named Nyanatiloka, reiterated the momentariness of existence from Visuddhi-Magga as follows: "All beings have only a very short instant to live, only so long as a moment of a slash of a lightning. When this is extinguished, the being is also extinguished. The beings of the last moment are now no longer living, and does not live now or will not live again later. The being of the present moment did not live previously, lives just now, but later will not live any more. The being of the future has not lived yet in the past, does not yet lived now, and will only live later." The Buddha taught on many occasions: "Human life is only as long as one breath, for breathing out (exhaling) without breathing (inhaling) means we have already died and stepped over into a new lifetime." In fact, our lives are like the breath, or like the growing and falling leaves. In the old days, at temples, the novices always must sweep falling leaves together on the open grounds and walkways of the monasteries. The leaves fall, the novices sweep, and yet, even while the sweeping continues and the near end of a long path is being clear, the novices can look back to the far end they have already swept and see a new scattering of leaves already starting to cover their work. When we can really understand about falling leaves, we can sweep the paths every day and have great happiness in our lives on this changing earth. According to the Sutra in Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 38, the Buddha asked a Sramana: "How long is the human lifespan?" He replied: "A few days." The Buddha said: "You have not yet understood the Way." The Buddha asked another Sramana: "How long is the human lifespan?" The other replied: "The space of a meal." The Buddha said: "You still have not yet understood the Way." The Buddha then asked another Sramana: "How long is the human lifespan?" The last one

replied: “The length of a single breath.” The Buddha said: “Excellent! You understand the Way.”

Chapter Six

Human Beings Are Living with Ignorance and Innumerable Sufferings in the Ocean of Life and Death

I. An Overview of Sufferings and Happiness in the Ocean of Life & Death:

According to Buddhism, all existence is characterized by suffering and does not bring satisfaction. There is no equivalent translation in English for the word "Dukkha" in both Pali and Sanskrit. So, the word "Dukkha" is often translated as "Suffering". However, this English word is sometimes misleading because it connotes extreme pain. When the Buddha described our lives as "Dukkha", he was referring to any and all unsatisfactory conditions. These range from minor disappointments, problems and difficulties to intense pain and misery. Therefore, Dukkha should be used to describe the fact that things are not completely right in our lives and could be better. Both Duhkha (skt) or Dukkha (p) are Sanskrit and Pali terms for "suffering" or "unsatisfactoriness." This is the first of the four noble truths of Buddhism, which holds that cyclic existence is characterized by unsatisfactoriness or suffering. This is related to the idea that since the things of the world are transitory, beings are inevitably separated from what they desire and forced to endure what is unpleasant. The main stated goal of Buddhism from its inception is overcoming "duhkha." There are three main types of duhkha: 1) the suffering of misery (duhkha-duhkhata), which includes physical and mental sufferings; 2) the suffering of change (viparinama-duhkhata), which includes all contaminated feelings of happiness. These are called sufferings because they are subject to change at any time, which leads to unhappiness; and 3) compositional suffering (samskara-duhkhata), the suffering endemic to cyclic existence, in which sentient beings are prone to the dissatisfaction due to being under the influence of contaminated actions and afflictions. The Buddha teaches that suffering is everywhere. Suffering is already enclosed in the cause, suffering from the effect, suffering throughout time, suffering pervades space,

and suffering governs both normal people and saint. The Buddha said that whatever is impermanent is suffering because although impermanence is not a cause for suffering, it creates occasions for suffering. For not understanding of impermanence, we crave and cling to objects in the hope that they may be permanent, that they may yeild permanent happiness. Failing to understand that youth, health, and life itself are impermanent, we crave them and cling to them. We desperately hold onto our youth and try to prolong our life, yet because they are impermanent by nature, they keep changing rapidly and we will surely one day become old and sick. When this occurs, impermanence is the main agent which creates occasions for suffering.

The Buddha's teaching on suffering, above all, offers a solution to the fundamental problem of the human condition. According to Buddhism, human existence is distinguished by the fact that nothing is permanent: no happiness will last forever, and whatever else there is, there will always be suffering and death. The first step in the Buddhist path to awakening is to recognize this as the foremost problem of human existence, to see that all is duhkha. However, this is not a pessimistic observation, because while acknowledging the ubiquity of duhkha, Buddhism offers a solution in the form of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Duhkha. The Buddha himself characterized his teaching by saying: "I teach only Duhkha and the cessation of duhkha." Duhkha can be experienced in three ways. The first is simply the ordinary suffering that affects people when the body is in pain. Ordinary suffering is also mental pain: it is the grief of not getting what one wants or the distress caused by separation from loved ones or from pleasant conditions. It is also the many other painful situations that one inevitably encounters by virtue of being born, ageing and dying. Underlying any happiness is the knowledge that whenever there is pleasure or delight, it will not be permanent. Sooner or later the vicissitudes of life will bring about a change. There is a Buddhist saying that even in laughter there is "duhkha," because all laughter is impermanent. This instability underlies the second kind of duhkha, which is dissatisfaction arising from change. It might seem that only death can bring about the cessation of suffering, but in fact death is also a form of suffering. In Buddhism the cosmos extends far beyond the immediate physical world perceptible by the senses, and death is

merely part of the endless cycle of rebirth. Death in itself offers no respite because actions have consequences in future lives far beyond death, just as deeds from previous lives have affected the present. The third kind of suffering is the inherent interconnectedness of actions and deeds, which exceeds human vision and experience. In this sense, suffering applies to the universe in its totality, and no imaginable beings, humans, gods, demons, animals or hell beings, are exempt from it. Suffering thus refers not only to everyday suffering but also to the whole infinite world of possible and seemingly endless forms of suffering. No simple translation can capture its full significance. The goal of Buddhism is the complete and final cessation of every form of duhkha, and thereby the attainment of nirvana, the eradication of greed, hatred and delusion, which ties beings to the cycle of rebirth. Accordingly, Buddhas and those who reach enlightenment do not experience duhkha, because strictly speaking they are not “beings”, nor do they “roll” in the samsara: they will never again be reborn. Duhkha characterizes the cosmos as a whole, but its predominance varies among the different “spheres of existence.” In the world of Pure Form, where the great gods dwell, there is less suffering than in the world of Sense-Desire, inhabited by lesser gods, humans and other beings. Just the Buddha when he walked the earth could enter the World of the Sense-Desire, so too can humans enter the World of Pure Form. This is ordinarily accomplished in meditation, through different kinds of absorptions (dhyana). The characteristic form of suffering in this situation is impermanence, caused by the meditator’s inability to remain eternally in trance. To attain more abiding happiness, an individual must strive to understand the processes that govern movement in the cosmos as a whole, namely, rebirth and karma, and how they can be affected.

Talking about happiness, ordinary happiness is the gratification of a desire. However, as soon as the thing desired is achived the we desire something else or some other kind of happiness, for our selfish desires are endless. According to Buddhism, happiness resulting from mental stability is the most important. We usually seek pleasant feelings and avoid unpleasant feelings through our sensory experience of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body. However, there is another level of experience: mental experience. Ture happiness should also be pursued

on the mental level. Many people believe that they can solve all their problems if they have money, so they're always busy to exhaust their energy to collect more and more money. The more money they have, the more they want to collect. They don't realize that money cannot buy happiness, or wealth does not always conduce to happiness. In fact, real happiness is found within, and is not be defined in terms of wealth, power, honours, or conquests. If we compare the mental and physical levels of happiness, we'll find that mental experiences of pain and pleasure are actually more powerful than those of physical experiences. Devout Buddhists should always remember that your property will remain when you die. Your friends and relatives will follow you up to your grave. But only good or bad actions you have done will follow you beyond the grave. Thus, wealth can only be used to decorate your house but not you. Only your own virtue can decorate you. Your dress can decorate your body, but not you; only your good conduct can decorate you. The secret of happiness lies in doing what needs be done now and not worrying about the past and the future. We cannot go back to change things in the past nor can we anticipate what will happen in the future. There is but one moment of time over which we have some relatively conscious control and that is the present.

The Buddha enumerates some kinds of happiness for a layman. They are the happiness of possession, health, wealth, longevity, beauty, joy, strength, property, children, etc. The Buddha does not advise all of us to renounce our worldly lives and pleasures and retire to solitude. However, he advised lay disciples to share the enjoyment of wealth with others. We should use wealth for ourselves, but we should also use wealth for the welfare of others. What we have is only temporary; what we preserve we leave and go. Only karmas will have to go with us along the endless cycle of births and deaths. Thus we must try to recognize and eliminate the powerful emotions we possess such as desire, hatred, anger, ignorance, pride, doubt, wrong views, etc., for they tend not to bring us long happiness. A fulfilled desire may provide us a sense of temporary satisfaction, but it will not last long. For example, we are satisfied with a new car we just bought, but for how long that satisfaction can last? Soon after the car will become old and broken, and that would cause us disatisfactions and sufferings. Thus, the Buddha taught about the happiness of lay disciples as

follows: “A poor, but peace life is real happiness. Leading a blameless life is one of the best sources of happiness, for a blameless person is a blessing to himself and to others. He is admired by all and feels happier, being affected by the peaceful vibrations of others. However, it is very difficult to get a good name from all. The wisemen try to be indifferent to external approbation, try to obtain the spiritual happiness by transcending of material pleasures.” Then the Buddha continued to remind monks and nuns: “Nirvana bliss, which is the bliss of relief from suffering, is the highest form of happiness.”

In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: Oh! Happily do we live without hatred among the hateful! Among hateful men we dwell unhating! (197). Oh! Happily do we live in good health among the ailing! Among the ailing we dwell in good health! (198). Oh! Happily do we live without greed for sensual pleasures among the greedy! Among the greedy we dwell free from greed! (199). Oh! Happily do we live without any hindrances. We shall always live in peace and joy as the gods of the Radiant Realm (200). Hunger is the greatest disease, aggregates are the greatest suffering. Knowing this as it really is, the wise realize Nirvana: supreme happiness (203). Good health is a great benefit, contentment is the richest, trust is the best kinsmen, Nirvana is the highest bliss (204). To meet the sage is good, to live with them is ever happy. If a man has not ever seen the foolish, he may ever be happy (206).

II. Beings, Especially, Human Beings Are Living with Ignorance and Innumerable Sufferings in the Ocean of Life & Death:

Sentient Beings in the Three Realms Are Living with Ignorance and Sufferings in the Ocean of Life and Death: According to Buddhism, sentient beings in the three realms (the realm of desire, of form, and of formlessness) are living with ignorance and innumerable sufferings in the ocean of life and death (the six paths of Samsara). In Buddhism, ignorance or Avidya is noncognizance of the four noble truths, the three precious ones (triratna), and the law of karma, etc. Avidya is the first link of conditionality (pratityasampada), which leads to entanglement of the world of samsara and the root of all unwholesome in the world. This is the primary factor that enmeshes

(làm vướng víu) beings in the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. In a Buddhist sense, it refers to lack of understanding of the four noble truths (Arya-satya), the effects of actions (karma), dependent arising (pratitya-samutpada), and other key Buddhist doctrines. In Madhyamaka, "Avidya" refers to the determination of the mind through ideas and concepts that permit beings to construct an ideal world that confers upon the everyday world its forms and manifold quality, and that thus block vision of reality. "Avidya" is thus the nonrecognition of the true nature of the world, which is empty (shunyata), and the mistaken understanding of the nature of phenomena. Thus "avidya" has a double function: ignorance veils the true nature and also constructs the illusory appearance. "Avidya" characterizes the conventional reality. For the Sautrantikas and Vaibhashikas, "Avidya" means seeing the world as unitary and enduring, whereas in reality it is manifold and impermanent. "Avidya" confers substantiality on the world and its appearances. In the Yogachara's view, "avidya" means seeing the object as a unit independent of consciousness, when in reality it is identical with it. Ignorance means Unenlightened, the first or last of the twelve nidanas. Ignorance is Illusion or darkness without illumination, the ignorance which mistakes seeming for being, or illusory phenomena for realities. Ignorance of the way of escape from sufferings, one of the three affluences that feed the stream of mortality or transmigration. Sometimes ignorance means "Maya" or "Illusion." It means complete darkness without illumination. The ignorance which mistakes seeming for being, or illusory phenomena for realities. Ignorance is the main cause of our non-enlightenment. Ignorance os only a false mark, so it is subject to production, extinction, increase, decrease, defilement, purity, and so on. Ignorance is the main cause of our birth, old age, worry, grief, misery, and sickness, and death. Ignorance is one of the three fires which must be allowed to die out before Nirvana is attained. The erroneous state of mind which arises from belief in self. It is due to ignorance, people do not see things as they really are, and cannot distinguish between right and wrong. They become blind under the delusion of self, clinging to things which are impermanent, changeable, and perishable.

Six miserable states (sentient beings revolve in the cycle of Birth and Death, along the six paths, life after life. These are paths of hell-dwellers, hungry ghosts, animals, titanic demons or asuras, human beings and celestials). Some say these are objective, geographic realms, places to which we can go. Others say they are subjective states that come about through psychological experience. But it may be that they are neither places nor psychological states; perhaps they belong to a kind of intermediate zone which is neither subjective nor objective. In any case, Zen master Hakuin says that as long as our inherent enlightenment remains unrealized, no realm of existence grants immunity from ignorance or suffering. According to the Records of the Transmission of the Lamp (Ch'uan-Teng-Lu), Volume XVII, a monk asked, "How does one escape the Three Realms?" Qianfeng said, "Call the temple director and have him chase this monk out of here!" Qianfeng asked the monks, "The six tendencies of the turning wheel of transmigration have what eye?" The monk didn't answer.

Human Beings Are Living with Ignorance and Innumerable Sufferings in the Ocean of Life & Death: Truly speaking, sentient beings, especially human beings are living with ignorance and innumerable sufferings in the ocean of life and death. According to Buddhism, all existence is characterized by suffering and does not bring satisfaction. There is no equivalent translation in English for the word "Dukkha" in both Pali and Sanskrit. So, the word "Dukkha" is often translated as "Suffering". However, this English word is sometimes misleading because it connotes extreme pain. When the Buddha described our lives as "Dukkha", he was referring to any and all unsatisfactory conditions. These range from minor disappointments, problems and difficulties to intense pain and misery. Therefore, Dukkha should be used to describe the fact that things are not completely right in our lives and could be better. Both Duhkha (skt) or Dukkha (p) are Sanskrit and Pali terms for "suffering" or "unsatisfactoriness." This is the first of the four noble truths of Buddhism, which holds that cyclic existence is characterized by unsatisfactoriness or suffering. This is related to the idea that since the things of the world are transitory, beings are inevitably separated from what they desire and forced to endure what is unpleasant. The main stated goal of Buddhism from its inception is overcoming "duhkha."

There are three main types of duhkha: 1) the suffering of misery (duhkha-duhkhata), which includes physical and mental sufferings; 2) the suffering of change (viparinama-duhkhata), which includes all contaminated feelings of happiness. These are called sufferings because they are subject to change at any time, which leads to unhappiness; and 3) compositional suffering (samskara-duhkhata), the suffering endemic to cyclic existence, in which sentient beings are prone to the dissatisfaction due to being under the influence of contaminated actions and afflictions.

After the Great Enlightenment, the Buddha declared His first Discourse at the Deer Park: "Life is nothing but suffering" and "The five aggregates are suffering". At other time in the Sravasti, the Buddha repeated the same discourse: "I will teach you, Bhiksus, pain and the root of pain. Do you listen to it. And what, Bhiksus, is pain? Body, Bhiksus, is pain, feeling is pain, perception is pain, the activities are pain, and consciousness is pain. That, Bhiksus, is the meaning of pain. And what, Bhiksus, is the root of pain? It is this craving that leads downward to rebirth, along with the lure of lust, that lingers longingly now here and there: namely, the craving for sense, the craving for rebirth, the craving to have done with rebirth." In other words, human beings' suffering is really the result of the arising of Dependent Origination, also the arising of the Five Aggregates. And thus, it is not the five aggregates, or human beings and the world that cause suffering, but a person's craving for the five aggregates that causes suffering. The Buddha described three main characteristics of Dukkha which we face in our daily lives. First, the suffering of pain occurs whenever we are mentally or physically miserable. Physical suffering includes headaches and scraped knees as well as torment of cancer and heart attacks. Mental suffering occurs whenever we fail to get what we want, when we lose something, we are attached to, or when misfortune comes our way. We are sad when our career goal cannot be achieved, we're depressed when we part from loved ones, we are anxious when we are waiting to obtain a letter form our children, etc... Second, the suffering of change indicates that activities we generally regard as pleasurable in fact inevitably change and become painful. When we first buy a new shirt, we like it because it looks gorgeous; however, three years later, we may be suffering or feeling uncomfortable when

we wear it because it is old and becomes worn out. No matter how much we like a person and we feel happy when we are with that person; however, when we spend too much time with that person, it makes us uncomfortable. Thus, happiness was never inherent in the person we like, but was a product of the interaction between us and that person. Third, the pervasive compounded suffering refers to our situation of having bodies and minds prone to pain. We can become miserable simply by the changing of external conditions. The weather changes and our bodies suffer from the cold; how a friend treats us changes and we become depressed. Our present bodies and minds compound our misery in the sense that they are the basis for our present problems. Our present bodies are the basis upon which we experience bad health. If we did not have a body that was receptive to pain, we would not fall ill no matter how many viruses and germs we were exposed to. Our present minds are the basis upon which we experience the pain and hurt feelings. If we had minds that were not contaminated by anger, then we would not suffer from the mental anguish of conflict with others.

In Buddhism, there are two categories of sufferings: physical and mental sufferings. Sufferings from within such as sickness or sorrow. First, physical sufferings or sufferings caused by diseases, including the suffering of birth, old age, sickness and death. The suffering of the body means that our body is not only impure, it is subject to birth, old age, disease and death, as well as to heat and cold, hunger and thirst, and other hardships that cause us to suffer, preventing us from being free and happy. Yes, indeed, birth is inevitablly suffering for both the mother and the infant, and because it is from birth, other forms of suffering, such as old age, sickness and death inevitably follow. Physical suffering takes many forms. People must have observed at one time or another, how their aged relatives suffer. Most of them suffer aches and pains in their joints and many find it hard to move about by themselves. With advancing age, the elderly find life difficult because they cannot see, hear or eat properly. The pain of disease, which strikes young and old alike, can be unbearable. The pain of death brings much suffering. Even the moment of birth gives pain, both to the mother and the child who is born. The truth is that the suffering of birth, old age, sickness and death are unavoidable. Some fortunate

people may now be enjoying happy and carefree lives, but it is only a matter of time before they too will experience suffering. What is worse, nobody else can share this suffering with the one that suffers. For example, a man may be very concerned that his mother is growing old. Yet he cannot take her place and suffer the pain of aging on her behalf. Also, if a boy falls very ill, his mother cannot experience the discomfort of his illness for him. Finally, neither mother nor son can help each other when the moment of death comes. Second, the mental sufferings or the sufferings of the mind. Besides physical suffering, there are also various forms of mental suffering. Mental suffering such as sadness, distress, jealousy, bitterness, unsatisfaction, unhappiness, etc. People feel sad, lonely or depressed when they lose someone they love through separation or death. They become irritated or uncomfortable when they are forced to be in the company of those whom they dislike or those who are unpleasant. People also suffer when they are unable to satisfy their needs and wants, etc. The suffering of the mind means that when the mind is afflicted, it is necessarily consumed by the fire of afflictions, bound by the ropes of afflictions, struck, pursued and ordered about by the whip of afflictions, defiled and obscured by the smoke and dust of afflictions. Thus, whoever develops afflictions is lacking in wisdom, because the first person he has caused to suffer is himself. Besides, there is also the suffering of the environment. The suffering of the environment means that this earth is subject to the vagaries of the weather, scorching heat, frigid cold and pouring rain, while sentient beings must toil and suffer day in and day out to earn a living. Tragedies occur every day, before our very eyes.

In this world, worries and miseries are twin evils that go hand in hand. They co-exist in this world. If you feel worried, you are miserable, and vise-versa; when you are miserable, you are worried. Devout Buddhists should always remember that worries are made by our own minds and by nothing else We create them in our own minds for we fail to understand the danger of attachment and egoistic feelings. To be able to overcome these problems, we must try to contemplate and to train our minds carefully because an untrained mind is the main cause of all the problems including worries and miseries. The most important fact is that we should always have a

smile for ourselves as well as for others in any circumstances. The Buddha taught: “Worries only arise in the fool, not in the wise.” Worries and miseries are nothing but states of mind. Negative thoughts produce worries and miseries, while positive thoughts produce happiness and peace. The Buddha teaches that suffering is everywhere, suffering is already enclosed in the cause, suffering from the effect, suffering throughout time, suffering pervades space, and suffering governs both normal people and saint. From internal sufferings to external sufferings. Internal sufferings include both physical and mental sufferings. Physical sufferings are sufferings from within such as sickness or sorrow. Mental sufferings are spiritual sufferings such as sadness, distress, jealousy, bitterness, unsatisfaction, unhappiness, etc. External sufferings include sufferings from outside circumstances such as calamities, wars, etc. The Buddha said that whatever is impermanent is suffering because although impermanence is not a cause for suffering, it creates occasions for suffering. For not understanding of impermanence, we crave and cling to objects in the hope that they may be permanent, that they may yeild permanent happiness. Failing to understand that youth, health, and life itself are impermanent, we crave them and cling to them. We desperately hold onto our youth and try to prolong our life, yet because they are impermanent by nature, they keep changing rapidly and we will surely one day become old and sick. When this occurs, impermanence is the main agent which creates occasions for suffering. According to The Connected Discourses of the Buddha, Chapter Esanavaggo (Searches), there are three aspects of Dukkha that all sentient beings experience. They are suffering due to pain, suffering due to change, and suffering due to formations. First, dukkha as ordinary suffering, or suffering due to pain, or suffering that produce by direct causes or suffering of misery, Including physical sufferings such as pain, old age, death; as well as mental anxieties. The suffering within suffering is experienced when people do not have a place to live, clothes to keep out the cold or heat, or food to eat to survive, etc. Dukkha as produced by change, or suffering due to change, or suffering by loss or deprivation or change, for example, people who are rich, who have a good life, but then a sudden fire burns up all their property, leaving them destitude. Or maybe they die in a plane crash or a shipwreck. These are the

sufferings of decay. Third, dukkha as conditioned states, or suffering due to formations, or suffering by the passing or impermanency of all things, body and mind are impermanent. Everybody of us experiences childhood, young days of life, then grows old and dies. Our thoughts flow on in a continuous succession, and we cannot control them. When we grow old, our eyes get blurry, our ears become deaf, and our hands and feet are no longer nimble, but start to tremble. These are the sufferings of process.

The Buddha's teachings on suffering, above all, offers a solution to the fundamental problem of the human condition. According to Buddhism, human existence is distinguished by the fact that nothing is permanent: no happiness will last forever, and whatever else there is, there will always be suffering and death. The first step in the Buddhist path to awakening is to recognize this as the foremost problem of human existence, to see that all is duhkha. However, this is not a pessimistic observation, because while acknowledging the ubiquity of duhkha, Buddhism offers a solution in the form of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Duhkha. The Buddha himself characterized his teaching by saying: "I teach only Duhkha and the cessation of duhkha." Duhkha can be experienced in three ways. The first is simply the ordinary suffering that affects people when the body is in pain. Ordinary suffering is also mental pain: it is the grief of not getting what one wants or the distress caused by separation from loved ones or from pleasant conditions. It is also the many other painful situations that one inevitably encounters by virtue of being born, ageing and dying. Underlying any happiness is the knowledge that whenever there is pleasure or delight, it will not be permanent. Sooner or later the vicissitudes of life will bring about a change. There is a Buddhist saying that even in laughter there is "duhkha," because all laughter is impermanent. This instability underlies the second kind of duhkha, which is dissatisfaction arising from change. It might seem that only death can bring about the cessation of suffering, but in fact death is also a form of suffering. In Buddhism the cosmos extends far beyond the immediate physical world perceptible by the senses, and death is merely part of the endless cycle of rebirth. Death in itself offers no respite because actions have consequences in future lives far beyond death, just as deeds from previous lives have affected the present. The

third kind of suffering is the inherent interconnectedness of actions and deeds, which exceeds human vision and experience. In this sense, suffering applies to the universe in its totality, and no imaginable beings, humans, gods, demons, animals or hell beings, are exempt from it. Suffering thus refers not only to everyday suffering but also to the whole infinite world of possible and seemingly endless forms of suffering. No simple translation can capture its full significance. The goal of Buddhism is the complete and final cessation of every form of duhkha, and thereby the attainment of nirvana, the eradication of greed, hatred and delusion, which ties beings to the cycle of rebirth. Accordingly, Buddhas and those who reach enlightenment do not experience duhkha, because strictly speaking they are not "beings", nor do they "roll" in the samsara: they will never again be reborn. Duhkha characterizes the cosmos as a whole, but its predominance varies among the different "spheres of existence." In the world of Pure Form, where the great gods dwell, there is less suffering than in the world of Sense-Desire, inhabited by lesser gods, humans and other beings. Just the Buddha when he walked the earth could enter the World of the Sense-Desire, so too can humans enter the World of Pure Form. This is ordinarily accomplished in meditation, through different kinds of absorptions (dhyana). The characteristic form of suffering in this situation is impermanence, caused by the meditator's inability to remain eternally in trance. To attain more abiding happiness, an individual must strive to understand the processes that govern movement in the cosmos as a whole, namely, rebirth and karma, and how they can be affected.

Human beings have countless sufferings. Suffering that produce by direct causes or suffering of misery, Including physical sufferings such as pain, old age, death; as well as mental anxieties. According to Most Venerable Piyadassi in "The Buddha's Ancient Path," all mental and bodily sufferings such as birth, aging, disease, death, association with the unloved, dissociation from the loved, not getting what one wants are the ordinary sufferings of daily life and are called Dukkha-Dukkhata. In the Four Noble Truths, Sakyamuni Buddha explained the eight basic causes of suffering. *The first suffering is the Suffering of Birth, or b*irth is suffering. If we did not have bodies, we would not feel pain and suffering. We experience all sorts of physical suffering

through our bodies. While still in the womb, human beings already have feelings and consciousness. They also experience pleasure and pain. When the mother eats cold food, the embryo feels as though it were packed in ice. When hot food is ingested, it feels as though it were burning, and so on. During pregnancy, the embryo, living as it is in a small, dark and dirty place; the mother loses her appetite and sleep, she often vomits and feels very weary. At birth, she suffers from hemorrhage or her life may be in danger in some difficult cases. From then on, all it can do is cry when it feels cold, hot, hungry, thirsty, or suffers insect bites. At the moment of birth, both mother and baby suffer. The mother may suffer from hemorrhage or her life may be in danger in some difficult cases. Sakyamuni Buddha in his wisdom saw all this clearly and in detail and therefore, described birth as suffering. The ancient sages had a saying in this regard:

"As soon as sentient beings escape one
Womb, they enter another,
Seeing this, sages and saints are deeply
Moved to such compassion!
The illusory body is really full of filth,
Swiftly escaping from it, we return to our
Original Nature."
(The Pure Land Buddhism in Theory and
Practice--Most Ven. Thích Thiền Tâm).

The second suffering is the suffering of old age (old age is suffering). We suffer when we are subjected to old age, which is natural. As we reach old age, human beings have diminished their faculties; our eyes cannot see clearly anymore, our ears have lost their acuity, our backs ache easily, our legs tremble, our eating is not easy and pleasurable as before, our memories fail, our skin dries out and wrinkles, hair becomes gray and white, their teeth ache, decay and fall out. We no longer have much control over our body. In old age, many persons become confused and mixed up when eating or dressing or they become uncontrollable of themselves. Their children and other family members, however close to them, soon grow tired and fed up. The human condition is like that of a flower, ruled by the law of impermanence, which, if it can bring beauty and fragrance, also carries death and decayin its wake. In truth, old age is nothing but suffering

and the human body has nothing worth cherishing. For this reason, Sakyamuni Buddha said: old age is suffering! Thus, he advised Buddhists to strive to cultivate so they can bear the sufferings of old age with equanimity. *The third suffering is the Suffering of Disease* (sickness) or sickness is suffering. The human body is only a temporary combination of the four elements: earth, water, fire, and wind. Once the four elements are not in balance, we become sick. Sicknesses cause both physical and mental pains and/or sufferings. To have a body is to have disease for the body is open to all kinds of diseases. So the suffering of disease is inevitable. Those with small ailments which have an external source to those dreadful diseases coming from inside. Some people are afflicted with incurable diseases such as cancers or delibitating ailments, such as osteoporosis, etc. In such condition, they not only experience physical pain, they also have to spend large sums of money for treatment. Should they lack the required funds, not only do they suffer, they create additional suffering for their families. The sufferings caused by diseases is more painful than the sufferings due to old age. Let imagine, even the slightest toothache or headache is sometimes unbearable. However, like or dislike, we have no choice but bearing the suffering of sickness. Even the Buddha, a perfect being, who had destroyed all defilements, had to endure physical suffering caused by disease. The Buddha was constantly subjectd to headaches. His last illness caused him much physical suffering was a wound in his foot. As a result of Devadatta's hurling a rock to kill him, his foot was wounded by splinter which necessiated an operation. When his disciples disobeyed his teachings, he was compelled to retire to a forest for three months. In a forest on a couch of leaves on a rough ground, facing fiercing cold winds, he maintained perfect equnimity. In pain and happiness, He lived with a balanced mind. *The fourth suffering is the Suffering of Death* or death is suffering. Birth leads inevitably to death. When a person dies, the four elements disperse and his psirit is dragged off by the karmic wind. Death entails undescribable suffering. All human beings desire an easy birth and a peaceful death; however, very few of us can fulfill these conditions. At the time of death, when the physical body is generally stricken by disease and in great pain. With the body in this state, the mind is panic-stricken, bemoaning the loss of wealth and property, and saddened by the impending separation

from loved ones as well as a multitude of similar thoughts. This is indeed suffering. Sentient beings are born with a cry of pain and die with even more pain. The death is unwanted, but it still comes, and nobody knows when it comes. As fruits fall from a tree, ripe or old even so we die in our infancy, prime of mankind, or old age. As the sun rises in the East only to set in the West. As Flowers bloom in the morning to fade in the evening. The Buddha taught: "Death is inevitable. It comes to all without exception; we have to cultivate so that we are able to face it with perfect equanimity." *The fifth suffering is the Suffering due to separation from loved ones* (parting with what we love). Parting with what we love is suffering. No one wants to be separated from the loved ones; however, this is inevitable. We still lose our loved ones to the demon of death, leaving them helpless and forsaken. Separation from loved ones, whether in life or through death, is indeed suffering. If we listen to the Buddha's teaching "All association in life must end with separation." Here is a good opportunity for us to practice "equanimity." *The sixth suffering is the suffering due to meeting with the uncongennial* (meeting with what we hate), or meeting with what we hate is suffering. People who get along well can work together without any conflict. But sometimes we may detest a person and want to get away from him. Yet, no matter where we go, we keep meeting up with him. The more we hate him, the more we run into him. This is also a form of psychological suffering. To endure those to whom we are opposed, whom we hate, who always shadow and slander us and look for a way to harm us is very hard to tolerate; however, we must confront this almost daily in our life. There are many families in which relatives are not of the same mind, and which are constantly beset with disputes, anger and acrimony. This is no different from encountering enemies. This is indeed suffering! Thus, the Buddha advised us to try to bear them, and think this way "perhaps we are reaping the effects of our karma, past or present." We should try to accommodate ourselves to the new situation or try to overcome the obstacles by some other means. *The seventh suffering is the suffering due to unfulfilled wishes* (unattained aims). The suffering of not obtaining what we want. If we seek something, we are greedy for it. If we cannot obtain what we want, we will experience all afflictions and sufferings. That is a kind of psychological suffering. Whether we

desire fame, profit, wealth, or sex, if we cannot obtain it, we suffer. Unabling to obtain what we wish is suffering: Our greed is like a container without the bottom. We have so many desires and hopes in our lives. When we want something and are able to get it, this does not often leads to happiness either because it is not long before we feel bored with that thing, lose interest in it and begin to want something else. In short, we never feel satisfied with what we have at the very moment. The poor hope to be rich; the rich hope to be richer; the ugly desire for beauty; the beauty desire for beautier; the childless pray for a son or daughter. Such wishes and hopes are innumerable that no way we can fulfill them. Even if we do obtain what we want, we will not feel happy. Before obtaining it, we are anxious to get it. Once we have got it, we constantly worry about losing it. Our mind is never peaceful or happy. We always feel uneasy. Thus, either obtaining what we wish or not obtaining what we wish is a source of suffering. When we want something but are unable to get it, we feel frustrated. When we expect someone to live or to work up to our expectation and they do not, we feel disappointed. When we want others like us and they don't, we feel hurt. *The eighth suffering is the suffering due to the raging aggregates* (all the ills of the five skandhas). The five skandhas are forms, feeling, thinking, formations, and consciousness. It is very difficult for us to overcome them. If we lack in meditation practices, it is extremely difficult for us to see their temporary nature. All the illnesses of the five skandhas is suffering. To have a body means to experience pain and diseases on a daily basis. Pain and disease also mean suffering. The five skandas or aggregates are form, feeling, perception, volition and consciousness. The skandas of form relates to the physical body, while the remaining four concern the mind. Simply speaking, this is the suffering of the body and the mind. The suffering of the skandas encompasses the seven kinds of suffering mentioned above. Our physical bodies are subject to birth, old age, disease, death, hunger, thirst, heat, cold and weariness. Our mind, on the other hand, are afflicted by sadness, anger, worry, love, hate and hundreds of other vexations. It once happened that Prince Siddhartha having strolled through the four gates of the city, witnessed the misfortunes of old age, disease and death. Endowed with profound wisdom, he was touched by

the suffering of human condition and left the royal palace to find the way of liberation.

The end of sufferings and affliction is the most important goal of Buddhism; however, this cannot be done through studying, but one must practice with your personal experiences. When we speak of the end of sufferings and afflictions in Buddhism, we mean the end of sufferings and afflictions in this very life, not waiting until a remote life. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that Nirvana in Buddhism is simply a place where there are no sufferings and afflictions. So if we can cultivate ourselves to eliminate sufferings and afflictions, we reach what we call "Nirvana in this very life." To end sufferings and afflictions, selfish desire must be removed. Just as a fire dies when no fuel is added, so unhappiness will end when the fuel of selfish desire is removed. When selfish desire is completely removed, our mind will be in a state of perfect peace. We shall be happy always. Buddhists call the state in which all suffering is ended "Nirvana". It is an everlasting state of great joy and peace. It is the greatest happiness in life. The Eightfold Path to the Cessation of Duhkha and afflictions, enumerated in the fourth Noble Truth, is the Buddha's prescription for the suffering experienced by all beings. It is commonly broken down into three components: morality, concentration and wisdom. Another approach identifies a path beginning with charity, the virtue of giving. Charity or generosity underlines morality or precept, which in turn enables a person to venture into higher aspirations. Morality, concentration and wisdom are the core of Buddhist spiritual training and are inseparably linked. They are not merely appendages to each other like petals of a flower, but are intertwined like "salt in great ocean," to invoke a famous Buddhist simile.

Chapter Seven

The Five Turbidities in the Evil Saha World Cause Sentient Beings Being Drifted Up and Down with Overloaded Misfortunes in the Ocean of Life & Death

Truly speaking, according to Buddhism, sentient beings, especially human beings are living with ignorance and innumerable sufferings in the ocean of life and death. According to Buddhist point of view, human's life in the ocean of life and death means the present birth which is brought about by the craving and clinging karma-volition (tanha-upadana) of past births, and the craving and clinging acts of will of the present birth bring about future rebirth. According to Buddhism, it is this karma-volition that divides beings into high and low. In short, craving and clinging karma-volition (tanha-upadana) themselves have been causing sentient beings to keep swirling in the cycle of the sixth paths of birth and death or the drifting up and down with overloaded misfortunes in the ocean of life and death keeps going endlessly around the five turbidities of the evil world, where beings repeat cycles of birth and death according to the law of karma. In other words, the five turbidities in the evil saha world with the help of craving and clinging karma-volition cause sentient beings being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortunes in the ocean of life and death.

What happens to us after death? Buddhism teaches that we remain for some time in the state of intermediate existence in this world after death, and when this time is over, in accordance with the karma that we have accumulated in our previous life, we are reborn in another appropriate world. Buddhism also divides this other world into the following realms: hell, hungry ghosts, animals, demons, human beings, heavens, sravakas, pratyeka-buddhas, bodhisattvas, and buddhas. If we die in an unenlightened state, our minds (consciousnesses) will return to the former state of ignorance, and we will be reborn in the six worlds of illusion and suffering, and will again reach old age and death through the stages mentioned above. And we will repeat this round over and over to an indefinite time. This perpetual repetition of birth

and death is called "Transmigration." But if we purify our minds by hearing the Buddha's teachings and practicing the Bodhisattva-way, the state of ignorance is annihilated and our minds can be reborn in a better world. So, whether the world is Samsara or Nirvana depends entirely on our state of mind. If our mind is enlightened, then this world is Nirvana; if our mind is unenlightened, then this world is Samsara. Thus, the Buddha taught: "For those who strive to cultivate, samsara is Nirvana, Nirvana is samsara." For devout Buddhists, whether the world is Samsara or Nirvana depends entirely on our state of mind. If our mind is enlightened, then this world is Nirvana; if our mind is unenlightened, then this world is Samsara. As a matter of fact, for those who strive to cultivate, samsara is Nirvana, Nirvana is samsara. Devout Buddhists should also always remember that born and reborn endlessly around the six paths of birth and death, when impermanence surges, we must let go everything.

What are the five turbidities of the evil world? These are five corruptions (five turbidities, defilements, depravities), or five stages of a world existence. In the Surangama Sutra, book Four, the Buddha reminded Ananda about the five turbidities as follows: "Ananda! While you are in your body, what is solid is of earth, what is moist is of water, what is warm is of fire, and what moves is of wind. Because of these four bonds, your tranquil and perfect, wonderfully enlightened bright mind divides into seeing, hearing, sensation, and cognition. From beginning to end there are the five layers of turbidity. What is meant by 'turbidity?' Ananda! Pure water, for instance, is fundamentally clear and clean, whereas dust, dirt, ashes, silt, and the like, are basically solid substances. Such are the properties of the two; their natures are not compatible. Suppose, then, that an ordinary person takes some dirt and tosses it into the pure water. The dirt loses its solid quality and the water is deprived of its transparency. The cloudiness which results is called 'turbidity.' Your five layers of turbidity are similar to it."

First, the Kalpa Turbidity: Life is turbid or this Saha world is filled with impurity. The defilement of the life-span decreases when the human life-span as a whole decreases. In the Surangama Sutra, book Four, the Buddha explained to Ananda about the kalpa turbidity as follows: "Ananda! You see that emptiness pervades the ten directions. There is no division between emptiness and seeing. However, although

emptiness has no substance and your seeing has no awareness, the two become entangled in a falseness. This is the first layer, called the turbidity of time. Also, in the Surangama Sutra, book Nine, the Buddha taught Ananda about how to transcend the kalpa turbidity as follows: "Ananda! You should know that as a cultivator sits in the Bodhimanda, he is doing away with all thoughts. When his thoughts come to an end, there will be nothing in his mind. This state of pure clarity will stay the same whether in movement or stillness, in remembrance or forgetfulness. When he dwells in this place and enters samadhi, he is like a person with clear vision who finds himself in total darkness. Although his nature is wonderfully pure, his mind is not yet illuminated. This is the region of the form skandha. If his eyes become clear, he will then experience the ten directions as an open expanse, and the darkness will be gone. This is the end of the form skandha. He will then be able to transcend the turbidity of kalpas. Contemplating the cause of the form skandha, one sees that false thoughts of solidity are its source.

Second, the View Turbidity or the Turbidity of View: Turbidity of view means all different views, perceptions, and knowledge of sentient beings that are based on false conceptions. They are gossip, competition, fame, self, egotism, right, wrong, etc. View turbid (false and evil views) or the defilement of views, or perverse thoughts. The five higher wholesome deeds: no greed, no hatred (hate), no stupidity, nor pride nor arrogance, and no doubt. In the Surangama Sutra, book Four, the Buddha explained to Ananda about the turbidity of views as follows: "Ananda! Your body appears in full, with the four elements composing its substance, and from this, seeing, hearing, sensation, and cognition become firmly defined. Water, fire, wind, and earth fluctuate between sensation and cognition and become entangled in a falseness. This is the second layer, called the turbidity of views. Also, in the Surangama Sutra, book Nine, the Buddha taught Ananda about the transcendency of the affliction turbidity as follows: "Ananda! When the good person who is cultivating samadhi and samatha has put an end to the form skandha, he can see the mind of all Buddhas as if seeing an image reflected in a clear mirror. He seems to have obtained something, but he cannot use it. In this he resembles a paralyzed person. His hands and feet are intact, his seeing and hearing are not

distorted, and yet his mind has come under a deviant influence, so that he is unable to move. This is the region of the feeling skandha. Once the problem of paralysis subsides, his mind can then leave his body and look back upon his face. It can go or stay as it pleases without further hindrance. This is the end of the feeling skandha. This person can then transcend the turbidity of views. Contemplating the cause of the feeling skandha, one sees that false thoughts of illusory clarity are its source.

Third, the Affliction Turbidity, Turbidity of Affliction: Turbidity of affliction means sentient beings are constantly plagued with afflictions, worries, anger, vengeance, false views, etc. All such impure thoughts consume their minds and bodies, but kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity are very rare. Thus, they cause one another innumerable afflictions. The Affliction Turbidity or affliction turbid (constantly in turmoil). The defilement of passions, when all kinds of transgressions are exalted. Five dull, unintelligent, or stupid vices or temptations or five envoys of stupidity caused by the illusion of the body or self: greed, anger, stupidity, arrogance, and doubt. In the Surangama Sutra, book Four, the Buddha explained to Ananda about the the affliction turbidity as follows: "Ananda! Further, the functions of memory, discrimination, and verbal comprehension in your mind bring into being knowledge and views. From out of them appear the six defiling objects. Apart from the defiling objects there are no appearances. Apart from cognition they have no nature. But they become entangled in a falseness. This is the third layer, called the turbidity of afflictions." Also, in the Surangama Sutra, book Nine, the Buddha taught Ananda about the transcendency of the affliction turbidity as follows: "Ananda! When the good person who is cultivating samadhi has put an end to the feeling skandha, although he has not achieved freedom from outflows, his mind can leave his body the way a bird escapes from a cage. From within his ordinary, he already has the potential for ascending through the Bodhisattvas' sixty levels of sagehood. He attains the 'body produced by intent' and can roam freely without obstruction. This is like someone talking in his sleep. Although he does not know he is doing it, his words are clear, and his voice and inflection are all in order, so those who are awake can understand what he is saying. This is the region of the thinking skandha. If he puts an end to his stirring thoughts and rids himself of superfluous thinking, it is as if he has

purged defilement from the enlightened, understanding mind. Then he is perfectly clear about the births and deaths of all categories of beings from beginning to end. This is the end of the thinking skandha. He can then transcend the turbidity of afflictions. Contemplating the cause of the thinking skandha, one sees that interconnected false thoughts are its source.

Fourth, the Living Beings Turbidity, or Turbidity of Sentient Beings: The Living Beings Turbidity or sentient beings turbid; everyone is filled with greed, hatred, ignorance, egoism, skepticism, etc. The defilement of human condition, people are always dissatisfied and unhappy. The period where all creatures are stupid and unclean. In the Surangama Sutra, book Four, the Buddha explained to Ananda about the turbidity of living beings as follows: "Ananda! And then day and night there is endless production and extinction as your knowledge and views continually wish to remain in the world, while your karmic patterns constantly move you to various places. This entanglement becomes a falseness, which is the fourth layer, called the turbidity of living beings." Also in the Surangama Sutra, book Nine, the Buddha taught Ananda about the transcendcy of the turbidity of living beings as follows: "Ananda! When the good person who is cultivating samadhi has put an end to the thinking skandha, he is ordinarily free of dreaming and idle thinking, so he stays the same whether in wakefulness or in sleep. His mind is aware, clear, empty, and still, like a cloudless sky, devoid of any coarse sense-impressions. he Contemplates everything in the world, the mountains, the rivers, and the earth, as reflections in a mirror, appearing without attachment and vanishing without any trace; they are simply received and reflected. He does away with all his old habits, and only the essential truth remains. From this point on, as the origin of production and destruction is exposed, he will completely see all the twelve categories of living beings in the ten directions. Although he has not fathomed the source of their individual lives, he will see that they share a common basis of life, which appears as a mirage, shimmering and fluctuating, and is the ultimate, pivotal point of the illusory sense faculties and sense objects. This is the region of the formations skandha. Once the basic nature of this shimmering fluctuation returns to its original clarity, his habits will cease, like waves subsiding to become clear, calm water. This is the end of the formations skandha. This person will then be able to transcend the turbidity of living beings.

Contemplating the cause of the formations skandha, one sees that subtle and hidden false thoughts are its source.

Fifth, the Life Turbidity, or Turbidity of Life (physical body): The Life Turbidity, or body turbid (body of impurity). The defilement of the world-age, when war and natural disasters are rife. Human lifetime gradually diminishes to ten years. Furthermore, the body is the accumulation of the four elements of earth, water, fire, and air, wrapped around a thin layer of skin masking the internal wreaking odors of the flesh, blood, bone, phlegm and other bodily secretions, and upon death, becomes rotten and eaten by worms. In fact, it becomes so disgusting that no one dare to go near. In the Surangama Sutra, book Four, the Buddha explained to Ananda about the life turbidity as follows: "Ananda! Originally, your seeing and hearing were not different natures, but a multitude of defiling objects has divided them until suddenly they became different. Their natures have a mutual awareness, but their functions are in opposition. Sameness and difference arise and they lose their identity. This entanglement becomes a falseness, which is the fifth layer, called the turbidity of a lifespan." Also, in the Surangama Sutra, book Nine, the Buddha taught Ananda about the transcendency of the turbidity of life span as follows: "Ananda! When that good person, in cultivating samadhi, has put an end to the formations skandha, the subtle, fleeting fluctuations, the deep, imperceptible, pivotal source and the common foundation from which all life in the world springs, are suddenly obliterated. In the submerged network of the retributive karma of the pudgala, the karmic resonances are interrupted. There is about to be a great illumination in the sky of Nirvana. It is like gazing east at the cock's final crow to see the light of dawn. The six sense faculties are empty and still; there is no further racing about. Inside and outside there is a profound brightness. He enters without entering. Fathoming the source of life of the twelve categories of beings throughout the ten directions, he can contemplate that source without being drawn into any of the categories. He has become identical with with the realms of the ten directions. The light does not fade, and what was hidden before is now revealed. This is the region of the consciousness skandha. If he has become identical with the beckoning masses, he may obliterate the individuality of the six gates and succeed in uniting and opening them. Seeing and hearing become linked so that they function interchangeably and purely. The worlds of the ten directions and his own body and mind are as bright and transparent as vaidurya. This is the end of the consciousness skamdha. This person can then transcend the turbidity of life span. Contemplating the cause of the consciousness skandha, one sees that the negation of existence and the negation of non-existence are both unreal, and that upside-down false thoughts are its source.

Chapter Eight

External States or Objects That Causes Sentient Beings Being Drifted Up and Down in the Ocean of Life and Death with Overloaded Misfortunes

A prospect, region, territory, surroundings, views, circumstances, environment, area, field, sphere, environments and conditions, i.e. the sphere of mind, the sphere of form for the eye, of sound for the ear, etc. External realms are realms which are not created by the mind, but come from the outside. A prospect, region, territory, surroundings, views, circumstances, environment, area, field, sphere, environments and conditions, i.e. the sphere of mind, the sphere of form for the eye, of sound for the ear, etc. If you can remain unperturbed by external states, then you are currently cultivating. On the contrary, if you are turned by external states, then you will fall. This can be considered one of the major causes that lead beings keep drifting in the path of birth-death and rebirth. In other words, external states or objects that cause sentient beings being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortunes in the ocean of life and death.

External states are also external conditions or circumstances which stir or tempt one to do evil. Problems and dissatisfaction do not develop because of external conditions, but from our own mind. If we don't have internal peace, nothing from outside can bring us happiness. According to the Mind-Only theories, different realms mean the ideas, or mental states which arise according to the various objects or conditions toward which the mind is directed. According to the Fa-Hsiang School, this group of elements falls under the general category of "mental function" which has five elements: desire, verification, recollection, meditation, and wisdom. According to Lama Anarika Govinda, the Buddhist as well as a Zen practitioner does not believe in an independent or separate existing external world into those dynamic forces, he could insert himself. The external world and his internal world are for him only two sides of the same fabric, in which threads of all force and of all events, of all forms of consciousness and of their

objects are woven into an inseparable net of endless, mutually conditioned relations.

External realms are realms which are not created by the mind, but come from the outside. For example, some practitioners might see Buddhas and Bodhisattvas appearing before them, preaching the Dharma, exhorting and praising them. Others, while reciting the Buddha's name, suddenly experience an awakening and immediately see the Land of Ultimate Bliss. Some practitioners, in the midst of their pure recitation, see deities and Immortals arrive, join hands and circumambulate them respectfully, or invite them for a leisurely stroll. Still other practitioners see "wandering souls of the dead" arrive, seeking to take refuge with them. Yet others, having reached a high level in their practice, have to endure challenges and harassment from external demons. In case of seeing the Buddhas and lotus blossoms is it not to see demonic apparitions? If cause and effect coincide, these are not "demonic realms." This is because the Pure Land method belongs to the Dharma Door of Existence; when Pure Land practitioners first develop the Bodhi Mind, they enter the Way through forms and marks and seek to view the celestial scenes of the Western Pure Land. When they actually witness these auspicious scenes, it is only a matter of effects corresponding to causes. If cause and effect are in accord, how can these be "demonic realms?" In the Zen School, on the other hand, the practitioner enters the Way through the Dharma Door of Emptiness. Right from the beginning of his cultivation, he wipes out all marks, even the marks of the Buddhas or the Dharma are destroyed. The Zen practitioner does not seek to view the Buddhas or the lotus blossoms, yet the marks of the Buddhas or the lotus blossoms appear to him. Therefore, cause and effect do not correspond. For something to appear without a corresponding cause is indeed the realm of the demons. Thus, the Zen practitioner always holds the sword of wisdom aloft. If the demons come, he kills the demons; if the Buddha comes, he kills the Buddha, to enter the realm of True Emptiness is not to tolerate a single mark.

According to the Dharmalaksana, the objects of the outer world (visaya), which throw shadows on the mind-face are of three kinds. The theory of three kinds of the object-domain may have originated from

Nalanda, but the four-line memorial verse current in the school is probably of Chinese origin. It runs as follow:

"The object of nature does not follow the mind (subjective).
The subject may be good or evil,
But the object is always neutral.
The mere shadow only follows the seeing (subjective).
The object is as the subject imagines.
The object with the original substance.
The character, seed, etc, are various as occasions require.
The object has an original substance,
But the subject does not see it as it is."

This four-line verse explains how the three kinds of the object-domain are related to the subjective function and the outer original substance. One may be puzzled in understanding how an idealism can have the so-called original substance. We should not forget that though it is an outer substance it is after all a thing manifested out of ideation. The eighth, the Alaya-consciousness itself, is not an unchangeable fixed substance (dravya), but is itself ever changing instantaneously (ksanika) and repeatedly; and, being 'perfumed' or having impressions made upon it by cognition and action, it becomes habituated and efficient in manifestation. It is like a current of water which never stops at one place for two consecutive moments. It is only with reference to the continuity of the stream that we can speak of a river. Let examine these three kinds of object-domain. First, Object domain of nature or immediate perception. The object that has the original substance and presents it as it is, just as the five objects of the sense, form, sound, smell, taste and touch, are perceived as they are. The first five sense-consciousnesses and the eighth, the store-consciousness, perceive the object in this way. Second, Object-domain with the original substance. The object has an original substance and yet is not perceived as it is. When the seventh, the thought-center, looks at the subjective function of the eighth, the store-center, it considers that it is self or ego. The subjective function of the eighth, the store-center, has its original substance or entity, but it is not seen as it is by the seventh consciousness and is regarded to be self or an abiding ego, which is in reality an illusion since it is not self at all. Third, Object-domain of mere shadow or illusion. The shadow-image appears simply from one's

own imagination and has no real existence. Of course, it has no original substance as a ghost which does not exist at all. Only the six sense-center, functions on it and imagines it to be.

Meditation practice not only helps our mental intelligence or spirit of mind be no longer troublesome with external things, but also helps practitioners reducing chances of drifting in the six paths. Whether something objective is troublesome or not often depends on the state of mind rather than the object itself. If we think that it is trouble, then it is trouble. If we do not think that it is trouble, then it is not trouble. Everything depends on the mind. For example, sometimes during meditation we are interrupted by outside noises. If we dwell on them and cling to them, they will disturb our meditation, but if we dismiss them from our minds as soon as they arise, then they will not cause a disturbance. If we are always demanding something out of our life, then we will never be content. But if we accept life as it is, then we know contentment. Some people seek happiness through material things; other people can be happy without many material things. Why? Because happiness is also a state of mind, not a quantitive measure of possessions. If we are satisfied with what we are and have now, then we are happy. But if we are not satisfied with what we are and have now, that is where unhappiness dwells. The desire is bottomless, because no matter how much is put into it, it can never be filled up, it always remains empty. The Sutra in Forty-Two Chapters taught: “Though a person filled with desires dwells in heaven, still that is not enough for him; though a person who has ended desire dwells on the ground, still he is happy.”

Chapter Nine

Internal Realms Are Major Agents That Keep Sentient Beings Drifting in the Ocean of Life and Death with Overloaded Misfortunes

Internal realms are also called “realms of the Self-Mind” because they do not come from outside, but develop from the mind. Those who do not clearly understand the truth that “the ten thousand dharmas are created by the mind,” think that all realms come from the outside. This is wrong and this is also one of the major causes that lead beings keep drifting in the path of birth-death and rebirth. When the practitioner reaches the stage of mutual interpenetration of mind and realms, completely severing external conditions, the seeds of latent dharmas in the Alaya consciousness suddenly manifest themselves. For the Buddha Recitation or mantra-chanting practitioner, the power of the Buddha's name or the mantra penetrates deep into the mind, eliciting a reaction from the wholesome or evil seeds in the Alaya consciousness. The realms that result are very complex and usually appear in dreams, or even when the practitioner is awake and striving to recite the Buddha’s name. In Buddhism, this condition is called “Changing manifestations of the Alaya consciousness.” In the dreaming scenes, if the events or scenes result from evil seeds, the practitioner may see various species of worms crawling out of his body, or witness himself, night after night, removing from his body six or seven loathsome creatures with many limbs, such as scorpions or centipedes. Or else, he may see various species of wild animals and or spirits or ghosts. Such realms are innumerable and cannot al be described. In genral, individuals greatly afflicted with greed, who are miserly and wicked, usually see marks of men and women, snakes and serpents and odd species with white features and forms. Those harboring a great deal of anger and resentment usually see tigers and leopards or strange species with red forms and features. Those who are heavily deluded usually see domestic animals, clams, oysters, snails or different species with black forms and features. The above, however, is merely indicative; it

does not mean that everything will be exactly as described. If the scenes in his dream come from good wholesome seeds, the practitioner sees tall trees and exotic flowers, beautiful scenery, bright adorned with nets of pearls. Or else, he sees himself eating succulent, fragrant food, wearing ethereal garments, dwelling in palaces of diamonds and other precious substances, or flying high in open space. Thus, in summary, all the seeds of the ten Dharma Realms are found in the minds of sentient beings. If wholesome seeds manifest themselves, practitioners view the realms of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, human, and celestial beings; if evil karma is manifested, they witness scenes from the wretched three Evil Paths and scenes of being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortunes in the ocean of life and death. If the cultivator has followed externalist ways in past lives, he usually sees his body emitting electric waves, or his soul leaving the body to roam, meeting demons, ghosts and the like, to discuss politics and the rise and fall of countries and empires. On the other hand, when the practitioner's mind is pure, he will know in his dreams about events that will occur three or fours days, or seven or eight months, hence. In general, those who have cultivated in previous lives will immediately see auspicious realms when reciting the Buddha's name. Those with heavy karma, lacking merit and virtue, will usually see evil realms when they begin Buddha Recitation. In time, these evil omens will disappear and gradually be replaced with auspicious omens. If the practitioner's efforts have reached a high level, there are times during his walking hours when all deluded feelings suddenly cease for a while, body and mind being at ease and free. At other times, the practitioner may recite for four or five hours but feel that the time was very short, perhaps two or three minutes. Or else, at times during recitation, wholesome omens will appear. At other times, unconsciously, his mind experiences great contentment and bliss. Sometimes, he realizes for a split second that mind and realm are both empty. At other times, just by hearing or seeing something once, he becomes awakened to the truth of suffering, emptiness, impermanence and No-Self, completely severing the marks of self and others. These occurrences are too numerous to be fully described! Visionary scenes such as the above, called "internal realms" or "realms of the Self-Mind," have their origin in a thought of peace and stillness, or are

caused by wholesome seeds generated by Buddha or Mantra Recitation. They appear suddenly and are lost immediately. The practitioner should not be attached to them, thinking that they are real, nor should he remember them fondly. It is an extreme mistake to develop nostalgia for them, thinking how ethereal, calm and peaceful, beautiful and well-adorned they were, they day-dream about them, unable to forget them, longing for their reappearance. The ancients have criticized such thoughts as "scratching in advance and waiting for the itch." This is because these scenes have their origin in diligent exertion and appear temporarily. They have no true existence. We should realize that when the practitioner exerts a certain level of efforts, the scenes and features particular to that level will appear naturally. Take the example of a traveller who views different scenery as he passes along various stretches of the road. If he has not reached home, yet develops such an attachment and fondness for a particular scene along the road that he refuses to proceed, his travel will be impeded. He will then be helplessly lost in the midst of his journey, not knowing when he will finally return home to rest. The practitioner is like that traveller; if he becomes attached to and fond of temporary realms and scenes, he will never attain the true realms. Were he to dream of them to the point of insanity, he would be destroyed by demons and waste an entire lifetime of practice! The Diamond Sutra states: "Everything in this world that has marks is illusory; to see marks as not marks is to see the Tathagata." Everything that has marks refers here to compounded, conditioned dharmas. Tose marks canot be said either to exist or not to exist, or to be true or false. Delusion arises precisely because unenlightened sentient beings discriminate, become attached and think that these marks exist or do not exist are real or are false. Even the fondness which some Zen practitioners develop for samadhi, upon entering concentration and experiencing this immense, empty, still, transparent, peaceful and free realm, falls into the category of "having marks." The same is true when these practitioners, once awakened to a certain lofty, transcendental principle, joyfully grasp at it. Once there are marks, there is delusion. "To see marks" means to see such marks as auspicious or evil, good or bad, dirty or clean, existent or non-existent, Buddha or sentient beings, even the realms of the Five Skandas or the Six Dusts, etc. "As not marks" means

seeing but neither becoming attached to nor rejecting them, just letting everything be. Why should we not reject them? It is because makrs, while illusory, are not non-existent. This is not unlike the reflection of the moon in the water. Although the reflected moon is not real, this does not mean that there is no illusory mark of moonlight. Therefore, if we see marks appear while we are cultivating, we should disregard them and redouble our efforts, just like the traveller, who views varied scenery en route but must push forward to reach home quickly. "To see the Tathagata" is to see the original Buddha Nature, to see the Way.

In summary, all states of mind, from those described above to the state of one-pointedness of mind, belong to the category of "internal realms." These realms have two aspects: "Attainment-like" and "Partial attainment." "Attainment-like" realms appear temporarily and disappear immediately. "Partial attainment" realms are those that once achieved, we have forever, because we have actually attained a part of True Thusness. Regardless of whether it is internal or external, if it is "attainment-like" it is not a True Realm; it is merely a full understanding of some of the manifestations of the True Mind. Practitioners who truly seek liberation should not confuse these aspects, taking attainment-like marks for the True Realm. Attainment-like marks are like a dark, leaden sky which suddenly clears, thanks to the winds which temporarily push away the dark clouds, letting a few rays of sunlight through before the sky becomes overcast again. They also resemble the "mark" of smoke just before the fire that people used to get when they rubbed two pieces of wood together. The True Realm can be likened to the bright sunlight in a clear and calm sky. It is like rubbing pieces of wood together and already having fire. However, we should not underestimate attainment-like marks, as they demonstrate the genuine existence of the True Realm. If, from that level, we diligently redouble our efforts, the True Realm is not that far away after all. Buddhist practitioners, especially lay people, should always remember that born and reborn endlessly in the the ocean of life and death, when impermanence surges, we must let go everything. In other words, internal realms are major agents that keep sentient beings being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortunes in the ocean of life and death. Meditation practice not only helps our mental intelligence or spirit of mind be no longer troublesome with internal things, but also helps practitioners reducing chances of drifting in the path of birth-death and rebirth.

Chapter Ten

Six Poisonous Robbers That Always Cause Beings to Be Sinking and Being Drifted Up and Down in the Ocean of Birth & Death

I. An Overview of the Six Poisonous Robbers That Always Lead Sentient Beings Going Around in the Ocean of Birth & Death:

According to Buddhism, there are six poisonous robbers that always lead sentient beings going around in the ocean of birth and death. These are six senses or six sense organs are the match-makers, or medial agents of the six robbers. They are six objects or objects of six organs of sense, i.e. sight or visible objects, sounds, smell, taste, touch, and idea, thought, or mental objects. The six robbers are also likened to the six pleasures of the six sense organs. Six bases of mental activities comprise of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. For Buddhist practitioners, the only way to prevent them is by not acting with them: The eye avoiding beauty, the ear avoiding melodious sound, the nose avoiding fragrant scent, the tongue avoiding tasty flavour, the body avoiding seductions, and the mind should always control thoughts. Besides the above-mentioned way of prevention, according to Bikkhu Piyananda in The Gems of Buddhism Wisdom, you must always be aware of the sense organs such as eye, ear, nose, tongue and body and the contact they are having with the outside world. You must be aware of the feelings that are arising as a result of this contact: eye is now in contact with forms (rupa), ear is now in contact with sound, nose is now in conatct with smell, tongue is now in contact with taste, body is now in contact with touching, and mind is now in contact with all things (dharma). Practitioners should always try to purify the six senses. The six organs and their purification in order to develop their unlimited power and interchange (in the case of Buddha). This full development enables the eye to see everything in a great chiliocosm from its highest heaven down to its lowest hells and all the beings past, present, and future with all the karma of each. Finally, practitioners should also supply enough healthy food for the six senses. In other words, food for six bases of mental activities: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. Food for the eyes is the sleep; for the ears is the sound; for the nose is the smell; for the tongue is the taste; for the body is the smooth touch; and for the mind is the dharma. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that the six senses or six

organs of sense are likened to six wild creatures in confinement and always struggling to escape. Only when they are domesticated will they be happy. So is it with the six senses and the taming power of Buddha-truth.

II. Six Entrances Are the Six Poisonous Robbers That Lead Sentient Beings Going Around the Cycle of Birth-Death and Rebirth in the Ocean of Birth & Death:

"Entrance" is one of the links in the chain of causation. According to Buddhism, six entrances themselves are six doors leading to the path of birth-death and rebirth. However, in Buddhist cultivation, cultivation on eliminating of six poisonous robbers, it is to say, the elimination of the six entrances to the sis faculties of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and perception), also means to close six doors that cause beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down in the ocean of life and death. According to the Surangama Sutra, book Three, the Buddha reminded Ananda about the six entrances as follows: "Ananda! Why do I say the six entrances have their origin in the wonderful nature of true suchness, the treasury of the Thus Come One?" *The first entrance is the Eye-Entrance:* Ananda! Although the eye's staring causes fatigue, the eye and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Staring gives rise to the characteristic of fatigue. Because a sense of seeing is stimulated in the midst of the two false, defiling objects of light and dark, defiling appearances are taken in; this is called the nature of seeing. Apart from the two defiling objects of light and dark, this seeing is ultimately without substance. Thus, Ananda, you should know that seeing does not come from light or dark, nor does it come forth from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness. Why? If it came from light, then it would be extinguished when it is dark, and you would not see darkness. If it came from darkness, then it would be extinguished when it is light, and you would not see light. Suppose it came from the sense organ, which is obviously devoid of light and dark, a nature of seeing such as this would have no self-nature. Suppose it came forth from emptiness. When it looks in front of you, it sees the shapes of the defiling dust; turning around, it would see your sense-organ. Moreover, if it were emptiness itself which sees, what connection would that have with your entrance? Therefore, you should know that the eye enance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence nor is spontaneous in nature. *The second entrance is the Ear Entrance:* Ananda! Consider, for example, a person who suddenly stops up his ears with two fingers. Because the sense-organ of hearing has become fatigued, a sound is heard in his head. However, both the ears and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Because a sense of hearing is stimulated in the midst of the two false, defiling

objects of movement and stillness, defiling appearances are taken; this is called the nature of hearing. Apart from the two defiling objects of movement and stillness, this hearing is ultimately without substance. Thus, Ananda, you know that hearing does not come from movement and stillness; nor does it come from the sense-organ, nor is it produced from emptiness. Why? If it came from stillness, it would be extinguished when there is movement, and you would not hear movement. If it came from movement, then it would be extinguished when there is stillness, and you would not be aware of this stillness. Suppose it came from the sense-organ, which is obviously devoid of movement and stillness: a nature of hearing such as this would have no self-nature. Suppose it came from emptiness; emptiness would then become hearing and would no longer be emptiness. Moreover, would it have with your entrance? Therefore, you should know that the ear-entrance is empty and false, since it neother depends upon causes and conditions for existence, nor is spontaneous in nature. *The third entrance is the Nose Entrance:* Ananda! Consider, for example, a person who inhales deeply through his nose. After he has inhaled for a long time, it becomes fatigued, and then there is a sensation of cold in the nose. Because of that sensation, there are the distinctions of penetration and obstruction, of emptiness and actuality, and so forth, including all fragrant and stinking vapors. However, both the nose and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Because a sense of smelling is stimulated in the midst of the two false, defiling objects of penetration and obstruction, defiling appearances are taken in; this is called the nature of smelling. Apart from the two defiling objects of penetration and obstruction, this smelling is ultimately without substance. You should know that smelling does not come from penetration and obstruction, nor does it come forth from the sense-organ, nor is it produced from emptiness. Why? If it came from penetration, the smelling would be extinguished when there is obstruction, and then how could it experience obstruction? If it existed because of obstruction, then where there is penetration there would be no smelling; in that case, how would the awareness of fragrance, stench, and other such sensations come into being? Suppose it came from the sense organ, which is obviously devoid of penetration and obstruction. A nature of smelling such as this would have no self-nature. Suppose it came from emptiness; smelling itself would turn around and smell your own nose. Moreover, if it were emptiness itself which smelled, what connection would it have with your entrance? Therefore, you should know that the nose-entrance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence nor is spontaneous in nature. *The fourth entrance is the Tongue Entrance:* Ananda! Consider, for example, a person who licks his lips with his tongue. His excessive licking causes fatigue. If the person is sick, there will be a bitter flavor; a person who is not sick will have a

subtle sweet sensation. Sweetness and biterness demonstrate the tongue's sense of taste. When the organ is inactive, a sense of tastelessness prevails. However, both the tongue and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Because of the two defiling objects of sweetness and bitterness, as well as tastelessness, stimulate a recognition of taste which in turn draws in these defiling sensations, it becomes what is known as a sense of taste. Apart from the two defiling objects of sweetnes and bitterness and apart from tastelessness, the sense of taste is originally without a substance. Thus, Ananda, you should know that the perception of sweetness, bitterness, and tastelessness does not come from sweetness or bitterness, nor does it exist because of tastelessness, nor does it arise from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness. Why? If it came from sweetness and bitterness, it would cease to exist when tastelessness was experienced, so how could it recognize tastelessness? If it arose from tastelessness, it would vanish when the flavor of sweetness was tasted, so how could it perceive the two flavors, sweet and bitter? Suppose it came from the tongue which is obviously devoid of defiling objects sweetness and bitternes and of tastelessness. An essence of tasting such as this would have no self-nature. Suppose it came from emptiness; the sense of taste would be experienced by emptiness instead of by the mouth. Suppose, moreover, that it was emptiness itself which tasted, what connection would that have with your entrance? Therefore, you should know that the tongue entrance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence, nor is it spontaneous in nature. *The fifth entrance is the Body Entrance:* Ananda! Consider, for example, a person who touches his warm hand with his cold hand. If the cold is in excess of warmth, the warm hand will become cold; if the warmth is in excess of the cold, his cold hand will become warm. So, the sensation of warmth and cold is felt through the contact and separation of the two hands. Fatiguing contact results in the interpenetration of warmth and cold. However, both the body and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Because a physical sensation is stimulated in the midst of the two defiling objects of separation and union, defiling appearances are taken in; this is called the awareness of sensation. Apart from the two sets of defiling objects of separation and union, and pleasantness and unpleasantness, the awareness of sensation is orginally without a substance. Thus, Ananda, you should know that this sensation does not come from separation and union, nor does it exist because of pleasantness and unpleasantness, nor does it arise from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness. Why? If it arose when there was union, it would disappear when there was separation, so how could it sense the separation? The two characteristics of pleasantness and unpleasantness are the same way. Suppose it came from the sense organ, which is obviously devoid of the four characteristics of union, separation, pleasantness, and

unpleasantness; an awareness of physical sensation such as this would have no self- nature. Suppose it came from emptiness; the awareness of sensations would be experienced by emptiness itself, what connection would that have with your entrance? Therefore, you should know that the body-entrance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence, nor is spontaneous in nature. *The sixth entrance is the Mind Entrance:* Ananda! Consider, for example, a person who becomes so fatigued that he goes to sleep. Having slept soundly, he awakens and tries to recollect what he experienced while asleep. He recalls some things and forgets others. Thus, his upsidedownness goes through production, dwelling, change, and extinction, which are taken in and returned to a center habitually, each following the next without ever being over taken. This is known as the mind organ or intellect. The mind and fatigue are both Bodhi. The two defiling objects of production and extinction stimulate a sense of knowing which in turn grasps these inner sense data, reversing the flow of seeing and hearing. Before the flow reaches the ground, it is known as the faculty of intellect. Apart from the two sets of dwelling objects of waking and sleeping and of production and extinction, the faculty of intellect is originally without substance. Thus, Ananda, you should know that the faculty of intellect does not come from waking, sleeping, production, or extinction, nor does it arise from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness. Why? If it came from waking, it would disappear at the time of sleeping, so how could it experience sleep? If it came from production, it would cease to exist at the time of extinction, so how could it undergo extinction? If it came from extinction it would disappear at the time of production, so how could it know about production? Suppose it came from the sense-organ; waking and sleeping cause only a physical opening and closing respectively. Apart from these two movements, the faculty of intellect is as unsubstantial as flowers in space, because it is fundamentally without a self-nature. Suppose it came from emptiness; the sense of intellect would be experienced by emptiness instead of by the mind. Then what connection would that have with your entrance? Therefore, you should know that the mind entrance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence, nor is spontaneous in nature.

III. Six Sense-Organs Can Lead Beings to Birth-Death and Rebirth in the Ocean of Birth & Death; But These Very Six Senses Can Also Bring Beings to Emancipation:

In Buddhist cultivation, cultivation on eliminating of six poisonous robbers also means to close six doors that cause beings to be sinking and being drifted

up and down in the ocean of life and death. As a matter of fact, six sense-organs can lead beings to birth-death and rebirth; but these very six senses can also bring beings to emancipation. Six sense-organs can lead beings to birth-death and rebirth, but these very six sens-organs can help practice the right way and bring beings to emancipation. Six bases of mental activities: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that the six senses or six organs of sense are likened to six wild creatures in confinement and always struggling to escape. Only when they are domesticated will they be happy. So is it with the six senses and the taming power of Buddha-truth. In daily life, people need to eat to survive, sis sense-organs also need food just like people. Food for six bases of mental activities: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. Food for the eyes is the sleep; for the ears is the sound; for the nose is the smell; for the tongue is the taste; for the body is the smooth touch; and for the mind is the dharma. Zen practitioners should always remember that the six senses or six organs of sense are likened to six wild creatures in confinement and always struggling to escape. Only when they are domesticated will they be happy. So is it with the six senses and the taming power of Buddha-truth. According to Buddhism, the six sense-organs are the very six doors leading to birth-death and rebirth, but these very six senses are wonderful objects of meditation practices. According to Bikkhu Piyananda in The Gems of Buddhism Wisdom, you must always be aware of the sense organs such as eye, ear, nose, tongue and body and the contact they are having with the outside world. You must be aware of the feelings that are arising as a result of this contact: eye is now in contact with forms (rupa), ear is now in contact with sound, nose is now in conatct with smell, tongue is now in contact with taste, body is now in contact with touching, and mind is now in contact with all things (dharma). Once the six organs and their purification in order to develop their unlimited power and interchange (in the case of Buddha). This full development enables the eye to see everything in a great chiliocosm from its highest heaven down to its lowest hells and all the beings in the past, present, and future with all the karma of each.

As for the sense-organ of the mind and consciousness of mind or thought is one of the six vijnanas, a mind which does not depend on any of the five sense faculties, but on the immediately preceding continuum of mind. Consciousness is also one of the five skandhas. Buddhism distinguishes eight classes of consciousness. The first six are the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch and thought (intellect). While the intellect creates the illusion of a subject 'I' standing apart from and object world, it is not persistently conscious of this 'I'. Only the seventh class of subconsciousness (manas) is this awareness of a discrete ego-'I' constant. Manas also acts as conveyor of the seed-essence of sensory experiences to the eighth level of subconsciousness

(alaya-vijnana), from which, in response to causes and conditions, specific 'seeds' are reconveyed by manas to the six senses, precipitating new actions, which in turn produce other 'seeds'. This process is simultaneous and endless. Mental consciousness apprehends not only objects (form, sound, taste, smell, touch) in the present time, but it also apprehends objects in the past and imagines objects even in the future. Mental consciousness will go with us from one life to another, while the first five consciousnesses are our temporary minds. Everyman's consciousness or ordinary consciousness as opposed to that of an enlightened person. Everyman's consciousness is characterized by delusion, identification with an imaginary separate ego as subject opposed to 'outside' objects, and, as a result of this, by the three poisons of greed, anger and ignorance. According to Zen Buddhist point of view, ordinary consciousness is a sick state of mind, in which a person is not aware of his true nature or buddha-nature and therefore remains imprisoned in the suffering-ridden cycle of life and death until he overcomes the deluded state of consciousness through enlightenment and the realization of the experience of enlightenment in everyday life. Mental consciousness apprehends not only objects (form, sound, taste, smell, touch) in the present time, but it also apprehends objects in the past and imagines objects even in the future. Mental consciousness will go with us from one life to another, while the first five consciousnesses are our temporary minds. According to Hsuan-Tsang in The Mind-Only School, mental consciousness is also related to three kinds of objects of the outer world, three kinds of abilities, and three points of view.

IV. Six Sense-Organs Coordinate with Six Objects Can Lead Sentient Beings to Birth-Death and Rebirth in the Ocean of Birth & Death; But They Can Also Lead Beings to the Treasury of the Thus Come One:

The twelve entrances are twelve entries or places, which include six sense-organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind) and six objects which are corresponding to the six senses (forms, sounds, scents, tastes, textures, and mental objects). In Buddhist cultivation, cultivation on not allowing six sense-organs to coordinate with six objects also means to close six doors that cause beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down in the ocean of life and death. In other words, for non-cultivators, six sense-organs coordinate with six objects can lead to birth-death and rebirth in the ocean of birth and death; but for diligent cultivators, they can lead them to the Treasury of the Thus Come One[1]. According to the Surangama Sutra, book Three, the Buddha explained to Ananda why he said that the twelve places were basically the wonderful nature of true suchness, the treasury of the Thus Come One. *First, the Place of the Eye and Form:* The Buddha taught: “Ananda! Look again at the trees in the Jeta Grove and the fountains and pools. What do you think? Do these things come into being because

the forms are produced and thus the eyes see, or because the eyes produce the characteristics of form? Ananda! If the organ of sight were to produce the characteristics of form, then the nature of form would be obliterated when you see emptiness, which is not form. Once it was obliterated, everything that is manifest would disappear. Since the characteristics of form would then be absent, who would be able to understand the nature of emptiness. The same is true of emptiness. If, moreover, the defiling objects of form were to produce the eye's seeing, then seeing would perish upon looking at emptiness, which is not form, and once it perished, everything would disappear. Then who would be able to understand emptiness and form? Therefore, you should know that neither seeing nor form nor emptiness has a location, and thus the two places of 'form and seeing' are empty and false. Their origin is not in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously." *Second, the Place of the Ear and Sound:* The Buddha taught: "Ananda! Listen again to the drum being beaten in the Jeta grove when the food is ready. The assembly gathers as the bell is struck. The sounds of the bell and the drum follow one another in succession. What do you think? Do these things come into existence because the sound comes to the region of the ear, or because the ear goes to the place of the sound? Again, Ananda, suppose that the sound comes to the region of the ear. Similarly, when I go to beg for food in the city of Shravasti, I am no longer in the Jeta Grove. If the sound definitely goes to the region of Ananda's ear, then neither Maudgalyayana nor Kasyapa would hear it, and even less the twelve hundred and fifty Sramanas who, upon hearing the sound of the bell, come to the dining hall at the same time. Again, suppose that the ear goes to the region of the sound. Similarly, when I return to the Jeta grove, I am no longer in the city of Sravasti. When you hear the sound of the drum, your ear will already have gone to the place where the drum is beaten. Thus, when the bell peals, you will not hear the sound, even the less that of the elephants, horses, cows, sheep, and all the other various sounds around you. If there is no coming or going, there will be no hearing either. Therefore, you should know that neither hearing nor sound a location, and thus the two places of 'hearing and sound' are empty and false. Their origin is not in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously." *Third, the Place of Nose and Smell:* The Buddha taught: "Moreover, Ananda, you smell the chandana in this censer. You sniff the burning incense burning. When one particle of this incense is lit, it can be smelled simultaneously through forty miles around the city of Sravasti. What do you think? Is this fragrance produced from the chandana wood? Is it produced in your nose? Or does it arise within emptiness? Again, Ananda! Suppose this fragrance is produced from your nose. What is said to be produced from the nose should come forth from the nose. Your nose is not chandana, so how can the nose have the fragrance of chandana? When you say you smell fragrance, it should enter your nose. For the nose to emit fragrance is not the meaning of smelling. Suppose it is produced from within emptiness. The nature of emptiness is everlasting and unchanging, and so the fragrance should be eternally present. What need should there to be to rely on burning the dry wood in the censer? Suppose it is produced from the wood. Noe, the nature of this incense is such that it gives off smoke when it is burned. If the nose smells it, it should be filled with smoke. The smoke rises into the air, and before it has reached the distance, how is it that the fragrance is already being smelled at a distance of forty miles? Therefore, you

should know that neither the fragrance nor the nose's smelling has a location, and so the two places of smelling and fragrance are empty and false. Their origin is not in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously." *Fourth, the Place of the Tongue and Taste:* The Buddha taught: "Ananda! Twice everyday you take your bowl along with the rest of the assembly, and among what you receive may be things of supreme flavor, such as curds, butter milk, and clarified butter. What do you think? Are these flavors produced from emptiness, do they come forth from the tongue, or are they produced from the food? Again, Ananda, suppose that the flavors came from your tongue; now there is only one tongue in your mouth. When that tongue had already become the flavor of curds, then it would not change if it encountered some dark rock-candy. Suppose it did not change, that would not be what is called knowing tastes. Suppose it did change, the tongue is not many substances, and how could one tongue know so many tastes? Suppose it were produced from the food. The food does not have consciousness; how could it know tastes? Moreover, if the food itself were to recognize them that would be the same as someone else eating. Then what connection would that have with what is called your recognition of tastes? Suppose it were produced in emptiness. When you eat emptiness, what flavor does it have? Suppose that emptiness had the flavor salt. Then since your tongue was salty, your face would also be salty, and likewise everyone in the world would be like fish in the sea. Since you would be constantly influenced by salt, you would never know tastelessness. If you did not recognize tastelessness, you would not know anything at all. How could that be what is called taste? Therefore, you should know that neither flavors nor the tongue's tasting has a location; and, so the two places of tasting and flavor are empty and false. Their origin is not in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously." *Fifth, the Place of the Body and Touches:* The Buddha taught: "Ananda! Early every morning you rub your head with your hand. What do you think? When there is a sensation of the rubbing, where does the ability in the hands or is it in the head? If it were in the hands, then the head would have no knowledge of it, and how could that be what is called touch? If it were in the head, then the hands would be useless, and how could that be what is called touch? If each had it, then you, Ananda, would have two bodies. If they were two substances, to which would the touch belong? The one which was capable of touch would not be the one that was touched. The one that was touched would not be the one that was capable of touch. Nor should it be that the touch came into being between you and emptiness. Therefore, you should know that neither the sensation of touch nor the body has a location, and so the two places of the body and touch are empty and false. Their origin is not in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously." *Finally, sixth, the Place of Mind and Dharmas:* The Buddha taught: "Ananda! Your mind is always conditioned by three qualities, good, bad, and indeterminate, which produce patterns of dharmas. Ananda! Are these dharmas produced by the mind, or do they have a special place apart from the mind? Ananda! If they were the mind, the dharmas would not be its defiling objects. Since they would not be conditions of the mind, how could you say that they had a location? Suppose they were to have a special place apart from the mind, then would the dharmas themselves be able to know? If they were to have a sense of knowing, they would be called a mind. If they were something other than you, they would be someone else's mind,

since they are not defiling objects. If they were the same as you, they would be your own mind. But how could your mind stand apart from you? Suppose they were to have no sense of knowing; yet these defiling objects are not forms, sounds, smells, or tastes; they are neither cold nor warmth, nor the characteristic of emptiness. Where would they be located? We have established that they are represented in neither form nor emptiness; nor is it likely that they exist somewhere in the human realm beyond emptiness, for if they did the mind could not be aware of them. Whence, then, would they aise? Therefore, you should know that neither dharmas nor the mind has a location, and, so the two places of mind and dharmas are empty and false. Their origin is not in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously."

Notes:

(1) The Tathagata-nature, which is the fundamental universal nature possessed by all the living. The Tathagatagarbha is the absolute, unitary storehouse of the universe, the primal source of all things. The Tathagat treasure house; a synonym for the Buddha-nature inherent in all beings, the true nature of reality that in unenlightened persons is obscured by delusion. The realm of the Tathagatagarbha which is another name for the Alayavijnana, is beyond the views based on the imagination of the Sravakas and Pratyekabuddhas and philosophers.

V. Sense Restraint in Daily Activities Means Closing Paths Leading to the Birth-Death & Rebirth in the Ocean of Birth and Death:

In Buddhist cultivation, sense estraint in daily activities means closing paths leading to the birth-death and rebirth. As a matter of fact, cultivation on eliminating of six poisonous robbers also means to close six doors that cause beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down in the ocean of life and death. Buddhism teaches practitioners to always contemplate on the six faculties are the main reasons that cause human beings to fall into hells, to be reborn in the realm of the hungry ghosts, or animals, asuras, devas, or human beings, etc. In other words, if practitioners restraint their sis sense-organs in daily activities; it is similar to closing some more doors to the rebirth cycle. It is agreeable that the six faculties that help us maintain our daily activities, but they are also the main factors that bring sufferings and afflictions to our body and mind. They are the main agents that cause us to create unwholesome karma, and eventually we will fall into evil ways because of them. Do not think that the eyes are that great, just because they help us see things. It is exactly because of their help that we give rise to all kinds of sufferings and afflictions. For instance, when we see an attractive person of the opposite sex, we become greedy for sex. If we do not get what we want, we will be afflicted; and if we get what we want, we will also be afflicted. The other faculties, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind are the same way. They make one give rise to many sufferings and afflictions. Therefore, the Buddha advised his disciples thus: "You should cultivate until you are unaware of heaven above, people in between, and earth below." If we cultivate until the time heaven, earth, people, east, west, south, north, etc., can no longer impact our six faculties, then at that point we are liberated from all hindrances—See Chapter Twenty-Two (II).

Chapter Eleven

Afflictions: The Most Dangerous Robbers That Always Cause Beings to Be Sinking and Being Drifted Up and Down with Overloaded Misfortunes in the Ocean of Life & Death

According to Buddhism, afflictions are distress, worldly cares, vexations, they are robbers that cause sentient beings with consequent reincarnation or being sinking and being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortunes in the ocean of life and death. They are such troubles as desire, hate, stupor, pride, doubt, erroneous views, etc., leading to painful results in future rebirths, for they are karma-messengers executing its purpose. Klesa also means "negative mental factors," that lead beings to engage in non-virtuous actions, which produce karmic results. Afflictions are all defilements that dull the mind, the basis for all unwholesome actions that bind people to the cycle of rebirths. Afflictions also mean all defilements that dull the mind, the basis for all unwholesome actions as well as kinks that bind people to the cycle of rebirths. In other words, afflictions are the most dangerous robbers that always cause beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortunes in the ocean of life and death. People also call Afflictions the thirst of Mara. In order to attain enlightenment, the number one priority is to eliminate these defilements by practicing meditation on a regular basis. The suffering arising out of the working of the passions, which produce good or evil karma, which in turns results in a happy or suffering lot in one of the three realms, and again from the lot of suffering (or mortality) arises the karma of the passions. The pains arising from a life of illusion, such as greed, hatred, ignorance.

There Are Six Fundamental Afflictions: The first fundamental affliction is the greed (raga): Greed for wealth, sex, fame, food, sleep or greed for forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and objects of touch. The second fundamental affliction is the anger (pratigha): Not obtaining what one is greedy for leads to anger. The third fundamental affliction

is the ignorance (moha): Once anger arises, one has nothing but "ignorance." The fourth fundamental affliction is the arrogance (mana): Arrogance means pride and conceit which causes one to look down on others. The fifth fundamental affliction is the doubt (vicikitsa): Cannot believe or make up one's mind on something. The sixth fundamental affliction is the improper views (drishti). ***There Are Twenty Derivative Afflictions (upaklesha):*** Derivative Afflictions include ten minor grade afflictions, two intermediate grade afflictions, and eight major grade afflictions. *Ten minor grade afflictions include wrath, hatred, covering, rage, deceit, conceit, harming, flattery, jealousy, and stinginess:* The first minor grade affliction is the wrath (krodha): Wrath which comes sudenly and is a combination of anger and hatred. The second minor grade affliction is the hatred (upanaha): Hatred happens when one represses the emotional feelings deep inside. The third minor grade affliction is the rage (pradasa): Rage, of which the emotional reaction is much more severe than hatred. The fourth minor grade affliction is the hiding (mraksha): Hiding means covering or concealing something inside. The fifth minor grade affliction is the deceit (maya): Deceit means false kindness or phone intention. The sixth minor grade affliction is the flattery (shathya). The seventh minor grade affliction is the conceit (mada): Conceit means to think high of self and low of others. The eighth minor grade affliction is the harming (vihimsa): Harming means to want to harm other people. The ninth minor grade affliction is the jealousy (irshya): Jealousy means to become envious of the who surpass us in one way or other. The tenth minor grade affliction is the stinginess (matsarya): One is tight about one's wealth, not wishing to share it with others. *Two intermediate grade afflictions include lack of shame and lack of remorse:* The first intermediate grade affliction is the lack of shame (ahrikya): Lack of shame means to do wrong, but always feel self-righteous. The second intermediate grade affliction is the lack of remorse (anapatrapya): Lack of remorse means never examine to see if one is up to the standards of others. *Eight major grade afflictions include lack of faith, laziness, laxiness, torpor, restlessness, distraction, improper knowledge and scatteredness:* The first major grade affliction is the lack of faith (ashraddhya): Lack of faith means not trust or believe in anyone, not to believe in the truth. The second major grade affliction is the laziness (kausidya): Laziness

means not to try to eliminate unwholesome deeds and to perform good deeds. The third major grade affliction is the laxiness (pramada): Laxiness means not to let the body and mind to follow the rules but does whatever one pleases. The fourth major grade affliction is the torpor (styana): Torpor means to feel obscure in mind or to fall asleep in the process. The fifth major grade affliction is the restlessness (auddhatya): One is agitated and cannot keep still. The sixth major grade affliction is the distraction (mushitasmriti): Distraction means to lose proper mindfulness. The seventh major grade affliction is the improper knowledge (asamprajanya): One become obssesses with defilement. The eighth major grade affliction is the scatteredness (wikshepa). ***There Are Four Afflictions of Unfixed Mental States (aniyata):*** The first mental state is the falling asleep to obscure the mind (middha). The second mental state is the regret (kaudritya) or repent for wrong doings in the past. The third mental state is the investigation (vitarka means to cause the mind unstable). The fourth mental state is the correct Examination (vicara means to pacify the mind).

Practitioners of mindfulness subdue afflictions in four basic ways: Subduing afflictions with the mind by going deep into meditation or Buddha recitation. Subduing afflictions with noumenon. When deluded thoughts arise which cannot be subdued with mind through meditation or Buddha recitation, we should move to the next step by visualizing principles. Whenever afflictions of greed develop, we should visualize the principles of impurity, suffering, impermanence and no-self. When anger arises, we should visualize the principles of compassion, forgiveness and emptiness of all dharmas. Subduing afflictions with phenomena. When meditation, Buddha recitation and Noumenon don't work for someone with heavy karma, leaving phenomena (external form/leaving the scene) can be used. That is to say to leave the scene. When we know that anger or quarrel is about to burst out, we can leave the scene and slowly sip a glass of water to cool ourselves down. Subduing afflictions with repentance and recitation sutras, mantras, or reciting the noble name of Amitabha Buddha.

Affliction is the way of temptation or passion which produces bad karma (life's istress and delusion), causes one to wander in the samsara and hinder one from reaching enlightenment. However, according to

the Mahayana teaching, especially the T'ien-T'ai sect, afflictions are inseparable from Buddhahood. Affliction and Buddhahood are considered to be two sides of the same coin. When we realize that afflictions in themselves can have no real and independent existence, therefore, we don't want to cling to anything, at that very moment, afflictions are bodhi without any difference. It is agreeable that the six faculties that help us maintain our daily activities, but they are also the main factors that bring sufferings and afflictions to our body and mind. Do not think that the eyes are that great, just because they help us see things. It is exactly because of their help that we give rise to all kinds of sufferings and afflictions. For instance, when we see an attractive person of the opposite sex, we become greedy for sex. If we do not get what we want, we will be afflicted; and if we get what we want, we will also be afflicted. The other faculties, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind are the same way. They make one give rise to many sufferings and afflictions.

The term "Klesa" literally means "pain," "external dust," "affliction," or "something tormenting" and is translated as "affliction." As there is nothing so tormenting spiritually as selfish, evil desires and passions, klesa has come to be understood chiefly in its derivative sense and external dust for agantuklesa. Klesa is a Sanskrit term for affliction, distress, worldly cares, vexations, and as consequent reincarnation. They are such troubles as desire, hate, stupor, pride, doubt, erroneous views, etc., leading to painful results in future rebirths, for they are karma-messengers executing its purpose. Klesa also means "negative mental factors," that lead beings to engage in non-virtuous actions, which produce karmic results. Klesa also means all defilements that dull the mind, the basis for all unwholesome actions as well as kinks that bind people to the cycle of rebirths. People also call Klesa the thirst of Mara. In order to attain enlightenment, the number one priority is to eliminate these defilements by practicing meditation on a regular basis.

Afflictions are also restlessness and worry, another disadvantage that makes progress difficult. When the mind becomes restless like flustered bees in a shaken hive, it can not concentrate. This mental agitation prevents calmness and blocks the upward path. mental worry is just as harmful. When a man worries over one thing and another,

over things done or left undone, and over fortune and misfortune, he can never have peace of mind. All this bother and worry, this fidgeting and unsteadiness of mind prevents concentration. According to the Adornment Sutra, Chapter 38, all afflictions, wrath, and folly are weapons of enlightening beings because they liberate sentient beings through afflictions. Enlightening Beings who abide by these can annihilate the afflictions, bondage, and compulsion accumulated by all sentient beings in the long night of ignorance. Bodhisattvas utilze "Giving" to destroy all stinginess; "Self-control" to get rid of all crime; Impartiality ito remove all discrimination; Wisdom to dissolve all ignorance and afflictions; Right livelihood to lead away from all wrong livelihood; Skill in means to manifest in all places; All afflictions, wrath, and folly to liberate sentient beings through afflictions; Birth-and-death to continue enlightening practices and teach sentient beings; Teaching the truth to be able to break up all clinging; All knowledge to not give up the avenues of practice of enlightening beings.

Afflictions are the barrier of temptation, passion or defilement, which obstructs the attainment of the nirvana. Klesa is also means hindrance of the afflictions. Klesa is generally divided into two groups, primary and secondary. The primary comprises of such evil impulses that lie at the foundation of every tormenting thought and desire. The passions and delusion which aid rebirth and hinder entrance into nirvana. The suffering arising out of the working of the passions, which produce good or evil karma, which in turns results in a happy or suffering lot in one of the three realms, and again from the lot of suffering (or mortality) arises the karma of the passions. The pains arising from a life of illusion, such as greed, hatred, ignorance. Defilements of transgression occur when people cannot keep the basic precepts, and perform actions of killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication. Defilements of obsession is a little bit more subtle. One may not outwardly commit any immortal action, but one's mind is obsessed with desires to kill and destroy, hurt and harm other beings physically or otherwise. Obsessive wishes may fill the mind: to steal, manipulate people, deceive others, etc. If you have experienced this kind of obsession, you know it is a very painful state. If a person fails to control his obsessive afflictions, he or she is likely to hurt other beings in one way or another. Dormant or latent afflictions are

ordinarily not apparent. They lie hidden, waiting for the right conditions to assault the helpless mind. Dormant afflictions may be likened to a person deeply asleep. As such a person awakes, when his or her mind begins to churn, it is as if the obsessive afflictions have arisen. When the person stands up from bed and becomes involved in the day's activities, this is like moving from the obsessive afflictions to the afflictions of transgression.

Besides, there are other kinds of afflictions, such as afflictions caused by desire or desire to have; afflictions caused by resentment or anger; afflictions caused by stupidity or ignorance; afflictions caused by pride or self-conceit; afflictions caused by doubt; afflictions caused by False views. Afflictions are considered six cauras or robbers, such as the six senses, the six sense organs are the match-makers, or medial agents of the sic robbers. The six robbers are also likened to the six pleasures of the six sense organs. The only way to prevent them is by not acting with them: the eye avoiding beauty; the ear avoiding melodious sound; the nose avoiding fragrant scent; the tongue avoiding tasty flavour; the body avoiding seductions; and the mind should always control thoughts.

The passion or moral afflictions are bodhi. The one is included in the other. According to the Mahayana teaching, especially the T'ien-T'ai sect, afflictions are inseparable from Buddhahood. Affliction and Buddhahood are considered to be two sides of the same coin. When we realize that afflictions in themselves can have no real and independent existence, therefore, we don't want to cling to anything, at that very moment, afflictions are bodhi without any difference. Once we thoroughly understand the real meaning of "Afflictions are bodhi", we've already subdued our own afflictions. The Buddha witnessed that all sentient beings undergo great sufferings, so He resolved to leave the home-life, to cultivate and find the way to help sentient beings escape these sufferings. Afflictions manifest themselves through our ignorance. Sometimes they show in our appearance; sometimes they are hidden in our minds, etc. In our daily life, we cannot do without sufferings and afflictions. However, if we know how to cultivate, we always consider "afflictions is Bodhi". If we know how to use it, affliction is Bodhi; on the contrary, if we do not know how to use it, then Bodhi becomes affliction. According to Late Most Venerable

Hsuan-Hua in Talks on Dharma, volume 7, Bodhi is analogous to water, and affliction to ice. Ice and water are of the same substance; there is no difference. In freezing weather, water will freeze into ice, and in hot weather, ice will melt into water. When there are afflictions, water freezes into ice; and when the afflictions are gone, ice melts into water. It is to say, having afflictions is having the affliction-ice of ignorance; having no afflictions is having the Bodhi-water of wisdom.

In short, afflictions include worldly cares, sensual desire, passions, unfortunate longings, suffering, pain that arise out of a deluded view of the world. In the four great vows, an adherent of Zen vows to eliminate these passions which obstruct the path to the attainment of enlightenment. Affliction also means suffering (pain), sorrow, distress, or calamity. Affliction includes delusion, moral faults, passions, and wrong belief. The way of temptation or passion which produces bad karma (life's distress and delusion), cause one to wander in the samsara and hinder one from reaching enlightenment. In order to attain enlightenment, the number one priority is to eliminate these defilements by practicing meditation on a regular basis. Practitioners of mindfulness can subdue afflictions with the mind by going deep into meditation or Buddha recitation; or subduing afflictions with noumenon. When deluded thoughts arise which cannot be subdued with mind through meditation or Buddha recitation, we should move to the next step by visualizing principles. Whenever afflictions of greed develops, we should visualize the principles of impurity, suffering, impermanence and no-self. When anger arises, we should visualize the principles of compassion, forgiveness and emptiness of all dharmas. Practitioners of mindfulness can also subdue afflictions with phenomena. When meditation, Buddha recitation and Noumenon don't work for someone with heavy karma, leaving phenomena (external form/leaving the scene) can be used. That is to say to leave the scene. When we know that anger or quarrel is about to burst out, we can leave the scene and slowly sip a glass of water to cool ourselves down. Practitioners of mindfulness can also subdue afflictions with repentance and recitation sutras, mantras, or reciting the noble name of Amitabha Buddha.

Chapter Twelve

The Bigger the Fame and Wealth, the Larger the Ocean of Births & Deaths

Fame and gain are two of the eight conditions which prevent people from advancing along the right path to enlightenment. The bigger the fame and wealth, the larger the ocean of births and deaths. According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are eight winds or influences (or worldly conditions) which fan the passions and prevent cultivators from advancing along the right path to enlightenment. They are also called the Eight Worldly States. They are so called because they continually succeed each other as long as the world persists; the approval that has the gain, etc., and the resentment that has the loss, etc. They are so called "Eight Winds" because they prevent people from advancing along the right path to enlightenment and liberation. When these eight worldly winds blow, men find themselves torn between them, they try to run toward one end to flee the other, so they continue endlessly in the cycle of birth and death. The eight winds that blow people who lack samadhi-power. They are dharmas that test our mind, to see whether adverse or favorable situations will upset our equilibrium. If they upset us, our cultivation still lacks maturity and we are deficient in the power of samadhi.

People are often swayed either by their attachment to gain, fame, praise, and pleasure, or by their aversion to loss, disgrace, blame, and suffering. In fact, life is a process of gain and loss, but people only satisfy with gain and feel miserable with loss; therefore, people continue to suffer. If life is a continuous process of temporary happiness of gain and suffering of loss, life would not worth living any more. Thus, the Buddha taught: "It is under adverse circumstances one should remain high and moral courage and maintain proper equilibrium. Our life, especially that of lay people, has ups and downs while struggling in daily activities, in order for us to have less disappintment, we should be prepared to accept both the good and the bad." In the time of the Buddha, a noble lady was offering food to the

Venerable Sariputra and some other monks. While serving them, she received a note stating that certain misfortunes had affected her family. Without becoming upset, she calmly kept the note in her waist-pocket and continued to serve the monks as if nothing had happened. A maid who was carrying a pot of ghee to offer to the monks was so startled that she slipped and broke the pot of ghee. Thinking that the lady would naturally fell sorry at the lost, Venerable Sariputra consoled her, saying that all breakable things are bound to break. The wise lady remarked: "Bhante, what is this trivial loss? I have just received a note stating certain misfortunes have occurred in my family. I accepted without losing my balance. I am serving you all despite the bad news." Such barve courage of the lady should be highly commended. We always welcome honour or fame and dislike dishonour. Honour gladdens our heart; dishonour disheartens us. We desire to become famous. We long to see our pictures in the papers. We are greatly pleased when our activities, however insignificant, are given publicity. Sometimes we seek undue publicity too. We must agree that human natue is to feel pleasant and happy when our fame is spread far and wide. But through our practical experience, fame and glory are passing away; sooner or later they will vanish. To obtain honour, some are prepared to offer gratification or give substantial donations to those in power. For the sake of publicity, some exhibit their generosity by giving alms to a hundred monks and nuns and even more, but they may be totally indifferent to the sufferings of the poor and the needy in the neighbourhood.

Buddhist practitioners should always remember that fame and gain (gain, praise, honor and underserved fame) belong to the the ninth army of Mara (1). When you attain some depth of practice, your manner and behavior will improve. You will become venerable and impressive. You may even start to share the Dharma with others, or your experience of the Dharma may manifest outwardly in another way, perhaps in clear expositions of the scriptures. People may feel deep faith in you and may bring you gifts and donations. Word may spread that you are an enlightened person, that you give great Dharma discourses. At this point, it would be easy for you to succumb the ninth army of Mara. The honor and respect these people direct toward you could go to your head. You might begin to subtly or overtly try to

extract bigger and better donations from your followers. You might decide that you deserve renown because you really are superior to other people. Or, insincere ambition might supplant a genuine wish to help others as your motivation for teaching, for sharing whatever wisdom you have reached in your own practice. Your reflections might run as follows: "Oh, I'm pretty great. I'm popular with many people. I wonder if anyone else is as great as I am. Can I get my devotees to build me a new temple?" Usually, the ninth mara attacks practitioners who have good result in meditation. However, wish for gain can attack any ordinary practitioner. One might feel proud of one's practice and begins wishing to be acknowledged as a great practitioner. A practitioner who has had an interesting experience or two, but little depth, can become overconfident. He or she may quickly want to step out onto the Dharma scene and teach other people, thus becoming the object of admiration and praise. Such person will teach meditation that may not be in accordance with the texts, nor with deep practical experience. They may actually harm their students. To vanquish the ninth mara, the motivation behind your effort must be sincere. If you begin practicing only with the hope of getting donations, reverence, or fame, you will never make any progress. Frequent re-examination of motives can be very helpful. If you make genuine, sincere progress and later succumb to greed for gain, you will become intoxicated and negligent. It is said that a person who is intoxicated and negligent will continue a life of peacelessness and be overcome by much suffering.

Notes:

(1) Ten kinds of demonic armies: According to the Nipata Sutta, there are ten armies of mara: Sensual desires, Discouragement, Hunger and thirst, Attachment, Sloth and torpor, Fear, Doubt, Detraction and stubborness, Gain, praise, honour, and ill-gotten fame; and Self-praise and contempt for others.

Chapter Thirteen

It Is the So Called "I" and "Mine" That Has Pushed Human Beings to Be Sinking and Being Drifted Up and Down with Overloaded Misfortunes in the Ocean of Life & Death

According to Buddhist teachings, it is the so called "I" and "Mine" that have pushed human beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortunes in the ocean of life and death. The self and its possession. The main goal of Buddhism is the extinction of separate individuality, which is brought about when we cease to identify anything with ourselves. From long habit it has become quite natural to us to think of our own experience in the term of "I" and "Mine." Even when we are convinced that strictly speaking such words are too nebulous to be tenable and that their unthinking use leads to unhappiness in our daily lives, even then do we go on using them. The reasons for this are manifold. One of them is that we see no alternative way of explaining our experiences to ourselves except by way of statements which include such words as "I" and "Mine." In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "These are my sons; this is my wealth; with such thought a fool is tormented. Verily, he is not even the owner of himself. Whence sons? Whence wealth? (Dharmapada 62). He who has no thought of "I" and "mine," for whatever towards his mind and body he does not grieve for that which he has not. He is indeed called a Bhikhshu (Dharmapada 367)."

According to the Pudgala-vada Sect, "Pudgala" is a Sanskrit term for "personalist." A term applied to several early Indian Buddhist schools, which shared a common belief that there is a self (pudgala) which is the basis for karma and transmigration, or the substance that is the bearer of the cycle of rebirth and that this self is neither the same, nor different from the five aggregates. However, Buddhism denies the existence of such an eternal person or soul. Buddhism sees the person only a conventional name or a combination of physical and psychological factors that change from moment to moment. The

pudgala doctrine was eventually declared heretical in Buddhism, though at one time Pudgalavadins appear to have been quite numerous. If we carefully look into the Buddha's teachings, we will see that the Buddha always denies such a permanent and partless self. The teaching of "pudgala" caused such a violent reaction on the part of its opponents was that while the "anatman" doctrine of the Buddha was entirely true in a conventional sense, there was still a "pudgala," or person. This person is an ultimately real thing, the substratum which allows for continuity between rebirths, for memory, and for the furture ripening of intentional actions or "karman" which are performed in the present or the past. If there was no person at all, as its opponents claimed, then Buddhism would be open to the charge of "Nihilism" and immortality, for there would be nobody who could undertake moral actions. It insisted that the "pudgala" was indeterminate in relation to the skandhas, neither outside them nor within them; neither identical with them, nor different from them. In fact, this pudgala was only perceptible to the Buddhas. In support of its position, it frequently quoted sayings of the Buddha such as "Monks, there is a single person born into the world for the welfare of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and men. One might see this kind of position reflected in the Tathagatagarbha doctrines of the Mahayana, the Ch'an and T'ien-T'ai schools in China.

Chapter Fourteen

Rebirth Consciousness: The Creater of the Ocean of Life & Death

"Vijnana" is another name for "Consciousness." Theravada considered the six kinds of consciousness as "Vijnana." Mahayana considered the eight kinds of consciousness as "Vijnana." Externalists considered "vijnana" as a soul. Consciousness is another name for mind. Consciousness means the art of distinguishing, or perceiving, or recognizing, discerning, understanding, comprehending, distinction, intelligence, knowledge, learning. It is interpreted as the "mind," mental discernment, perception, in contrast with the object discerned. According to Buddhism, our "Nature" is the "Buddha". The "Consciousness" is the "Spirit", the "Intention" or "Mano-vijnana" is the "Discriminating Mind", and the "Mind" is what constantly engages in idle thinking. The "Nature" is originally perfect and bright, with no conception of self, others, beauty, or ugliness; no falling into numbers and discriminations. But as soon as there is "Consciousness", one falls into numbers and discriminations. The "Intention" or "Mano-vijnana" also makes discriminations, and it is the sixth consciousness. It is relatively turbid, while the seventh and eighth consciousnesses are relatively purer. There are eight kinds of consciousness: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, klista-mano-vijnana, and alaya-vijnana. Fundamentally speaking, consciousness is not of eight kinds, although there are eight kinds in name. We could say there is a single headquarters with eight departments under it. Although there are eight departments, they are controlled by just one single headquarters. "Vijnana" translated as "consciousness" is the act of distinguishing or discerning including understanding, comprehending, recognizing, intelligence, knowledge. There are eight consciousnesses. The first five arise as a result of the interaction of the five sense organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and mind) and the five dusts (Gunas); the sixth consciousness comes into play, all kinds of feelings, opinions and judgments will be formed (the one that does all the differentiating); the seventh consciousness (Vijnana) is the center of ego; the eighth

consiousness is the Alayagarbha (a lại da), the storehouse of consciousness, or the storehouse of all deeds or actions (karmas), whether they are good, bad or neutral. “Vijnana” also means cognition, discrimination, consciousness, but as any one of these does not cover the whole sense contained in Vijnana. “Vijnana” also means relative knowledge. This term is usually used as contrasted to Jnana in purely intellectual sense. Jnana is transcendental knowledge dealing with such subjects as immortality, non-relativity, the unattained, etc., whereas Vijnana is attached to duality of things.

Consciousness is another name for mind. Consciousness means the art of distinguishing, or perceiving, or recognizing, discerning, understanding, comprehending, distinction, intelligence, knowledge, learning. It is interpreted as the “mind,” mental discernment, perception, in contrast with the object discerned. Rebirth means reincarnation is transmigration. The passing away from one body to be reborn in another body. Where the being will be reborn depends on his accumulated good or bad karma. The belief that living beings, including man, have a series of bodily lives, only ceasing when they no longer base their happiness on any of the objects of the world. This come about when the Buddha-nature is found. This belief is very common to all Buddhists. Rebirth is the recombination of mind and matter. After passing away of the physical body or the matter, the mental forces of the mind recombine and assume a new combination in a different material form and condition in another existence. Rebirth is the result of karma. In Buddhist belief, there is no transmigration of soul or any substance from one body to another. What really happens is that the last active thought (Javana) process of dying man releases certain forces which vary in accordance with the purity of the five thought moments in that series. These forces are called karma vega or karmic energy which attracts itself to a material layer produced by parents in the mother's’womb. The material aggregates in this germinal compound must possess such characteristics as are suitable for the reception of that particular type of karmic energy. Attraction in this manner of various types of physical aggregates produced by parents occurs through the operation of death and gives a favourable rebirth to the dying man. An unwholesome thought gives an unfavourable rebirth. Each and every type of sentient being will have different

appearance whether it be beautiful or ugly, superior or inferior. This is determined and is manifested based solely on the various karma sentient beings created while alive with their antecedent bodies.

In Buddhism, rebirth consciousness is not a Self or a Soul, or an Ego-entity that experiences the fruits of good and evil deeds. Consciousness is generated by conditions. Apart from condition there is no arising of consciousness. We call names such as birth, death, thought-processes, and so on, to a stream of consciousness. There are only thought-moments. The last thought-moment we call death, and the first thought-moment we call birth. Thus, birth and death occur in this stream of consciousness, which is only a series of ever continuing thought-moments. So long as man is attached to existence through his ignorance, craving and clinging, to him death is not the final end. He will continue his journey of whirling round the "Wheel of Existence." This is the endless play of "cause and effect" or action and reaction kept in perpetual motion by karma concealed by ignorance propelled by craving or thirst. As karma, or action, is of our own making, we have the power to break this endless chain. In short, rebirth consciousness is the creator of the ocean of life and death. It is through the eradication of ignorance and of this driving force, craving, this thirst for existence, this will to live, that the "Cycle of Existence" ceases. In the Majjhima Nikaya, the Buddha explained: "How is there not re-becoming in the future? By the cessation of ignorance, by the arising of knowledge, by the cessation of craving there is thus no re-becoming in the future." In the Dhammapada (153-154), on attaining Enlightenment, the Buddha spoke these joyful words:

"Repeated births are each a torment.
Seeking but not finding the "House Builder",
I wandered through many a Samsaric birth.
O "House Builder", thou art seen,
Thou wilt not rebuild the house.
All thy rafters have been shattered,
Demolished has thy ridge pole been.
My mind has won the Unconditioned (Nirvana),
The extinction of craving is achieved." (fruit of Arhat).

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The “Consciousness” is the “Spirit”, the “Intention” or “Mano-vijnana” is the “Discriminating Mind”, and the “Mind” is what constantly engages in idle thinking. The “Nature” is originally perfect and bright, with no conception of self, others, beauty, or ugliness; no falling into numbers and discriminations. But as soon as there is “Consciousness”, one falls into numbers and discriminations. The “Intention” or “Mano-vijnana” also makes discriminations, and it is the sixth consciousness. It is relatively turbid, while the seventh and eighth consciousnesses are relatively purer. There are eight kinds of consciousness: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, klista-mano-vijnana, and alaya-vijnana. Fundamentally speaking, consciousness is not of eight kinds, although there are eight kinds in name. We could say there is a single headquarters with eight departments under it. Although there are eight departments, they are controlled by just one single headquarters. “Vijnana” is a Sanskrit term generally translated as “consciousness.” This is the act of distinguishing or discerning including understanding, comprehending, recognizing, intelligence, knowledge. There are eight consciousnesses. The first five arise as a result of the interaction of the five sense organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and mind) and the five dusts (Gunas). The sixth consciousness comes into play, all kinds of feelings, opinions and judgments will be formed (the one that does all the differentiating). The seventh consciousness (Vijnana) is the center of ego. The eighth consiousness is the Alayagarbha (a lại da), the storehouse of consciousness, or the storehouse of all deeds or actions (karmas), whether they are good, bad or neutral. “Vijnana” also means cognition, discrimination, consciousness, but as any one of these does not cover the whole sense contained in Vijnana. Relative knowledge. This term is usually used as contrasted to Jnana in purely intellectual sense. Jnana is transcendental knowledge dealing with such subjects as immortality, non-relativity, the unattained, etc., whereas Vijnana is attached to duality of things. In short, once practitioners thoroughly understand that consciousness means the art of distinguishing, or perceiving, or recognizing, discerning, understanding, comprehending, distinction, intelligence, knowledge, learning, it is interpreted as the “mind,” mental discernment, perception, in contrast with the object discerned, then practitioners can easily cultivate the consciounesses. Finally, practitioners should always remember that consciousnesses are not an intellectual concept, nor are they another thought to played with in our mind. They are states of mind, specific qualities of consciousnesses or awarenesses to be attained through cultivation. In order to cultivate our consciousnesses, we have to exert a great deal of effort to cultivate on them. Especially, we have to train our mind and transform our basic attitude towards others.

Chapter Fifteen

Eight Mad Winds Are Swirling & Causing Beings to Be Sinking and Being Drifted Up and Down with Overloaded Misfortunes in the Ocean of Life & Death

The Saha world is a place of good and evil, where all are subject to be up and down in the ocean of birth and death. World of endurance refers to our world which is filled with sufferings and affections, yet gladly enjoyed, endured by its inhabitants, and always whirled into its all environments. According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are eight winds or influences (or worldly conditions) which fan the passions that not only prevent cultivators from advancing along the right path to enlightenment, but also whirl and drift them along the six worldly paths. They are also called the Eight Worldly States. They are so called because they continually succeed each other as long as the world persists; the approval that has the gain, etc., and the resentment that has the loss, etc. They are so called "Eight Winds" because they prevent people from advancing along the right path to enlightenment and liberation. When these eight worldly winds blow, men find themselves torn between them, they try to run toward one end to flee the other, so they continue endlessly in the cycle of birth and death or being sinking and being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortunes in the ocean of life and death. ***The First and the Second are Gain and Loss or Success and Failure:*** People are often swayed either by their attachment to gain, fame, praise, and pleasure, or by their aversion to loss, disgrace, blame, and suffering. In fact, life is a process of gain and loss, but people only satisfy with gain and feel miserable with loss; therefore, people continue to suffer. If life is a continuous process of temporary happiness of gain and suffering of loss, life would not worth living any more. Thus, the Buddha taught: "It is under adverse circumstances one should remain high and moral courage and maintain proper equilibrium. Our life, especially that of lay people, has ups and downs while struggling in daily activities, in order for us to have less disappintment, we should be prepared to accept both the good and the

bad." In the time of the Buddha, a noble lady was offering food to the Venerable Sariputra and some other monks. While serving them, she received a note stating that certain misfortunes had affected her family. Without becoming upset, she calmly kept the note in her waist-pocket and continued to serve the monks as if nothing had happened. A maid who was carrying a pot of ghee to offer to the monks was so startled that she slipped and broke the pot of ghee. Thinking that the lady would naturally fell sorry at the loss, Venerable Sariputra consoled her, saying that all breakable things are bound to break. The wise lady remarked: "Bhante, what is this trivial loss? I have just received a note stating certain misfortunes have occurred in my family. I accepted without losing my balance. I am serving you all despite the bad news." Such barve courage of the lady should be highly commended. The Buddha taught: Buddhists should courageously accept losses. One must face these losses with equanimity and take them as an opportunity to cultivate our sublime virtues. At the time of the Buddha, once the Buddha went seeking alms in a village. Owing to the intervention of Mara, the Buddha did not obtain any food. When the Mara questioned the Buddha rather sarcastically whether he was hungry or not, the Buddha solemnly explained the mental attitude of those who were free from impediments, and replied: "Ah, happily do we live, we who have no impediments. Feeders of joy shall wee be even as the gods of the Radiant Realm." On another occasion, the Buddha and his disciples observed the rainy season in a village at the invitation of a brahmin who, however, completely fogot to attend the needs of the Buddha and the Sangha. Throughout the period of three months, although Venerable Moggallana volunteered to obtain food by his psychic powers, the Buddha making no complaint, was contented with the fodder of horses offered by a horse dealer. According to the sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are five kinds of loss: Loss of relatives: Loss of wealth, loss of health, loss of morality, and loss of right view. The Buddha also taught that no beings fall into an evil state or a hell state after death because of loss of relatives, wealth or health. However, beings do fall into an evil state or a hell state by loss of morality and right views. ***The Third and the Fourth Mad Winds Are Honor and Dishonor:*** Honour and dishonour are a pair of inevitable worldly conditions that confront us in the course of our

daily lives. We always welcome honour or fame and dislike dishonour. Honour gladdens our heart; dishonour disheartens us. We desire to become famous. We long to see our pictures in the papers. We are greatly pleased when our activities, however insignificant, are given publicity. Sometimes we seek undue publicity too. We must agree that human natue is to feel pleasant and happy when our fame is spread far and wide. But through our practical experience, fame and glory are passing away; sooner or later they will vanish.

To obtain honour, some are prepared to offer gratification or give substantial donations to those in power. For the sake of publicity, some exhibit their generosity by giving alms to a hundred monks and nuns and even more, but they may be totally indifferent to the sufferings of the poor and the needy in the neighbourhood. We will surely perturbed when receiving dishonour. This is again the human nature. It takes a long long time to build up a good reputation, but in no time the hard-earning good name can be ruined. This matter is not difficult to understand because human nature is always like that, we always like to praise ourselves and to dishonour others. Nobody is exempt from the ill-famed remark even the Buddha. You may live the life of a Buddha, but you will not be exempt from criticisms, attacks, and insults. At the time of the Buddha, the Buddha was the most famous for his virtues, but he was the one who received the most criticisms, attacks and insults. Some antagonists of the Buddha spread a rumour that a woman used to spend the night in the monastery, but they failed because noone believed them. Having failed in this mean attempt, thay spread false news among the people that the Buddha and his disciples murdered that very woman and hid her corpse in the rubbish-heap of withered flowers within the monastery. The conspirators admitted that they were the culprits. To treat honour and dishonour, it is needless to waste time in correcting the false reports unless circumstances compel us to necessitate a clarification. The enemy is gratified when he sees that you are hurt. That is what he actually expects. If you are indifferent, such misrepresentations wil fal on deaf ears. It is not possible to put a stop to false accusations, reports and rumours; therefore, in The Gems of Buddhism Wisdom, most Venerable Dhammananda taught: In seeing the faults of others, we should behave like a blind person. In hearing unjust criticism of others, we should behave like a deaf person.

In speaking ill of others, we should behave like a dumb person. Dogs bark, but the caravans move on peacefully. We should expect mud to be thrown at us instead of roses. Then there will be no disappointments. Though difficult, we should try to cultivate nonattachment. Alone we come, alone we go. Nonattachment is happiness in this world. Unmindful of the poisonous darts of uncurbed tongues, alone we should wander serving others to the best of our ability. It is rather strange that great men have been slandered, vilified, poisoned, crucified or shot. Great Socrates was poisoned, Noble Jesus Christ, and Gandhi was shot, etc. The world is full of thorns and pebbles. It is impossible to remove them all. But if we have to walk, in spite of such obstacles, instead of trying to remove them, which is impossible, it is advisable to wear a pair of slippers and walk harmlessly. In The Dhammapada Sutta, the Buddha taught: Be like a lion that trembles not at sounds. Be like the wind that does not cling to the meshes of a net. Be like a lotus that is not contaminated by the mud from which it springs. We are living in a muddy world. Numerous lotuses spring therefrom without being contaminated by the mud, they adorn the world. Like lotuses we should try to lead blameless and noble lives, unmindful of the mud that may be thrown at us. Wander alone like a rhinoceros. Being the kings of the forest, lions are fearless. By nature, they are not frightened by the roaring of other animals. In this world, we may hear adverse reports, false accusations, degrading remarks of uncurbed tongues. Like a lion, we should not even listen to them. Like a boomerang, false reports will end where they began. Great men are indifferent to honour, or dishonour. They are not upset when they are criticized or maligned, for they work not for fame, nor for name or honour. They are indifferent whether others recognize their services or not. To work, they have the right but not to the fruit thereof. ***The Fifth and the Sixth Mad Winds are Praise and Blame:*** It is natural to be happy when praised and to be depressed when blamed. Praise, if worthy, is pleasing to the ears. If unworthy, as in the case of flattery, though pleasing, it is deceptive. However, they all are sounds which will produce no effect if they do not reach our ears. From a worldly standpoint, a word of praise may bring forth special grace, special benefit, or special authority. The wise men do not resort to flattery; nor do they wish to be flattered by others. The praiseworthy, they praise without being envious. The

blameworthy, they blame not contemptuously but out of compassion with the object of reforming others. In summary, the praiseworthy, one should praise seriousnessly. Most of ordinary people are prone to seek the ugliness in others but not the good and beautiful. *Praise:* Praise, if worthy, is pleasing to the ears. If unworthy, as in the case of flattery, though pleasing, it is deceptive. However, they all are sounds which will produce no effect if they do not reach our ears. From a worldly standpoint, a word of praise may bring forth special grace, special benefit, or special authority. The wise man do not resort to flattery; nor do they wish to be flattered by others. The praiseworthy, they praise without being envious. The blameworthy, they blame not contemptuously but out of compassion with the object of reforming others. In summary, the praiseworthy, one should praise seriousnessly. *Blame:* Most of ordinary people are prone to seek the ugliness in others but not the good and beautiful. A sincere Buddhist should follow the Buddha's teaching in dealing with "Praise and blame" in the secular world. For instance, assume that blame has just been made about you or your work. Very often in such a situation you may feel insulted. Your ego may be damaged. But before you let such thought to arise, examine that blame objectively. On the one hand, if the blame given is well-founded and arises with good intention, you should accept that blame in good faith so as to use it constructively for self-improvement. On the other hand, if it is unjust, ill-founded and given with bad intention, there is still no reason to lose your temper and damage your own mental health. Just ignore the blame since it is untrue and you are under no obligation to accept it. The ancient said: "The uncultivated man always blames others; the cultivated man blames himself most of the time, and the fully-cultivated man blames no one." A sincere Buddhist should learn to face and handle his problems like the fully-cultivated man that the ancient just taught. A sincere Buddhist should never try to find a scapegoat on which to place the blame. A sincere Buddhist should not try to blame anyone, not even on himself or herself, for, to Buddhism, blaming on others or on self, is a negative attitude and will not help the person advance on the cultivating path to perfect himself or herself. Instead of blaming on anyone, a sincere Buddhist should have the courage and understanding for a better solution to the problem. This should be more positive, and a positive

frame of mind will help solve many problems, and also make the world a much better place to live for everyone. The Buddha says: "Those who speak much are blamed, those who speak little are blamed, and those who are silent are also blamed. In this world there is none who is not blamed." In this world, except the Buddha, nobody is perfectly good and nobody is totally bad. Blame seems to be a universal legacy of people, for one may serve and help others to the best of one's ability; however latter, those very persons whom one has helped will not only find fault with him who once incurred debts or sold property to save them; but they will also rejoice in his downfall. On one occasion, the Buddha was invited by a brahmin to his house for alms. When the Buddha arrived at his house, instead of entertaining the Buddha, he poured a torrent of abuse with the filthiest words. The Buddha politely inquired, "Do visitors come to your house, good Brahmin?" The brahmin said: "Yes." The Buddha asked: "What do you do when the visitors come?" The brahmin replied: "Oh, we prepare a sumptuous feast." If they don't eat the food you serve, then what would you do?" The brahmin said: "We gladly partake of it." The Buddha then said: "Well, good Brahmin, you have invited me for alms and you have entertained me with abuse. I accept nothing. Please take it back." Through this story, we see that the Buddha did not retaliate. The Buddha exhorts: "Hatreds do not cease through hatreds but through love alone they cease." Sincere Buddhists should always remember the Buddha's teaching: "Whoever harms a harmless person who is pure and guiltless, the evil falls back upon that fool, like dust thrown against the wind." (Dhammapada 125). The Buddha says: "He who can keep silent himself when attacked, insulted and abused, he is in the presence of Nirvana although he has not yet attained Nirvana." ***The Seventh and the Eighth Mad Winds Are Sufferings and Happiness:*** *Suffering:* According to Buddhism, what is difficult to bear is sorrow. Sorrow or suffering comes in different guises. There is no equivalent translation in English for the word "Dukkha" in both Pali and Sanskrit. So the word "Dukkha" is often translated as "Suffering". However, this English word is sometimes misleading because it connotes extreme pain. When the Buddha described our lives as "Dukkha", he was referring to any and all unsatisfactory conditions. These range from minor disappointments, problems and difficulties to intense pain and misery.

Therefore, Dukkha should be used to describe the fact that things are not completely right in our lives and could be better.

According to Most Venerable Thich Giac Nhiên (President of the International Sangha Buddhist Bhiksu Order), the eight winds that blow people who lack samadhi-power. In other words, eight mad winds are swirling and causing human beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortunes in the ocean of life and death. However, they are also dharmas that test our mind, to see whether adverse or favorable situations will upset our equilibrium. If they upset us, our cultivation still lacks maturity and we are deficient in the power of samadhi. *The first mad wind is Praise:* This means adulation (flattery). When others praise us, it tastes as sweet as honey; it is a comfortable sensation. *The second mad wind is Ridicule:* This means somebody makes fun of us. If someone mock us, even a little, we can not stand it, and it is a very uncomfortable sensation. *The third mad wind is Pain:* This means suffering. When we experience a little bit of suffering, we become afflicted. Whenever suffering befalls us, it is a test to see whether or not we can forbear it. *The fourth mad wind is Pleasure:* This refers to happiness. We should not let a little happiness overwhelm us. All kinds of happy states are tests, to see what we will do with them. *The fifth mad wind is Gain:* This refers to getting advantages. We become pleased when we gain benefits and are sad when we lose them. This shows a lack of samadhi-power. *The sixth mad wind is Loss:* This refers to failure. No matter what difficulties arise, we ought to take them in stride and not be upset when we lose out. *The seventh mad wind is Defamation:* This means slander. If someone insults us and spreads tales about us, we should not mind. We should let it pass, come what may. The entire episode will eventually calm down all by itself. *The eighth mad wind is Honor:* This refers to situations of exaltation. If we are praised by someone and he makes our name known, we should take it in stride and regard glory and honor as no more important than forst on the window pane at dawn.

In the Sung Dynasty, a poet named Su Tung Po was adept in Buddhist study. Although his skill in Zen concentration was immature, he felt himself to be quite accomplished. One day, feeling exuberant and possessed by a sudden inspiration, he penned a verse:

"I pay my respect to the chief of gods,

Whose hairmark-light illumines the universe;
The Eight Winds blow me not, as I
Meditate on this purple-golden lotus."

He thought he had already gained enlightenment, and he wanted this enlightenment certified by Zen Master Foyin. Thereupon, he sent his servant to Gold Mountain Monastery across the river from his home. The elderly Zen Master took a look at the verse the messenger handed him and wrote two words on the paper: "Fart! Fart!" and told the attendant to take the message back. Su Tung Po read the reply and blew up in a fit of anger. He thundered, "How dare you! This is my enlightenment testimonial; how dare you call it a fart?" He promptly rowed across the river to talk with the Zen Master. Unexpectedly, as soon as he reached the gate of Gold Mountain, Zen Master Foyin was waiting for him, to say "Oh, welcome! Welcome to the Great Adept Su Tung Po, one who is unmoved by the Eight Winds, but who let a couple of tiny farts blow him all the way across the river. Welcome!" The two were old friends and fellow cultivators, and they were in the habit of joking with each other. Su Tung Po's vocanic anger, right on the verge of exploding, was cooled off completely by the truth Zen Master Foyin's statement. All he could do was admit that his samadhi still lacked maturity and bow Master Foyin. He apologized for making a scene, and thereafter he avoided bragging. Zen skill is proven by practice, not by skill of mouth. If we do not practice what we preach, it does not count. Cultivation in Buddhism, especially meditation practice is considered as an art in the sense that, to express itself, it only follows its own intuition and inspirations, but not dogmas and rules. At times it appears to be very grave and solemn, at others trivial and gay, plain and direct, or enigmatic and round-about. When Zen masters preach they do not always do so with their mouths, but with their hands and legs, with symbolic signals, or with concrete action. They shout, strike, and push, and when questioned they sometimes run away, or simply keep their mouths shut and pretend to be dumb. Such antics have no place in rhetoric philosophy, or religion, and can be best described as "art". The above story is one of the manners of Zen art that Zen master Fo-ying utilized to express Zen humour and wit.

When these eight mad winds blow, men find themselves torn between them, they try to run to one end to flee the other. But when

the mind is poised in the tranquil state of meditation, it can remain steadfast like a mountain, even when we are subjected to all kinds of abuse. According to Zen Master Shundo Aoyama in Zen Seeds, birth, old age, illness, and death, as well as happiness and misfortune, gain and loss, love and hate, all these are important tools for weaving the brocade of human life. A brocade cannot be woven with the single color of happiness. Given time, place, and occasion, everything "contains all colors." It is in this way that the Pure Land, the Other Shore, is made manifest. The Buddha had a lay disciple who often neglected his wife in order to practice the Way or to go to listen to the Buddha's teachings. This made his wife feel very angry. She was angry not only with her husband, but also with the Buddha. She believed that the Buddha was using some mystical power to steal her husband. One day, after her husband had come home late, she went to the Buddha and yelled at Him with very harsh words. The Buddha sat listening quietly without speaking a word. His disciples tried to push the woman away, but the Buddha instructed them not to do that. The woman continued to yell at the Buddha and then left when she was tired. After she left, the Buddha asked his disciples: "If someone offers you a gift that you like, what would you do?" The disciples replied: "Lord, we would accept it." The Buddha asked again: "If someone offers you a gift that you do not like, what would you do?" The disciples replied: "Lord, we would not accept it." The Buddha added: "If you did not accept it, what would become of it?" The disciples replied: "It would remain in the owner's hands." The Buddha continued: "Now just that has happened with the woman who was here. She offered me a disagreeable gift, and I did not accept it. So that gift is still in her hands." Thus, if we do not go after these poisonous winds of gain, loss, fame, defamation, praise, ridicule, sorrow, and joy... there is no way they can impact us.

The Buddha teaches that suffering is everywhere. Suffering is already enclosed in the cause, suffering from the effect, suffering throughout time, suffering pervades space, and suffering governs both normal people and saint. The Buddha said that whatever is impermanent is suffering because although impermanence is not a cause for suffering, it creates occasions for suffering. For not understanding of impermanence, we crave and cling to objects in the

hope that they may be permanent, that they may yeild permanent happiness. Failing to understand that youth, health, and life itself are impermanent, we crave them and cling to them. We desperately hold onto our youth and try to prolong our life, yet because they are impermanent by nature, they keep changing rapidly and we will surely one day become old and sick. When this occurs, impermanence is the main agent which creates occasions for suffering. The Buddha's teaching on suffering, above all, offers a solution to the fundamental problem of the human condition. According to Buddhism, human existence is distinguished by the fact that nothing is permanent: no happiness will last forever, and whatever else there is, there will always be suffering and death. The first step in the Buddhist path to awakening is to recognize this as the foremost problem of human existence, to see that all is duhkha. However, this is not a pessimistic observation, because while acknowledging the ubiquity of duhkha, Buddhism offers a solution in the form of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Duhkha. The Buddha himself characterized his teaching by saying: "I teach only Duhkha and the cessation of duhkha." Duhkha can be experienced in three ways. The first is simply the ordinary suffering that affects people when the body is in pain. Ordinary suffering is also mental pain: it is the grief of not getting what one wants or the distress caused by separation from loved ones or from pleasant conditions. It is also the many other painful situations that one inevitably encounters by virtue of being born, ageing and dying. Underlying any happiness is the knowledge that whenever there is pleasure or delight, it will not be permanent. Sooner or later the vicissitudes of life will bring about a change. There is a Buddhist saying that even in laughter there is "duhkha," because all laughter is impermanent. This instability underlies the second kind of duhkha, which is dissatisfaction arising from change. It might seem that only death can bring about the cessation of suffering, but in fact death is also a form of suffering. In Buddhism the cosmos extends far beyond the immediate physical world perceptible by the senses, and death is merely part of the endless cycle of rebirth. Death in itself offers no respite because actions have consequences in future lives far beyond death, just as deeds from previous lives have affected the present. The third kind of suffering is the inherent interconnectedness of actions and

deeds, which exceeds human vision and experience. In this sense, suffering applies to the universe in its totality, and no imaginable beings, humans, gods, demons, animals or hell beings, are exempt from it. Suffering thus refers not only to everyday suffering but also to the whole infinite world of possible and seemingly endless forms of suffering. No simple translation can capture its full significance. The goal of Buddhism is the complete and final cessation of every form of duhkha, and thereby the attainment of nirvana, the eradication of greed, hatred and delusion, which ties beings to the cycle of rebirth. Accordingly, Buddhas and those who reach enlightenment do not experience duhkha, because strictly speaking they are not "beings", nor do they "roll" in the samsara: they will never again be reborn. Duhkha characterizes the cosmos as a whole, but its predominance varies among the different "spheres of existence." In the world of Pure Form, where the great gods dwell, there is less suffering than in the world of Sense-Desire, inhabited by lesser gods, humans and other beings. Just the Buddha when he walked the earth could enter the World of the Sense-Desire, so too can humans enter the World of Pure Form. This is ordinarily accomplished in meditation, through different kinds of absorptions (dhyana). The characteristic form of suffering in this situation is impermanence, caused by the meditator's inability to remain eternally in trance. To attain more abiding happiness, an individual must strive to understand the processes that govern movement in the cosmos as a whole, namely, rebirth and karma, and how they can be affected. *Happiness:* Happiness resulting from mental stability is the most important. Ordinary happiness is the gratification of a desire. However, as soon as the thing desired is achived the we desire something else or some other kind of happiness, for our selfish desires are endless. We usually seek pleasant feelings and avoid unpleasant feelings through our sensory experience of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body. However, there is another level of experience: mental experience. Ture happiness should also be pursued on the mental level. Many people believe that they can solve all their problems if they have money, so they're always busy to exhaust their energy to collect more and more money. The more money they have, the more they want to collect. They don't realize that money cannot buy happiness, or wealth does not always conduce to happiness. In

fact, real happiness is found within, and is not be defined in terms of wealth, power, honours, or conquests. If we compare the mental and physical levels of happiness, we'll find that mental experiences of pain and pleasure are actually more powerful than those of physical experiences. Devout Buddhists should always remember that your property will remain when you die. Your friends and relatives will follow you up to your grave. But only good or bad actions you have done will follow you beyond the grave. Thus, wealth can only be used to decorate your house but not you. Only your own virtue can decorate you. Your dress can decorate your body, but not you; only your good conduct can decorate you. The secret of happiness lies in doing what needs be done now and not worrying about the past and the future. We cannot go back to change things in the past nor can we anticipate what will happen in the future. There is but one moment of time over which we have some relatively conscious control and that is the present. The Buddha enumerates some kinds of happiness for a layman. They are the happiness of possession, health, wealth, longevity, beauty, joy, strength, property, children, etc. The Buddha does not advise all of us to renounce our worldly lives and pleasures and retire to solitude. However, he advised lay disciples to share the enjoyment of wealth with others. We should use wealth for ourselves, but we should also use wealth for the welfare of others. What we have is only temporary; what we preserve we leave and go. Only karmas will have to go with us along the endless cycle of births and deaths. Thus, we must try to recognize and eliminate the powerful emotions we possess such as desire, hatred, anger, ignorance, pride, doubt, wrong views, etc., for they tend not to bring us long happiness. A fulfilled desire may provide us a sense of temporary satisfaction, but it will not last long. For example, we are satisfied with a new car we just bought, but for how long that satisfaction can last? Soon after the car will become old and broken, and that would cause us disatisfactions and sufferings. Thus, the Buddha taught about the happiness of lay disciples as follows: "A poor, but peace life is real happiness. Leading a blameless life is one of the best sources of happiness, for a blameless person is a blessing to himself and to others. He is admired by all and feels happier, being affected by the peaceful vibrations of others. However, it is very difficult to get a good name from all. The wisemen try to be indifferent

to external approbation, try to obtain the spiritual happiness by transcending of material pleasures." Then the Buddha continued to remind monks and nuns: "Nirvana bliss, which is the bliss of relief from suffering, is the highest form of happiness." In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: Oh! Happily, do we live without hatred among the hateful! Among hateful men we dwell unhating! (197). Oh! Happily do we live in good health among the ailing! Among the ailing we dwell in good health! (198). Oh! Happily, do we live without greed for sensual pleasures among the greedy! Among the greedy we dwell free from greed! (199). Oh! Happily, do we live without any hindrances. We shall always live in peace and joy as the gods of the Radiant Realm (200). Hunger is the greatest disease; aggregates are the greatest suffering. Knowing this as it really is, the wise realize Nirvana: supreme happiness (203). Good health is a great benefit, contentment is the richest, trust is the best kinsmen, Nirvana is the highest bliss (204). To meet the sage is good, to live with them is ever happy. If a man has not ever seen the foolish, he may ever be happy (206).

According to Most Venerable Thich Giac Nhiên (President of the International Sangha Buddhist Bhiksu Order), the eight winds that blow people who lack samadhi-power. These are practical benefits of meditation in stopping these eight winds. When these eight winds blow, men find themselves torn between them, they try to run to one end to flee the other. But when the mind is poised in the tranquil state of meditation, it can remain steadfast like a mountain, even when we are subjected to all kinds of abuse. According to Zen Master Shundo Aoyama in Zen Seeds, birth, old age, illness, and death, as well as happiness and misfortune, gain and loss, love and hate, all these are important tools for weaving the brocade of human life. A brocade cannot be woven with the single color of happiness. Given time, place, and occasion, everything "contains all colors." It is in this way that the Pure Land, the Other Shore, is made manifest. The Buddha had a lay disciple who often neglected his wife in order to practice the Way or to go to listen to the Buddha's teachings. This made his wife feel very angry. She was angry not only with her husband, but also with the Buddha. She believed that the Buddha was using some mystical power to steal her husband. One day, after her husband had come home late, she went to the Buddha and yelled at Him with very harsh words. The

Buddha sat listening quietly without speaking a word. His disciples tried to push the woman away, but the Buddha instructed them not to do that. The woman continued to yell at the Buddha and then left when she was tired. After she left, the Buddha asked his disciples: "If someone offers you a gift that you like, what would you do?" The disciples replied: "Lord, we would accept it." The Buddha asked again: "If someone offers you a gift that you do not like, what would you do?" The disciples replied: "Lord, we would not accept it." The Buddha added: "If you did not accept it, what would become of it?" The disciples replied: "It would remain in the owner's hands." The Buddha continued: "Now just that has happened with the woman who was here. She offered me a disagreeable gift, and I did not accept it. So that gift is still in her hands." Thus, if we do not go after these poisonous winds of gain, loss, fame, defamation, praise, ridicule, sorrow, and joy... there is no way they can impact us. In other words, according to Buddhism, poisonous winds of the worldly world themselves are major causes that widely open six doors that push beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down in the ocean of life and death. Therefore, cultivation on eliminating of poisonous winds also means to close six doors that cause beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down in the ocean of life and death.

Chapter Sixteen

Human Lives with Birth-Old Age-Sickness-Death in the Ocean of Life & Death

I. Human Life in Buddhist Point of View:

An Overview of Human Life in Buddhist Point of View: According to modern biology, a new human life begins in that miraculous instant when a sperm cell from the father merges with an egg cell or ovum within the mother. This is the moment of birth. Science speaks of only these two physical common factors. Buddhism, however, speaks of a third factors which is purely mental. According to the Mahatanhasamkhaya-sutta in Majjhima Nikaya, by the conjunction of three factors does conception take place. If mother and father come together, but it is not the mother's proper season, and the being to be reborn (gandhabba) does not present itself, a germ of life is not planted. If the parents come together, and it is the mother's proper season, but the being to be reborn is not present, then there is no conception. If the mother and father come together, and it is the mother's proper season and the being to be reborn is also present, then a germ of life is planted there. The third factor is simply a term for the rebirth consciousness (patisandhi-vinnana). It should be clearly understood that this rebirth consciousness is not a "self" or a "soul" or an "ego-entity" that experiences the fruits of good and evil deeds. Consciousness is also generated by conditions. Apart from condition there is no arising of consciousness. According to the Visuddhi-Magga: "All beings have only a very short instant to live, only so long as a moment of a slash of a lightning. When this is extinguished, the being is also extinguished. The beings of the last moment are now no longer living, and do not live now or will not live again later. The being of the present moment did not live previously, lives just now, but later will not live any more. The being of the future has not lived yet in the past, does not yet lived now, and will only live later."

The Eastern ancient said: "Man is the most sacred and superior being," however, to Buddhism, any living being's life is precious and of the same value. That is to say no being's life is more precious than the

other's life. According to the Upasaka Sutra, Buddhism agrees that in all living beings, man is endowed with all necessary faculties, intelligence. Buddhism also agrees that conditions of human beings are not too miserable as those beings in the hell or the hungry ghosts. To Buddhism, human life is difficult to obtain. If we are born as human beings with many qualities, difficult to attain. We should try to make our lives meaningful ones. Besides, human beings have intelligence. This precious quality enables us to investigate the true meaning of life and to practice the path to enlightenment. Devout Buddhists should always remember that what rebirth we will take depends on our present actions and habits. Thus, our purpose in this very life is to attain liberation or enlightenment, either becoming liberated from cyclic existence (Arhats), or becoming fully enlightened Buddhas. Most of all, we should be able to take advantage of our precious human lives to live to the fullest, moment by moment. To achieve this, we must be mindful of each moment, not being in the here-and-now when we act. According to Buddhist point of view, we have precious human lives, endowed with many qualities to attain. Because of this, we can make our lives highly meaningful. We often take our lives for granted and dwell on the things that aren't going the way we would like them to. Thinking this way is unrealistic and makes us depressed. However, if we think about the qualities we do have and everything that is going well, we'll have a different and more joyful perspective on life. One of our greatest endowments is our human intelligence. This precious quality enables us to investigate the meaning of life and to practice to advance on the path to enlightenment. If all of our senses, eyes, ears, mental... are intact, we are able to hear the Dharma, read books on it, and think about its meaning. We're so lucky to be born in an historical era when the Buddha has appeared and taught the Dharma. These teachings have been transmitted in a pure from teacher to student in lineages steming back to the Buddha. We have the opportunity to have qualified spiritual masters who can teach us, and there are communities of ordained people and dharma friends who share our interest and encourage us on the path. Those of us who are fortunate to live in countries that cherish religious freedom aren't restricted from learning and practicing the path. In addition, most of us don't live in desperate poverty and thus have enough food, clothing and shelter to engage in

spiritual practice without worrying about basic material needs. Our minds aren't heavily obscured with wrong views and we are interested in self-development. We have the potential to do great things with our present opportunity. But to appreciate this, we must develop a long-term vision for our cultivation because our present lives are only a short one. Devout Buddhists should always remember that our mindstreams don't cease when our physical bodies die. Our minds are formless entities, but when they leave our present bodies at the time of death, they will be reborn in other bodies. What rebirth we'll take depends on our present actions. Therefore, one purpose of our lives can be to prepare for death and future lives. In that way, we can die peacefully, knowing our minds will be propelled towards good rebirths. The other way that we can utilize our lives is to attain liberation or enlightenment. We can become arhats, beings liberated from cyclic existence, or we can go on to become fully enlightened Buddhas, able to benefit others most effectively. Attaining liberation, our minds will be completely cleansed of all disturbing attitudes. Thus, we'll never become angry, jealous or proud again. We no longer feel guilty, anxious or depressed, and all our bad habits will be gone. In addition, if we aspire to attain enlightenment for the benefit of everyone, we'll have spontaneous affection for all beings, and will know the most appropriate ways to help them. Also, another way to take advantage of our precious human lives is to live life to the fullest, moment by moment. There are several ways to do this. One is to be mindful of each moment, being in the here-and-now as we act. When we eat, we can concentrate on eating, noting the taste and texture of the food. When we walk, we concentrate on the movements involved in walking, without letting our minds wander to any other thoughts. When we go upstairs, we can think, "may I lead all beings to fortunate rebirths, liberation and enlightenment." While washing dishes or clothes, we think, "may I help all beings cleanse their minds of disturbing attitudes and obscurations." When we hand something to another person, we think, "May I be able to satisfy the needs of all beings." We can creatively transform each action by generating the wish to bring happiness to others. Life according to Buddhism is suffering; suffering dominates all life. It is the fundamental problem of life. The world is suffering and afflicted, no being is free from this bond of misery and

this is a universal truth that no sensible man who sees things in their proper perspective can deny. The recognition of this universal fact, however, is not totally denial of pleasure or happiness. The Buddha, the Lord over suffering, never denied happiness in life when he spoke of the universality of suffering. The psycho-physical organism of the body undergoes incessant change, creates new psycho-physical processes every instant and thus preserves the potentiality for future organic processes, and leaves the gap between one moment and the next. We live and die every moment of our lives. It is merely a coming into being and passing away, a rise and fall (udaya-vaya), like the waves of the sea. This change of continuity, the psycho-physical process, which is patent to us this life does not cease at death but continues incessantly. It is the dynamic mind-flux that is known as will, thirst, desire, or craving which constitutes karmic energy. This mighty force, this will to live, keeps life going. According to Buddhism, it is not only human life, but the entire sentient world that is drawn by this tremendous force, this mind with its mental factors, good or bad. The present birth is brought about by the craving and clinging karma-volition (tanha-upadana) of past births, and the craving and clinging acts of will of the present birth bring about future rebirth. According to Buddhism, it is this karma-volition that divides beings into high and low. According the Dhammapada (135), beings are hiers of their deeds; bearers of their deeds, and their deeds are the womb out of which they spring, and through their deeds alone they must change for the better, remark themselves, and win liberation from ill.

Man's Determined Period of Life: The Eastern ancient said: “Man is the most sacred and superior being,” however, to Buddhism, any living being’s life is precious and of the same value. That is to say no being’s life is more precious than the other’s life. According to the Upasaka Sutra, Buddhism agrees that in all living beings, man is endowed with all necessary faculties, intelligence. Buddhism also agrees that conditions of human beings are not too miserable as those beings in the hell or the hungry ghosts. To Buddhism, human life is difficult to obtain. If we are born as human beings with many qualities, difficult to attain. We should try to make our lives meaningful ones. Besides, human beings have intelligence. This precious quality enables us to investigate the true meaning of life and to practice the path to

enlightenment. Devout Buddhists should always remember that what rebirth we will take depends on our present actions and habits. Thus, our purpose in this very life is to attain liberation or enlightenment, either becoming liberated from cyclic existence (Arhats), or becoming fully enlightened Buddhas. Most of all, we should be able to take advantage of our precious human lives to live to the fullest, moment by moment. To achieve this, we must be mindful of each moment, not being in the here-and-now when we act.

Buddhism has no concern with either determinism or determinateness because it is a religion of self-creation. It holds the theory of free will within the sphere of human beings. Buddhism, therefore, has nothing to do with fatalism, for it does not admit the existence of anything like destiny or the decree of fate. According to Buddhism, all living beings have assumed the present life as the result of self-creation, and are, even at present, in the midst of creating themselves. Birth and death are not the predestined fate of a living being but only a corollary of action or karma. One who acts must sooner or later reap the result of such action. Nobody can determine the fate of anybody else in this universe. In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts; it is made up of our thoughts." Thus, there is no room for the idea of "Creation" in Buddhism. Devout Buddhists should always remember the Buddha's teachings on Human Life in the Dharmapada Sutra: It is difficult to obtain birth as a human being; it is difficult to have a life of mortals; it is difficult to hear the Correct Law; it is even rare to meet the Buddha (Dharmapada 182). Here I shall live in the rainy season, here in the winter and the summer. These are the words of the fool. He fails to realize the danger (of his final destination) (Dharmapada 286). Death descends and carries away that man of drowsy mind greedy for children and cattle, just like flood sweeps away a sleeping village (Dharmapada 287). Nothing can be saved, nor sons, nor a father, nor even relatives; there is no help from kinsmen can save a man from death (Dharmapada 288).

Buddhist practitioners should always remember that the best way to practice is to forget the self. By forgetting the self, we can appreciate our life not in the narrow, restricted, isolated way that we usually live but rather as a life of unity, a life that is unsurpassable.

Another way to explain what we mean by forgetting the self is that we are transcending the subject-object relationship or the "I-Other" relationship. We are transcending duality. So, what is the primary matter of our practice? It always comes back to oneself, to one's own life. We say clarify yourself. Clarify the matter of your life and death. How do we do that? Fogen Zenji says, "Forget the self." Zen practitioners should always ask yourselves: "Are we forgetting ourself or are we reinforcing ourself?" This is an extremely important matter in our practice. Devout Buddhists should always remember that man's life is a burning candle, we don't know it will be off at any time. According to the Sutra In Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 38, the Buddha asked a Sramana: "How long is the human lifespan?" He replied: "A few days." The Buddha said: "You have not yet understood the Way." The Buddha asked another Sramana: "How long is the human lifespan?" The other replied: "The space of a meal." The Buddha said: "You still have not yet understood the Way." The Buddha then asked another Sramana: "How long is the human lifespan?" The last one replied: "The length of a single breath." The Buddha said: "Excellent! You understand the Way."

Human's Life Is Impermanence in Each Moment: Impermanence (anitya) is the state of not being permanent, of lasting or existing only for a short time, of changing continually. Physical changes operating from the state of formation, to that of development, decay and disintegration are exact manifestations of the law of transformation. All things in the universe, from the small grain of sand, the human body, to the big one such as the earth, moon and sun are governed by the aove law, and as such, must come through these four periods. This process of changes characterizes impermanence. All things are impermanent, their birth, existence, change, and death never resting for a moment. All things in this world, including human life, mountains, rivers, and political systems, are constantly changing from moment to moment. This is called impermanence in each moment. Everything passes through a period of birth, maturity, transformation, and destruction. This destruction is called impermanence in each cycle. To see the impermanent nature of all things, we must examine this closely. Doing so will prevent us from being imprisoned by the things of this world." Impermanence of the body means that the body withers rapidly, soon

grows old and delibitated, ending in death. The ancients have lamented: “Oh, that time when we were young and would ride bamboo sticks, pretending they were horses, in the twinkling of an eye, our hair is now spotted with the color of frost.” What happened to all those brave and intelligent young men and those beautiful and enchanting women of bygone days? They ended as in the following poem: “Rosy cheeks have faded, heros have passed away; young students’ eyes, too, are weary and sad.” He also reminded his disciples about the verse of impermance that monks and nuns in most monasteries often chant at the end of ceremonies: ‘This day is already done; our lives are that much less; we’re like fish in a shrinking pond; what joy is there in this? We should be diligent and vigorous, as if our own head were at stake. Only be mindful of impermanence, and be careful not to be lax.’ To him, this body grows old and decays, but the Correct Dharma does not. If we always practice the Correct Dharma every day with our whole body and mind, we will have true happiness. In other words, if we always shower our whole body and mind with the Correct Dharma, we will have no fear of the rise and decline of our own life for at that time, we have the ability to see the rise and decline just like a drop of dew on a blade of grass, no more no less!

Before passing away, he composed one of his famous Zen poems titled ‘impermanence of the body’ about the impermanence as below:

Our life is a simple lightning which
Comes and goes (appears then disappears).
As springtime offers blossoms,
Only to fade (wither) in the fall.
(Earthly flourish and decline,
O friends, do not fear at all.
They are nothing, but
A drop of dew on the grass of morning!)

Buddhist practitioners should look at the body as a shadow, an image, an illusion; as a it's there one moment and disappears in no time. Just like trees and foliages, their life circle evolves around the four seasons. Let our body, our surroundings, and our life flow like driftwood. The ups and downs, the good and the bad that we accumulate throughout our life are like the morning dew; they are impermanent. Thus, we shall feel no fear, and that is the real spirit of

Zen. In order to have the Zen master's attitude, Zen practitioners should always have this attitude 'Looking but not seeing, hearing but not listening, smelling but not noticing the scent.' Why is it described as 'looking, but not seeing?' Because the person is returning the light to shine within, and introspecting. Why is it 'hearing, but not listening?' Because he is turning the hearing to listen his own nature. Why does it say, 'smelling, but not noticing the scent?' Because he has gathered back his body and mind, and is not disturbed any longer by scent. At this time, the cultivator's eyes contemplate physical forms, but the forms do not exist for him. His ears hear sounds; but the sounds do not exist for him. His nose smells scents, but those scents do not exist for him. His tongue tastes flavors, but for him, those flavors do not exist. His body feels sensations, but does not attach itself to those sensations. His mind knows of things, but does not attach to them. If we can sit in meditation until our state is such that 'inside we have no body and mind,' 'outside we have no world,' and 'afar there are no objects', then we reach the stage of nonattachment, or the state of "no trace of self, no trace of others, no trace of living beings, and no trace of life span." This is also the stage described as, "Thoughts of the past cannot be obtained, thoughts of the present cannot be obtained, and thoughts of the future cannot be obtained." This is also called the wonderful stage of lightness and ease in meditation. If we continue to meditate profoundly, we will approach wonderful stages in meditation: the stage of happiness that leaves living beings behind; it means that we have reached a stage of happiness beyond that which living beings enjoy. The stage of happiness that brings concentration, it means happiness in concentration which is completely unparalleled and indescribable. The stage of bliss beyond happiness, it means we leave coarse happiness behind and reach a level of subtle bliss that is most wonderful. The pure stage free of thoughts, where the mind is totally pure without any thoughts. Zen practitioners should also remember 'Anything with shape or form is considered a "dharma born of conditions." All things born of conditions are like dreams, illusory transformations, bubbles of foam, and shadows. Like dewdrops and lightning, they are false and unreal. By contemplating everything in this way, we will be able to understand the truth, let go of attachments, and put an end to random thoughts.'

As a matter of fact, impermanence is an endless moving stream in the life of sentient beings. According to Jisho Warner in Stone Creek Zendo, we usually think that things are changing around us, rushing by at a mad pace and making us feel unstable, so we try to slow them down. We try to establish a firm footing on what is really shifting ground, which only makes us more uneasy. We act as though we are solid unchanging things that changes happen to, but that is impossible. If we carry the idea through that things are changing, we see for ourselves that we are changing, that what is at the heart of things is changingness. What the Buddha said is that it is because we don't see that truth of the nature of things that we suffer. We feel at sea, and we're seasick because we think things should hold still. The Buddha's prescription could be said to be: learn to swim. Impermanence is a great river of phenomena, of beings, things, and events, coming to be and passing away in dependence on each other. This natural order of things includes us, and its laws are our laws. We are an endless moving stream in an endless moving stream.

In Buddhist Point of View, Life Is Uncertain, Death Is Certain: "Life is uncertain, death is certain", this is a well-know saying in Buddhism. Knowing fully well that death is certain and is the natural phenomenon that everyone has to face, we should not be afraid of death. Yet all of us fear death because we do not think of its inevitability. We like to cling to our life and body and develop too much craving and attachment. A German monk named Nyanatiloka, reiterated the momentariness of existence from Visuddhi-Magga as follows: "All beings have only a very short instant to live, only so long as a moment of a slash of a lightning. When this is extinguished, the being is also extinguished. The beings of the last moment is now no longer living, and does not live now or will not live again later. The being of the present moment did not live previously, lives just now, but later will not live any more. The being of the future has not lived yet in the past, does not yet lived now, and will only live later." According to the Sutra in Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 38, the Buddha asked a Sramana: "How long is the human lifespan?" He replied: "A few days." The Buddha said: "You have not yet understood the Way." The Buddha asked another Sramana: "How long is the human lifespan?" The other replied: "The space of a meal." The Buddha said: "You still

have not yet understood the Way." The Buddha then asked another Sramana: "How long is the human lifespan?" The last one replied: "The length of a single breath." The Buddha said: "Excellent! You understand the Way." The Buddha taught on many occasions: "Human life is only as long as one breath, for breathing out (exhaling) without breathing (inhaling) means we have already died and stepped over into a new lifetime." In fact, our lives are like the breath, or like the growing and falling leaves. In the old days, at temples, the novices always must sweep falling leaves together on the open grounds and walkways of the monasteries. The leaves fall, the novices sweep, and yet, even while the sweeping continues and the near end of a long path is being clear, the novices can look back to the far end they have already swept and see a new scattering of leaves already starting to cover their work. When we can really understand about falling leaves, we can sweep the paths every day and have great happiness in our lives on this changing earth.

Buddhist practitioners who thoroughly understand Buddhist teachings should peacefully confront the certainty of Death. Death naturally comes to everyone. However, most people feel uncomfortable thinking about death. People fear that if they talk about death, death is coming closer. That's a mistaken idea. In fact, by very nature our lives are impermanent, and death is inevitable. By natural law, death id one of the four steps of the Law of Impermanence. Thus, death is an irrevocable result of living, it's good to think about it to make our lives more meaningful. Once we fully recognize that we will inevitably die, all the petty concerns that worry us in our daily life become insignificant compared to the importance of following the path before our lives end. The Buddha taught: "There is no greater realization than awareness of the impermanence of our lives. Such realization will help us understand that at the time of death, our mindstreams and the imprints of the actions we have created go on to future lives. Such realization will also help us understand clearly that if we spend oue precious human lives acting harmfully with bad motivations, the imprints of those actions will come with us. Devout Buddhists should always remember that death definitely comes to everyone, whether we are kings or mandarins, rich or poor, noble or ignoble. There is nowhere we can go to avoid death. Our lifespans

can't be extended and with every passing moment, they're becoming shorter and shorter. When our lifespans run out, we can't bargain for more time in order to transform our minds.

II. Human Lives with Birth-Old Age-Sickness-Death in the Ocean of Life & Death:

Birth, old-age, and death are the three last chains of the twelve links of causes and effects are one of the basic teachings of Buddhism; the twelve links of causes and effects which explain the samsaric state of sentient beings' birth and death. The twelve links of "Cause and Effect" or "Karmic Causality" include: ignorance (unenlightenment), action (moving, activity, conception, disposition), consciousness, name and form, six organs (mắt,tai mũi, lưỡi, thân, ý/eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, contact (touch), feeling or perception (sensation), thirst (desire or craving or attachment), grasping (laying hold of), being (existing or owning or possessing), birth, old age, illness and death. Because of ignorance, the mind is moved. This Moving is the second link. If the mind is moved, it will move everything. So, everything else comes into being due to that initial Moving. Subsequent to this Moving, the third link of Consciousness arises. Owing to the consciousness wrong views arise, that's the fourth link. Because of the wrong views, arising the fifth link of Form and Name. Form (visible), Name (invisible) combine themselves together to form everything else and of course there arises the Six Roots or Six Senses. When the six senses come into contact with the internal and external, the sixth link of Contact arises. After the arising of Contact, Perception or Feeling is brought forth. When happiness, unhappiness, anger, love, jealousy, etc are all perceived, the eighth link of attachment arises. When we attached to our perceptions, we have a tendency to grasp on whatever we have. It's very difficult to detach ourselves from them, the ninth link of Grasping arises. We always grasp our feelings very strongly and never let go what we grasp in hands, the tenth link of Owning or Possessing arises to bind us tightly with the samsara. Subsequent to Owning, there will arise Birth (the eleventh link), Old Age, Illness and Death (the twelfth link).

Human beings have countless sufferings; however, Sakyamuni Buddha explained the eight basic causes of suffering: First, Suffering

of Birth or birth is suffering. While still in the womb, human beings already have feelings and consciousness. They also experience pleasure and pain. When the mother eats cold food, the embryo feels as though it were packed in ice. When hot food is ingested, it feels as though it were burning, and so on. The embryo, living as it is in a small, dark and dirty place, immediately lets out scream upon birth. From then on, all it can do is cry when it feels cold, hot, hungry, thirsty, or suffers insect bites. Sakyamuni Buddha in his wisdom saw all this clearly and in detail and therefore, described birth as suffering. The ancient sages had a saying in this regard: "As soon as sentient beings escape one womb, they enter another. Seeing this, sages and saints are deeply moved to such compassion! The illusory body is really full of filth, swiftly escaping from it, we return to our Original Nature." Second, Suffering of old age or old age is suffering. We suffer when we are subjected to old age, which is natural. As they reach old age, human beings have diminished their faculties; their eyes cannot see clearly anymore, their ears have lost their acuity, their backs ache easily, their legs tremble, eating is not easy and pleasurable as before, their memories fail, their skin dries out and wrinkles, hair becomes gray and white, their teeth ache, decay and fall out. In old age, many persons become confused and mixed up when eating or dressing or they become uncontrollable of themselves. Their children and other family members, however close to them, soon grow tired and fed up. The human condition is like that of a flower, ruled by the law of impermanence, which, if it can bring beauty and fragrance, also carries death and decayin its wake. In truth, old age is nothing but suffering and the human body has nothing worth cherishing. For this reason, Sakyamuni Buddha said: old age is suffering! Thus, he advised Buddhists to strive to cultivate so they can bear the sufferings of old age with equanimity. Third, Suffering of Disease (sickness) or sickness is suffering. To have a body is to have disease for the body is open to all kinds of diseases. So, the suffering of disease is inevitable. Those with small ailments which have an external source to those dreadful diseases coming from inside. Some people are afflicted with incurable diseases such as cancers or delibitating ailments, such as osteoporosis, etc. In such condition, they not only experience physical pain, they also have to spend large sums of money for treatment. Should they lack the

required funds, not only do they suffer, they create additional suffering for their families. The sufferings caused by diseases is more painful than the sufferings due to old age. Let imagine, even the slightest toothache or headache is sometimes unbearable. However, like or dislike, we have no choice but bearing the suffering of sickness. Even the Buddha, a perfect being, who had destroyed all defilements, had to endure physical suffering caused by disease. The Buddha was constantly subjected to headaches. His last illness caused him much physical suffering was a wound in his foot. As a result of Devadatta's hurling a rock to kill him, his foot was wounded by splinter which necessiated an operation. When his disciples disobeyed his teachings, he was compelled to retire to a forest for three months. In a foreston a couch of leaves on a rough ground, facing fiercing cold winds, he maintained perfect equanimity. In pain and happiness, He lived with a balanced mind. Fourth, Suffering of Death or death is suffering. All human beings desire an easy birth and a peaceful death; however, very few of us can fulfill these conditions. At the time of death, when the physical body is generally stricken by disease and in great pain. With the body in this state, the mind is panic-stricken, bemoaning the loss of wealth and property, and saddened by the impending separation from loved ones as well as a multitude of similar thoughts. This is indeed suffering. Sentient beings are born with a cry of pain and die with even more pain. The death is unwanted, but it still comes, and nobody knows when it comes. As fruits fall from a tree, ripe or old even so we die in our infancy, prime of mankind, or old age. As the sun rises in the East only to set in the West. As Flowers bloom in the morning to fade in the evening. The Buddha taught: "Death is inevitable. It comes to all without exception; we have to cultivate so that we are able to face it with perfect equanimity." The rest four of these eight sufferings are Suffering due to separation from loved ones (parting with what we love), suffering due to meeting with the uncongennial (meeting with what we hate), suffering due to unfulfilled wishes (unattained aims), and suffering due to the raging aggregates (all the ills of the five skandhas) or all the illnesses of the five skandhas is suffering. According to the Buddhist traditions and also according to Most Venerable Narada in The Buddha and His Teachings, death can occur in one of the four ways. The first cause of death is the Ayukkhaya (p).

Death can be due to the exhaustion of the life span assigned to beings of that particular species. This is likened to the wick in the lamp burns up. The second cause of death is the Kammakkhya (p). Death can be due to the exhaustion of the Kammic energy that caused the birth of the deceased. This is likened to the consumption of the oil in the lamp. The third cause of death is the Ubbayakkhaya (p). Death can be due to the exhaustion of both the life span and kamma energy. This is likened the consumption of the oil in the lamp and the burning off of the wick at the same time. The fourth cause of death is the Upachedake (p). Death can be due to external circumstances, such as accidents, untimely happenings. This is likened to the effect of external factors such as the wind or someone blows out the light.

Prince Siddhartha's perception of the old age, sickness and death happened when he was very young. One day, with the permission from the King, Prince Siddhartha and his attendants set out a tour around the capital city. However, after exiting the East Gate not long, he saw a hunch-back old man with white hair and bare shoulders. The man was limping along very feebly and look pitiful, as if he could easily be blown away just by a slight gust of wind. The prince immediately dismounted from the elephant, walked to the old man, and spoke to him in a caring manner. It turned out that the old man was deaf, with not even one tooth in his mouth. He was lonely and unprovided for because his children refused to support him. This aroused the prince's sympathy who offered to support the the old man through his old age, but the old man only asked the prince to help bring back his rejuvenation and longevity instead. Hearing this, the prince was speechless, sighted and instructed his attendants to return to the palace. A few days later, the prince and his attendants toured the West Gate. Even though the King already ordered the area to be cleaned, and the sick and the poor were not allowed to stay outdoors, but not long after they set out, the prince saw a sick man lying by the roadside on the verge of dying. He had a thin body and a bloated belly, and he was moaning. The prince asked one of his attendants: "Why would the man become like this?" The attendant dared not to conceal the truth, he replied: "This is a sick man. He catches illness because his body is in disorder. Whether rich or poor, noble or lower classes, all have the body that is subject to disease and pain." On hearing these words, the

prince felt ill and disturbed. He gave the order to return to the palace. After returning to the palace, the prince was unhappy all day long. He was wondering why people would turn old and would contract diseases. With all the luxuries he had, he did not know how to alleviate the suffering of the masses and how to make them live in more comfort. The King was aware of the unhappiness of his son, but considered this a minor incident. He persuaded the prince to continue on another tour. This time he decreed that all the people of the kingdom should help avoid any unpleasant encounters. The king even ordered Devadatta to accompany the prince, as he believed Devadatta was excellent in archery and martial arts, which could help the prince muster more courage. Not long after setting out of the South Gate, they accidentally came upon a funeral procession which blocked the way of the prince's carriage. The men who walked in front looked sad, while all the women were crying miserably. The prince told Devadatta: "Let's return to the palace." Devadatta laughed at the prince for his being afraid of dead people and said: "the true coward Prince." The prince thought, "Although Devadatta laugh at others, no one in the world could stay alive forever. It is only a matter of time before he joins the procession of the dead." He was then in no mood to appreciate the scenery along the way. So, he returned to the palace in total silence. In all these tours, the prince always set out in high spirits but returned in a somber mood. Since then, he remained silent and unhappy despite the fact that his beautiful wife and his good son were always by his side. Images of the old, the sick and the dead constantly haunted the mind of the prince. He thought that even his beautiful wife and baby son could not escape from the cycle of old age, sickness and death. In his mind, human life was illusionary and unreal, like images of flowers in the air or the moon in the water. Another day while in the royal garden, the prince observed the fish in the pond fighting among themselves for food, with the big fish eating the small and the small fish eating the shrimps. This was the fight for survival among living creatures with the strong preying on the weak. As for humans, they waged wars out of selfishness. The prince was contemplating on its origin and how to stop it. Wine, women and songs could not arouse the interest of the Prince who was puzzled by the problems of old age, sickness, death, and impermanence. He wanted to seek out ways and means of

emancipation from the sufferings of life. To him, this was the most important goal to achieve in human life. That was why the young Prince left his beautiful wife, baby son, and the luxurious life to become a homeless mendicant.

Finally, according to Buddhism, rebirth and redeath or life and death. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that "life and death" is a primary theme that we must clarify, and that we must really understand that life and death is the life and death of the instant. One day, Goshu came to Zen master Yui-e and said, "I have been studying Zen for many years, but have not yet succeeded. Please give me some guidance." Yui-e said, "There is no secret trick to Zen study. It's just a matter of freedom from birth and death." Goshu asked, "How does one pass through birth and death to freedom?" Raising his voice, Yui-e said, "Your every passing thought is birth and death!" At these words Goshu went into ecstasy, feeling as if he had put down a heavy burden.

According to Zen master Dogen, the founder of Japanese Soto Zen, Sakyamuni Buddha said that in twenty-four hours our life is born and dying, rising and falling, 6,400,099,980 times. So in one second, our life is born and dying around seventy thousand times. Our conscious mind cannot even imagine such an occurence. What kind of life is this? We usually think of our life as fifty years, sixty years, maybe the most around one hundred years. But what are people doing with such long lives? Zen master Dogen said that living a long life without awareness is almost a crime. On the contrary, he emphasized that even if you live one day with a clear understanding of what life is, the value of that one day is equal to many, many years of living without awareness. We are all so concerned with how long we will live. We feel that living eighty, ninety, or a hundred years is a wonderful life. Maybe so, but wonderful compared with what? Compared with those who die young? So, Buddhist practitioners must see our life clearly. The existence of this life at this very moment, what is it? Being born and dying seventy thousand times at this very moment, what is it? Is such a life different for a man, a woman, a young person, and old person, a human being, or other beings? Is it relative or absolute? Buddhist practitioners should always remember that all our usual considerations and understanding about what our life is make no sense if we a born and dying seventy thousand times in an instant. We must, by all means, with our best effort to practice to get beyond this ocean of life and death and human lives with birth-old age-sickness-death.

3

Part Three
Cultivation on Escaping
the Ocean of Life and Death

Chapter Seventeen

Summaries of Cultivation in Buddhism

I. An Overview of Cultivation in Buddhism

Cultivation in Buddhism is to put the Buddha's teachings into practice on a continued and regular basis. Cultivation in Buddhism also means to nourish the seeds of Bodhi by practicing and developing precepts, dhyana, and wisdom. Thus, cultivation in Buddhism is not soly practicing Buddha recitation or sitting meditation, it also includes cultivation of six paramitas, ten paramitas, thirty-seven aids to Enlightenment, etc. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that time is extremely precious. An inch of time is an inch of life, so do not let the time pass in vain. Someone is thinking, "I will not cultivate today. I will put it off until tomorrow." But when tomorrow comes, he will put it off to the next day. He keeps putting it off until his hair turns white, his teeth fall out, his eyes become blurry, and his ears go deaf. At that point in time, he wants to cultivate, but his body no longer obeys him. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that living in this world, we all are like fish in a pond that is evaporating. We do not have much time left. Thus, ancient virtues taught: "One day has passed, our lives are that much less. We are like fish in a shrinking pond. What joy is there in this? We should be diligently and vigorously cultivating as if our own heads were at stake. Only be mindful of impermanence, and be careful not to be lax." From beginningless eons in the past until now, we have not had good opportunity to know Buddhism, so we have not known how to cultivate. Therefore, we undergo birth and death, and after death, birth again. Oh, how pitiful! Today we have good opportunity to know Buddhism, why do we still want to put off cultivating? Sincere Buddhists! Time does not wait anybody. In the twinkling of an eye, we will be old and our life will be over!

There are as many as eighty-four thousand Dharma-doors for cultivating the Path. For the sake of understanding, we should be familiar with each one of these Dharma-doors. You should not limit yourself in just a single method of cultivation. However, for the sake of practicing, we should focus on the dharma-door that is the most

appropriate for us. “Tu” means correct our characters and obey the Buddha’s teachings. “Tu” means to study the law by reciting sutras in the morning and evening, being on strict vegetarian diet and studying all the scriptures of the Buddha, keep all the precepts; however, the most important factors in real “Tu” are to correct your character, to eliminate bad habits, to be joyful and compassionate, to build virtue. In reciting sutras, one must thoroughly understand the meaning. Furthermore, one should also practise meditation on a daily basis to get insight. For laypeople, “Tu” means to mend your ways, from evil to wholesome (ceasing transgressions and performing good deeds). According to the first patriarch Bodhidharma, “Requite hatred” is one of the four disciplinary processes. What is meant by ‘How to requite hatred?’ Those who discipline themselves in the Path should think thus when they have to struggle with adverse conditions: “During the innumerable past eons I have wandered through multiplicity of existences, never thought of cultivation, and thus creating infinite occasions for hate, ill-will, and wrong-doing. Even though in this life I have committed no violations, the fruits of evil deeds in the past are to be gathered now. Neither gods nor men can fortell what is coming upon me. I will submit myself willingly and patiently to all the ills that befall me, and I will never bemoan or complain. In the sutra it is said not to worry over ills that may happen to you, because I thoroughly understand the law of cause and effect. This is called the conduct of making the best use of hatred and turned it into the service in one’s advance towards the Path.

We can cultivate in charity. The pitiable, or poor and needy, as the field or opportunity for charity. We can also cultivate the field of religion and reverence of the Buddhas, the saints, the priesthood. We can also cultivate of happiness by doing offerings to those who are still in training in religion. Or we can cultivate by making Offerings to those who have completed their course. According to The Commentary on the Ten Stages of Bodhisattvahood, there are two paths of cultivation. The first way is “the Difficult Path”. The difficult path refers to the practices of sentient beings in the world of the five turbidities, who, through countless Buddha eras, aspire to reach the stage of non-retrogression. The difficulties are truly countless, as numerous as specks of dust or grains of sand, too numerous to imagine; however,

there are basically five major kinds of difficulties: externalists are legion, creating confusion with respect to the Bodhisattva Dharma; evil beings destroy the practitioner's good and wholesome virtues; worldly merits and blessings can easily lead the practitioner astray, so that he ceases to engage in virtuous practices; it is easy to stray onto the Arhat's path of self-benefit, which obstructs the Mind of great loving kindness and great compassion; and relying exclusively on self-power, without the aid of the Buddha's power, make cultivation very difficult and arduous; it is like the case of a feeble, handicapped person, walking alone, who can only go so far each day regardless of how much effort he expends. The second way is the Easy Path. The easy path of cultivation means that, if sentient beings in this world believe in the Buddha's words, practice Buddha Recitation and vow to be reborn in the Pure Land, they are assisted by the Buddha's vow-power and assured of rebirth. This is similar to a person who floats downstream in a boat; although the distance may be thousands of miles far away, his destination will be reached sooner or later. Similarly, a common being, relying on the power of a 'universal mornach' or a deity, can traverse the five continents in a day and a night, this is not due to his own power, but, rather, to the power of the monarch. Some people, reasoning according to 'noumenon,' or principle may say that common beings, being conditioned, cannot be reborn in the Pure Land or see the Buddha's body. The answer is that the virtues of Buddha Recitation are 'unconditioned' good roots. Ordinary, impure persons who develop the Bodhi Mind, seek rebirth and constantly practice Buddha Recitation can subdue and destroy afflictions, achieve rebirth and, depending on their level of cultivation, obtain vision of the rudimentary aspects of the Buddha (the thirty-two marks of greatness, for example). Bodhisattvas, naturally, can achieve rebirth and see the subtle, loftier aspects of the Buddha, i.e., the Dharma body. There can be no doubt about this. Thus, the Avatamsaka Sutra states: "All the various Buddha lands are equally purely adorned. Because the karmic practices of sentient beings differ, their perceptions of these lands are different."

In Buddhism, cultivation does not barely mean to shave one's head or to wear the yellow robe; nor does it mean outer practices of the body. Diligent cultivation does not only include meditation, correct sitting and controlling the breath; or that we must not be lazy, letting

days and months slip by neglectfully, we should also know how to feel satisfied with few possessions and eventually cease loking for joy in desires and passions completely. Diligent cultivation also means that we must use our time to meditate on the four truths of permanence, suffering, selflessness, and impurity. We must also penetrate deeply into the profound meaning of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness to see that all things as well as our bodies are constantly changing from becoming, to maturing, transformation, and destruction. Diligent cultivation also means to obtain correct understanding and concentration so that we can destroy narrow-mindedness. Among the basic desires and passions, narrow-mindedness has the deepest roots. Thus, when these roots are loosened, all other desires, passions, greed, anger, ignorance, and doubt are also uprooted. According to the Sutra In Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 40, the Buddha said: "A Sramana who practices the Way should not be like an ox turning a millstone because an ox is like one who practices the way with his body but his mind is not on the Way. If the mind is concentrated on the Way, one does not need the outer practices of the body." Sincere Buddhists should select a single Dharma Door and then practice according to the teachings of that Dharma Door for the remainder of the cultivator's life without changing and mixing in other practices. For example, once a person chooses to practice Pureland Buddhism, then for the entire life, he should always and often focus his energy into reciting the Buddha's virtuous name and pray to gain rebirth. If he or she chooses to practice meditation, he or she should always focus on meditation and contemplation. Thus, the wrong thing to do is to practice one Dharma Door one day and switch to another the next.

According to the Flower Adornment Sutra, Chapter 38, there are ten kinds of diligent practices of Great Enlightening Beings. Enlightening Beings who abide by these can attain the supreme practice of great knowledge and wisdom of Buddhas. First, diligent practice of giving, relinquishing all without seeking reward. Second, diligent practice of self-control, practicing austerities, having few desires, and being content. Third, diligent practice of forbearance, detaching from notions of self and other, tolerating all evils without anger or malice. Fourth, diligent practice of vigor, their thoughts, words and deeds never confused, not regressing in what they do, reaching the

ultimate end. Fifth, diligent practice of meditation, liberations, and concentrations, discovering spiritual powers, leaving behind all desires, afflictions, and contention. Sixth, diligent practice of wisdom, tirelessly cultivating and accumulating virtues. Seventh, diligent practice of great benevolence, knowing that all sentient beings have no nature of their own. Eighth, diligent practice of great compassion, knowing that all things are empty, accepting suffering in place of all sentient beings without wearying. Ninth, diligent practice to awaken the ten powers of enlightenment, realizing them without obstruction, manifesting them for sentient beings. Tenth, diligent practice of the non receding wheel of teaching, proceeding to reach all sentient beings. In summary, a straight mirror image requires a straight object. If you want to reap the "Buddhahood," you must sow the Buddha-seed. A mirror reflects beauty and ugliness as they are, the Buddha's Teachings prevail forever, knowing that requital spans three generations, obviously good deeds cause good results, evil deeds cause evil results. The wise know that it is the object before the mirror that should be changed, while the dull and ignorant waste time and effort hating and resenting the image in the mirror. Encountering good or adverse circumstances, devoted Buddhists should always be peaceful, not resent the heaven nor hate the earth. In the contrary, sincere Buddhists should strive their best to cultivate until they attain the Buddhahood.

II. The Importance of Practice in Buddhism:

It is traditional for Buddhists to honour the Buddha, to respect the Sangha and to pay homage the religious objects of veneration such as the relics of the Buddha, Buddha images, monastery, pagoda, and personal articles used by the Buddha. However, Buddhists never pray to idols. The worship of the Buddha, ancestors, and deceased parents, are encouraged. However, the word "worship" itself is not appropriate from the Buddhist point of view. The term "Pay homage" should be more appropriate. Buddhists do not blindly worship these objects and forget their main goal is to practice. Buddhists kneel before the image of the Buddha to pay respect to what the image represents, and promise to try to achieve what the Buddha already achieved 25 centuries ago, not to seek worldly favours from the image. Buddhists pay homage to the image not because they are fear of the Buddha, nor do they

supplicate for worldly gain. The most important aspect in Buddhism is to put into practice the teaching given by the Buddha. The Buddha always reminded his disciples that Buddhists should not depend on others, not even on the Buddha himself, for their salvation. During the Buddha's time, so many disciples admired the beauty of the Buddha, so the Buddha also reminded his disciples saying: "You cannot see the Buddha by watching the physical body. Those who see my teaching see me."

III. In Buddhist Point of View: Cultivation Means Changing the Karma:

Although the supreme goal of Buddhism is the supreme Enlightenment and liberation, the Buddha also taught that Buddhist practice is the source of happiness. It can lead to the end of human suffering and miseries. The Buddha was also a man like all other men, but why could he become a Great Enlightened One? The Buddha never declared that He was a Deity. He only said that all living beings have a Buddha-Nature that is the seed of Enlightenment. He attained it by renouncing his princely position, wealth, prestige and power for the search of Truth that no one had found before. As Buddhist followers, we practice Buddhist tenets, not for entreating favors but for for following the Buddha's example by changing bad karmas to good ones or no karma at all. Since people are different from one another, some are rich and intelligent, some are poor and stupid. It can be said that this is due to their individual karma, each person has his own circumstances. Buddhists believe that we reap what we have sown. This is called the law of causality or karma, which is a process, action, energy or force. Karmas of deeds, words and thoughts all produce an effect, either happiness or miseries, wealth or poverty. Karma does not mean "determinism," because if everything is predetermined, then there would be no free will and no moral or spiritual advancement. Karma is not fixed, but can be changed. It cannot shut us in its surroundings indefinitely. On the contrary, we all have the ability and energy to change it. Our fate depends entirely on our deeds; in other words, we are the architects of our karma. Cultivating in accordance with the Buddha's Teachings means we change the karma of ourselves; changing our karmas by not only giving up our bad actions or misdeeds,

but also forgiving offences directed against us by others. We cannot blame anyone else for our miseries and misfortunes. We have to face life as it is and not run away from it, because there is no place on earth to hide from karma. Performing good deeds is indispensable for our own happiness; there is no need of imploring favors from deities or simply showing repentance. Changing karma also means remembrance of karma and using wisdom to distinguish virtue from evil and freedom from constraint so that we are able to avoid evil deeds, to do meritorious deeds, or not to create any deeds at all. Changing karma also means to purify our minds rather than praying, performing rites, or torturing our bodies. Changing karma also means to change your narrow-minded heart into a heart full of love and compassion and accomplish the four boundless hearts, especially the hearts of loving-kindness and compassion. True Buddhists should always remember that sooner or later everyone has to die once. After death, what can we bring with us? We cannot bring with us any worldly possessions; only our bad or good karma will follow us like a shadow of our own.

IV. Moderation in Cultivation:

According to Zen Master Achan Chah in "A Still Forest Pool," there are three basic points of practice to work with are sense restraint, which means taking care not to indulge and attach to sensations; moderation in eating; and wakefulness. The first moderation is the sense restraint. We can easily recognize physical irregularities, such as blindness, deafness, deformed limbs, but irregularities of mind are another matter. When you begin to meditate, you see things differently. You can see the mental distortions that formerly seemed normal, and you can see danger where you did not see it before. This brings sense restraint. You become sensitive, like one who enters a forest or jungle and becomes aware of danger from poisonous creatures, thorns, and so forth. One with a raw wound is likewise more aware of danger from flies. For one who meditates, the danger is from sense objects. Sense restraint is thus necessary; in fact, it is the highest kind of virtue. The second Moderation is moderation in Eating. It is difficult to eat little or in moderation. Let learn to eat with mindfulness and sensitivity to our needs, learn to distinguish needs from desires. Training the body is not in itself self-torment. Going without sleep or

without food may seem extreme at times. We must be willing to resist laziness and defilement, to stir them up and watch them. Once these are understood, such practices are no longer necessary. This is why we should eat, sleep, and talk little, for the purpose of opposing our desires and making them reveal themselves. According to the Sekha Sutta in the Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, the Buddha confirmed his noble disciples on moderating in eating includes reflecting wisely when taking food, not for amusement, not for intoxication, not for the sake of physical beauty and attractivenes, only for the endurance and continuance of this body, for enduring discomfort, and for assisting the holy life. Considering: "Thus I shall terminate old feelings without arousing new feelings and I shall be healthy and blameless and shall live in comfort." According to the Dharmapada Sutra, verse 325, the Buddha taught: "The stupid one, who is torpid, gluttonous, sleepy and rolls about lying like a hog nourished on pig-wash, that fool finds rebirth again and again." The third moderation is the wakefulness. To establish wakefulness, effort is required constantly, not just when we feel diligent. Even if we meditate all night at times, it is not correct practice if at other times we still follow our laziness. You should constantly watch over the mind of a child, protect it from its own foolishness, teach it what is right. It is incorrect to think that at certain times we do not have the opportunity to meditate. We must constantly make the effort to know ourselves; it is as necessary as our breathing, which continues in all situations. If we do not like certain activities, such as chanting or working, and give up on them as meditation, we will never learn wakefulness.

V. Cultivation" Is Not a One-Day Affair:

People who cultivate should not be rush, thinking that we can cultivate today and become enlightened tomorrow. It is not tha easy. We must train and cultivate everyday. As long as we do not retreat, do not worry too much about progress we are making. If each day we have less and less random thoughts, less and less lust, anger and ignorance, then we are making progress. We cultivate to eliminate our bad habits and faults, cast out our defiled thoughts, and reveal our wisdom. The wisdom that each one of us once possessed, but it has been covered up by ignorance. Cultivation is not a one-day affair. We should cultivate in

thought after thought, from morning to night, month after month, and year after year with unchanging perseverance. And above all, we should cultivate sincerely every day. As we practice, we should remain calm whether we encounter demonic obstacles, adverse situations, or even favorable situations. We should maintain our vigor in both adversity and favorable situations, and we should think that all things seem to be proclaiming the wonderful dharma to us. Sincere cultivators should always remember that we are trying to reach the transcendental dharma within worldly affairs. Thus, nothing will confuse us. No situations will obstruct us. The reasons why we have been backsliding instead of advancing: when we encounter good conditions, we hesitate and feel unsure ourselves; when meeting evil conditions, we follow right along. Thus, we continue to linger on birth and death, and rebirth. We are born muddled, died confused, and do not know what we are doing, cannot figure out what life is all about.

VI. Rejection of Means of Life or Rejection of Pleasures?:

Most of us want to do good deeds; however, we are always contraditory ourselves between pleasure and cultivation. A lot of people misunderstand that religion means a denial or rejection of happiness in worldly life. In saying so, instead of being a method for transcending our limitations, religion itself is viewed as one of the heaviest forms of suppression. It's just another form of superstition to be rid of if we really want to be free. The worst thing is that nowadays, many societies have been using religion as a means of political oppression and control. They believe that the happiness we have here, in this world, is only a temporary, so they try to aim at a so-called "Almighty Creator" to provide them with a so-called eternal happiness. They deny themselves the everyday pleasures of life. They cannot enjoy a meal with all kinds of food, even with vegetarian food. Instead of accepting and enjoying such an experience for what it is, they tie themselves up in a knot of guilt "while so many people in the world are starving and miserable, how dare I indulge myself in this way of life!" This kind of attitude is just mistaken as the attitude of those who try to cling to worldly pleasures. In fact, this just another form of grasping. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that we deny to indulge in worldly pleasures so that we can eliminate "clinging" to make it easy

for our cultivation. We will never reject means of life so we can continue to live to cultivate. A Buddhist still eat everyday, but never eats lives. A Buddhist still sleeps but is not eager to sleep round the clock as a pig. A Buddhist still converse in daily life, but not talk in one way and act in another way. In short, sincere Buddhists never reject any means of life, but refuse to indulge in or to cling to the worldly pleasures because they are only causes of sufferings and afflictions.

VII.Cultivation Is as Lute Strings Turned Between Slack and Taut:

No matter how busy you are, if you believe that you need be mindful in every activity, Buddhist practitioners should perform your daily activities in a slow, calm, and relaxing manner. The ancient said: "Don't worry, everything will pass." Look at monks and Nuns, no matter what task or motion they undertake, i.e., walking, standing, sitting or lying, they do it slowly and evenly, without reluctance. When they need to speak, they speak; when they don't need to speak, they don't. The most important thing is the sincere observation of Buddhist rules. Sincere Buddhists should not follow a kind of exaggerated, frivolous attitude towards the training and discipline of Zen. It comes about, for example, when someone, based on the mere thought that he is already Buddha, comes to the conclusion that he need not concern himself with practice, a disciplined life, or enlightenment. This is an attitude can lead to a misunderstanding to the method of cultivation, particularly of the teaching of the Tao-Tung School of Zen. According to the Sutra in Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 34, one evening a Sramana was reciting the Sutra of Bequeating the Teaching by Kasyapa Buddha. His mind was mournful as he reflected repentantly on his desie to retreat. The Buddha asked him: "When you were a householder in the past, what did you do?" He replied: "I was fond of playing the lute." The Buddha said: "What happened when the strings were slack?" He replied: "They did not sound good." The Buddha then asked: "What happened when the strings were taut?" He replied: "The sounds were brief." The Buddha then asked again: "What happened when they were tuned between slack and taut?" He replied: "The sounds carried." The Buddha said: "It is the same with a Sramana who studies the Way. If his mind is harmonious, he can obtain (achieve) the Way. If he is impetuous about the Way, this impetuousness will tire out his body, and if his body is tired, his mind will give rise to afflictions. If his mind produces afflictions, then he will retreat from his practice. If he retreats from his practice, it will certainly increase his offenses. You need only be pure, peaceful, and happy and you

will not lose the Way." Remember our mind is easy to set great effort but is also easily prone to retrogression; once hearing the dharma and advice, we bravely advance with our great efforts, but when we encounter obstacles, we not only grow lax and lazy retrogression, but also change our direction and sometimes fall into heterodox ways. Sincere Buddhists should always have Diligent Cultivation and aty away from this thinking "In the first year of cultivation, the Buddha stands right before our eyes; the second year he has already returned to the West; third year if someone inquires about the Buddha or request recitations, payment is required before a few words are spoken or a few verses recited".

VIII.Should We Wait Until After Retirement to Cultivate?:

Some people believe that they should wait until after their retirement to cultivate because after retirement they will have more free time. Those people may not understand the real meaning of the word "cultivation", that is the reason why they want to wait until after retirement to cultivate. According to Buddhism, cultivation means to turn bad things into good things, or to improve your body and mind. So, when can we turn bad things into good things, or when can we improve our body and mind? Ancient virtues taught: "Do not wait until you are thirsty to dig a well, or don't wait until the horse is on the edge of the cliff to draw in the reins for it is too late; or don't wait until the boat is in the middle of the river to patch the leaks for it's too late, and so on". Most of us have the same problem of waiting and delaying of doing things. If we wait until the water reaches our navel to jump, it's too late, no way we can escape the drown if we don't know how to swim. In the same way, at ordinary times, we don't care about proper or improper acts, but wait until after retirement or near death to start caring about our actions, we may never have that chance. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that impermanence and death never wait for anybody. So, take advantage of whatever time we have at the present time to cultivate, to plant good roots and to accumulate merits and virtues.

Devout Buddhists should always remember that the three realms of Desire, Form and Formless realms scorching sentient beings, such sufferings are limitless. The triple worlds as a burning house. In the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha taught: "The three worlds are unsafe, much like a house on fire. Suffering is all pervasive, truly deserving to be terrified and frightened."

Sentient beings in the three worlds, especially those in the Saha World, are hampered constantly by afflictions and sufferings. Living crowded in the suffering conditions of this Saha World is similar to living in a house on fire, full of dangers, life can end at any moment. Even so, everyone is completely oblivious and unaware, but continues to live leisurely, chasing after the five desires, as if nothing was happening. Sincere Buddhists should always remember this and should always diligently cultivate to seek liberation. The burning house, one of the seven parables in the Wonder Lotus sutra, from which the owner tempts his heedless children by the device of the three kinds of carts (goat, deer and bullock), especially the white bullock cart. The three realms of Desire, Form and Formless realms scorching sentient beings, such sufferings are limitless. The triple worlds as a burning house. In the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha taught: "The three worlds are unsafe, much like a house on fire. Suffering is all pervasive, truly deserving to be terrified and frightened." Sentient beings in the three worlds, especially those in the Saha World, are hampered constantly by afflictions and sufferings. Living crowded in the suffering conditions of this Saha World is similar to living in a house on fire, full of dangers, life can end at any moment. Even so, everyone is completely oblivious and unaware, but continues to live leisurely, chasing after the five desires, as if nothing was happening. Sincere Buddhists should always remember this and should always diligently cultivate to seek liberation. Societies are filled with robberies, murders, rapes, frauds, deceptions, etc. All these continue without any foreseeable end. To speak of our individual mind, everyone is burdened with worries, sadness, depression, and anxieties, etc. In the Dharmapada Sutra, verse 146, the Buddha taught: "How can there be laughter, how can there be joy, when the whole world is burnt by the flames of passions and ignorance? When you are living in darkness, why wouldn't you seek the light?"

The Buddhist teaching about time is closely related to the doctrine of impermanence. In other words, time waits for no one. According to Buddhism, time is moving ceaselessly. It is ungraspable. The concept of the speed of time changes in different situations, it is relative to our state of mind. It passes more quickly when we are happy and less quickly when we are unhappy and afflictive. To Buddhists, a day in which no meritorious deeds nor meditation can be achieved is a lost day. That is equivalent with going towards your own tomb with ignorance. Practitioners of Buddha recitation should maximize all the time that we have to practice, and always remember that the intermediate goal of cultivation in Buddhism is to achieve one-pointed mind; from one-pointed mind gradually one can see one's own nature or to achieve the ultimate goal of Buddhahood.

Chapter Eighteen

Cultivation in Escaping the Ocean of Life & Death

I. An Overview of Six Paths of the Ocean of Life and Death (Birth-Death & Rebirth) of Sentient Beings:

In Buddhism, the ocean of life and death is another term for being up and down with overloaded misfortune is the original word for reincarnation which is translated as transmigration in six paths that all sentient beings have been being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortune. What are the Six Paths that all sentient beings have been being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortune? According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, all creatures in the Saha World are tied to the ceaseless round of birth-death and rebirth, that is, to the law of causation, according to which existence on any one of these planes are determined by antecedent actions. In Buddhism these planes are depicted as the spokes or segments of the "wheel of life." This wheel is set in motion by actions stemming from our basic ignorance of the true nature of existence and by karmic propensities from an incalculable past, and kept revolving by our craving for the pleasures of the senses and by our clinging to them, which leads to an unending cycle of births, deaths, and rebirths to which we remain bound. These are six paths, or six ways or conditions of sentient existence, or six miserable states (sentient beings revolve in the cycle of Birth and Death, along the six paths, life after life. These are paths of hell-dwellers, hungry ghosts, animals, titanic demons or asuras, human beings and celestials). The six realms of the samsara include the three lower gatis, or three evil paths; and the three upper gatis, or three good paths.

According to Buddhism, the passing away from one body to be reborn in another body. Where the being will be reborn depends on his accumulated good or bad karma. The belief that living beings, including man, have a series of bodily lives, only ceasing when they no longer base their happiness on any of the objects of the world. This come about when the Buddha-nature is found. This belief is very common to all Buddhists. Reincarnation means going around as the

wheel turns around. Whether the world is Samsara or Nirvana depends entirely on our state of mind. If our mind is enlightened, then this world is Nirvana; if our mind is unenlightened, then this world is Samsara. For those who strive to cultivate, samsara is Nirvana, Nirvana is samsara. I other words, the ocean of life and death or transmigation means the passing away from one body to be reborn in another body, and the same process keeps repeating in a ceaseless continuation. Where the beings will be reborn depends on his accumulated good or bad karma.

II. Cultivation in Escaping from Being Drifted Up and Down with Overloaded Misfortune in the Six Paths:

In Buddhism, escaping the ocean of life and death or escaping being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortune in the Six Paths also means escaping the Burning House in the Triple World. As mentioned above, according to Buddhist teachings, each individual living being comes into being as the result of a variety of different causes and conditions. The smallest living beings as ants, mosquitoes, or even the tiniest parasites are living beings. Every being is a combination of five elements: rupa, vedana, sanna, sankhara, and vinnana. Hence, one being is not essentially different from another, an ordinary man is not different from a perfect saint. But is the nature and proportion of each of the five constituents existing in an individual be taken into account, then one being is different from another, an ordinary man is different from a perfect saint. The combination of elements is the outcome of Karma and is happening every moment, implying that the disintegration of elements always precedes it. The elements in a combined state pass as an individual, and from time immemorial he works under misconception of a self and of things relating to a self. His vision being distorted or obscured by ignorance of the truth he can not perceive the momentary combination and disintegration of elements. On the other hand, he is subject to an inclination for them. A perfect man with his vision cleared by the Buddhist practices and culture realizes the real state of empirical things that an individual consists of the five elements and does not possess a permanent and unchanging entity called soul.

According to Buddhism, the three realms of Desire, Form and Formless realms scorching sentient beings, such sufferings are limitless. The triple worlds as a burning house. In the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha taught: “The three worlds are unsafe, much like a house on fire. Suffering is all pervasive, truly deserving to be terrified and frightened.” Sentient beings in the three worlds, especially those in the Saha World, are hampered constantly by afflictions and sufferings. Living crowded in the suffering conditions of this Saha World is similar to living in a house on fire, full of dangers, life can end at any moment. Even so, everyone is completely oblivious and unaware, but continues to live leisurely, chasing after the five desires, as if nothing was happening.

Truly speaking, the world is impermanent as master Yuren's words at the request of someone going into the service of a noble, Yuren wrote:

"When you're headed for good fortune,
don't forget to remember
that the world is inconstant."

Master Yuren continued to say: Whose body will be the kindling tomorrow?

"Looking over the fields,
I see the unknown smoke
Rising again today.
Whose body will be
The kindling tomorrow?

In the parable, there are two mice, one white, the other black, gnawing at the rope of life, i.e. day and night, or sun and moon. Once upon a time, there was a man who was traveling across a field encountered a tiger. He fled, the tiger chased after him. Coming to a precipice he caught hold of a thumb-sized root of a wild vine and swung himself down over the edge. The tiger sniffed at him from above. Trembling, the man looked down to where, far below, another tiger was waiting to eat him. Only the vine sustained him. Two mice, one white and one black little by little started to gnaw away the vine. At that time, the man saw a wild luscious strawberry near him. Grasping the vine with one hand, he plucked the strawberry with the other hand. How sweet it tasted! Sincere Buddhists should always

remember this and should always diligently cultivate to seek liberation. The burning house, one of the seven parables in the Wonder Lotus sutra, from which the owner tempts his heedless children by the device of the three kinds of carts (goat, deer and bullock), especially the white bullock cart. The three realms of Desire, Form and Formless realms scorching sentient beings, such sufferings are limitless. The triple worlds as a burning house. In the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha taught: "The three worlds are unsafe, much like a house on fire. Suffering is all pervasive, truly deserving to be terrified and frightened." Sentient beings in the three worlds, especially those in the Saha World, are hampered constantly by afflictions and sufferings. Living crowded in the suffering conditions of this Saha World is similar to living in a house on fire, full of dangers, life can end at any moment. Even so, everyone is completely oblivious and unaware, but continues to live leisurely, chasing after the five desires, as if nothing was happening. Sincere Buddhists should always remember this and should always diligently cultivate to seek liberation. Societies are filled with robberies, murders, rapes, frauds, deceptions, etc. All these continue without any foreseeable end. To speak of our individual mind, everyone is burdened with worries, sadness, depression, and anxieties, etc. In the Dharmapada Sutra, verse 146, the Buddha taught: "How can there be laughter, how can there be joy, when the whole world is burnt by the flames of passions and ignorance? When you are living in darkness, why wouldn't you seek the light?"

Devout Buddhist practitioners should always remember that if we want to escape the burning house in the triple world, besides practicing meditation, we should do a lot of good deeds, for the level of mind stillness depends not only on methods of zen, but also greatly depends the good deeds that we accomplished. If we are not completely emancipated, our happiness in meditation also synonymous with the happiness that we did for others. Therefore, a zen practitioner must be the one who always gives the happiness, peace, and mindfulness to others all his life. In other words, deside the effort for meditation, zen practitioners should always try to do many good deeds, for good deeds will support meditation result very well.

In Buddhist teachings, there are eighty-four thousand dharma doors that can help practitioners in cultivation; however, there are some

typical and practical methods in cultivation to escape the ocean of life and death as follows: ***First, Cultivation on Eliminating of Poisonous Demons:*** Buddhism also calls these poisonous demons as robbers. According to Buddhism, poisonous demons themselves are major causes that widely open six doors that push beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down in the ocean of life and death. Therefore, cultivation on eliminating of poisonous demons is one of typical and practical methods that can help practitioners closing six doors that cause beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down in the ocean of life and death. Therefore, cultivation on eliminating of poisonous demons also means to close six doors that cause beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down in the ocean of life and death. ***Second, Cultivation in Subduing of Greed, Anger and Delusion:*** In Buddhist teachings, three poisons of greed, hatred and ignorance do not only cause our afflictions, but also prevent us from tasting the pure and cool flavor of emancipation (liberation). Therefore, in Buddhist cultivation, subduing of of greed, anger and delusion is one of the most wonderful methods in extingishing the burning house in the triple world. Practitioners should always remember that the karma of greed, anger and delusion manifest themselves in many forms, which are impossible to describe fully. ***Third, Cultivation in Extinguish the Burning House in the Triple World:*** In cultivation, wanting to extinguish the burning house in the triple world, practitioners should also be always careful with heedlessness and giving free rein to one's emotion because they are also great obstacles on our path of cultivation. However, extingishing the burning house in the triple world is not an easy matter, nor is it a matter of one or two days. However, wanting to escape the ocean of life and death, we must, by all means, to extinguish the burning house in the triple world right now, right here, right in this very life. Besides, wanting to extinguish the burning house in the triple world, practitioners should also be always careful with arrogance, doubt, wrong views, and envy. In addition, practitioners must realize the state of suffering caused by arrogance, doubt, wrong views, and envy. In fact, once we make up our mind in cultivation, we should try to see the real face of pride or arrogance, doubt, wrong views, and envy. Practitioners should also always remember that arrogance, doubt, wrong views, and envy are some typical robbers among the ten most

dangerous robbers in our path of cultivation. In short, in order to achieve the ends of peace, mindfulness, hapiness, and eventual emancipation or escaping the ocean of life and death. practitioners should always try to subdue these ten robbers. ***Fourth, Cultivation of Body-Mouth-Mind:*** According to Buddhist teachings, Body-Speech-Mind play a considerable role in widely opening six doors that cause beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down in the ocean of life and death. If we want to have more peace, mindfulness, and happiness in our daily life, in addition to remembering about ten robbers: greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, sexual misconducts, and lying which are always waiting to harm and to destroy completely our path of cultivation, lay practitioners should always cultivate our own body-mouth-mind in all circumstances and at all times. ***Fifth, Closing Doors of Sense-organs in Daily Activities:*** In Buddhist teachings, the main goal of Buddhist cultivation is firmly preventing robbers' infiltration by closing doors of sense-organs in daily activities; for sense restraint is not only the most effective way to subdue these ten robbers of desires-anger-ignorance-arrogance-doubt-wrong views-killing-stealing-sexual misconduct-lying, but it is also one of the most wonderful methods to escape the ocean of birth and death. As a matter of fact, in Buddhist teachings, six sense organs together with six entrances cause to flare up all kinds of fires of afflictions, from the fires of greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, to the fires of killing, stealing, committing sexual misconducts, and lying, and so on; therefore, in order to achieve the ends of peace, mindfulness, hapiness, and eventual emancipation. Practitioners should always try to prevent the infiltration of these above mentioned ten robbers. In Buddhist cultivation, although the main goal of Buddhist practitioners is of course to attain the ultimate enlightenment and emancipation, the immediate goal we must achieve is the attaining of happiness in the midst of the world which is full of sufferings and afflictions. In order to achieve this immediate goal, practitioners' every moment in life must be moment of living and cultivating in firmly preventing the infiltration of robbers of afflictions by sense restraint or by partly closing the six sense doors; for this is the most effecient and wonderful way to reduce afflictions; and this is also one of the most wonderful methods of escaping the ocean of life and death. ***Sixth,***

Cultivation on Eight Consciousnesses: In Buddhism, "Vijnana" means cognition, discrimination, consciousness, but as any one of these does not cover the whole sense contained in Vijnana. Relative knowledge. This term is usually used as contrasted to Jnana in purely intellectual sense. Jnana is transcendental knowledge dealing with such subjects as immortality, non-relativity, the unattained, etc., whereas Vijnana is attached to duality of things. In short, once practitioners thoroughly understand that consciousness means the art of distinguishing, or perceiving, or recognizing, discerning, understanding, comprehending, distinction, intelligence, knowledge, learning, it is interpreted as the "mind," mental discernment, perception, in contrast with the object discerned, then practitioners can easily cultivate the consciounesses. Finally, practitioners should always remember that consciousnesses are not an intellectual concept, nor are they another thought to played with in our mind. They are states of mind, specific qualities of consciousnesses or awarenesses to be attained through cultivation. In order to cultivate our consciousnesses, we have to exert a great deal of effort to cultivate on them. Especially, we have to train our mind and transform our basic attitude towards others. Thus, in Buddhist cultivation, to cultivate eight consciousnesses is a wonderful method of escape from six doors that cause beings to be sinking in the ocean of life and death. ***Seventh, Being Always Alert to Fueling Materials for All Fires of Afflictions in Sentient Beings:*** One of the most wonderful methods of escaping the ocean of life and death is being always alert to fueling materials for all fires of afflictions in sentient beings. According to Buddhism, practitioners should always remember that the six senses or six organs of sense are likened to six wild creatures in confinement and always struggling to escape. Only when they are domesticated will they be happy. So is it with the six senses and the taming power of Buddha-truth. So is it with the six senses and the taming power of Buddha-truth. One of the most important purposes of practitioners is to keep the six sense organs pure. The six organs and their purification in order to develop their unlimited power and interchange (in the case of Buddha). This full development enables the eye to see everything in a great chiliocosm from its highest heaven down to its lowest hells and all the beings, past, present, and future with all the karma of each. According to Buddhist teachings, sufferings, afflictions and adverse

circumstances are triplet and they always go together. Practitioners should always remember that such cases occur because of the power of evil karma. The Buddhas view suffering and adverse circumstances as their teacher, thus achieving Ultimate Enlightenment. Likewise, we should consider illness as medicine, to escape the ocean of birth and death. We should realize that human beings are bound by all kinds of karmic afflictions. Without the sufferings of poverty and illness, they will, by nature, pursue the worlds of sight and sound, fame anf profit, finding it difficult to let go. Who would then willingly turn around to watch and ponder the state of perdition to come? The sage Mencius once said, “Those who will be entrusted with great talks should first endure hardship both in body and mind, suffering hunger and destitution or failure in their undertakings. Only then will they be able to forge their character, develop patience and endurance and attain outstanding abilities, beyond the ken of the multitude. Therefore, we should realize that human character is usually forged in adversity. If adversity cannot be avoided, we should remain at peace and practice forbearance. Moreover, in speaking of great tasks, the sage Mencius was referring merely to mundane undertakings. Even so, enduring hardship is necessary for success; how much more so when lowly beings such as ourselves undertake the great task of achieving Buddhahood and rescuing sentient beings! If we are not tested to a certain extent by financial hardship and disease, our worldly delusions will know no bounds and our Pure Land practice will be difficult to perfect. With our Mind-mirror clouded, we will revolve for many eons in the evil realms; not knowing when we will ever achieve liberation! The ancients have said: 'If it were not for a period of penetrating cold, the plum blossom could never develop its exquisite perfume!' This is the meaning of what I said earlier. We should persevere in reciting the Buddha's name, to eradicate past karma swiftly and avoid developing a mind of afflictions, resenting the Heavens, blaming our fellow beings, considering the law of Cause and Effect as a fairy tale and rejecting the Buddhas and their teachings as ineffective. We should know that from time immemorial, we have all created immeasurable evil karma. As the Avatamsaka Sutra states: 'If evil karma had physical form, the empty space of the ten directions could not contain it.' Thus, how can haphazard, intermittent cultivation possibly annihilates all afflictions

and obstructions?" In short, cultivation on subduing and reducing afflictions is one of the most wonderful methods of escaping the ocean of life and death. ***Eighth, Cultivation of Kusala Dharmas & By Staying Away from Akusala Dharmas:*** According to Buddhist teachings, cultivation of kusala dharmas staying away from akusala dharmas, and cultivation of unwholesome mental states, including fifty-one unwholesome mental states that are interactive with the mind is one of the most wonderful methods of escaping the ocean of life and death. In fact, in order to attain enlightenment and emancipation (liberation), the number one priority is to reduce afflictions and to eliminate these defilements by cultivation of kusala dharmas and staying away from akusala dharmas on a regular basis. In other words, in Buddhist cultivation, wanting to escape the ocean of life and death, practitioners should always cultivate kusala dharmas and by stay away from akusala dharmas. Practitioners should always remember that our mind tremendously and profoundly influences and affects the body. If we allow it to function freely to external conditions, it can cause unmeasurable disasters. The path of cultivation of any Buddhist is a war between wholesome and unwholesome mental states. And most of the time, unwholesome mental factors keep attacking any devout Buddhists. Buddhist teaching (Buddhism) is eay to say, but not easy to do or to practice. However, when we really want to cultivate, we have no other choice but trying to let go all unwholesome factors, for being able to do this also means that we have already pushed away great obstacles on our own path of cultivation. In short, according to Buddhist teachings, cultivation of unwholesome mental states is one of the most wonderful methods of escaping the ocean of life and death. ***Ninth, Always Walking with the Buddha:*** According to Buddhism, walking with the Buddha means advancing to the direction of enlightenment and emancipation with a life of peace, mindfulness and happiness. While walking with dust guests means entering into the ocean of life and death. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that it is due to lack of an enlightened mind that conflicts of diverse kinds arise in our mind. Thus, achieving of an enlightened mind or walking with the Buddha in the middle of all kinds of differences and distinctions in nowadays busy life is not only extremely important and essential for any Buddhist practitioners; but it is also a wonderful mean of escaping the ocean of life and death. ***Tenth, Cultivation with a Mind That Always Lest Go:*** In Buddhist cultivation, the Buddha advises practioners to do everything with a mind that lets go. Do not expect any praise or reward. If we let go a little, we will have a little peace. If we let go a lot, we will have a lot of peace. If we let go completely, we will know complete peace and freedom. In other words, cultivation of letting go is one of the most wonderful

methods of escaping the ocean of life and death that can be fully achieved right in this very life. ***Eleventh, Always Be the Self-master:*** According to Buddhism, it is due to lack of self-mastery that conflicts of diverse kinds arise in our mind. Thus, be the self-master in the middle of all kinds of differences and distinctions is not only extremely important and essential for any Buddhist practitioners; but it is also a wonderful mean of escaping the ocean of life and death. ***Twelfth, Always Try to Subjugatie the ghost of ignorance:*** According to Buddhism, it is the subjugation of a ghost of ignorance that prevents beings advancing to the direction of enlightenment and emancipation with a life of peace, mindfulness and happiness; and that very subjugation of a ghost of ignorance pushes beings into the ocean of life and death. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that it is due to ignorance, human beings cannot enlighten their mind so conflicts of diverse kinds arise in our mind. In cultivation, the subjugation of a ghost of ignorance means advancing to the direction of enlightenment and emancipation with a life of peace, mindfulness and happiness. This is not only one of the extremely important and essential facts for any Buddhist practitioners; but it is also a wonderful mean of escaping the ocean of life and death.

Besides above-mentioned methods, in cultivation to escape the ocean of life and death, practitioners should also pay attention to some other facts that play very important roles in pushing sentient beings into the ocean of life and death such as the five turbidities in the evil Saha World, external states, internal realms, afflictions, the fame and wealth, the so called "I" and "Mine", and eight mad winds, and so on… In fact, the five turbidities in the evil Saha World cause sentient beings being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortunes in the ocean of life and death; external states and internal realms are also major agents that keep sentient beings being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortunes in the ocean of life and death. In this life, the bigger the fame and wealth, the larger the ocean of births and deaths. The fame and wealth themselves have brought immeasurable sufferings and afflictions to sentient beings; and afflictions are the most dangerous robbers that always cause beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortunes in the ocean of life and death. Besides, it is the so called "I" and "Mine" that have pushed human beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortunes in the ocean of life and death. In addition, eight mad winds are also playing not a small role in swirling and causing human beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortunes in the ocean of life and death.

Chapter Nineteen

Impacts of Organs-States-Consciuosnesses in Life & Cultivation Aims to Escape the Ocean of Life and Death

I. An Overview of Organs-States-Consciuosnesses in Buddhism:

An Overview of Organs: The Sanskrit term Indriya means organs of sense; Indriya means faculty of sense; Indriya also means bodily and mental power. Spiritual faculties or power of the spirituality. In natural science, indriya means root, or source which is capable of producing or growing, as the eye is able to produce knowledge, as faith is able to bring forth good works, as human nature is able to produce good or evil karma. The six senses comprise of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Practitioners should always consider the six senses as objects of meditation practices. According to Bhikkhu Bodhi in Abhidhamma, in the compendium of mixed categories there are six roots: greed, hatred, delusion, non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion. According to Bikkhu Piyananda in The Gems of Buddhism Wisdom, you must always be aware of the sense organs such as eye, ear, nose, tongue and body and the contact they are having with the outside world. You must be aware of the feelings that are arising as a result of this contact: i) Eye is now in contact with forms (rupa). ii) Ear is now in contact with sound. iii) Nose is now in conatct with smell. iv) Tongue is now in contact with taste. v) Body is now in contact with touching. vi) Mind is now in contact with all things (dharma).

The six faculties are the main reasons that cause human beings to fall into hells, to be reborn in the realm of the hungry ghosts, or animals, asuras, devas, or human beings, etc. It is agreeable that the six faculties that help us maintain our daily activities, but they are also the main factors that bring sufferings and afflictions to our body and mind. They are the main agents that cause us to create unwholesome karma, and eventually we will fall into evil ways because of them. Do not think that the eyes are that great, just because they help us see things.

It is exactly because of their help that we give rise to all kinds of sufferings and afflictions. For instance, when we see an attractive person of the opposite sex, we become greedy for sex. If we do not get what we want, we will be afflicted; and if we get what we want, we will also be afflicted. The other faculties, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind are the same way. They make one give rise to many sufferings and afflictions. Therefore, the Buddha advised his disciples thus: “You should cultivate until you are unaware of heaven above, people in between, and earth below.” If we cultivate until the time heaven, earth, people, east, west, south, north, etc., can no longer impact our six faculties, then at that point we are liberated from all hindrances.

An Overview of Objects: A prospect, region, territory, surroundings, views, circumstances, environment, area, field, sphere, environments and conditions, i.e., the sphere of mind, the sphere of form for the eye, of sound for the ear, etc. In Buddhism, the word "object" has many meanings, such as scene, environment, domain, sphere, object, understanding, etc. Zen Buddhists seemed to have a special usage of this word; for instance, a realm has not yet arisen (ching pu sheng) means a certain specific experience of Zen which has not yet arisen in the disciple. Thus "realm" means the specific experience or understanding within one's mind, which, of course, can be referentially treated as an "object" visualized or comprehended by the mind. Practitioners should always remember that all things and conditions come together and disintegrate like a lightning, an illusion or a phantom. Practitioners should remember that external states or external realms are realms which are not created by the mind, but come from the outside. For this reason, if you can remain unperturbed by external states, then you are currently cultivating. On the contrary, if you are turned by external states, then you will fall. External states are also external conditions or circumstances which stir or tempt one to do evil. Problems and dissatisfaction do not develop because of external conditions, but from our own mind. If we don’t have internal peace, nothing from outside can bring us happiness. There are different kinds of regions, states or conditions.

According to the Mind-Only theories, different realms mean the ideas, or mental states which arise according to the various objects or conditions toward which the mind is directed. According to the Fa-Hsiang School, this group of

elements falls under the general category of “mental function” which has five elements: desire, verification, recollection, meditation, and wisdom. Gocara means experience, mental attitude. Gocara literally means “a range for cattle,” or “a pasturage,” is a field for action and an object of sense. In the Lankavatara Sutra, it means a general attitude one assumes toward the external world, or a better spiritual atmosphere in which one’s being is enveloped. In cultivation, practitioners should not try to find things behind the mirror, this indicates someone who fulfils what was promised in jest, only wastes the time without any result. As mentioned above, external states or external realms are realms which are not created by the mind, but come from the outside. However, the wind moving usually causes our minds moving. In Zen, the question for Zen practitioners is that the flag moving, the wind moving, or our minds moving? Several monks were arguing back and forth about the flag and the wind without reaching the truth in front of the Fa Hsin monastery in Kuang Chou. The sixth patriarch, Hui-Neng, said to them: “It is not the wind moving, neither the flag moving. It is your own minds that are moving."

An Overview of Consciousnesses: “Vijnana” is another name for “Consciousness.” Theravada considered the six kinds of consciousness as “Vijnana.” Mahayana considered the eight kinds of consciousness as “Vijnana.” Externalists considered “vijnana” as a soul. Consciousness is another name for mind. Consciousness means the art of distinguishing, or perceiving, or recognizing, discerning, understanding, comprehending, distinction, intelligence, knowledge, learning. It is interpreted as the “mind,” mental discernment, perception, in contrast with the object discerned. According to Buddhism, our “Nature” is the “Buddha”. The “Consciousness” is the “Spirit”, the “Intention” or “Mano-vijnana” is the “Discriminating Mind”, and the “Mind” is what constantly engages in idle thinking. The “Nature” is originally perfect and bright, with no conception of self, others, beauty, or ugliness; no falling into numbers and discriminations. But as soon as there is “Consciousness”, one falls into numbers and discriminations. The “Intention” or “Mano-vijnana” also makes discriminations, and it is the sixth consciousness. It is relatively turbid, while the seventh and eighth consciousnesses are relatively purer. There are eight kinds of consciousness: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, klista-mano-vijnana, and alaya-vijnana. Fundamentally speaking, consciousness is not of eight kinds, although there are eight kinds in name. We could say there is a single headquarters with eight departments under it. Although there are eight departments, they are controlled by just one single headquarters. “Vijnana” translated as “consciousness” is the act of distinguishing or discerning including understanding, comprehending, recognizing, intelligence, knowledge. There

are eight consciousnesses. The first five arise as a result of the interaction of the five sense organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and mind) and the five dusts (Gunas); the sixth consciousness comes into play, all kinds of feelings, opinions and judgments will be formed (the one that does all the differentiating); the seventh consciousness (Vijnana) is the center of ego; the eighth consiousness is the Alayagarbha (a lại da), the storehouse of consciousness, or the storehouse of all deeds or actions (karmas), whether they are good, bad or neutral. "Vijnana" also means cognition, discrimination, consciousness, but as any one of these does not cover the whole sense contained in Vijnana. "Vijnana" also means relative knowledge. This term is usually used as contrasted to Jnana in purely intellectual sense. Jnana is transcendental knowledge dealing with such subjects as immortality, non-relativity, the unattained, etc., whereas Vijnana is attached to duality of things.

II. Relationships Between the Sense Organs & Six Sense-Objects in Buddhist Point of View:

An Overview of Six Sense-Objects in Buddhist Teachings: The six objective fields include the six senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch and idea or thought; rupa, form and colour, is the field of vision; sound of hearing, scent of smelling, the five flavours of tasting, physical feeling of touch, and mental presentation of discernment or element with no manifestation (Avijnapti-rupa (skt). Dharmas include a substantial form analyzed to utmost, the smallest atom; an unsubstantial form as aerial space or color analyzed to utmost, the remotest atom; a perceptive form conceived at ordination, the innermost impression; a momentary illusive form; and a form produced by meditation. Buddhist practitioners should always remember the relationship between the five faculties and the Six modes of sense in the path of their own cultivation. First, eye is now in contact with forms (rupa). Second, ear is now in contact with sound. Third, nose is now in conatct with smell. Fourth, tongue is now in contact with taste. Fifth, body is now in contact with touching. Six objects (inherent qualities produced by the objects and organs of sense, i.e. sight or visible objects, sounds, smell, taste, touch, and idea, thought, or mental objects). The six sense-objects collide with their respective sense-organs giving rise to six types of consciousness. First, the visual object in cludes the quality of form, color, or sexual attraction. Second, the audible object or sounds (saddarammana-p). Third, odourferous object or Grandharammana means the atom or element of smell. Fourth, the sapid object or taste (rasarammana-p). Organ of taste does the function of taste (sweet, salty, sour, hot, bitter...). Fifth, the tactile object or Phassarammana or touch (tangible) means the medium or quality of touch. Sixth, mental object or

object of the mind or of mind-sense, or thought that proceed from contact with sensible objects in the mind.

Relationships Between the Sense Organs & Six Sense-Objects In Buddhist Point of View: Ordinarily speaking, the abiding places of the sense organs, saying more exactly, the abiding places of six sense organs are the six objects; but in reality, the six sense organs work with six objects to make the twelve entrances. It is to say, the twelve entrances are twelve entries or places, which include six sense-organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind) and six objects which are corresponding to the six senses (forms, sounds, scents, tastes, textures, and mental objects). According to the Surangama Sutra, book Three, the Buddha explained to Ananda why he said that the twelve places were basically the wonderful nature of true suchness, the treasury of the Thus Come One. ***First, the Place of the Eye and Form:*** The Buddha taught: "Ananda! Look again at the trees in the Jeta Grove and the fountains and pools. What do you think? Do these things come into being because the forms are produced and thus the eyes see, or because the eyes produce the characteristics of form? Ananda! If the organ of sight were to produce the characteristics of form, then the nature of form would be obliterated when you see emptiness, which is not form. Once it was obliterated, everything that is manifest would disappear. Since the characteristics of form would then be absent, who would be able to understand the nature of emptiness. The same is true of emptiness. If, moreover, the defiling objects of form were to produce the eye's seeing, then seeing would perish upon looking at emptiness, which is not form, and once it perished, everything would disappear. Then who would be able to understand emptiness and form? Therefore, you should know that neither seeing nor form nor emptiness has a location, and thus the two places of 'form and seeing' are empty and false. Their origin is not in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously." ***Second, the Place of the Ear and Sound:*** The Buddha taught: "Ananda! Listen again to the drum being beaten in the Jeta grove when the food is ready. The assembly gathers as the bell is struck. The sounds of the bell and the drum follow one another in succession. What do you think? Do these things come into existence because the sound comes to the region of the ear, or because the ear goes to the place of the sound? Again, Ananda, suppose that the sound comes to the region of the ear. Similarly, when I go to beg for food in the city of Shravasti, I am no longer in the Jeta Grove. If the sound definitely goes to the region of Ananda's ear, then neither Maudgalyayana nor Kasyapa would hear it, and even less the twelve hundred and fifty Sramanas who, upon hearing the sound of the bell, come to the dining hall at the same time. Again, suppose that the ear goes to the region of the sound. Similarly, when I return to the Jeta grove, I am no longer in the city of

Sravasti. When you hear the sound of the drum, your ear will already have gone to the place where the drum is beaten. Thus, when the bell peals, you will not hear the sound, even the less that of the elephants, horses, cows, sheep, and all the other various sounds around you. If there is no coming or going, there will be no hearing either. Therefore, you should know that neither hearing nor sound a location, and thus the two places of 'hearing and sound' are empty and false. Their origin is not in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously." ***Third, the Place of Nose and Smell:*** The Buddha taught: "Moreover, Ananda, you smell the chandana in this censer. You sniff the burning incense burning. When one particle of this incense is lit, it can be smelled simultaneously through forty miles around the city of Sravasti. What do you think? Is this fragrance produced from the chandana wood? Is it produced in your nose? Or does it arise within emptiness? Again, Ananda! Suppose this fragrance is produced from your nose. What is said to be produced from the nose should come forth from the nose. Your nose is not chandana, so how can the nose have the fragrance of chandana? When you say you smell fragrance, it should enter your nose. For the nose to emit fragrance is not the meaning of smelling. Suppose it is produced from within emptiness. The nature of emptiness is everlasting and unchanging, and so the fragrance should be eternally present. What need should there to be to rely on burning the dry wood in the censer? Suppose it is produced from the wood. Noe, the nature of this incense is such that it gives off smoke when it is burned. If the nose smells it, it should be filled with smoke. The smoke rises into the air, and before it has reached the distance, how is it that the fragrance is already being smelled at a distance of forty miles? Therefore, you should know that neither the fragrance nor the nose's smelling has a location, and so the two places of smelling and fragrance are empty and false. Their origin is not in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously." ***Fourth, the Place of the Tongue and Taste:*** The Buddha taught: "Ananda! Twice everyday you take your bowl along with the rest of the assembly, and among what you receive may be things of supreme flavor, such as curds, butter milk, and clarified butter. What do you think? Are these flavors produced from emptiness, do they come forth from the tongue, or are they produced from the food? Again, Ananda, suppose that the flavors came from your tongue; now there is only one tongue in your mouth. When that tongue had already become the flavor of curds, then it would not change if it encountered some dark rock-candy. Suppose it did not change, that would not be what is called knowing tastes. Suppose it did change, the tongue is not many substances, and how could one tongue know so many tastes? Suppose it were produced from the food. The food does not have consciousness; how could it know tastes? Moreover, if the food itself were to recognize them that

would be the same as someone else eating. Then what connection would that have with what is called your recognition of tastes? Suppose it were produced in emptiness. When you eat emptiness, what flavor does it have? Suppose that emptiness had the flavor salt. Then since your tongue was salty, your face would also be salty, and likewise everyone in the world would be like fish in the sea. Since you would be constantly influenced by salt, you would never know tastelessness. If you did not recognize tastelessness, you would not know anything at all. How could that be what is called taste? Therefore, you should know that neither flavors nor the tongue's tasting has a location; and, so the two places of tasting and flavor are empty and false. Their origin is not in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously." ***Fifth, the Place of the Body and Touches:*** The Buddha taught: "Ananda! Early every morning you rub your head with your hand. What do you think? When there is a sensation of the rubbing, where does the ability in the hands or is it in the head? If it were in the hands, then the head would have no knowledge of it, and how could that be what is called touch? If it were in the head, then the hands would be useless, and how could that be what is called touch? If each had it, then you, Ananda, would have two bodies. If they were two substances, to which would the touch belong? The one which was capable of touch would not be the one that was touched. The one that was touched would not be the one that was capable of touch. Nor should it be that the touch came into being between you and emptiness. Therefore, you should know that neither the sensation of touch nor the body has a location, and so the two places of the body and touch are empty and false. Their origin is not in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously." ***Sixth, the Place of Mind and Dharmas:*** The Buddha taught: "Ananda! Your mind is always conditioned by three qualities, good, bad, and indeterminate, which produce patterns of dharmas. Ananda! Are these dharmas produced by the mind, or do they have a special place apart from the mind? Ananda! If they were the mind, the dharmas would not be its defiling objects. Since they would not be conditions of the mind, how could you say that they had a location? Suppose they were to have a special place apart from the mind, then would the dharmas themselves be able to know? If they were to have a sense of knowing, they would be called a mind. If they were something other than you, they would be someone else's mind, since they are not defiling objects. If they were the same as you, they would be your own mind. But how could your mind stand apart from you? Suppose they were to have no sense of knowing; yet these defiling objects are not forms, sounds, smells, or tastes; they are neither cold nor warmth, nor the characteristic of emptiness. Where would they be located? We have established that they are represented in neither form nor emptiness; nor is it likely that they exist somewhere in the human realm beyond emptiness, for if

they did the mind could not be aware of them. Whence, then, would they aise? Therefore, you should know that neither dharmas nor the mind has a location, and, so the two places of mind and dharmas are empty and false. Their origin is not in causes and conditions, nor do their natures arise spontaneously."

III. The Five Aggregates and Sense Organs-States-Consciounsses:

"Skandha" in Sanskrit means "group, aggregate, or heap." In Buddhism, Skandha means the trunk of a tree, or a body. Skandha also means the five aggregates or five aggregates of conditioned phenomena (constituents), or the five causally conditioned elements of existence forming a being or entity. According to Buddhist philosophy, each individual existence is composed of the five elements and because they are constantly changing, so those who attempt to cling to the "self" are subject to suffering. Though these factors are often referred to as the "aggregates of attachment" because they are impermanent and changing, ordinary people always develop desires for them. According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are five aggregates (Five Skandhas). The aggregates which make up a human being. The five skandhas are the roots of all ignorance. They keep sentient beings from realizing their always-existing Buddha-Nature. The five aggregates are considered as maras or demons fighting against the Buddha-nature of men. In accordance with the Dharma, life is comprised of five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, mental formation, consciousness). Matter plus the four mental factors classified below as feeling, perception, mental formation and consciousness combined together from life. The real nature of these five aggregates is explained in the Teaching of the Buddha as follows: "Matter is equated to a heap of foam, feeling is like a bubble, perception is described as a mirage, mental formations are like a banana tree and consciousness is just an illusion.

Aggregate of Matter or Aggregate of Form which comprises of four elements of our own body and other material objects such as solidity, fluidity, heat and motion comprise matter). Material or physical factors. The aggregate of form includes the five physical sense organs and the corresponding physical objects of the sense organs (the eyes and visible objects, the ears and sound, the nose and smell, the tongue and taste, the skin and tangible objects). Matter is form, appearance, object or material shape. There are several different categories of rupa. Form is used more in the sense of "substance," or "something occupying space which will resist replacement by another form." So it has extension, it is limited and conditioned. It comes into existence when conditions are matured, as Buddhists would say, and staying as long as they

continue, pass away. Form is impermanent, dependent, illusory, relative, antithetical, and distinctive. Things with shape and features are forms. Forms include all colors which can dim our eyes. Ordinarily speaking, we are confused with forms when we see them, hear sounds and be confused by them, smell scents and be confused by them, taste flavors and be confused by them, or feel sensations and be confused by them. In the Classic of the Way and Its Virtue, it is said: "The five colors blind the eyes; the five musical notes deafen the ears; and the five flavors dull the palate." There are two kinds of rupa: Inner rupa as the organs of sense (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body). Outer rupa as the objects of sense (colour, sound, smell, taste, touch). There are three kinds of rupa: Visible objects (white, blue, yellow, red, etc.). Invisible objects (sound, smell, taste, touch). Invisible immaterial or abstract objects. There are also ten kinds of rupa: Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, color, sound, smell, taste, and touch. In the Heart Sutra, the Buddha also taught: "Matter is just the immaterial, the immaterial is just matter (form is emptiness and the very emptiness is form/rupam eva sunyata, sunyataiva rupam). This phenomenal world or form is emptiness, and emptiness is truly the phenomenal world. Emptiness is not different from the phenomenal world; the phenomenal world is not different from emptiness. What is the phenomenal world that is emptiness, what is emptiness that is the phenomenal world." Devout Buddhists should always remember that the nature of rupa or matter (character of the visible or material) is concealing and misleading sentient beings. The seeming is always concealing the reality. All visible objects are the realm of vision or form. Besides, Material appearance, external manifestation, the visible or corporeal features and the flavour of form means sexual attraction, or love of women. ***Aggregate of Feeling*** is knowledge obtained by the senses, feeling sensation. It is defined as mental reaction to the object, but in general it means receptivity, or sensation. Feeling is also a mind which experiences either pleasure, unpleasure or indifference (pleasant, unpleasant, neither pleasant nor unpleasant). The Aggregate of Feelings refers to the feelings that we experience. For instance, a certain state arises, we accept it without thinking about it, and we feel comfortable or uncomfortable. When we eat some delicious food and its flavor makes us feel quite pleasant, this is what we mean by feelings. If we wear a fine suit and it makes us feel quite attractive, this is also what we mean by feelings. If we live in a nice house that we feel like it, this is a feeling. If we drive a nice car that we love to have, this also a feeling. All experiences that our body accepts and enjoys are considered to be the Aggregate of Feelings. When we meet attractive objects, we develop pleasurable feelings and attachment which create karma for us to be reborn in samsara. In the contrary, when we meet undesirable objects, we develop painful or unpleasurable feelings which also create karma

for us to be reborn in samsara. When we meet objects that are neither attractive nor unattractive, we develop indifferent feelings which develop ignorant self-grasping, also create karma for us to be reborn in samsara. All actions performed by our body, speech and mind are felt and experienced, Buddhism calls this "Feeling" and the Buddha confirmed in the Twelve Nidanas that "Feeling" creates karma, either positive or negative, which causes rebirths in samsara. Buddhist practitioners should consider "Feelings" as objects of meditation practices. To contemplate various kinds of feelings such as pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feelings. To understand thoroughly how these feelings arise, develop after their arising, and pass away. To contemplate that "feelings" only arise when there is contact between the senses. To contemplate all of the above to have a better understanding of "feelings." No matter what kinds of feelings, pleasant, unpleasant or indifference, they all lead to sufferings. Sensation of physical objects, or three states of sensation (vedana). Karma of pleasure and pain of the physical body. Sensation of mental objects or Karma of the mental or the mind, i.e. anxiety, joy, etc. Aggregate of feeling or sensation of three kinds pleasant, unpleasant and indifferent. When an object is experienced, that experience takes on one of these emotional tones, either of pleasure, of displeasure or of indifference. The five vedanas or sensations: Limited to mental emotion includes sorrow and joy. Limited to the senses includes pain and pleasure. Limited to both mental emotion and the senses include indifference. According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are six groups of feeling: First, Cakkhu-samphassaja-vedana or the Feeling based on eye-contact. Second, feeling based on ear-contact. Third, feeling based on nose-contact. Fourth, feeling based on tongue-contact. Fifth, feeling based on body-contact. Sixth, feeling based on mind-contact. Buddhist Practitioners should think over carefully the Buddha's Teachings on the 'Three Kinds of Feeling'. In order to provide answers to layperson Visakha on the cultivation of Buddhist practitioners of 'Body-Mouth-Mind', Bhikhuni Dhammadinna explained in the Culavedalla Sutta (the Shorter Set of Questions-and-Answers), in Majjhima Nikaya, book 44: "Threre are three kinds of feeling: pleasant feeling, painful feeling, and neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling. What is pleasant feeling? What is painful feeling? What is neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling? Visakha, whatever is experienced physically or mentally as pleasant and gratifying is pleasant feeling. Whatever is experienced physically or mentally as painful and hurting is painful feeling. Whatever is experienced physically or mentally as neither gratifying nor hurting is neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling. Pleasant feeling is pleasant in remaining, and painful in changing. Painful feeling is painful in remaining and pleasant in changing. Neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling is pleasant in occurring together with knowledge,

and painful in occurring without knowledge. The latent tendency to passion lies latent in pleasant feeling. The latent tendency to irritation lies latent in painful feeling. The latent tendency to ignorance lies latent in neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling. However, the latent tendency to passion does not necessary lie latent in all pleasant feeling; the latent tendency to irritation does not necessary lie latent in all painful feeling; and the latent tendency to ignorance does not necessary lie latent in all neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling. To be able to achieve these, the latent tendency to irritation is to be abandoned in pleasant feeling, the latent tendency to irritation is to be abandoned in painful feeling, and the latent tendency to ignorance is to be abandoned in neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling. When practitioners quite withdraw from sensuality, and withdraw from unskillful qualities, they enter and remain in the first jhana: rapture and pleasure born from withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought and evaluation. With that they abandon passion. No latent tendency to passion lies latent there. At that time, practitioners will enter and remain in the sphere that those who are noble now enter and remain in. And as they thus nurse this yearning for the unexcelled liberations, there arises within them sorrow based on that yearning. With that he abandons irritation. No latent tendency to irritation lies latent there. There is the case where practitioners, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, as with the earlier disappearance of elation and distress, they enter and remain in the fourth jhana: purity of equanimity and mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. With that they abandon ignorance. No latent tendency to ignorance lies latent there." Practitioners should remember, passion lies on the side of pleasant feeling, and pleasant feeling lies on the other side of painful feeling. Irritation lies on the side of painful feeling and painful feeling also lies on the other side of pleasant feeling. What lies on the other side of neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling? Ignorance lies on the side of neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling. However, clear knowing and emancipation lie on the other side of ignorance. ***Aggregate of Thinking***, aggregate of perception or activity of recognition or identification or attaching of a name to an object of experience. Perceptions include form, sound, smell, taste, bodily impression or touch, and mental objects. The Aggregate of Thoughts refers to our thinking processes. When our five sense organs perceive the five sense objects, a variety of idle thoughts arise. Many ideas suddenly come to mind and are suddenly gone: ideas of forms, ideas of feelings. According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are seven perceptions: Perception of impermanence, Perception of Not-Self, Perception of foulness (Asubhasanna (p), Perception of danger, Perception of abandonment, Perception of dispassion, and Perception of cessation. ***Aggregate of Mental Formation***, a conditioned response to the object of experience including volition, attention,

discrimination, resolve, etc. The Aggregate of Activities refers to a process of shifting and flowing. The Aggregate of Activities leads us to come and go, to go and come without end in a constant, ceaseless, flowing pattern. Our idle thoughts compel us to impulsively do good or do evil, and such thoughts then manifest in our actions and our words. ***Aggregate of Consciousness*** includes the six types of consciousness (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and mental consciousness). Awareness or sensitivity to an object, i.e. the consciousness associates with the physical factors when the eye and a visible object come into contact, an awareness of a visible object occurs in our mind. Consciousness or a turning of a mere awareness into personal experience is a combined function of feeling, perception and mental formation. The Aggregate of Consciousness refers to the process of discrimination. As soon as a situation appears, we begin to discriminate in our thoughts about that situation. For example, when we see something beautiful, we have thoughts of fondness towards it; and when we hear ugly sounds, we have thoughts of dislike for those sounds. All such discriminations are part of this Aggregate. We, ordinary people, do not see the five aggregates as phenomena but as an entity because of our deluded minds, and our innate desire to treat these as a self in order to pander to our self-importance. The Buddha taught in the Sati Patthana Sutra: "If you have patience and the will to see things as they truly are. If you would turn inwards to the recesses of your own minds and note with just bare attention (sati), not objectively without projecting an ego into the process, then cultivate this practice for a sufficient length of time, then you will see these five aggregates not as an entity but as a series of physical and mental processes. Then you wil not mistake the superficial for the real. You will then see that these aggregates arise and disappear in rapid succession, never being the same for two consecutive moments, never static but always in a state of flux, never being but always becoming." And the Buddha continued to teach in the Lankavatara Sutra: "The Tathatagata is neither different nor not-different from the Skandhas." (Skandhebhyo-nanyo-nanayas-tathagata).

According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are five aggregates of grasping: Aggregate of grasping of body (form) or the form agregate subject to clinging. Aggregate of grasping of feelings or the feeling aggregate subject to clinging. Aggregate of grasping of perceptions or the perception aggregate subject to clinging. Aggregate of grasping of mental formations or the volition aggregate subject to clinging. Aggregate of grasping of consciousness or the consciousness aggregate subject to clinging. According to Most Venerable Piyadassi in "The Buddha's Ancient Path," the skandha of form relates to the physical body, while the remaining four concern the mind. The skandha of rupa (or that which has form). According to Most Venerable Piyadassi in "The Buddha's Ancient Path," matter contains and comprises the

Four Great Primaries which are traditionally known as, solidity, fluidity, heat or temperature, and motion or vibration. However, they are not simply earth, water, fire and wind, though conventionally they may be so called. In Buddhist thought, especially in the Abhidhamma, the Higher Doctrine, they are more than that. All our feelings are included in the group of "Aggregate of feeling". Feelings are threefold: pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral. They arise dependent on contact. Seeing a form, hearing a sound, smelling an odor, tasting a flavor, touching some tangible thing, cognizing a mental object, either an idea or a thought, man experiences feeling. When, for instance, eye, form and eye-consciousness (cakkhu-vinnana) come together, it is their coincidence that is called contact. Contact means the combination of the organ of sense, the object of sense, and sence-consciousness. When these are all present together there is no power or force that can prevent the arising of feeling. According to Most Venerable Piyadassi in "The Buddha's Ancient Path," the function of perception is recognition of objects both physical and mental. Perception, like feeling, also is sixfold: perception of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, bodily contacts, and mental objects. Perception in Buddhism is not used in the sense that some Western philosophers like Bacon, or Descartes, etc. used the term, but as a mere sense perception. There is a certain affinity between awareness (a function of consciousness) and recognition (a function of perception). While consciousness becomes aware of an object, simultaneously the mental factor of perception takes the distinctive mark of the object and thus distinguishes it from other objects. This distinctive mark is instrumental in cognizing the object a second and a third time, and in fact, every time we become aware of the object. Thus, it is perception that brings about memory. Aggregate of volational formations include all mental factors except feeling and perception. The Abhidhamma speaks of fifty-two mental concomitants or factors (cetasika). Feeling and perception are two of them, but they are not volitional activities. The remaining fifty are collectively known as mental or volitional formations. Volition (cetana) plays a very important role in the mental realm. In Buddhism, no action is considered as "kamma" if that action is void of volition. And like feeling and perception, it is of six kinds: volition directed to forms, sounds, smells, tastes, bodily contacts and mental objects. Aggregate of consciousness is the most important of the aggregates; for it is the receptacle, so to speak, for all the fifty-two mental concomitants or factors, since without consciousness no mental factors are available. Consciousness and the factors are interrelated, inter-dependent, and co-existent. Aggregate of consciousness has six types and its function is varied. It has its basis and objects. All our feelings are experienced through the contact of sense faculties with the external world. Although there is this functional relationship between the faculties and their objects, for instance,

eye with forms, ear with sounds, and so on, awareness comes through consciousness. In other words, sense objects can not be experienced with the particular sensitivity without the appropriate kind of consciousness. Now when eye and form are both present, visual consciousness arises dependent on them. Similarly with ear and sound, and so on, down to mind and mental objects. Again, when the three things, eye, form, and eye-consciousness come together, it is their coincidence that is called "contact". From contact comes feeling and so on. Thus, consciousness originates through a stimulus arising in the five sense doors and the mind door, the sixth. As consciousness arises through the interaction of the sense faculties and the sense objects, it also is conditioned and not independent. It is not a spirit or soul opposed to matter. Thoughts and ideas which are food for the sixth faculty called mind are also dependent and conditioned. They depend on the external world which the other five sense faculties experience. The five faculties contact objects, only in the present that is when objects come in direct contact with the particular faculty. The mind faculty, however, can experience the sense object, whether it is form, sound, smell, taste, or thought already cognized by the sense organs. For instance, a visible object, with which the eye came in contact in the past, can be visualized by the mind faculty just at this moment although the object is not before the eye. Similarly with the other sense objects. This is subjective, and it is difficult to experience some of these sensations. This sort of activity of the mind is subtle and sometimes beyond ordinary comprehension.

We, ordinary people, do not see the five aggregates as phenomena but as an entity because of our deluded minds, and our innate desire to treat these as a self in order to pander to our self-importance. The Buddha taught in the Sati Patthana Sutra: "If you have patience and the will to see things as they truly are. If you would turn inwards to the recesses of your own minds and note with just bare attention (sati), not objectively without projecting an ego into the process, then cultivate this practice for a sufficient length of time, then you will see these five aggregates not as an entity but as a series of physical and mental processes. Then you wil not mistake the superficial for the real. You will then see that these aggregates arise and disappear in rapid succession, never being the same for two consecutive moments, never static but always in a state of flux, never being but always becoming." And the Buddha continued to teach in the Lankavatara Sutra: "The Tathatagata is neither different nor not-different from the Skandhas." (Skandhebhyo-nanyo-nanayas-tathagata). According to The Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra, the five aggregates are composed of form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness. Generally speaking, the five aggregates mean men and the world of phenomena. Things that cover or conceal, implying that physical and mental forms obstruct realization of the truth. An accumulation or heap,

implying the five physical and mental constituents, which combine to form the intelligence or nature, and rupa. The skandhas refer only to the phenomenal, not to the non-phenomenal. In order to overcome all sufferings and troubles, Buddhists should engage in the practice of profound Prajnaparamita and perceive that the five aggregates are empty of self-existence. The Buddha reminded Sariputra: "O Sariputra, Form is not different from Emptiness, and Emptiness is not different from Form. Form is Emptiness and Emptiness is Form. The same can be said of feelings, perceptions, actions and consciousnesses." Therefore, if we can empty out the Aggregate of Form, then we can realize a state of there being 'no mind inside, no body outside, and no things beyond. If we can follow what the Buddha taught, we are no longer attached to Forms, we are totally liberated.

As for the skandha of consciousness, Sanskrit term is "Vijnana-Skandha", another name for "Consciousness." Hinayana considered the sixth kinds of consciousness as "Vijnana." Mahayana considered the eighth kinds of consciousness as "Vijnana." Externalists considered "vijnana" as a soul. Consciousness is another name for mind. Consciousness means the art of distinguishing, or perceiving, or recognizing, discerning, understanding, comprehending, distinction, intelligence, knowledge, learning. It is interpreted as the "mind," mental discernment, perception, in contrast with the object discerned. According to Buddhism, our "Nature" is the "Buddha". The "Consciousness" is the "Spirit", the "Intention" or "Mano-vijnana" is the "Discriminating Mind", and the "Mind" is what constantly engages in idle thinking. The "Nature" is originally perfect and bright, with no conception of self, others, beauty, or ugliness; no falling into numbers and discriminations. But as soon as there is "Consciousness", one falls into numbers and discriminations. The "Intention" or "Mano-vijnana" also makes discriminations, and it is the sixth consciousness. It is relatively turbid, while the seventh and eighth consciousnesses are relatively purer. There are eight kinds of consciousness: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, klista-mano-vijnana, and alaya-vijnana. Fundamentally speaking, consciousness is not of eight kinds, although there are eight kinds in name. We could say there is a single headquarters with eight departments under it. Although there are eight departments, they are controlled by just one single headquarters. As above mentioned, the term "Vijnana" is a Sanskrit term generally translated as "consciousness." This is the act of distinguishing or discerning including understanding, comprehending, recognizing, intelligence, knowledge. There are eight consciousnesses. The first five arise as a result of the interaction of the five sense organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and mind) and the five dusts (Gunas). The sixth consciousness comes into play, all kinds of feelings, opinions and judgments will be formed (the one that does all the

differentiating). The seventh consciousness (Vijnana) is the center of ego. The eighth consiousness is the Alayagarbha (a lại da), the storehouse of consciousness, or the storehouse of all deeds or actions (karmas), whether they are good, bad or neutral. "Vijnana" also means cognition, discrimination, consciousness, but as any one of these does not cover the whole sense contained in Vijnana. Relative knowledge. This term is usually used as contrasted to Jnana in purely intellectual sense. Jnana is transcendental knowledge dealing with such subjects as immortality, non-relativity, the unattained, etc., whereas Vijnana is attached to duality of things. According to the Mind-Only, the doctrine of consciousness, or the doctrine of the Yogacaras that only intelligence has reality, not the objects exterior to us. Dharmalaksana sect, which holds that all is mind in its ultimate nature. The doctrine of Idealism School concerns chiefly with the facts or specific characters (lakshana) of all elements on which the theory of idealism was built in order to elucidate that no element is separate from ideation. Although it is usually expressed by saying that all dharmas are mere ideation or that there is nothing but ideation, the real sense is quite different. It is idealistic because all elements are in some way or other always connected with ideation. This doctrine was based on the teaching of the Buddha in the Avatamsaka Sutra that the three worlds exist only in ideation. According to Ideation Theory, the outer world does not exist but the internal ideation presents appearance as if it were an outer world. The whole world is therefore, of either illusory or causal nature; and no permanent reality can be found. In India, two famous monks named Wu-Ch'o and T'ien-Ts'in wrote some sastras on Vijnana. They had an outstanding disciple named Chieh-Hsien, an Indian monk living at Nalanda monastery. Later, Chieh-Hsien established the Vijnanavada School and contributed much to the arrangement of the Buddhist canons. In China, Hsuan-Tsang, to whom Chieh-Hsien handed over the sastra, founded this school in his native land. Later, the school was also called Dharmalaksana (Fa-Tsiang-Tsung) and was led by Kwei-Chi, a great disciple of Hsuan-Tsang. Asraya is the base that on which anything depends, the basis of the vijnanas. This is a sudden revulsion or turning over which takes place at the basis of consciousness, whereby we are enabled to grasp the inmost truth of all existence, liberating us from the fetters of discrimination. All the Buddhist discipline aims at this catastrophe, without which there is no permanent conversion at all. When it is thoroughly comprehended that the external world is no more than the manifestation of one's own mind, there is a revulsion at the basis of discrimination, which is emancipation and not destruction. The revulsion is Suchness; the abode is free from discrimination. Bhutatathata or Parinispanna means the absolute reality, the pure ideation can purify the tainted portion of the ideation-store (Alaya-vijnana) and further develop its

power of understanding. The world of imagination and the world of interdependence will be brought to the real truth (Parinispanna). This having been attained, the seed-store, as consciousness, will disappear altogether and ultimately will reach the state where there is no distinction between subject and object. The knowledge so gained has no discrimination (avikalpa-jnana). This ultimate state is the Nirvana of No Abode (apratisthita-nirvana), that is to say, the attainment of perfect freedom, not being bound to one place.

IV. Organs-States-Consciousnesses Impact on Seven Emotions and Six Desires in Daily Life & Cultivation:

Craving (greed, affection, desire) means desire for and love of the things of this life. Most people define happiness as the satisfaction of all desires. The desires are boundless, but our ability to realize them is not, and unfulfilled desires always create suffering. When desires are only partially fulfilled, we have a tendency to continue to pursue until a complete fulfillment is achieved. Thus, we create even more suffering for us and for others. We can only realize the true happiness and a peaceful state of mind when our desires are few. This is one of the great steps towards the shore of liberation. The Buddha taught: "Craving and desire are the cause of all unhappiness or suffering. Everything sooner or later must change, so do not become attached to anything. Instead devote yourself to clearing your mind and finding the truth, lasting hapiness." Knowing how to feel satisfied with few possessions help us destroy greed and desire. This means being content with material conditions that allow us to be healthy and strong enough to cultivate. This is an effective way to cut through the net of passions and desires, attain a peaceful state of mind and have more time to help others. In the Middle Length Discourses, the Buddha taught: "O Bhikksus, with sense desires as cause, with sense desires as motives, kings are fighting with kings, khattiya are fighting with khattiya, brahmanas are fighting with brahmanas, householders are fighting with householders, mother is fighting with son, son is fighting with mother, father is fighting with brother, brother is fighting with sister, sister is fighting with brother, friend is fighting with friend. When they engage themselves in fighting, in quarrels, in disputes, they attack each other with hands, they attack each other with stones, they attack each other with sticks, they attack each other with swords. Thus they are going to death, or to suffer like death. O Bhikksus, with sense desires as cause, with sense desires as motives, they take hold of spears, they take hold of shields, they wear bows and arrows. They arrange themselves in two lines, and arrows are thrown at each other, knives are thrown at each other, swords are slashed at each other. They pierce each other with arrows, they slash each other with knives, they

cut each other heads with swords. Thus, they are going to death, or to suffer like death."

Emotions, negative or positive, are impermanent (they would not last), but we cannot say we don't care about our emotions because they are impermanent. Buddhists cannot say both suffering and happiness are impermanent so we need not seek nor avoid them. We all know that negative emotions lead to suffering, whereas positive ones lead to happiness, and the purpose of all Buddhists is to achieve happiness. So should try to achieve things that cause happiness, and whatever causes suffering we should deliberately happiness. According to Buddhism, there are seven kinds of emotions.

What can be borne with ease is happiness. Ordinary happiness is the gratification of a desire. However, as soon as the thing desired is achived then we desire something else or some other kind of happiness, for our selfish desires are endless. Money cannot buy happiness, or wealth does not always conduce to happiness. In fact, real happiness is found within, and is not be defined in terms of wealth, power, honours, or conquests. The Buddha enumerates some kinds of happiness for a layman. They are the happiness of possession, health, wealth, longevity, beauty, joy, strength, property, children, etc. The Buddha does not advise all of us to renounce our worldly lives and pleasures and retire to solitude. However, he advised lay disciples to share the enjoyment of wealth with others. We should use wealth for ourselves, but we should also use wealth for the welfare of others. What we have is only temporary; what we preserve we leave and go. Only karmas will have to go with us along the endless cycle of births and deaths. The Buddha taught about the happiness of lay disciples as follows: "A poor, but peace life is real happiness. Leading a blameless life is one of the best sources of happiness, for a blameless person is a blessing to himself and to others. He is admired by all and feels happier, being affected by the peaceful vibrations of others. However, it is very difficult to get a good name from all. The wisemen try to be indifferent to external approbation, try to obtain the spiritual happiness by transcending of material pleasures." Then the Buddha continued to remind monks and nuns: "Nirvana bliss, which is the bliss of relief from suffering, is the highest form of happiness." Thus, the Buddha taught on Happiness in the Dharmapada Sutra: "Happy is the birth of Buddhas! Happy is the teaching of the True Law! Happy is the harmony in the sangha! Happy is the discipline of the united ones! (Dharmapada 194). Oh! Happily, do we live without hatred among the hateful! Among hateful men we dwell unhating! (Dharmapada 197). Oh! Happily, do we live in good health among the ailing! Among the ailing we dwell in good health! (Dharmapada 198). Oh! Happily, do we live without greed for sensual pleasures among the greedy! Among the greedy we

dwell free from greed! (Dharmapada 199). Oh! Happily, do we live without any hindrances. We shall always live in peace and joy as the gods of the Radiant Realm (Dharmapada 200). Victory breeds hatred, defeat breeds suffering; giving up both victory and defeat will lead us to a peaceful and happy life (Dharmapada 201). If by giving up a small happiness or pleasure, one may behold a larger joy. A far-seeing and wise man will do this (a wise man will leave the small pleasure and look for a larger one) (Dharmapada 290). It is pleasant to have friends when need arises. Enjoyment is pleasant when shared with one another. Merit is pleasant when life is at its end. Shunning of (giving up) all evil is pleasant (Dharmapada 331). To revere the mother is pleasant; to revere the father is pleasant; to revere the monks is pleasant; to revere the sages is pleasant (Dharmapada 332). To be virtue until old age is pleasant; to have steadfast faith is pleasant; to attain wisdom is pleasant; not to do evil is pleasant (Dharmapada 333).

According to Buddhist thoeries, sorrow and joy, each producing the other, or each being inherent in the other. There is no greater love in this world than the love of the mother and father. If a person, carrying father on the left shoulder and mother on the right shoulder, were to walk around the Sumeru Mountain hundreds of thousands of times, with blood covering both feet, it would still not be enough to repay the love and hardship of child rearing (Dhammapada). The Buddha taught: “Love is the only way to destroy hatred. Hatred cannot be defeated with more hatred.” Buddha taught: “When you hate others, you yourself become unhappy. But when you love others, everyone is happy.” In order to eliminate “hate,” you should meditate on loving-kindness, pity and compassion.

Greed and lust are unrestrained desires for material possessions such as food, sleeping, sexual intercourse, etc., all related to sensual pleasures. We also have a desire for appropriations, showing off, authority, and profits. The cover of desire which overlays the mind and prevents the good from appearing. Since they are like bottomless barrel, neither obsessive greed nor desire can be stopped or satisfied. Through tricks, expedients, and manipulations we try to reach our goal irrespective of whatever happens to others. We Buddhists must see that greedy people are generally selfish, wicked, and prone to cause sufferings to others. As a result, they transform this world into a battlefield where tears are shed like streams, and sufferings rise like an ocean tide. Desire for and love of the things of this life, such as craving (greed, affection, desire). Most people define happiness as the satisfaction of all desires. The desires are boundless, but our ability to realize them is not, and unfulfilled desires always create suffering. When desires are only partially fulfilled, we have a tendency to continue to pursue until a complete fulfillment is achieved. Thus, we create even more suffering for us and for

others. We can only realize the true happiness and a peaceful state of mind when our desires are few. This is one of the great steps towards the shore of liberation. The Buddha taught: "Craving and desire are the cause of all unhappiness or suffering. Everything sooner or later must change, so do not become attached to anything. Instead devote yourself to clearing your mind and finding the truth, lasting hapiness." Knowing how to feel satisfied with few possessions help us destroy greed and desire. This means being content with material conditions that allow us to be healthy and strong enough to cultivate. This is an effective way to cut through the net of passions and desires, attain a peaceful state of mind and have more time to help others.

In nowadays society, one fears everything, fear of no money, fear of homelessness, fear of sickness, old-age and death, etc. In fact, because of lack of understanding about the real nature of life, we try to maintain things that we are unable to, that's why we feel fear of everything. Buddhists should always remember that life is changeable and it composes of a bundle of changeable (impermanent) elements. Once we understand the real nature of life, we don't have the feeling of fear in life anymore.

Emotions, negative or positive, are impermanent (they would not last), but we cannot say we don't care about our emotions because they are impermanent. Buddhists cannot say both suffering and happiness are impermanent so we need not seek nor avoid them. We all know that negative emotions lead to suffering, whereas positive ones lead to happiness, and the purpose of all Buddhists is to achieve happiness. So should try to achieve things that cause happiness, and whatever causes suffering we should deliberately happiness. According to Buddhism, six emotions arising from the six organs of sense: Emotions arising from the eyes. Emotions arising from the ears. Emotions arising from the nose. Emotions arising from the tongue. Emotions arising from the body. Emotions arising from the mind. Practitioners of mindfulness always consider the six senses are objects of cultivation. According to Bikkhu Piyananda in The Gems of Buddhism Wisdom, you must always be aware of the sense organs such as eye, ear, nose, tongue and body and the contact they are having with the outside world. You must be aware of the feelings that are arising as a result of this contact: eye is now in contact with forms (rupa); ear is now in contact with sound; nose is now in conatct with smell; tongue is now in contact with taste; body is now in contact with touching; and mind is now in contact with all things (dharma). In short, practitioners who can realize these things in cultivation can thoroughly understand the impacts of organs-states-consciuosnesses in life and cultivation that aim to escape the ocean of life and death.

Chapter Twenty

The Importance of Cause-Condition-Effect in Cultivation on Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death in Buddhist Cultivation

I. Cause-Condition-Effect in Buddhist Point of View:

Cause and Effect in Buddhist Point of View: Cause is a primary force that produces an effect; effect is a result of that primary force. The law of causation governs everything in the universe without exception. Law of cause and effect or the relation between cause and effect in the sense of the Buddhist law of "Karma" The law of causation (reality itself as cause and effect in momentary operation). Every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise every resultant action or effect has its cause. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations. The Moral Causation in Buddhism means that a deed, good or bad, or indifferent, brings its own result on the doer. Good people are happy and bad ones unhappy. But in most cases "happiness" is understood not in its moral or spiritual sense but in the sense of material prosperity, social position, or political influence. For instance, kingship is considered the reward of one's having faithfully practiced the ten deeds of goodness. If one meets a tragic death, he is thought to have committed something bad in his past lives even when he might have spent a blameless life in the present one. Causality is a natural law, mentioning the relationship between cause and effect. All things come into being not without cause, since if there is no cause, there is no effect and vice-versa. As so sow, so shall you reap! Cause and effect never conflict with each other. In other words, cause and effect are always consistent with each other. If we want to have beans, we must sow bean seeds. If we want to have oranges, we must sow orange seeds. If wild weeds are planted, then it's unreasonable for one to hope to harvest edible fruits. One cause cannot have any effect. To produce an effect, it is necessary to have some specific conditions. For instance, a grain of rice cannot produce a rice plant without the presence of

sunlight, soil, water, and care. In the cause there is the effect; in the effect there is the cause. From the current cause, we can see the future effect and from the present effect we discerned the past cause. The development process from cause to effect is sometimes quick, sometimes slow. Sometimes cause and effect are simultaneous like that of beating a drum and hearing its sound. Sometimes cause and effect are three or four months away like that of the grain of rice. It takes about three to four, or five to six months from a rice seed to a young rice plant, then to a rice plant that can produce rice. Sometimes it takes about ten years for a cause to turn into an effect. For instance, from the time the schoolboy enters the elementary school to the time he graduates a four-year college, it takes him at least 14 years. Other causes may involve more time to produce effects, may be the whole life or two lives. By understanding and believing in the law of causality, Buddhists will not become superstitious, or alarmed, and rely passively on heaven authority. He knows that his life depends on his karmas. If he truly believes in such a causal mecahnism, he strives to accomplish good deeds, which can reduce and alleviate the effect of his bad karmas. If he continues to live a good life, devoting his time and effort to practicing Buddhist teachings, he can eliminate all of his bad karmas. He knows that he is the only driving force of his success or failure, so he will be discouraged, put the blame on others, or rely on them. He will put more effort into performing his duties satisfactorily. Realizing the value of the law of causality, he always cares for what he thinks, tells or does in order to avoid bad karma. Devout Buddhists should always remember that retribution of good and evil karma or cause and effect in the moral realm have their corresponding relations. According to Buddhism, whoever denies the rule of "cause and effect" will destroy all moral responsibility.

Overview and Meanings of Cause: According to the Buddha, a cause refers to the cause you have planted, from which you reap a corresponding result without any exception. If you plant a good cause, you will get a good result. And if you plant a bad cause, you will obtain a bad result. So, if you plant a certain cause with other conditions assemble, a certain retribution or result is brought about without any exception. The Buddha taught: "Because of a concatenation of causal chains there is birth, there is disappearance." Cause and effect in

Buddhism are not a matter of belief or disbelief. Even though you don't believe in "cause and effect," they just operate the way they are suppose to operate. The cause is the seed, what contributes to its growth is the conditions. Planting a seed in the ground is a cause. Conditions are aiding factors which contribute to the growth such as soil, water, sunlight, fertilizer, and the care of the gardener, etc.

Hetu means cause, antecedent, condition, reason, or principle. The original or fundamental cause which produces phenomena, such as karma or reincarnation. Every cause has its fruit or consequences. Every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise, every resultant action has its cause. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situation. Buddhists believe in a just rational of karma that operates automatically and speak in terms of cause and effect instead of rewards and punishments. Every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise, every resultant action has its cause. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism goverining all situation. Buddhists believe in a just rational of karma that operates automatically and speak in terms of cause and effect instead of rewards and punishments. It's a fundamental principle for all living beings and all things that if one sows good deeds, he will surely reap a good harvest; if he sows bad deeds, he must inevitably reap a bad harvest. Though the results may appear quickly or slowly, everyone will be sure to receive the results that accord with their actions. Anyone who has deeply understood this principle will never do evil.

Law of cause and effect also means the relation between cause and effect in the sense of the Buddhist law of "Karma". Cause is a primary force that produces an effect; effect is a result of that primary force. The law of causation governs everything in the universe without exception. The law of causation (reality itself as cause and effect in momentary operation). Every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise, every resultant action or effect has its cause. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations. The Moral Causation in Buddhism means that a deed, good or bad, or indifferent, brings its own result on the doer. Good people are happy and bad ones unhappy. But in most cases "happiness" is understood not in its moral or spiritual sense but in the

sense of material prosperity, social position, or political influence. For instance, kingship is considered the reward of one's having faithfully practiced the ten deeds of goodness. If one meets a tragic death, he is thought to have committed something bad in his past lives even when he might have spent a blameless life in the present one. According to Buddhism, there exists a simultaneity of Cause and Effect; that means the cause has result as its cause, while the result has the cause as its result. It is like planting seeds; the seeds produce fruit; the fruit produces seeds. The law of karma and its retribution permeates all three life spans: immediate retributions, rebirth retributions (next life retributions), and future retributions.

An Overview and Meanings of Conditions: Conditions are external circumstances. If our cultivation power is weak, we can be attracted by external conditions; however, if our cultivation power is strong, no external environments can attract us. The sixth patriarch told the monks in Kuang Chou that: "It is not the wind moving, and it is not the flag moving, it is our mind moving." So, if we follow the teachings of the sixth patriarch, no external environments can be fertilizers to our cycle of births and deaths. We may have been up and down in the samsara because of our previous or present karma. However, Most Venerable Thích Thanh Từ, a famous Zen Master in recent Vietnamese Buddhist history confirmed that: "Cultivation means transformation of karma." Therefore, no matter what kind of karma, from previous or present, can be transformed. Sincere Buddhists must try to zealously cultivate so that we establish no causes. Ancient sages always reminded that "Bodhisattvas fear causes, ordinary people fear results." Even though we are still ordinary people, try to know to fear "causes" so that we don't have to reap "results." The Buddha taught: "When the mind is still, all realms are calm." Therefore, the issue of certainty is a determination of our future Buddhahood.

Pratyaya means having conditions. In other words, pratyaya is a kind of concurrent or environment cause. Sanskrit term "Hetupratyaya" means causation or causality. Hetu and pratyaya are really synonymous; however, hetu is regarded as a more intimate and efficient agency of causation than a Pratyaya. Secondary cause, upon which something rests or depends, hence objects of perception; that which is the environmental or contributory cause; attendant

circumstances. This is also the adaptive cause (water and soil help the seed growing). The circumstantial, conditioning, or secondary cause, in contrast with the Hetu, the direct or fundamental cause. Hetu is the seed, Pratyaya is the soil, rain, sunshine, etc. Pratyaya also means a contributory or developing cause, i.e. development of the fundamental Buddha-nature; as compared with direct or true cause. Pratyaya is a contributory or developing cause of all undergoing development of the Buddha-nature, in contrast with the Buddha-nature or Bhutatathata itself. All things are produced by causal conditions (or conditional causation which are name by the effects, or following from anything as necessary result). To lay hold of, or study things or phenomena, in contrast to principles or noumena; or meditation on the Buddha's nirmanakaya, and sambhogakaya, in contrast with the dharmakaya.

Everything arises from conditions and not being spontaneous and self-contained has no separate and independent nature. According to Buddhism, human beings and all living things are self-created or self-creating. The universe is not homocentric; it is a co-creation of all beings. Buddhism does not believe that all things came from one cause, but holds that everything is inevitably created out of more than two causes. The creations or becomings of the antecedent causes continue in time-series, past, present and future, like a chain. This chain is divided into twelve divisions and is called the Twelve Divisioned Cycle of Causation and Becomings. Since these divisions are interdependent, the process is called Dependent Production or Chain of causation. The formula of this theory is as follows: From the existence of this, that becomes; from the happening of this, that happens. From the non-existence of this that does not become; from the non-happening of this, that does not happen. According to Buddhist teachings, if the contemplation of the mind arose spontaneously from the mind itself, then causes and conditions are not necessary. The mind exists due to causes and conditions. The mind has no power to arise spontaneously on its own. The mind has no power to arise spontaneously, but neither do conditions arise spontaneously. If the mind and conditions each lack substantial being; how can they have being when they are joined together? It is difficult to speak of substantial being, or of them arising when they are joined together; when they are separated, they do not arise at all. Now, if just one

arising is lacking in substantial being, how can one speak of the hundred realms and the thousand suchlike characteristics as having substantial being? Since the mind is empty of substantial being, therefore all things which arise dependent on the mind are empty.

An Overview of Retribution: The term "consequence" or "effect" contrasts with "cause," or "Fruit" contrasts with "seed." The effect by causing a further effect becomes also a cause. Retributions mean consequences (requitals) of one's previous life. The pain or pleasure resulting in this life from the practices or causes and retributions of a previous life. Therefore, ancient virtues said: "If we wish to know what our lives were like in the past, just look at the retributions we are experiencing currently in this life. If we wish to know what retributions will happen to us in the future, just look and examine the actions we have created or are creating in this life." If we understand clearly this theory, then in our daily activities, sincere Buddhists are able to avoid unwholesome deeds and practice wholesome deeds. Here are some beliefs of retributions in Buddhist point of view: The retributions of robber and petty thieves are poverty and accute suffering. The retributions of being stingy are frustrated desires. The retributions of being slandering and harsh speech are tongueless and cankerous mouth. The retribution of mean and greedy is poverty. The retribution of being creating hatred with others is to live an endangered life. The retribution of being laughing at or scolding the beggar is to starve to death at the road side. The retribution of being benefitting oneself by bringing harmness to others is to be life-long friendless. The retribution of bringing harm to others by spreading rumours is to become distrust (mistrustful) forever. The retribution of being slandering the Triratna (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha) is to enter Avici forever.

There are many different kinds of effect such as: *Fruit of desire* and attachment. *The ripening of a fruit* (vipaka-phala), or maturation of effect, an effect which is ripe (mature, ripening, maturing), either good or bad, gain or loss, reward or punishment. *The fruit of extinction* or Nirvana as the fruit of extinction of desire. The effect of action or the result of action. *The fruit of the next rebirth* or the condition of the next rebirth, regarded as the result of the present. The fruit of karma or the result of karma (karmaphala), the natural reward or retribution for a deed, brought about by the law of karma mentioned by the Buddha.

The fruit of karma, conditions of rebirth depending on previous karmaic conduct. *The retribution bond* or the bitter fruit of transmigration binds the individual so that he cannot attain release. This fruit produces further seeds of bondage. *The fruit of fruit or the fruit of the bodhi* or nirvana. Bodhi itself is a fruit; however, it is also the fruit of a life-long cultivation. The simultaneous effect (purusakaraphala) produced by the co-operative causes (sahabhu-hetu), as the four elements in nature, not one of which can be omitted; and the mutual responsive or associated causes (samprayukta-hetu), i.e. mind and mental conditions, subject with object. The fruit of knowledge, or the fruit of enlightenment.

Law of cause and effect or the relation between cause and effect in the sense of the Buddhist law of "Karma". Cause is a primary force that produces an effect; effect is a result of that primary force. The law of causation governs everything in the universe without exception. The law of causation (reality itself as cause and effect in momentary operation). Every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise, every resultant action or effect has its cause. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations. The Moral Causation in Buddhism means that a deed, good or bad, or indifferent, brings its own result on the doer. Good people are happy and bad ones unhappy. But in most cases "happiness" is understood not in its moral or spiritual sense but in the sense of material prosperity, social position, or political influence. For instance, kingship is considered the reward of one's having faithfully practiced the ten deeds of goodness. If one meets a tragic death, he is thought to have committed something bad in his past lives even when he might have spent a blameless life in the present one.

There are two kinds of reward. *First,* the material environment on which a person depends, resulting from former karma. Buddhist doctrine believes that direct retribution of individual's previous existence and the dependent condition or environment created by the beings' minds. *Second,* direct reward, body or person. The body is the direct fruit of the previous life; the environment is the indirect fruit of the previous life. Being the resultant person, good or bad, depends on or results from former karma. Direct retribution of the individual's previous existence, such as being born as a man is the result of keeping the five basic commandments for being reborn as a man.

There are also three recompenses. *First,* immediate result or immediate retribution, or recompense in the present life for deeds done now. Recompeses in the present life for deeds done now, or result that happens in this present life. Present-life recompense for good or evil done in the present life. For example, if wholesome karmas are created in this life, it is possible to reap those meritorious retributions in this present life; if evil karmas are committed in this life, then the evil consequences will occur in this life. *Second,* future result or next life retribution or rebirth retribution. Recompenses in the next rebirth for deeds done now. Recompenses in the next rebirth for deeds now done, or future result which will happen in the next life. One of the three and four retributions, life's retribution. The deeds, wholesome or unwholesome, done in this life produce their results, meritorious retributions or evil karma, in the next reincarnation. *Third,* deffered result or future retribution. This is the recompenses in subsequent life. Recompenses in subsequent lives, or result that is deffered for some time to come. The retribution received in the next or further incarnation for the deeds done in this life. Wholesome and unwholesome karma are created in this life, but sometimes the karma will pass through the second, third life, or even longer before one is able to reap the meritorious retributions or endure the evil consequences. Whether these future retributions are earlier or later is not absolute, but it is absolutely unavoidable. If there is action, whether it is good or evil, there will be consequences sooner or later. Ancient sages taught: "The heaven's net may be thin, but even a hair will not fall through," and "supposing hundreds of thousands of lives have passed, but the karma created still remains; when destinies, circumstances come to fruition, the appropriate retributions will not be denied." There are some noticeable situations which Buddhists should clearly understand to prevent any misunderstanding about the law of cause and effect: Those who commit evil in this life, yet continue to prosper; it is because they have only begun to commit transgressions in this life. However, in the former lives, they have already formed wholesome merits, make offerings and charitable donations. The evil deeds of this life which have just been planted, have not had the proper time to form unwholesome consequences; while the wholesome deeds in the former lives planted long ago, have had the time to come to

fruition in the present life. There are also other circumstances, where people practice good deeds, yet they continue to suffer, experience setbacks, misfortunes, etc. that is because they have just learned to practice wholesome conducts in the present life. Otherwise, in the former lives, they have created many unwholesome deeds. The wholesome deeds in this life have just been planted, have not had the proper time to grow into wholesome fruition. However, the wholesome and wicked deeds in the former lives which had been planted long long ago, have had the proper time to come to fruition in the present life. This is one of the three consequences associated with the causes for a child to be born into a certain family. Transgressions or wholesome deeds we perform in this life, we will not receive good or bad results in the next life; however, good or bad results can appear in the third, fourth or thousandth lifetime, or until untold eons in the future. There are consequences with the three currents of life and death: *The first consequence is the real consequence:* The certain consequences that follow on a good, evil or neutral kind of nature respectively. *The second consequence is the temporal fate:* The particular fate derived from a previous life's ill deeds (shortened life from taking life). *The third consequence* is each organ as reincarnated according to its previous deeds: For instance, if you had made someone blind in your previous life, you will be blind this or next life. Also, there are four kinds of retribution. *First,* action to receive retribution immediately. *Second,* action to receive retribution in the present life. *Third,* action to receive retribution in the life to come. *Fourth,* action to receive retribution in one of the lives following the next.

II. A Summary of Cause-Condition-Effect in Buddhist Teachings:

As mentioned above, in Buddhist teachings, cause is a primary force that produces an effect. Conditions are external circumstances. If our cultivation power is weak, we can be attracted by external conditions; however, if our cultivation power is strong, no external environments can attract us. The sixth patriarch told the monks in Kuang Chou that: "It is not the wind moving, and it is not the flag moving, it is our mind moving." So, if we follow the teachings of the sixth patriarch, no external environments can be fertilizers to our cycle

of births and deaths. Effect is a result of that primary force. The law of causation governs everything in the universe without exception. Law of cause-condition-effect or the relation between cause, condition and effect in the sense of the Buddhist law of "Karma". The law of causation (reality itself as cause and effect in momentary operation). Every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise, every resultant action or effect has its cause. The law of cause-condition-effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations. The Moral Causation in Buddhism means that a deed, good or bad, or indifferent, brings its own result on the doer. Good people are happy and bad ones unhappy.

Six Chief Causes Play an Importance in Cultivation on Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death in Buddhism: *The sixfold division of causes of all conditioned things:* Every phenomenon depends upon the union of the primary cause and conditional or environmental cause. According to the Abhidharma of the Kosa School, there are six chief causes in the Theory of Causal Relation: *The first cause is the effective cause:* The active cause as the leading factor in the production of an effect. This is the reason that makes the existence of anyhing possible. Effective causes (karanahetu (skt)) of two kinds: Empowering cause and non-resistant cause, as space does not resist. *The second cause is the co-operative cause:* The co-existent cause, more than two factors always working together. As the four elements in nature, not one of which can be omitted. The law of mutuality (sahabhuhetu), that is, the state of being mutually conditioned. *The third cause is the cause of the same effect:* The similar-species cause, a cause helping other causes of its kind. The law that like produces like (sabhagahetu), causes of the same kind as the effect, good producing good, etc. *The fourth cause is the cause of the associated effect:* The law of association (samprayuktahetu), mutual responsive or associated causes, i.e. mind and mental conditions, subject with object. The concomitant cause, appearing at any time, from any motive, with regard to any fact, on any occasion and in any environment. *The fifth cause is the cause of the effect of generality:* The law of generality (sarvatragahetu (skt)), which is applicable to certain mental qualities making the common ground for others, or universal or omnipresent cause of illusion, as of false views affecting every act. The universally prevalent cause, a cause always

connected with wrong views, doubts or ignorance which produces all the errors of men. *The sixth cause is the cause of the differential effect:* Differential fruition (vipakahetu), i.e. the effect different from the cause, as the hells are from evil deeds. This is the law of retribution, or fruition. The cause ripening in a different life, a cause which produces its effect in a different life, as when retributions are obtained in the life after death. Heterogeneous cause, i.e. a cause producing a different effect, known as neutral, or not ethical, e.g. goodness resulting in pleasure, evil in pain. According to the Lankavatara Sutra, there are six kinds of causes: *The first cause is the Bhavishayaddhetu:* This is the possibility of anything becoming cause to others. *The second cause is the Sambandha-hetu:* This is the mutual dependence. *The third cause is the Lakshana-hetu:* This is an uninterrupted continuity of signs. *The fourth cause is the Karana-hetu:* This is a causal agency that wields supreme power like a great king. *The fifth cause is the Vyanjana-hetu:* This is the condition in which things are manifested as if illuminated by a light. *The sixth cause is the Upeksha-hetu:* This is the law of discontinuation.

Eleven Accumulated Habits Play an Importance in Cultivation on Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death in Buddhism: In the Surangama Sutra, Volume Eight, the Buddha taught on "Accumulated Habits" as follows: *First, Habit of craving:* Habits of craving or Habits of greed or covetousness results in the cold hells. The Buddha reminded Ananda about the habit of greed as follows: "Habits of greed and intermingled scheming which give rise to a suction. When this suction becomes dominant and incessant, it produces intense cold and solid ice where freezing occurs, just as a sensation of cold is experienced when a person draws in a blast of wind through his mouth. Because these two habits clash together, there come into being chattering, whimpering, and shuddering; blue, red, and white lotuses; cold and ice; and other such expeirences." *Second, Habits of anger:* Habits of hatred or Hatred results in emasculation of sex organ. This is one of the ten causes and effects. The Buddha reminded Ananda about the habit of hatred as follows: "Habits of hatred which give rise to mutual defiance. When the defiance binds one without cease, one's heart becomes so hot that it catches fire, and the molten vapor turns into metal. From it produced the mountain of knives, the iron cudgel, the tree of swords, the wheel

of swords, axes and halberds (câ y kích), and spears and saws. It is like the intent to kill surging forth when a person meets a mortal enemy, so that he is roused to action. Because these two habits clash with one another, there come into being castration and hacking, beheading and mutilation, filing and sticking, flogging and beating, and other such experiences. Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon hatred and name it 'sharp knives and swords.' Bodhisattvas should avoid hatred as they would their own execution." *Third, Habits of arrogance:* Habits of arrogance or conceit results in blood rivers and poisonous seas. The Buddha reminded Ananda about the habit of arrogance as follows: "Habits of arrogance and resulting friction which give rise to mutual intimidation. When it accelerates without cease, it produces torrents and rapids which create restless waves of water, just as water is produced when a person continuously works his tongue in an effort to taste flavors. Because these two habits incite one another, there come into being the river of blood, the river of ashes, the burning sand, the poisonous sea, the molten copper which is poured over one or which must be swallowed, and other such experiences. Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon self-satisfaction and name it 'drinking the water of stupidity.' Bodhisattvas should avoid arrogance as they would a huge deluge." *Fourth, Habits of lust:* Habit of sexual desire or Lust grows into a habit because of sexual intercourse in which two people caress each other thereby producing heat that in turn stimulates desire. This is like the heat caused by rubbing the hands together. Adultery results in the iron bed, the copper pillar, and the eight hot hells (the bed stands for sexual desire and the pillar for the partner on whom the sinner depends to stimulate his sexual appetite). The Buddha taught: "Habits of lust and reciprocal interactions which give rise to mutual rubbing. When this rubbing continues without cease, it produces a tremendous raging fire within which movement occurs, just as warmth arises between a person's hands when he rubs them together. Because these two habits set each other ablaze, there come into being the iron bed, the copper pillar, and other such experiences. Therefore, Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon the practice of lust and name it the 'fire of desire.' Bodhisattvas avoid desire as they would a fiery pit." *Fifth, Habit of committing adultery:* At the time of the Buddha, there was a man who

had the habit of committing adultery. Even though he had been arrested a number of times for his misconduct, he did not change his ways. In desperation, his father brought him to the Buddha for advice. The Buddha pointed out that a person who indulges in sexual misconduct creates problems and suffering for himself as well as others. He not only squanders his money and loses his reputation but also creates enemies for himself. These are serious consequences often result from sexual misconduct, but they are usually overlooked at the time when it is being committed. *Sixth, Habits of deceptions:* Habits of deceitfulness or Habits of deceptions result in yokes and being beaten with rods. The Buddha reminded Ananda about the habit of deceitfulness as follows: "Habits of deception and misleading involments which give rise to mutual guile. When such maneucering continues without cease, it produces the ropes and wood of gallows for hanging, like the grass and trees that grow when water saturates a field. Because these two habits perpetuate one another, there come into being handcuffs and fetters, cangues and locks, whips and clubs, sticks and cudgels, and other such experiences. Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon deception and name it a 'treacherous crook.' Bodhisattvas fear deception as they would a savage wolf." *Seventh, Habits of disputation:* Habits of disputation or Habits of litigation. The Buddha reminded Ananda about the habit of disputation as follows: "Habits of litigation and the mutual disputations which give rise to covering. From them there are produced a look in the mirror and illumination by the lamp. It is like being in direct sunlight. There is no way one can hide one's shadow. Because these two habits bicker back and forth, there come into being evil companions, the mirror of karma, the fiery pearl, exposure of past karma, inquests, and other such experiences. Therefore, all the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon covering and name it a 'yin villain.' Bodhisattvas regard covering as they would having to carry a mountain atop their heads while walking upon the sea." *Eighth, Habits of injustice:* Habits of injustice or Habits of unfairness. The Buddha reminded Ananda about the habit of unfairness as follows: "Habits of injustice and their interconnected support of one another; they result in instigating false charges and libeling. From them are produced crushing between mountains, crushing between rocks, stone rollers, stone

grinders, plowing, and pulverizing. It is like a slanderous villain who engages in persecuting good people unjustly. Because these two habits join ranks, there come into being pressing and pushing, bludgeons and compulsion, squeezing and straining, weighing and measuring, and other such experiences. Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon harmful accusations and name them a 'treacherous tiger.' Bodhisattvas regard injustice as they would a bolt of lightning. *Ninth, Habits of lying:* The Buddha reminded Ananda about the habit of lying as follows: "Habits of lying and combined fraudulence which give rise to mutual cheating. When false accusations continue without cease, one becomes adept at corruption. From this there come into being dust and dirt, excrement and urine, filth, stench, and impurities. It is like the obscuring of everyone's vision when the dust is stirred up by the wind. Because these two habits augment one another, there come into being sinking and drowning, tossing and pitching, flying and falling, floating and submerging, and other such experiences. Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon lying and name it 'robbery and murder.' Bodhisattvas regard lying as they would tread on a venomous snake." *Tenth, Habits of resentment:* Habits of resentment or Habits of animosity. The Buddha reminded Ananda about the habit of animosity as follows: "Habits of animosity and interconnected enmity which give rise to grievances. From this there come into being flying rocks, thrown stones, caskets and closets, cages on wheels, jars and containers, and bags and rods. It is like someone harming others secretly. He harbors, cherishes, and nurtures evil. Because these two habits swallow one another up, there come into being tossing and pitching, seizing and apprehending, striking and shooting, casting away and pinching, and other such experiences. Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon animosity and name it a 'disobedient and harmful ghost.' Bodhisattvas regard animosity as they would drinking poisonous wine." *Eleventh, Habits of views:* Habits of wrong views or Wrong views result in torture. The Buddha reminded Ananda about the habit of wrong views as follows: "Habits of views and the admixture of understandings, such as Satkayadrishti, views, moral prohibitions, grasping, and deviant insight into various kinds of karma, which bring about opposition and produce mutual antagonism. From them there

come into being court officials, deputies, certifiers, and registrars. They are like people traveling on a road, who meet each other coming and going. Because these two habits influence one another, there come into being official inquiries, baited questions, examinations, interrogations, public investigations, exposure, the youth who record good and evil, carrying the record books of the offenders' arguments and retionalizations, and other such experiences. Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon evil views and name them the 'pit of views.' Bodhisattvas regard having false and one-sided views as they would standing on the edge of a steep ravine full of poison."

Different Kinds of Secondary Causes Also Play an Importance in Cultivation on Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death in Buddhism: There are many different kinds of pratyaya such as *1) Conditioned condition (adhipati-pratyaya (skt):* The reasoning mind, or the mind reasoning. Intelligence in contact with its object. The relationship being like that of form or colour to the eye. The influence of one factor in causing others. Condition becoming an object of cognition. Upon which something rests or depends, hence objects of perception; that which is the environmental or contributory cause; attendant circumstances. The relationship being like that of form or colour to the eye. The influence of one factor in causing others. *2) The environmental or secondary force (Pratyaya-bala (skt))*: The power of the conditioning cause, circumstance, or contributing environement), in contrast with the causal force or direct cause (nhân lực). *3) Conditioned immutable:* The conditioned immutable, immutable as a whole, but not in its parts, its phenomenal activity. *4) Cause-nature-environment:* Cause, nature and environment; natural powers and conditioning environment. The circumstances or conditions environing the mind created by the six gunas. Conditioning environment and natural powers in which environment plays a main role. *5) Conditioned Bhutatathata:* The conditioned Bhutatathata or relative condition, or the Bhutatathata influenced by environment, or pure and impure conditions, produces all things. *6) Alambana-pratyaya (skt):* Things distracting the attention, distracting thoughts; the action of external objects conditioning consciousness. *7) Samanantara-hetu (skt):* Condition governing the succession of events. *8) Condition of visibility:* The state or condition of visibility, which according to the Awakening of Faith, arises from

motion. *9) Conditioning power:* The conditioning power in contrast with the conditioned, e.g. the power of seeing and hearing in contrast with that which is seen and heard. *10) Resisting accessory cause:* Resisting accessory cause, in contrast with the accordant cause (thuận duyên); as goodness is the accordant cause so evil is the resisting cause of the Buddha way. *11) Condition of karmic action:* Action, or activity, the karmaic, condition of karmaic action. The first of the three subtle marks of the Awakening of Faith, when mental activity is stirred to action by unenlightenment. *12) External conditions:* People think that external conditions or circumstances which stir or tempt one to do evil. As a matter of fact, problems and dissatisfaction do not develop because of external conditions, but from our own mind. If we don't have internal peace, nothing from outside can bring us happiness. The condition in which the five internal senses attach to the five external objects. *13) Cause sub-cause (Hetu-pratyaya (skt):* The cause sub-cause which acts as chief cause (hetu-pratyaya), there being no distinction between the chief cause and the secondary cause, i.e., the water and the wind cause a wave. *14) A concatenation of causal chains:* The Buddha taught: "Because of a concatenation of causal chains there is birth, there is disappearance." *15) Direct or indirect causes:* Real entities that arise from direct or indirect causes. *16) Dependent on cause:* The cause or causes on which anything depends. *17) Link of pollution:* Nidana of pollution, which connects illusion with the karmaic miseries of reincarnation. From the "water" of the bhutatathata, affected by the "waves" of this nidana-pollution, arise the waves of reincarnation. *18) Interdependent causes:* Something to lay hold of, a reality, cause, and basis, similar to an old man relies on his cane (the mind likea monkey, the thought like a horse). *19) Causes resting on object of consciousness*: Causes depending upon object of consciousness, upon which something rests or depends, hence objects of perception; that which is the environmental or contributory cause; attendant circumstances. When talking on being far away from alambavigata, it is to say to be free from all conditions. *20) Condition of advance to a higher stage:* The cause, or organ of advance to a higher stage, e.g. the eye is able to produce sight. *21) Conditions of time and place of rebirth:* The conditions or causes of time and place into which one is born. *22) Conditions environing the mind created by the six gunas:* The

circumstances environing the mind created by the six gunas. Conditioning environment and natural powers in which environment plays a main role. *23) Contributory Cause:* Environing cause of attaining the perfect Buddha-nature, or the environing cause, his goodness or merits which result in deliverance or salvation. Developing cause of all undergoing development of the Buddha-nature, in contrast with the Buddha-nature or Bhutatathata itself. *24) Cause of erroneous ideas:* The unreality of one's environment.

Four Kinds of Sub-Causes Play an Importance in Cultivation on Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death in Buddhism: Contributory Cause or environing cause of attaining the perfect Buddha-nature, or the environing cause, his goodness or merits which result in deliverance or salvation. Developing cause of all undergoing development of the Buddha-nature, in contrast with the Buddha-nature or Bhutatathata itself. According to the Lankavatara Sutra and the Kosa School in the Abhidharma, there are four sub-causes in the theory of Causal Relation. *The first contributory cause is the cause sub-cause:* The cause sub-cause which acts as chief cause (hetu-pratyaya (skt)), there being no distinction between the chief cause and the secondary cause, i.e., the water and the wind cause a wave. *The second contributory cause is the immediate sub-cause:* The immediate sub-cause (samanantra-pratyaya (skt)), occuring in order, one after another, consequences coming immediately and equally after antecedents, as waves following one after another. *The third contributory cause is the objective sub-cause:* The objective sub-cause (alambana-pratyaya (skt)), which has an object or environment as a concurring cause, as waves are conditioned by a basin, a pond, a river, the sea, or a boat. *The fourth contributory cause is the upheaving sub-cause:* The upheaving sub-cause (adhipati-pratyaya (skt)) which is the most powerful one to bring all the abiding causes to a culmination, as the last wave that upsets a boat in a storm. Among these four causes, the cause sub-cause and the upheaving cause are the most important ones. The active cause is itself the upheaving sub-cause.

Four Principal Uses of Conditional Causation Play an Importance in Cultivation on Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death in Buddhism: According to the doctrine of the Hua-Yen sect, there are four principal uses of conditional causation: *The first category is the "Causation by*

Action-influence": Causation by action-influence is depicted in the Wheel of Life. There is law and order in the progress of cause and effect. This is the theory of causal Sequence. In the Twelve Divisioned Cycle of Causations and Becomings, it is impossible to point out which one is the first cause, because the twelve make a continuous circle which is called the Wheel of Life. People are accustomed to regard time as progressing in a straight line from the infinite past through present to infinite future. Buddhism, however, regards time as a circle with no beginning or end. Time is relative. The death of a living being is not the end; at once another life begins to go through a similar process of birth and death, and thus repeats the round of life over and over again. In this way a living being, when considered in relation to time, forms an endless continuum. It is impossible to define what a living being is, for it is always changing and progressing through the Divisions or Stages of Life. The whole series of stages must be taken in their entirety as representing the one individual being. Thus, a living being, when regarded in relation to space, forms a complex of five elements. The Wheel of Life is a clever representation of the Buddhis conception of a living being in relation to both space and time. The Wheel of Life is a circle with no beginning, but it is customary to begin its exposition at Blindness (unconscious state). Blindness is only a continuation of Death. At death the body is abandoned, but Blindness remains as the crystalization of the effects of the actions performed during life. This Blidness is often termed Ignorance; but this ignorance should not be thought of as the antonym of knowing; it must include in its meaning both knowing and not knowing, blindness or blind mind, unconsciousness. Blindness leads to blind activity. The energy or the effect of this blind activity is the next stage, Motive or Will to Live. This Will to Live is not the kind of will which is used in the term "free will;" it is rather a blind motive toward life or the blind desire to live. Blindness and Will to Live are called the Two Causes of the past. They are causes when regarded subjectively from the present; but objectively regarded, the life in the past is a whole life just as much as is the life of the present.

The second category is the "Causation by the Ideation-Store": Causation by the Ideation-store is used to explain the origin of action. Actions or karma are divided into three groups, i.e., those by the body, those by speech and those by volition. When one makes up one's mind to do something, one is responsible for it and is liable to retribution, because volition is a mind-action even if it is not expressed in speech or manifested in physical action. But the mind being the inmost recess of all actions, the causation ought to be attributed to the mind-store or Ideation-store. The Buddhist ideation theory divides the mind into eight faculties, i.e., the eye-sense, the ear-sense, the nose-sense, the tongue-sense, the body-sense, the co-ordinating sense-center

or the sixth mano-vijnana, the individualizing thought-center of egotism or the seventh manas-vijnana, and the storing-center of ideation or the eighth alaya-vjnana, or Ideation-store. Of these eight faculties, the seventh and the eighth require explanation. The seventh, the Individualizing Center of Egotism is the center where all the selfish ideas, egotistic, opinions, arrogance, self-love, illusions, and delusions arise. The eighth, the Storing Center of Ideation, is where the 'seeds' of all manifestations are deposited and later expressed in manifestations. Buddhism holds that the origin of all things and events is the effect of ideation. Every seed lies in the Storing Center and when it sprouts out into the object-world a reflection returns as a new seed. That is, the mind reahces out into the outer world and, perceiving objects, puts new ideas into the mind-store. Again, this new seed sprouts out to reflect back a still newer seed. Thus, the seeds accumulate and all are stored there together. When they are latent, we call them seeds, but when active we call them manifestations. The old seeds, the manifestations and the new seeds are mutually dependent upon each other, forming a cycle which forever repeats the same process. This is called the Chain of Causation by Ideation. That which makes the seed or subconscious thought sprout out into actual manifestation, that is, the motive force which makes the chain of causation move, is nothing but ideation. It is easy to see from this theory of Causation by Ideation that Delusion, Action and Suffering originate from mind-action, or ideation. The Storing Center of Ideation is carried across rebirth to determine what the next form of life will be. This Storing Center might be regarded as similar to the soul in other forms of religion. According to the Buddhist doctrine, however, what is reborn is not the soul, but is the result of the actions performed in the preceding life. In Buddhism the existence of the soul is denied.

The third category is the "Causation by Thusness": Causation by Thusness is used to explain the origin of the ideation-store. The ideation-store of a human being is determined by his nature as a human being and this nature is a particular dynamic form of Thusness. One should not ask where Thusness or Matrix of Thus-come originates, because it is the noumenon, the ultimate indescribable Thusness. Thusness or suchness, is the only term which can be used to express the ultimate indefinable reality. It is otherwise called the Matrix of Thus-come. Thus-come is Buddha-nature hidden in ordinary human nature. "Thus-come" is a designation of the Buddha employed by himself instead of "I" or "we," but not without special meaning. After he had attained Enlightenment, he met the five ascetics with whom he had formerly shared his forest life. These five ascetics addressed him saying "Friend Gotama." The Buddha admonished them, sayingthat they ought not treat the Thus-come (thus enlightened I come) as their friend and their equal, because he was now the Enlightened One, the Victorious, All-wise One. When he had 'thus come' in

his present position as the instructor of all men and even of devas, they should treat him as the Blesed One and not as an old friend. Again, when the Buddha went back to Kapilavastu, his former home, he did not go to the palace of his father, but lived in the banyan grove outside the town, and as usual went out to beg daily. Suddhodana, his king-father, could not bear the idea of his own son, the prince, begging on the streets of Kapilavastu. At once, the king visited the Buddha in the grove and entreated him to return to the palace. The Buddha answered him in the following words: "If I were still your heir, I should return to the palace to share the comfort with you, but my lineage has changed. I am now a successor to the Buddhas of the past, all of whom have 'thus gone' (Tathagata) as I am doing at present, living in the woods and begging. So your Majesty must excuse me." The king understood the words perfectly and became a pupil of the Buddha at once. Thus, come and thus gone have practically the same meaning. The Buddha used them both and usually in their plural forms. Sometimes the words were used for a sentient being who thus come, i.e., comes in the contrary way. Thus-come and Thus-gone can therefore be used in two senses: 'The one who is enlightened but comes in an ordinary way' or 'the one who comes in an ordinary way simply.' Now, Thusness or the Matrix of Thus-come or Thus-gone means the true state of all things in the universe, the source of an Enlightened One, the basis of enlightenment. When static, it is Enlightenment itself, with no relation to time or space; but, when dynamic, it is in human form assuming an ordinary way and feature of life. Thusness and the Matrix of Thus-come are practically one and the same, the ultimate truth. In Mahayana the ultimate truth is called Suchness or Thusness. We are now in a position to explain the Theory of Causation by Thusness. Thusness in its static sense is spaceless, timeless, all-equal, without beginning or end, formless, colorless, because the thing itself without its manifestation cannot be sensed or described. Thusness in its dynamic sense can assume any form; when driven by a pure cause it takes a lofty form; when driven by a tainted cause it takes a depraved form. Thusness, therefore, is of two states. The one is the Thusness itself; the other is its manifestation, its state of life and death.

The fourth category is the "Causation by the Universal Principle": Dharmadhatu means the elements of the principle and has two aspects: the state of Thusness or noumenon and the world of phenomenal manifestation. In this causation theory it is usually used in the latter sense, but in speaking of the odeal world as realized, the former sense is to be applied. Buddhism holds that nothing was created singly or individually. All things in the universe, matter and mind, arose simultaneously, all things in it depending upon one another, the influence of each mutually permeating and thereby making a universal symphony of harmonious totality. If one item were lacking, the

universe would not be complete; without the rest, one item cannot be. When the whole cosmos arrives at a harmony of perfection, it is called the 'Universe One and True,' or the 'Lotus Store.' In this ideal universe all beings will be in perfect harmony, each finding no obstruction in the existence and activity of another. Although the idea of the interdependence and simultaneous rise of all things is called the Theory of Universal Causation, the nature of the rise being universal, it is rather a philosophy of the totality of all existence than a philosophy of origination.

Ten Theories That Independently Cause the Manifestation of the Ideal World Play an Importance in Cultivation on Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death in Buddhism: According to The Avatamsaka School, the principle of "One-in-all and all-in-one." There are ten theories that independently cause the manifestation of the ideal world: *First,* because all beings as well as all things are manifested from ideation, the source is one. *Second,* because all beings as well as all things have no determinate nature, all move freely, selflessness being the ultimate truth. *Third,* because the causation theory means interdependence or interrelation, all are co-related. *Fourth,* because the Dharma-nature (dharmata) or the Buddha-nature (Buddha-svabhava) is possessed in common by all, they have similar liability. *Fifth,* because the phenomenal world is said to be as a dream or illusion, the world of One-Truth can be molded in any way without restraint. *Sixth,* because the phenomenal world is said to be as shadow or image, the world of One-Truth can be molded in any way. *Seventh,* since the Enlightenment of the Buddha, the causes of production are known to be boundless, the effects are manifold or limitless, but they do not hinder each other; rather they cooperate to form a harmonious whole. *Eighth,* because the Buddha's Enlightenment is ultimate and absolute, the transformation of the world is at his will. *Ninth,* because of the function of the Buddha's profound meditation the transformation of the world is at his will. *Tenth,* because of the supernatural power originating from deliverance, the transformation of the world is free.

III. The Law of Cause and Effect: The Core Principle of Buddhism:

Four Core Views of Causality in Buddhism: According to Nagarjuna in the Madhyamaka Sastra, there are four views about causality: *The first view is the theory of Self-Becoming:* This means that the cause and effect are identical, that things are produced out of themselves. Nagarjuna had evidently in view the Satkaryavada of Samkhya while criticizing the autogenous theory of causality. The Madhyamika's criticism of this theory may be summarized thus: (i) If the effect is already present in the cause, not purpose would be

served by its re-production. The Samkhya may say that though the effect may be present in the cause, its manifestation is something new. This, however, does not mean that the effect is a new substance. It only means that it is a new form or state goes against the identity of the underlying substratum; (ii) If it is said that the cause is partly actual, and partly potential, it would amount to accepting opposed natures in one and the same thing. If the cause is wholly potential, it cannot by itself become actual without an extraneous aid. The oil cannot be got out of the seed, unless it is pressed by a crusher. If it has to depend on an external aid, then there is no 'self-production' (svata-utpattih); (iii) If the cause and effect are identical, it would be impossible to distinguish one as the producer of the other. The identity view of cause and effect is, therefore, troubled itself with self-contradiction. *The second view is the Production from Another (Parata-Utpattih):* This means that the cause and effect are different. This view is known as "Asatkaryavada." This was held by the Sarvastivadins and Sautrantikas or the Hinayanists in general. Nagarjuna had obviously these in view while criticizing this heterogeneous view of causality. His criticism of this view makes out the following important points: (i) If the cause is different from the effect, no relation can subsist between the two. In what case anything can be produced from anything. (ii) The Hinayanist believed that with the production of the effect the course ceased to exist. But 'ex-hypothesis' causality is a relation between two. Unless the cause and effect co-exist, they cannot be related. If they cannot be related, causality becomes meaningless. (iii) The Hinayanist believed that the effect is produced by a combination of factors. Now for the co-ordination of these factors, another factor would be required, and again for the co-ordination of the additional factor with the previous one, another factor be required. This would lead to a 'regressus ad infinitum'. *The third view is the Production from Both "Itself and Another" (Duabhyam-Utpattih):* This theory believes that the effect is both identical with and different from the cause. This is a combination of both Satkaryavada and Asatkaruavada, and so contains the inconsistencies of both. Besides this would invest the real with two opposed characters (identity and difference) at one and the same time. *The fourth view is the Production Without Any Cause or Production by Chance (Ahetutah-Utpattih):* This theory maintains that things are produced without a cause, or produced by chance. The Naturalists and Sceptics (Svabhavaadins) believed in such a theory. If no reason is assigned for the theory, it amounts to sheer, perverse dogmatism. If a reason is assigned, it amounts to accepting a cause.

The Process of the Law of Dependent Origination Is Happening in Your Own Mind: Master Mogok Sayadaw was one of the most outstanding meditation masters in Burmese Buddhism in the modern time. Master Mogok Sayadaw follows in the footsteps of Master Ledi Sayadaw, a prolific and

widely respected Dharma master who taught in Burma at the turn of the twentieth century. Master Ledi Sayadaw had increased understanding of the Law of Dependent Origination among Burmese Buddhists, and Master Mogok Sayadaw revived and emphasized its importance in his teaching. He was a renowned scholar in monastic circles and spent more than thirty years as a teacher of Buddhist psychology and scriptures in Burma. One day it occured to him that he was like a cowherd who in spite of tending the animals did not have the opportunity to use the milk given by them. He decided to leave his teaching position and traveled to Mingun where he undertook intensive practice of Vipassana. After some years passed, at the request of devoted lay-Buddhists, he began teaching of insight meditation. And not long after that, his fame as an enlightened teacher was widespread. Since Master Mogok Sayadaw's death not many years ago, a number of his disciples have been carrying on the important teachings of insight meditation in his style. The most outstanding point in Master Mogok Sayadaw's teaching is the use of the Law of Dependent Origination. He explains how this causal chain works and then directs meditators to experience this process in their own bodies and minds. This insight that develops leads to the freedom beyond this process, the truth of the Buddha. Practice consists of three parts. First, Master Mogok Sayadaw stresses the importance of intellectual understanding of Dharma before actual mediation practice. He teaches the distinction between concepts and ultimate reality, and how ultimate reality is composed of elements and aggregates. Then he explains the cycle of dependent origination, showing how through cause and effect, craving and desires keep us trapped in the rounds of becoming and suffering. Second, meditation is then developed based on this prior understanding. Practitioner first starts with mindfulness of breathing to concentrate the mind. Then practice is changed to either meditation on consciousness, the knowing faculty of mind, or meditation on feeling. Finally, as the meditation deepens, Master Mogok Sayadaw emphasizes how all perception becomes simply that of the arising and vanishing of the five aggregates, the process of body and mind. This constant change which must be directly experienced, and not simply noted as change, change, shows how unsatisfactory and empty of self our whole existence is. On penetrating the tru nature of the aggregates as they arise and vanish, the practitioner becomes ripe for the cessation of this process and the stopping of the wheel of dependent origination which is the highest bliss, nirvana.

Human Beings Create Causes and Reap the Results Themselves: Buddhism views man as a tiny being not only in strength but also in life span. Man is no more than just another creature but with intelligence that inhabit universe. Man is regarded as a cultured living being because he can harmonize with other creatures without destroying them. Religion was

founded by men only for this purpose. Every creature that lives share the same life force which energizes man. Men and other creatures are part of the same cosmic energy which takes various forms during endless rebirths, passing from human to animal, to divine form and back again, motivated by the powerful craving for existence which takes them from birth to death and rebirth again in a never-ending cycle. In Buddhist cosmology, man is simply the inhabitant of one of the existing planes that other sentient beings can go after death. Human world is a good, well-balanced mixture of pleasure and pain. Man is in a favorable position to create or not to create fresh karma, and thus is able to shape his own destiny. Man is in effect his own Creator and Savior. Many others believe that religion has come down from heaven but Buddhists know that Buddhism started on the earth and reached heaven, or Buddha.

Yes, indeed, human beings create causes and reap the results themselves, it is a matter of time, sooner or later, you will reap what you sow. According to the Abhidharma, there are four kinds of karma by time of ripening. *The first kind of karma is the Immediately Effective Karma*, a karma in which, if it is to ripen, must yield its results in the same existence in which it is performed; otherwise, if it does not meet the opportunity to ripen in the same existence, it becomes defunct. First, the result of a good karma reaped in this life. In the Buddhist Legends, there is a story about the result of a good karma reaped in this life. At the time of the Buddha, a couple of husband and wife who possessed only one upper garment to wear when they went outdoor. One day the husband heard the Dharma from the Buddha and was so pleased with the doctrine that he wished to offer his only upper garment to the Buddha, but his inate greed would not permit him to do so. He combatted with his mind and, eventually overcoming his greed, offered the garment to the Buddha and exclaimed, “I have won, I have won.” Upon learning this story, the king was so delighted and in appreciation of his generosity, the king presented him with 32 robes. The devout husband kept one for himself, and another for his wife, and offered the rest to the Buddha and the Order. Second, the result of a bad karma reaped in this life. In the Buddhist Legends, there is a story about the result of a bad karma reaped in this life. At the time of the Buddha, there was a hunter who went hunting to the forest, followed by his dogs, met by the wayside a monk who was proceeding on his almsround. As the hunter could not procure any game, he thought it was due to the unfortunate meeting of the monk. While returning home he met the same monk and was deeply engraved at this second encounter. In spite of the entreaties of the innocent monk, the hunter set the dogs on him. Finding escape therefrom, the monk climbed a tree. The wicked hunter ran up the tree, and pierced the soles of the monk’s feet with the point of an arrow. The pain was so excruciating that the robe the monk was wearing fell upon the hunter completely covering him. The dogs,

thinking that the monk had fallen from the tree, devoured their own master. *The second kind of karma is the Subsequently Effective Karma*, a karma in which, if it is to ripen, must yield its results in the existence immediately following that in which it is performed; otherwise, it becomes defunct. An example of Upapajjavedaniya, a millionaire's servant returned home in the evening after his laborious work in the field, to see that all were observing the eight precepts as it was the full-moon day. Learning that he also could observe them even for half a day, he took the precepts and fasted at night. Unfortunately, he died on the following morning and as a result of his good action was born as a Deva. Another good example of subsequently effective karma, Ajatasatru, son of King Bimbisara, was born, immediately after his death, in a state of misery as the result of killing his father. *The third kind of karma is the Indefinitely Effective Karma*, a karma which can ripen at any time from the second future existence onwards, whenever it gains an opportunity to produce results. It never becomes defunct so long as the round of rebirth continues. No one, not even a Buddha or an Arahant, is exempt from experiencing the results of indefinitely effective karma. No one is exempt from this class of karma. Even the Buddhas and Arahants may reap the effects of their past karma. Arahant Moggallana in the remote past, instigated by his wicked wife, attempted to kill his mother and father. As a result of this he suffered long in a woeful state, and in his last birth was clubbed to death by bandits. To the Buddha was imputed the murder of a female devotee of the naked ascetics. This was the result of his having insulted a Pacceka Buddha in one of his previous kalpa. The Buddha's foot was slightly injured when Devattava made a futile to kill him. This was due to his killing a step-brother of his previous birth with the object of appropriating his property. *The fourth kind of karma is the Defunct Karma*. The term "ahosi" in Pali does not designate a special class of karma, but applies to karma that was due to ripen in either the present existence or the next existence but did not meet conditions conductive to its maturation. In the case of Arahants, all their accumulated karma from the past which was due to ripen in future lives becomes defunct with their final passing away with their achievement of "non-birth" fruit.

Karmas You Committed Will Become Effect and Never Get Lost: Buddhist practitioners should always remember that, according to Buddhism, all kinds of karma are accumulated by the Alayavijnana and Manas. Karma can be cultivated through religious practice (good), and uncultivated. For sentient being has lived through innumerable reincarnations, each has boundless karma. Whatever kind of karma is, a result would be followed accordingly, sooner or later. No one can escape the result of his own karma. Body, speech, and mind all make karma when we cling. We create habits that

can make us suffer in the future. This is the fruit of our attachment, of our past defilement. Remember, not only body but also speech and mental action can make conditions for future results. If we did some act of kindness in the past and remember it today, we will be happy, and this happy state of mind is the result of past karma. In other words, all things conditioned by cause, both long-term and moment-to-moment. If we act positively, the happy result will eventually occur. When we do negative actions, the imprints aren't lost even though they may not bring their results immediately. When we act, either good or bad, we see our own actions, like an outsider who witnesses. The pictures of these actions will automatically imprint in our Alaya-vijnana (subconscious mind); the seed of these actions are sown there, and waited for enough conditions to spring up its tree and fruits. Similarly, the effect in the alaya-vijnana (subconscious mind) of the one who has received our actions. The seed of either love or hate has been sown there, waiting for enough conditions to spring up its tree and fruits. Devout Buddhists should always remember that, "the ocean's water may dry up, mountain may waste away, the actions done in former lives are never lost; on the contrary, they come to fruit though aeons after aeons pass, until at last the debt is paid." When we plant a black-pepper seed, black-pepper plant grows and we will reap black-pepper, not oranges. Similarly, when we act positively, happiness follows, not suffering. When we act destructively, misery comes, not happiness. Just as small seed can grow into a huge tree with much fruit, small actions can bring large result. Therefore, we should try to avoid even small negative actions and to create small negative ones.

Cause and Effect-Curse and Blessing: A blessed reward, e.g. to be born as a man or a deva. According to Buddhism, there is no calamity and happiness that is not of one's own seeking. Talking about cause and effect, as mentioned in previous chapters, law of cause and effect or the relation between cause and effect in the sense of the Buddhist law of "Karma". Cause is a primary force that produces an effect; effect is a result of that primary force. The law of causation governs everything in the universe without exception. The law of causation (reality itself as cause and effect in momentary operation). Every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise, every resultant action or effect has its cause. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations. The Moral Causation in Buddhism means that a deed, good or bad, or indifferent, brings its own result on the doer. Good people are happy and bad ones unhappy. But in most cases "happiness" is understood not in its moral or spiritual sense but in the sense of material prosperity, social position, or political influence. For instance, kingship is considered the reward of one's having faithfully practiced the ten deeds of goodness. If one meets a tragic

death, he is thought to have committed something bad in his past lives even when he might have spent a blameless life in the present one. One day, Zen master Muso-Soseki entered the hall and addressed the assembly, saying, “Causes are complex and have different time scales. The efforts of the individual are not the sole determining factor in the individual's condition in life, because everyone is part of the nexus of society and nature and the conitnuum of time. It is common for people to attribute causes wrongly because of misperception of real relationships. Every cause is the effect of something else, and every effect is the cause of something else. What may seem a curse may be a blessing, and what may seem a blessing may be a curse. Hardship is a blessing when it spurs effort and development; while ease is a curse when it increases complacency and self-indulgence.”

Ten Causes and Ten Effects: According to Buddhism, law of cause and effect or the relation between cause and effect in the sense of the Buddhist law of “Karma”. Cause is a primary force that produces an effect; effect is a result of that primary force. The law of causation governs everything in the universe without exception. The law of causation (reality itself as cause and effect in momentary operation). Every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise, every resultant action or effect has its cause. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations. The Moral Causation in Buddhism means that a deed, good or bad, or indifferent, brings its own result on the doer. Good people are happy and bad ones unhappy. But in most cases “happiness” is understood not in its moral or spiritual sense but in the sense of material prosperity, social position, or political influence. For instance, kingship is considered the reward of one’s having faithfully practiced the ten deeds of goodness. If one meets a tragic death, he is thought to have committed something bad in his past lives even when he might have spent a blameless life in the present one. According to the Surangama Sutra, book Eight, the Buddha reminded Ananda about the ten causes and ten effects as mentioned below. *The first cause and its effect is the Habits of Lust or the Habit of Sexual Desire:* Lust grows into a habit because of sexual intercourse in which two people caress each other thereby producing heat that in turn stimulates desire. This is like the heat caused by rubbing the hands together. Adultery results in the iron bed, the copper pillar, and the eight hot hells (the bed stands for sexual desire and the pillar for the partner on whom the sinner depends to stimulate his sexual appetite). The Buddha taught: “Habits of lust and reciprocal interactions which give rise to mutual rubbing. When this rubbing continues without cease, it produces a tremendous raging fire within which movement occurs, just as warmth arises between a person’s hands when he rubs them together. Because these two habits set each other ablaze, there come into being the iron bed, the copper pillar, and other

such experiences. Therefore, Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon the practice of lust and name it the 'fire of desire.' Bodhisattvas avoid desire as they would a fiery pit." *The second cause and its effect is the Habits of Greed (craving):* Covetousness results in the cold hells. The Buddha taught: "Habits of greed and intermingled scheming which give rise to a suction. When this suction becomes dominant and incessant, it produces intense cold and solid ice where freezing occurs, just as a sensation of cold is experienced when a person draws in a blast of wind through his mouth. Because these two habits clash together, there come into being chattering, whimpering, and shuddering; blue, red, and white lotuses; cold and ice; and other such expeirences." *The third cause and its effect is the Habits of Arrogance:* Conceit results in blood rivers and poisonous seas. Habits of arrogance and resulting friction which give rise to mutual intimidation. When it accelerates without cease, it produces torrents and rapids which create restless waves of water, just as water is produced when a person continuously works his tongue in an effort to taste flavors. Because these two habits incite one another, there come into being the river of blood, the river of ashes, the burning sand, the poisonous sea, the molten copper which is poured over one or which must be swallowed, and other such experiences. Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon self-satisfaction and name it 'drinking the water of stupidity.' Bodhisattvas should avoid arrogance as they would a huge deluge." *The fourth cause and its effect is the Habits of Hatred (anger):* Hatred results in emasculation of sex organ. Habits of hatred which give rise to mutual defiance. When the defiance binds one without cease, one's heart becomes so hot that it catches fire, and the molten vapor turns into metal. From it produced the mountain of knives, the iron cudgel, the tree of swords, the wheel of swords, axes and halberds, and spears and saws. It is like the intent to kill surging forth when a person meets a mortal enemy, so that he is roused to action. Because these two habits clash with one another, there come into being castration and hacking, beheading and mutilation, filing and sticking, flogging and beating, and other such experiences. Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon hatred and name it 'sharp knives and swords.' Bodhisattvas should avoid hatred as they would their own execution." *The fifth cause and its effect is the Habits of Deceptions:* Deceitfulness result in yokes and being beaten with rods. The Buddha taught: "Habits of deception and misleading involments which give rise to mutual guide. When such maneucering continues without cease, it produces the ropes and wood of gallows for hanging, like the grass and trees that grow when water saturates a field. Because these two habits perpetuate one another, there come into being handcuffs and fetters, cangues and locks, whips and clubs, sticks and cudgels, and other such experiences. Therefore, the Thus

Come Ones of the ten directions look upon deception and name it a 'treacherous crook.' Bodhisattvas fear deception as they would a savage wolf." *The sixth cause and its effect is the Habits of Lying:* The Buddha taught: "Habits of lying and combined fraudulence which give rise to mutual cheating. When false accusations continue without cease, one becomes adept at corruption. From this there come into being dust and dirt, excrement and urine, filth, stench, and impurities. It is like the obscuring of everyone's vision when the dust is stirred up by the wind. Because these two habits augment one another, there come into being sinking and drowning, tossing and pitching, flying and falling, floating and submerging, and other such experiences. Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon lying and name it 'robbery and murder.' Bodhisattvas regard lying as they would tread on a venomous snake." *The seventh cause and its effect is the Habits of Animosity (resentment):* Habits of animosity and interconnected enmity which give rise to grievances. From this there come into being flying rocks, thrown stones, caskets and closets, cages on wheels, jars and containers, and bags and rods. It is like someone harming others secretly. He harbors, cherishes, and nurtures evil. Because these two habits swallow one another up, there come into being tossing and pitching, seizing and apprehending, striking and shooting, casting away and pinching, and other such experiences. Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon animosity and name it a 'disobedient and harmful ghost.' Bodhisattvas regard animosity as they would drinking poisonous wine." *The eighth cause and its effect is the Habits of Views (wrong views):* Wrong views result in torture. The Buddha taught: "Habits of views and the admixture of understandings, such as Satkayadrishti, views, moral prohibitions, grasping, and deviant insight into various kinds of karma, which bring about opposition and produce mutual antagonism. From them there come into being court officials, deputies, certifiers, and registrars. They are like people traveling on a road, who meet each other coming and going. Because these two habits influence one another, there come into being official inquiries, baited questions, examinations, interrogations, public investigations, exposure; a youth who is recording good and evil, carrying the record books of the offenders' arguments and retionalizations, and other such experiences. Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon evil views and name them the 'pit of views.' Bodhisattvas regard having false and one-sided views as they would standing on the edge of a steep ravine full of poison." *The Ninth cause and its effect is the Habits of Injustice (unfairness):* Habits of injustice and their interconnected support of one another; they result in instigating false charges and libeling. From them are produced crushing between mountains, crushing between rocks, stone rollers, stone grinders, plowing, and pulverizing. It is like a slanderous villain who engages in

persecuting good people unjustly. Because these two habits join ranks, there come into being pressing and pushing, bludgeons and compulsion, squeezing and straining, weighing and measuring, and other such experiences. Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon harmful accusations and name them a 'treacherous tiger.' Bodhisattvas regard injustice as they would a bolt of lightning." *The tenth cause and its effect is the Habits of Litigation (disputation):* Habits of litigation and the mutual disputations which give rise to covering. From them there are produced a look in the mirror and illumination by the lamp. It is like being in direct sunlight. There is no way one can hide one's shadow. Because these two habits bicker back and forth, there come into being evil companions, the mirror of karma, the fiery pearl, exposure of past karma, inquests, and other such experiences. Therefore, all the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon covering and name it a 'yin villain.' Bodhisattvas regard covering as they would having to carry a mountain atop their heads while walking upon the sea."

The Law of Cause and Effect: The Core Principle of Buddhism: As mentioned above, the law of cause and effect or the relation between cause and effect in the sense of the Buddhist law of "Karma". Cause is a primary force that produces an effect; effect is a result of that primary force. The law of causation governs everything in the universe without exception. The law of causation (reality itself as cause and effect in momentary operation). Every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise, every resultant action or effect has its cause. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations. Cause is a primary force that produces an effect; effect is a result of that primary force. The law of causation governs everything in the universe without exception. Devout Buddhists should always remember that the chief cause that leads to all kinds of effect is "Ignorance". "Ignorance" is a mental factor, or attitude, that obscures our understanding of who we are, and the mode in which all phenomena exist. Not only does ignorance prevent us from realizing how things exist, it also depicts things as existing in a way they do not. By understanding and believing in the law of causality, Buddhists will not become superstitious, or alarmed, and rely passively on heaven authority. He knows that his life depends on his karmas. If he truly believes in such a causal mecahnism, he strives to accomplish good deeds, which can reduce and alleviate the effect of his bad karmas. If he continues to live a good life, devoting his time and effort to practicing Buddhist teachings, he can eliminate all of his bad karmas. He knows that he is the only driving force of his success or failure, so he will be discouraged, put the blame on others, or rely on them. He will put more effort into performing his duties satisfactorily. Ralizing the

value of the law of causality, he always cares for what he thinks, tells or does in order to avoid bad karma.

Some people believe in Christianity, and according to the Christian, the theistic position that man's destiny is basically determined for him by God. God determines if a man deserves heaven or hell; he may even decide each man's earthly destiny. Some other people believe in fatalism that each of us has a fate which we cannot change and about which we can do nothing. They believe that 'Whatever will be will be.' In this philosophy the agent that determines destiny is not a God, but rather a mysterious impersonal power called 'Fate' which transcend our understanding. Still some other people believe the exact opposite, they believe in indeterminism: everything happens by accident. They believe that if man is lucky, he will achieve happiness or success; if he is unlucky, he will suffer or fail, but whatever he receives, he receives not through any process of determination but by accident, by sheer coincidence. In Christianity, the Christian worships God and prays to Him in order to obtain forgiveness from the results his evil actions hold out for him. Buddhism differs from Christianity in that it sees the root cause of all evil in "ignorance" and not in "sin", in an act of intellectual misapprehension and not in an act of volition and rebellion. As a practical definition of ignorance, we are offered the four perverted views which make us seek for permanence in what is inherently impermanent, ease in what is inseparable from suffering, selfhood in what is not linked to any self, and delight in what is essentially repulsive and disgusting. According to the Karma Law in Buddhism, the present is a shadow of the past, the future a shadow of the present. Hence our action in the present is most important, for what we do in the present determines the course of our future development. For this reason, Buddhist practitioners should always apply their minds to the present so that they may advance on the way. According to the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth, the causal relation between action and its results holds not only with regard to the present life but also with regard to past and future lives. This universal law of cause and effect is non-negotiable. Just as we cannot run away from our own shadows, so we cannot run away from the results of our actions. They will pursue us no matter where we hide. Besides, the Buddha also taught that negative or unwholesome mind creates negative or unwholesome thoughts (anger, hatred, harmful thoughts, wrong views, etc), speech (lying, harsh speech, double-tongued, etc), as well as deeds which are the causes of our sufferings, confusion and misery. Unwholesome or negative mind will destroy our inner peace and tranquility.

Catholicism contradicts itself with the words in the Bible: "Ye shall reap what ye shall sow" and the theory of forgiveness through the gace of Christ or God. The sentence "Reap what you sow" is precisely in accordance with the

natural law of karma, while the grace of forgiveness completely denies this law. But in Buddhism, no one can forgive a person for his transgression. If he commits an evil deed, he has to reap the bad consequences, for all is governed by universal law and not by any arbitrary creator. According to Buddhism, the pain or pleasure resulting in this life from the practices or causes and retributions of a previous life. Therefore, ancient virtues said: "If we wish to know what our lives were like in the past, just look at the retributions we are experiencing currently in this life. If we wish to know what retributions will happen to us in the future, just look and examine the actions we have created or are creating in this life." If we understand clearly this theory, then in our daily activities, sincere Buddhists are able to avoid unwholesome deeds and practice wholesome deeds. Every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise, every resultant action has its cause. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situation. Buddhists believe in a just rational of karma that operates automatically and speak in terms of cause and effect instead of rewards and punishments. Every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise every resultant action has its cause. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism goverining all situation. Buddhists believe in a just rational of karma that operates automatically and speak in terms of cause and effect instead of rewards and punishments. It's a fundamental principle for all living beings and all things that if one sows good deeds, he will surely reap a good harvest; if he sows bad deeds, he must inevitably reap a bad harvest. Though the results may appear quickly or slowly, everyone will be sure to receive the results that accord with their actions. Anyone who has deeply understood this principle will never do evil.

According to Buddhism, every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise, every resultant action or effect has its cause. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations. The Moral Causation in Buddhism means that a deed, good or bad, or indifferent, brings its own result on the doer. Good people are happy and bad ones unhappy. But in most cases "happiness" is understood not in its moral or spiritual sense but in the sense of material prosperity, social position, or political influence. For instance, kingship is considered the reward of one's having faithfully practiced the ten deeds of goodness. If one meets a tragic death, he is thought to have committed something bad in his past lives even when he might have spent a blameless life in the present one. Causality is a natural law, mentioning the relationship between cause and effect. All things come into being not without cause, since if there is no cause, there is no effect and vice-versa. As so sow, so shall you reap. Cause and effect never conflict with each other. In other words, cause and effect are always consistent with

each other. If we want to have beans, we must sow bean seeds. If we want to have oranges, we must sow orange seeds. If wild weeds are planted, then it's unreasonable for one to hope to harvest edible fruits. One cause cannot have any effect. To produce an effect, it is necessary to have some specific conditions. For instance, a grain of rice cannot produce a rice plant without the presence of sunlight, soil, water, and care. In the cause there is the effect; in the effect there is the cause. From the current cause, we can see the future effect and from the present effect we discerned the past cause. The development process from cause to effect is sometimes quick, sometimes slow. Sometimes cause and effect are simultaneous like that of beating a drum and hearing its sound. Sometimes cause and effect are three or four months away like that of the grain of rice. It takes about three to four, or five to six months from a rice seed to a young rice plant, then to a rice plant that can produce rice. Sometimes it takes about ten years for a cause to turn into an effect. For instance, from the time the schoolboy enters the elementary school to the time he graduates a four-year college, it takes him at least 14 years. Other causes may involve more time to produce effects, may be the whole life or two lives.

IV. The Importance of Cause-Condition-Effect in Ecaping the Ocean of Life and Death in Buddhist Cultivation:

It is traditional for Buddhists to honour the Buddha, to respect the Sangha and to pay homage the religious objects of veneration such as the relics of the Buddha, Buddha images, monastery, pagoda, and personal articles used by the Buddha. However, Buddhists never pray to idols. The worship of the Buddha, ancestors, and deceased parents, are encouraged. However, the word "worship" itself is not appropriate from the Buddhist point of view. The term "Pay homage" should be more appropriate. Buddhists do not blindly worship these objects and forget their main goal is to practice. Buddhists kneel before the image of the Buddha to pay respect to what the image represents, and promise to try to achieve what the Buddha already achieved 25 centuries ago, not to seek worldly favours from the image. Buddhists pay homage to the image not because they are fear of the Buddha, nor do they supplicate for worldly gain. The most important aspect in Buddhism is to put into practice the teaching of Cause-Condition-Effect that were given by the Buddha. The Buddha always reminded his disciples that Buddhists should not depend on others, not even on the Buddha himself, for their salvation. During the Buddha's time, so many disciples admired the beauty of the Buddha, so the Buddha also reminded his disciples saying: "You cannot see the Buddha by watching the physical body. Those who see my teaching see me."

To help laypeople overcome their disturbing attitudes and stop committing harmful actions, the Buddha set out five precepts. During a brief ceremony performed by a monk or nun, laypeople can take refuge in the Triple Gem: Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. At the same time, they can take any of the five lay precepts and become either an upasaka or upasika. When performing the ceremony, some masters include only the first precept of not killing, and let laypeople decide themselves to take any or all of the other four. Other masters give all five precepts at the time of giving refuge. Laypeople may also take eight precepts for a period of 24 hours every month. Many laypeople like to take the eight precepts on new and full moon days, or the end of the lunar month, or on Buddhist festivals, although they may be taken on any day. The first five of these eight are similar to the five lay precpets, with the expception that the precpet against unwise sexual behavior become abstinent from sex, because the precepts are kept for only one day. In Thailand's and Cambodia's traditions, there is a custom whereby most young men become monks and hold the Sramanera precepts for three months, at least once during their lives. They usually do this when they are young adults as it gives them a foundation in strict ethics and is very auspicious for their families. At the end of the three-month period, they give back their precepts and return to worldly family life.

Concerning the ideas of a Buddhist in the Path of Cultivation, in the Satipatthana Sutra, the Buddha explained His Way of Enlightenment. Here, mental objects are mindfully examined and observed as they arise within. The task here is to be aware of the thoughts that arise and pass away within the mind. You must slowly understand the nature of thoughts. You must know how to make use of the good thoughts and avoid the danger of the harmful thoughts. Your thoughts need constant watching if the mind is to be purified. Concerning the methods of mindfulness of thoughts and mental states, the Buddha taught: "To sit alone and concentrate the mind on the thoughts. To watch the good thoughts and observe how they affect your mental state. To watch the harmful thoughts and observe how they disturb your mental state. Do not try to fight with the thoughts, for the more you try to fight them, the more you have to run with them. Simply observe the thoughts dispassionately and so create the opportunity to go beyond them. The moving beyond all thoughts and knowledge bring peace, harmony, and happiness. Simply observe these thoughts, you will slowly come to understand how to control evil thoughts and to encourage good thoughts. In the course of your working day, try to observe your thinking process. Simply observe and do not identify with this process." To be able to do these, you will experience an endless inner happiness and peace even though you are living in a society that is full of troubles, sufferings and afflictions. Thought transformation is one of the methods of cultivation that can help laypeople achieve peace, mindfulness,

liberation or enlightenment in this very life. This is a way to live each moment to the fullest, for example, when we wash dishes or clothes, we think 'may I help all beings cleanse their minds of disturbing attitudes and obscurations.'

According to Mahamudra Master, an Indian famous monk: "Thought is like a horse, let it go free, just like a dove released from a ship in the middle of the infinite ocean. For just as the bird finds nowhere to land but back on the ship, thoughts have no place to go other than returning to their place of origin." Thus, Mahamudra Master wrote a verse on "Thought" as follow:

Clouds that drift in the sky have no roots.
They have no home.
Conceptual thoughts that float in the mind are the same.
When we see the nature of mind,
All discrimination ends.

Some people believe that they should wait until after their retirement to cultivate because after retirement they will have more free time. Those people may not understand the real meaning of the word "cultivation", that is the reason why they want to wait until after retirement to cultivate. According to Buddhism, cultivation means to turn bad things into good things, or to improve your body and mind. So, when can we turn bad things into good things, or when can we improve our body and mind? Ancient virtues taught: "Do not wait until your are thirsty to dig a well, or don't wait until the horse is on the edge of the cliff to draw in the reins for it is too late; or don't wait until the boat is in the middle of the river to patch the leaks for it's too late, and so on". Most of us have the same problem of waiting and delaying of doing things. If we wait until the water reaches our navel to jump, it's too late, no way we can escape the drown if we don't know how to swim. In the same way, at ordinary times, we don't care about proper or improper acts, but wait until after retirement or near death to start caring about our actions, we may never have that chance. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that impermanence and death never wait for anybody. So, take advantage of whatever time we have at the present time to cultivate, to plant good roots and to accumulate merits and virtues.

Buddhism never separates itself from the secular life. On the contrary, the Buddha always reminded his followers, monks, nuns, upasakas and upasikas, to live the best and highest life and to get the most out of life. However, the best joy in life according to Buddhism are not the pleasures and materials, but the light-hearted and joyful happiness at all time in mind. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that it is true that we must study the Buddha's teachings, but the main thing is to live them in our daily life. If we can do this, we are truly Buddhists of a living Buddhism. If not, we are only embracing the corpse of a dead Buddhism.

Everyone has hopes that his wishes will be fulfilled someday. Hope itself is not wrong, for hope will help people try to reach to better situations. However, when a person begins to expect things have to happen the way he or she wishes, he or she begins to have trouble with disappointment. Thus, the Buddha taught: "Suffering of frustrated desire," or unfulfilled wishes cause suffering (suffering due to unfulfilled wishes), or cannot get what one wants causes suffering. The pain which results from not receiving what one seeks, from disappointed hope or unrewarded effort, one of the eight sorrows. And therefore, the Buddha advised his disciples "content with few desires." "Content with few desires" means having few desires; "knowing how to feel satisfied" means being content. Knowing how to feel satisfied with few possessions means being content with material conditions that allow us to be healthy and strong enough to practice the Way. "Knowing how to feel satisfied and being content with material conditions" is an effective way to cut through the net of passions and desires, attain a peaceful state of body and mind and accomplish our supreme goal of cultivation.

There are some people who regard this life as a life of suffering or pessimists may be tolerated as long as they are simply feeling dissatisfied with this life, but when they begin to give up this life as hopeless and try to escape to a better life by practicing austerities or self-mortifications, then they are to be abhorred. Some people believe that Buddhism is pessimistic because its significant viewpoint on the idea that there is nothing but hardship in this world, even pleasures end in hardship. It is totally wrong thinking that way. Buddhism believes that in this present life, there are both pleasures and hardships. He who regards life as entirely pleasure will suffer when the so-called "happiness" ceases to exist. The Buddha believes that happiness and sufferings intertwine in our daily life. If one is ignorant of the fact that pleasures can cause hardships, one will be disappointed when that fact presents itself. Thus, the Buddha teaches that one should regard hardship as hardship, accepting it as a fact and finding way to oppose it. Hence his emphasis on perserverance, fortitude, and forebearance, the latter being one of the six Perfections. In short, according to the Buddhist view, there are both pleasures and hardships in life, but one must not be discouraged when hardship comes, or lose oneself in rapture of joy when pleasure comes. Both pleasures and hardships must be taken alike with caution for we know that pleasures end in hardship. From this understanding, sincere Buddhists will be determined to cultivate diligently to turn both worldly pleasures and hardships to an eternally transcendental joy. It is to say that we are not bound to both worldly pleasures and hardships at all times. They come and go naturally. We are always live a life without worries, without afflictions because we know for sure that everything will pass. The Buddhist point of view on both optimism

and pessimism is very clear: Buddhism is not optimistic nor pessimistic on human life. Two extremes of both optimism and pessimism are prevented by the moderate doctrine of Buddhism.

In Theravada countries, “Pirit” is a Pali term for a common practice for protecting of the Three Gems of laypeople, which involves reciting Buddhist texts as a way of generating merit. Often laypeople make donations to monks who do the recitation, believing that this activity makes merit both by supporting the monks and by causing the texts to be chanted. It is believed that this activity helps those who engage in it to accrue merit, which is conductive to a better rebirth, and it is also thought to bring benefits in the present life. The most common form of pirit involves a group of monks who chant a set of texts during the course of a night, then dedicate the merit to all beings. A worthwhile life, according to Mahayana Buddhist point of view, does not consist in merely spending one’s life in peace and quiet but in creating something good for other beings. When one tries to become a better person through his practice, this endeavor is the creation of good. When he does something for the benefit of other people, this is the creation of a still higher standard of good. The various arts are the creation of beauty, and all honest professions are the creation of various kinds of energy that are beneficial to society. Creation is bound to bring with it pain and hardship. However, one finds life worth living when one makes a strenuous effort for the sake of something good. He endeavors to become a little better a person and to do just a little more for the good of other people, through such positive endeavor we are enabled to feel deep joy in our human lives.

Buddhism has a very special point of view in “outer appearance or inner world”. For the understanding of the world within, science may not be of much help to us. Ultimate truth can not be found in science. To the scientist, knowledge is something that ties him more and more to this sentient existence. That knowledge, therefore, is not saving knowledge. To one who views the world and all it holds in its proper perspective, the primary concern of life is not mere speculation or vain voyaging into the imaginary regions of high fantasy, but the gaining of true happiness and freedom from ill or unsatisfactoriness. To him, true knowledge depends on this question: “Is this learning according to actuality? Can it be of use to us in the conquest of mental peace and tranquility, of real happiness?” To understand the world within we need the guidance, the instruction of a competent and genuine seer clarity of vision and depth of insight penetrate into the deepest recesses of life and cognize the true nature that underlies all appearance. He, indeed, is the true philosopher, true scientist who has grasped the meaning of change in the fullest sense and has transmuted this understanding into a realization of the deepest truths fathomable by man, the truths of the three signs or

characteristics: Impermanence, Unsatisfactoriness, Non-self. No more can he be confused by the terrible or swept off his feet by the glamor of thing ephemeral. No more is it possible for him to have a clouded view of phenomena; for he has transcended all capacity for error through the perfect immunity which insight alone can give. Cultivator of the Way must leave behind everything, must use proper knowledge and views as their standard and cultivate vigorously. Our goal is to 'leave behind the mark of speech', so that there is nothing left to say. We also want to 'leave behind the mark of the mind and its conditions,' so that there is nothing left to climb on. We want to 'leave behind the mark of written words.' Once words also are gone, they can not represent our speech at all. Since there is no way to express with words, what is there to remember? What is there that we can not put down? What is left to take so seriously? We should apply ourselves to this, and stop toying with superficial aspects.

In short, in Buddhist teachings, cause is a primary force that produces an effect. Conditions are external circumstances. If our cultivation power is weak, we can be attracted by external conditions; however, if our cultivation power is strong, no external environments can attract us. The sixth patriarch told the monks in Kuang Chou that: "It is not the wind moving, and it is not the flag moving, it is our mind moving." So, if we follow the teachings of the sixth patriarch, no external environments can be fertilizers to our cycle of births and deaths. Effect is a result of that primary force. The law of causation governs everything in the universe without exception. Law of cause-condition-effect or the relation between cause, condition and effect in the sense of the Buddhist law of "Karma". The law of causation (reality itself as cause and effect in momentary operation). Every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise, every resultant action or effect has its cause. The law of cause-condition-effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations. The Moral Causation in Buddhism means that a deed, good or bad, or indifferent, brings its own result on the doer. Good people are happy and bad ones unhappy. In other words, practitioners who can realize these things in cultivation can thoroughly understand the importance of cause-condition-effect in cultivation on escaping the ocean of life and death in Buddhist cultivation.

Chapter Twenty-One

Roles Body-Speech-Mind in Cultivation to Escape the Ocean of Life and Death

I. A Summary of the Cultivation of the Body, Speech, and Mind in Buddhism:

Buddhist Practitioners should always remember that in Buddhist cultivation, practitioners must cultivate both the body and the mind. In other words, practitioners must cultivate three karmas of Body-Speech-Mind. Both the body and the mind are intricately connected. When the mind is really pure and suffused with the factors of enlightenment, this has a tremendous effect on the circulatory system. Then the body becomes luminous, and perceptions are heightened. The mind becomes light and agile, as does the body, which sometimes feels as if it is floating in the air. To Buddhist cultivators, the practice of restraint is an effective way of moderating the body and mind and preventing the attack of afflictions. Restraint does not mean that our body becoming numb, deaf or dumb. It means guarding each sense door so that the mind does not run out through it into fancies and thoughts. In the relationship between the body and the mind, mindfulness of the mind plays a crucial role in restraining the arising of the six sense organs. When we are mindful in each moment, the mind is held back from falling into a state where greed, hatred and delusion may erupt; and sufferings and afflictions will have no opportunity to arise. During the process of cultivation or an intensive meditation retreat, we must try to restraint our body because the restraint in the body means the peace and joy in the mind. During the process of cultivation, our eyes must act like a blind person even though we may possess complete sight. When walking, we should walk about with lowered eyelids, incuriously, to keep the mind from scattering. Even though we have ears but we must act like a deaf person, not reflecting, commenting upon, nor judging the sounds we may hear. We should pretend not quite to understand sounds and should not listen for them. Even though we have a great deal of learning, may have read a tremendous amount

of meditation methods, and even though we are extremely intelligent, during actual practice, we should put away all this knowledge. We should act like we know nothing and at the same time we should not talk anything about what we know. Devout Zen practitioners should always see that both body and mind are impermanent, so there is no reason for us to continue to attach to them and continue to float in the cycle of birth and death. There are people who have the appearance of true cultivators by becoming a monk or nun, but their minds are not determined to find enlightenment but instead they yearn for fame, notoriety, wealth, etc just like everyone in the secular life. Thus, cultivating in this way is entirely contradictory to the Buddha's teachings and one is better off remaining in the secular life and be a genuine lay Buddhist. Our mental consciousness and all experiences are contingent upon our body; therefore, the human mind and the human body are in some sense cannot be separated. However, the human mind itself has its own power which can help to better human beings through cultivation of meditation. Devout Buddhists should always remember that the human mind can greatly effect any physical changes. In short, we must cultivate both the mody and the mind. For ordinary people, we do not free trapped animals; but, in contrast, we continue to kill and murder innocent creatures, such as fishing, hunting, etc. We do not give, donate, or make offerings; but, in contrast, we continue to be selfish, stingy, and stealing from others. In the monastery, we must be thrifty with all materials such as rice, oil, soysauce, vinegar, salt, and so on. We should cherish them and not let them spoil and go to waste. Even a sheet of paper or a pen should be carefully utilized, because they are all bought from the money offered by sincere followers. Buddhist practitioners, if we cannot cease our karma, we should always be careful in this and if we do not cherish our blessings, all our merit and virtue will leak out. We do not behave properly and honorably; but, in contrast, we continue to commit sexual misconduct or sexual promiscuity.

Buddhist practitioners should always remember that we cannot cease our karma, with our body, we should not kill, steal, commit sexual misconduct. We should not always be caring too much about our stinking skinbag by finding good things to feed it in every thought, and trying to make it more attractive in every thought. Buddhist

Practitioners Should Not Create the Four Karmas of the Mouth. Usually, we, ordinary people, do not speak the truth; but, in contrast, we continue to lie and speak falsely. Buddhist cultivators should bring forth to a true mind. In every move we make and every word we say, we should aim to be true. Do not be like worldly people, sometime to be true and other time to be false (sometimes telling the truth and sometimes telling lies). Buddhist cultivators must always speak truthfully, do true deeds, and not tell lies. In every thought, we must get rid of our own faults. We must try our best to eliminate the bad habits we had formed since limitless eons in the past and repent of the offenses created in limitless eons. We do not speak soothingly and comfortably; but, in contrast, we continue to speak wickedly and use a double-tongue to cause other harm and disadvantages. Moreover, in every move and every word, we must not harm anyone else. We should guard the virtue of our mouth, not speaking frivolous words, untruthful words, harsh words, or words which cause disharmony. We do not speak kind and wholesome words; but, in contrast, we continue to speak wicked and unwholesome words, i.e., insulting or cursing others. We do not speak words that are in accordance with the dharma; but, in contrast, we continue to speak ambiguous talks. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that we cannot cease our karma, with our mouth, we should not lie, should not exaggerate, should not use wicked and unwholesome words, and should not have ambiguous talk. Buddhist Practitioners Should Not Create three Karmas of the Mind. Usually, we, ordinary people, do not know how to desire less and when is enough; but we continue to be greedy and covetous. We do not have peace and tolerance toward others; but, in contrast, we continue to be malicious and to have hatred. We do not believe in the Law of Causes and Effetcs, but in contrast we continue to attach to our ignorance, and refuse to be near good knowledgeable advisors in order to learn and cultivate the proper dharma. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that we cannot cease our karma, with our mouth, we should not to be covetous, not to be malicious, and not to be unbelief.

Finally, according to Buddhist teachings, karma does not get lost. Body, speech, and mind all make karma when we cling. We create habits that can make us suffer in the future. This is the fruit of our attachment, of our past defilement. Remember, not only body but also

speech and mental action can make conditions for future results. If we did some act of kindness in the past and remember it today, we will be happy, and this happy state of mind is the result of past karma. In other words, all things conditioned by cause, both long-term and moment-to-moment. If we act positively, the happy result will eventually occur. When we do negative actions, the imprints aren't lost even though they may not bring their results immediately. When we act, either good or bad, we see our own actions, like an outsider who witnesses. The pictures of these actions will automatically imprint in our Alaya-vijnana (subconscious mind); the seed of these actions are sown there, and await for enough conditions to spring up its tree and fruits. Similarly, the effect in the alaya-vijnana (subconscious mind) of the one who has received our actions. The seed of either love or hate has been sown there, waiting for enough conditions to spring up its tree and fruits. Devout Buddhists should always remember that, "the ocean's water may dry up, mountain may waste away, the actions done in former lives are never lost; on the contrary, they come to fruit though aeons after aeons pass, until at last the debt is paid." When we plant a black-pepper seed, black-pepper plant grows and we will reap black-pepper, not oranges. Similarly, when we act positively, happiness follows, not suffering. When we act destructively, misery comes, not happiness. Just as small seed can grow into a huge tree with much fruit, small actions can bring large result. Therefore, we should try to avoid even small negative actions and to create small negative ones.

II. Cultivation of Body-Mouth-Mind Is Not A One-Day Affair:

Some people believe that they should wait until after their retirement to cultivate because after retirement they will have more free time. Those people may not understand the real meaning of the word "cultivation", that is the reason why they want to wait until after retirement to cultivate. According to Buddhism, cultivation of Body-Mouth-Mind is not a one-day affair for cultivation means to turn bad things in your body, mouth and mind into good things, or to improve your body, mouth and mind, and this may take more than one lifetime, it may even take countless eons (asankhyeya kalpas-skt). So, when can we turn bad things into good things, or when can we improve our body, mouth and mind? Ancient virtues taught: "Do not wait until your are

thirsty to dig a well, or don't wait until the horse is on the edge of the cliff to draw in the reins for it is too late; or don't wait until the boat is in the middle of the river to patch the leaks for it's too late, and so on". Most of us have the same problem of waiting and delaying of doing things. If we wait until the water reaches our navel to jump, it's too late, no way we can escape the drown if we don't know how to swim. In the same way, at ordinary times, we don't care about proper or improper acts, but wait until after retirement or near death to start caring about our actions, we may never have that chance. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that impermanence and death never wait for anybody. So, take advantage of whatever time we have at the present time to cultivate, to plant good roots and to accumulate merits and virtues.

Devout Buddhists should always remember that the three realms of Desire, Form and Formless realms scorching sentient beings, such sufferings are limitless. The triple worlds as a burning house. In the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha taught: "The three worlds are unsafe, much like a house on fire. Suffering is all pervasive, truly deserving to be terrified and frightened." Sentient beings in the three worlds, especially those in the Saha World, are hampered constantly by afflictions and sufferings. Living crowded in the suffering conditions of this Saha World is similar to living in a house on fire, full of dangers, life can end at any moment. Even so, everyone is completely oblivious and unaware, but continues to live leisurely, chasing after the five desires, as if nothing was happening. Sincere Buddhists should always remember this and should always diligently cultivate to seek liberation. The burning house, one of the seven parables in the Wonder Lotus sutra, from which the owner tempts his heedless children by the device of the three kinds of carts (goat, deer and bullock), especially the white bullock cart. The three realms of Desire, Form and Formless realms scorching sentient beings, such sufferings are limitless. The triple worlds as a burning house. In the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha taught: "The three worlds are unsafe, much like a house on fire. Suffering is all pervasive, truly deserving to be terrified and frightened." Sentient beings in the three worlds, especially those in the Saha World, are hampered constantly by afflictions and sufferings. Living crowded in the suffering conditions of this Saha World is similar to living in a

house on fire, full of dangers, life can end at any moment. Even so, everyone is completely oblivious and unaware, but continues to live leisurely, chasing after the five desires, as if nothing was happening. Sincere Buddhists should always remember this and should always diligently cultivate to seek liberation. Societies are filled with robberies, murders, rapes, frauds, deceptions, etc. All these continue without any foreseeable end. To speak of our individual mind, everyone is burdened with worries, sadness, depression, and anxieties, etc. In the Dharmapada Sutra, verse 146, the Buddha taught: "How can there be laughter, how can there be joy, when the whole world is burnt by the flames of passions and ignorance? When you are living in darkness, why wouldn't you seek the light?"

The Buddhist teaching about time is closely related to the doctrine of impermanence. In other words, time waits for no one. According to Buddhism, time is moving ceaselessly. It is ungraspable. The concept of the speed of time changes in different situations, it is relative to our state of mind. It passes more quickly when we are happy and less quickly when we are unhappy and afflictive. To Buddhists, a day in which no meritorious deeds nor meditation can be achieved is a lost day. That is equivalent with going towards your own tomb with ignorance. Practitioners of Buddha recitation should maximize all the time that we have to practice, and always remember that the intermediate goal of cultivation in Buddhism is to achieve one-pointed mind; from one-pointed mind gradually one can see one's own nature or to achieve the ultimate goal of Buddhahood.

People who cultivate should not be rush, thinking that we can cultivate today and become enlightened tomorrow. It is not tha easy. We must train and cultivate everyday. As long as we do not retreat, do not worry too much about progress we are making. If each day we have less and less random thoughts, less and less lust, anger and ignorance, then we are making progress. We cultivate to eliminate our bad habits and faults, cast out our defiled actions, speeches and thoughts, and reveal our wisdom. The wisdom that each one of us once possessed, but it has been covered up by ignorance. Cultivation is not a one-day affair. We should cultivate in thought after thought, from morning to night, month after month, and year after year with unchanging perseverance. And above all, we should cultivate sincerely every day.

As we practice, we should remain calm whether we encounter demonic obstacles, adverse situations, or even favorable situations. We should maintain our vigor in both adversity and favorable situations, and we should think that all things seem to be proclaiming the wonderful dharma to us. Sincere cultivators should always remember that we are trying to reach the transcendental dharma within worldly affairs. Thus, nothing will confuse us. No situations will obstruct us. The reasons why we have been backsliding instead of advancing: when we encounter good conditions, we hesitate and feel unsure ourselves; when meeting evil conditions, we follow right along. Thus, we continue to linger on birth and death, and rebirth. We are born muddled, died confused, and do not know what we are doing, cannot figure out what life is all about.

III. Three Karmas of Body-Speech-Mind Play a Considerable Role in Causing Beings to Be Sinking and Being Drifted Up and Down with Overloaded Misfortunes in the Ocean of Life and Death:

According to Buddhist teachings, Body-Speech-Mind play a considerable role in widely opening six doors that cause beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down in the ocean of life and death. If we want to escape the ocean of life and death; or at least to have more peace, mindfulness, and happiness in our daily activities right in this very life, in addition to remembering about ten robbers: greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, sexual misconducts, and lying which are always waiting to harm and to destroy completely our path of cultivation, lay practitioners should always cultivate our own body-mouth-mind in all circumstances and at all times. ***First, Karmas of Body:*** According to Buddhism, body of a man is "Pancakkhandha". The physical body is produced from the essence of food which is a combination of multiple conditions in the world, digested by the father communicated to the mother and established in the womb. Such a person is conditioned by this physical and mental world. he relates closely to others, to society, and to nature, but can never exist by himself. The five aggregates of man are the operation of the twelve elements. Among which, aggregate of form is understood as a person's physical body, aggregate of feeling includes feelings of suffering, of happiness, and of indifference. It is known as

feelings arising from eye contact, ear contact, nose contact, tongue contact, body contact and mind contact. Aggregate of perception includes perception of body, of sound, of odor, of taste, of touch, and of mental objects or phenomena. Aggregate of activities is all mental, oral, and bodily activities. It is also understood as vocational acts occasioned by body, by sound, by odor, by taste, by touching or by ideas. Aggregate of consciousness includes eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind consciousnesses. In the Turning the Dharma-Cakra Sutra, the Buddha taught very clearly about the Pancakkhandha as follows: "Bhiksus, the form, feeling, perception, activities, and consciousness are impermanent, suffering, and void of the self. Let us examine the body and mind to see whether in either of them we can locate the self, we will find in neither of of them. Then, the so-called "Self" is just a term for a collection of physical and mental factors. Let us first look at the aggregate matter of form. The aggregate of form corresponds to what we would call material or physical factors. It includes not only our own bodies, but also the material objects that surround us, i.e., houses, soil, forests, and oceans, and so on. However, physical elements by themselves are not enough to produce experience. The simple contact between the eyes and visible objects, or between the ear and sound cannot result in experience without consciousness. Only the co-presence of consciousness together with the sense of organ and the object of the sense organ produces experience. In other words, it is when the eyes, the visible object and consciousness come together that the experience of a visible object is produced. Consciousness is therefore an extremely important element in the production of experience. Consciousness or the sixth sense, or the mind. This sense organ together with the other five sense organs of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body to produce experience. The physical and mental factors of experience worked together to produce personal experience, and the nature of the five aggregates are in constant change. Therefore, according to the Buddha's teachings, the truth of a man is selfless. The body and mind that man misunderstands of his 'self' is not his self, it is not his, and he is not it." Devout Buddhists should grasp this idea firmly to establish an appropriate method of cultivation not only for the body, but also for the speech and mind. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Vimalakirti used expedient means

of appearing illness in his body to expound about sentient beings' bodies and the Buddha's body to save them. Because of his indisposition, kings, ministers, elders, upasakas, Brahmins, et., as well as princes and other officials numbering many thousands came to enquire after his health. So Vimalakirti appeared in his sick body to receive and expound the Dharma to them, saying: "Virtuous ones, the human body is impermanent; it is neither strong nor durable; it will decay and is, therefore, unreliable. It causes anxieties and sufferings, being subject to all kinds of ailments. Virtuous ones, all wise men do not rely on this body which is like a mass of foam, which is intangible. It is like a bubble and does not last for a long time. It is like a flame and is the product of the thirst of love. It is like a banana tree, the centre of which is hollow. It is like an illusion being produced by inverted thoughts. It is like a dream being formed by fasle views. It is like a shadow and is caused by karma. This body is like an echo for it results from causes and conditions. It is like a floating cloud which disperses any moment. It is like lightning for it does not stay for the time of a thought. It is ownerless for it is like the earth. It is egoless for it is like fire (that kills itself). It is transient like the wind. It is not human for it is like water. It is unreal and depends on the four elements for its existence. It is empty, being neither ego nor its object. It is without knowledge like grass, trees and potsherds. It is not the prime mover, but is moved by the wind (of passions). It is impure and full of filth. It is false, and though washed, bathed, clothed and fed, it will decay and die in the end. It is a calamity being subject to all kinds of illnesses and sufferings. It is like a dry well for it is prusued by death. It is unsettled and will pass away. It is like a poisonous snake, a deadly enemy, a temporary assemblage (without underlying reality), being made of the five aggregates, the twelve entrances (the six organs and their objects) and the eighteen realms of sense (the six organs, their objects and their perceptions). However, when Manjusri Bodhisattva asked Vimalakirti about "what should a Bodhisattva say when comforting another Bodhisattva who falls ill?" Vimalakirti replied, "He should speak of the impermanence of the body but never of the abhorrence and relinquishment of the body. He should speak of the suffering body but never of the joy in nirvana. He should speak of egolessness in the body while teaching and guiding all living beings (in spite of the fact that they are fundamentally non-existent in the absolute state). He should speak of the voidness of the body but should never cling to the ultimate nirvana. He should speak of repentance of past sins but should avoid slipping into the past. Because of his own illness he should take pity on all those who are sick. Knowing that he has suffered during countless past aeons he should think of the welfare of all living beings. He should think of his past practice of good virtues to uphold (his determination for) right livelihood. Instead of worrying

about troubles (klesa) he should give rise to zeal and devotion (in his practice of the Dharma). He should act like a king physician to cure others' illnesses. Thus, a Bodhisattva should comfort another sick Bodhisattva to make him happy." A sick Bodhisattva should look into all things in this way. He should further meditate on his body which is impermanent, is subject to suffering and is non-existent and egoless; this is called wisdom. Although his body is sick, he remains in (the realm of) birth and death for the benefit of all (living beings) without complaint; this is called expedient method (upaya). Manjusri! He should further meditate on the body which is inseparable from illness and on illness which is inherent in the body because sickness and the body are neither new nor old; this is called wisdom. The body, though ill, is not to be annihilated; this is the expedient method (for remaining in the world to work for salvation). "Virtuous ones, the (human) body being so repulsive, you should seek the Buddha body. Why? Because the Buddha body is called Dharmakaya, the product of boundless merits and wisdom; the outcome of discipline, meditation, wisdom, liberation and perfect knowledge of liberation; the result of kindness, compassion, joy and indifference (to emotions); the consequence of (the six perfections or paramitas) charity, discipline, patience, zeal, meditation and wisdom, and the sequel of expedient teaching (upaya); the six supernatural powers; the three insights; the thirty-seven stages contributory to enlightenment; serenity and insight; the ten transcendental powers (dasabala); the four kinds of fearlessness; the eighteen unsurpassed characteristics of the Buddha; the wiping out of all evils and the performance of all good deeds; truthfulness, and freedom from looseness and unrestraint. So countless kinds of purity and cleanness produce the body of the Tathagata. Virtuous ones, if you want to realize the Buddha body in order to get rid of all the illnesses of a living being, you should set your minds on the quest of supreme enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi)." All things have changed and will never cease to change. The human body is changeable, thus governed by the law of impermanence. Our body is different from the minute before to that of the minute after. Biological researches have proved that the cells in our body are in constant change, and in every seven years all the old cells have been totally renewed. These changes help us quickly grow up, age and die. The longer we want to live, the more we fear death. From childhood to aging, human life is exactly like a dream, but there are many people who do not realize; therefore, they continue to launch into the noose of desire; as a result, they suffer from greed and will suffer more if they become attached to their possessions. Sometimes at time of death they still don't want to let go anything. There are some who know that they will die soon, but they still strive desperately to keep what they cherish most. However, of all precious jewels, life is the greatest; if there is life, it is the priceless jewel. Thus, if you

are able to maintain your livelihood, someday you will be able to rebuild your life. However, everything in life, if it has form characteristics, then, inevitably, one day it will be destroyed. A human life is the same way, if there is life, there must be death. Even though we say a hundred years, it passes by in a flash, like lightening streaking across the sky, like a flower's blossom, like the image of the moon at the bottom of a lake, like a short breath, what is really eternal? Sincere Buddhists should always remember when a person is born, not a single dime is brought along; therefore, when death arrives, not a word will be taken either. A lifetime of work, putting the body through pain and torture in order to accumulate wealth and possessions, in the end everything is worthless and futile in the midst of birth, old age, sickness, and death. After death, all possessions are given to others in a most senseless and pitiful manner. At such time, there are not even a few good merits for the soul to rely and lean on for the next life. Therefore, such an individual will be condemned into the three evil paths immediately. Ancient sages taught: "A steel tree of a thousand years once again blossom, such a thing is still not bewildering; but once a human body has been lost, ten thousand reincarnations may not return." Sincere Buddhists should always remember what the Buddha taught: "It is difficult to be reborn as a human being, it is difficult to encounter (meet or learn) the Buddha-dharma; now we have been reborn as a human being and encountered the Buddha-dharma, if we let the time passes by in vain, we waste our scarce lifespan." Thus, the Buddha advised His disciples to cultivate in every minute and every second of the current life. According to the Kayagatasati-Sutta in the Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, cultivation of mindfulness of the body means when walking, a person understands that he is walking; when standing, he understands that he is standing; when sitting, he understands that he is sitting; when lying, he understands that he is lying. He understands accordingly however his body is disposed. As he abides thus diligent, ardent, and resolute, his memories and intentions based on the household life are abandoned. That is how a person develops mindfulness of the body. The body itself is a very good object in Cultivation and in Meditation. The body regarded as a field which produces good and evil fruit in the future existence. According to Buddhism, in order to produce wholesome fruit, devout Buddhists should put themselves in harmony with Nature and the natural laws which govern the universe. This harmony arises through charity, generosity, love, and wisdom, for they are the causes of unselfishness, sympathy and altruism, compassion and equnimity, humanity and goodwill, renunciation and serenity. The first goal of meditation practices is to realize the true nature of the body and to be non-attached to it. Most people identify themselves with their bodies. However, after a period of time of meditation practices, we will no longer care to think of yourself as a body, we will no

longer identify with the body. At that time, we will begin to see the body as it is. It is only a series of physical and mental process, not a unity; and we no longer mistake the superficial for the real. Mindfulness of your body in daily life activities, such as mindfulness of your body while walking, standing, lying, sitting, looking at someone, looking around the environments, bending, stretching, dressing, washing, eating, drinking, chewing, talking, etc. The purpose of mindfulness is to pay attention to your behavior, but not to run after any events.

Second, Karma of the Mouth: According to the Buddha's teachings, the karmic consequences of speech karma are much greater than the karmic consequences of the mind and the body karma because when thoughts arise, they are not yet apparent to everyone; however, as soon as words are spoken, they will be heard immediately. Using the body to commit evil can sometimes be impeded. The thing that should be feared is false words that come out of a mouth. As soon as a wicked thought arises, the body has not supported the evil thought, but the speech had already blurted out vicious slanders. The body hasn't time to kill, but the mind already made the threats, the mind just wanted to insult, belittle, or ridicule someone, the body has not carried out any drastic actions, but the speech is already rampant in its malicious verbal abuse, etc. The mouth is the gate and door to all hatred and revenge; it is the karmic retribution of of the Avichi Hell; it is also the great burning oven destroying all of one's virtues and merits. Therefore, ancients always reminded people: "Diseases are from the mouth, and calamities are also from the mouth." If wickedness is spoken, then one will suffer unwholesome karmic retributions; if goodness is spoken, then one will reap the wholesome karmic retributions. If you praise others, you shall be praised. If you insult others, you shall be insulted. It's natural that what you sow is what you reap. We should always remember that the "theory of karmic retributions" is flawless, and then courageously take responsibility by cultivating so karmic transgressions will be eliminated gradually, and never blame Heaven nor blaming others. The evil karma of speech is the mightiest. We must know that evil speech is even more dangerous than fire because fire can only destroy all material possessions and treasures of this world, but the firece fire of evil speech not only burns all the Seven Treasures of Enlightened beings and all virtues of liberation, but it will also reflect on the evil karma vipaka in the future.

Buddhist Practitioners Should Always Remember the Ancients and Saintly beings' Teachings about the karma of the mouth. Mouth chanting Buddha Recitation or any Buddha is like excreting precious jewels and gemstones and will have the consequence of being born in Heaven or the Buddhas' Purelands. Mouth speaking good and wholesomely is like praying exquisite fragrances and one will attain all that was said to people. Mouth

encouraging, teaching, and aiding people is like emitting beautiful lights, destroying the false and ignorant speech and dark minds for others and for self. Mouth speaking truths and honesty is like using valuable velvets to give warmth to those who are cold. Mouth speaking without benefits for self or others is like chewing on sawdust; it is like so much better to be quiet and save energy. In other words, if you don't have anything nice to say, it is best not to say anything at all. Mouth lying to ridicule others is like using paper as a cover for a well, killing travelers who fall into the well because they were not aware, or setting traps to hurt and murder others. Mouth joking and poking fun is like using words and daggers to wave in the market place, someone is bound to get hurt or die as a result. Mouth speaking wickedness, immorality, and evil is like spitting foul odors and must endure evil consequences equal to what was said. Mouth speaking vulgarly, crudely, and uncleanly is like spitting out worms and maggots and will face the consequences of hell and animal life.

Buddhist practitioners should always remember to develop the mind to be frightened and then try to guard our speech-karma. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that mouth speaking without benefits for self or others is like chewing on sawdust; it is so much better to be quiet and save energy. It is to say if you don't have anything nice to say, it is best not to say anything at all. Mouth lying to ridicule others is like using paper as a cover for a well, killing travellers who fall into the well because they were not aware. It is similar to setting traps to hurt and murder others. Mouth joking and poking fun is like using swords and daggers to wave in the market place, someone is bound to get hurt or die as the result. Mouth speaking of wickedness, immorality, and evil is like spitting foul odors and must endure evil consequences equal to what was said. Mouth speaking vulgarly, foully, uncleanly is like spitting out worms and maggots and will face the consequences of the three evil paths from hells, hungry ghosts to animals.

Buddhist practitioners should always remember that if we cannot cease our karma of the mouth, we should try to develop the good ones. A saying can lead people to love and respect you for the rest of your life; also, a saying can lead people to hate, despite, and become an enemy for an entire life. A saying can lead to a prosperous and successful life; also, a saying can lead to the loss of all wealth and possessions. A saying can lead to a greatly enduring nation; also, a saying can lead to the loss and devastation of a nation. Mouth speaking good and wholesomely is like spraying exquisite fragrances and one will attain all that was said to people. Mouth encouraging, teaching, and aiding people is like emitting beautiful lights, destroying the false and ignorant speech and dark minds of the devil and false cultivators. Mouth speaking of truths and honesty is like using valuable velvets to give warmth to those who are cold. The spoken words of saints, sages, and enlightened beings of the past

were like gems and jewels, leaving behind much love, esteem, and respect from countless people for thousands of years into the future. As for Buddhist practitioners nowadays, if we cannot speak words like jewels and gems, then it is best to remain quiet, be determined not to toss out words that are wicked and useless.

Third, Karmas of Mind: Karma of the thought, one of the three kinds of karma (thought, word, and deed). Compared to the karma of the mouth, karma of the mind is difficult to establish, thought has just risen within the mind but has not take appearance, or become action; therefore, transgressions have not formed. Vijnanas does not depend on any of the five sense faculties, but on the immediately preceding continuum of mind. Mental consciousness apprehends not only objects (form, sound, taste, smell, touch) in the present time, but it also apprehends objects in the past and imagines objects even in the future. Mental consciousness will go with us from one life to another, while the first five consciousnesses are our temporary minds. Consciousness is also one of the five skandhas. Buddhist Practitioners should always Remember that this Mind is Impermanent, but this Mind itself is the Main Factor that causes us to Drift in the Samsara, and it is this Mind that helps us return to the Nirvana. Not only our body is changeable, but also our mind. It changes more rapidly than the body, it changes every second, every minute according to the environment. We are cheerful a few minutes before and sad a few minutes later, laughing then crying, happiness then sorrow. Some people wonder why Buddhism always emphasizes the theory of impermanence? Does it want to spread in the human mind the seed of disheartenment, and discourage? In their view, if things are changeable, we do not need to do anything, because if we attain a great achievement, we cannot keep it. This type of reasoning, a first, appears partly logical, but in reality, it is not at all. When the Buddha preached about impermanence, He did not want to discourage anyone, but warning his disciples about the truth. A true Buddhist has to work hard for his own well being and also for the society's. Although he knows that he is facing the changing reality, he always keeps himself calm. He must refrain from harming others, in contrast, strive to perform good deeds for the benefit and happiness of others.

IV. Ten Karmas of Body-Speech-Mind Play A Considerable Role in Causing Beings to Be Sinking in the Ocean of Life and Death:

An overview of Three Commandments in the Body Four in the Mouth and Three in the Mind: According to Buddhism, everything in this world happens due to the acting of body-mouth-mind. So, control the body-mouth-mind

means steering away from six doors leading to the rebirth cycle. Also, according to Buddhism, with the body, there are three things that need be brought into submission or three commandments dealing with the body. As a matter of fact, Ten Karmas of Body-Speech-Mind play a considerable role in widely opening six doors that cause beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down in the ocean of life and death. If we want to have more peace, mindfulness, and happiness in our daily life, in addition to remembering about ten robbers: greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, sexual misconducts, and lying which are always waiting to harm and to destroy completely our path of cultivation, lay practitioners should always cultivate our own body-mouth-mind in all circumstances and at all times. The Buddha pointed out: "For a long time has man's mind been defiled by greed, hatred and delusion. Mental defilements make beings impure; mental cleansing purifies them." The Buddhist way of life, especially that of Buddhist practitioners, is an intense process of cleansing one's action, speech, and thought. It is self-development and self-purification resulting in self-realization. The emphasis is on practical results and not on philosophical speculation or logical abstraction. Hence Buddhist practitioners need to practice meditation on a daily basis. We need to behave like the hen on her eggs; for we have been most of the time behaving like a little white mouse in the revolving cage. The Buddha also said: "Living beings may perform ten good practices or ten evil practices. What are the ten? Three are three of the Body, four are of the Mouth and the last three are of the Mind. The three of the Body are killing, stealing and lust. The four of the mouth are double-tongued speech (duplicitous speech), harsh speech, lies, and irresponsible speech. The three of the Mind are jealousy, hatred, and stupidity. Thus, these ten are not in accordance (consistent) with the Holy Way and are called ten evil practices. To put an end to these evils is to perform the ten good practices." We mistakenly think that what binds us in Samsara are our bodies, speeches, and minds. As a matter of fact, they are not. What really binds us in Samsara are desire, hatred and ignorance. However, what is worth to say here is that our body, mouth, and mind are willing to serve "desire, hatred and ignorance" as slaves. Our body, mouth and mind are the three doors or means of action. They are three unwholesome actions of the body, four of the speech, and three of the mind. Devout Buddhists should always remember that the three unwholesome actions of body that are to be avoided are killing, stealing and sexual misconduct. The four unwholesome actions of speech that are to be avoided are lying, slander, harsh speech and malicious gossip. The three unwholesome actions of the mind that are to be avoided are greed, anger, and delusion. By avoiding these ten unwholesome actions, we will avoid reaping bad results in this life or the next lives. Devout Buddhists should always

remember the Buddha's teachings: "Do not disregard small good, saying, 'it will not matter to me.' Do not disregard small good, saying, 'it will not matter to me.' Do not disregard (underestimate) small evil, saying, "it will not matter to me." By the falling of drop by drop, a water-jar is filled; likewise, the fool becomes full of evil, even if he gathers it little by little (Dhammapda121). Neither in the sky, nor in mid-ocean, nor in mountain cave, nowhere on earth where one can escape from the consequences of his evil deeds (Dhammapada 127)." Even an evil-doer sees good as long as evil deed has not yet ripened; but when his evil deed has ripened, then he sees the evil results (Dhammapada 119). If a person commits evil, let him not do it again and again; he should not rejoice therein, sorrow is the outcome of evil (Dhammapada 117). Even by the falling of drop by drop, a water-jar is filled; likewise, the wise man, gathers his merit little by little (Dhammapda 122). Even a good person sees evil as long as his good deed has not yet ripened; but when his good deed has ripened, then he sees the good results (Dhammapda 120). Let's hasten up to do good. Let's restrain our minds from evil thoughts, for the minds of those who are slow in doing good actions delight in evil (Dhammapada 116). If a person does a meritorious deed, he should do it habitually, he should find pleasures therein, happiness is the outcome of merit (Dhammapada 118).

Buddhist Practitioners and Three Commandments in the Body Four in the Mouth and Three in the Mind: *Buddhist Practitioners Should Not Create the Following Three Karmas of the Body:* For ordinary people, we do not free trapped animals; but, in contrast, we continue to kill and murder innocent creatures, such as fishing, hunting, etc. We do not give, donate, or make offerings; but, in contrast, we continue to be selfish, stingy, and stealing from others. In the monastery, we must be thrifty with all materials such as rice, oil, soysauce, vinegar, salt, and so on. We should cherish them and not let them spoil and go to waste. Even a sheet of paper or a pen should be carefully utilized, because they are all bought from the money offered by sincere followers. Buddhist practitioners, if we cannot cease our karma, we should always be careful in this and if we do not cherish our blessings, all our merit and virtue will leak out. We do not behave properly and honorably; but, in contrast, we continue to commit sexual misconduct or sexual promiscuity. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that we cannot cease our karma, with our body, we should not kill, steal, commit sexual misconduct. We should not always be caring too much about our stinking skinbag by finding good things to feed it in every thought, and trying to make it more attractive in every thought. *Buddhist Practitioners Should Not Create the Following Four Karmas of the Mouth:* Usually, we, ordinary people, do not speak the truth; but, in contrast, we continue to lie and speak falsely. Buddhist cultivators

should bring forth to a true mind. In every move we make and every word we say, we should aim to be true. Do not be like worldly people, sometime to be true and other time to be false (sometimes telling the truth and sometimes telling lies). Buddhist cultivators must always speak truthfully, do true deeds, and not tell lies. In every thought, we must get rid of our own faults. We must try our best to eliminate the bad habits we had formed since limitless eons in the past and repent of the offenses created in limitless eons. We do not speak soothingly and comfortably; but, in contrast, we continue to speak wickedly and use a double-tongue to cause other harm and disadvantages. Moreover, in every move and every word, we must not harm anyone else. We should guard the virtue of our mouth, not speaking frivolous words, untruthful words, harsh words, or words which cause disharmony. We do not speak kind and wholesome words; but, in contrast, we continue to speak wicked and unwholesome words, i.e., insulting or cursing others. We do not speak words that are in accordance with the dharma; but, in contrast, we continue to speak ambiguous talks. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that we cannot cease our karma, with our mouth, we should not lie, should not exaggerate, should not use wicked and unwholesome words, and should not have ambiguous talk. *Buddhist Practitioners Should Not Create The Following Three Karmas of the Mind:* Usually, we, ordinary people, do not know how to desire less and when is enough; but we continue to be greedy and covetous. We do not have peace and tolerance toward others; but, in contrast, we continue to be malicious and to have hatred. We do not believe in the Law of Causes and Effetcs, but in contrast we continue to attach to our ignorance, and refuse to be near good knowledgeable advisors in order to learn and cultivate the proper dharma. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that we cannot cease our karma, with our mind, we should not to be covetous, not to be malicious, and not to be unbelief.

Among Three Areas of Body-Mouth-Mind, Subduing the Mind Is Extremely Important in Cultivation: In Buddhist cultivation, discipline the Mind in Buddhism is extremely important. Usually the word "mind" is understood for both heart and brain. However, in Buddhism, mind does not mean just the brain or the intellect; mind also means consciousness or the knowing faculty that which knows an object, along with all of the mental and emotional feeling states associated with that knowing. Thus, cultivating the mind means practicing the "four great efforts" in the Buddha's teachings: We try to diminish the unwholesome mental states that have already arisen and to prevent those that have not yet arisen from arising. At the same time, we make effort to strengthen those wholesome mental states that are already developed, and to cultivate and develop the wholesome states that have not yet arisen. Control of the self or of one's own mind is the key to happiness. It

is the force behind all true achievement. The movement of a man void of control are purposeless. It is owing to lack of control that conflicts of diverse kinds arise in man's mind. And if conflicts are to be controlled, if not eliminated, man must give less rein to his longings and inclinations and endeavor to live a life self-governed and pure. Everyone is aware of the benefits of physical training. However, we should always remember that we are not merely bodies, we also possess a mind which needs training. Mind training or meditation is the key to self-mastery and to that contentment which finally brings happiness. The Buddha once said: "Though one conquers in battle thousand times thousand men, yet he is the greatest conqueror who conquers himself." This is nothing other than "training of your own monkey mind," or "self-mastery," or "control your own mind." In other words, it means mastering our own mental contents, our emotions, likes and dislikes, and so forth. Thus, "self-mastery" is the greatest kingdom a man can aspire unto, and to be subject to oue own passions is the most grievous slavery.

According to Most Venerable Piyadassi in "The Buddha's Ancient Path," control of the mind is the key to happiness. It is the king of virtues and the force behind all true achievement. It is owing to lack of control that various conflicts arise in man's mind. If we want to control them, we must learn to give free to our longings and inclinations and should try to live self-governed, pure and calm. It is only when the mind is controlled that it becomes useful for its pocessor and for others. All the havoc happened in the world is caused by men who have not learned the way of mind control.

Buddhist Practitioners Should Think Over Carefully the Buddha's Teachings on 'Body-Mouth-Mind' in the Majjhima Nikaya: In order to provide answers to layperson Visakha on the cultivation of Buddhist practitioners of 'Body-Mouth-Mind', Bhikhuni Dhammadinna explained in the Culavedalla Sutta (the Shorter Set of Questions-and-Answers), in Majjhima Nikaya, book 44: "There are three fabrications, friend Visakha: bodily-fabrications, verbal fabrications, and mental fabrications. But what are bodily-fabrications? What are verbal fabrications? What are mental fabrications? In-and-out breaths are bodily fabrications. Directed thought and evaluation are verbal fabrications. Perceptions and feelings are mental fabrications. But why are in-and-out breaths bodily fabrications? Why are directed thought and evaluation verbal fabrications? Why are perceptions and feelings mental fabrications? In-and-out breaths are bodily; these are things tied up with the body. That's why in-and-out breaths are bodily fabrications. Having first directed one's thoughts and made an evaluation, one then breaks out into speech. That's why directed thought and evaluation are verbal fabrications. Perceptions and feelings are mental; these are things tied up with the mind. That's why perceptions and feelings are mental fabrications."

Chapter Twenty-Two

Cultivation of Sense Restraint Also Means to Close Six Doors That Cause Beings to Be Sinking in the Ocean of Life and Death

I. A Summary of Six Doors Leading to the Rebirth Cycle in Buddhism:

According to Buddhism, reincarnation means going around as the wheel turns around. The state of transmigration or samsara, where beings repeat cycles of birth and death according to the law of karma. The Buddha taught that whether the world is Samsara or Nirvana depends entirely on our state of mind. If our mind is enlightened, then this world is Nirvana; if our mind is unenlightened, then this world is Samsara. For those who strive to cultivate, samsara is Nirvana, Nirvana is samsara. What happens to us after death? Buddhism teaches that we remain for some time in the state of intermediate existence in this world after death, and when this time is over, in accordance with the karma that we have accumulated in our previous life, we are reborn in another appropriate world. Buddhism also divides this other world into the following realms: hell, hungry ghosts, animals, demons, human beings, heavens, sravakas, pratyeka-buddhas, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas. If we die in an unenlightened state, our minds (consciousnesses) will return to the former state of ignorance, and we will be reborn in the six worlds of illusion and suffering, and will again reach old age and death through the stages mentioned above. And we will repeat this round over and over to an indefinite time. This perpetual repetition of birth and death is called "Transmigration." But if we purify our minds by hearing the Buddha's teachings and practicing the Bodhisattva-way, the state of ignorance is annihilated and our minds can be reborn in a better world. So, whether the world is Samsara or Nirvana depends entirely on our state of mind. If our mind is enlightened, then this world is Nirvana; if our mind is unenlightened, then this world is Samsara. Thus the Buddha taught: "For those who strive to cultivate, samsara is Nirvana, Nirvana is samsara."

Meanwhile, Six Doors mentioned in this book are six bases of mental activities: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. Devout Buddhists should always remember that the six senses or six organs of sense are likened to six wild creatures in confinement and always struggling to escape. Only when they are domesticated will they be happy. So is it with the six senses and the taming power of Buddha-truth. Otherwise, these six bases of mental activities will become six doors which are wide open for sentient beings to drift ceaselessly in the cycle of births and deaths. According to Bikkhu Piyananda in The Gems of Buddhism Wisdom, you must always be aware of the sense organs such as eye, ear, nose, tongue and body and the contact they are having with the outside world. You must be aware of the feelings that are arising as a result of this contact: eye is now in contact with forms (rupa), ear is now in contact with sound, nose is now in conatct with smell, tongue is now in contact with taste, body is now in contact with touching, and mind is now in contact with all things (dharma). According to Buddhism, death is not end. After death, the heart ceases to beat, only consciousness generally identified as the soul follows its course determined by the dead's karmic forces to enter the embryo to be reborn. Such a process is called reincarnation. If we understand the Buddha's Teachings, before parting, we can remain as calm as possible; we will not fear, knowing that our next rebirth is dedicated by our own karma, not by any external power. They will have a strong faith on "the way you live is exactly the way you die." In reality, there are so many Buddhists and non-Buddhists who do not thoroughly understand the Buddha's Teachings. For them, death is the end; thinking of death only makes them tired. They just live for the present. This is the way of living for those who do not know how to live a happy and joyful life in accordance with the Buddha's Teachings. They do not understand the relationship between cause and effect, linking generations to generations or successive lives. When they are young and strong, they feel comfortable with everything, but when they become sick, or aged, isolated from kinfolk or short of money, they will be agitated, but it is too late for them to regret. Buddhists should always remember the old proverb "You need to dig the well before you are thirsty" to prevent the feeling of late regret. Since earliest time, Buddhism has asserted that all sentient beings are born, die, and

are reborn again in dependence on their past actions (karma) in an endless cycle. The question whether or not beings are actually reborn in this way has become a controversial topic among Western Buddhists, many of whom do not accept that the doctrine of rebirth is literally true. The overwhelming majority of Asian Buddhist teachers, however, consider belief in rebirth to be a central tenet of Buddhism, and contending that it accords with the teachings of the Buddha as reported in the Buddhist canon. It is also widely thought that the doctrine of rebirth is very necessary in order for Buddhist karma theory to make sense, since if there were no rebirth there would be no direct recompense for any actions. Devout Buddhists should always remember that time flies really fast. The years and months have gone by really fast too. In the same way, people progress from birth to old age and death without being aware of it. Birth, old age, sickness, and death come in quick succession as we pass the years in muddled confusion. If we do not wake up to our own birth and death, then, having been born muddled, we will also die muddled according to the law of karma. What a meaningless life! Six Doors Leading to the Rebirth Cycle comprise of the door of the organ of sight, the door of the organ of hearing the door of the organ of smelling the door of the organ of tasting the door of the organ of the body, and the door of the organ of the mind.

II. Sense Restraint in Daily Activities Is A Wonderful Method of Escape from Six Doors That Cause Beings to Be Sinking in the Ocean of Life and Death:

In Buddhist cultivation, although the main goal of Buddhist practitioners is of course to attain the ultimate enlightenment and emancipation, the immediate goal we must achieve is the attaining of happiness in the midst of the world which is full of sufferings and afflictions. In order to achieve this immediate goal, practitioners' every moment in life must be moment of living and cultivating in firmly preventing the infiltration of robbers of afflictions by closing the six sense doors for this is the most effecient and wonderful way to reduce afflictions; and this is also one of the most wonderful methods of escaping the ocean of life and death. In Buddhist teachings, the main goal of Buddhist cultivation is firmly preventing robbers' infiltration by

closing doors of sense-organs in daily activities. Sense restraint is the most effective way to subdue these ten robbers of desires, anger, ignorance, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and lying. As a matter of fact, in order to achieve the ends of peace, mindfulness, hapiness, and eventual emancipation. Practitioners should always try to prevent the infiltration of these above mentioned ten robbers. In Buddhist teachings, closing doors of sense-organs also means to guardian these sense-doors. Buddhist practitioners should always contemplate on the six faculties are the main reasons that cause human beings to fall into hells, to be reborn in the realm of the hungry ghosts, or animals, asuras, devas, or human beings, etc. It is agreeable that the six faculties that help us maintain our daily activities, but they are also the main factors that bring sufferings and afflictions to our body and mind. They are the main agents that cause us to create unwholesome karma, and eventually we will fall into evil ways because of them. Do not think that the eyes are that great, just because they help us see things. It is exactly because of their help that we give rise to all kinds of sufferings and afflictions. For instance, when we see an attractive person of the opposite sex, we become greedy for sex. If we do not get what we want, we will be afflicted; and if we get what we want, we will also be afflicted. The other faculties, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind are the same way. They make one give rise to many sufferings and afflictions. Therefore, the Buddha advised his disciples thus: “You should cultivate until you are unaware of heaven above, people in between, and earth below.” If we cultivate until the time heaven, earth, people, east, west, south, north, etc., can no longer impact our six faculties, then at that point we are liberated from all hindrances. The six sense-organs can be entrances to the hells; at the same time, they can be some of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with them, we create karmas and sins, but also with them, we can practise the right way. According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are five roots or faculties (indriyani): Eye is one of the six senses on which one relies or from which knowledge is received. Ear is one of the six unions of the six sense organs with the six objects of the senses, the ears is in union with sound heard. Nose is in union with the smell smelt, this is one of the six unions of the six sense

organs with the six objects of the senses. Tongue is in union with the taste tasted, this is one of the six unions of the six sense organs with the six objects of the senses. Body is in union with the thing touched, this is one of the six unions of the six sense organs with the six objects of the senses. And the mind is in union with the dharma thought about. The Buddha said: "Karma that you have made for yourself can only disappear if you want it to. No one can make you want it to disappear. I have many kinds of medicine, but I can't take it for you." Therefore, we should be mindful of it throughout the day. It is obvious that during meditation, the six organs are closed and purified in order to develop their unlimited power and interchange (in the case of Buddha). This full development enables the eye to see everything in a great chiliocosm from its highest heaven down to its lowest hells and all the beings, past, present, and future with all the karma of each.

Buddhist Practitioners's sense restraint is proper practice. We should be mindful of it throughout the day. But do not overdo it. Walk, eat, and act naturally, and then develop natural mindfulness of what is going on within ourselves. To force our meditation or force ourselves into awkward patterns is another form of craving. Patience and endurance are necessary. If we act naturally and are mindful, wisdom will come naturally. Besides, practicing meditation can lead to pure and objective observation and is intended to prevent emotions such as joy, sadness, love, jealousy, sympathy, antipathy, desire, hatred, and so on. Buddhist Practitioners always consider the six senses are objects of meditation practices. According to Bikkhu Piyananda in The Gems of Buddhism Wisdom, you must always be aware of the sense organs such as eye, ear, nose, tongue and body and the contact they are having with the outside world. You must be aware of the feelings that are arising as a result of this contact. Eye is now in contact with forms (rupa). Ear is now in contact with sound. Nose is now in conatct with smell. Tongue is now in contact with taste. Body is now in contact with touching. Mind is now in contact with all things (dharma). According to the Samannaphala Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, the Buddha taught about "a guardian of the sense-door." How does a monk become a guardian of the sense-door? Here a monk, on seeing a visible object with the eye, does not grasp at its major signs or secondary characteristics. Because greed and sorrow, evil unskilled states, would

overwhelm him if he dwelt leaving this eye-faculty unguarded, so he practises guading it, he protects the eye-faculty, develops restraint of the eye-faculty. On hearing a sound with the ear…; on smelling an odour with the nose…; on tasting a flavour with the tongue…; on feeling an object with the body…; on thinking a thought with the mind, he does not grasp at its major signs or secondary characteristics, he develops restraint of the mind-faculty. He experiences within himself the blameless bliss that comes from maintaining this Ariyan guarding of the faculties.

According to Buddhist teachings, ten robbers of greed, anger, ignorance, pride, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and unwholesome thoughts... are unwholesome or negative Karmas. Unwholesome or evil karmas of greed, hatred and ignorance, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying... are all created by body, mouth and speech. Unwholesome or harmful actions, or conduct in thought, word, or deed (by the body, speech, and mind) to self and others which leads to evil recompense (negative path, bad deeds, or black path). In other words, evil actions are those that result in suffering and whose consequences are perceived as painful for beings who experience them. According to the Sigalaka Sutra, there are four causes of unwholesome or evil actions: unwholesome action springs from attachment, ill-will, ignorance, and fear. According to the Sigalaka Sutra, the Buddha taught: "If the Ariyan disciple does not act out of attachment, ill-will, folly or fear, he will not do evil from any one of the four above mentioned causes." From the earliest period, Buddhist thought has argued that the reasons these robbers mentioned above can infiltrate sentient beings are the result of ignorance (avidya), which cause sentient beings to open widely doors of their six sense-organs for these robbers come and go freely. It means these robbers can no longer come and go freely once ignorance is overcome.

The worldly way is outgoing exuberant; the way of the devoted Buddhist's life is restrained and controlled. Constantly work against the grain, against the old habits; eat, speak, and sleep little. If we are lazy, raise energy. If we feel we can not endure, raise patience. If we like the body and feel attached to it, learn to see it as unclean. Virtue or following precepts, and concentration or meditation are aids to the

practice. They make the mind calm and restrained. But outward restraint is only a convention, a tool to help gain inner coolness. We may keep our eyes cast down, but still our mind may be distracted by whatever enters our field of vision. Perhaps we feel that this life is too difficult, that we just can not do it. But the clearer we understand the truth of things, the more incentive we will have. Keep our mindfulness sharp. In daily activity, the important point is intention; know what we are doing and know how we feel about it. Learn to know the mind that clings to ideas of purity and bad karma, burdens itself with doubt and excessive fear of wrongdoing. This, too, is attachment. We must know moderation in our daily needs. Robes need not be of fine material, they are merely to protect the body. Food is merely to sustain us. The Path constantly opposes defilements and habitual desires.

The Buddha taught about "Restraining oneself" in the Dharmapada Sutra. "He who strictly adorned, lived in peace, subdued all passions, controlled all senses, ceased to injure other beings, is indeed a holy Brahmin, an ascetic, a bhikshu (Dharmapada 142). Rarely found in this world anyone who restrained by modesty, avoids reproach, as a well-trained horse avoids the whip (Dharmapada 143). Like a well-trained horse, touch by the whip, even so be strenuous and zealous. By faith, by virtue, by effort, by concentration, by investigation of the Truth, by being endowed with knowledge and conduct, and being mindful, get rid of this great suffering (Dharmapada 144). Irregators guide the water to their fields; fletchers bend the arrow; carpenters bend the wood, the virtuous people control themselves (Dharmapada 145). What should have been done is left undone; what should not have been done is done. This is the way the arrogant and wicked people increase their grief (Dharmapada 292). Those who always earnestly practice controlling of the body, follow not what should not be done, and constantly do what should be done. This is the way the mindful and wise people end all their sufferings and impurities (Dharmapada 293). As an elephant in the battlefield endures the arrows shot from a bow, I shall withstand abuse in the same manner. Truly, most common people are undisciplined (who are jealous of the disciplined) (Dharmapada 320). To lead a tamed elephant in battle is good. To tame an elephant for the king to ride it better. He who tames himself to endure harsh words patiently is the best among men (Dharmapada 321). Tamed

mules are excellent; Sindhu horses of good breeding are excellent too. But far better is he who has trained himself (Dharmapada 322). Never by those vehicles, nor by horses would one go to Nirvana. Only self-tamers who can reach Nirvana (Dharmapada 323). It is good to have control of the eye; it is good to have control of the ear; it is good to have control of the nose; it is good to have control of the tongue (Dharmapada 360). It is good to have control of the body; it is good to have control of speech; it is good to have control of everything. A monk who is able to control everything, is free from all suffering (Dharmapada 362). He who controls his hands and legs; he who controls his speech; and in the highest, he who delights in meditation; he who is alone, serene and contented with himself. He is truly called a Bhikhshu (Dharmapada 362). Censure or control yourself. Examine yourself. Be self-guarded and mindful. You will live happily (Dharmapada 379). You are your own protector. You are your own refuge. Try to control yourself as a merchant controls a noble steed (Dharmapada 380). One who conquers himself is greater than one who is able to conquer a thousand men in the battlefield (Dharmapada 103). Self-conquest is, indeed, better than the conquest of all other people. To conquer onself, one must be always self-controlled and disciplined one's action (Dharmapada 104). Neither the god, nor demigod, nor Mara, nor Brahma can win back the victory of a man who is self-subdued and ever lives in restraint (Dharmapada 105)."

In Buddhist teachings, sense restraint is the most effective way to subdue afflictive robbers (robbers that cause afflictions) of desires-anger-ignorance-arrogance-doubt-wrong views-killing-stealing-sexual misconduct-lying. As a matter of fact, in order to achieve the ends of peace, mindfulness, hapiness, and eventual emancipation. practitioners should always try to prevent the infiltration of these above mentioned ten robbers. In Buddhist teachings, closing doors of sense-organs also means to guardian these sense-doors. Practitioners' practicing of sense restraint is proper practice. We should be mindful of it throughout the day. But do not overdo it. Walk, eat, and act naturally, and then develop natural mindfulness of what is going on within ourselves. To force our meditation or force ourselves into awkward patterns is another form of craving. Patience and endurance are necessary. If we act naturally and are mindful, wisdom will come naturally. Besides,

practicing meditation can lead to pure and objective observation and is intended to prevent emotions such as joy, sadness, love, jealousy, sympathy, antipathy, desire, hatred, etc. Practitioners should always contemplate on the six faculties are the main reasons that cause human beings to fall into hells, to be reborn in the realm of the hungry ghosts, or animals, asuras, devas, or human beings, etc. It is agreeable that the six faculties that help us maintain our daily activities, but they are also the main factors that bring sufferings and afflictions to our body and mind. They are the main agents that cause us to create unwholesome karma, and eventually we will fall into evil ways because of them. Do not think that the eyes are that great, just because they help us see things. It is exactly because of their help that we give rise to all kinds of sufferings and afflictions. For instance, when we see an attractive person of the opposite sex, we become greedy for sex. If we do not get what we want, we will be afflicted; and if we get what we want, we will also be afflicted. The other faculties, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind are the same way. They make one give rise to many sufferings and afflictions. Therefore, the Buddha advised his disciples thus: "You should cultivate until you are unaware of heaven above, people in between, and earth below." If we cultivate until the time heaven, earth, people, east, west, south, north, etc., can no longer impact our six faculties, then at that point we are liberated from all hindrances.

The six sense-organs can be entrances to the hells; at the same time, they can be some of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with them, we create karmas and sins, but also with them, we can practise the right way. According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are five roots or faculties (indriyani): Eye is one of the six senses on which one relies or from which knowledge is received. Ear is one of the six unions of the six sense organs with the six objects of the senses, the ears is in union with sound heard. Nose is in union with the smell smelt, this is one of the six unions of the six sense organs with the six objects of the senses. Tongue is in union with the taste tasted, this is one of the six unions of the six sense organs with the six objects of the senses. Body is in union with the thing touched, this is one of the six unions of the six sense organs with the six objects of the senses. And the mind is in union with the dharma thought about.

In the six sense-organs, thought, the mind-sense, the sixth of the senses, the perception of thinking or faculty of thinking or the thinking mind. According to Most Venerable Piyadassi in "The Buddha's Ancient Path," faculty of mind recognizes mental objects, we know, is not something tangible and perceptible like the other five faculties, which recognizes the external world. The eye cognizes the world of colors (vanna) or visible objects, the ear audible sounds, and so forth. The mind, however, cognizes the world of ideas and thoughts. Faculty of mind literally means "chief" or "lord". Forms can only be seen by the faculty of the eye and not by the ear, hearing by the faculty of the ear, and so on. When it comes to the world of thoughts and ideas the faculty of the mind lord over the mental realm. The eye can not think thoughts, and collect ideas, but it is instrumental in seeing visible forms, the world of colors. In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: Like a frontier fortress is well guarded, so guard yourself, inside and outside. Do not let a second slip away, for each wasted second makes the downward path (315). A wise monk must first control the senses, practise equanimity, follow discipline as laid down in the sutra (375). In short, those who try to restraint the six senses are not only advancing on the path to Buddhahood, but they also have peace, mindfulness and happiness in their daily life.

In short, cultivation of body-Mouth-Mind means cultivation of sense-organs and at the same time, it also means to close six doors that cause beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down in the ocean of life and death. Buddhist practitioners should always contemplate on the six faculties that command Body-Mouth-Mind through actions, speeches, and thoughts. And these are the main reasons that cause human beings to fall into hells, to be reborn in the realm of the hungry ghosts, or animals, asuras, devas, or human beings, etc. Therefore, cultivation of body-Mouth-Mind also means cultivation of Sense-Organs. According to Buddhist teachings, these robbers such as afflictions are distress, worldly cares, vexations, and as consequent reincarnation. They are such troubles as desire, hate, stupor, pride, doubt, erroneous views, etc., leading to painful results in future rebirths, for they are karma-messengers executing its purpose. Klesa also means "negative mental factors," that lead beings to engage in non-virtuous actions, which produce karmic results. Afflictions are all

defilements that dull the mind, the basis for all unwholesome actions that bind people to the cycle of rebirths. Afflictions also mean all defilements that dull the mind, the basis for all unwholesome actions as well as kinks that bind people to the cycle of rebirths. People also call Afflictions the thirst of Mara. In order to attain enlightenment, the number one priority is to eliminate these defilements by cultivating on a regular basis. The worldly way is letting the doors of the six sense organs widely opened and outgoing exuberant. The way of the devoted Buddhist's life is to close the doors of the six sense organs, restrained and controlled. The ancients have said: "If inside the door there are mean-spirited people, mean-spirited people will arrive at the door; if inside the door there are virtuous, superior people, noble superior people will arrive at the door." As an example, when thieves try to enter a house through the side door, if the owner calmly scolds them in a loud voice, they will naturally be frightened and leave. If on the other hand, he is terrified and panic-stricken, and begs them to desist, he will unwittingly be inviting them into his house. Generally speaking, when the doors are wide opened, robbers are encouraged to freely enter, while closed doors can delay or slow down robbers' infiltration. It should be reminded that in order to attain enlightenment, the number one priority is to eliminate these defilements by cultivating on a regular basis. The worldly way is letting the doors of the six sense organs widely opened and outgoing exuberant. The way of the devoted Buddhist's life is to close the doors of the six sense organs, restrained and controlled. The ancients have said: "If inside the door there are mean-spirited people, mean-spirited people will arrive at the door; if inside the door there are virtuous, superior people, noble superior people will arrive at the door." As an example, when thieves try to enter a house through the side door, if the owner calmly scolds them in a loud voice, they will naturally be frightened and leave. If on the other hand, he is terrified and panic-stricken, and begs them to desist, he will unwittingly be inviting them into his house. Generally speaking, when the doors are wide opened, afflictive robbers (robbers that cause afflictions) are encouraged to freely enter, while closed doors can delay or slow down their infiltration, and hoping that practitioners' life and cultivation could be more peaceful, mindful, and happier.

Chapter Twenty-Three

To Cultivate Eight Consciousnesses Is a Wonderful Method That Helps Beings to Escape the Ocean of Life and Death

When we talk about "Consciousnesses" we usually misunderstand with the sixth consciousness according to Buddhist psychology. In fact, there are six basic sense consciousnesses, and the sixth one being the mental consciousness. Buddhist psychology bases the perception process on six sense faculties: sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch and thought. Each faculty relates to a sense organ (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind) and to a consciousness which functions specifically with that organ. The sixth consciousness, or the mind consciousness is not the mind, it is the function of the mind; it does not depend on any of the five sense faculties, but on the immediately preceding continuum of mind. Mental consciousness apprehends not only objects (form, sound, taste, smell and touch) in the present time, but it also apprehends objects and imagines in the past and even in the future, then it transfers these objects or imagines to the seventh consciousness, and in turn, the seventh consiousness will transfer these objects to the Alaya Consciousness. Let us examine the body and mind to see whether in either of them we can locate the self, we will find in neither of of them. Then, the so-called "Self" is just a term for a collection of physical and mental factors. Let us first look at the aggregate matter of form. The aggregate of form corresponds to what we would call material or physical factors. It includes not only our own bodies, but also the material objects that surround us, i.e., houses, soil, forests, and oceans, and so on. However, physical elements by themselves are not enough to produce experience. The simple contact between the eyes and visible objects, or between the ear and sound cannot result in experience without consciousness. Only the co-presence of consciousness together with the sense of organ and the object of the sense organ produces experience. In other words, it is when the eyes, the visible object and consciousness come together that the experience

of a visible object is produced. Consciousness is therefore an extremely important element in the production of experience. Consciousness or the sixth sense, or the mind. This sense organ together with the other five sense organs of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body to produce experience. The physical and mental factors of experience worked together to produce personal experience, and the nature of the five aggregates are in constant change. Therefore, according to the Buddha's teachings, the truth of a man is selfless. The body and mind that man misunderstands of his 'self' is not his self, it is not his, and he is not it." Devout Buddhists should grasp this idea firmly to establish an appropriate method of cultivation not only for the body, but also for the speech and mind. Besides, we also have the seventh consciousness, or the mano-vijnana, which is the transmitting consciousness that relays sensory information from the mind to the Alaya Consciousness, or the eighth consciousness which functions as a storehouse of all sensory information.

In Buddhist cultivation, to cultivate eight consciousnesses is a wonderful method of escape from six doors that cause beings to be sinking in the ocean of life and death. ***First, Cultivation of the Eye Consciousness:*** The function of the eye consciousness is to perceive and apprehend visual forms. Without the eye consciousness we could not behold any visual form; however, the eye consciousness depends on the eye faculty. When the eye faculty and any form meet, the eye consciousness develops instantly. If the eye faculty and the form never meet, eye consciousness will never arise (a blind person who lacks the eye faculty, thus eye consciousness can never develop). Buddhist cultivators should always understand thoroughly this vital point to minimize the meeting between eye faculty and visual forms, so that no or very limited eye consciousness will ever arise. The Buddha reminded his disciples that meditation is the only means to limit or stop the arising of the eye consciousness.

Second, Cultivation of the Ear Consciousness: The function of the ear consciousness is to perceive and apprehend sounds; however, ear consciousness depends on the ear faculty. Ear faculty and any sound meet, the ear consciousness develops instantly (in a deaf person, ear faculty and sounds never meet, therefore no ear consciousness will

arise). Buddhist cultivators should always remember this and try to practise meditation stop or close the ear consciousness if possible.

Third, Cultivation of the Smell Consciousness: The nose consciousness develops immediately from the dominant condition of the nose faculty when it focuses on smell. Nose consciousness completely dependents on the nose faculty. Someone who lacks smelling capability, nose faculty and smell never meet, therefore, nose consciousness will never arise. Buddhist cultivators should always practise meditation to stop or close the nose consciousness.

Fourth, Cultivation of the Taste Consciousness: The tongue consciousness develops immediately through the dominant condition of the tongue when the tongue faculty focuses on a certain taste. At that very moment, we experience and distinguish between tastes and desire arises.

Fifth, Cultivation of the Tacticle Sensation Consciousness: Body consciousness develops when the dominant condition in which the body faculty meets an object of touch. The location of the body faculty is throughout the entire body. Cognition of the objects of touch, one of the five forms of cognition. Here a monk, on touching a tangible object with the body, is neither pleased not displeased, but remains equable, mindful and clearly aware. This is one of the six stable states which the Buddha taught in the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses.

Sixth, Cultivation of the Mano Consciousness: The Mano Consciousness is the thinking consciousness that coordinates the perceptions of the sense organs. The mind consciousness, the sixth or the intellectual consciousness is not the mind, it's the function of the mind. The sentient being's mind is an ever-spinning whirlpool in which mental activities never cease. There are four stages of production, dwelling, change, and decay. A mind which does not depend on any of the five sense faculties, but on the immediately preceding continuum of mind. Mental consciousness apprehends not only objects (form, sound, taste, smell, touch) in the present time, but it also apprehends objects in the past and imagines objects even in the future. Mental consciousness will go with us from one life to another, while the first five consciousnesses are our temporary minds. Consciousness is also one of the five skandhas. The function of Manovijnana is by hypothesis to reflect on Manas, as the eye-vijnana reflects on the world of forms

and the ear-vijnana on that of sounds; but in fact as soon as Manas evolves the dualism of subject and object out of the absolute unity of the Alaya, Manovijnana and indeed all the other Vijnanas begin to operate. Thus, in the Lankavatara Sutra, the Buddha said: "Buddhist Nirvana consists in turning away from the wrongfully discriminating Manovijnana. For with Manovijnana as cause (hetu) and support (alambana), there takes place the evolution of the seven Vijnanas. Further, when Manovijnana discerns and clings to an external world of particulars, all kinds of habit-energy (vasana) are generated therefrom, and by them the Alaya is nurtured. Together with the thought of "me and mine," taking hold of it and clinging to it, and reflecting upon it, Manas thereby takes shape and is evolved. In substance (sarira), however, Manas and Manovijnana are not differentthe one from the other, they depend upon the Alaya as cause and support. And when an external world is tenaciously held as real which is no other than the presentation of one's own mind, the mentation-system (citta-kalapa), mutually related, is evolved in its totality. Like the ocean waves, the Vijnanas set in motion by the wind of an external world which is the manifestation of one's own mind, rise and cease. Therefore, the seven Vijnanas cease with the cessation of Manovijnana." A mind which does not depend on any of the five sense faculties, but on the immediately preceding continuum of mind. Mental consciousness apprehends not only objects (form, sound, taste, smell, touch) in the present time, but it also apprehends objects in the past and imagines objects even in the future. Mental consciousness will go with us from one life to another, while the first five consciousnesses are our temporary minds. Consciousness is also one of the five skandhas. Consciousness refers to the perception or discernment which occurs when our sense organs make contact with their respective objects. The first five consciousness correspond to the five senses. The sixth consciousness integrates the perceptions of the five senses into coherent images and make judgments about the external world. The seventh consciousness is the active center of reasoning, calculation, and construction or fabrication of individual objects. It is the source of clinging and craving, and thus the origin of self or ego and the cause of illusion that arises from assuming the apparent to be real. The terms "conscious" and "unconscious" are used with several different meanings. In one

meaning, which might be called functional, "conscious" and "unconscious" refer to a subjective state within the individual. Saying that he is conscious of this or that psychic content means that he is aware of affects, of desires, of judgments, etc.

Seventh, Cultivation of the Klistamanas Consciousness: "Klista-mano-vijnana" is a Sanskrit term for "sentience." In Buddhism, it is called "mental faculty" for it constitutes man as an intelligent and moral being. It is commonly thought to be equated with the terms "citta" or "consciousness." It is derived from the Sanskrit root "man," which means "to think" or "to imagine" and is associated with intellectual activity of consciousness. This is the discriminating and constructive sense. It is more than the intellectually perceptive. It is the cause of all egoism (it creates the illusion of a subject "I" standing apart from the object world) and individualizing of men and things (all illusion arising from assuming the seeming as the real). The self-conscious defiled mind, which thinks, wills, and is the principal factor in the generation of subjectivity. It is a conveyor of the seed-essence of sensory experiences to the eighth level of subconsciousness. It is described as a sea in which currents of thought surge and seethe. It is the transmitting consciousness that relays sensory information from the mind or mano consciousness to the storehouse or Alaya-vijnana. According to The Lankavatara Sutra, this system of the five sense-vijnanas is in union with Manovijnana and this muatuality makes the system distinguish between what is good and what is not good. Manovijnana in union with the five sense-vijnanas grasps forms and appearances in their multitudinous apsect; and there is not a moment's cessation of activity. This is called the momentary character of the Vijnanas. This system of vijnanas is stirred uninterruptedly and all the time like the waves of the great ocean. Klistamanas consciousness is the thinking consciousness that coordinates the perceptions of the sense organs. The mind consciousness, the sixth or the intellectual consciousness is not the mind, it's the function of the mind. The sentient being's mind is an ever-spinning whirlpool in which mental activities never cease. There are four stages of production, dwelling, change, and decay. A mind which does not depend on any of the five sense faculties, but on the immediately preceding continuum of mind. Mental consciousness apprehends not only objects (form, sound, taste,

smell, touch) in the present time, but it also apprehends objects in the past and imagines objects even in the future. Mental consciousness will go with us from one life to another, while the first five consciousnesses are our temporary minds. Consciousness is also one of the five skandhas. This acts like the collection station for the first six consciousnesses. The seventh of the eight consciousnesses, which means thinking and measuring, or calculating. It is the active mind, or activity of mind, but is also used for the mind itself. The waves will be seen ruffling the surface of the ocean of Alayavijnana when the principle of individuation known as Vishaya blows over it like the wind. The waves thus started are this world of particulars where the intellect discriminates, the affection clings, and passions and desires struggle for existence and supremacy. This particularizing agency sits within the system of Vijnanas and is known as Manas; in fact it is when Manas begins to operate that a system of the Vijnanas manifests itself. They are thus called "object-discriminating-vijnana" (vastu-prativikalpa-vijnana). The function of Manas is essentially to reflect upon the Alaya and to creat and to discriminate subject and object from the pure oceans of the Alaya. The memory accumulated (ciyate) in the latter is now divided into dualities of all forms and all kinds. This is compared to the manifoldness of waves that stir up the ocean of Alaya. Manas is an evil spirit in one sense and a good one in another, for discrimination in itself is not evil, is not necessarily always false judgment (abhuta-parikalpa) or wrong reasoning (prapanca-daushthulya). But it grows to be the source of great calamity when it creates desires based upon its wrong judgments, such as when it believes in the reality of an ego-substance and becomes attached to it as the ultimate truth. For manas is not only a discriminating intelligence, but a willing agency, and consequently an actor. Manyana is a kind of intuition, the sense that there is a separate self which can exist independently of the rest of the world. This intuition is produced by habit and ignorance. Its illusory nature has been constructed by vijnapti, and it, in turn, becomes a basis for vijnapti. The object of this intuition is a distorted fragment of alaya which it considers to be a self, comprised of a body and a soul. It of course is never reality in itself, but just a representation of reality. In its role as a self as well as consciousness of the self, manyana is regarded as the basic obstacle to

penetrating reality. Contemplation performed by vijnapti can remove the erroneous perceptions brought about by manas. The function of Manovijnana is by hypothesis to reflect on Manas, as the eye-vijnana reflects on the world of forms and the ear-vijnana on that of sounds; but in fact, as soon as Manas evolves the dualism of subject and object out of the absolute unity of the Alaya, Manovijnana and indeed all the other Vijnanas begin to operate. Thus, in the Lankavatara Sutra, the Buddha said: "Buddhist Nirvana consists in turning away from the wrongfully discriminating Manovijnana. For with Manovijnana as cause (hetu) and support (alambana), there takes place the evolution of the seven Vijnanas. Further, when Manovijnana discerns and clings to an external world of particulars, all kinds of habit-energy (vasana) are generated therefrom, and by them the Alaya is nurtured. Together with the thought of "me and mine," taking hold of it and clinging to it, and reflecting upon it, Manas thereby takes shape and is evolved. In substance (sarira), however, Manas and Manovijnana are not differentthe one from the other, they depend upon the Alaya as cause and support. And when an external world is tenaciously held as real which is no other than the presentation of one's own mind, the mentation-system (citta-kalapa), mutually related, is evolved in its totality. Like the ocean waves, the Vijnanas set in motion by the wind of an external world which is the manifestation of one's own mind, rise and cease. Therefore, the seven Vijnanas cease with the cessation of Manovijnana."

Eighth, Cultivation of the Alaya Vijnana: Alaya Vijnana, the receptacle intellect or consciousness, basic consciousness, Eighth consciousness, subconsciousness, and store consciousness. The storehouse consciousness or basis from which come all seeds of consciousness or from which it responds to causes and conditions, specific seeds are reconveyed by Manas to the six senses, precipitating new actions, which in turn produce other seeds. This process is simultaneous and endless. "Alayavijnana is also called "Open knowledge", the store of knowledge where all is revealed, either good or bad. Alaya means a house or rather a home, which is in turn a place where all the valued things for use by us are kept and among which we dwell. Also called "Store consciousness," "eighth consciousness," or "karma repository." All karma created in the present and previous

lifetime is stored in the Alaya Consciousness. According to the Consciousness-Only, there are eight consciousnesses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, mind, Mana and Alaya). These consciousnesses enable sentient beings to discriminate between right and wrong of all dharmas (thoughts, feelings, physical things, etc). However, human beings have a deep consciousness which is called Alaya-consciousness which is the actual subject of rebirth, and is mistakenly taken to be an eternal soul or self by the other consciousnesses. It is in the Alaya-consciousness that the impressions of action and experience are stored in the form of 'seeds' and it is these seeds which engender further experiences according to the individual situation. According to Asvaghosa Bodhisattva in the Awakening of Faith and the Samparigraha, the Alaya or store id the consciousness in which the true and the false unite. When Alaya Consciousness becomes pure and taintless, it is Tathata (Thusness). Also known as Alayavijnana. In the Lankavatara Sutra, the Buddha told Mahamati: "Oh Mahamati! The Tathagata-garbha contains in itself causes alike good and not-good, and from which are generated all paths of existence. It is like an actor playing different characters without harboring any thought of 'me and mine.'" Alaya means all-conserving. It is in company with the seven Vijnanas which are generated in the dwelling-house of ignorance. The function of Alayavijnana is to look into itself where all the memory (vasana) og the beginningless past is preserved in a way beyond consciousness (acintya) and ready for further evolution (parinama); but it has no active energy in itself; it never acts, it simply perceives, it is in this exactly like a mirror; it is again like the ocean, perfectly smooth with no waves disturbing its tranquillity; and it is pure and undefiled, which means that it is free from the dualism of subject and object. For it is the pure act of perceiving, with no differentiation yet of the knowing one and the known. According to Prof. Junjiro Takakusu in The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy, when all things are reflected on our mind, our discriminating or imaginating power is already at work. This called our consciousness (vijnana). Since the consciousness co-ordinating all reflected elements stores them, it is called the store-consciousness or ideation-store. The ideation-store itself is an existence of causal combination, and in it the pure and tainted elements are causally combined or intermingled. When the ideation-

store begins to move and descend to the everyday world, then we have the manifold existence that is only an imagined world. The ideation-store, which is the seed-consciousness, is the conscious center and the world manifested by ideation is its environment. It is only from the Buddha's Perfect Enlightenment that pure ideation flashed out. This pure ideation can purify the tainted portion of the ideation-store and further develop its power of understanding. The world of imagination and the world of interdependence will be brought to the real truth (parinispanna). This having been attained, the seed-store, as consciousness, will disappear altogether and ultimately will reach the state where there is no distinction between subject and object. The knowledge so gained has no discrimination (Avikalpa-vijnana). This ultimate state is the Nirvana of No Abode (apratisthita-nirvana), that is to say, the attainment of perfect freedom, not being bound to one place. The function of Alayavijnana is to look into itself where all the memory (vasana) of the beginningless past is preserved in a way beyond consciousness (acintya) and ready for further evolution (parinama); but it has no active energy in itself; it never acts, it simply perceives, it is in this exactly like a mirror; it is again like the ocean, perfectly smooth with no waves disturbing its tranquillity; and it is pure and undefiled, which means that it is free from the dualismof subject and object. For it is the pure act of perceiving, with no differentiation yet of the knowing one and the known. The initiator of change, or the first power of change, or mutation, i.e. the alaya-vijnana, so called because other vijnanas are derived from it. An important doctrinal concept that is particularly important in the Yogacara tradition. This term is sometimes translated by Western scholars as "storehouse consciousness," since it acts as the repository (kho) of the predisposition (thiên về) that one's actions produce. It stores these predispositions until the conditions are right for them to manifest themselves. The Tibetan translators rendered (hoàn lại) it as "basis of all" because it serves as the basis for all of the phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana. Through meditative practice and engaging in meritorious actions, one gradually replaces afflicted seeds with pure ones; when one has completely purified the continuum of the alaya-vijnana, it is referred to as the "purified consciousness." Alaya means all-conserving mind. It is in company with the seven Vijnanas which

are generated in the dwelling-house of ignorance. Alaya means the preconsciousness, or the eighth consciousness, or the store-consciousness. It is the central or universal consciousness which is the womb or store consciousness (the storehouse consciousness where all karmic seeds enter and cause all thought activities). All karma created in the present and previous lifetime is stored in the Alaya Consciousness. This is like a storage space receiving all information collected in the Mana consciousness. When a sentient being dies, the first seven consciousnesses die with it, but the Alaya-Consciousness carries on. It is the supreme ruler of one existence which ultimately determines where one will gain rebirth in the six realms of existence or will be sinking and being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortunes in the ocean of life and death.

Notes:

(1) Another name for consciousness or mind. Consciousness means the art of distinguishing, or perceiving, or recognizing, discerning, understanding, comprehending, distinction, intelligence, knowledge, learning. It is interpreted as the "mind," mental discernment, perception, in contrast with the object discerned.

(2) Storehouse consciousness is one of the eight consciousnesses which is very familiar from the Buddhist tradition. All karma created in the present and previous lifetime is stored in the Alaya Consciousness. This is like a storage space receiving all information collected in the Mana consciousness. Vinnana is also known as the subliminal consciousness in which the experiences of the past are registered and retained, the results of such experience becoming faculties in the next physical birth. When a sentient being dies, the first seven consciousnesses die with it, but the Alaya-Consciousness carries on. It is the supreme ruler of one existence which ultimately determines where one will gain rebirth in the six realms of existence. The storehouse-consciousness is a place where stores all impressions, all memory-seeds, and all karmic seeds. Consciousness is also one of the Five Skandhas. The relation between subject and object. It is the empirical mind by which one cognizes the phenomenal worlds and gains the experience of life. According to the Lankavatara Sutra, the storehouse consciousness plays a particularly important role because it not only exists as the tranquil depths of the ocean do, but it also functions as a repository. This is why it is called a storehouse, because it collects the seeds of sense impressions and actions. Indeed, the concept of the storehouse consciousness is extremely important for the Mahayana Buddhism. The storehouse consciousness is also called the "All-Base Consciousness", the consciousness that is the substratum of all. This implies that it has within it the potential for both samsara and nirvana, both phenomenal world and enlightenment.

Chapter Twenty-Four

Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death by Being Always Alert to Fueling Materials for All Fires of Afflictions in Sentient Beings

I. An Overview of the Buddha's Teachings on Fueling Materials for All Fires of Afflictions in Sentient Beings:

At the Deer Park, the Buddha also preached a Lecture on Fires. From the fire of love, fire of passion, fire of lust to the fires of greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, and lying, and so on. All these fires are fires of afflictions that have been burning up all the forest of Practitioners' merits and virtues. And they are still flaring up uncessantly in us at this very moment. Wanting to escape the ocean of life and death, practitioners should always be alert to fueling materials for all fires of afflictions in sentient beings. What are fueling materials for all fires of afflictions which are flaring up in all sentient beings? According to the Buddha, six sense organs are best fueling materials for all kinds of fires of afflictions, i.e., fires of greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, committing sexual misconducts, and lying, and so on. Six bases of mental activities: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. Practitioners should always remember that food for six bases of mental activities: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. Food for the eyes is the sleep; for the ears is the sound; for the nose is the smell; for the tongue is the taste; for the body is the smooth touch; and for the mind is the dharma. Practitioners should always remember that the six senses or six organs of sense are likened to six wild creatures in confinement and always struggling to escape. Only when they are domesticated will they be happy. So is it with the six senses and the taming power of Buddha-truth. So is it with the six senses and the taming power of Buddha-truth. One of the most important purposes of practitioners is to keep the six sense organs pure. The six organs and their purification in order to develop their unlimited power and interchange (in the case of Buddha). Six sense organs together with six entrances cause to flare up all kinds

of fires of afflictions, from the fires of greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, to the fires of killing, stealing, committing sexual misconducts, and lying, and so on. "Entrance" is one of the links in the chain of causation. The six entrances or locations, both the organ and the sensation (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and perception). The six entrances or locations, both the organ and the sensation (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and perception). Surroundings, views, circumstances, area, field, sphere, environments and conditions are where the mind grasps and follows i.e., the sphere of mind, the sphere of form for the eye, of sound for the ear, etc. In Buddhism, objects or views are also best fueling materials for all kinds of fires of afflictions, i.e., fires of greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, committing sexual misconducts, and lying, and so on. In Buddhism, eight consciousnesses are best fueling materials that not only keep flaring up all kinds of fires of afflictions, i.e., fires of greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, committing sexual misconducts, and lying, and so on. Furthermore, these eight consciousnesses are also best materials that keep these above-mentioned fires from extinguishing.

II. Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death by Being Always Alert to Fueling Materials for All Fires of Afflictions in Sentient Beings

Six Sense Organs with Six Entrances Cause All Fires of Afflictions to Flare Up: *Six Organs of Sense Are Fueling Materials for All Fires of Afflictions from Within Practitioners:* According to Buddhism, practitioners should always remember that the six senses or six organs of sense are likened to six wild creatures in confinement and always struggling to escape. Only when they are domesticated will they be happy. So is it with the six senses and the taming power of Buddha-truth. So is it with the six senses and the taming power of Buddha-truth. One of the most important purposes of practitioners is to keep the six sense organs pure. The six organs and their purification in order to develop their unlimited power and interchange (in the case of Buddha). This full development enables the eye to see everything in a great chiliocosm from its highest heaven down to its lowest hells and all the beings past, present, and future with all the karma of each. According to Bikkhu Piyananda in The Gems of Buddhism Wisdom, you must always be aware of

the sense organs such as eye, ear, nose, tongue and body and the contact they are having with the outside world. You must be aware of the feelings that are arising as a result of this contact: eye is now in contact with forms (rupa), ear is now in contact with sound, nose is now in conatct with smell, tongue is now in contact with taste, body is now in contact with touching, and mind is now in contact with all things (dharma).

Practitioners should always remember that the six faculties are the main reasons that cause human beings to fall into hells, to be reborn in the realm of the hungry ghosts, or animals, asuras, devas, or human beings, etc. It is agreeable that the six faculties that help us maintain our daily activities, but they are also the main factors that bring sufferings and afflictions to our body and mind. They are the main agents that cause us to create unwholesome karma, and eventually we will fall into evil ways because of them. Do not think that the eyes are that great, just because they help us see things. It is exactly because of their help that we give rise to all kinds of sufferings and afflictions. For instance, when we see an attractive person of the opposite sex, we become greedy for sex. If we do not get what we want, we will be afflicted; and if we get what we want, we will also be afflicted. The other faculties, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind are the same way. They make one give rise to many sufferings and afflictions. Therefore, the Buddha advised his disciples thus: "You should cultivate until you are unaware of heaven above, people in between, and earth below." If we cultivate until the time heaven, earth, people, east, west, south, north, etc., can no longer impact our six faculties, then at that point we are liberated from all hindrances.

According to the Samannaphala Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, the Buddha taught about "a guardian of the sense-door." How does a monk become a guardian of the sense-door? Here a monk, on seeing a visible object with the eye, does not grasp at its major signs or secondary characteristics. Because greed and sorrow, evil unskilled states, would overwhelm him if he dwelt leaving this eye-faculty unguarded, so he practises guading it, he protects the eye-faculty, develops restraint of the eye-faculty. On hearing a sound with the ear…; on smelling an odour with the nose…; on tasting a flavour with the tongue…; on feeling an object with the body…; on thinking a thought with the mind, he does not grasp at its major signs or secondary characteristics, he develops restraint of the mind-faculty. He experiences within himself the blameless bliss that comes from maintaining this Ariyan guarding of the faculties.

Six Sense Organs with Six Entrances Cause All Fires of Afflictions to Flare Up: In Buddhism, six sense organs together with six entrances cause to flare up all kinds of fires of afflictions, from the fires of greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, to the fires of killing, stealing, committing sexual misconducts, and lying, and so

on. “Entrance” is one of the links in the chain of causation. The six entrances or locations, both the organ and the sensation (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and perception). The six entrances or locations, both the organ and the sensation (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and perception). One of the links in the chain of causation. According to the Surangama Sutra, book Three, the Buddha reminded Ananda about the six entrances as follows: “Ananda! Why do I say the six entrances have their origin in the wonderful nature of true suchness, the treasury of the Thus Come One?” *The first entrance is the The Organ of Sight with Eye-Entrance:* Ananda! Although the eye’s staring causes fatigue, the eye and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Staring gives rise to the characteristic of fatigue. Because a sense of seeing is stimulated in the midst of the two false, defiling objects of light and dark, defiling appearances are taken in; this is called the nature of seeing. Apart from the two defiling objects of light and dark, this seeing is ultimately without substance. Thus, Ananda, you should know that seeing does not come from light or dark, nor does it come forth from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness. Why? If it came from light, then it would be extinguished when it is dark, and you would not see darkness. If it came from darkness, then it would be extinguished when it is light, and you would not see light. Suppose it came from the sense organ, which is obviously devoid of light and dark, a nature of seeing such as this would have no self-nature. Suppose it came forth from emptiness. When it looks in front of you, it sees the shapes of the defiling dust; turning around, it would see your sense-organ. Moreover, if it were emptiness itself which sees, what connection would that have with your entrance? Therefore, you should know that the eye enance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence nor is spontaneous in nature. *The second entrance is the Organ of Hearing with Ear-Entrance:* Ananda! Consider, for example, a person who suddenly stops up his ears with two fingers. Because the sense-organ of hearing has become fatigued, a sound is heard in his head. However, both the ears and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Because a sense of hearing is stimulated in the midst of the two false, defiling objects of movement and stillness, defiling appearances are taken; this is called the nature of hearing. Apart from the two defiling objects of movement and stillness, this hearing is ultimately without substance. Thus, Ananda, you know that hearing does not come from movement and stillness; nor does it come from the sense-organ, nor is it produced from emptiness. Why? If it came from stillness, it would be extinguished when there is movement, and you would not hear movement. If it came from movement, then it would be extinguished when there is stillness, and you would not be aware of this stillness. Suppose it came from the sense-organ, which is obviously devoid of movement and stillness: a nature of hearing such as this would have no self-nature. Suppose it came from emptiness; emptiness would then become hearing and would no longer be emptiness. Moreover, would it have with your entrance? Therefore, you should know that the ear-entrance is empty and false, since it neother depends upon causes and conditions for existence, nor is spontaneous in nature. *The third entrance is the Organ of Smell with Nose-Entrance:* Ananda! Consider, for example, a person who inhales deeply through his nose. After he has inhaled for a long time, it becomes fatigued, and then there is a sensation of cold in the nose. Because of that sensation,

there are the distinctions of penetration and obstruction, of emptiness and actuality, and so forth, including all fragrant and stinking vapors. However, both the nose and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Because a sense of smelling is stimulated in the midst of the two false, defiling objects of penetration and obstruction, defiling appearances are taken in; this is called the nature of smelling. Apart from the two defiling objects of penetration and obstruction, this smelling is ultimately without substance. You should know that smelling does not come from penetration and obstruction, nor does it come forth from the sense-organ, nor is it produced from emptiness. Why? If it came from penetration, the smelling would be extinguished when there is obstruction, and then how could it experience obstruction? If it existed because of obstruction, then where there is penetration there would be no smelling; in that case, how would the awareness of fragrance, stench, and other such sensations come into being? Suppose it came from the sense organ, which is obviously devoid of penetration and obstruction. A nature of smelling such as this would have no self-nature. Suppose it came from emptiness; smelling itself would turn around and smell your own nose. Moreover, if it were emptiness itself which smelled, what connection would it have with your entrance? Therefore, you should know that the nose-entrance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence nor is spontaneous in nature. *The fourth entrance is the Organ of Taste with Tongue-Entrance:* Ananda! Consider, for example, a person who licks his lips with his tongue. His excessive licking causes fatigue. If the person is sick, there will be a bitter flavor; a person who is not sick will have a subtle sweet sensation. Sweetness and biterness demonstrate the tongue's sense of taste. When the organ is inactive, a sense of tastelessness prevails. However, both the tongue and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Because of the two defiling objects of sweetness and bitterness, as well as tastelessness, stimulate a recognition of taste which in turn draws in these defiling sensations, it becomes what is known as a sense of taste. Apart from the two defiling objects of sweetnes and bitterness and apart from tastelessness, the sense of taste is originally without a substance. Thus, Ananda, you should know that the perception of sweetness, bitterness, and tastelessness does not come from sweetness or bitterness, nor does it exist because of tastelessness, nor does it arise from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness. Why? If it came from sweetness and bitterness, it would cease to exist when tastelessness was experienced, so how could it recognize tastelessness? If it arose from tastelessness, it would vanish when the flavor of sweetness was tasted, so how could it perceive the two flavors, sweet and bitter? Suppose it came from the tongue which is obviously devoid of defiling objects sweetness and bitternes and of tastelessness. An essence of tasting such as this would have no self-nature. Suppose it came from emptiness; the sense of taste would be experienced by emptiness instead of by the mouth. Suppose, moreover, that it was emptiness itself which tasted, what connection would that have with your entrance? Therefore, you should know that the tongue entrance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence, nor is it spontaneous in nature. *The fifth entrance is the Organ of Touch with Body-Entrance:* Ananda! Consider, for example, a person who touches his warm hand with his cold hand. If the cold is in excess of warmth, the warm hand will become cold; if the warmth is in excess of the cold, his cold hand will become warm. So, the sensation of warmth and cold is

felt through the contact and separation of the two hands. Fatiguing contact results in the interpenetration of warmth and cold. However, both the body and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Because a physical sensation is stimulated in the midst of the two defiling objects of separation and union, defiling appearances are taken in; this is called the awareness of sensation. Apart from the two sets of defiling objects of separation and union, and pleasantness and unpleasantness, the awareness of sensation is orginally without a substance. Thus, Ananda, you should know that this sensation does not come from separation and union, nor does it exist because of pleasantness and unpleasantness, nor does it arise from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness. Why? If it arose when there was union, it would disappear when there was separation, so how could it sense the separation? The two characteristics of pleasantness and unpleasantness are the same way. Suppose it came from the sense organ, which is obviously devoid of the four characteristics of union, separation, pleasantness, and unpleasantness; an awareness of physical sensation such as this would have no self- nature. Suppose it came from emptiness; the awareness of sensations would be experienced by emptiness itself, what connection would that have with your entrance? Therefore, you should know that the body-entrance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence, nor is spontaneous in nature. *The sixth entrance is the Organ of Mind with Mind-Entrance:* Ananda! Consider, for example, a person who becomes so fatigued that he goes to sleep. Having slept soundly, he awakens and tries to recollect what he experienced while asleep. He recalls some things and forgets others. Thus, his upsidedownness goes through production, dwelling, change, and extinction, which are taken in and returned to a center habitually, each following the next without ever being over taken. This is known as the mind organ or intellect. The mind and fatigue are both Bodhi. The two defiling objects of production and extinction stimulate a sense of knowing which in turn grasps these inner sense data, reversing the flow of seeing and hearing. Before the flow reaches the ground, it is known as the faculty of intellect. Apart from the two sets of dwelling objects of waking and sleeping and of production and extinction, the faculty of intellect is originally without substance. Thus, Ananda, you should know that the faculty of intellect does not come from waking, sleeping, production, or extinction, nor does it arise from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness. Why? If it came from waking, it would disappear at the time of sleeping, so how could it experience sleep? If it came from production, it would cease to exist at the time of extinction, so how could it undergo extinction? If it came from extinction it would disappear at the time of production, so how could it know about production? Suppose it came from the sense-organ; waking and sleeping cause only a physical opening and closing respectively. Apart from these two movements, the faculty of intellect is as unsubstantial as flowers in space, because it is fundamentally without a self-nature. Suppose it came from emptiness; the sense of intellect would be experienced by emptiness instead of by the mind. Then what connection would that have with your entrance? Therefore, you should know that the mind entrance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence, nor is spontaneous in nature.

According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are six internal sense-spheres: Eye-sense-sphere, Ear-sense-sphere, Nose-sense-sphere, Tongue-sense-sphere, Body-sense-sphere, and Mind-sense-sphere. Practitioners should always try keep these six internal sense-spheres pure places. That is to say, they try to keep the six organs and their purification in order to develop their unlimited power and interchange (in the case of Buddha). This full development enables the eye to see everything in a great chiliocosm from its highest heaven down to its lowest hells and all the beings past, present, and future with all the karma of each. This is the state of the organs thus purified is defined by T'ien-T'ai as the semblance stage in the Perfect teaching.

Objects or Views Are Also Best Fueling Materials for Fires of Afflictions: As mentioned above, a prospect, region, territory, surroundings, views, circumstances, environment, area, field, sphere, environments and conditions, i.e., the sphere of mind, the sphere of form for the eye, of sound for the ear, etc. In Buddhism, objects or views are also best fueling materials for all kinds of fires of afflictions, i.e., fires of greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, committing sexual misconducts, and lying, and so on. The word "object" has many meanings, such as scene, environment, domain, sphere, object, understanding, etc. Zen Buddhists seemed to have a special usage of this word; for instance, a realm has not yet arisen (ching pu sheng) means a certain specific experience of Zen which has not yet arisen in the disciple. Thus "realm" means the specific experience or understanding within one's mind, which, of course, can be referentially treated as an "object" visualized or comprehended by the mind. Practitioners should always remember that all things and conditions come together and disintegrate like a lightning, an illusion or a phantom. Practitioners should remember that external states or external realms are realms which are not created by the mind, but come from the outside. For this reason, if you can remain unperturbed by external states, then you are currently cultivating. On the contrary, if you are turned by external states, then you will fall. External states are also external conditions or circumstances which stir or tempt one to do evil. Problems and dissatisfaction do not develop because of external conditions, but from our own mind. If we don't have internal peace, nothing from outside can bring us happiness. There are different kinds of regions, states or conditions.

According to the Mind-Only theories, different realms mean the ideas, or mental states which arise according to the various objects or conditions toward which the mind is directed. According to the Fa-Hsiang School, this group of elements falls under the general category of "mental function" which has five elements: desire, verification, recollection, meditation, and wisdom. Gocara means experience, mental attitude. Gocara literally means "a range for cattle," or "a pasturage," is a field for action and an object of sense. In the Lankavatara Sutra, it means a general attitude one assumes toward the external world, or a better spiritual atmosphere in which one's being is enveloped. In cultivation, practitioners should not try to find things behind the mirror, this indicates someone who fulfils what was promised in jest, only wastes the time without any result. As mentioned above, external states or external realms are realms which are not created by the mind, but come from the outside. However, the wind moving usually causes our minds moving. In Zen, the question for Zen practitioners is

that the flag moving, the wind moving, or our minds moving? Several monks were arguing back and forth about the flag and the wind without reaching the truth in front of the Fa Hsin monastery in Kuang Chou. The sixth patriarch, Hui-Neng, said to them: "It is not the wind moving, neither the flag moving. It is your own minds that are moving."

Eight Consciousnesses Keep the Fires of Allfictions from Extinguishing: In Buddhism, eight consciousnesses are best fueling materials that not only keep flaring up all kinds of fires of afflictions, i.e., fires of greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, committing sexual misconducts, and lying, and so on. Furthermore, these eight consciousnesses are also best materials that keep these above-mentioned fires from extinguishing. "Vijnana" is another name for "Consciousness." Theravada considered the six kinds of consciousness as "Vijnana." Mahayana considered the eight kinds of consciousness as "Vijnana." Externalists considered "vijnana" as a soul. Consciousness is another name for mind. Consciousness means the art of distinguishing, or perceiving, or recognizing, discerning, understanding, comprehending, distinction, intelligence, knowledge, learning. It is interpreted as the "mind," mental discernment, perception, in contrast with the object discerned. According to Buddhism, our "Nature" is the "Buddha". The "Consciousness" is the "Spirit", the "Intention" or "Mano-vijnana" is the "Discriminating Mind", and the "Mind" is what constantly engages in idle thinking. The "Nature" is originally perfect and bright, with no conception of self, others, beauty, or ugliness; no falling into numbers and discriminations. But as soon as there is "Consciousness", one falls into numbers and discriminations. The "Intention" or "Mano-vijnana" also makes discriminations, and it is the sixth consciousness. It is relatively turbid, while the seventh and eighth consciousnesses are relatively purer. There are eight kinds of consciousness: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, klista-mano-vijnana, and alaya-vijnana. Fundamentally speaking, consciousness is not of eight kinds, although there are eight kinds in name. We could say there is a single headquarters with eight departments under it. Although there are eight departments, they are controlled by just one single headquarters. "Vijnana" translated as "consciousness" is the act of distinguishing or discerning including understanding, comprehending, recognizing, intelligence, knowledge. There are eight consciousnesses. The first five arise as a result of the interaction of the five sense organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and mind) and the five dusts (Gunas); the sixth consciousness comes into play, all kinds of feelings, opinions and judgments will be formed (the one that does all the differentiating); the seventh consciousness (Vijnana) is the center of ego; the eighth consiousness is the Alayagarbha (a lại da), the storehouse of consciousness, or the storehouse of all deeds or actions (karmas), whether they are good, bad or neutral. "Vijnana" also means cognition, discrimination, consciousness, but as any one of these does not cover the whole sense contained in Vijnana. "Vijnana" also means relative knowledge. This term is usually used as contrasted to Jnana in purely intellectual sense. Jnana is transcendental knowledge dealing with such subjects as immortality, non-relativity, the unattained, etc., whereas Vijnana is attached to duality of things—See Chapter Twenty-Three.

Chapter Twenty-Five

Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death by Being Always Subduing Ten Afflictive Robbers of Desires-Anger-Ignorance-Arrogance-Doubt-Wrong Views-Killing-Stealing-Sexual Misconduct-Lying"

I. An Overview of Ten Robbers of Desires, Anger, Ignorance, Arrogance, Doubt, Wrong Views, Killing, Stealing, Sexual Misconduct, Lying:

Ordinarily speaking, for monks and nuns in temples, cultivation is relatively simple and easy than that of lay people, who, everyday, have to deal with ten robbers in the society, both internal and external: greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, sexual misconducts, and lying... that are always waiting to harm and to destroy completely our path of cultivation. However, according to Buddhist teachings, there are eight teachers that help us contemplate avoidable sins and unavoidable things in our daily life: murder, the Robbery, the adultery, the lying, the drunkard, the aged, the sick, and the death. Therefore, among these ten robbers mentioned above, four of them are considered practitioners' teachers according to Buddhist teachings. For those who cultivate wisdom, if we don't eliminate these robbers, it is difficult to attain a real wisdom. Truly speaking, not only Buddhists but the whole world also are indebted to the Buddha for it is He who first showed the Way to free human beings from the obstructive ghosts of lush, anger, stupidity, arrogance, doubtness, wrong views, killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and lying... We call them robbers because they usually plunder the virtues and murder the wisdom-life of cultivators. In Buddhist teachings, robbers also represent the destructive conditions or influences that cause practitioners to retrogress in their cultivation. Demons can render cultivators insane, making them lose their right thought, develop erroneous views, commit evil karma and end up sunk in the lower realms. Beside trying to prevent robbers of lust, anger, ignorance... Buddhist practitioners should should keep the precepts strictly; they

should have a clear understanding of the Dharma, skillfully distinguishing the correct from the deviant, the true from the false; they should be firm and stable in his determination; they should be guided by a good advisor, who has a thorough understanding of the sutras and many years experience in cultivation.

Broadly speaking, there are 84,000 robbers of afflictions. But after analysis, we can say there are only 10 serious ones which are ten robbers or disturbers of the religious life. According to Buddhism, beside these ten robbers of Desires-Anger-Ignorance-Arrogance-Doubt-Wrong Views-Killing-Stealing-Lying, no one else is our enemy. These are ten most poisonous enemies in our life and cultivation for these ten robbers do not only cause our afflictions, but also prevent us from tasting the pure and cool flavor of emancipation (liberation). The first poison is "Lust": Lust is the string of craving and attachment confines us to samsara's prison. In other words, craving and attachment are not only roots that prevent us from being sufficiently moved to renounce samsara, but they are also two of the main things that bind us to samsara. In order to overcome craving and attachment, we should contemplate on the impurity of the body. When we are attached to someone, for example, consider how that person is just a sack full of six kinds of filthy substances. Then our attachment and craving will diminish. The second poison is "Anger": Anger is the highly disturbed aspect of the mind that arises when we see something unpleasant. The objects of anger could be sentient beings or inanimate objects; when we involve ourselves with them, they completely disturb and torment our mind and we wish to harm them. Anger does great damage, for it can destroy our root merits as if they had been burnt in a fire. Anger is responsible for people taking lives, beating or stabbing others. The third poison is "Ignorance": Ignorance is the opposite of the word 'to know'. In Budhdism, ignorance means 'not knowing', 'not seeing', 'not understanding', 'being unclear', and so forth. Whoever is dominated by ignorance is like a blind person because the eyes are shut, or not seeing the true nature of objects, and not understanding the truths of cause and effect, and so on. Ignorance is the root of all sufferings and afflictions. The fourth poison is "Pride": Pride is the inflated opinion of ourselves and can manifest in relation to some good or bad object. When we look down from a high mountain, everyone below seems to

have shrunken in size. When we hold ourselves to be superior to others, and have an inflated opinion of ourselves, we take on a superior aspect. It is extremely difficult to develop any good qualities at all when one has pride, for no matter how much the teacher may teach that person, it will do no good. Haughtiness means false arrogance, thinking oneself correct in spite of one's wrong conduct, thinking oneself is good in spite of one's very bad in reality. Haughtiness also means arrogance and conceit due to one's illusion of having completely understood what one has hardly comprehended at all. Haughtiness is one of the main hindrances in our cultivation. In cultivating the Way, we must have genuine wisdom. Those who have genuine wisdom never praise themselves and disparage others. These people never consider themselves the purest and loftiest, and other people common and lowly. In Buddhism, those who praise themselve have no future in their cultivation of the Way. Even though they are still alive, they can be considered as dead, for they have gone against their own conscience and integrity. The fifth poison is "Doubt": Doubt signifies spiritual doubt, from a Buddhist perspective the inability to place confidence in the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha, and the training. Doubt, as wavering uncertainty, a hindrance and fetter to be removed. One of the mula-klesa, or root causes of suffering. Skepticism, one of the five hindrances one must eliminate on entering the stream of saints. Vichikiccha is a Pali term, a combination of "vi", means without; and "cikiccha" means medicine. One who suffers from perplexity is really suffering from a dire disease, and unless he sheds his doubts, he will continue to worry over and suffer from this illness. As long as man is subject to this mental itch, this sitting on the fence, he will continue to take a skeptical view of things which is most detrimental to mental ability to decide anything definitely; it also includes doubt with regard to the possibility of attaining the jhanas. Doubting is natural. Everyone starts with doubts. We can learn a great deal from them. What is important is that we do not identify with our doubts. That is, do not get caught up in them, letting our mind spin in endless circles. Instead, watch the whole process of doubting, of wondering. See who it is that doubts. See how doubts come and go. Then we will no longer be victimized by our doubts. We will step outside of them, and our mind will be quiet. We can see how all things

come and go. Let go of our doubts and simply watch. This is how to end doubting. The sixth poison is “Wrong Views”: According to Buddhism, perverted (wrong) views are views that do not accept the law of cause and effect, not consistent with the dharma, one of the five heterodox opinions and ten evils. This view arises from a misconception of the real characteristic of existence. There were at least sixty-two heretical views (views of the externalist or non-Buddhist views) in the Buddha’s time. Buddhism emphasizes on theory of causation. Understanding the theory of causation means to solve most of the question of the causes of sufferings and afflictions. Not understanding or refuse of understanding of the theory of causation means a kind of wrong view in Buddhism. According to the Buddha, sentient beings suffer from sufferings and afflictions because of dersires, aversions, and delusion, and the causes of these harmful actions are not only from ignorance, but also from wrong views. Wrong views also means holding to the view of total annihilation, or the view that death ends life, or world-extinction and the end of causation, in contrast with the view that body and soul are eternal, both views being heterodox. The philosophic doctrine that denies a substantial reality to the phenomenal universe. The seventh poison is “Killing”: This is one of the ten kinds of evil karma, to kill living beings, to take life, kill the living, or any conscious being. According to The Buddha and His Teaching, written by Most Venerable Narada, killing means the intentional destruction of any living being. The Pali term pana strictly means the psycho-physical life pertaining to one’s particular existence. The wanton destruction of this life-force, without allowing it to run its due course, is panatipata. Pana also means that which breathes. Hence all animate beings, including animals, are regarded as pana. Plants are not considered as “living beings” as they possess no mind. Monks and nuns, however, are forbidden to destroy even plant life. This rule, it may be mentioned, does not apply to lay-followers. According to the Buddhist laws, the taking of human life offends against the major commands, of animal life against the less stringent commands. Suicide also leads to severe penalties in the next lives. The eighth poison is “Stealing”: Stealing means taking possession of anything that has not been given by its owner or stealing, is also wrong, even legally speaking. Stealing, one of the four grave prohibitions or sins in Buddhism. Stealing is taking

what isn't given to us. It includes not paying taxes or fees that are due, borrowing things and not returning them, and taking things from our workplace for our own personal use. A Bhiksu or Bhiksuni who steals or violates the property of another, whether the property is privately or publicly owned, breaks the second of the Four Degradation Offences. He or she is no longer worthy to remain a Bhiksu or Bhiksuni and cannot participate in the activities of the Order of Bhiksus or Order of Bhiksunis. The ninth poison is "Sexual Intercourse": This is the third commandment of the five basic commandments for lay people, and the third precept of the ten major precepts for monks and nuns in the Brahma Net Sutra. Monks or nuns who commit this offence will be expelled from the Order forever. A Bhiksu or Bhiksuni who has sexual intercourse with another person, whether a female or male, and whether that person has given consent or not, breaks the first of the Four Degradation Offences. He or she is no longer worthy to remain a Bhiksu or Bhiksuni and cannot participate in the activities of the Bhiksu or Bhiksuni Sangha. A Bhiksu who, when motivated by sexual desire, tells a woman or a man that it would be a good thing for her or him to have sexual relations with him, commits a Sangha Restoration Offence. A Bhiksuni who is intent upon having sexual relations with someone, whether male or female, breaks one of the eight Degradation Offences. She is no longer worthy to remain a Bhiksuni and cannot participate in the actiivities of the Order of Bhiksunis. Through word or gesture arouses sexual desire in that person, breaks the seventh of the Eight Degradation Offences. Says to that person that she is willing to offer him or her sexual relations, breaks the Degradation Offences. The tenth poison is "Lying": Lying means verbally saying or indicating through a nod or a shrug somethng we know isn't true. However, telling the truth should be tempered and compassion. For instance, it isn't wise to tel the truth to a murderer about a potential victim's whereabouts, if this would cause the latter's death. According to the Dharmapada Sutra, verse 306, the Buddha taught: "The speaker of untruth goes down; also, he who denies what he has done, both sinned against truth. After death they go together to hells."

II. Summaries of Ten Robbers of Desires-Anger-Ignorance-Arrogance-Doubt-Wrong Views-Killing-Stealing-Lying:

The First Robber Is Craving: Craving (greed, affection, desire) means desire for and love of the things of this worldly life. Most people define happiness as the satisfaction of all desires. The desires are boundless, but our ability to realize them is not, and unfulfilled desires always create suffering. When desires are only partially fulfilled, we have a tendency to continue to pursue until a complete fulfillment is achieved. Thus, we create even more suffering for us and for others. Only if we have no desire for ourselves; if we are working and earning money in order to help other people; if we make cultivation our business and our business is cultivation only, then how clear and happy our life will be! However, most people don't understand this. They are only interested in making a lot of money or becoming successful in worldly business. Remember, this is only a small 'I'. Devout Buddhists should make a lot of money to help all people, then even we create our worldly business, it is a good business. It is a selfish desire for more than we need or deserve, such as food, house, car, wealth, honors, etc. Eyes are longing for viewing beautiful forms without any satisfaction, ears are longing for melodious sounds, nose is longing for fragrance, tongue is longing for delicate tastes, body is longing for soothing touches, and mind is longing for various emotions of love and hate from self and others. Human beings' greediness is like a barrel without bottom. It is just as the great ocean obtaining continuously the water from hundreds and thousands of large and small rivers and lakes everyday. In this Dharma Ending Age, sentient beings, especially human beings use every method to manipulate and harm one another. Sentient beings' lives, especially, those of human beings' lives are already filled with pain and sufferings, now there are even more pain and sufferings. Through tricks, expedients, and manipulations we try to reach our goal irrespective of whatever happens to others. Greed is a powerful mental force that drives people to fight, kill, cheat, lie and perform various forms of unwholesome deeds. The desires are boundless, but our ability to realize them is not, and unfulfilled desires always create suffering. When desires are only partially fulfilled, we have a tendency to continue to pursue until a complete fulfillment is achieved. Thus, we create even more suffering for us and for others.

Knowing how to feel satisfied with few possessions help us destroy greed and desire. This means being content with material conditions that allow us to be healthy and strong enough to cultivate. This is an effective way to cut through the net of passions and desires, attain a peaceful state of mind and have more time to help others. Cultivation helps us balance 'Lust' by contemplation of loathsomeness. Attachment to bodily form is one extreme, and one should keep the opposite in mind. Examine the body as a corpse and see the process of decay, or think of the parts of the body, such as lungs, spleen, fat, feces, and so forth. Remembering these and visualizing the loathsome aspects of the body will free us from lust. Furthermore, through cultivation, we can see the string of craving and attachment confines us to samsara's prison. In other words, craving and attachment are not only roots that prevent us from being sufficiently moved to renounce samsara, but they are also two of the main things that bind us to samsara. In order to overcome craving and attachment, we should contemplate on the impurity of the body. When we are attached to someone, for example, consider how that person is just a sack full of six kinds of filthy substances. Then our attachment and craving will diminish. We can only realize the true happiness and a peaceful state of mind when we get rid of greed and desires or when our desires are few. This is one of the great steps towards the shore of liberation. The Buddha taught: "Craving and desire are the cause of all unhappiness or suffering. Everything sooner or later must change, so do not become attached to anything. Instead devote yourself to clearing your mind and finding the truth, lasting hapiness." Knowing how to feel satisfied with few possessions help us destroy greed and desire. This means being content with material conditions that allow us to be healthy and strong enough to cultivate. This is an effective way to cut through the net of passions and desires, attain a peaceful state of mind and have more time to help others. As a matter of fact, once, we, Buddhist practitioners get rid of greed and desire also means that we have already pushed away great obstacles on our own path of cultivation. In conclusion for this chapter, on the path of cultivation, practitioners should always remember the Buddha's teaching in the Sutra in Forty-Two Chapters taught: "Though a person with a state of mind filled with desires dwells in heaven, still that is not enough for him; though a

person who has ended desire dwells on the ground, still he is happy." We are living in a material world where we must encounter all kinds of objects such as sights, sounds, tastes, sensations, thoughts and ideas, etc. Desire arises from contact with these pleasing objects. Buddhists should always remember that "Desire" not only obscures our mind, but it is also a main cause of grasping which causes sufferings and afflictions, forces us to continue to wander in the samsara.

At this very moment in daily life, content with few desires and satisfy with what we have is one of the most efficient way to subdue demonic obstruction of greed and desire. Content with few desires. "Thiểu Dục" means having few desires; "tri túc" means being content. Knowing how to feel satisfied with few possessions means being content with material conditions that allow us to be healthy and strong enough to practice the Way. "Knowing how to feel satisfied and being content with material conditions" is an effective way to cut through the net of passions and desires, attain a peaceful state of body and mind and accomplish our supreme goal of cultivation. Being content with few desires means having few desires. Here "desires" include not only the desire for money and material things but also the wish for status and fame. It also indicates seeking the love and service of others. In Buddhism, a person who has attained the mental stage of deep faith has very few desires and is indifferent to them. We must note carefully that though such a person is indifferent to worldly desires, he is very eager for the truth, that is, he has a great desire for the truth. To be indifferent to the truth is to be slothful in life. To be content with few desires also means to be satisfied with little material gain, that is, not to feel discontented with one's lot and to be free from worldly cares. Nevertheless, this does not mean to be unconcerned with self-improvement but to do one's best in one's work without discontent. Such a person will never be ignored by those around him. But even if people around him ignored him, he would feel quite happy because he lives like a king from a spiritual point of view. We must have few desires in two areas: the desires for food and sex. Food and sex support ignorance in perpetrating all sort of evil. Thus, Confucius taught: "Food and sex are part of human nature." That is to say we are born with the craving for foos and sex. Why is that we have not been able to demolish our ignorance, eliminate our afflictions, and reveal our

wisdom? Because we always crave for food and sex. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that food gives rise to sexual desire, and sexual desire gives rise to ignorance. Once the desire for food arises, the desire for sex arises as well. Men are attracted to beautiful women, and women are charmed by handsome men. People become infatuated and obsessed and cannot see through their desires. The nourishment from the food we eat is transformed into reporductive essence; and once that essence is full, sexual desire arises. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that the less tasty the food is, the better. Food should not be regarded as too important. Sincere Buddhists should practice moderation and eat only enough to sustain ourselves. We should neither eat very rich food, nor eat spoilt food, for either one could ruin our health. To be satisfied with what we have at this very moment means satisfaction or contentment is a characteristic of the really happy individual. The ordinary people seem to think that it is difficult to cultivate and develop contentment. However, with courage and determination to control one's evil inclination, as well as to understand the consequences of these evil thoughts, one can keep the mind from being soiled and experience happiness through contentment. For those who have wisdom, know how to apply themselves and are able to endure life, and are able to think cleverly, will find peace in his fate under whatever circumstances. With the conditions of wealth, one satisfies and is at peace with being wealthy; with the conditions of poverty, one satisfies and is at peace with being impoverished. In fact, in our lifetime, we engage in all kinds of activities, think and calculate every imaginable method without abandoning any plot, so long as it is beneficial, but whether or not our actions affect others we never care. We have been doing all these for what? For a better life, clothes, house, and for storing more money. If we think carefully, we will see that the sun rises, reaches its stand still, and then it will set and disappears in the evening; a full moon will soon become half, quarter, then lose its brightness; mountains become deep canyons; oceans become hills of berries, etc. The way of life has always been rise and fall, success and failure, victory and defeat, lost and found, together and apart, life and death, etc., goes on constantly and there is absolutely nothing that remain unchanged and eternal. People with wisdom should always satisfy with their current circumstances. The

Buddha extols simple living as being more conducive to the development of one's mind. Thus, the Buddha always preaches the self-contentment for the benefit of the Bhikkhus as follow: The robes or clothes they receive, whether coarse or fine; alms or food they receive, whether unpalatable or delicious; the abodes or houses they receive, whether simple or luxurious. Those who satisfy with these three conditions can reduce the desires, and at the same time develop the habits and values of simple living.

Devout Buddhists should always remember that to Buddhism, sensual pleasures are something fleeting, something that comes and goes. Can something be really called "Happiness" when it is here one moment and gone the next? Is it really so enjoyable to go around hunting for something so ephemeral, which is changing all the time? Look at the amount of trouble we have to go through to get all those sensual pleasures which we think will bring us happiness. Some people have such strong desire for pleasure that they will break the law, commit brutal crimes and cause others to suffer just so they can experience these pleasures. They may not understand how much suffering they themselves will have to endure in the future as a consequence of the unwholesome acts they have committed. Even ordinary people may become aware that a disproportionate amount of suffering is necessary to bring together a few moments of happiness so much that it really is not worth it. Devout Buddhists should always remember that suffering will always follow craving. All the problems in this world are rooted in the desire for pleasure. It is on account of the need for pleasure that quarrels occur within the family that neighbors do not get along well, that states have conflict and nations go to war. It is also on account of sense-based pleasures that sufferings, afflictions, and all kinds of problems plague our world, that people have gone beyond their humanness into great cruelty and inhumanity.

According to the first patriarch Bodhidharma, the 28th Patriarch from India and also the 1st Patriarch in China, "Not to seek after anything" is one of the four disciplinary processes. By 'not seeking after anything' is meant this: "Men of the world, in eternal confusion, are attached everywhere to one thing or another, which is called seeking. The wise, however, understand the truth and are not like the vulgar. Their minds abide serenely in the uncreated while the body

turns about in accordance with the laws of causation. All things are empty and there is nothing desirable and to be sought after. Wherever there is nothing merit of brightness there follows the demerit of darkness. The triple world there one stays too long is like a house on fire; all that has a body suffers, and who would ever know what is rest? Because the wise are thoroughly acquainted with this truth, they get neer attached to anything that becomes, their thoughts are quieted, they never seek. Says the sutra: 'Wherever there is seeking, there you have sufferings; when seeking ceases you are blessed. Thus we know that not to seek is verily the way to the truth. Therefore, one should not seek after anything." Bodhidharma taught about three Non-seeking practices or three doors of liberation: Emptiness, signlessness or to get rid of the idea of form, or externals. There are no objects to be perceived by sense-organs, one of the three emancipations, and wishlessness or to get rid of all wishes or desires until no wish of any kind whatsoever remains in the cultivator's mind, for he no longer needs to strive for anything, one of the three emancipations. Trully speaking, worldly phenomena are dharmas are illusory and dream-like, born and destroyed, destroyed and born. So what is there which is true ever-lasting and worth seeking? Furthermore, worldly phenomena are all relative, in calamities are found blessings, in blessings there is misfortune. Therefore, Buddhist cultivators should always keep their minds calm and undisturbed in all situations, rising or falling, unfortunate or blessed. For example, when a monk cultivates alone in a deserted hut with few visitors. Although his living conditions are miserable and lonely, his cultivation is diligent. After a while, virtuous people learn of his situation and come to offer and seek for his guidance, his used-to-be hut now become a huge magnificient temple, filled with monks and nuns. By then, his blessings may be great, his cultivation has not only obviously declined, sometimes external events may attract him to causing more bad karma. Therefore, Buddhist cultivators should always keep in mind these three Non-seeking practices. According to the Forty-Two Sections Sutra, "A Sramana asked the Buddha: 'What are the causes and conditions by which one come to know past lives and also by which one's understanding enables one to attain the Way?' The Buddha said: 'By purifying the mind and guarding the will, your understanding can achieve (attain) the Way.

Just as when you polish a mirror, the dust vanishes and brightness remains; so, too, if you cut off and do not seek desires, you can then know past lives."

The Second Robber Is Ill Will: Ill-will or anger is an emotional response to something that is inappropriate or unjust. If one does not obtain what one is greedy can lead to anger. Anger is an emotion involved in self-protection. However, according to Buddhist doctrines, anger manifests itself in a very crude manner, destroying the practitioner in a most effective way. The Buddha makes it very clear that with a heart filled with hatred and animosity, a man cannot understand and speak well. A man who nurtures displeasure and animosity cannot appease his hatred. Only with a mind delighted in harmlessness and with loving kindness towards all creatures in him hatred cannot be found. Ill-will or Hatred is one of the three poisons in Buddhism (greed, anger, ignorance). This is one of the three fires which burn in the mind until allowed to die for fuelling. Anger manifests itself in a very crude manner, destroying the practitioner in a most effective way. To subdue anger and resentment, we must develop a compassionate mind. According to Buddhist psychology, the mental factor of aversion is always linked to the experience of pain. One may be greedy and happy, but never angry and happy at the same time. Anyone who cultures hatred, anger, or malice, nurses revenge or keeps alive a grudge is bound to experience much suffering for he has laid hold a very potent source of it. Those who exercise their hatred on others as in killing, torturing or maiming may expect birth in a state, compared in the scriptural simile to a pitfull of glowing situations, where they will experience feelings which are exclusively painful, sharp, and severe. Only in such an environment will they be able to experience all the misery which they, by their own cruelty to others, have brought upon themselves. The Buddha taught: "Bandits who steal merits are of no comparison to hatred and anger. Because when hatred and anger arise, inevitable innumerable karma will be created. Immediately thereafter, hundreds and thousands of obstructions will appear, masking the proper teachings of enlightenment, burying and dimming the Buddha Nature. Therefore, a thought of hatred and anger had just barely risen, ten thousands of karmic doors will open immediately. It is to say with just one thought of hatred, one must

endure all such obstructions and obstacles." In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha's teachings, to subdue anger and resentment, we must develop a compassionate mind by meditating on loving kindness, pity and compassion. According to Buddhism, the basis of anger is usually fear for when we get angry, we feel we are not afraid any more, however, this is only a blind power. The energy of anger, if it's not so destructive, it may not be of any constructive. In fact, extreme anger could eventually lead us even to taking our own life. Thus, the Buddha taught: "When you are angry at someone, let step back and try to think about some of the positive qualities of that person. To be able to do this, your anger would be reduced by its own." A man was rowing his boat upstream on a very misty morning. Suddenly, he saw another boat coming downstream, not trying to avoid him. It was coming straight at him. He shouted, "Be careful!" but the boat came right into him, and his boat was almost sunk. The man became very angry, and began to shout at the other person, to give him a piece of his mind. But when he looked closely, he saw that there was no one in the other boat. Charlotte Joko Beck wrote in 'Nothing Special': "There's a killer shark in everybody. And the killer shark is unexperienced fear. Your way of covering it up is to look so nice and do so much and be so wonderful that nobody can possibly see who you really are, which is someone who is scared to death. As we uncover these layers of rage, it's important not to act out; we shouldn't inflict our rage on others. In genuine practice, our rage is simply a stage that passes. But for a time, we are more uncomfortable than when we started. That's inevitable; we're becoming more honest, and our false surface style is beginning to dissolve. The process doesn't go on forever, but it certainly can be most uncomfortable while it lasts. Occasionally we may explode, but that's better than evading or covering our reaction." Zen practitioners should always remember that hatred is one of the three fires which burn in the mind until allowed to die for fuelling. Anger is also one of the mula-klesa, or root causes of suffering. Anger manifests itself in a very crude manner, destroying the practitioner in a most effective way. To subdue anger and resentment, we must develop a compassionate mind. As in the case of lust or sense-desire, it is unwise or unsystematic attention that brings about ill-will, which when not checked propagates itself, saps the mind and clouds the vision. It distorts the entire mind and its

properties and thus hinders awakening to truth, and blocks the path to freedom. Lust and ill-will based on ignorance, not only hamper mental growth, but act as the root cause of strife and dissension between man and man and nation and nation. Besides, Zen practitioner should always pay close attention to your breathing because there is surely a so-called reciprocal character of mind and breathing (Prana), which means that a certain type of mind or mental activity is invariably accompanied by a breathing of corresponding character, whether transcendental or mundane. For instance, a particualr mood, feeling, or thought is always accompanied, manifested, or reflected by a breathing of corresponding character and rhythm. Thus, anger produces not merely an inflamed thought-feeling, but also a harsh and accentuated "roughness" of breathing. On the other hand, when there is a calm concentration on an intellectual problem, the thought and the breathing exhibit a like calmness.

The Buddha taught that in order to subdue anger and resentment, we must develop a compassionate mind by meditating on loving kindness, pity and compassion. To subdue anger and resentment, we must develop a compassionate mind. According to Buddhist psychology, the mental factor of aversion is always linked to the experience of pain. One may be greedy and happy, but never angry and happy at the same time. Anyone who cultures hatred, anger, or malice, nurses revenge or keeps alive a grudge is bound to experience much suffering for he has laid hold a very potent source of it. Those who exercise their hatred on others as in killing, torturing or maiming may expect birth in a state, compared in the scriptural simile to a pitfull of glowing situations, where they will experience feelings which are exclusively painful, sharp, and severe. Only in such an environment will they be able to experience all the misery which they, by their own cruelty to others, have brought upon themselves.

The Third Robber Is Delusion: According to Buddhism, ignorance means regarding the self as real. In a Buddhist sense, it refers to lack of understanding of the four noble truths (Arya-satya), the effects of actions (karma), dependent arising (pratitya-samutpada), and other key Buddhist doctrines. In other words, Avidya is noncognizance of the four noble truths, the three precious ones (triratna), and the law of karma, etc. Avidya is the first link of conditionality (pratityasampada), which

leads to entanglement of the world of samsara and the root of all unwholesome in the world. This is the primary factor that enmeshes (làm vướng víu) beings in the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.In Madhyamaka, "Avidya" refers to the determination of the mind through ideas and concepts that permit beings to construct an ideal world that confers upon the everyday world its forms and manifold quality, and that thus block vision of reality. "Avidya" is thus the nonrecognition of the true nature of the world, which is empty (shunyata), and the mistaken understanding of the nature of phenomena. Thus "avidya" has a double function: ignorance veils the true nature and also constructs the illusory appearance. "Avidya" characterizes the conventional reality. For the Sautrantikas and Vaibhashikas, "Avidya" means seeing the world as unitary and enduring, whereas in reality it is manifold and impermanent. "Avidya" confers substantiality on the world and its appearances. In the Yogachara's view, "avidya" means seeing the object as a unit independent of consciousness, when in reality it is identical with it. In Zen, ignorance is not seeing things as they really are. It is failing to understand the truth about life. As long as we have not developped our minds to obtain wisdom, we remain ignorant of the tru nature of things. In short, delusion or ignorance is not seeing things as they really are. It is failing to understand the truth about life. As long as we have not developped our minds to obtain wisdom, we remain ignorant of the tru nature of things. According to Buddhism, ignorance means regarding the self as real. Ignorance is the main cause of our non-enlightenment. Ignorance os only a false mark, so it is subject to production, extinction, increase, decrease, defilement, purity, and so on. Ignorance is the main cause of our birth, old age, worry, grief, misery, and sickness, and death. Ignorance of the way of escape from sufferings, one of the three affluences that feed the stream of mortality or transmigration. Sometimes ignorance means "Maya" or "Illusion." It means complete darkness without illumination. The ignorance which mistakes seeming for being, or illusory phenomena for realities. Ignorance is one of the three fires which must be allowed to die out before Nirvana is attained. The erroneous state of mind which arises from belief in self. Due to ignorance, people do not see things as they really are, and cannot distinguish between right and wrong. They become blind under the

delusion of self, clinging to things which are impermanent, changeable, and perishable. Once anger arises, one has nothing but "ignorance."

In order to eliminate "ignorance," you should meditate on causality. All of our psychological problems are rooted in ignorance, in delusion. Ignorance is the crowning corruption. Our greeds, hates, conceits and a host of other defilements go hand in hand with our ignorance. The solutions are to be found in the problems themselves and hence we should not run away from our problems. Analyze and scrutinize the problems, and you will see that they are human problems, so do not attribute them to non-humans. Our real problems can be solved only by giving up illusions and false concepts and bringing our lives into harmony with reality and this can be done only through meditation. Just as the Buddha described in His discourses how He would exclaim, "Mara! I see you." Zen practitioners should remember that the purpose of disciplined meditation practice is to eliminate ignorance, to open the essential nature of mind, and to stabilize awareness. Through meditation, we concentrate on things with an undistracted awareness. We are not thinking about anything, not analyzing, not getting lost in flux of things, but just seeing the nature of what is happening in the mind. Through practices of meditation, our mind becomes clearer and clearer; it is to say 'ignorance' is gradually eliminated through the course of meditation. If you think that your mind can only be opened by a certain master out there, you are never cultivating in accordance with Buddhism at all. If you think someone out there can eliminate ignorance for you, you are not a devout Buddhist.

The Fourth Robber Is Arrogance: Arrogance or Elevated Pride means arrogance or haughtiness. Arrogance and pride, a kind of klesa, one of the five higher bonds of desire. Pride is asserting superiority over inferiors and equality with equals. Looking down on others. Haughty people are self-aggrandized and boasting. They tend to bully their superiors and trample the inferior. They refuse to learn any more or listen to advice or explanations; and as a result, commit regretable errors. Pride is also the inflated opinion of ourselves and can manifest in relation to some good or bad object, one of the most considerable demonic obstructions on the practitioners' path of cultivation. When we look down from a high mountain, everyone below seems to have

shrunken in size. When we hold ourselves to be superior to others, and have an inflated opinion of ourselves, we take on a superior aspect. It is extremely difficult to develop any good qualities at all when one has pride, for no matter how much the teacher may teach that person, it will do no good. Haughtiness means false arrogance, thinking oneself correct in spite of one's wrong conduct, thinking oneself is good in spite of one's very bad in reality.

Buddhist practitioners should always remember that conceit and ingratitude belong to the eighth army of Mara. Conceit arises when practitioners begin to experience joy, rapture, delight, and other interesting things in practice. At this point they may wonder whether their teacher has actually attained this wondrous stage yet, whether other practitioners are practicing as hard as they are, and so forth. Conceit most often happens at the stage of insight when practitioners perceive the momentary arising and passing away of phenomena. It is a wonderful experience of being perfectly present, seeing how objects arise and pass away at the very moment when mindfulness alights on them. At this particular stage, a series of defilements can arise. They are specifically known as the "vipassana kilesas," defilements of insight. Since these defilements can become a harmful obstacle, it is important for practitioners to understand them clearly. The scriptures tell us that mana or conceit has the characteristic of bubbly energy, of a great zeal and enthusiasm arising in the mind. One overflows with energy and is filled with self-centered, self-glorifying thoughts like, "I'm so great, no one can compare with me." A prominent aspect of conceit is "stiffness and rigidity." One's mind feels stiff and bloated, like a python that has just swallowed some other creature. This aspect of mana is also reflected as tension in the body and posture. Its victims get big-headed and stiff-necked, and thus may find it difficult to bow respectfully to others. Conceit is really a fearsome mental state. It destroys gratitude, making it difficult to acknowledge that one owes any kind of debt to another person. Forgetting the good deeds other have done for us in the past, one belittles them and denigrates their virtues. Not only that, but one also actively conceals the virtues of others so that no one will hold them in esteem. All of us have had benefactors in our lives, especially in childhood and younger days. Our parents, for example, gave us love, education and necessities of life at

a time when we were helpless. Our teachers gave us knowledge. Friends helped us when we got into trouble. Remembering our debts to those who have helped us, we feel humble and grateful, and we hope for a chance to help them in turn. The Buddha taught: there are two types of rare and precious people in the world. The first types is a benefactor, one who is benevolent and kind, who helps another person for noble reasons, sparing no effort to help beings liberate themselves from the sufferings of samsara. The second type is the one who is grateful, who appreciates the good that has been done for him or her, and who tries to repay it when the time is ripe."

Arrogance is generated by one's feeling of inferiority, while pride, haughtiness, and arrogance are born from a false sense of superiority. These kinds of pride and arrogance are caused by looking at things from a distorted, self-centered point of view. Those who have truly understood the Buddha's teachings and been able to obtain a right view of things will never succumb to such warped thinking. *There are four different kinds of arrogance: The first kind of pride* is the arrogance in progress and the delusion that one has attained Nirvana. This is one of the ten stages or objects in meditation. *The second kind of pride* is the self-superiority, or self-sufficiency, or the pride of self. *The third kind of pride* is the exalting self and depreciating others, or the self-intoxication or pride of self. *The fourth kind of pride* is the ego-conceit or the egotism. *According to the Kosa Sastra, there are seven pretensions or arrogances: First,* asserting superiority over inferiors and equality with equals. *Second,* the pride which among equals regards self as superior and among superiors as equal (superiority over equals and equality with superiors). *Third,* superiority over manifest superiors. *Fourth,* egotism or overweening pride. *Fifth,* vaunting assertion of possessing the truth. self-conceit, or high opinion of one's self, or haughtiness. Haughtiness means vaunting assertion of possessing the truth. Pride (of superior knowledge), haughtiness, self-conceit, high opinion of one's self. A monk who thinks to have attained more than is the fact. A Supremely (lofty/haughty) arrogant monk who has high opinion of one's self (self-conceit/self pride/haughtiness) and refuses to hear the Buddha's Teachings, one of the seven arrogances. When the Buddha preached about the Lotus Sutra, there were 5,000 disciples who, in their Hinayana superiority, thought they had gained

all wisdom and refused to hear the Lotus sutra. *Sixth,* vaunting one's inferiority or flase humility. The pride of regarding self as little inferior to those who far surpass one. *Seventh,* vaunting lack of virtue for virtue. The Pride in false views or doings. This is one of the eight kinds of pride, mana, arrogance or self-conceit. To hold to heterodox views and not to reverence Triratna. False views laso means perverse or evil pride or doing evil for self-advancement, vaunting lack of virtue for virtue.

There are also eight kinds of pride or arrogance: First, arrogance because of strength. *Second,* pride because of clan or name. *Third,* arrogance because of wealth. *Fourth,* arrogance because of independence or high position. *Fifth,* pride because of years of age. *Sixth,* arrogance because of cleverness. *Seventh,* pride because of good or charitable deeds. *Eighth,* arrogance because of good looks. *According to the Mahayana Buddhism, there are other eight kinds of arrogance: First,* though inferior, to think oneself equal to others (in religion). *Second,* thought superior, to think oneself superior among manifest superiors. *Third,* to think oneself not so much inferior among manifest superiors. *Fourth,* to think one has attained more than is the fact. *Fifth,* self-superiority, or self-sufficiency. *Sixth,* pride in false views or doings. *Seventh,* arrogance. *Eighth,* extreme arrogance. *According to Abhidharma, there are nine forms of pride: First,* that I surpass those who are equal to me. *Second,* I am equal to those who surpass me. The pride of thinking oneself equal to those who surpass us. *Third,* that I am not so bad as others. *Fourth,* that others surpass me. *Fifth,* none are equal to me. *Sixth,* none are inferior to me. *Seventh,* none surpass me. *Eighth,* that are equal to me. *Ninth,* that are worse than me. *According to the Flower Adornment Sutra, Chapter 38, there are ten kinds of conceited action of Great Enlightening Beings:* Enlightening Beings who can get rid of these ten kinds of conceited action will attain ten kinds of actions of knowledge. *First,* not respecting teachers, parents, mendicants, people on the right Path, people aiming for the right Path, or honorable fields of blessings, is conceited action. *Second,* if there are teachers who have attained to supreme truth, who ride the Great Vehicle of universal enlightenment, who know the way to emancipation, who have attained mental command and expound the great principles of the scriptures, to be

haughty toward them or their teachings and to be disrespectful is conceited action. *Third,* when in an audience hearing the sublime Teaching expounded, to be unwilling to laud its excellence and cause others to believe and accept it, is conceited action. *The fourth conceited action:* habitually conceiving the illusion of superiority, elevating onself and looking down on others, not seeing one's own faults, and not knowing one's own shortcoming. *The fifth conceited action:* habitually imagining that one is better than those who are better than onself; not praising virtuous people who are praiseworthy; not being happy when others praise virtuous people. *Sixth,* when seeing someone preach, in spite of knowing it is the norm, the rule, the truth, the word of Buddha, to despise the teaching because of disliking the person, to slander it and incite others to slander it, is conceited action. *The seventh conceited action:* seeking a high seat for oneself; edeclaring onself to a teacher; declaring onself to be worthy of receiving offerings; not supposed to work; failing to rise to greet old people who have cultivated spiritual practice for a long time; being unwilling to serve and make offerings to enlightening beings. *Eighth,* frowning unhappily on seeing people with virtue, speaking to them harshly and looking for faults in them, is conceited action. *The ninth conceited action:* When seeing intelligent people who know the truth, not being willing to approach and attend them, not respecting and honoring them, being unwilling to ask them what is good and what is not good, what should be done and what should not be done, what acts result in various benefits and comforts in the long night, being foolish and deluded, stubborn and contentious, swallow by self-importance, never able to see the way of emancipation. *The tenth conceited action:* minds shrouded by conceit; when Buddhas appear in the world are unable to approach, respect, and honor them; no new good arises, and goodness from the past evaporates and vanishes; they say what they should not; they contend where they should not; in the future they will surely fall into a deep pit of danger and; will not even encounter Buddha; much less hearing the Teaching for hundreds of thousands of eons; though because of having once conceived the aspiration for enlightenment they will in the end wake up on their own.

Besides, pride has many different kinds including: *First,* the pride of thinking onself is superior to others. *Second,* the Pride in progress

and the delusion that one has attained Nirvana. This is one of the ten stages or objects in meditation. *Third,* the Pride as a banner rearing itself aloft. *Fourth,* the Pride because of clan or name. This is one of the eight kinds of pride or arrogance. *Fifth,* the Pride because of good or charitable deeds. This is one of the eight kinds of pride or arrogance. *Sixth,* the Pride because of years of age. This is one of the eight kinds of pride or arrogance. *Seventh,* the Pride in false views or doings, one of the eight kinds of pride, mana, arrogance, or self-conceit. Doing evil for self-advancement, vaunting lack of virtue for virtue. *Eighth,* the Pride of regarding self as little inferior to those who far surpass one. Vaunting one's inferiority or flase humility. *Ninth,* the Pride of regarding self as little inferior to those who far surpass one. Pride of thinking oneself is not much inferior to those who surpass us. The pride of regarding self as little inferior to those who far surpass one. This is one of the seven kinds of pride. The pride of thinking myself not much inferior to those who far surpass me, one of the nine kinds of pride. *Tenth,* the Pride of self, or the pride of self-superiority. It is to say exalting self and depreciating others, or self-intoxication or pride of self, or the ego-conceit (egotism). *Eleventh,* the Pride of thinking oneself is equal to those who surpass us. The pride which among superiors regards self as equal, one of the seven arrogances. The pride of thinking oneself equal to those who surpass us, this is also one of the nine kinds of pride. *Twelfth,* the Pride of thinking oneself is superior to equals. The pride which among equals regards self as superior, one of the seven arrogances. The pride which among equals regards self as superior and among superiors as equal. Superiority over equals and equality with superiors.

Pride is the inflated opinion of ourselves and can manifest in relation to some good or bad object. When we look down from a high mountain, everyone below seems to have shrunken in size. When we hold ourselves to be superior to others, and have an inflated opinion of ourselves, we take on a superior aspect. It is extremely difficult to develop any good qualities at all when one has pride, for no matter how much the teacher may teach that person, it will do no good. Haughtiness means false arrogance, thinking oneself correct in spite of one's wrong conduct, thinking oneself is good in spite of one's very bad in reality. Haughtiness also means arrogance and conceit due to one's

illusion of having completely understood what one has hardly comprehended at all. Haughtiness is one of the main hindrances in our cultivation. In cultivating the Way, we must have genuine wisdom. Those who have genuine wisdom never praise themselves and disparage others. These people never consider themselves the purest and loftiest, and other people common and lowly. Once, we, Buddhist practitioners, get rid of pride and arrogance also means that we have already pushed away one of the great obstacles on our own path of cultivation. In Buddhism, those who praise themselve have no future in their cultivation of the Way. Even though they are still alive, they can be considered as dead, for they have gone against their own conscience and integrity.

The Fifth Robber Is Doubt: Doubt signifies spiritual doubt, from a Buddhist perspective the inability to place confidence in the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha, and the training; doubt if there really is a so called "you reap what you sow", and so on. Doubt is one of the five hindrances one must eliminate on entering the stream of saints. Doubt, as wavering uncertainty, a hindrance and fetter to be removed, one of the mula-klesa, or root causes of suffering. Skepticism, one of the five hindrances one must eliminate on entering the stream of saints. Vichikiccha is a Pali term, a combination of "vi", means without; and "cikiccha" means medicine. One who suffers from perplexity is really suffering from a dire disease, and unless he sheds his doubts, he will continue to worry over and suffer from this illness. In fact, one who suffers from perplexity is really suffering from a dire disease, and unless he sheds his doubts, he will continue to worry over and suffer from this illness. As long as man is subject to this mental itch, this sitting on the fence, he will continue to take a skeptical view of things which is most detrimental to mental ability to decide anything definitely; it also includes doubt with regard to the possibility of attaining the jhanas.

According to Buddhism, there are three doubts: Doubt of self, doubt of teacher, and doubt of dharma. According to Venerable Thích Hải Quang in the Letters to Buddhist Followers, there are four types of doubts: *First, Doubts of the Body:* Doubting that whether in the past one had a body or not? Doubting that whether at the present this body really exists or not? Doubting that whether in the future one will have

another body or not (one will be reincarnated or not)? Doubting that in the past and in the future, whether one will have a male's or female's body? *Second, Doubts of Life:* Doubting that whether there is life and body or there is body but no life? Doubting that life and body are permanent or impermanent? Doubting about who created this life and body, such as: Was it created by Isvaradeva (God of Free-Will)? Was it created through time or evolution? Was it naturally created? Was it created by the nature of life? Was it created from the soil? Doubting that if the body was not formed from the soil, then how come once it deteriorates it returns to the soil? Doubting that the body was created by dharma or not dharma. Doubting that this body was created by karma or not karma. Doubting that this body was created by afflictions. Doubting that whether this body was created by parents or not. *Third, Doubts of Self:* Doubting where does the Self come from and where will it go? Doubting if there is a Self, then does that Self have form or doesn't have form? Doubting if there is Self, then does that Self have characteristics or doesn't it have characteristics? Doubting whether the Self exists within the body or outside the body? Doubting whether the Self exists within the mind or within the eyes? Doubting about what type of the Self in the past (was it an animal, a human, and how did it behave, etc)? Doubting about what will be the type of the Self in the future? *Fourth, Doubts about Transgressions:* Doubting if killing living things (animals) is considered transgressions or not? Doubting if drinking alcohol or other substances is considered a transgression or not? Doubting one's transgressions are created by the individual or created by someone else? Doubting if transgressions are created will one reap the retribution or will the Self reap those retributions?

According to Buddhism, there are five doubts that lurk in the shadows of the human mind and tend to discourage faith. First, doubt in the Buddha's wisdom. Second, doubt in the Buddha's Teachings. Third, doubt in the person who explains the Buddha's teachings. Fourth, doubt as to whether the ways and methods suggested for following the Noble Path are reliable. Fifth, there are some people, may doubt in the sincerity of others who understand and follow the Buddha's teachings. There are five more kinds of doubt: Doubts that cause the practitioner to be filled with anger and resistance, but also cause his or her mind become deluded. There are five kinds of doubt that lead to a deluded

mind: The first doubt is regarding the Buddha, the great master who showed the path to enlightenment. The second doubt is regarding the Dharma, the path that leads to liberation. The third doubt is regarding the Sangha, the noble ones who have uprooted some or all of the afflictions. The fourth is the doubt of oneself, of one's own morality and method of practice. The last is the doubt of other people, including one's master and other fellow practitioners.

As mentioned above, doubt signifies spiritual doubt, from a Buddhist perspective the inability to place confidence in the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha, and the training. Bernard Glassman and Rick Fields wrote in 'Instructions to the Cook': "Doubt is a state of openness and unknowing. It's a willingness to not be in charge, to not know what is going to happen next. The state of doubt allows us to explore things in an open and fresh way. Like water, doubt is fluid. It had no fixed position. If you pour water into a round container, it becomes round, and if you pour water into a square container, it becomes square. In the same way, doubt or unknowing flows in accordance with the situation. It's the state of surrender, of being open to what is. Only when we raise sufficient doubt and questioning can we go further. Our problem with doubt is that we take it to be a negative thing. We think that because we don't understand or because we are not sure, there is something wrong. When we get caught by the negative aspects of doubt, we wallow in self-pity. 'How come I can't see it?' we say. But this doubt can be positive. Positive doubt can allow us to see what this life is about. It can help us get rid of our complacency." Doubting is natural. Everyone starts with doubts. We can learn a great deal from them. What is important is that we do not identify with our doubts. That is, do not get caught up in them, letting our mind spin in endless circles. Instead, watch the whole process of doubting, of wondering. See who it is that doubts. See how doubts come and go. Then we will no longer be victimized by our doubts. We will step outside of them, and our mind will be quiet. We can see how all things come and go. Let go of our doubts and simply watch. This is how to end doubting.

The Sixth Robber Is Wrong View: Improper views or Wrong views in Buddhism means not recognizing the doctrine of normal karma. Perverted (wrong) views or opinions, not consistent with the dharma, one of the five heterodox opinions and ten evils. In fact, there is no

specific definition for the term “wrong views” (micchaditthi) in Buddhism. During the Buddha’s time, the Buddha confirmed his disciples that even the validity of the Buddha’s own statements could be questioned.” The Buddha claimed no authority for his doctrine except his own experience. Perverted (wrong) views or opinions arises from a misconception of the real characteristic of existence. There were at least sixty-two heretical views (views of the externalist or non-Buddhist views) in the Buddha’s time. Buddhism emphasizes on theory of causation. Understanding the theory of causation means to solve most of the question of the causes of sufferings and afflictions. Not understanding or refuse of understanding of the theory of causation means a kind of wrong view in Buddhism. According to the Buddha, sentient beings suffer from sufferings and afflictions because of dersires, aversions, and delusion, and the causes of these harmful actions are not only from ignorance, but also from wrong views. Wrong views according to Hinayana Buddhism: “Wrong view is the acausality view, which states that there is no cause or condition for the defilement and purification of beings, that beings are defiled and purified by chance, or necessity. The inefficacy of action view, which claims that deeds have no efficacy in producing results and thus invalidates moral distinctions. Annihilism, which denies the survival of the personality in any form after death, thus negating the moral significance of deed. Also, according to the Hinayana Buddhism, there are another ten kinds of wrong views: There is no such virtue and generosity. This means that there is no good effect in giving alms: There is no such virtue as liberal alms-giving: There is no such virtue as offering gifts to guests. This means there is no effetc in such charitable actions. There is neither fruit, nor result of good or evil deeds. There is no such belief as “this world.” There is no such belief as “a world beyond,” i.e. those born here do not accept a past existence, and those living here do not accept future life. There is no “mother.” There is no father, i.e. there is no effect in anything done to them. There are no beings that died and are reborn. There are no righteous and well-disciplined recluses and Brahmins who, having realized by their own super-intellect this world and the world beyond, make known the same (Buddhas and Arahants). According to Bhikkhu Bodhi in Abhidhamma, there are three kinds of wrong views: Nihilism (natthika-ditthi), which denies the survival of

the personality in any form after death, thus negating the moral significance of deeds. The causality view (ahetuka-ditthi), which states that there is no cause or condition for the defilement and purification of beings, that beings are defiled and purified by chance, fate, or necessity. The inefficacy of action view (akiriya-ditthi), which claims that deeds have no efficacy in producing results and thus invalidates moral distinctions. In Buddhism, perverted views also means holding to the real existence of material things or viewing the seeming as real and the ego as real, or not recognizing the doctrine of causality and karma. Perverted (wrong) views or opinions, not consistent with the dharma, one of the five heterodox opinions and ten evils. “Wrong views” are attitudes and doctrines that are antithetical to the teachings and practices of Buddhism. In Indian Buddhism, seven false views are commonly enumerated: 1) belief in a truly existent self (atman); 2) rejection of the working of cause and effect (karma); 3) eternalism or belief that there is a soul that exists after death; 4) annihilationism or belief that the soul persishes after death; 5) adherence to false ethics; 6) perceiving negative actions as good; and 7) doubt regarding the central tenets of Buddhism. There were at least sixty-two heretical views (views of the externalist or non-Buddhist views) in the Buddha’s time. Practitioners should always remember that only Right understanding alone can help remove these inverted wrong views and helps us to cognize the real nature that underlies all appearance. It is only when we come out of this cloud of illusions and perversions that we shine with true wisdom like the full moon that emerges brilliant from behind a black cloud.

Through cultivation, we can see that holding wrong views involves vigorously and hostilely denying the existence of such things as past and future lives, the possibility of attaining Nirvana. Wrong views mean the false belief that the skandhas, or constituents of personality, contain an immortal soul. False view also means seeing wrongly. Wrong views also mean denying a substantial reality to the phenomenal universe and holding to the view of total annihilation, or the view that death ends life, or world-extinction and the end of causation, in contrast with the view that body and soul are eternal, both views being heterodox. Its characteristic is unwise or unjustified interpretation or belief. Its function is to preassume. It is manifested as

a wrong interpretation or belief. Its proximate cause is unwillingness to see the noble ones. Holding wrong views in Buddhism involves vigorously and hostilely denying the existence of such things as past and future lives, the possibility of attaining nirvana, the existence of the Buddhas, Dharma and Sangha. Doubt about these subjects does not constitute wrong views; however, if we neglect to resolve our doubts by asking questions and investigating these issues, we could later generate wrong views by believing in deceptive doctrines. As a matter of fact, unless Buddhist practitioners see the real nature of wrong views, if not, we can never let them go. Practitioners should always listen to the Buddha's teachings on wrong views to prevent us from sufferings and afflictions on our path of cultivation. However, we never lose wrong views by saying it has to go, only cultivation and practicing can help us see that we the real nature of wrong views. Through cultivation, we will have the opportunity to destroy the veil of ignorance to see that there have been many things that we used to stubbornly held in the past are wrong. For wrong views could not help us nothing, but on the contrary, they caused us to derail farther and farther from the Buddha's teachings. Buddhist cultivators should always remember that unless we, Buddhist practitioners, see the real nature of wrong views, if not, we can never let them go. In short, we, Buddhist practitioners should try to see the real nature of all wrong views. To be able to do this also means we push away great obstacles on our own path of cultivation. This is one of the most wonderful methods of letting go for practitioners.

The Seventh Robber Is Killing: Killing is one of the ten kinds of evil karma, to kill living beings, to take life, kill the living, or any conscious being. In other words, killing is intentionally taking the life of any being, any living beings or conscious beings, including animals. The advice of not killing challenges us to think creatively of alternate means to resolve conflict besides violence. In Buddhism, killing is considered to be demonic obstructions for Buddhist practitioners. So the Buddha established the five basic prohibitions binding on all Buddhists, monks and laymen alike; however, these are especially for lay disciples. The observance of these five precepts can help prevent evil thoughts, evil speech as well as evil actions and ensure rebirth in the human realm. Not to take life or not to kill or injure any living

being means refraining from taking life. This is the first of the five commandments. Pranatipata-viratih also means not to have any intention to kill any living being; this includes animals, for they feel pain just as human do. On the contrary, one must lay respect and save lives of all sentient beings. The Buddha always taught in his sutras: "The greatest sin is killing; the highest merit is to save sentient lives." According to The Buddha and His Teaching, written by Most Venerable Narada, killing means the intentional destruction of any living being. The Pali term pana strictly means the psycho-physical life pertaining to one's particular existence. The wanton destruction of this life-force, without allowing it to run its due course, is panatipata. Pana also means that which breathes. Hence all animate beings, including animals, are regarded as pana. However, plants are not considered as "living beings" as they possess no mind. Monks and nuns, however, are forbidden to destroy even plant life. This rule, it may be mentioned, does not apply to lay-followers. Five conditions that are necessary to complete the evil of killing: a living being, knowledge that it is a living being, intention of killing, effort to kill, and consequent death (cause the death of that being). The gravity of the evil deed of killing depends on the goodness and the magnitude of the being concerned. If the killing of a virtuous person or a big animal is regarded as more heinous than the killing of a vicious person or a small animal, because a greater effort is needed to commit the evil and the loss involved is considerably great. The evil effetcs of killing include brevity of life, ill-health, constant grief due to the separation from the loved one, and constant fear.

The Buddha always taught in his sutras: "The greatest sin is killing; the highest merit is to save sentient lives. Life is dear to all." In fact, all beings fear death and value life, we should therefore respect life and not kill anything. This precept forbids not only killing people but also any creature, especially if it is for money or sport. We should have an attitude of loving-kindness towards all beings, wishing them to be always happy and free. Caring for the Earth, not polluting its rivers and air, not destroying its forests, etc, are also included in this precept. Killing is one of the four grave prohibitions or sins in Buddhism. Killing is intentionally taking the life of any being, including animals. The advice of not killing challenges us to think creatively of alternate

means to resolve conflict besides violence. Refraining from taking life. According to the Buddhist laws, the taking of human life offends against the major commands, of animal life against the less stringent commands. Suicide also leads to severe penalties in the next lives. According to Most Venerable Dhammananda in the Gems of Buddhism Wisdom, the prohibition against the taking of any life applies not only to humanity but also to creatures of every kind, both big and small; black ants as well as red ants. Each day a vast number of animals are slaughtered as food, for most people eat meat, while vegeterians are not common. In the field of science, animals are used in many researches and experiments. In the administrative field, arms are used in crime suppression. Law enforcement agencies punish law breakers. Belligerents at war use arms to destroy one another. The actions cited here as examples are not regarded as illegal or as running counter to normal worldly practice. Indeed, it may even be considered wrong to abstain from them, as is the case when constables or soldiers fail in their police or military duties. Nowadays many kinds of animals are known to be carriers of microbes and, thanks to the microscope, germs and many sorts of microbes have been detected. Almost everything contains them, even drinking water. Only the larger impurities are caught by filter; microbes can pass through. So, infinite microbes pass into our throats with each draught of water. It is the same medicines. Whenever they are used, either externally or internally, they destroy myriads of microbes. Are these microbes to be considered as living beings in the sense of the first sila or are they not? If so, perhaps no one can fully comply with it. Besides, some are of the opinion that people who refrain from taking the life of animals should also refrain from eating meat, because it amounts to encouraging slaughter and is no less sinful according to them.

We are living in an imperfect world where the strong prey on the weak; big animals prey on small animals, and killing is spreading everywhere. Even in the animal world, we can see a tiger would feed on a deer, a snake on a frog, a frog on other small insects, or a big fish on a small fish, and so on. Let us take a look at the human world, we kill animals, and sometimes we kill one another for power. Thus, the Buddha set the first rule for his disciples, “not to kill.” Not to kill the living, the first of the Ten Commandments. Not to kill will help us

become kind and full of pity. This is the first Buddhist precept, binding upon clergy and laity, not to kill and this includes not to kill, not to ask other people to kill, not to be joyful seeing killing, not to think of killing at any time, not to kill oneself (commit suicide), not to praise killing or death by saying "it's better death for someone than life." Not to kill is also including not to slaughtering animals for food because by doing this, you do not only cut short the lives of other beings, but you also cause pain and suffering for them. "Not to Take Life" is one of the first eight of the Ten Commandments which the Buddha set forth for lay Buddhists to observe 24 hours every fornight. If we truly believe that all sentient beings are the Buddhas of the future, we would never think of killing or harming them in any way. Rather, we would have feelings of loving-kindness and compassion toward all of them, without exception. Buddhists do not take life out of the pity of others. Besides, not to kill will help us become kind and full of pity. Devout Buddhists should always remember the Buddha's teachings, not only not to kill, not only do we respect life, we also cherish it. Abstain from killing and to extend compassion to all beings does not entail any restriction. All beings, in Buddhism, implies to all living creatures, or all that breathe. It is an admitted fact that all that live, human or animal, love life and hate death. As life is precious to all, their one aim is to preserve it from harm and prolong it. This implies even to the smallest creatures that are conscious of being alive. According to the Dhammapada (131), "Whoever in his search for happiness harasses those who are fond of happiness will not be happy in the hereafter." The happiness of all creatures depends on their being alive. So, to deprive them of that which contains all good for them, is cruel and heartless in the extreme. Thus, not to harm and kill others is one of the most important virtues of a Buddhist. Those who develop the habit of being cruel to animal are quite capable of ill-treating people as well when the opportunity comes. When a cruel thought gradually develops into an obsession it may well lead to sadism. Those who kill suffer often in this life. After this life, the karma of their ruthless deeds will for long force them into states of woe. On the contrary, those who show pity towards others and refrain from killing will be born in good states of existence, and if reborn as humans, will be endowed with health, beauty, riches, influences, and intelligence, and so forth.

The Buddha said: “Life is dear to all.” In fact, all beings fear death and value life, we should therefore respect life and not kill anything. This precept forbids not only killing people but also any creature, especially if it is for money or sport. We should have an attitude of loving-kindness towards all beings, wishing them to be always happy and free. Caring for the Earth, not polluting its rivers and air, not destroying its forests, etc, are also included in this precept. To Buddhists, especially, lay people, staying away from the demonic obstructions of lying will help us with the followings: Help make our life have more quality; help us obtain dignity and respect from others; help make us a good member of the family, a good father or mother, a filial child; help make us good citizens of the society.

Thus, the rule of not to kill living beings is the top rule in Buddhist precepts. Not to kill will help us become kind and full of pity. This is the first Buddhist precept, binding upon clergy and laity, not to kill and this includes not to kill, not to ask other people to kill, not to be joyful seeing killing, not to think of killing at any time, not to kill oneself (commit suicide), not to praise killing or death by saying “it’s better death for someone than life.” Not to kill is also including not to slaughtering animals for food because by doing this, you do not only cut short the lives of other beings, but you also cause pain and suffering for them. According to Zen Master Philip Kapleau in Awakening to Zen: "Sometimes you see people mash a mosquito that has bitten them. I am reminded of the biblical exhortation to take an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The same people who speak of such Old Testament morality as archaic in its severity don't hesitate to kill a mosquito that merely stings them. That's surely an unjust exchange! Yet the biblical injunction itself may have more in common with the first precept that one might first think. It meant that even in one's grief or anger, one had to be careful and appropriate, taking no more than 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.' It was a way of limiting violence and not an exhortation to it. Yet now often we thoughtlessly kill insects or other small animals, such as squirrels, that merely annoy us! As we know, life is not inviolable. Something often has to die in order for another thing to live. But where it is necessary to take life for a greater good, then doing it with a feeling of contrition lessens the karmic consequences. As your Zen practice deepens, you feel a greater

closeness to all forms of life: when a mosquito alights on the hand, you'll simply blow it off, and similarly with ants and other insects. You will not kill them." Helen Tworkov wrote in Zen In America, writing on the first precept, 'No Killing,' Robert Aitken recalls "that someone once asked Alan Watts why he was a vegetarian. He said, 'Because cows scream louder than carrots.' This reply may serve as a guidance. Some people will refuse to eat red meat. Some people will not drink milk. Some people will eat what is served to them, but will limit their own purchase of animal products..." Aitken, who generally maintains a vegetarian diet, has said that if he goes to a dinner party and is served meat, he will eat it because "the cow is dead and the hostess is not."

The Eighth Robber Is Stealing: Stealing means taking possession of anything that has not been given by its owner or stealing, is also wrong, even legally speaking. Stealing, one of the four grave prohibitions or sins in Buddhism. Stealing is taking what isn't given to us. It includes not paying taxes or fees that are due, borrowing things and not returning them, and taking things from our workplace for our own personal use. According to Buddhism, there are five conditions that are necessary for the completion of the evil of stealing: First, another's property. Second, knowledge that it is so. Third, intention of stealing. Fourth, effort to steal. Fifth, actual removal. The consequences of stealing: Poverty, misery, disappointment, and dependent livelihood. Besides the consequences of stealing, Buddhist practitioners should always remember that stealing is considered to be demonic obstructions for Buddhist practitioners. A Bhiksu or Bhiksuni who steals or violates the property of another, whether the property is privately or publicly owned, breaks the second of the Four Degradation Offences. He or she is no longer worthy to remain a Bhiksu or Bhiksuni and cannot participate in the activities of the Order of Bhiksus or Order of Bhiksunis. In Buddhist teachings, not to take anything which does not belong to you or what is not given to you. Refraining from taking what is not given. Adattadana-viratih means not directly or indirectly taking other's belongings. On the contrary, one should give things, not only to human beings, but also to animals. The Buddha always taught in his sutras "desire brings great misfortune; giving brings great fortune." Not to steal or no stealing is the second of the ten

commandments. Not to steal because we have no right to take what is not given. Not to steal will help us become honest.

So, the Buddha established the five basic prohibitions binding on all Buddhists, monks and laymen alike; however, these are especially for lay disciples. The observance of these five precepts can help prevent evil thoughts, evil speech as well as evil actions and ensure rebirth in the human realm. Among them, there exists the precept of not stealing. Taking possession of anything that has not been given by its owner or stealing, is also wrong, even legally speaking. Refraining from taking what is not given. Adattadana-viratih means not directly or indirectly taking other's belongings. On the contrary, one should give things, not only to human beings, but also to animals. The Buddha always taught in his sutras "desire brings great misfortune; giving brings great fortune." We all have the same right to own things and give them away as we wish. However, we should not take things that do not belong to us by stealing or cheating. Instead, we should learn to give to help others, and always take good care of the things that we use, whether they belong to us or to the public. In a broader sense, this precept means being responsible. If we are lazy and neglect our studies or work, we are said to be "stealing time" of our own. This precept also encourages us to be generous. Buddhists give to the poor and the sick and make offerings to monks and nuns to practice being good. Buddhists are usually generous to their parents, teachers and friends to show gratitude for their advice, guidance and kindness. Buddhists also offer sympathy and encouragement to those who feel hurt or discouraged. Helping people by telling them about the Dharma is considered to be the highest form of giving. Six ways of stealing which lead to a Parajaka offense (major offense for a Bodhisattva): Stealing committed by oneself, to encourage others to steal, to steal by expedient means, to praise stealing, to rejoice at witnessing stealing, and to steal through incantation or deviant mantras. To Buddhists, especially, lay people, staying away from the demonic obstructions of stealing will help us with the followings: Help make our life have more quality; help us obtain dignity and respect from others; help make us a good member of the family, a good father or mother, a filial child; help make us good citizens of the society. Thus, the Buddha placed the precept of not stealing in the second rank out of the five basic precepts

(not killing, not stealing, not lying, not committing sexual misconduct, not drinking alcohol or taking toxicants). Not to steal because we have no right to take what is not given. Not to steal will help us become honest. Abstain from stealing and to live honestly, taking only what is one's own by right. To take what belongs to another is not so serious as to deprive him of his life, but it is still a grave crime because it deprives him of some happiness. As no one wants to be robbed, it is not difficult to understand that it is wrong to take what is not one's own. The thought that urges a person to steal can never be good or wholesome. Then robbery leads to violence and even to murder.

The Ninth Robber Is Lewd: Lewd or sexual misconduct, fornication, or adultery, the third commandment of the five basic commandments for lay people, and the third precept of the ten major precepts for monks and nuns in the Brahma Net Sutra. Monks or nuns who commit this offence will be expelled from the Order forever. Four conditions that are necessary to complete the evil of sexual misconduct: the thought to enjoy, consequent effort, means to gratify, and gratification. According to The Buddha and His Teachings, written by Most Venerable Narada, these are the inevitable consequences of Kamesu-micchacara: Having many enemies, having an undesirable wives and husbands (spouses), and birth as a woman or as a eunuch (thái giám). Lust grows into a habit because of sexual intercourse in which two people caress each other thereby producing heat that in turn stimulates desire. This is like the heat caused by rubbing the hands together. Adultery results in the iron bed, the copper pillar, and the eight hot hells (the bed stands for sexual desire and the pillar for the partner on whom the sinner depends to stimulate his sexual appetite). The Buddha taught: "Habits of lust and reciprocal interactions which give rise to mutual rubbing. When this rubbing continues without cease, it produces a tremendous raging fire within which movement occurs, just as warmth arises between a person's hands when he rubs them together. Because these two habits set each other ablaze, there come into being the iron bed, the copper pillar, and other such experiences. Therefore, Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon the practice of lust and name it the 'fire of desire.' Bodhisattvas avoid desire as they would a fiery pit." At the time of the Buddha, there was a man who had the habit of committing adultery. Even though he had

been arrested a number of times for his misconduct, he did not change his ways. In desperation, his father brought him to the Buddha for advice. The Buddha pointed out that a person who indulges in sexual misconduct creates problems and suffering for himself as well as others. He not only squanders his money and loses his reputation but also creates enemies for himself. These are serious consequences often result from sexual misconduct, but they are usually overlooked at the time when it is being committed. Not to engage in improper sexual conduct. Against lust, not to commit adultery, to abstain from all sexual excess, or refraining from sexual misconduct. This includes not having sexual intercourse with another's husband or wife, or being irresponsible in sexual relationship. Adultery is wrong. Laypeople should be responsible in sexual matters. If we do not have the great opportunity to renounce the world to become monks and nuns to cultivate obtain liberation, we should keep a good relationship between husband and wife, we should be considerate, loving and faithful to each other, then our family will be happy, and our society will be better. One who commits it does not command respect nor does one inspire confidence. Sexual misconduct involving person with whom conjugal relations should be avoided to custom, or those who are prohibited by law, or by the Dharma, is also wrong. So is coercing by physical or even financial means a married or even unmarried person into consenting to such conduct. The purpose of this third sila is to preserve the respectability of the family of each person concerned and to safeguard its sanctity and inviolability. According to The Path of Purification, "Bad Ways" is a term for doing what ought not to be done and not doing what ought to be done, out of desire, hate, delusion, and fear. They are called "bad ways" because they are ways not to be travel by Noble Ones. Adultery is mentioned in Buddhist texts as one of a number of forms of similar sexual misconduct. For monks or nuns who only think about or wish to commit sexual intercourse with any people (not wait until physically commiting sexual intercourse) are guilty and violate the Vinaya commandments and must be excommunicated from the Order. For laypeople, thinking or wishing to make love or physically making love with those who are not their husband or wife is forbidden. Avoiding the misuse of sex is respect for people and personal relationships. Much unhappiness arises from the

misuse of sex and from living in irresponsible ways. Many families have been broken as a result, and many children have been victims of sexual abuse. For all lay Buddhists, the happiness of others is also the happiness of ourselves, so sex should be used in a caring and loving manner, not in a craving of worldly flesh. When observing this precept, sexual desire should be controlled, and husbands and wives should be faithful towards each other. This will help to create peace in the family. In a happy family, the husband-and-wife respect, trust and love each other. With happy families, the world would be a better place for us to live in. Young Buddhists should keep their minds and bodies pure to develop their goodness. Devout Buddhists should not commit sexual misconduct (to have unchaste) because first, we don't want to be a bad person in the society; second, not to have unchaste will help us become pure and good. Not to commit sexual misconduct is the third commandment of the five basic commandments for lay people, and the third precept of the ten major precepts for monks and nuns in the Brahma Net Sutra. Monks or nuns who commit this offence will be expelled from the Order forever. This is one of the first eight of the Ten Commandments which the Buddha set forth for lay Buddhists to observe 24 hours every fornight. There are four conditions that are necessary to complete the evil of sexual misconduct: the thought to enjoy, consequent effort, means to gratify (gratification or the act of sexual misconduct). For Monks and Nuns, a Bhiksu who, when motivated by sexual desire, tells a woman or a man that it would be a good thing for her or him to have sexual relations with him, commits a Sangha Restoration Offence. A Bhiksuni who is intent upon having sexual relations with someone, whether male or female, breaks one of the eight Degradation Offences. She is no longer worthy to remain a Bhiksuni and cannot participate in the actiivities of the Order of Bhiksunis. Through word or gesture arouses sexual desire in that person, breaks the seventh of the Eight Degradation Offences. Says to that person that she is willing to offer him or her sexual relations, breaks the eighth of the Eight Degradation Offences. According to The Buddha and His Teachings, written by Most Venerable Narada, these are the inevitable consequences of Kamesu-micchacara: having many enemies, union with undesirable wives and husbands (spouses), and birth as a woman or as a eunuch (thái giám). If living beings in the six

paths of any mundane world had no thoughts of lust, they would not have to follow a continual succession of births and deaths. According to the Surangama Sutra, the Buddha reminded Ananda about "cutting off lust", one of the four important precepts for monks and nuns in Buddhism: "Ananda! Your basic purpose in cultivating is to transcend the wearisome defilements. But if you don't renounce your lustful thoughts, you will not be able to get out of the dust. Even though one may have some wisdom and the manifestation of Zen Samadhi, one is certain to enter demonic paths if one does not cut off lust. At best, one will be a demon king; on the average, one will be in the retinue of demons; at the lowest level, one will be a female demon. These demons have their groups of disciples. Each says of himself he has accomplished the unsurpassed way. After my extinction, in the Dharma-Ending Age, these hordes of demons will abound, spreading like wildfire as they openly practice greed and lust. Calming to be good knowing advisors, they will cause living beings to fall into the pit of love and views and lose the way to Bodhi Ananda! When you teach people in the world to cultivate samadhi, they must first of all sever the mind of lust. This is the first clear and unalterable instruction on purity given by the Thus Come Ones and the Buddhas of the past, World Honored Ones. Therefore, Ananda, if cultivators of Zen Samadhi do not cut off lust, they will be like someone who cooks sand in the hope of getting rice, after hundreds of thousands of eons, it will still be just hot sand. Why? It wasn't rice to begin with; it was only sand. Ananda! If you seek the Buddha's wonderful fruition and still have physical lust, then even if you attain a wonderful awakening, it will be based in lust. With lust at the source, you will revolve in the three paths and not be able to get out. Which road will you take to cultivate and be certified to the Thus Come One's Nirvana? You must cut off the lust which is intrinsic in both body and mind. Then get rid of even the aspect of cutting it off. At that point you have some hope of attaining the Buddha's Bodhi. What I have said here is the Buddha's teaching. Any explanation counter to it is the teaching of Papiyan.

Not to engage in improper sexual conduct. Against lust, not to commit adultery, to abstain from all sexual excess, or refraining from sexual misconduct. This includes not having sexual intercourse with another's husband or wife, or being irresponsible in sexual relationship.

Adultery is wrong. One who commits it does not command respect nor does one inspire confidence. Sexual misconduct involving person with whom conjugal relations should be avoided to custom, or those who are prohibited by law, or by the Dharma, is also wrong. So is coercing by physical or even financial means a married or even unmarried person into consenting to such conduct. The purpose of this third sila is to preserve the respectability of the family of each person concerned and to safeguard its sanctity and inviolability. Avoiding the demonic obstruction of sex is respect for people and personal relationships. Much unhappiness arises from the misuse of sex and from living in irresponsible ways. Many families have been broken as a result, and many children have been victims of sexual abuse. For all lay Buddhists, the happiness of others is also the happiness of ourselves, so sex should be used in a caring and loving manner, not in a craving of worldly flesh. When observing this precept, sexual desire should be controlled, and husbands and wives should be faithful towards each other. This will help to create peace in the family. In a happy family, the husband-and-wife respect, trust and love each other. With happy families, the world would be a better place for us to live in. Young Buddhists should keep their minds and bodies pure to develop their goodness. To Buddhists, especially, lay people, staying away from the demonic obstructions of sexual misconducts will help us with the followings: Help make our life have more quality; help us obtain dignity and respect from others; help make us a good member of the family, a good father or mother, a filial child; help make us good citizens of the society. Buddhists try not to have unchaste (to have adultery) because we don't want to be a bad person in the society. Besides, not to have unchaste will also help us become pure and good.

The Tenth Robber Is Lying: Lying or false speech means nonsense or transgression speaking, or lying, either slander, false boasting, or deception. Lying also means not to tell the truth. Lying also means tale-bearing speech, or double tongue speech, or slandering speech. Lying also means harsh speech or frivolous talk. Slander the Buddhist Sutras is considered a serious lying. Slandering the Buddhist sutras means ridiculing Buddhist theories taught by the Buddha and written in the sutras, i.e., saying that the principles in the Buddhist sutras are false, that the Buddhist and Great Vehicle sutras were spoken by

demon kings, and so on. This sort of offense cannot be pardoned through repentance. According to The Buddha and His Teachings, there are four conditions that are necessary to complete the evil of lying: an untruth, deceiving intention, utterance, and actual deception. According to Buddhism, "Lying" is the main rationalization for other offenses. Devout Buddhists should always be aware of the following situations: we tell lies when we contend; we tell lies when we are greedy; we tell lies when we seek gratification; we tell lies as we are selfish; we tell lies as we chase personal advantages. We tell lies to deceive people. We commit mistakes but do not want to admit, so we tell lies and try to rationalize for ourselves, and so on, and so on. Also according to The Buddha and His Teachings, written by Most Venerable Narada, there are some inevitable consequences of lying as follow: being subject to abusive speech, vilification, untrustworthiness, and stinking mouth. The Buddha wanted His disciples to be so perfectly truthful that He encouraged us not to lie, but to speak the truth, the whole truth. Against lying, deceiving and slandering. Not to lie includes not saying bad things, not gossiping, not twisting stories, and not lying. On the contrary, one must use the right gentle speech, which gives benefit to oneself and others. However, sometimes they are unable to speak the truth; for instance, they may have to lie to save themselves from harm, and doctors lie to bolster their patients' morale. Lying under these circumstances may be contrary to the sila, but it is not entirely contrary to the loving-kindness and to its purpose. This sila aims at bringing about mutual benefits by adhering to truth and avoiding verbal offences. Similarly, utterances harmful to another's well-being, for example, malicious, abusive or slanderous speech intended either to deride others or to vaunt oneself may be truthful, yet they must be regarded as wrong, because they are contrary to the sila. Sincere Buddhists should always respect each other and not tell lies or boast about ourselves. This would result in fewer quarrels and misunderstandings, and the world would be a more peaceful place. In observing the fourth precept, we should always speak the truth. There are four ways of "Mrsavadaviratih". The first way is "lying". Lying means verbally saying or indicating through a nod or a shrug somethng we know isn't true. However, telling the truth should be tempered and compassion. For instance, it isn't wise to tell the truth to a murderer

about a potential victim's whereabouts, if this would cause the latter's death. We should not to lie because if we lie, nobody would believe us. Furthermore, not to lie will help us become truthful and trustful. According to the Dharmapada Sutra, verse 306, the Buddha taught: "The speaker of untruth goes down; also, he who denies what he has done, both sinned against truth. After death they go together to hells." The second way is "Tale-bearing" or "Slandering". To slander means to twist stories, or to utilize slandering words. The Pali word means literally 'breaking up of fellowship'. To slander another is most wicked for it entails making a false statement intended to damage someone's reputation. The slanderer often commits two crimes simultaneously, he says what is false because his report is untrue and then he back-bites. In Sanskrit poetry the back-biter is compared to a mosquito which though small is noxious. It comes singing, settles on you, draws blood and may give you malaria. Again, the tale-bearer's words may be sweet as honey, but his mind is full of poison. Let us then avoid tale-bearing and slander which destroy friendships. Instead of causing trouble let us speak words that make for peace and reconciliation. Instead of sowing the seed of dissension, let us bring peace and friendship to those living in discord and enmity. The third way is "Harsh speech" (Pharusavaca p). Harsh words include insult, abuse, ridicule, sarcasm, and so on. Sometimes harsh words can be said with a smile, as when we innocently pretend what we have said won't hurt other people. Devout Buddhists should never use harsh words because harsh words hurt others. According to The Buddha and His Teaching, written by Most Venerable Narada, there are three conditions that are necessary to complete the evil of harsh speech: a person to be abused, an angry thought, and the actual abuse. The inevitable consequences of harsh speech: being detested by others though absolutely harmless, and having a harsh voice. Sincere Buddhist should avoid using harsh words in speech. The fourth way is "Frivolous talk" (Samphappalapa p). According to Most Venerable in The Buddha and His Teachings, there are two conditions that are necessary to complete the evil of frivolous talk: the inclination towards frivolous talk, and its narration. The inevitable consequences of frivolous talk: defective bodily organs and incredible speech. Truly speaking, to let go these lying speeches is not an easy thing to do; they are not easy to be eliminated in one or

two days, but when we want to follow the Buddha's Path, we have no other choice but to let go these lying speeches. Once we are able to let them go, it also means that we have already pushed away great obstacles on our own path of cultivation. To Buddhists, especially, lay people, staying away from the demonic obstructions of lying will help us with the followings: Help make our life have more quality; help us obtain dignity and respect from others; help make us a good member of the family, a good father or mother, a filial child; help make us good citizens of the society.

III. Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death by Being Always Try to Find Ways to Subdue Ten Afflictive Robbers of Desires-Anger-Ignorance-Arrogance-Doubt- Wrong Views -Killing-Stealing-Sexual Misconduct-Lying:

As mentioned above, for Buddhist practitioners, they worry about many kinds of afflictions. Broadly speaking, there are 84,000 worries. But after analysis, we can say there are only 10 serious ones which include desires-anger-ignorance-arrogance-doubt-wrong views-killing-stealing-sexual misconduct-lying. These ten robbers do not only cause our afflictions, but also prevent us from tasting the pure and cool flavor of emancipation (liberation). To refrain from greed, anger, jealousy, and other evil thoughts to which people are subject, we need strength of mind, strenuous effort and vigilance. When we are free from the city life, from nagging preoccupation with daily life, we are not tempted to lose control; but when we enter in the real society, it becomes an effort to check these troubles. Meditation will contribute an immense help to enable us to face all this with calm. There are only two points of divergence between the deluded and the enlightened, i.e., Buddhas and Bodhisattvas: purity is Buddhahood, defilement is the state of sentient beings. Because the Buddhas are in accord with the pure mind, they are enlightened, fully endowed with spiritual powers and wisdom. Because sentient beings are attached to worldly dusts, they are deluded and revolve in the cycle of birth and death. In order to achieve the ends of peace, mindfulness, hapiness, and eventual emancipation or escaping the ocean of life and death. practitioners should always try to subdue these ten robbers. Beside Buddha recitation, sense restraint in daily activities, and counteracting afflictions with the meditating mind;

there are still many other methods of subduing them. Below methods are the ones that practitioners should consider. ***First, To Subdue These Ten Robbers with Balancing Lust:*** Only if we have no desire for ourselves; if we are working and earning money in order to help other people; if we make cultivation our business and our business is cultivation only, then how clear and happy our life will be! However, most people don't understand this. They are only interested in making a lot of money or becoming successful in worldly business. Remember, this is only a small 'I'. Devout Buddhists should make a lot of money to help all people, then even we create our worldly business, it is a good business. It is a selfish desire for more than we need or deserve, such as food, house, car, wealth, honors, etc. Eyes are longing for viewing beautiful forms without any satisfaction, ears are longing for melodious sounds, nose is longing for fragrance, tongue is longing for delicate tastes, body is longing for soothing touches, and mind is longing for various emotions of love and hate from self and others. Human beings' greediness is like a barrel without bottom. It is just as the great ocean obtaining continuously the water from hundreds and thousands of large and small rivers and lakes everyday. In this Dharma Ending Age, sentient beings, especially human beings use every method to manipulate and harm one another. Sentient beings' lives, especially, those of human beings' lives are already filled with pain and sufferings, now there are even more pain and sufferings. Through tricks, expedients, and manipulations we try to reach our goal irrespective of whatever happens to others. Greed is a powerful mental force that drives people to fight, kill, cheat, lie and perform various forms of unwholesome deeds. The desires are boundless, but our ability to realize them is not, and unfulfilled desires always create suffering. When desires are only partially fulfilled, we have a tendency to continue to pursue until a complete fulfillment is achieved. Thus, we create even more suffering for us and for others. We can only realize the true happiness and a peaceful state of mind when our desires are few. This is one of the great steps towards the shore of liberation. The Buddha taught: "Greed and desire are the cause of all unhappiness or suffering. Everything sooner or later must change, so do not become attached to anything. Instead devote yourself to clearing your mind and finding the truth, lasting happiness." Knowing how to feel satisfied with

few possessions help us destroy greed and desire. This means being content with material conditions that allow us to be healthy and strong enough to cultivate. This is an effective way to cut through the net of passions and desires, attain a peaceful state of mind and have more time to help others. Cultivation helps us balance 'Lust' by contemplation of loathsomeness. Attachment to bodily form is one extreme, and one should keep the opposite in mind. Examine the body as a corpse and see the process of decay, or think of the parts of the body, such as lungs, spleen, fat, feces, and so forth. Remembering these and visualizing the loathsome aspects of the body will free us from lust. Furthermore, through Zen, we can see the string of craving and attachment confines us to samsara's prison. In other words, craving and attachment are not only roots that prevent us from being sufficiently moved to renounce samsara, but they are also two of the main things that bind us to samsara. In order to overcome craving and attachment, we should contemplate on the impurity of the body. When we are attached to someone, for example, consider how that person is just a sack full of six kinds of filthy substances. Then our attachment and craving will diminish.

Second, To Subdue These Ten Robbers with Balancing Anger: Anger is an emotional response to something that is inappropriate or unjust. If one does not obtain what one is greedy can lead to anger. Anger is an emotion involved in self-protection. However, according to Buddhist doctrines, anger manifests itself in a very crude manner, destroying the practitioner in a most effective way. The Buddha makes it very clear that with a heart filled with hatred and animosity, a man cannot understand and speak well. A man who nurtures displeasure and animosity cannot appease his hatred. Only with a mind delighted in harmlessness and with loving kindness towards all creatures in him hatred cannot be found. Thus, according to the Buddha's teachings in the Dharmapada Sutra, to subdue anger and resentment, we must develop a compassionate mind by meditating on loving kindness, pity and compassion. According to Buddhism, the basis of anger is usually fear for when we get angry, we feel we are not afraid any more, however, this is only a blind power. The energy of anger, if it's not so destructive, it may not be of any constructive. In fact, extreme anger could eventually lead us even to taking our own life. Thus, the Buddha

taught: “When you are angry at someone, let step back and try to think about some of the positive qualities of that person. To be able to do this, your anger would be reduced by its own.” Anger is a fire that burns in all human beings, causing a feeling of displeasure or hostility toward others. Angry people speak and act coarsely or pitiless, creating all kinds of sufferings. Of the three great poisons of Greed, Hatred and Ignorance, each has its own unique evil characteristic. However, of these poisons, hatred is unimaginably destructive and is the most powerful enemy of one’s cultivated path and wholesome conducts. The reason is that once hatred arises from within the mind, thousands of karmic obstructions will follow to appear immediately, impeding the practitioner from making progress on the cultivated path and learning of the philosophy of Buddhism. Therefore, the ancient virtuous beings taught: “One vindictive thought just barely surfaced, ten thousand doors of obstructions are all open.” Supposing while you were practicing meditation, and your mind suddenly drifted to a person who has often insulted and mistreated you with bitter words. Because of these thoughts, you begin to feel sad, angry, and unable to maintain peace of mind; thus, even though your body is sitting there quietly, your mind is filled with afflictions and hatred. Some may go so far as leaving their seat, stopping meditation, abandoning whatever they are doing, and getting completely caught up in their afflictions. Furthermore, there are those who get so angry and so depressed to the point where they can’t eat and sleep; for their satisfaction, sometimes they wish their wicked friend to die right before their eyes. Through these, we know that hatred is capable of trampling the heart and mind, destroying people’s cultivated path, and preventing everyone from practicing wholesome deeds. Thus, the Buddha taught the way to tame hatred in the Lotus Sutra as follows: “Use great compassion as a home, use peace and tolerance as the armor, use all the Dharma of Emptiness as the sitting throne.” We should think that when we have hatred and afflictions, the first thing that we should be aware of is we are bringing miseries on ourselves. The fire of hatred and afflictions internally burns at our soul, and externally influences our bodies, standing and sitting restlessly, crying, moaning, screaming, etc. In this way, not only are we unable to change and tame the enemy, but also unable to gain any peace and happiness for ourselves. Cultivation also helps us balance ‘Anger’ by

contemplation of loving-kindness. When angry states of mind arise strongly, balance them by developing feelings of loving-kindness. If someone does something bad or gets angry, do not get angry ourselves. If we do, we are being more ignorant than they. Be wise. Keep compassion in mind, for that person is suffering. Fill our mind with loving-kindness as if he was a dear brother. Concentrate on the feeling of loving-kindness as a meditation subject. Spread it to all beings in the world. Only through loving-kindness is hatred overcome.

Third, To Subdue These Ten Robbers with Repentance on the Three Karmas: From infinite eons, because we have been drowning deeply in the concept of "Self," ignorance has ruled and governed us. Thus, our body, speech, and mind have created infinite karmas and even great transgressions, such as being ungrateful and disloyal to our fathers, mothers, the Triple Jewels, etc, were not spared. Now that we are awakened, it is necessary to feel ashamed and be remorseful by using the same three karmas of body, speech, and mind to repent sincerely. Maitreya Bodhisattva, even as a "One-Birth Maha-Bodhisattva," six times daily he still performs the repentance ceremony praying to eliminate binding ignorance quickly. As a Maha-Bodhisattva, his 'binding ignorance' is infinitesimal, yet He still repents to eliminate them. Sincere Buddhists should develop vow to feel ashamed and be remorseful by using the same three karmas of body, speech, and mind to repent sincerely, to make the Triple Jewels glorious, help and rescue sentient beings, in order to compensate and atone for past transgressions and repay the four-gratefuls including the Triple Jewels, parents, teachers of both life and religion, and all sentient beings. *The first repentance is the repentance of the body karma:* Body karma openly confesses all transgressions, vow not to kill or prohibiting taking of life, not to steal or prohibiting stealing, not to commit adultery or prohibiting commiting adultery, and pray for them to disappear, and then use that body to practice wholesome actions, such as alms givings, offerings, etc. The Buddha taught: "The body is the origin of all sufferings, is the root of all tortures, punishments and karmic retributions in the three domains." Because of ignorance and stupidity, sentient beings are only concerned with our bodies and have not the slightest care of other people's bodies. We are only aware of our own sufferings, but completely oblivious of others' pains and

sufferings. We only know of our hopes for peace and happiness but unaware that others, too, have hope for peace and happiness. Moreover, because of ignorance and stupidity, we give rise to the mind of self and other, which gives rise to the perception of friends and strangers. Gradually over time, this perception sometimes develops into feuds and hatred among people, who become enemies for countless aeons (life after life, one reincarnation after reincarnation). There are three kinds of body karma: killing, stealing, and sexual misconducts. To repent the body karma, we should bow and prostrate our body to the Triple Jewels, and realize that our body is inherently impermanent, filled with sicknesses, constantly changing, and transforming. Thus, in the end, we cannot control and command it. We should never be so obssessed and overly concerned with our body and let it causes so many evil deeds. *The second repentance is the repentance of the speech karma:* Speech karma openly confess all transgressions, vow not to lie, not to exaggerate, not to abuse (curse), not to have ambiguous talk, not to insult, not to exaggerate, not to speak with a double-tongue, and pray for them to disappear, and then use that speech to practice Buddha Recitation, chant sutras, speak wholesomely, etc. The Buddha taught: "The mouth is the gate and door to all hateful retaliations." The karmic retribution for speech-karma is the greatest. Speech-karma gives rise to four great karmic offenses: lying, insulting, gossiping, and speaking with a double tongue maner. Because of these four unwholesome speeches, sentient beings accumulate infinite and endless offenses ranging from speaking artificially, sweetly, manipulatively to speaking untruthfully, words and actions contradicting one another, etc. Once the mind of hatred arises, not mention strangers, even one's parents, religious masters, etc., there is not an insult one will not speak. No malicious words will be spared, whether saying hateful words with intention of causing separation between two people, saying something happened when it didn't or when it didn't happen saying it did; thus speaking irresponsibly and chaotically without the slightest consideration of what is being said. Sincere Buddhists should always repent the body-karma by using the "mouth of transgressions" of the past to change it into praises and glorification of the virtuous practices of the Buddhas. Use that speech often to speak of kindness, encouraging others to cultivate the Way and

change for the better, i.e. sitting meditation, Buddha-Recitation, or chanting sutras, etc. Thereafter, for the remainder of this life, vow not to use one mouth and tongue to speak vulgarly, disrespectfully, and before the Triple Jewels, sincerely confess and willingly admit to all offenses without concealment. Thus, use the same mouth and tongue which has created countless offenses in the past to give birth to infinite merits, virtues, and wholesome karma at the present. *The third repentance is the repentance of the mind-karma:* Mind Karma must be genuine, remorseful, vow not to be covetous, not to be malicious, not to be unbelief, not to be greedy, not to be hatred, not to be ignorant, vowing not to revert back to the old ways. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that the mind consciousness is the reason to give rise to infinite offenses of the other five consciousnesses, from Sight, Hearing, Scent, Taste, and Touch Consciousnesses. The mind consciousness is similar to an order passed down from the King to his magistrates and chancellors. Eyes take great pleasure in looking and observing unwholesome things, ears take great pleasure in listening to melodious sounds, nose takes great pleasure in smelling aromas and fragrance, tongue takes great pleasure in speaking vulgarly and irresponsibly as well as finding joy in tasting the various delicacies, foods, and wines, etc; body takes great pleasure in feeling various sensations of warmth, coolness, softness, velvet clothing. Karmic offenses arise from these five consciousnesses come from their master, the Mind; the mind consciousness is solely responsible for all their actions. In the end, this will result in continual drowning in the three evil paths, enduring infinite pains and sufferings in hells, hungry ghosts, and animals. In the Dharmapada, the Buddha taught: "Guard one's mind much like guarding a castle; protect the mind similar to protecting the eye ball. Mind is an enemy capable of destroying and eliminating all of the virtues and merits one has worked so hard to accumulate during one's existence, or sometimes many lifetimes." Also in the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: Like a well-trained horse, touch by the whip, even so be strenuous and zealous. By faith, by virtue, by effort, by concentration, by investigation of the Truth, by being endowed with knowledge and conduct, and being mindful, get rid of this great suffering (144). To repent the mind-karma, sincere Buddhists should think that the three karmas of Greed, Hatred, and Ignorance of

the mind are the roots and foundations of infinite karmic transgressions. The mind-karma is the web of ignorance which masks our wisdom and is the affliction and worry that cover our true nature. It should be feared and needs be avoided. Sincere Buddhists should use their heart and mind to sincerely confess and repent, be remorseful, and vow never again to commit such offenses.

Fourth, To Subdue These Ten Robbers Through Cultivation of Kusala Dharmas: "Kusala" means volitional action that is done in accordance with the Aryan Eightfold Noble Path. So, Kusala is not only in accordance with the right action, but it is also always in accordance with the right view, right understanding, right speech, right livelihood, right energy, right concentration and right samadhi. According to the Dharmapada Sutra, verse 183, the Buddha taught: Not to do evil, to do good, to purify one's mind, this is the teaching of the Buddhas." Kusala karmas or good deeds will help a person control a lot of troubles arising from his mind. Inversely, if a person does evil deeds, he will receive bad results in this life and the next existence which are suffering. Thus, wholesome deeds clean our mind and give happiness to oneself and others. Kusala means good, right, or wholesome; it is contrary to the unwholesome. According to Buddhism, kusala karma means volitional action that is done in accordance with the Aryan Eightfold Noble Path. So, Kusala karma is not only in accordance with the right action, but it is also always in accordance with the right view, right understanding, right speech, right livelihood, right energy, right concentration and right samadhi. According to the Dharmapada Sutra, verse 183, the Buddha taught: Not to do evil, to do good, to purify one's mind, this is the teaching of the Buddhas." Kusala karmas or good deeds will help a person control a lot of troubles arising from his mind. Inversely, if a person does evil deeds, he will receive bad results in this life and the next existence which are suffering. An honest man, especially one who believes in Buddhist ideas of causality and lives a good life. There are two classes of people in this life, those who are inclined to quarrel and addicted to dispute, and those who are bent to living in harmony and happy in friendliness. The first class can be classified wicked, ignorant and heedless folk. The second class comprised of good, wise and heedful people. The Buddha has made a clear distinction between wickedness and goodness and advises all his disciples not to do evil actions, to perform good ones and to purify their own heart. He knows that it is easy to do evil action. To perform meritorious one

far more difficult. But His disciples should know how to select in between evil and good, because wicked people will go to hell and undergo untold suffering, while good ones will go to Heaven and enjoy peaceful bliss. Moreover, Good one even from afar shrine like the mountain of snow with their meritorious actions, while bad ones are enveloped in darkness like an arrow shot in the night." According to The Connected Discourses of the Buddha, Chapter Ambapali, there are two starting points of wholesome states. First, virtue that is well purified which includes basing upon virtue and establishing upon virtue. Second, view that is straight. According to The Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are three good (wholesome) roots. For Monks and Nuns, there are the wholesome roots of non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion (no selfish desire, no ire, no stupidity); the wholesome roots of almsgiving, kindness, and wisdom; and the wholesome roots of good deeds, good words, good thoughts. Three good roots for all moral development: the wholesome root of no lust or selfish desire, the wholesome root of no ire or no hatred, and the wholesome root of no stupidity. For Ordinary People, there are three wholesome roots: the wholesome root of almsgiving; the wholesome root of mercy; and the wholesome root of wisdom. There are also three good upward directions or states of existence. The first path is the wholesome path. This is the highest class of goodness rewarded with the deva life. The second path is the path of human beings. The middle class of goddness with a return to human life. The third path is the path of asuras. The inferior class of goodness with the asura state. According to The Long Discourses of the Buddha, Sangiti Sutra, there are three kinds of wholesome element. First, the wholesome element of renunciation. Second, the wholesome element of non-enmity. Third, the wholesome element of non-cruelty. According to the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are three kinds of right conduct: right conduct in body, right conduct in speech, and right conduct in thought. Three good deeds (the foundation of all development) include no lust (no selfish desire), no anger, and no stupidity (no ignorance). According to the Abhidharma, there are three doors of wholesome kamma pertaining to the sense-sphere. First, bodily action pertaining to the door of the body: not to kill, not to steal, and not to commit sexual misconduct. Second, verbal action pertaining to the door of speech: not to have false speech, not to slander, not to speak harsh speech, and not to speak frivolous talk. Third, mental action pertaining to the door of the mind: not to have Covetousness, not to have Ill-will, and not to have wrong views. According to The Long Discourses of the Buddha, Sangiti Sutra, there are three kinds of wholesome investigation. First, the wholesome investigation of renunciation. Second, the wholesome investigation of non-enmity. Third, the wholesome investigation of non-cruelty. According to The Long Discourses of the Buddha, Sangiti Sutra, there are three kinds of wholesome

perception. First, the wholesome perception of renunciation. Second, the wholesome perception of non-enmity. Third, the wholesome perception of non-cruelty. According to the Mahayana, there are four good roots, or sources from which spring good fruit or development: Sravakas, Pratyeka-buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Buddhas. According to the Kosa Sect, there are four good roots, or sources from which spring good fruit or development: the level of heat, the level of the summit, the level of patience, and the level of being first in the world. According to the Surangama Sutra, book Eight, there are four good roots or sources from which spring good fruit or development. The Buddha reminded Ananda as follows: "Ananda! When these good men have completely purified these forty-one minds, they further accomplish four kinds of wonderfully perfect additional practices." The first root is the level of heat. When the enlightenment of a Buddha is just about to become a function of his own mind, it is on the verge of emerging but has not yet emerged, and so it can be compared to the point just before wood ignites when it is drilled to produce fire. Therefore, it is called 'the level of heat.' The second root is the level of the summit. He continues on with his mind, treading where the Buddhas tread, as if relying and yet not. It is as if he were climbing a lofty mountain, to the point where his body is in space but there remains a slight obstruction beneath him. Therefore, it is called 'the level of the summit.' The third root is the level of patience. When the mind and the Buddha are two and yet the same, he has well obtained the middle way. He is like someone who endures something when it seems impossible to either hold it in or let it out. Therefore, it is called ''he level of patience.'' The fourth root is the level of being first in the world. When numbers are destroyed, there are no such designations as the middle way or as confusion and enlightenment; this is called the 'level of being first in the world.' According to the Long Discourses of the Buddha, Sangiti Sutra, there are eight right factors: Right views, Right thinking, Right speech, Right action, Right livelihood, Right effort, Right mindfulness, and Right concentration. In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "As a flower that is colorful and beautiful, but without scent, even so fruitless is the well-spoken words of one who does not practice it (Dharmapada 51). As the flower that is colorful, beautiful, and full of scent, even so fruitful is the well-spoken words of one who practices it (Dharmapada 52). As from a heap of flowers many a garland is made, even so many good deeds should be done by one born to the mortal lot (Dharmapada 53). If a person does a meritorious deed, he should do it habitually, he should find pleasures therein, happiness is the outcome of merit (Dharmapada 118). Even a good person sees evil as long as his good deed has not yet ripened; but when his good deed has ripened, then he sees the good results (Dharmapada 120). Do not disregard small good, saying, "It will not matter to me." Even by the

falling of drop by drop, a water-jar is filled; likewise, the wise man, gathers his merit little by little (Dharmapada 122)." In the Forty-Two Sections Sutra, chapter 14, the Buddha taught: "A Sramana asked the Buddha: "What is goodness? What is the foremost greatness?" The Buddha replied: "To practice the Way and to protect the Truth is goodness. To unite your will with the Way is greatness." For lay Buddhists, kusala dharmas can be going to a temple to do good deeds there, but kusala dharmas can also be what we do to make others happier or moraler so that they can come closer to enlightenment and emancipation. Devout Zen practitioners should always remember that before entering meditation practices, we should do a lot of good deeds, for the level of mind stillness depends not only on methods of Zen, but also greatly depends the good deeds that we accomplished. If we are not completely emancipated, our happiness in meditation also synonymous with the happiness that we did for others. Therefore, a Zen practitioner must be the one who always gives the happiness, peace, and mindfulness to others all his life. In other words, deside the effort for meditation, Zen practitioners should always try to do many good deeds, for good deeds will support meditation result very well.

Fifth, To Subdue These Ten Robbers by Staying Away from Akusala Dharmas: Unwholesome deeds (anything connected with the unwholesome root or akasula mula) accompanied by greed, hate or delusion and cause undesirable karmic results or future suffering. There are two kinds of causes in the world: good causes and bad causes. If we create good causes, we will reap good results; if we create bad causes, we will surely reap bad results. According to The Path of Purification, unwholesome deeds are both unprofitable action and courses that lead to unhappy destinies. Unwholesome mind creates negative or unwholesome thoughts (anger, hatred, harmful thoughts, wrong views, etc), speech (lying, harsh speech, double-tongued, etc), as well as deeds which are the causes of our sufferings, confusion and misery. Unwholesome or negative mind will destroy our inner peace and tranquility. According to Buddhism, if we create bad causes, we will surely reap bad results. People who create many offenses and commit many transgressions will eventually have to undergo the retribution of being hell-dwellers, hungry-ghosts, and animals, etc. In general, doing good deeds allows us to ascend, while doing evil causes us to descend. In everything we do, we must take the responsibility ourselves; we cannot rely on others. According to The Path of Purification, "Bad Ways" is a term for doing what ought not to be done and not doing what ought to be done, out of desire, hate, delusion, and fear. They are called "bad ways" because they are ways not to be travel by Noble Ones. Incorrect conduct in thought, word or deed, which leads to evil recompense. Unwholesome speech or slanderous or evil-speech which cause afflictions. In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "Do not speak unwholesome or

harsh words to anyone. Those who are spoken to will respond in the same manner. Angry speech nourishes trouble. You will receive blows in exchange for blows (Dharmapada 133). If like a cracked gong, you silence yourself, you already have attained Nirvana. No vindictiveness (quarrels) will be found in you (Dharmapada 134)." Unwholesome views or wrong views mean seeing or understanding in a wrong or wicked and grasping manner. There are five kinds of wrong views: wrong views of the body, one-sided views, wrong views which are inconsistent with the dharma, wrong views caused by attachment to one's own errouneous understanding, and wrong views or wrong understandings of the precepts. Unwholesome deeds are bad, wrong, cruel, evil or mischievous acts. Unwholesome or wicked deeds which are against the right. Maliciousness is planning to harm others. It includes thinking how to revenge a wrong done to us, how to hurt others' feelings or how to embarrass them. From the earliest period, Buddhist thought has argued that immoral actions are the result of ignorance (avidya), which prompts beings to engage in actions (karma) that will have negative consequences for them. Thus, evil for Buddhism is a second-order problem, which is eliminated when ignorance is overcome. Thus, the definition of sin and evil is pragmatic: evil actions are those that result in suffering and whose consequences are perceived as painful for beings who experience them. Unwholesome or evil karmas of greed, hatred and ignorance, all created by body, mouth and speech. Unwholesome or harmful actions, or conduct in thought, word, or deed (by the body, speech, and mind) to self and others which leads to evil recompense (negative path, bad deeds, or black path). Unwholesome or negative Karma includes: greed, anger, ignorance, pride, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and unwholesome thoughts. According to the Sigalaka Sutra, there are four causes of unwholesome or evil actions: unwholesome action springs from attachment, ill-will, ignorance, and fear. According to the Sigalaka Sutra, the Buddha taught: "If the Ariyan disciple does not act out of attachment, ill-will, folly or fear, he will not do evil from any one of the four above mentioned causes." In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "As rust sprung from iron eats itself away when arisen, just like ill deeds lead the doer to a miserable state (Dharmapada 240). There are three kinds of unwholesome paths (the states of woe, realms of woe, evil realms, or evil ways). Also called evil ways or three evil paths, or destinies of hells, hungry ghosts and animals. These are three paths which can be taken as states of mind, i.e., when someone has a vicious thought of killing someone, he is effectively reborn, for that moment, in the hells. Sentient beings in evil realms do not encounter the Buddhadharma, never cultivate goodness, and always harm others. Sometimes the Asura realm is also considered an unwholesome or evil realm because though they have heavenly merits, they lack virtues and

have much hatred. There are four fundamental unwholesome passions. These four are regarded as the fundamental evil passions originating from the view that there is really an eternal substance known as ego-soul. First, the belief in the existence of an ego-substance. Second, ignorance about the ego. Third, conceit about the ego. The fourth fundamental unwholesome passion is self-love. All karmas are controlled by the threefold deed (body, speech, and mind). Three deeds of the body, four deeds of the mouth, and three deeds of the mind. According to Buddhism, evil phenomena refer to supernatural phenomena which are said to be side effects of Zazen, such as clairvoyance and othe magical abilities, as well as hallucinations. They are considered to be distractions, and so meditators are taught to ignore them as much as possible and to concentrate on meditative practice only. "Akusala" is a Sanskrit term for "bonds of assumptions of bad states." These are obstructions of body (kayavarana) and of mind (manas-avarana). Some Buddhist exegetes also add the third type, obstructions of speech (vag-avarana). These are said to be caused by influences of past karma, in imitation of past activities, and are the subtle traces that remain after the afflictions (klesa) have been destroyed. An example that is commonly given is of an Arhat, who has eliminated the afflictions, seeing a monkey, jumping up and down while making noises like a monkey, but the subtle traces still remain deep in the conscious. According to Buddhism, an unwholesome person means an evil person, one who has evil ideas of the doctrine of voidness, to deny the doctrine of cause and effect. Thus, the Buddha advises us not make friends with wicked ones, but to associate only with good friends. He points out very clearly that if we yearn for life, we should avoid wickedness like we shun poison because a hand free from wound can handle poison with impurity. The dhammas of the good ones do not decay, but go along with the good ones to where meritorious actions will lead them. Good actions will welcome the well doer who has gone from this world to the next world, just as relatives welcome a dear one who has come back. So, the problem poses itself very clear and definite. Wickedness and goodness are all done by oneself. Wickedness will lead to dispute and to war, while goodness will lead to harmony, to friendliness and to peace. Also according to the Buddhism, the unwholesome people are those who commit unbelievable crimes and whose minds are filled with greed, hatred and ignorance. Those who commit lying, gossip, harsh speech, and double-tongued. Those who abuse others' good heart; those who cheat others for their own benefits; those who kill, steal; those who act lasciviously; those who think of wicked plots; those who always think of wicked (evil) scheme. There are three unwholesome paths or three evil paths: hells, hungry ghosts, and animals. Great Master Ying-Kuang reminded Buddhist followers to singlemindedly recite the Buddha's name if they wish for their mind not to be

attaching and wandering to the external world. Do not forget that death is lurking and hovering over us, it can strike us at any moment. If we do not wholeheartedly concentrate to practice Buddha Recitation, praying to gain rebirth to the Western Pureland, then if death should come suddenly, we are certain to be condemned to the three unwholesome realms where we must endure innumerable sufferings and sometime infinite Buddhas have in turn appeared in the world, but we are still trapped in the evil paths and unable to find liberation. Thus, cultivators should always ponder the impermanence of a human life, while death could come at any moment without warning. We should always think that we have committed infinite and endles unwholesome karmas in our former life and this life, and the sufferings are waiting for us in the unwholesome realms. Upon thinking all these, we will be awakened in every moment, and we no longer have greed and lust for the pleasures of the five desires and six elements of the external world. If condemned to hell, then we will experience the torturous and agonizing conditions of a moutain of swords, a forest of knives, stoves, frying pans; in each day and night living and dying ten thousand times, the agony of pain and suffering is inconceivable. If condemned to the path of hungry ghost, then the body is hideously ugly wreaking foul odors. Stomach is large as a drum but neck is as small as a needle; though starving and thirsty, the offenders cannot eat or drink. When seeing food and drinks, these items transform into coals and fires. Thus, they must endure the torture and suffering of famine and thirst, throwing, banging their bodies against everything, crying out in pain and agony for tens and thousands of kalpas. If condemned to the animal realm, then they must endure the karmic consequences of carrying and pulling heavy loads, get slaughtered for food, or the strong prey on the weak, mind and body always paranoid, frightened, and fearful of being eaten or killed, without having any moment of peace. There are five kinds of unwholesome deeds in this world. The first kind of unwholesome deed is Cruelty. Every creature, even insects, strives against one another. The strong attack the weak; the weak deceive the strong; everywhere there is fighting and cruelty. The second kind of unwholesome deed is Deception and lack of Sincerity. There is a lack of a clear demarcation between the rights of a father and a son, between an elder brother and a younger; between a husband and a wife; between a senior relative and a younger. On every occasion, each one desires to be the highest and to profit off others. They cheat each other. They don't care about sincerity and trust. The third kind of unwholesome deed is wicked behavior that leads to Injustice and wickedness. There is a lack of a clear demarcation as to the behavior between men and women. Everyone at times has impure and lasvicious thoughts and desires that lead them into questionable acts and disputes, fighting, injustice and wickedness. The fourth kind of unwholesome deed is

Disrespect the rights of others. There is a tendency for people to disrespect the rights of others, to exaggerate their own importance at the expense of others, to set bad examples of behavior and, being unjust in their speech, to deceive, slander and abuse others. The fifth kind of unwholesome deed is to neglect their duties. There is a tendency for people to neglect their duties towards others. They think too much of their own comfort and their own desires; they forget the favors they have received and cause annoyance to others that often passes into great injustice. According to the Long Discourses of the Buddha, Sangiti Sutra, there are eight unwholesome factors: wrong views, wrong thinking, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong concentration. Eight wrong perceptions of thought: desire, hatred, vexation with others, home-sickness, patriotism or thoughts of the country's welfare, dislike of death, ambition for one's clan or family, and slighting or being rude to others. According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are nine unwholesome causes of malice which are stirred up by the thought "There is no use to think that a person has harmed, is harming, or will harm either you, someone you love, or someone you hate". First, he has done me an injury. Second, he is doing me an injury. Third, he will do me an injury. Fourth, he has done an injury to someone who is dear and pleasant to me. Fifth, he is doing an injury to someone and pleasant to me. Sixth, he will do an injury to someone who is dear and pleasant to me. Seventh, he has done an injury to someone who is hateful and unpleasant to me. Eighth, he is doing an injury to someone who is hateful and unpleasant to me. Ninth, he will do an injury to someone who is hateful and unpleasant to me. Ancient virtues taught on unwholesome doings as followed: "Those who spit at the sky, immediately the spit will fall back on their face." Or to harbor blood to spit at someone, the mouth is the first to suffer from filth. Five practical suggestions to prevent evil thoughts given by the Buddha. First, harbouring a good thought opposite to the encroaching one, e.g., loving-kindness in the case of hatred. Second, reflecting upon possible evil consequences, e.g., anger sometimes results in murder. Third, simple neglect or becoming wholly inattentive to them. Fourth, tracing the cause which led to the arising of the unwholesome thoughts and thus forgetting them in the retrospective process. Fifth, direct physical force. In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "Let's hasten up to do good. Let's restrain our minds from evil thoughts, for the minds of those who are slow in doing good actions delight in evil (Dharmapada 116). If a person commits evil, let him not do it again and again; he should not rejoice therein, sorrow is the outcome of evil (Dharmapada 117). Even an evil-doer sees good as long as evil deed has not yet ripened; but when his evil deed has ripened, then he sees the evil results (Dharmapada 119). Do not disregard (underestimate) small evil, saying, "It

will not matter to me." By the falling of drop by drop, a water-jar is filled; likewise, the fool becomes full of evil, even if he gathers it little by little (Dharmapada 121). A merchant with great wealth but lacks of companions, avoids a dangerous route, just as one desiring to live avoids poison, one should shun evil things in the same manner (Dharmapada 123). With a hand without wound, one can touch poison; the poison does not afftect one who has no wound; nor is there ill for him who does no wrong. (Dharmapada 124). Whoever harms a harmless person who is pure and guiltless, the evil falls back upon that fool, like dust thrown against the wind (Dharmapada 125). Some are born in a womb; evil-doers are reborn in hells; the righteous people go to blissful states; the undefiled ones pass away into Nirvana (Dharmapada 126). Neither in the sky, nor in mid-ocean, nor in mountain cave, nowhere on earth where one can escape from the consequences of his evil deeds (Dharmapada 127). The evil is done by oneself; it is self-born; it is self-nursed. Evil grinds the unwise as a diamond grinds a precious stone (Dharmapada 161). Bad deeds are easy to do, but they are harmful, not beneficial to oneself. On the contrary, it is very difficult to do that which is beneficial and good for oneself (Dharmapada 163). The foolish man who slanders the teachings of the Arhats, of the righteous and the Noble Ones. He follows false doctrine, ripens like the kashta reed, only for its own destruction (Dharmapada 164). By oneself the evil is done, by oneself one is defiled or purified. Purity or impurity depend on oneself. No one can purify another (Dharmapada 165). Not to slander, not to harm, but to restrain oneself in accordance with the fundamental moral codes, to be moderate in eating, to dwell in secluded abode, to meditate on higher thoughts, this is the teaching of the Buddhas (Dharmapada 185)." In the Forty-Two Sections Sutra, the Buddha taught: "The Buddha said: "When an evil person hears about virtue and intentionally or voluntarily comes to cause trouble, you should restrain yourself and should not become angry or upbraid him. Then, the one who has come to do evil will do evil to himself." There was one who, upon hearing that I protect the way and practice great humane compassion, intentionally or voluntarily came to scold me. I was silent and did not reply. When he finished scolding me, I asked, 'If you are courteous to people and they do not accept your courtesy, the courtesy returns to you, does it not?' He replied, 'It does.' I said, 'Now you are scolding me but I do not receive it. So, the misfortune returns to you and must remain with you. It is just as inevitable as the echo that follows a sound or as the shadow that follows a form. In the end, you cannot avoid it. Therefore, be careful not to do evil." An evil person who harms a sage is like one who raises his head and spits at heaven. Instead of reaching heaven, the spittle falls back on him. It is the same with one who throws dust into the wind instead of going somewhere

else, the dust returns to fall on the thrower's body. The sage cannot be harmed; misdeed will inevitably destroy the doer."

Sixth, To Subdue These Ten Robbers Through Keeping Precepts: According to the Mahaparinibbana Sutta and the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are five advantages to one of good morality and of success in morality. First, through careful attention to his affairs, he gains much wealth. Second, precept keeper gets a good reputation for morality and good conduct. Third, whatever assembly he approaches, whether of Khattiyas, Brahmins, Ascetics, or Householders, he does so with confidence and assurance. Fourth, at the end of his life, he dies unconfused. Fifth, after death, at breaking up of the body, he arises in a good place, a heavenly world. According to the Uttarasanghati Sutra, there are five benefits for the virtuous in the perfecting of virtue. First, one who is virtuous, possessed of virtue, comes into a large fortune as consequence of diligence. Second, one who is virtuous, possessed of virtue, a fair name is spread abroad. Third, one who is virtuous, possessed of virtue, enters an assembly of Khattiyas, Brahmans, householders or ascetics without fear or hesitation. Fourth, one who is virtuous, dies unconfused. Fifth, one who is virtuous, possessed of virtue, on the break up of the body after death, reappears in a happy destiny or in the heavenly world. In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "The scent of flowers does not blow against the wind, nor does the fragrance of sandalwood and jasmine, but the fragrance of the virtuous blows against the wind; the virtuous man pervades every direction (Dharmapada 54). Of little account is the fragrance of sandal-wood, lotus, jasmine; above all these kinds of fragrance, the fragrance of virtue is by far the best (Dharmapada 55). Of little account is the fragrance of sandal; the fragrance of the virtuous rises up to the gods as the highest (Dharmapada 56). Mara never finds the path of those who are virtuous, careful in living and freed by right knowledge (Dharmapada 57). To be virtue until old age is pleasant; to have steadfast faith is pleasant; to attain wisdom is pleasant; not to do evil is pleasant (Dharmapada 333).

Seventh, To Subdue These Ten Robbers by Not Breaking Precepts: According to the Mahaparinibbana Sutta and the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are five dangers to the immoral through lapsing from morality (bad morality or failure in morality). First, precept breaker suffers great loss of property through neglecting his affairs. Second, precept breaker gets bad reputation for immorality and misconduct. Third, whatever assembly the precept breaker approaches, whether of Khattiyas, Bramins, Ascetics, or Householders, he does so differently and shyly. Fourth, at the end of his life, he dies confused. Fifth, after death, at the breaking up of the body, he arises in an evil state, a bad fate, in suffering and hell.

Eighth, To Subdue These Ten Robbers Through the Cultivation of Doing no Evil, Doing Only Good, and Purifying the Mind: In order to reduce demonic obstructions as well as to terminate the suffering and affliction in life, The Buddha advises his fourfold disciple: "Do no evil, to do only good, to purify the mind." In the Agama Sutra, the Buddha taught: "Do not commit wrongs, devoutly practice all kinds of good, purify the mind, that's Buddhism", or "To do no evil, to do only good, to purify the will, is the doctrine of all Buddhas." These four sentences are said to include all the Buddha-teaching. The Buddha's teachings in the Dharmapada Sutra: "A wise man should abandon the way of woeful states and follows the bright way. He should go from his home to the homeless state and live in accordance with the rules for Sramanas (Dharmapada 87). A wise man should purge himself from all the impurities of the mind, give up sensual pleasures, and seek great delight in Nirvana (Dharmapada 88). Those whose minds are well-trained and well-perfected in the seven factors of enlightenment, who give up of grasping, abandon defiled minds, and eradicate all afflictions. They are shinning ones and have completely liberated and attained Nirvana even in this world (Dharmapada 89)." However, the Buddha's teachings are usually easy to speak but very difficult to put in practice. Yes! "Not to commit any sin, to do good, to purify one's mind." Buddha's teaching is so easy to speak about, but very difficult to put into practice. The Buddha's teaching is so easy that a child of three knows how to speak, but it is so difficult that even an old man of eighty finds it difficult to practice. According to the Forty-Two Sections Sutra, Chapter 18, the Buddha said: "My Dharma is the mindfulness that is both mindfulness and no-mindfulness. It is the practice that is both practice and non-practice. It is words that are words and non-words. It is cultivation that is cultivation and non-cultivation. Those who understand are near to it; those who are confused are far from it indeed. The path of words and language is cut off; it cannot be categorized as a thing. If you are off (removed) by a hair's breadth, you lose it in an instant."

Ninth, To Subdue These Ten Robbers Through Overcoming Greed, Anger, and Jealousy: To refrain from greed, anger, jealousy, and other evil thoughts to which people are subject, we need strength of mind, strenuous effort and vigilance. When we are free from the city life, from nagging preoccupation with daily life, we are not tempted to lose control; but when we enter in the real society, it becomes an effort to check these troubles. Meditation will contribute an immense help to enable us to face all this with calm. There are only two points of divergence between the deluded and the enlightened, i.e., Buddhas and Bodhisattvas: purity is Buddhahood, defilement is the state of sentient beings. Because the Buddhas are in accord with the Pure Mind, they are enlightened, fully endowed with spiritual powers and

wisdom. Because sentient beings are attached to worldly Dusts, they are deluded and revolve in the cycle of Birth and Death. To practice Pure Land is to go deep into the Buddha Recitation Samadhi, awakening to the Original Mind and attaining Buddhahood. Therefore, if any deluded, agitated thought develops during Buddha Recitation, it should be severed immediately, allowing us to return to the state of the Pure Mind. This is the method of counteracting afflictions with the meditating mind.

Tenth, To Subdue These Ten Robbers Through Striving to Be Content With Few Desires and Be Satisfied with What We Have At This Very Moment: Content with few desires. "Thiểu Dục" means having few desires; "tri túc" means being content. Knowing how to feel satisfied with few possessions means being content with material conditions that allow us to be healthy and strong enough to practice the Way. "Knowing how to feel satisfied and being content with material conditions" is an effective way to cut through the net of passions and desires, attain a peaceful state of body and mind and accomplish our supreme goal of cultivation. Being content with few desires means having few desires. Here "desires" include not only the desire for money and material things but also the wish for status and fame. It also indicates seeking the love and service of others. In Buddhism, a person who has attained the mental stage of deep faith has very few desires and is indifferent to them. We must note carefully that though such a person is indifferent to worldly desires, he is very eager for the truth, that is, he has a great desire for the truth. To be indifferent to the truth is to be slothful in life. To be content with few desires also means to be satisfied with little material gain, that is, not to feel discontented with one's lot and to be free from worldly cares. Nevertheless, this does not mean to be unconcerned with self-improvement but to do one's best in one's work without discontent. Such a person will never be ignored by those around him. But even if people around him ignored him, he would feel quite happy because he lives like a king from a spiritual point of view. We must have few desires in two areas: the desires for food and sex. Food and sex support ignorance in perpetrating all sort of evil. Thus, Confucius taught: "Food and sex are part of human nature." That is to say we are born with the craving for foods and sex. Why is that we have not been able to demolish our ignorance, eliminate our afflictions, and reveal our wisdom? Because we always crave for food and sex. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that food gives rise to sexual desire, and sexual desire gives rise to ignorance. Once the desire for food arises, the desire for sex arises as well. Men are attracted to beautiful women, and women are charmed by handsome men. People become infatuated and obsessed and cannot see through their desires. The nourishment from the food we eat is transformed

into reporductive essence; and once that essence is full, sexual desire arises. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that the less tasty the food is, the better. Food should not be regarded as too important. Sincere Buddhists should practice moderation and eat only enough to sustain ourselves. We should neither eat very rich food, nor eat spoilt food, for either one could ruin our health. To be satisfied with what we have at this very moment means satisfaction or contentment is a characteristic of the really happy individual. The ordinary people seem to think that it is difficult to cultivate and develop contentment. However, with courage and determination to control one's evil inclination, as well as to understand the consequences of these evil thoughts, one can keep the mind from being soiled and experience happiness through contentment. For those who have wisdom, know how to apply themselves and are able to endure life, and are able to think cleverly, will find peace in his fate under whatever circumstances. With the conditions of wealth, one satisfies and is at peace with being wealthy; with the conditions of poverty, one satisfies and is at peace with being impoverished. In fact, in our lifetime, we engage in all kinds of activities, think and calculate every imaginable method without abandoning any plot, so long as it is beneficial, but whether or not our actions affect others we never care. We have been doing all these for what? For a better life, clothes, house, and for storing more money. If we think carefully, we will see that the sun rises, reaches its stand still, and then it will set and disappears in the evening; a full moon will soon become half, quarter, then lose its brightness; mountains become deep canyons; oceans become hills of berries, etc. The way of life has always been rosen and fall, success and failure, victory and defeat, lost and found, together and apart, life and death, etc., goes on constantly and there is absolutely nothing that remain unchanged and eternal. People with wisdom should always satisfy with their current circumstances. The Buddha extols simple living as being more conducive to the development of one's mind. Thus, the Buddha always preaches the self-contentment for the benefit of the Bhikkhus as follow: The robes or clothes they receive, whether coarse or fine; alms or food they receive, whether unpalatable or delicious; the abodes or houses they receive, whether simple or luxurious. Those who satisfy with these three conditions can reduce the desires, and at the same time develop the habits and values of simple living. Satisfaction or contentment is a characteristic of the really happy individual. The ordinary people seem to think that it is difficult to cultivate and develop contentment. However, with courage and determination to control one's evil inclination, as well as to understand the consequences of these evil thoughts, one can keep the mind from being soiled and experience happiness through contentment. For those who have wisdom, know how to apply themselves and are able to endure life, and are able to think cleverly,

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Eleventh, To Subdue These Ten Robbers through Striving to Subdue Afflictions: Afflictions are distress, worldly cares, vexations, and as consequent reincarnation. They are such troubles as desire, hate, stupor, pride, doubt, erroneous views, etc., leading to painful results in future rebirths, for they are karma-messengers executing its purpose. Klesa also means "negative mental factors," that lead beings to engage in non-virtuous actions, which produce karmic results. Afflictions are all defilements that dull the mind, the basis for all unwholesome actions that bind people to the cycle of rebirths. Afflictions also mean all defilements that dull the mind, the basis for all unwholesome actions as well as kinks that bind people to the cycle of rebirths. People also call Afflictions the thirst of Mara. In order to attain enlightenment, the number one priority is to eliminate these defilements by practicing meditation on a regular basis. Practitioners of mindfulness subdue afflictions in four basic ways: Subduing afflictions with the mind by going deep into meditation or Buddha recitation. Subduing afflictions with noumenon. When deluded thoughts arise which cannot be subdued with mind through meditation or Buddha recitation, we should move to the next step by visualizing principles. Whenever afflictions of greed develop, we should visualize the principles of impurity, suffering, impermanence and no-self. When anger arises, we should visualize the principles of compassion, forgiveness and emptiness of all dharmas. Subduing afflictions with phenomena. When meditation, Buddha recitation and Noumenon don't work for someone with heavy karma, leaving phenomena (external form/leaving the scene) can be used. That is to say to leave the scene. When we know that anger or quarrel is about to burst out, we can leave the scene and slowly sip a glass of water to cool ourselves down. Subduing afflictions with repentance and recitation sutras, mantras, or reciting the noble name of Amitabha Buddha. As a matter of fact, according to the Mahayana teaching, especially the T'ien-T'ai sect, afflictions are inseparable from Buddhahood. Affliction and Buddhahood are considered to be two sides of the same coin. The one is included in the other. When we realize that afflictions in themselves can have no real and independent existence, therefore, we don't want to cling to anything, at that very moment, afflictions are bodhi without any difference. Once we thoroughly understand the real meaning of "Afflictions are bodhi", we've already subdued our own afflictions. The Buddha witnessed that all sentient beings undergo great sufferings, so He resolved to leave the home-life, to cultivate and find the way to help sentient beings escape these sufferings. Afflictions manifest themselves through our ignorance. Sometimes they show in our appearance; sometimes they are hidden in our minds, etc. In our daily life, we cannot do without sufferings and afflictions. However, if we know how to cultivate, we always consider "affliction is Bodhi". If we know how to

use it, affliction is Bodhi; on the contrary, if we do not know how to use it, then Bodhi becomes affliction. According to Late Most Venerable Hsuan-Hua in Talks on Dharma, volume 7, Bodhi is analogous to water, and affliction to ice. Ice and water are of the same substance; there is no difference. In freezing weather, water will freeze into ice, and in hot weather, ice will melt into water. When there are afflictions, water freezes into ice; and when the afflictions are gone, ice melts into water. It is to say, having afflictions is having the affliction-ice of ignorance; having no afflictions is having the Bodhi-water of wisdom.

Twelfth, To Subdue These Ten Robbers Through Striving to Cultivate the Ten Good Actions and Deva-Gati: According to the Mahayana Buddhism, there are ten meritorious deeds, or the ten paths of good action. First, to abstain from killing, but releasing beings is good; second, to abstain from stealing, but giving is good; third, to abstain from sexual misconduct, but being virtuous is good; fourth, to abstain from lying, but telling the truth is good; fifth, to abstain from speaking double-tongued (two-faced speech), but telling the truth is good; sixth, to abstain from hurtful words (abusive slander), but speaking loving words is good; seventh, to abstain from useless gossiping, but speaking useful words; eighth, to abstain from being greedy and covetous; ninth, to abstain from being angry, but being gentle is good; tenth, to abstain from being attached (devoted) to wrong views, but understand correctly is good. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, chapter ten, the Buddha of the Fragrant Land, Vimalakirti said to Bodhisattvas of the Fragrant Land as follows: “As you have said, the Bodhisattvas of this world have strong compassion, and their lifelong works of salvation for all living beings surpass those done in other pure lands during hundreds and thousands of aeons. Why? Because they achieved ten excellent deeds which are not required in other pure lands.” What are these ten excellent deeds? They are: using charity (dana) to succour the poor; using precept-keeping (sila) to help those who have broken the commandments; using patient endurance (ksanti) to subdue their anger; using zeal and devotion (virya) to cure their remissness; using serenity (dhyana) to stop their confused thoughts; using wisdom (prajna) to wipe out ignorance;putting an end to the eight distressful conditions for those suffering from them; teaching Mahayana to those who cling to Hinayana; cultivation of good roots for those in want of merits; and using the four Bodhisattva winning devices for the purpose of leading all living beings to their goals (in Bodhisattva development). According to Hinayana Buddhism, according to Most Venerable Narada, there are ten kinds of good karma or meritorious actions which may ripen in the sense-sphere. Generosity or charity which yields wealth; morality gives birth in noble families and in states of happiness; meditation gives birth in realms of form and formless realms;

reverence is the cause of noble parentage; service produces larger retinue; transference of merit acts as a cause to give in abundance in future births; rejoicing in other's merit is productive of joy wherever one is born; rejoicing in other's merit is also getting praise to oneself; hearing the dhamma is conductive to wisdom; expounding the dhamma is also conducive to wisdom; taking the three refuges results in the destruction of passions, straightening one's own views and mindfulness is conducive to diverse forms of happiness.

Thirteen, to Subdue These Ten Robbers According to The Pure Land Buddhism in Theory and Practice: The karma of greed, anger, delusion, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying... manifest themselves in many forms, which are impossible to describe fully. To refrain from greed, anger, jealousy, and other evil thoughts to which people are subject, we need strength of mind, strenuous effort and vigilance. When we are free from the city life, from nagging preoccupation with daily life, we are not tempted to lose control; but when we enter in the real society, it becomes an effort to check these troubles. Meditation will contribute an immense help to enable us to face all this with calm. According to Most Venerable Thích Thiền Tâm in The Pure Land Buddhism in Theory and Practice, there are four basic ways to subdue them. Depending on the circumstances, the practitioner can use either one of these four methods to counteract the karma of greed, anger and delusion. *The first method is "Suppressing afflictions with the mind":* There are only two points of divergence between the deluded and the enlightened, i.e., Buddhas and Bodhisattvas: purity is Buddhahood, defilement is the state of sentient beings. Because the Buddhas are in accord with the Pure Mind, they are enlightened, fully endowed with spiritual powers and wisdom. Because sentient beings are attached to worldly Dusts, they are deluded and revolve in the cycle of Birth and Death. To practice Pure Land is to go deep into the Buddha Recitation Samadhi, awakening to the Original Mind and attaining Buddhahood. Therefore, if any deluded, agitated thought develops during Buddha Recitation, it should be severed immediately, allowing us to return to the state of the Pure Mind. This is the method of counteracting afflictions with the mind. *The second method is "Suppressing afflictions with noumenon":* When deluded thoughts arise which cannot be suppressed with the mind, we should move to the second stage and "visualize principles." For example, whenever the affliction of greed develops, we should visualize the principles of impurity, suffering, impermanence, and no-self. Whenever the affliction of anger arises, we should visualize the principles of compassion, forgiveness and emptiness of all dharmas. *The third method is "Supressing afflictions with phenomena":* People with heavy karma who cannot suppress their afflictions by visualizing principles alone, we should use "phenomena," that is external forms. For

example, individuals who are prone to anger and delusion and are aware of their shortcomings, should, when they are on the verge of bursting into a quarrel, immediately leave the scene and slowly sip a glass of cold water. Those heavily afflicted with the karma of lust-attachment who cannot suppress their afflictions through "visualization of principle," should arrange to be near virtuous Elders and concentrate on Buddhist activities or distant travel, to overcome lust and memories gradually as mentioned in the saying "out of sight, out of mind." This is because sentient beings' minds closely parallel their surroundings and environment. If the surroundings disappear, the mind loses its anchor, and gradually, all memories fade away. *The fourth method is "Suppressing afflictions with repentance and recitation":* In addition to the above three methods, which range from the subtle to the gross, there is also a fourth: repentance and the recitation of sutras, mantras and the Buddha's name. If performed regularly, repentance and recitation eradicate bad karma and generate merit and wisdom. For this reason, many cultivators in times past, before receiving the precepts or embarking upon some great Dharma work such as building a temple or translating a sutra, would vow to recite the Great Compassion Mantra tens of thousands of times, or to recite the entire Larger Prajna Paramita Sutra, the longest sutra in the Buddha canon. In the past, during lay retreats, if a practitioner had heavy karmic obstructions and could not recite the Buddha's name with a pure mind or clearly visualize Amitabha Buddha, the presiding Dharma Master would usually advise him to follow the practice of "bowing repentance with incense." This method consists of lighting a long incense stick and respectfully bowing in repentance while uttering the Buddha's name, until the stick is burnt out. There are cases of individuals with heavy karma who would spend the entire seven or twenty-one-day retreat doing nothing but "bowing with incense."

Fourteenth, to Subdue These Ten Robbers Through Striving to Let the Sorrowless Flowers Always Bloom in Our Minds: The opportunity our precious human live does not last forever. Sooner or later, death comes to everyone. The very true nature of our lives is impermanent, and death inevitable. When we first took birth, given the countless number of bodies into which we have been born. Death is an irrevocable result of living. Therefore, we should not ignore it; on the contrary, it is good to think about it seriously. According to the Buddhist point of view, death is not an end but a means leading to another rebirth. The conscious mind only migrates from life to life. The starting point of such a process is impossible to retrace. However, our existence in samsara is not naturally infinite. Also, according to the Buddhist point of view, it is possible to put an end to it. A seed has no beginning but it is not naturally infinite, if we burn the seed, we can destroy its potential to grow. That is the end of it. The only way to do is to let the sorrowless flowers always

bloom in our minds. Why? Because once the sorrowless flowers bloom in our minds, we no longer continue to grow any seed for this rebirth cycle. Due to our deluded mind, even in this present life, we are constantly operating with negative actions. We do not have much freedom from afflictive emotions. We are enslaved by them. We are prisoners of our own devices. For example, when anger rises in us, we become completely under the control of this afflictive emotion. It makes us think and act in ways we do not want to. If we step back and look in a mirror when we become angry, we will see what anger has done to us. We will see anger's power to destroy us and others around us. We might wonder if it is indeed possible to expiate a non-virtuous deed such as one of these five heinous crimes. According to "Prasanghika Madhyamika," any kind of negative deed can be expiated. This is a property of negativities. If we do not leave them unattended until they are ripen, we can purify them. Non-virtuous deeds are negative by nature but have the quality of being purified. There are people who believe that they can get away with whatever negative action they commit. They are those who do not believe in the law of cause and effect. We have no comment on these people. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that according to the law of cause and effect, the consequences of any kind of act one commits, virtuous or non-virtuous, must be faced by that same person. In other words, each person is responsible for his own actions. And again, the only way to do this is to let the sorrowless flowers always bloom in our minds. Why? Because once the sorrowless flowers bloom in our minds, we are able to purify all negative and non-virtuous deeds in the past; at the same time, we can avoid similar negative and non-virtuous deeds at the present and in the future. However, the sorrowless flowers only bloom when we are content with few desires; or when we have few desires. Here "desires" include not only the desire for money and material things but also the wish for status and fame. It also indicates seeking the love and service of others. In Buddhism, a person who has attained the mental stage of deep faith has very few desires and is indifferent to them. We must note carefully that though such a person is indifferent to worldly desires, he is very eager for the truth, that is, he has a great desire for the truth. To be indifferent to the truth is to be slothful in life. To be content with few desires also means to be satisfied with little material gain, that is, not to feel discontented with one's lot and to be free from worldly cares. This does not mean to be unconcerned with self-improvement but to do one's best in one's work without discontent. Such a person will never be ignored by those around him. But even if people around him ignored him, he would feel quite happy because he lives like a king from a spiritual point of view. We must have few desires in two areas: the desires for food and sex. Food and sex support ignorance in perpetrating all sort of evil. Thus, Confucius taught: "Food and

sex are part of human nature." That is to say we are born with the craving for foos and sex. Why is that we have not been able to demolish our ignorance, eliminate our afflictions, and reveal our wisdom? Because we always crave for food and sex. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that food gives rise to sexual desire, and sexual desire gives rise to ignorance. Once the desire for food arises, the desire for sex arises as well. Men are attracted to beautiful women, and women are charmed by handsome men. People become infatuated and obsessed and cannot see through their desires. The nourishment from the food we eat is transformed into reporductive essence; and once that essence is full, sexual desire arises. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that the less tasty the food is, the better. Food should not be regarded as too important. Sincere Buddhists should practice moderation and eat only enough to sustain ourselves. We should neither eat very rich food, nor eat spoilt food, for either one could ruin our health. Finally, the sorrowless flowers only bloom when we understands things as they really are, that is seeing the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and non-substantial or non-self nature of the five aggregates of clinging in ourselves. It is not easy to understand ourselves because of our wrong concepts, baseless illusions, perversions and delusions. It is so difficult to see the real person. The Buddha taught that to be a real knower, we must first see and understand the impemanence of the five aggregates. He compares material form or body to a lump of foam, feeling to a bubble, perception to a mirage, mental formations or volitional activities to water-lily plant which is without heartwood, and consciousness to an illusion. The Buddha says: "Whatever material form there be whether past, future or present, internal, external, gross or subtle, low or lofty, far or near that material form is empty, unsubstantial and without essence. In the same manner, the remaining aggregates: feeling, perception, mental formation, and consciousness are also empty, unsubstantial and without essence. Thus, the five aggregates are impermanent, whatever is impermanent, that is suffering, unsatisfactory and without self. Whenever you understand this, you understand yourselves." To Buddhists, the blooming of the sorrowless flowers bloom also means the illumination of wisdom. In Buddhism, wisdom is of the highest importance; for purification comes through wisdom, through understanding; and wisdom in Buddhism is the key to enlightenment and final liberation. But the Buddha never praised mere intellect. According to him, knowledge should go hand in hand with purity of heart, with moral excellence. Wisdom gained by understanding and development of the qualities of mind and heart is wisdom par excellence. It is the knowledge of loving kindness, of compassion, of joy, of letting go, of altruism, of understanding of the law of cause and effect, of wishing for freedom, of seeking enlightenment and emancipation for others. It is saving knowledge, and not mere speculation, logic or specious

reasoning. However, devout Buddhists never fall in love with wisdom; nor induce the search after wisdom; nor adore wisdom. Although wisdom really has its significance and bearing on mankind, devout Buddhists should use it as an encouragement of a practical application of the teaching that leads the follower to dispassion, enlightenment and final deliverance. Hoping that the sorrowless flowers are blooming everywhere, so that one day all beings will achieve Buddhahood together!

IV. The Buddha's Teachings on Methods of Subduing These Ten Robbers of Desires-Anger-Ignorance-Arrogance-Doubt-Wrong Views-Killing-Stealing-Sexual Misconduct-Lying in Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death:

The Buddha's Teachings on Desire & Love: In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: One is the path that leads to worldly gain, and another is the path leads to nirvana. Once understand this, the monks and the lay disciples of the Buddha, should not rejoice in the praise and worldly favours, but cultivate detachment (75). It is difficult to renounce the world. It is difficult to be a householder. It is painful to associate with those who are not friends. It is painful to be wandering in the samsara forever. Reaching the enlightenment and let wander no more! Let's suffer no more! (Dharmapada 302). Whoever binds to craving, his sorrows flourish like well-watered birana grass (Dharmapada 335). Whoever in this world overcomes this unruly craving, his sorrows fall away just like water-drops from a lotus leaf (Dharmapada 336). This is my advice to you: "Root out craving; root it out, just like birana grass is rooted out. Let not Mara crush you again and again as a flood crushes a reed! (Dharmapada 337). Latent craving is not conquered, suffering recovers and grows again and again, just like a tree hewn down grows up again as long as its roots is unrooted (Dharmapada 338). If in any man, the thirty-six streams of craving are still flowing, such deluded person is still looking for pleasure and passion, and torrential thoughts of lust sweep him away (Dharmapada 339). Streams of pleasure and passion flow in all directions, just like the creeper sprouts and stands. Seeing the creeper that has sprung up in your mind, cut it off with wisdom (Dharmapada 340). Common people are subject to attachment and thirst; they are always happy with pleasure; they run after passion. They look for happiness, but such men caught in the cycle of birth and decay again and again (Dharmapada 341). Men who are crazed with craving, are terrified like hunted hares. The more they hold fast by fetters, bonds, and afflictions, the longer they suffer (Dharmapada 342). Men who are crazed with craving, are terrified just like hunted hares. Therefore, a monk who wishes his own passionlessness, should first banish craving (Dharmapada 343). He who is

free from desire for the household, finds pleasure (of asceticism or monastic life) in the forest, yet run back to that very home. Look at that man! He runs right back into that very bondage again! (Dharmapada 344). To a wise man, the bondage that is made of hemp, wood or iron, is not a strong bond, the longing for wives, children, jewels, and ornaments is a greater and far stronger attachment (Dharmapada 345). The wise people say that that bond is very strong. Such fetters seem supple, but hard to break. Break them! Cut off desire and renounce the world! (Dharmapada 346). A man infatuated with lust falls back into the stream as a spider into the web spun by itself. He who cuts off this bond, retire from the world, with no clinging, will leave all sorrow behind (Dharmapada 347). He who has reached the goal, without fear, without craving and without desire, has cut off the thorns of life. This is his final mortal body (Dharmapada 351). He who is without craving, without attachment; who understands subtleties of words and meanings; they are truly a great wise who bear the final mortal body (Dharmapada 352). Strive hard to cut off the stream of desires. Oh! Brahman! Knowing that all conditioned things will perish. Oh! Brahman! You are a knower of the Unmade Nirvana! (Dharmapada 383).

Also, in the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught on Happiness: "Happy is the birth of Buddhas! Happy is the teaching of the True Law! Happy is the harmony in the sangha! Happy is the discipline of the united ones! (Dharmapada 194). Oh! Happily do we live without hatred among the hateful! Among hateful men we dwell unhating! (Dharmapada 197). Oh! Happily do we live in good health among the ailing! Among the ailing we dwell in good health! (Dharmapada 198). Oh! Happily do we live without greed for sensual pleasures among the greedy! Among the greedy we dwell free from greed! (Dharmapada 199). Oh! Happily do we live without any hindrance. We shall always live in peace and joy as the gods of the Radiant Realm (Dharmapada 200). Victory breeds hatred, defeat breeds suffering; giving up both victory and defeat will lead us to a peaceful and happy life (Dharmapada 201). From desire springs grief; from desire springs fear. For him who is free from desire, will be neither grief nor fear (214). From lust springs grief; from lust springs fear. For him who is free from lust, there will be neither grief nor fear (215). There is no fire like passion, no grip like hatred, no net like ignorance, no river like craving (251). Not by a shaven head does an undisciplined man who utters lies on the Dharma, become a monk. How can one who is full of desire and greed be a monk? (264). If by giving up a small happiness or pleasure, one may behold a larger joy. A far-seeing and wise man will do this (a wise man will leave the small pleasure and look for a larger one) (Dharmapada 290). It is pleasant to have friends when need arises. Enjoyment is pleasant when shared with one another. Merit is pleasant when life is at its end. Shunning of (giving up) all evil is pleasant (Dharmapada 331). To revere the mother is

pleasant; to revere the father is pleasant; to revere the monks is pleasant; to revere the sages is pleasant (Dharmapada 332). To be virtue until old age is pleasant; to have steadfast faith is pleasant; to attain wisdom is pleasant; not to do evil is pleasant (Dharmapada 333).

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He who is without craving, without attachment; who understands subtleties of words and meanings; they are truly a great wise who bear the final mortal body (Dharmapada 352). Strive hard to cut off the stream of desires. Oh! Brahman! Knowing that all conditioned things will perish. Oh! Brahman! You are a knower of the Unmade Nirvana! (Dharmapada 383)." He whose passion, hatred, pride and hypocrisy fall off like a mustard seed from the point of a needle, I call him a Brahmana (407).

In the Middle Length Discourses, the Buddha taught: "O Bhikksus, with sense desires as cause, with sense desires as motives, kings are fighting with kings, khattiya are fighting with khattiya, brahmanas are fighting with brahmanas, householders are fighting with householders, mother is fighting with son, son is fighting with mother, father is fighting with brother, brother is fighting with sister, sister is fighting with brother, friend is fighting with friend. When they engage themselves in fighting, in quarrels, in disputes, they attack each other with hands, they attack each other with stones, they attack each other with sticks, they attack each other with swords. Thus, they are going to death, or to suffer like death. O Bhikksus, with sense desires as cause, with sense desires as motives, they take hold of spears, they take hold of shields, they wear bows and arrows. They arrange themselves in two lines, and arrows are thrown at each other, knives are thrown at each other, swords are slashed at each other. They pierce each other with arrows, they slash each other with knives, they cut each other heads with swords. Thus, they are going to death, or to suffer like death."

The Buddha's Teachings on Anger: The Buddha taught: "Bandits who steal merits are of no comparison to hatred and anger. Because when hatred and anger arise, inevitable innumerable karma will be created. Immediately thereafter, hundreds and thousands of obstructions will appear, masking the proper teachings of enlightenment, burying and dimming the Buddha Nature. Therefore, a thought of hatred and anger had just barely risen, ten of thousands of karmic doors will open immediately. It is to say with just one thought of hatred, one must endure all such obstructions and obstacles." In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "Like the earth, Arhats who are balanced and well-disciplined, resent not. He is like a pool without mud; no new births are in store for him (95). Misers cannot go to the heaven; fools cannot indeed praise charity. A wise man rejoices in alsmgiving and thus becomes happy thereafter (177). There is no fire like lust; no evil like hatred. There is no ill like the body; no bliss higher than Nirvana (202). One should give up anger; one should abandon pride. One should overcome all fetters. No suffering befalls him who calls nothing his own (Dharmapada 221). He who controls his anger which arises as a rolling chariot. He is a true charioteer. Other people are only holding the rein (Dharmapada 222). Conquer anger by

love; conquer evil by good; conquer stingy by giving; conquer the liar by truth (Dharmapada 223). One should speak the truth. One should not be angry. One should give when asked to. These are three good deeds that help carry men the realm of heaven (224). One should guard against the bodily anger, or physical action, and should control the body. One should give up evil conduct of the body. One should be of good bodily conduct (Dharmapada 231). One should guard against the anger of the tongue; one should control the tongue. One should give up evil conduct in speech. One should be of good conduct in speech (Dharmapada 232). One should guard against the anger of the mind; one should control the mind. One should give up evil conduct of the mind. One should practice virtue with the mind (Dharmapada 233). Only he who eradicates hatred, is indeed called good-natured (263)."

The Buddha's Teachings on Ignorance: In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "Long is the night to the wakeful; long is the road to him who is tired; long is samsara to the foolish who do not know true Law (60). If a traveler does not meet a companion who is better or at least equal, let him firmly pursue his solitary career, rather than being in fellowship with the foolish (61). These are my sons; this is my wealth; with such thought a fool is tormented. Verily, he is not even the owner of himself. Whence sons? Whence wealth? (62). A foolish man who knows that he is a fool, for that very reason a wise man; the fool who think himself wise, he is indeed a real fool (63). If a fool associates with a wise man even all his life, he will understand the Dharma as litle as a spoon tastes the flavour of soup (64). An intelligent person associates with a wise man, even for a moment, he will quickly understand the Dharma, as the tongue tastes the flavour of soup (65). A fool with little wit, goes through life with the very self as his own greatest enemy. In the same manner, evil doers do evil deeds, the fruit of which is bitter (66). The deed is not well done of which a man must repent, and the reward of which he receives, weeping, with tearful face; one reaps the fruit thereof (67). The deed is well done when, after having done it, one repents not, and when, with joy and pleasure, one reaps the fruit thereof (68). As long as the evil deed done does not bear fruit, the fool thinks it is as sweet as honey; but when it ripens, then he comes to grief (69). Let a fool, month after month, eats only as much food as can be picked up on the tip of a kusa blade; but he is not worth a sixteenth part of them who have comprehended the truth (70). An evil deed committed may not immediately bear fruit, just as newl drawn milk does not turn sour at once. In the same manner, smouldering, it follows the fool like fire covered with ashes (71). The knowledge and fame that the fool gains, so far from benefiting; they destroy his bright lot and cleave his head (72). The fool always desires for an undue reputation or undeserved honour, precedence among the monks, authority in the monasteries, honour among other families

(73). Let both monks and laymen think, “by myself was this done; in every work, great or small, let them refer to me.” Such is the ambition of the fool; his desires and pride increase (74).

The Buddha's Teachings on Arrogance: According to the Flower Adornment Sutra, Chapter 38, there are ten kinds of conceited action of Great Enlightening Beings. Enlightening Beings who can get rid of these ten kinds of conceited action will attain ten kinds of actions of knowledge. First, not respecting teachers, parents, mendicants, people on the right Path, people aiming for the right Path, or honorable fields of blessings, is conceited action. Second, if there are teachers who have attained to supreme truth, who ride the Great Vehicle of universal enlightenment, who know the way to emancipation, who have attained mental command and expound the great principles of the scriptures, to be haughty toward them or their teachings and to be disrespectful is conceited action. Third, when in an audience hearing the sublime Teaching expounded, to be unwilling to laud its excellence and cause others to believe and accept it, is conceited action. The fourth conceited action: habitually conceiving the illusion of superiority, elevating onself and looking down on others, not seeing one’s own faults, and not knowing one’s own shortcoming. The fifth conceited action: habitually imagining that one is better than those who are better than onself; not praising virtuous people who are praiseworthy; not being happy when others praise virtuous people. Sixth, when seeing someone preach, in spite of knowing it is the norm, the rule, the truth, the word of Buddha, to despise the teaching because of disliking the person, to slander it and incite others to slander it, is conceited action. The seventh conceited action: seeking a high seat for oneself; edeclaring onself to a teacher; declaring onself to be worthy of receiving offerings; not supposed to work; failing to rise to greet old people who have cultivated spiritual practice for a long time; being unwilling to serve and make offerings to enlightening beings. Eighth, frowning unhappily on seeing people with virtue, speaking to them harshly and looking for faults in them, is conceited action. The ninth conceited action, when seeing intelligent people who know the truth, not being willing to approach and attend them, not respecting and honoring them, being unwilling to ask them what is good and what is not good, what should be done and what should not be done, what acts result in various benefits and comforts in the long night, being foolish and deluded, stubborn and contentious, swallow by self-importance, never able to see the way of emancipation. The tenth conceited action: minds shrouded by conceit; when Buddhas appear in the world are unable to approach, respect, and honor them; no new good arises, and goodness from the past evaporates and vanishes; they say what they should not; they contend where they should not; in the future they will surely fall into a deep pit of danger and; will not even encounter Buddha; much less

hearing the Teaching for hundreds of thousands of eons; though because of having once conceived the aspiration for enlightenment they will in the end wake up on their own. According to the Surangama Sutra, book Eight, the Buddha reminded Ananda about the habit of arrogance as follows: "Habits of arrogance and resulting friction which give rise to mutual intimidation. When it accelerates without cease, it produces torrents and rapids which create restless waves of water, just as water is produced when a person continuously works his tongue in an effort to taste flavors. Because these two habits incite one another, there come into being the river of blood, the river of ashes, the burning sand, the poisonous sea, the molten copper which is poured over one or which must be swallowed, and other such experiences. Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon self-satisfaction and name it 'drinking the water of stupidity.' Bodhisattvas should avoid arrogance as they would a huge deluge."

The Buddha's Teachings on Doubt: In Buddhist scriptures, the Buddha always taught that doubting is natural. Everyone starts with doubts. We can learn a great deal from them. What is important is that we do not identify with our doubts. That is, do not get caught up in them, letting our mind spin in endless circles. Instead, watch the whole process of doubting, of wondering. See who it is that doubts. See how doubts come and go. Then we will no longer be victimized by our doubts. We will step outside of them, and our mind will be quiet. We can see how all things come and go. Let go of our doubts and simply watch ro see the real nature of them. This is how to end doubting. In short, to see the real nature of doubts will lead practitioners to letting go. And as a matter of fact, unless Buddhist practitioners see the real nature of doubts, if not, we can never let them go. Practitioners should always listen to the Buddha's teachings on doubts to prevent us from sufferings and afflictions on our path of cultivation.

The Buddha's Teachings on Wrong Views: According to the Simile of the Snake in the Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, the Buddha taught about someone who does not have wrong views as follows: "Here Bhikkhus! Someone who hears the Tathagata or a disciple of the Tathagata teaching the Dharma for the elimination of all standpoints, decisions, obsessions, adherences, and underlying tendencies, for the stilling of all formations, for the relinquishing of all attachments, for the destruction of craving, for dispassion, for cessation, for Nirvana. He thinks that he will be annihilated, he will be perished; he will have no more sorrow, grieve, and lament; he does not weep beating his breast and become distraught." In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "Those who embrace the wrong views, are ashamed of what is not shameful, and are not ashamed of what is shameful, will not be able to avoid the hell (Dharmapada 316). Those who fear when they should not fear,

and don't fear in the fearsome, embrace these false views, will not be able to avoid the hell (Dharmapada 317). Those who perceive faults in the faultless, and see no wrong in what is wrong; such men, embracing false doctrines, will not be able to avoid the hell (Dharmapada 318). Those who perceive wrong as wrong and what is right as right, such men, embracing right views and go to the blissful state (319)."

The Buddha's Teachings on Killing: In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "He who in this world destroys life, tells lie, takes others' wealth, commits adultery, is addicted to intoxicating liquors (246). A person who has such actions, digs up his own good roots right in this life (247). He who does not use the rod to damage creatures, big or small, who neither harms nor kills, I call him a Brahmana (405)." According to the Surangama Sutra, the Buddha reminded Ananda about "cutting off killing", one of the four important precepts for monks and nuns in Buddhism: "Ananda! If living beings in the six paths of any mundane world had no thoughts of killing, they would not have to follow a continual succession of births and deaths. Ananda! Your basic purpose in cultivating samadhi is to transcend the wearisome defilements. But if you do not remove your thoughts of killing, you will not be able to get out of the dust. Ananda! Even though one may have some wisdom and the manifestation of Zen Samadhi, one is certain to enter the path of spirits if one does not cease killing. At best, a person will become a mighty ghost; on the average, one will become a flying yaksha, a ghost leader, or the like; at the lowest level, one will become an earth-bound rakshasa. These ghosts and spirits have their groups of disciples. Each says of himself that he has accomplished the unsurpassed way. After my extinction, in the Dharma-Ending Age, these hordes of ghosts and spirits will aboud, spreading like wildfire as they argue that eating meat will bring one to the Bodhi Way. Ananda! I permit the Bhikshus to eat five kinds of pure meat. This meat is actually a transformation brought into being by my spiritual powers. It basically has no life-force. You Brahmans live in a climate so hot and humid, and on such sandy and rocky land, that vegetables will not grow. Therefore, I have had to assist you with spiritual powers and compassion. Because of the magnitude of this kindness and compassion, what you eat that tastes like meat is merely said to be meat; in fact, however, it is not. After my extinction, how can those who eat the flesh of living beings be called the disciples of Sakya? You should know that these people who eat meat may gain some awareness and may seem to be in samadhi, but they are all great rakshasas. When their retribution ends, they are bound to sink into the bitter sea of birth and death. They are not disciples of the Buddha. Such people as they kill and eat one another in a never-ending cycle. How can such people transcend the triple realm? Ananda! When you teach people in the world to cultivate samadhi,

they must also cut off killing. This is the second clear and unalterable instruction on purity given by the Thus Come Ones and the Buddhas of the past, World Honored Ones. Therefore, Ananda, if cultivators of Zen Samadhi do not cut off killing, they are like one who stops up his ears and calls out in a loud voice, expecting no one to hear him. It is to wish to hide what is completely evident. Bhikshus and Bodhisattvas who practice purity will not even step on grass in the pathway; even less will they pull it up with their hand. How can one with great compassion pick up the flesh and blood of living beings and proceed to eat his fill? Bhikshus who do not wear silk, leather boots, furs, or down from this country or consume milk, cream, or butter can truly transcend this world. When they have paid back their past debts, they will not have to re-enter the triple realm. Why? It is because when one wears something taken from a living creature, one creates conditions with it, just as when people eat the hundred grains, their feet cannot leave the earth. Both physically and mentally one must avoid the bodies and the by-products of living beings, by neither wearing them nor eating them. I say that such people have true liberation. What I have said here is the Buddha's teaching. Any explanation counter to it is the teaching of Papiyan.

The Buddha's Teachings on Stealing: In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "He who takes nothing that is not given, good or bad, long or short, small or great, I call him a Brahmana (409)." According to the Surangama Sutra, the Buddha reminded Ananda about "cutting off stealing", one of the four important precepts for monks and nuns in Buddhism: "Ananda! If living beings in the six paths of any mundane world had no thoughts of stealing, they would not have to follow a continuous succession of births and deaths. Ananda! Your basic purpose in cultivating samadhi is to transcend the wearisome defilements. But if you do not renounce your thoughts of stealing, you will not be able to get out of the dust. Ananda! Even though one may have some wisdom and the manifestation of Zen Samadhi, one is certain to enter a devious path if one does not cease stealing. At best, one will be an apparition; on the average, one will become a phantom; at the lowest level, one will be a devious person who is possessed by a Mei-Ghost. These devious hordes have their groups of disciples. Each says of himself that he has accomplished the unsurpassed way. After my extinction, in the Dharma-Ending Age, these phantoms and apparitions will abound, spreading like wildfire as they surreptitiously cheat others. Calling themselves good knowing advisors, they will each say that they have attained the superhuman dharmas. Enticing and deceiving the ignorant, or frightening them out of their wits, they disrupt and lay watse to households wherever they go. I teach the Bhikshus to beg for their food in an assigned place, in order to help them renounce greed and accomplish the Bodhi Way. The Bhikshus do not prepare their own food,

so that, at the end of this life of transitory existence in the triple realm, they can show themselves to be once-returners who go and do not come back. How can thieves who put on my robes and sell the Thus Come One's dharmas, saying that all manner of karma one creates is just the Buddhadharma? They slander those who have left the home-life and regard Bhikshus who have taken complete precepts as belonging to the path of the small vehicle. Because of such doubts and misjudgments, limitless living beings fall into the Unintermittent Hell. I say that Bhikshus who after my extinction have decisive resolve to cultivate samadhi, and who before the images of Thus Come Ones can burn a candle on their bodies, or burn off a finger, or burn even one incense stick on their bodies, will in that moment, repay their debts from beginningless time past. They can depart from the world and forever be free of outflows. Though they may not have instantly understood the unsurpassed enlightenment, they will already have firmly set their mind on it. If one does not practice any of these token renunciations of the body on the causal level, then even if one realizes the unconditioned, one will still have to come back as a person to repay one's past debts exactly as I had to undergo the retribution of having to eat the grain meant for horses. Ananda! When you teach people in the world to cultivate samadhi, they must also cease stealing. This is the third clear and unalterable instruction on purity given by the Thus Come One and the Buddhas of the past, World Honored Ones. Therefore, Ananda, if cultivators of Zen Samadhi do not cease stealing, they are like someone who pours water into a leaking cup and hopes to fill it. He may continue for as many eons as there are fine motes of dust, but it still will not be full in the end. If Bhikshus do not store away anything but their robes and bowls; if they give what is left over from their food-offerings to hungry living beings; if they put their palms together and make obeisance to the entire great assembly; if when people scold them they can treat it as praise: if they can sacrifice their very bodies and minds, giving their flesh, bones, and blood to living creatures. If they do not repeat the non-ultimate teachings of the Thus Come One as though they were their own explanations, misrepresenting them to those who have just begun to study, then the Buddha gives them his seal as having attained true samadhi. What I have said here is the Buddha's teaching. Any explanation counter to it is the teaching of Papiyan.

The Buddha's Teachings on Lewd: According to the Anguttara Nikaya, the Buddha taught: "Monk, I know not of any other single form by which a man's heart is attracted as it is by that of a woman. Monks, a woman's form fills a man's mind. Monks, I know not of any other single sound by which a man's heart is attracted as it is by that of a woman. Monks, a woman's sound fills a man's mind (the same thing happens with smell, flavor, touch..." Sex is described by the Buddha as the strongest impulse in man. If one becomes a

slave to this impulse, even the most powerful man turns into a weakling; even the sage may fall from the higher to a lower level. In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: “Even a shower of gold pieces cannot satisfy lust. A wise man knows that lusts have a short taste, but long suffering (186). Misconduct is the taint of a woman; stinginess is the taint of a donor. Taints are indeed all evil things, both in this world and in the next (242). Four misfortunes occur to a careless man who commits adultery: acquisition of demerit, restlessness, moral blame and downward path (Dharmapada 309). There is acquisition of demerit as well as evil destiny. No joy of the frightened man. The king imposes a heavy punishment. Therefore, man should never commit adultery (Dharmapada 310).” In the Forty-Two Sections Sutra, the Buddha said: “There was once someone who, plagued by ceaseless sexual desire, wished to castrate himself. To cut off your sexual organs would not be as good as to cut off your mind. You mind is like a supervisor; if the supervisor stops, his employees will also quit. If the deviant mind is not stopped, what good does it do to cut off the organs?” The Kasyapa Buddha taught: ‘Desire is born from your will; your will is born from thought. When both aspects of the mind are still, there is neither form nor activity.” We, Buddhist practitioners shouldlisten to the Buddha's teaching to get rid of sexual misconducts, for once we are able to get rid of sexual misconducts also means that we have already pushed away great obstacles on our own path of cultivation.

According to the Surangama Sutra, the Buddha reminded Ananda about “cutting off lust”, one of the four important precepts for monks and nuns in Buddhism: “Ananda! Your basic purpose in cultivating is to transcend the wearisome defilements. But if you don’t renounce your lustful thoughts, you will not be able to get out of the dust. Even though one may have some wisdom and the manifestation of Zen Samadhi, one is certain to enter demonic paths if one does not cut off lust. At best, one will be a demon king; on the average, one will be in the retinue of demons; at the lowest level, one will be a female demon. These demons have their groups of disciples. Each says of himself he has accomplished the unsurpassed way. After my extinction, in the Dharma-Ending Age, these hordes of demons will abound, spreading like wildfire as they openly practice greed and lust. Calming to be good knowing advisors, they will cause living beings to fall into the pit of love and views and lose the way to Bodhi Ananda! When you teach people in the world to cultivate samadhi, they must first of all sever the mind of lust. This is the first clear and unalterable instruction on purity given by the Thus Come Ones and the Buddhas of the past, World Honored Ones. Therefore, Ananda, if cultivators of Zen Samadhi do not cut off lust, they will be like someone who cooks sand in the hope of getting rice, after hundreds of thousands of eons, it will still be just hot sand. Why? It wasn’t rice to begin with; it was only sand.

Ananda! If you seek the Buddha's wonderful fruition and still have physical lust, then even if you attain a wonderful awakening, it will be based in lust. With lust at the source, you will revolve in the three paths and not be able to get out. Which road will you take to cultivate and be certified to the Thus Come One's Nirvana? You must cut off the lust which is intrinsic in both body and mind. Then get rid of even the aspect of cutting it off. At that point you have some hope of attaining the Buddha's Bodhi. What I have said here is the Buddha's teaching. Any explanation counter to it is the teaching of Papiyan. According to the Anguttara Nikaya, the Buddha taught: "Monk, I know not of any other single form by which a man's heart is attracted as it is by that of a woman. Monks, a woman's form fills a man's mind. Monks, I know not of any other single sound by which a man's heart is attracted as it is by that of a woman. Monks, a woman's sound fills a man's mind (the same thing happens with smell, flavor, touch...)" Sex is described by the Buddha as the strongest impulse in man. If one becomes a slave to this impulse, even the most powerful man turns into a weakling; even the sage may fall from the higher to a lower level. In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "Four misfortunes occur to a careless man who commits adultery: acquisition of demerit, restlessness, moral blame and downward path (Dharmapada 309). There is acquisition of demerit as well as evil destiny. No joy of the frightened man. The king imposes a heavy punishment. Therefore, man should never commit adultery (Dharmapada 310)." In the Forty-Two Sections Sutra, the Buddha said: "There was once someone who, plagued by ceaseless sexual desire, wished to castrate himself. To cut off your sexual organs would not be as good as to cut off your mind. You mind is like a supervisor; if the supervisor stops, his employees will also quit. If the deviant mind is not stopped, what good does it do to cut off the organs?" The Kasyapa Buddha taught: 'Desire is born from your will; your will is born from thought. When both aspects of the mind are still, there is neither form nor activity."

The Buddha's Teachings on Lying: At the time of the Buddha, one day, an angry man with a bad temper went to see the Buddha. The man used harsh words to abuse the Buddha. The Buddha listened to him patiently and quietly, and did not say anything as the man spoke. The angry man finally stopped speaking. Only then did the Buddha ask him, "If someone wants to give you something, but you don't want to accept it, to whom does the gift belong?" "Of course, it belongs to the person who tried to give it away in the first place," the man answered. "Likewise, it is with your abuse," said the Buddha. "I do not wish to accept it, and so it belongs to you. You should have to keep this gift of harsh words and abuse for yourself. And I am afraid that in the end you will have to suffer it, for a bad man who abuses a good man can only bring suffering on himself. It is as if a man wanted to dirty the sky by spitting at it.

His spittle can never make the sky dirty; it would only fall onto his own face and make it dirty instead." The man listened to the Buddha and felt ashamed. He asked the Buddha to forgive him and became one of his followers. The Buddha the said, "Only kind words and reasoning can influence and transform others." According to the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "Do not speak harshly to anyone. Those who are spoken to will respond in the same manner. Angry speech nourishes trouble. You will receive blows in exchange for blows (133). If like a cracked gong, you silence yourself, you already have attained Nirvana. No vindictiveness (quarrels) will be found in you (134). Those who have transgressed the One Vehicle Law (the law of truthfulness), who tell lie, who don't believe in the law of cause and effect, there is no evil that they will not do (176). The speaker of untruth goes down; also, he who denies what he has done, both sinned against truth. After death they go together to hells (306)." According to Buddhism, habits of deceptions (deceitfulness) result in yokes and being beaten with rods. According to the Surangama Sutra, book Eight, the Buddha reminded Ananda about the habit of deceitfulness as follows: "Habits of deception and misleading involments which give rise to mutual guile. When such maneucering continues without cease, it produces the ropes and wood of gallows for hanging, like the grass and trees that grow when water saturates a field. Because these two habits perpetuate one another, there come into being handcuffs and fetters, cangues and locks, whips and clubs, sticks and cudgels, and other such experiences. Therefore, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions look upon deception and name it a 'treacherous crook.' Bodhisattvas fear deception as they would a savage wolf."

V. Conclusion for the Writing "Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death by Being Always Subduing Ten Afflictive Robbers of Desires-Anger-Ignorance-Arrogance-Doubt-Wrong Views-Killing-Stealing-Sexual Misconduct-Lying":

In short, in the conclusion part for the writing "Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death by Being Always Subduing Ten Afflictive Robbers of Desires-Anger-Ignorance-Arrogance-Doubt-Wrong Views-Killing-Stealing-Sexual Misconduct-Lying", it should be reminded that the reason for calling them robbers because they usually plunder the virtues and murder the wisdom-life of cultivators. Robbers that we are going to mention always take turns watching practitioners constantly and without interruption, waiting for the opportunity. These robbers are always waiting to infiltrate, to harm and to destroy completely our path of cultivation. If the Buddhist practitioner has a delusive thought, they pounce on him or steer him toward things contrary to

the Way. The practitioner's entire lifetime of cultivation is then over, for all practical purposes. The worldly way is letting the doors of the six sense organs widely opened and outgoing exuberant. The way of the devoted Buddhist's life is to close the doors of the six sense organs, restrained and controlled. The ancients have said: "If inside the door there are mean-spirited people, mean-spirited people will arrive at the door; if inside the door there are virtuous, superior people, noble superior people will arrive at the door." As an example, when thieves try to enter a house through the side door, if the owner calmly scolds them in a loud voice, they will naturally be frightened and leave. If on the other hand, he is terrified and panic-stricken, and begs them to desist, he will unwittingly be inviting them into his house. Generally speaking, when the doors are wide opened, robbers are encouraged to freely enter, while closed doors can delay or slow down robbers' infiltration. According to Buddhist teachings, three robbers of greed, anger, ignorance... are unwholesome or negative Karmas. Unwholesome or evil karmas of greed, hatred and ignorance... are all created by body, mouth and speech. Unwholesome or harmful actions, or conduct in thought, word, or deed (by the body, speech, and mind) to self and others which leads to evil recompense (negative path, bad deeds, or black path). In other words, evil actions are those that result in suffering and whose consequences are perceived as painful for beings who experience them. According to the Sigalaka Sutra, there are four causes of unwholesome or evil actions: unwholesome action springs from attachment, ill-will, ignorance, and fear. According to the Sigalaka Sutra, the Buddha taught: "If the Ariyan disciple does not act out of attachment, ill-will, folly or fear, he will not do evil from any one of the four above mentioned causes." From the earliest period, Buddhist thought has argued that the reasons these robbers mentioned above can infiltrate sentient beings are the result of ignorance (avidya), which cause sentient beings to open widely doors of their six sense-organs for these robbers come and go freely. It means these robbers can no longer come and go freely once ignorance is overcome.

Vehement longing or desire or coveting others' possessions is when we plan how to procure something belonging to another person. Raga is also interpreted as tainted by and in bondage to the five desires. While coveting is a mental action no one else can see, it can lead us to flatter, bribe, cheat or steal from others to obtain what we desire. Greed, the first unwholesome root, covers all degrees of selfish desire, longing, attachment, and clinging. Its characteristic is grasping an object. Its function is sticking, as meat sticks to a hot pan. It is manifested as not giving up. Its proximate cause is seeing enjoyment in things that lead to bondage. Anger is an emotional response to something that is inappropriate or unjust. If one does not obtain what one is greedy can lead to anger. Anger is an emotion involved in self-protection.

However, according to Buddhist doctrines, anger manifests itself in a very crude manner, destroying the practitioner in a most effective way. Thus, according to the Buddha's teachings in the Dharmapada Sutra, to subdue anger and resentment, we must develop a compassionate mind by meditating on loving kindness, pity and compassion. According to Buddhism, the basis of anger is usually fear for when we get angry, we feel we are not afraid any more, however, this is only a blind power. The energy of anger, if it's not so destructive, it may not be of any constructive. Ignorance is an unenlightened mind that led astray. In Buddhism, delusion or moha is a synonym for avijja, ignorance. Its characteristic is mental blindness or unknowing. Its function is non-penetration, or concealment of the real nature of the object. It is manifested as the absence of right understanding or as mental darkness. Its proximate cause is unwise attention. It should be seen as the root of all that is unwholesome. The karma of greed, anger, delusion, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying... manifest themselves in many forms, which are impossible to describe fully. To refrain from greed, anger, jealousy, and other evil thoughts to which people are subject, we need strength of mind, strenuous effort and vigilance. When we are free from the city life, from nagging preoccupation with daily life, we are not tempted to lose control; but when we enter in the real society, it becomes an effort to check these troubles. Meditation will contribute an immense help to enable us to face all this with calm. The defilements we call lust or greed, anger and ignorance, are just outward names and appearances, just as we call a house beautiful, ugly, big, small, etc. These are only appearances of things. If we want a big house, we call this one small. We create such concepts because of our craving. Craving causes us to discriminate, while the truth is merely what is. Look at it this way. Are you a person? Yes. This is the appearance of things. But you are really only a combination of elements or a group of changing aggregates. If the mind is free, it does not discriminate. No big and small, no you and me, nothing. We say 'anatta' or 'not self', but really, in the end, there is neither 'atta' nor 'anatta'. Truly speaking, not only Buddhists but the whole world also is indebted to the Buddha for it is He who first showed the Way to free human beings from lush, anger, stupidity, arrogance... If we, Buddhists, can enter and advance on the path of cultivation, not talking about becoming a Buddha, at every moment, at least, we can reduce evil thoughts, ignorance, selfishness, hatred, anger, jealousy, grudges, and ill-will. Furthermore, if we can identify them in our daily life, that is similar to the reduction of the effects of the bad karma that we committed in many aeons in the past, for this the way that the Buddha advanced for overcoming the bad effects and escaping the ocean of life and death.

Chapter Twenty-Six

Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death Through Cultivation of Kusala Dharmas & By Staying Away from Akusala Dharmas

I. To Be Able to Escape the Ocean of Life and Death, Practitioners Should Always Try to Reduce Robbers of Afflictions Through Cultivation of Kusala Dharmas:

As mentioned above, afflictions include worldly cares, sensual desire, passions, unfortunate longings, suffering, pain that arise out of a deluded view of the world. In the four great vows, an adherent of Zen vows to eliminate these passions which obstruct the path to the attainment of enlightenment. Affliction also means suffering (pain), sorrow, distress, or calamity. Affliction includes delusion, moral faults, passions, and wrong belief. The way of temptation or passion which produces bad karma (life's distress and delusion), cause one to wander in the samsara and hinder one from reaching enlightenment. In order to attain enlightenment and emancipation (liberation), the number one priority is to reduce afflictions and to eliminate these defilements by cultivation of kusala dharmas and staying away from akusala dharmas on a regular basis. In other words, in Buddhist cultivation, wanting to escape the ocean of life and death, practitioners should always cultivate kusala dharmas and by stay away from akusala dharmas. "Kusala" means volitional action that is done in accordance with the Aryan Eightfold Noble Path. So, Kusala is not only in accordance with the right action, but it is also always in accordance with the right view, right understanding, right speech, right livelihood, right energy, right concentration and right samadhi. According to the Dharmapada Sutra, verse 183, the Buddha taught: Not to do evil, to do good, to purify one's mind, this is the teaching of the Buddhas." Kusala karmas or good deeds will help a person control a lot of troubles arising from his mind. Inversely, if a person does evil deeds he will receive bad results in this life and the next existence which are suffering. Thus, wholesome deeds clean our mind and give happiness to oneself and

others. Kusala means good, right, or wholesome. It is contrary to the unwholesome. According to Buddhism, kusala karma means volitional action that is done in accordance with the Aryan Eightfold Noble Path. So, Kusala karma is not only in accordance with the right action, but it is also always in accordance with the right view, right understanding, right speech, right livelihood, right energy, right concentration and right samadhi. According to the Dharmapada Sutra, verse 183, the Buddha taught: Not to do evil, to do good, to purify one's mind, this is the teaching of the Buddhas." Kusala karmas or good deeds will help a person control a lot of troubles arising from his mind. Inversely, if a person does evil deeds, he will receive bad results in this life and the next existence which are suffering. An honest man, especially one who believes in Buddhist ideas of causality and lives a good life. There are two classes of people in this life, those who are inclined to quarrel and addicted to dispute, and those who are bent to living in harmony and happy in friendliness. The first class can be classified wicked, ignorant and heedless folk. The second class comprised of good, wise and heedful people. The Buddha has made a clear distinction between wickedness and goodness and advises all his disciples not to do evil actions, to perform good ones and to purify their own heart. He knows that it is easy to do evil action. To perform meritorious one far more difficult. But His disciples should know how to select in between evil and good, because wicked people will go to hell and undergo untold suffering, while good ones will go to Heaven and enjoy peaceful bliss. Moreover, Good one even from afar shrine like the mountain of snow with their meritorious actions, while bad ones are enveloped in darkness like an arrow shot in the night." According to The Connected Discourses of the Buddha, Chapter Ambapali, there are two starting points of wholesome states. First, virtue that is well purified which includes basing upon virtue and establishing upon virtue. Second, view that is straight. According to The Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are three good (wholesome) roots. For Monks and Nuns, there are the wholesome roots of non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion (no selfish desire, no ire, no stupidity); the wholesome roots of almsgiving, kindness, and wisdom; and the wholesome roots of good deeds, good words, good thoughts. Three good roots for all moral development: the wholesome root of no lust or selfish desire, the wholesome root of no

ire or no hatred, and the wholesome root of no stupidity. For Ordinary People, there are three wholesome roots: the wholesome root of almsgiving; the wholesome root of mercy; and the wholesome root of wisdom. There are also three good upward directions or states of existence. The first path is the wholesome path. This is the highest class of goodness rewarded with the deva life. The second path is the path of human beings. The middle class of goddness with a return to human life. The third path is the path of asuras. The inferior class of goodness with the asura state. According to The Long Discourses of the Buddha, Sangiti Sutra, there are three kinds of wholesome element. First, the wholesome element of renunciation. Second, the wholesome element of non-enmity. Third, the wholesome element of non-cruelty. According to the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are three kinds of right conduct: right conduct in body, right conduct in speech, and right conduct in thought. Three good deeds (the foundation of all development) include no lust (no selfish desire), no anger, and no stupidity (no ignorance). According to the Abhidharma, there are three doors of wholesome kamma pertaining to the sense-sphere. First, bodily action pertaining to the door of the body: not to kill, not to steal, and not to commit sexual misconduct. Second, verbal action pertaining to the door of speech: not to have false speech, not to slander, not to speak harsh speech, and not to speak frivolous talk. Third, mental action pertaining to the door of the mind: not to have Covetousness, not to have Ill-will, and not to have wrong views. According to The Long Discourses of the Buddha, Sangiti Sutra, there are three kinds of wholesome investigation. First, the wholesome investigation of renunciation. Second, the wholesome investigation of non-enmity. Third, the wholesome investigation of non-cruelty. According to The Long Discourses of the Buddha, Sangiti Sutra, there are three kinds of wholesome perception. First, the wholesome perception of renunciation. Second, the wholesome perception of non-enmity. Third, the wholesome perception of non-cruelty. According to the Mahayana, there are four good roots, or sources from which spring good fruit or development: Sravakas, Pratyeka-buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Buddhas. According to the Kosa Sect, there are four good roots, or sources from which spring good fruit or development: the level of heat, the level of the summit, the level of patience, and the level of being first in the

world. According to the Surangama Sutra, book Eight, There are four good roots, or sources from which spring good fruit or development. The Buddha reminded Ananda as follows: “Ananda! When these good men have completely purified these forty-one minds, they further accomplish four kinds of wonderfully perfect additional practices.” The first root is the level of heat. When the enlightenment of a Buddha is just about to become a function of his own mind, it is on the verge of emerging but has not yet emerged, and so it can be compared to the point just before wood ignites when it is drilled to produce fire. Therefore, it is called ‘the level of heat.’ The second root is the level of the summit. He continues on with his mind, treading where the Buddhas tread, as if relying and yet not. It is as if he were climbing a lofty mountain, to the point where his body is in space but there remains a slight obstruction beneath him. Therefore, it is called ‘the level of the summit.’ The third root is the level of patience. When the mind and the Buddha are two and yet the same, he has well obtained the middle way. He is like someone who endures something when it seems impossible to either hold it in or let it out. Therefore, it is called ''he level of patience.'' The fourth root is the level of being first in the world. When numbers are destroyed, there are no such designations as the middle way or as confusion and enlightenment; this is called the ‘level of being first in the world.’ According to the Long Discourses of the Buddha, Sangiti Sutra, there are eight right factors: Right views, Right thinking, Right speech, Right action, Right livelihood, Right effort, Right mindfulness, and Right concentration. In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: “As a flower that is colorful and beautiful, but without scent, even so fruitless is the well-spoken words of one who does not practice it (Dharmapada 51). As the flower that is colorful, beautiful, and full of scent, even so fruitful is the well-spoken words of one who practices it (Dharmapada 52). As from a heap of flowers many a garland is made, even so many good deeds should be done by one born to the mortal lot (Dharmapada 53). If a person does a meritorious deed, he should do it habitually, he should find pleasures therein, happiness is the outcome of merit (Dharmapada 118). Even a good person sees evil as long as his good deed has not yet ripened; but when his good deed has ripened, then he sees the good results (Dharmapada 120). Do not disregard small good, saying, “It will not

matter to me." Even by the falling of drop by drop, a water-jar is filled; likewise, the wise man, gathers his merit little by little (Dharmapada 122)." In the Forty-Two Sections Sutra, chapter 14, the Buddha taught: "A Sramana asked the Buddha: "What is goodness? What is the foremost greatness?" The Buddha replied: "To practice the Way and to protect the Truth is goodness. To unite your will with the Way is greatness." For lay Buddhists, kusala dharmas can be going to a temple to do good deeds there, but kusala dharmas can also be what we do to make others happier or moraler so that they can come closer to enlightenment and emancipation. Devout Zen practitioners should always remember that before entering meditation practices, we should do a lot of good deeds, for the level of mind stillness depends not only on methods of Zen, but also greatly depends the good deeds that we accomplished. If we are not completely emancipated, our happiness in meditation also synonymous with the happiness that we did for others. Therefore, a Zen practitioner must be the one who always gives the happiness, peace, and mindfulness to others all his life. In other words, deside the effort for meditation, Zen practitioners should always try to do many good deeds, for good deeds will support meditation result very well.

II. To Be Able to Escape the Ocean of Life and Death, Practitioners Should Always Try to Reduce Robbers of Afflictions by Staying Away from Akusala Dharmas:

Cultivation on Trying to Stay Away from Akusala Dharmas in Order to Be Able to Escape the Ocean of Life and Death: Unwholesome deeds (anything connected with the unwholesome root or akasula mula) accompanied by greed, hate or delusion and cause undesirable karmic results or future sufferings and afflictions. There are two kinds of causes in the world: good causes and bad causes. If we create good causes, we will reap good results; if we create bad causes, we will surely reap bad results. According to The Path of Purification, unwholesome deeds are both unprofitable action and courses that lead to unhappy destinies. Unwholesome mind creates negative or unwholesome thoughts (anger, hatred, harmful thoughts, wrong views, etc), speech (lying, harsh speech, double-tongued, etc), as well as deeds which are the causes of our sufferings, confusion and misery.

Unwholesome or negative mind will destroy our inner peace and tranquility. According to Buddhism, if we create bad causes, we will surely reap bad results. People who create many offenses and commit many transgressions will eventually have to undergo the retribution of being hell-dwellers, hungry-ghosts, and animals, etc. In general, doing good deeds allows us to ascend, while doing evil causes us to descend. In everything we do, we must take the responsibility ourselves; we cannot rely on others. According to The Path of Purification, "Bad Ways" is a term for doing what ought not to be done and not doing what ought to be done, out of desire, hate, delusion, and fear. They are called "bad ways" because they are ways not to be travel by Noble Ones. Incorrect conduct in thought, word or deed, which leads to evil recompense. Unwholesome speech or slanderous or evil-speech which cause afflictions. In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "Do not speak unwholesome or harsh words to anyone. Those who are spoken to will respond in the same manner. Angry speech nourishes trouble. You will receive blows in exchange for blows (Dharmapada 133). If like a cracked gong, you silence yourself, you already have attained Nirvana. No vindictiveness (quarrels) will be found in you (Dharmapada 134)." Unwholesome views or wrong views mean seeing or understanding in a wrong or wicked and grasping manner. There are five kinds of wrong views: wrong views of the body, one-sided views, wrong views which are inconsistent with the dharma, wrong views caused by attachment to one's own errouneous understanding, and wrong views or wrong understandings of the precepts. Unwholesome deeds are bad, wrong, cruel, evil or mischievous acts. Unwholesome or wicked deeds which are against the right. Maliciousness is planning to harm others. It includes thinking how to revenge a wrong done to us, how to hurt others' feelings or how to embarrass them. From the earliest period, Buddhist thought has argued that immoral actions are the result of ignorance (avidya), which prompts beings to engage in actions (karma) that will have negative consequences for them. Thus evil for Buddhism is a second-order problem, which is eliminated when ignorance is overcome. Thus, the definition of sin and evil is pragmatic: evil actions are those that result in suffering and whose consequences are perceived as painful for beings who experience them. Unwholesome or evil karmas of greed, hatred and ignorance, all

created by body, mouth and speech. Unwholesome or harmful actions, or conduct in thought, word, or deed (by the body, speech, and mind) to self and others which leads to evil recompense (negative path, bad deeds, or black path). Unwholesome or negative Karma includes: greed, anger, ignorance, pride, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and unwholesome thoughts. According to the Sigalaka Sutra, there are four causes of unwholesome or evil actions: unwholesome action springs from attachment, ill-will, ignorance, and fear. According to the Sigalaka Sutra, the Buddha taught: "If the Ariyan disciple does not act out of attachment, ill-will, folly or fear, he will not do evil from any one of the four above mentioned causes." In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "As rust sprung from iron eats itself away when arisen, just like ill deeds lead the doer to a miserable state (Dharmapada 240). There are three kinds of unwholesome paths (the states of woe, realms of woe, evil realms, or evil ways). Also called evil ways or three evil paths, or destinies of hells, hungry ghosts and animals. These are three paths which can be taken as states of mind, i.e., when someone has a vicious thought of killing someone, he is effectively reborn, for that moment, in the hells. Sentient beings in evil realms do not encounter the Buddhadharma, never cultivate goodness, and always harm others. Sometimes the Asura realm is also considered an unwholesome or evil realm because though they have heavenly merits, they lack virtues and have much hatred. There are four fundamental unwholesome passions. These four are regarded as the fundamental evil passions originating from the view that there is really an eternal substance known as ego-soul. First, the belief in the existence of an ego-substance. Second, ignorance about the ego. Third, conceit about the ego. The fourth fundamental unwholesome passion is self-love. All karmas are controlled by the threefold deed (body, speech, and mind). Three deeds of the body, four deeds of the mouth, and three deeds of the mind. According to Buddhism, evil phenomena refers to supernatural phenomena which are said to be side effects of Zazen, such as clairvoyance and othe magical abilities, as well as hallucinations. They are considered to be distractions, and so meditators are taught to ignore them as much as possible and to concentrate on meditative practice only. "Akusala" is a Sanskrit term for "bonds of assumptions of bad states." These are

obstructions of body (kayavarana) and of mind (manas-avarana). Some Buddhist exegetes also add the third type, obstructions of speech (vag-avarana). These are said to be caused by influences of past karma, in imitation of past activities, and are the subtle traces that remain after the afflictions (klesa) have been destroyed. An example that is commonly given is of an Arhat, who has eliminated the afflictions, seeing a monkey then jumping up and down while making noises like a monkey, but the subtle traces still remain deep in the conscious. According to Buddhism, an unwholesome person means an evil person, one who has evil ideas of the doctrine of voidness, to deny the doctrine of cause and effect. Thus, the Buddha advises us not make friends with wicked ones, but to associate only with good friends. He points out very clearly that if we yearn for life, we should avoid wickedness like we shun poison because a hand free from wound can handle poison with impurity. The dhammas of the good ones do not decay, but go along with the good ones to where meritorious actions will lead them. Good actions will welcome the well doer who has gone from this world to the next world, just as relatives welcome a dear one who has come back. So, the problem poses itself very clear and definite. Wickedness and goodness are all done by oneself. Wickedness will lead to dispute and to war, while goodness will lead to harmony, to friendliness and to peace. Also, according to the Buddhism, the unwholesome people are those who commit unbelievable crimes and whose minds are filled with greed, hatred and ignorance. Those who commit lying, gossip, harsh speech, and double-tongued. Those who abuse others' good heart; those who cheat others for their own benefits; those who kill, steal; those who act lasciviously; those who think of wicked plots; those who always think of wicked (evil) scheme. There are three unwholesome paths or three evil paths: hells, hungry ghosts, and animals. Great Master Ying-Kuang reminded Buddhist followers to singlemindedly recite the Buddha's name if they wish for their mind not to be attaching and wandering to the external world. Do not forget that death is lurking and hovering over us, it can strike us at any moment. If we do not wholeheartedly concentrate to practice Buddha Recitation, praying to gain rebirth to the Western Pureland, then if death should come suddenly, we are certain to be condemned to the three unwholesome realms where we must endure innumerable sufferings and sometime

infinite Buddhas have in turn appeared in the world, but we are still trapped in the evil paths and unable to find liberation. Thus, cultivators should always ponder the impermanence of a human life, while death could come at any moment without warning. We should always think that we have committed infinite and endles unwholesome karmas in our former life and this life, then the sufferings waiting for us in the unwholesome realms. Upon thinking all these, we will be awakened in every moment, and we no longer have greed and lust for the pleasures of the five desires and six elements of the external world. If condemned to hell, then we will experience the torturous and agonizing conditions of a moutain of swords, a forest of knives, stoves, frying pans; in each day and night living and dying ten thousand times, the agony of pain and suffering is inconceivable. If condemned to the path of hungry ghost, then the body is hideously ugly wreaking foul odors. Stomach is large as a drum but neck is as small as a needle; though starving and thirsty, the offenders cannot eat or drink. When seeing food and drinks, these items transform into coals and fires. Thus, they must endure the torture and suffering of famine and thirst, throwing, banging their bodies against everything, crying out in pain and agony for tens and thousands of kalpas. If condemned to the animal realm, then they must endure the karmic consequences of carrying and pulling heavy loads, get slaughtered for food, or the strong prey on the weak, mind and body always paranoid, frightened, and fearful of being eaten or killed, without having any moment of peace. There are five kinds of unwholesome deeds in this world. The first kind of unwholesome deed is Cruelty. Every creature, even insects, strives against one another. The strong attack the weak; the weak deceive the strong; everywhere there is fighting and cruelty. The second kind of unwholesome deed is Deception and lack of Sincerity. There is a lack of a clear demarcation between the rights of a father and a son, between an elder brother and a younger; between a husband and a wife; between a senior relative and a younger. On every occasion, each one desires to be the highest and to profit off others. They cheat each other. They don't care about sincerity and trust. The third kind of unwholesome deed is wicked behavior that leads to Injustice and wickedness. There is a lack of a clear demarcation as to the behavior between men and women. Everyone at times has impure and lasvicious thoughts and desires that lead them into questionable acts and disputes, fighting, injustice and wickedness. The fourth kind of unwholesome deed is Disrespect the rights of others. There is a tendency for people to disrespect the rights of others, to exaggerate their own importance at the expense of others,

to set bad examples of behavior and, being unjust in their speech, to deceive, slander and abuse others. The fifth kind of unwholesome deed is to neglect their duties. There is a tendency for people to neglect their duties towards others. They think too much of their own comfort and their own desires; they forget the favors they have received and cause annoyance to others that often passes into great injustice. According to the Long Discourses of the Buddha, Sangiti Sutra, there are eight unwholesome factors: wrong views, wrong thinking, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong concentration. Eight wrong perceptions of thought: desire, hatred, vexation with others, home-sickness, patriotism or thoughts of the country's welfare, dislike of death, ambition for one's clan or family, and slighting or being rude to others. According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are nine unwholesome causes of malice which are stirred up by the thought "There is no use to think that a person has harmed, is harming, or will harm either you, someone you love, or someone you hate". First, he has done me an injury. Second, he is doing me an injury. Third, he will do me an injury. Fourth, he has done an injury to someone who is dear and pleasant to me. Fifth, he is doing an injury to someone and pleasant to me. Sixth, he will do an injury to someone who is dear and pleasant to me. Seventh, he has done an injury to someone who is hateful and unpleasant to me. Eighth, he is doing an injury to someone who is hateful and unpleasant to me. Ninth, he will do an injury to someone who is hateful and unpleasant to me. Ancient virtues taught on unwholesome doings as followed: "Those who spit at the sky, immediately the spit will fall back on their face." Or to harbor blood to spit at someone, the mouth is the first to suffer from filth. Five practical suggestions to prevent evil thoughts given by the Buddha. First, harbouring a good thought opposite to the encroaching one, e.g., loving-kindness in the case of hatred. Second, reflecting upon possible evil consequences, e.g., anger sometimes results in murder. Third, simple neglect or becoming wholly inattentive to them. Fourth, tracing the cause which led to the arising of the unwholesome thoughts and thus forgetting them in the retrospective process. Fifth, direct physical force. In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "Let's hasten up to do good. Let's restrain our minds from evil thoughts, for the minds of those who are slow in doing good actions delight in evil (Dharmapada 116). If a person commits evil, let him not do it again and again; he should not rejoice therein, sorrow is the outcome of evil (Dharmapada 117). Even an evil-doer sees good as long as evil deed has not yet ripened; but when his evil deed has ripened, then he sees the evil results (Dharmapada 119). Do not disregard (underestimate) small evil, saying, "It will not matter to me." By the falling of drop by drop, a water-jar is filled; likewise, the fool becomes full of evil, even if he gathers it little by little

(Dharmapada 121). A merchant with great wealth but lacks of companions, avoids a dangerous route, just as one desiring to live avoids poison, one should shun evil things in the same manner (Dharmapada 123). With a hand without wound, one can touch poison; the poison does not afftect one who has no wound; nor is there ill for him who does no wrong. (Dharmapada 124). Whoever harms a harmless person who is pure and guiltless, the evil falls back upon that fool, like dust thrown against the wind (Dharmapada 125). Some are born in a womb; evil-doers are reborn in hells; the righteous people go to blissful states; the undefiled ones pass away into Nirvana (Dharmapada 126). Neither in the sky, nor in mid-ocean, nor in mountain cave, nowhere on earth where one can escape from the consequences of his evil deeds (Dharmapada 127). The evil is done by oneself; it is self-born; it is self-nursed. Evil grinds the unwise as a diamond grinds a precious stone (Dharmapada 161). Bad deeds are easy to do, but they are harmful, not beneficial to oneself. On the contrary, it is very difficult to do that which is beneficial and good for oneself (Dharmapada 163). The foolish man who slanders the teachings of the Arhats, of the righteous and the Noble Ones. He follows false doctrine, ripens like the kashta reed, only for its own destruction (Dharmapada 164). By oneself the evil is done, by oneself one is defiled or purified. Purity or impurity depend on oneself. No one can purify another (Dharmapada 165). Not to slander, not to harm, but to restrain oneself in accordance with the fundamental moral codes, to be moderate in eating, to dwell in secluded abode, to meditate on higher thoughts, this is the teaching of the Buddhas (Dharmapada 185)." In the Forty-Two Sections Sutra, the Buddha taught: "The Buddha said: "When an evil person hears about virtue and intentionally or voluntarily comes to cause trouble, you should restrain yourself and should not become angry or upbraid him. Then, the one who has come to do evil will do evil to himself." There was one who, upon hearing that I protect the way and practice great humane compassion, intentionally or voluntarily came to scold me. I was silent and did not reply. When he finished scolding me, I asked, 'If you are courteous to people and they do not accept your courtesy, the courtesy returns to you, does it not?' He replied, 'It does.' I said, 'Now you are scolding me but I do not receive it. So, the misfortune returns to you and must remain with you. It is just as inevitable as the echo that follows a sound or as the shadow that follows a form. In the end, you cannot avoid it. Therefore, be careful not to do evil." An evil person who harms a sage is like one who raises his head and spits at heaven. Instead of reaching heaven, the spittle falls back on him. It is the same with one who throws dust into the wind instead of going somewhere else, the dust returns to fall on the thrower's body. The sage cannot be harmed; misdeed will inevitably destroy the doer."

Cultivation on Trying to Stay Away from the Five Evils Also Means to Close Six Doors That Cause Beings to Be Sinking and Being Drifted Up and Down in the Ocean of Birth and Death: In Buddhist cultivation, cultivation of five evils that cause sentient beings keep going around this worldly world also means to close six doors that cause beings to be sinking and being drifted up and down in the ocean of life and death. According to Buddhism, evil means unwholsome. From the earliest period, Buddhist thought has argued that immoral actions are the result of ignorance (avidya), which prompts beings to engage in actions (karma) that will have negative consequences for them. Thus, evil for Buddhism is a second-order problem, which is eliminated when ignorance is overcome. The definition of sin and evil is pragmatic: evil actions are those that result in suffering and whose consequences are perceived as painful for beings who experience them. There are five evils that cause sentient beings keep going around the six paths of the worldly world. *The first evil is Cruelty:* Every creature, even insects, strives against one another. The strong attack the weak; the weak deceive the strong; everywhere there is fighting and cruelty. *The second evil is Deception and lack of Sincerity:* There is a lack of a clear demarcation between the rights of a father and a son, between an elder brother and a younger; between a husband and a wife; between a senior relative and a younger. On every occasion, each one desires to be the highest and to profit off others. They cheat each other. They don't care about sincerity and trust. *The third evil is Wicked behavior that leads to Injustice and wickedness:* There is a lack of a clear demarcation as to the behavior between men and women. Everyone at times has impure and lasvicious thoughts and desires that lead them into questionable acts and disputes, fighting, injustice and wickedness. *The fourth evil is Disrespect the rights of others:* There is a tendency for people to disrespect the rights of others, to exaggerate their own importance at the expense of others, to set bad examples of behavior and, being unjust in their speech, to deceive, slander and abuse others. *The fifth evil is to neglect their duties:* The is a tendency for people to neglect their duties towards others. They think too much of their own comfort and their own desires; they forget the favors they have received and cause annoyance to others that often passes into great injustice.

III. Cultivation on Ferrying the Ten Evil Actions to the Shore of the Ten Meritorious Deeds Is Synonymous with Closing Six Doors That Cause Beings to Be Sinking and Being Drifted Up and Down in the Ocean of Birth and Death:

An Overview of Ten Evil Actions: *According to Buddhism, there are ten evil deeds:* All karmas are controlled by the threefold deed (body, speech, and

mind). Three deeds of the body, four deeds of the mouth, and three deeds of the mind. Ten wrongs comprise of: killing, stealing, committing adultery, telling lies or using obscene and lewd words or speech, speaking two-faced speech, abusive slandering, useless gossiping or chattering, greed, anger, and devoting to wrong views. *According to the Theravadan Buddhism, there are ten evil actions:* All karmas are controlled by the threefold deed (body, speech, and mind). Three deeds of the body, four deeds of the mouth, and three deeds of the mind: killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, slandering, harsh language, greed, ill-will, and wrong views. First, taking the life of any beings, including human or animal. Killing means the destruction of any living being including animals of all kinds. To complete the offence of killing, five conditions are necessary: a being, consciousness that it is a being, intention of killing, effort of killing, and consequent death. Second, Stealing, all forms of acquiring for onself that which belongs to another. To complete the offence of stealing, five conditions are necessary: property of other people, consciousness that it is stealing, intention of stealing, effort of stealing, and consequent stealing. Third, sexual misconduct, including all forms of sex-indulgence, by action or thoughts wants. To complete the offence of sexual misconduct, three conditions are necessary: intent to enjoy the forbidden object, efforts of enjoyment of the object, and possession of the object. Fourth, lying or telling lie. To complete the offence of lying, four conditions are necessary: untruth, intention to deceive, effort, and communication of the matter to others. Fifth, slandering (to slander or speak with a double-tongue maner or to speak ill of one friend to another). To complete the offence of slandering, five conditions are necessary: division of people, intention to separate people, effort of division, and communication. Sixth, harsh language. The effects of harsh language are being detested by others although blameless. To complete the offence of harsh language, three conditions are necessary: someone to be abused, angry thought, and using abusive or harsh language. Seventh, frivolous talk and the effects of frivolous talk are disorderliness of the bodily organs and unacceptable speech. To complete the offence of frivolous talk, two conditions are necessary: inclination towards frivolous talk and speaking of frivolous talk. The evil karma of speech is the mightiest. We must know that evil speech is even more dangerous than fire because fire can only destroy all material possessions and treasures of this world, but the firece fire of evil speech not only burns all the Seven Treasures of Enlightened beings and all virtues of liberation, but it will also reflect on the evil karma vipaka in the future. Eighth, greed or covetousness. To complete the offence of covetousness, two conditions are necessary: another's property and desire for another's property. Ninth, ill-will. To complete the offence of ill-will, two conditions are necessary: another being and I intention

of doing harm. Tenth, false view, which means seeing things wrongly without understanding what they truly are. To complete this false view two conditions are necessary: perverted manner in which an object is viewed and misunderstanding of the object according to that wrong view. Therefore, the Buddha taught: "Devout Buddhists should always remember in mind the followings: not to kill, not to steal, not to fornicate, not to lie, not to polish your words for personal advantages, not to slander nor double-tongued, not to use harsh speech (not be of evil speech), not to crave (desire or greed), not to be angry, and not to be ignorant (stupid) or wrong views."

An Overview of Ten Wholesome Actions: *Ten meritorious deeds, or the ten paths of good action according to the Mahayana Buddhism:* First, to abstain from killing, but releasing beings is good. Second, to abstain from stealing, but giving is good. Third, to abstain from sexual misconduct, but being virtuous is good. Fourth, to abstain from lying, but telling the truth is good. Fifth, to abstain from speaking double-tongued (two-faced speech), but telling the truth is good. Sixth, to abstain from hurtful words (abusive slander), but speaking loving words is good. Seventh, to abstain from useless gossiping, but speaking useful words. Eighth, to abstain from being greedy and covetous. Ninth, to abstain from being angry, but being gentle is good. Tenth, to abstain from being attached (devoted) to wrong views, but understand correctly is good. *According to the Sutra in Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 4, the Buddha taught:* "Living beings may perform ten good practices or ten evil practices. What are the ten? Three are three of the Body, four are of the Mouth and the last three are of the Mind. The three of the Body are killing, stealing and lust. The four of the mouth are double-tongued speech (duplicitous speech), harsh speech, lies, and irresponsible speech. The three of the Mind are jealousy, hatred, and stupidity. Thus, these ten are not in accordance (consistent) with the Holy Way and are called ten evil practices. To put an end to these evils is to perform the ten good practices." *According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, chapter ten, the Buddha of the Fragrant Land, Vimalakirti said to Bodhisattvas of the Fragrant Land as follows:* "As you have said, the Bodhisattvas of this world have strong compassion, and their lifelong works of salvation for all living beings surpass those done in other pure lands during hundreds and thousands of aeons. Why? Because they achieved ten excellent deeds which are not required in other pure lands." What are these ten excellent deeds? They are: First, using charity (dana) to succour the poor. Second, using precept-keeping (sila) to help those who have broken the commandments. Third, using patient endurance (ksanti) to subdue their anger. Fourth, using zeal and devotion (virya) to cure their remissness. Fifth, using serenity (dhyana) to stop their confused thoughts. Sixth, using wisdom (prajna) to wipe out ignorance. Seventh, putting an end to the eight distressful conditions for those suffering from them. Eighth, teaching

Mahayana to those who cling to Hinayana. Ninth, cultivation of good roots for those in want of merits. Tenth, the four Bodhisattva winning devices for the purpose of leading all living beings to their goals (in Bodhisattva development). *Ten wholesome deeds according to Theravada Buddhism:* According to Most Venerable Narada, there are ten kinds of good karma or meritorious actions which may ripen in the sense-sphere: generosity or charity, morality, meditation, reverence, service, transference of merit, rejoicing in other's good actions and praising other's good work, hearing the doctrine, expounding the doctrine, and straightening one's own views by two parts (taking the three refuges and mindfulness).

The Buddha's Teachings on Evil Deeds and Wholesome Deeds in the Dharmapada Sutra: Devout Buddhists should always remember the Buddha's teachings: "Do not disregard small good, saying, 'it will not matter to me.' Do not disregard small good, saying, 'it will not matter to me.' Do not disregard (underestimate) small evil, saying, "it will not matter to me." By the falling of drop by drop, a water-jar is filled; likewise, the fool becomes full of evil, even if he gathers it little by little (Dhammapda121). Neither in the sky, nor in mid-ocean, nor in mountain cave, nowhere on earth where one can escape from the consequences of his evil deeds (Dhammapada 127)." Even an evil-doer sees good as long as evil deed has not yet ripened; but when his evil deed has ripened, then he sees the evil results (Dhammapada 119). If a person commits evil, let him not do it again and again; he should not rejoice therein, sorrow is the outcome of evil (Dhammapada 117). Even by the falling of drop by drop, a water-jar is filled; likewise, the wise man, gathers his merit little by little (Dhammapda 122). Even a good person sees evil as long as his good deed has not yet ripened; but when his good deed has ripened, then he sees the good results (Dhammapda 120). Let's hasten up to do good. Let's restrain our minds from evil thoughts, for the minds of those who are slow in doing good actions delight in evil (Dhammapada 116). If a person does a meritorious deed, he should do it habitually, he should find pleasures therein, happiness is the outcome of merit (Dhammapada 118).

Cultivation on Ferrying the Ten Evil Actions to the Shore of the Ten Meritorious Deeds Is Synonymous with Closing Six Doors That Cause Beings to Be Sinking and Being Drifted Up and Down in the Ocean of Birth and Death: As a matter of fact, cultivation of body-mouth-mind is synonymous with ferrying the ten evil actions to the shore of the ten meritorious deeds and closing six doors that cause beings to be sinking and being drifted op and down in the ocean of life and death. The Buddha pointed out: "For a long time has man's mind been defiled by greed, hatred and delusion. Mental defilements make beings impure; mental cleansing purifies them." Now, if Buddhists cultivate the Body-Mouth-Mind, it is also synonymous with ferrying the ten

evil actions to the shore of the ten meritorious deeds. The Buddhist way of life, especially that of Buddhist practitioners, is an intense process of cleansing one's action, speech, and thought. It is self-development and self-purification resulting in self-realization. The emphasis is on practical results and not on philosophical speculation or logical abstraction. Hence Buddhist practitioners need to practice meditation on a daily basis. We need to behave like the hen on her eggs; for we have been most of the time behaving like a little white mouse in the revolving cage. The Buddha also said: "Living beings may perform ten good practices or ten evil practices. What are the ten? Three are three of the Body, four are of the Mouth and the last three are of the Mind. The three of the Body are killing, stealing and lust. The four of the mouth are double-tongued speech (duplicitous speech), harsh speech, lies, and irresponsible speech. The three of the Mind are jealousy, hatred, and stupidity. Thus, these ten are not in accordance (consistent) with the Holy Way and are called ten evil practices. To put an end to these evils is to perform the ten good practices." At that time, there are three wholesome deeds of the Body: *First*, to abstain from killing, but releasing beings is good. *Second*, to abstain from stealing, but giving is good. *Third*, to abstain from sexual misconduct, but being virtuous is good. There are four wholesome deeds of the Mouth: *Fourth*, to abstain from lying, but telling the truth is good. *Fifth*, to abstain from speaking double-tongued (two-faced speech), but telling the truth is good. *Sixth*, to abstain from hurtful words (abusive slander), but speaking loving words is good. *Seventh*, to abstain from useless gossiping, but speaking useful words. There are three wholesome deeds of the Mind: *Eighth*, to abstain from being greedy and covetous. *Ninth*, to abstain from being angry, but being gentle is good. *Tenth*, to abstain from being attached (devoted) to wrong views, but understand correctly is good. We mistakenly think that what binds us in Samsara are our bodies, speeches, and minds. As a matter of fact, they are not. What really binds us in Samsara are desire, hatred and ignorance. However, what is worth to say here is that our body, mouth, and mind are willing to serve "desire, hatred and ignorance" as slaves. Our body, mouth and mind are the three doors or means of action. They are three unwholesome actions of the body, four of the speech, and three of the mind. Devout Buddhists should always remember that the three unwholesome actions of body that are to be avoided are killing, stealing and sexual misconduct. The four unwholesome actions of speech that are to be avoided are lying, slander, harsh speech and malicious gossip. The three unwholesome actions of the mind that are to be avoided are greed, anger, and delusion. By avoiding these ten unwholesome actions, we will avoid reaping bad results in this life or the next lives.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

To Escape the Ocean of Life and Death, Practitioners Should Always Try to Balance Lust So That They Are Able to Reduce Afflictions by Being Content with Few Desires & Satisfying with What We Have in Daily Life and Cultivation

I. An Overview of Cultivation to Reach the Balance of Lust:

An Overview & Meanings of Desire: Desire for more than we need or deserve, such as food, house, car, wealth, honors, etc. Eyes are longing for viewing beautiful forms without any satisfaction, ears are longing for melodious sounds, nose is longing for fragrance, tongue is longing for delicate tastes, body is longing for soothing touches, and mind is longing for various emotions of love and hate from self and others. Human beings' greediness is like a barrel without bottom. It is just as the great ocean obtaining continuously the water from hundreds and thousands of large and small rivers and lakes everyday. In this Dharma Ending Age, sentient beings, especially human beings use every method to manipulate and harm one another. Sentient beings' lives, especially, those of human beings' lives are already filled with pain and sufferings, now there are even more pain and sufferings. Through tricks, expedients, and manipulations we try to reach our goal irrespective of whatever happens to others. Greed is a powerful mental force that drives people to fight, kill, cheat, lie and perform various forms of unwholesome deeds. Greed is the first of the three poisons. Coveting others' possessions is when we plan how to procure something belonging to another person. While coveting is a mental action no one else can see, it can lead us to flatter, bribe, cheat or steal from others to obtain what we desire. Greed, the first unwholesome root, covers all degrees of selfish desire, longing, attachment, and clinging. Its characteristic is grasping an object. Its function is sticking, as meat sticks to a hot pan. It is manifested as not giving up. Its proximate cause is seeing enjoyment in things that lead to bondage. People usually have greed for wealth, sex, fame, food, sleep or greed

for forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and objects of touch, and so on, and so on. According to Most Venerable in The Buddha and His Teachings, there are three conditions that are necessary to complete the evil of covetousness: first, another's possession; second, adverting to it, thinking "would this be mine"; and third, to actually take another's possession without permission. According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are five kinds of begrudging: first, begrudging as to dwelling-place; second, begrudging as to family; third, begrudging as to gains; fourth, begruding as to beauty; and fifth, begrudging as to Dhamma. There are also five kinds of selfishness: first, this abode (house or place) is mine and no one else's; second, this almsgiving household is mine and no one else's; third, I am the only one who receive this alms; fourth, I am the only one who deserve this praise; no one else who deserves this; and fifth, I am the only one who has the knowledge of truth, but I don't want to share with any one else. According to The Path of Purification, there are five kinds of avarice: first, avarice about dwellings; second, avarice about families; third, avarice about gain; fourth, avarice about Dharma; and fifth, avarice about praise.

Desire for and love of the things of this life and craving for worldly properties is unlimited. Most people define happiness as the satisfaction of all desires. The desires are boundless, but our ability to realize them is not, and unfulfilled desires always create suffering. When desires are only partially fulfilled, we have a tendency to continue to pursue until a complete fulfillment is achieved. Thus, we create even more suffering for us and for others. We can only realize the true happiness and a peaceful state of mind when our desires are few. This is one of the great steps towards the shore of liberation. The Buddha taught: "Craving and desire are the cause of all unhappiness or suffering. Everything sooner or later must change, so do not become attached to anything. Instead devote yourself to clearing your mind and finding the truth, lasting hapiness." Knowing how to feel satisfied with few possessions help us destroy greed and desire. This means being content with material conditions that allow us to be healthy and strong enough to cultivate. This is an effective way to cut through the net of passions and desires, attain a peaceful state of mind and have more time to help others. In the Middle Length Discourses, the Buddha

taught: "O Bhikksus, with sense desires as cause, with sense desires as motives, kings are fighting with kings, khattiya are fighting with khattiya, brahmanas are fighting with brahmanas, householders are fighting with householders, mother is fighting with son, son is fighting with mother, father is fighting with brother, brother is fighting with sister, sister is fighting with brother, friend is fighting with friend. When they engage themselves in fighting, in quarrels, in disputes, they attack each other with hands, they attack each other with stones, they attack each other with sticks, they attack each other with swords. Thus, they are going to death, or to suffer like death. O Bhikksus, with sense desires as cause, with sense desires as motives, they take hold of spears, they take hold of shields, they wear bows and arrows. They arrange themselves in two lines, and arrows are thrown at each other, knives are thrown at each other, swords are slashed at each other. They pierce each other with arrows, they slash each other with knives, they cut each other heads with swords. Thus, they are going to death, or to suffer like death."

The defilements we call lust or greed, anger and delusion, are just outward names and appearances, just as we call a house beautiful, ugly, big, small, etc. These are only appearances of things. If we want a big house, we call this one small. We create such concepts because of our craving. Craving causes us to discriminate, while the truth is merely what is. Look at it this way. Are you a person? Yes. This is the appearance of things. But you are really only a combination of elements or a group of changing aggregates. If the mind is free it does not discriminate. No big and small, no you and me, nothing. We say 'anatta' or 'not self', but really, in the end, there is neither 'atta' nor 'anatta'. Greed should be balanced by contemplation of loathsomeness. Attachment to bodily form is one extreme, and one should keep the opposite in mind. Examine the body as a corpse and see the process of decay, or think of the parts of the body, such as lungs, spleen, fat, feces, and so forth. Remembering these and visualizing the loathsome aspects of the body will free us from greed.

Balancing Lust In Order to Reduce Robbers of Afflictions: Only if we have no desire for ourselves; if we are working and earning money in order to help other people; if we make cultivation our business and our business is cultivation only, then how clear and happy our life will

be! However, most people don't understand this. They are only interested in making a lot of money or becoming successful in worldly business. Remember, this is only a small 'I'. Devout Buddhists should make a lot of money to help all people, then even we create our worldly business, it is a good business. It is a selfish desire for more than we need or deserve, such as food, house, car, wealth, honors, etc. Eyes are longing for viewing beautiful forms without any satisfaction, ears are longing for melodious sounds, nose is longing for fragrance, tongue is longing for delicate tastes, body is longing for soothing touches, and mind is longing for various emotions of love and hate from self and others. Human beings' greediness is like a barrel without bottom. It is just as the great ocean obtaining continuously the water from hundreds and thousands of large and small rivers and lakes everyday. In this Dharma Ending Age, sentient beings, especially human beings use every method to manipulate and harm one another. Sentient beings' lives, especially, those of human beings' lives are already filled with pain and sufferings, now there are even more pain and sufferings. Through tricks, expedients, and manipulations we try to reach our goal irrespective of whatever happens to others. Greed is a powerful mental force that drives people to fight, kill, cheat, lie and perform various forms of unwholesome deeds. The desires are boundless, but our ability to realize them is not, and unfulfilled desires always create suffering. When desires are only partially fulfilled, we have a tendency to continue to pursue until a complete fulfillment is achieved. Thus, we create even more sufferings and afflictions for us and for others. We can only realize the true happiness and a peaceful state of mind when our desires are few. This is one of the great steps towards the shore of liberation. The Buddha taught: "Greed and desire are the cause of all unhappiness or suffering. Everything sooner or later must change, so do not become attached to anything. Instead devote yourself to clearing your mind and finding the truth, lasting happiness." Knowing how to feel satisfied with few possessions help us destroy greed and desire. This means being content with material conditions that allow us to be healthy and strong enough to cultivate. This is an effective way to cut through the net of passions and desires, attain a peaceful state of mind and have more time to help others. Cultivation helps us balance 'Lust' by contemplation of loathsomeness.

Attachment to bodily form is one extreme, and one should keep the opposite in mind. Examine the body as a corpse and see the process of decay, or think of the parts of the body, such as lungs, spleen, fat, feces, and so forth. Remembering these and visualizing the loathsome aspects of the body will free us from lust. Furthermore, through Zen, we can see the string of craving and attachment confines us to samsara's prison. In other words, craving and attachment are not only roots that prevent us from being sufficiently moved to renounce samsara, but they are also two of the main things that bind us to samsara. In order to overcome craving and attachment, we should contemplate on the impurity of the body. When we are attached to someone, for example, consider how that person is just a sack full of six kinds of filthy substances. Then our attachment and craving will diminish; at the same time, sufferings and afflictions will also be reduced.

II. Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death by Balancing Lust & Being Able to Reduce Afflictions by Being Content with Few Desires & Satisfying with What We Have in Daily Life and Cultivation:

After the phase of balancing lust in daily life and cultivation, practitioners advance to the phase of being content with few desires & satisfying with what we have in order to reach the final goal of escaping the ocean of life and death. Content with few desires. "Thiểu Dục" means having few desires; "tri túc" means being content. Knowing how to feel satisfied with few possessions means being content with material conditions that allow us to be healthy and strong enough to practice the Way. "Knowing how to feel satisfied and being content with material conditions" is an effective way to cut through the net of passions and desires, attain a peaceful state of body and mind and accomplish our supreme goal of cultivation. Being content with few desires means having few desires. Here "desires" include not only the desire for money and material things but also the wish for status and fame. It also indicates seeking the love and service of others.

As mentioned above, afflictions include worldly cares, sensual desire, passions, unfortunate longings, suffering, pain that arise out of a deluded view of the world. In the four great vows, an adherent of Zen

vows to eliminate these passions which obstruct the path to the attainment of enlightenment. Affliction also means suffering (pain), sorrow, distress, or calamity. Affliction includes delusion, moral faults, passions, and wrong belief. The way of temptation or passion which produces bad karma (life's distress and delusion), cause one to wander in the samsara and hinder one from reaching enlightenment. In order to attain enlightenment, the number one priority is to eliminate these defilements by cultivating on a regular basis. The main goal of Buddhist practitioners is of course to attain the ultimate enlightenment and emancipation; however, the immediate goal we must achieve is the attaining of happiness in the midst of the world which is full of sufferings and afflictions. In order to achieve this immediate goal, practitioners' every moment in life must be moment of living and cultivating in the spirit of being content with few desires and satisfying with what we have for this is the most effecient and wonderful way to reduce afflictions. As a matter of fact, in Buddhism, one of the most effective ways of reducing afflictions is by being content with few desires and satisfying with what we have at this very moment. A person who has attained the mental stage of deep faith has very few desires and is indifferent to them. We must note carefully that though such a person is indifferent to worldly desires, he is very eager for the truth, that is, he has a great desire for the truth. To be indifferent to the truth is to be slothful in life. To be content with few desires also means to be satisfied with little material gain, that is, not to feel discontented with one's lot and to be free from worldly cares. Nevertheless, this does not mean to be unconcerned with self-improvement but to do one's best in one's work without discontent. Such a person will never be ignored by those around him. But even if people around him ignored him, he would feel quite happy because he lives like a king from a spiritual point of view. We must have few desires in two areas: the desires for food and sex. Food and sex support ignorance in perpetrating all sort of evil. Thus, Confucius taught: "Food and sex are part of human nature." That is to say we are born with the craving for foos and sex. Why is that we have not been able to demolish our ignorance, eliminate our afflictions, and reveal our wisdom? Because we always crave for food and sex. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that food gives rise to sexual desire, and sexual desire gives

rise to ignorance. Once the desire for food arises, the desire for sex arises as well. Men are attracted to beautiful women, and women are charmed by handsome men. People become infatuated and obsessed and cannot see through their desires. The nourishment from the food we eat is transformed into reporductive essence; and once that essence is full, sexual desire arises. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that the less tasty the food is, the better. Food should not be regarded as too important. Sincere Buddhists should practice moderation and eat only enough to sustain ourselves. We should neither eat very rich food, nor eat spoilt food, for either one could ruin our health. To be satisfied with what we have at this very moment means satisfaction or contentment is a characteristic of the really happy individual. The ordinary people seem to think that it is difficult to cultivate and develop contentment. However, with courage and determination to control one's evil inclination, as well as to understand the consequences of these evil thoughts, one can keep the mind from being soiled and experience happiness through contentment. For those who have wisdom, know how to apply themselves and are able to endure life, and are able to think cleverly, will find peace in his fate under whatever circumstances. With the conditions of wealth, one satisfies and is at peace with being wealthy; with the conditions of poverty, one satisfies and is at peace with being impoverished. In fact, in our lifetime, we engage in all kinds of activities, think and calculate every imaginable method without abandoning any plot, so long as it is beneficial, but whether or not our actions affect others we never care. We have been doing all these for what? For a better life, clothes, house, and for storing more money. If we think carefully, we will see that the sun rises, reaches its stand still, and then it will set and disappears in the evening; a full moon will soon become half, quarter, then lose its brightness; mountains become deep canyons; oceans become hills of berries, etc. The way of life has always been rosen and fall, success and failure, victory and defeat, lost and found, together and apart, life and death, etc., goes on constantly and there is absolutely nothing that remain unchanged and eternal. People with wisdom should always satisfy with their current circumstances. The Buddha extols simple living as being more conducive to the development of one's mind. Thus, the Buddha always preaches the

self-contentment for the benefit of the Bhikkhus as follow: The robes or clothes they receive, whether coarse or fine; alms or food they receive, whether unpalatable or delicious; the abodes or houses they receive, whether simple or luxurious. Those who satisfy with these three conditions can reduce the desires, and at the same time develop the habits and values of simple living. As for lay people, in the Pattakamma Sutta, the Buddha reminded a person should spend his wealth in five areas. First, expenditure on food and clothing and other needs. Second, maintain of parents, wife and children and servants. Third, expenditure on illness and other emergencies. Fourth, expenditure on charitable purposes. Fifth, expenditures on the followings: treating one's relatives, treating one's visitors, offering alms in memory of the departed, offering merit to the deities, offerings to monks and nuns, and payment of state taxes and dues in time.

Devout Buddhists should always remember that to Buddhism, sensual pleasure is something fleeting, something that comes and goes. Can something be really called "Happiness" when it is here one moment and gone the next? Is it really so enjoyable to go around hunting for something so ephemeral, which is changing all the time? Look at the amount of trouble we have to go through to get all those sensual pleasures which we think will bring us happiness. Some people have such strong desire for pleasure that they will break the law, commit brutal crimes and cause others to suffer just so they can experience these pleasures. They may not understand how much suffering they themselves will have to endure in the future as a consequence of the unwholesome acts they have committed. Even ordinary people may become aware that a disproportionate amount of suffering is necessary to bring together a few moments of happiness, so much that it really is not worth it. Devout Buddhists should always remember that suffering will always follow craving. All the problems in this world are rooted in the desire for pleasure. It is on account of the need for pleasure that quarrels occur within the family, that neighbors do not get along well, that states have conflict and nations go to war. It is also on account of sense-based pleasures that sufferings, afflictions, and all kinds of problems plague our world, that people have gone beyond their humanness into great cruelty and inhumanity.

In short, according to Buddhism, devout Buddhists should always remember that suffering will always follow craving. All the problems in this world are rooted in the desire for pleasure. It is on account of the need for pleasure that quarrels occur within the family, that neighbors do not get along well, that states have conflict and nations go to war. It is also on account of sense-based pleasures that sufferings, afflictions, and all kinds of problems plague our world, that people have gone beyond their humanness into great cruelty and inhumanity. Buddhist practitioners should also always remember that to cultivate without thoughts of seeking fame and benefit, for they have already eradicated the five roots of the hell: wealth, sex, fame, food, and sleep in all circumstances. We should cultivate the Way with our own effort. Do not crave fame and profits. We should follow the spirit of the Bodhisattvas Manjusri, Samantabhadra, Avalokitesvara, Ksitigarbha, and other Bodhisattvas for they feel that living beings' accomplishments are the same as their own accomplishment. They do not make dictinctions between self and others. Bodhisattvas joyfully support the merit and virtue they see and hear others doing. Thus, in most Buddhist scriptures, the Buddha always taught: Wanting to escape the ocean of birth and death, practitioners should always try to balance in order to be able to reduce afflictions by being content with few desires and satisfying what we have in daily life and cultivation. As a matter of fact, only if we have no desire for ourselves; if we are working and earning money in order to help other people; if we make cultivation our business and our business is cultivation only, then how clear and happy our life will be!

Chapter Twenty-Eight

Cultivation on Subduing & Reducing Afflictions Is One of the Most Wonderful Methods of Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death

I. An Overview of Fundamental Afflictions:

Affliction is the way of temptation or passion which produces bad karma (life's istress and delusion), causes one to wander in the samsara and hinder one from reaching enlightenment. However, according to the Mahayana teaching, especially the T'ien-T'ai sect, afflictions are inseparable from Buddhahood. Affliction and Buddhahood are considered to be two sides of the same coin. When we realize that afflictions in themselves can have no real and independent existence, therefore, we don't want to cling to anything, at that very moment, afflictions are bodhi without any difference. Sanskrit term "Agantu-klesa" means guest-dust. Let's explain in details for "Guest-dust". According to Buddhism, affliction means guest or the foreign atom, or intruding element, which enters the mind and causes distress and delusion. Also, according to Buddhism, affliction means worldly dust for the mind is naturally pure or innocent till the evil element enters. It is agreeable that the six faculties that help us maintain our daily activities, but they are also the main factors that bring sufferings and afflictions to our body and mind. Do not think that the eyes are that great, just because they help us see things. It is exactly because of their help that we give rise to all kinds of sufferings and afflictions. For instance, when we see an attractive person of the opposite sex, we become greedy for sex. If we do not get what we want, we will be afflicted; and if we get what we want, we will also be afflicted. The other faculties, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind are the same way. They make one give rise to many sufferings and afflictions. "Klesa" literally means "pain," "external dust," "affliction," or "something tormenting" and is translated as "affliction." As there is nothing so tormenting spiritually as selfish, evil desires and passions, klesa has come to be understood chiefly in its derivative sense and external dust

for agantuklesa. Klesa is a Sanskrit term for affliction, distress, worldly cares, vexations, and as consequent reincarnation. They are such troubles as desire, hate, stupor, pride, doubt, erroneous views, etc., leading to painful results in future rebirths, for they are karma-messengers executing its purpose. Klesa also means "negative mental factors," that lead beings to engage in non-virtuous actions, which produce karmic results. Klesa also means all defilements that dull the mind, the basis for all unwholesome actions as well as kinks that bind people to the cycle of rebirths. People also call Klesa the thirst of Mara. In order to attain enlightenment, the number one priority is to eliminate these defilements by practicing meditation on a regular basis. Afflictions are also restlessness and worry, another disadvantage that makes progress difficult. When the mind becomes restless like flustered bees in a shaken hive, it can not concentrate. This mental agitation prevents calmness and blocks the upward path. mental worry is just as harmful. When a man worries over one thing and another, over things done or left undone, and over fortune and misfortune, he can never have peace of mind. All this bother and worry, this fidgeting and unsteadiness of mind prevents concentration. According to Buddhism, mulaklesa means fundamental illusions or passions, or afflictions, including: Panca-klesa or Panca-klesa-dula means five dull, unintelligent, or stupid vices or temptations or five envoys of stupidity caused by the illusion of the body or self: greed, anger, stupidity, arrogance, and doubt. It should be reminded that the suffering arising out of the working of the passions, which produce good or evil karma, which in turns results in a happy or suffering lot in one of the three realms, and again from the lot of suffering (or mortality) arises the karma of the passions. The pains arising from a life of illusion, such as greed, hatred, ignorance. Panca-tiksna-dula means the five higher wholesome deeds: no greed, no hatred (hate), no stupidity, nor pride nor arrogance, and no doubt.

II. Main Causes Lead to Afflictions: Ignorance Leads to Attachments-Attachments Lead to Afflictions:

Ignorance Leads to Attachments: We are born from the desires of our father and mother. Then, when we emerge into this world, we become infatuated with many things, and become ourselves well-

springs of desire. We relish physical comforts and the enjoyments of the senses. Thus, we are strongly attached to the body. But if we consider this attachment, we will see that this is a potential source of sufferings and afflictions. For the body is constantly changing. We wish we could remain alive forever, but moment after moment the body is passing from youth to old age, from life to death. We may be happy while we are young and strong, but when we contemplate sickness, old age, and the ever-present threat of death, anxiety overwhelms us. Thus, we seek to elude the inevitable by evading the thought of it. The lust for life and the fear of death are forms of attachment. We are also attached to our clothes, our car, our storied houses, and our wealth. Besides, we are also attached to memories concerning the past or anticipations of the future. ***According to Buddhism, All These Attachments Originated from Ignorance:*** In Buddhism, ignorance (Avidya) is noncognizance of the four noble truths, the three precious ones (triratna), and the law of karma, etc. Avidya is the first link of conditionality (pratityasampada), which leads to entanglement of the world of samsara and the root of all unwholesome in the world. This is the primary factor that enmeshes (làm vướng víu) beings in the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. In a Buddhist sense, it refers to lack of understanding of the four noble truths (Arya-satya), the effects of actions (karma), dependent arising (pratitya-samutpada), and other key Buddhist doctrines. In Madhyamaka, "Avidya" refers to the determination of the mind through ideas and concepts that permit beings to construct an ideal world that confers upon the everyday world its forms and manifold quality, and that thus block vision of reality. "Avidya" is thus the nonrecognition of the true nature of the world, which is empty (shunyata), and the mistaken understanding of the nature of phenomena. Thus "avidya" has a double function: ignorance veils the true nature and also constructs the illusory appearance. "Avidya" characterizes the conventional reality. For the Sautrantikas and Vaibhashikas, "Avidya" means seeing the world as unitary and enduring, whereas in reality it is manifold and impermanent. "Avidya" confers substantiality on the world and its appearances. In the Yogachara's view, "avidya" means seeing the object as a unit independent of consciousness, when in reality it is identical with it.

Ignorance means Unenlightened, the first or last of the twelve nidanas. Ignorance is Illusion or darkness without illumination, the ignorance which mistakes seeming for being, or illusory phenomena for realities. Ignorance of the way of escape from sufferings, one of the three affluences that feed the stream of mortality or transmigration. Sometimes ignorance means “Maya” or “Illusion.” It means complete darkness without illumination. The ignorance which mistakes seeming for being, or illusory phenomena for realities. Ignorance is the main cause of our non-enlightenment. Ignorance os only a false mark, so it is subject to production, extinction, increase, decrease, defilement, purity, and so on. Ignorance is the main cause of our birth, old age, worry, grief, misery, and sickness, and death. Ignorance is one of the three fires which must be allowed to die out before Nirvana is attained. The erroneous state of mind which arises from belief in self.

In Buddhism, ignorance is not seeing things as they really are. It is failing to understand the truth about life. As long as we have not developped our minds to obtain wisdom, we remain ignorant of the tru nature of things. According to Buddhism, ignorance means regarding the self as real. Due to ignorance, people do not see things as they really are, and cannot distinguish between right and wrong. They become blind under the delusion of self, clinging to things which are impermanent, changeable, and perishable. Once anger arises, one has nothing but “ignorance.” In order to eliminate “ignorance,” you should meditate on causality. All of our psychological problems are rooted in ignorance, in delusion. Ignorance is the crowning corruption for ignorance itself leads us to attachments. Besides attachments, our greeds, hates, conceits and a host of other defilements also go hand in hand with our ignorance. The solutions are to be found in the problems themselves and hence we should not run away from our problems. Analyze and scrutinize the problems, and you will see that they are human problems, so do not attribute them to non-humans. Our real problems can be solved only by giving up illusions and false concepts and bringing our lives into harmony with reality and this can be done only through meditation. Ignorance is also thoughts and impulses that try to draw us away from emancipation. If we wish to liberate ourselves from these hindrances, we should first recognize them through meditation. Just as the Buddha described in His discourses how

He would exclaim, “Mara! I see you.” Zen practitioners should remember that the purpose of disciplined meditation practice is to eliminate ignorance, to open the essential nature of mind, and to stabilize awareness. Through meditation, we concentrate on things with an undistracted awareness. We are not thinking about anything, not analyzing, not getting lost in flux of things, but just seeing the nature of what is happening in the mind. Through practices of meditation, our mind becomes clearer and clearer; it is to say ‘ignorance’ is gradually eliminated through the course of meditation. If you think that your mind can only be opened by a certain master out there, you are never cultivating in accordance with Buddhism at all. If you think someone out there can eliminate ignorance for you, you are not a devout Buddhist. In short, we, devout Buddhists should turn inside and try our best to destroy ignorance. If we destroy a little ignorance, we will have a little more wisdom. If we destroy a lot of ignorance, we will have a lot more of wisdom. If we destroy ignorance completely, we will have a complete wisdom. At that time, our life is a life with complete wisdom at all times. At that time, what is our life if we don't want to say it is a life of peace, mindfulness, enlightenment, and complete happiness.

Attachments Lead to Afflictions: To grasp, hold, or cling to anythingmeans to cling to things as real. A tendency for settling down in the mind. According to the Buddha Birth Story, there is a story about the Trapper and the Monkey. How does a trapper catch a monkey? He takes a coconut and makes a small hole in it. He then puts some peanuts inside and outside the coconut. Before long, a monkey will come and eat the peanuts on the ground. Then he will put his hand in the coconut to reach the peanuts inside. Holding the peanuts makes his hand bigger, so now he cannot pull it out through the hole. He cries and gets angry, but will not open his hand and let the peanuts go. Finally, the trapper comes and catches him. We are like the monkey. We want to be free from sufferings and afflictions, but we will not let go our attachments. In this way we continue to suffer afflictions and remain caught in Samsara because of our own attachments.

III. Cultivation on Subduing & Reducing Afflictions Is One of the Most Wonderful Methods of Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death:

According to Buddhist teachings, sufferings, afflictions and adverse circumstances are triplet and they always go together. Practitioners should always remember that such cases occur because of the power of evil karma. The Buddhas view suffering and adverse circumstances as their teacher, thus achieving Ultimate Enlightenment. Likewise, we should consider illness as medicine, to escape the ocean of birth and death. We should realize that human beings are bound by all kinds of karmic afflictions. Without the sufferings of poverty and illness, they will, by nature, pursue the worlds of sight and sound, fame anf profit, finding it difficult to let go. Who would then willingly turn around to watch and ponder the state of perdition to come? The sage Mencius once said, “Those who will be entrusted with great talks should first endure hardship both in body and mind, suffering hunger and destitution or failure in their undertakings. Only then will they be able to forge their character, develop patience and endurance and attain outstanding abilities, beyond the ken of the multitude. Therefore, we should realize that human character is usually forged in adversity. If adversity cannot be avoided, we should remain at peace and practice forbearance. Moreover, in speaking of great tasks, the sage Mencius was referring merely to mundane undertakings. Even so, enduring hardship is necessary for success; how much more so when lowly beings such as ourselves undertake the great task of achieving Buddhahood and rescuing sentient beings! If we are not tested to a certain extent by financial hardship and disease, our worldly delusions will know no bounds and our Pure Land practice will be difficult to perfect. With our Mind-mirror clouded, we will revolve for many eons in the evil realms; not knowing when we will ever achieve liberation! The ancients have said: 'If it were not for a period of penetrating cold, the plum blossom could never develop its exquisite perfume!' This is the meaning of what I said earlier. We should persevere in reciting the Buddha's name, to eradicate past karma swiftly and avoid developing a mind of afflictions, resenting the Heavens, blaming our fellow beings, considering the law of Cause and Effect as a fairy tale and rejecting the Buddhas and their teachings as ineffective. We should know that from

time immemorial, we have all created immeasurable evil karma. As the Avatamsaka Sutra states: 'If evil karma had physical form, the empty space of the ten directions could not contain it.' Thus, how can haphazard, intermittent cultivation possibly annihilates all afflictions and obstructions?" In short, cultivation on subduing and reducing afflictions is one of the most wonderful methods of escaping the ocean of life and death.

Cultivation of Letting Go or Non-Attachment to Reduce Afflictions: Our world is a world of desire. Every living being comes forth from desire and endures as a combination of desires. We are born from the desires of our father and mother. Then, when we emerge into this world, we become infatuated with many things, and become ourselves well-springs of desire. We relish physical comforts and the enjoyments of the senses. Thus, we are strongly attached to the body. But if we consider this attachment, we will see that this is a potential source of sufferings and afflictions. For the body is constantly changing. We wish we could remain alive forever, but moment after moment the body is passing from youth to old age, from life to death. We may be happy while we are young and strong, but when we contemplate sickness, old age, and the ever-present threat of death, anxiety overwhelms us. Thus, we seek to elude the inevitable by evading the thought of it. The lust for life and the fear of death are forms of attachment. We are also attached to our clothes, our car, our storied houses, and our wealth. Besides, we are also attached to memories concerning the past or anticipations of the future.

In Buddhist cultivation, cultivating of letting go or non-attachments also means to reduce afflictions. Buddhist practitioners should always have this attitude 'Looking but not seeing, hearing but not listening, smelling but not noticing the scent.' Why is it described as 'looking, but not seeing?' Because the person is returning the light to shine within, and introspecting. Why is it 'hearing, but not listening?' Because he is turning the hearing to listen his own nature. Why does it say, 'smelling, but not noticing the scent?' Because he has gathered back his body and mind, and is not disturbed any longer by scent. At this time, the cultivator's eyes contemplate physical forms, but the forms do not exist for him. His ears hear sounds, but the sounds do not exist for him. His nose smells scents, but those scents do not exist for him. His tongue

tastes flavors, but for him, those flavors do not exist. His body feels sensations, but does not attach itself to those sensations. His mind knows of things, but does not attach to them. If we can sit in meditation until our state is such that 'inside we have no body and mind,' 'outside we have no world,' and 'afar there are no objects', then we reach the stage of nonattachment, or the state of "no trace of self, no trace of others, no trace of living beings, and no trace of life span." This is also the stage described as, "Thoughts of the past cannot be obtained, thoughts of the present cannot be obtained, and thoughts of the future cannot be obtained." This is also called the wonderful stage of lightness and ease in meditation. If we continue to meditate profoundly, we will approach wonderful stages in meditation: the stage of happiness that leaves living beings behind; it means that we have reached a stage of happiness beyond that which living beings enjoy. The stage of happiness that brings concentration, it means happiness in concentration which is completely unparalleled and indescribable. The stage of bliss beyond happiness, it means we leave coarse happiness behind and reach a level of subtle bliss that is most wonderful. The pure stage free of thoughts, where the mind is totally pure without any thoughts. According to the Sutra in Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 18, the Buddha said: "My Dharma is the mindfulness that is both mindfulness and no-mindfulness. It is the practice that is both practice and non-practice. It is words that are words and non-words. It is cultivation that is cultivation and non-cultivation. Those who understand are near to it; those who are confused are far from it indeed. The path of words and language is cut off; it cannot be categorized as a thing. If you are off (removed) by a hair's breadth, you lose it in an instant." The Vajra Sutra taught:

"All things born of conditions are like dreams,
Like illusions, bubbles, and shadows;
Like dewdrops, like flashes of lightning:
Contemplate them in these ways."

Anything with shape or form is considered a "dharma born of conditions." All things born of conditions are like dreams, illusory transformations, bubbles of foam, and shadows. Like dewdrops and lightning, they are false and unreal. By contemplating everything in this way, we will be able to understand the truth, let go of attachments,

and put an end to random thoughts. According to the Sutra In Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 18, the Buddha said: "My Dharma is the mindfulness that is both mindfulness and no-mindfulness. It is the practice that is both practice and non-practice. It is words that are words and non-words. It is cultivation that is cultivation and non-cultivation. Those who understand are near to it; those who are confused are far from it indeed. The path of words and language is cut off; it cannot be categorized as a thing. If you are off (removed) by a hair's breadth, you lose it in an instant."

Cultivation of Letting Go Through Meditation to Reduce Afflictions: As mentioned above, the main goal of Buddhist practitioners is of course to attain the ultimate enlightenment and emancipation; however, the immediate goal we must achieve is the attaining of happiness in the midst of the world which is full of sufferings and afflictions. In order to achieve this immediate goal, practitioners' every moment must be moment of practice of letting go in life for this is the most effecient and wonderful way to reduce afflictions. Buddhist practitioners should always have this attitude 'Looking but not seeing, hearing but not listening, smelling but not noticing the scent.' Why is it described as 'looking, but not seeing?' Because the person is returning the light to shine within, and introspecting. Why is it 'hearing, but not listening?' Because he is turning the hearing to listen his own nature. Why does it say, 'smelling, but not noticing the scent?' Because he has gathered back his body and mind, and is not disturbed any longer by scent. At this time, the cultivator's eyes contemplate physical forms, but the forms do not exist for him. His ears hear sounds, but the sounds do not exist for him. His nose smells scents, but those scents do not exist for him. His tongue tastes flavors, but for him, those flavors do not exist. His body feels sensations, but does not attach itself to those sensations. His mind knows of things, but does not attach to them. If we do our sitting meditation for a considerable time, we may feel fatigued, we may need to ease our aching limbs a little bit. Then we can start our walking meditation. Walk slowly mindful of the movements, now we need not think of the breath but become aware of the walk. If our mind wanders give attention to our walking without getting involved in other thoughts. If we stop, turn or look around, be mindful and apply clear

comprehension. When our foot touches the earth we get the sensation, become aware of it. Walking is also an exercise in mindfulness. When we are following a meditation course let us try to be mindful always everywhere. When sitting, standing, walking, working, eating, drinking, talking, laughing, wearing clothes, or even when we are silent, etc., let us be always mindful. If our limbs get numbed while in meditation, rub and stretch them. We can also relax in a lying down position; however, this we may do at the end of a sitting meditation. Lie on our back on a flat surface, and try to avoid using a pillow or cushion under our head. Keep our legs stretched out slightly apart and arms loosely by our sides, keep our eyes shut, do not go to deep thinking, but allow your mind to relax, and not wander. Relax each muscle, be completely relaxed for a few minutes. At times, we may slightly fall asleep for a couple of minutes, at the end of the relaxation, get up feeling fit. We could do this type of relaxation, not only during the meditation hours, but also at any time we feel fatigued or when we have the inclination to relax.

A basic teaching of the Buddha on how to calm and rein in the “monkey” mind. When we feel asleep, just lie down in a quiet place, put the lights out and let go our minds and bodies. In Buddhism, we have always been hearing about letting go and not clinging to anything. What does the Buddha mean on letting go? He means in daily activities no way we can let go everything. We have to hold on things; however, try not to cling to them. For example, we try to make money for our living expenses, but not try to cling on making a lot of money to accumulate regardless of the means of making the money. Practioners do everything with a mind that lets go. Do not expect any praise or reward. If we let go a little, we will have a little peace. If we let go a lot, we will have a lot of peace. If we let go completely, we will know complete peace and freedom. In Zen, this 'abandonment' means the moral courage of taking risks; it helps practitioners plunging into the unknown which lies beyond the topography of relative knowledge. This 'abandonment' may seem an easy thing to do, but after all it is the last thing any practitioner can do, for it is done only when we are most thoroughly convinced that there is no other way to meet the situation. We are always conscious of a tie, which we thought it's slender, but we will see how strong it is when we try to cut it off. It is always holding us

back when we wish to let go. Zen practitioners should always be careful!

To let go greed, anger, jealousy, and other evil thoughts to which people are subject, we need strength of mind, strenuous effort and vigilance. When we are free from the city life, from nagging preoccupation with daily life, we are not tempted to lose control; but when we enter in the real society, it becomes an effort to check these troubles. Meditation will contribute an immense help to enable us to face all this with calm. There are only two points of divergence between the deluded and the enlightened, i.e., Buddhas and Bodhisattvas: purity is Buddhahood, defilement is the state of sentient beings. Because the Buddhas are in accord with the Pure Mind, they are enlightened, fully endowed with spiritual powers and wisdom. Because sentient beings are attached to worldly Dusts, they are deluded and revolve in the cycle of Birth and Death. While to practice Pure Land is to go deep into the Buddha Recitation Samadhi, awakening to the Original Mind and attaining Buddhahood. Therefore, if any deluded, agitated thought develops during Buddha Recitation, it should be severed immediately, allowing us to return to the state of the Pure Mind. This is the method of dropping afflictions with the meditating mind. Devout Buddhists, even though seeing that letting go of greed-anger-ignorance is not an easy thing to do; this is not easy to do in one or two days, but when we want to follow the Buddha's Path, we have no other choice but to let them go.

Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death by Utilizing Some Other Methods of Subduing and Reducing Afflictions in Buddhist Cultivation: According to Buddhist teachings, demonic obstructions can be demonic afflictions. These demons represent the afflictions of greed, anger, resentment, delusion, contempt, doubt and wrong views. They also include the demons of the Five Skandas, the Six Entrances, the Twelve Sense Fields, and the Eighteen Elements. These demons are also called “internal” as they created by topsy-turvy, delusive states of mind. Therefore, they must be overcome by the bright, enlightened mind. The human mind is easily moved, developing afflictions not only because of personal karma but also because of the common karma of living in an environment filled, for the most part, with evil beings. Some persons cannot resist the attractions of the five

Dusts and thus fall into evil ways. Others, encountering adverse conditions, grow sad and mournful and lose their determination to progress. Such developments depending on their severity, render the cultivator despondent, indignant and ill, or worse still, cause him to abandon the Buddhist Order or even to commit suicide out of despair. More harmful still, they can lead to loss of respect and good will toward other cultivators, sometimes even hatred and avoidance of clergy and lay people alike. Loss of faith in cause and effect, bad karma and finally, descent upon the three Evil Paths are the end result. To counteract these demons, the practitioner should reflect that all afflictions are illusory, upsetting, suffocating, binding, evil and conducive only to suffering for both himself and others. To eliminate afflictions is to return to the True Mind, free and liberated, fresh and tranquil, bright and clear, happy and at peace, transcendental and wondrous. The cultivator should also meditate in the same way on all attachments, from the Five Skandas to the Eighteen Elements. Besides, afflictions also include worldly cares, sensual desire, passions, unfortunate longings, suffering, pain that arise out of a deluded view of the world. In the four great vows, an adherent of Zen vows to eliminate these passions which obstruct the path to the attainment of enlightenment. Affliction also means suffering (pain), sorrow, distress, or calamity. Affliction includes delusion, moral faults, passions, and wrong belief. The way of temptation or passion which produces bad karma (life's distress and delusion), cause one to wander in the samsara and hinder one from reaching enlightenment. In order to attain enlightenment, the number one priority is to eliminate these defilements by cultivating on a regular basis. The main goal of Buddhist practitioners is of course to attain the ultimate enlightenment and emancipation; however, the immediate goal we must achieve is the attaining of happiness in the midst of the world which is full of sufferings and afflictions. In order to achieve this immediate goal, practitioners' every moment in life must be moment of living and cultivating in the spirit of reducing afflictions without any exception. In Buddhist cultivation, in order to achieve the ends of peace, mindfulness, hapiness, and eventual emancipation. practitioners should always try to subdue these ten robbers that cause afflictions. Beside sense restraint in daily activities mentioned above, there are still many

other methods of subduing them, below are some other typical methods that practitioners should consider.

First, To Subdue These Robbers of Afflictions Through the Cultivation of Doing no Evil, Doing Only Good, and Purifying the Mind: In order to reduce demonic obstructions as well as to terminate the suffering and affliction in life, The Buddha advises his fourfold disciple: "Do no evil, to do only good, to purify the mind." In the Agama Sutra, the Buddha taught: "Do not commit wrongs, devoutly practice all kinds of good, purify the mind, that's Buddhism", or "To do no evil, to do only good, to purify the will, is the doctrine of all Buddhas." These four sentences are said to include all the Buddha-teaching. The Buddha's teachings in the Dharmapada Sutra: "A wise man should abandon the way of woeful states and follows the bright way. He should go from his home to the homeless state and live in accordance with the rules for Sramanas (Dharmapada 87). A wise man should purge himself from all the impurities of the mind, give up sensual pleasures, and seek great delight in Nirvana (Dharmapada 88). Those whose minds are well-trained and well-perfected in the seven factors of enlightenment, who give up of grasping, abandon defiled minds, and eradicate all afflictions. They are shinning ones and have completely liberated and attained Nirvana even in this world (Dharmapada 89)." However, the Buddha's teachings are usually easy to speak but very difficult to put in practice. Yes! "Not to commit any sin, to do good, to purify one's mind." Buddha's teaching is so easy to speak about, but very difficult to put into practice. The Buddha's teaching is so easy that a child of three knows how to speak, but it is so difficult that even an old man of eighty finds it difficult to practice. According to the Forty-Two Sections Sutra, Chapter 18, the Buddha said: "My Dharma is the mindfulness that is both mindfulness and no-mindfulness. It is the practice that is both practice and non-practice. It is words that are words and non-words. It is cultivation that is cultivation and non-cultivation. Those who understand are near to it; those who are confused are far from it indeed. The path of words and language is cut off; it cannot be categorized as a thing. If you are off (removed) by a hair's breadth, you lose it in an instant."

Second, To Subdue These Robbers of Afflictions Through Overcoming Greed, Anger, and Jealousy: To refrain from greed, anger, jealousy, and other evil thoughts to which people are subject, we need strength of mind, strenuous effort and vigilance. When we are free from the city life, from nagging preoccupation with daily life, we are not tempted to lose control; but when we enter in the real society, it becomes an effort to check these troubles. Meditation will contribute an immense help to enable us to face all this with calm. There are only two points of divergence between the deluded and the enlightened, i.e., Buddhas and Bodhisattvas: purity is Buddhahood, defilement

is the state of sentient beings. Because the Buddhas are in accord with the Pure Mind, they are enlightened, fully endowed with spiritual powers and wisdom. Because sentient beings are attached to worldly Dusts, they are deluded and revolve in the cycle of Birth and Death. To practice Pure Land is to go deep into the Buddha Recitation Samadhi, awakening to the Original Mind and attaining Buddhahood. Therefore, if any deluded, agitated thought develops during Buddha Recitation, it should be severed immediately, allowing us to return to the state of the Pure Mind. This is the method of counteracting afflictions with the meditating mind.

Third, To Subdue These Robbers of Afflictions with Repentance on the Three Karmas: From infinite eons, because we have been drowning deeply in the concept of "Self," ignorance has ruled and governed us. Thus, our body, speech, and mind have created infinite karmas and even great transgressions, such as being ungrateful and disloyal to our fathers, mothers, the Triple Jewels, etc, were not spared. Now that we are awakened, it is necessary to feel ashamed and be remorseful by using the same three karmas of body, speech, and mind to repent sincerely. Maitreya Bodhisattva, even as a "One-Birth Maha-Bodhisattva," six times daily he still performs the repentance ceremony praying to eliminate binding ignorance quickly. As a Maha-Bodhisattva, his 'binding ignorance' is infinitesimal, yet He still repents to eliminate them. Sincere Buddhists should develop vow to feel ashamed and be remorseful by using the same three karmas of body, speech, and mind to repent sincerely, to make the Triple Jewels glorious, help and rescue sentient beings, in order to compensate and atone for past transgressions and repay the four-gratefuls including the Triple Jewels, parents, teachers of both life and religion, and all sentient beings. The first repentance is the repentance of the body karma: Body karma openly confesses all transgressions, vow not to kill or prohibiting taking of life, not to steal or prohibiting stealing, not to commit adultery or prohibiting commiting adultery, and pray for them to disappear, and then use that body to practice wholesome actions, such as alms givings, offerings, etc. The Buddha taught: "The body is the origin of all sufferings, is the root of all tortures, punishments and karmic retributions in the three domains." Because of ignorance and stupidity, sentient beings are only concerned with our bodies and have not the slightest care of other people's bodies. We are only aware of our own sufferings, but completely oblivious of others' pains and sufferings. We only know of our hopes for peace and happiness but unaware that others, too, have hope for peace and happiness. Moreover, because of ignorance and stupidity, we give rise to the mind of self and other, which gives rise to the perception of friends and strangers. Gradually over time, this perception sometimes develops into feuds and hatred among people, who become enemies for countless aeons (life after life, one

reincarnation after reincarnation). There are three kinds of body karma: killing, stealing, and sexual misconducts. To repent the body karma, we should bow and prostrate our body to the Triple Jewels, and realize that our body is inherently impermanent, filled with sicknesses, constantly changing, and transforming. Thus, in the end, we cannot control and command it. We should never be so obssessed and overly concerned with our body and let it causes so many evil deeds. The second repentance is the repentance of the speech karma: Speech karma openly confesses all transgressions, vow not to lie, not to exaggerate, not to abuse (curse), not to have ambiguous talk, not to insult, not to exaggerate, not to speak with a double-tongue, and pray for them to disappear, and then use that speech to practice Buddha Recitation, chant sutras, speak wholesomely, etc. The Buddha taught: "The mouth is the gate and door to all hateful retaliations." The karmic retribution for speech-karma is the greatest. Speech-karma gives rise to four great karmic offenses: lying, insulting, gossiping, and speaking with a double tongue maner. Because of these four unwholesome speeches, sentient beings accumulate infinite and endless offenses ranging from speaking artificially, sweetly, manipulatively to speaking untruthfully, words and actions contradicting one another, etc. Once the mind of hatred arises, not mention strangers, even one's parents, religious masters, etc., there is not an insult one will not speak. No malicious words will be spared, whether saying hateful words with intention of causing separation between two people, saying something happened when it didn't or when it didn't happen saying it did; thus, speaking irresponsibly and chaotically without the slightest consideration of what is being said. Sincere Buddhists should always repent the body-karma by using the "mouth of transgressions" of the past to change it into praises and glorification of the virtuous practices of the Buddhas. Use that speech often to speak of kindness, encouraging others to cultivate the Way and change for the better, i.e. sitting meditation, Buddha-Recitation, or chanting sutras, etc. Thereafter, for the remainder of this life, vow not to use one mouth and tongue to speak vulgarly, disrespectfully, and before the Triple Jewels, sincerely confess and willingly admit to all offenses without concealment. Thus, use the same mouth and tongue which has created countless offenses in the past to give birth to infinite merits, virtues, and wholesome karma at the present. The third repentance is the repentance of the mind-karma: Mind Karma must be genuine, remorseful, vow not to be covetous, not to be malicious, not to be unbelief, not to be greedy, not to be hatred, not to be ignorant, vowing not to revert back to the old ways. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that the mind

consciousness is the reason to give rise to infinite offenses of the other five consciousnesses, from Sight, Hearing, Scent, Taste, and Touch Consciousnesses. The mind consciousness is similar to an order passed down from the King to his magistrates and chancellors. Eyes take great pleasure in looking and observing unwholesome things, ears take great pleasure in listening to melodious sounds, nose takes great pleasure in smelling aromas and fragrance, tongue takes great pleasure in speaking vulgarly and irresponsibly as well as finding joy in tasting the various delicacies, foods, and wines, etc; body takes great pleasure in feeling various sensations of warmth, coolness, softness, velvet clothing. Karmic offenses arise from these five consciousnesses, come from their master, the Mind; the mind consciousness is solely responsible for all their actions. In the end, this will result in continual drowning in the three evil paths, enduring infinite pains and sufferings in hells, hungry ghosts, and animals. In the Dharmapada, the Buddha taught: "Guard one's mind much like guarding a castle; protect the mind similar to protecting the eye ball. Mind is an enemy capable of destroying and eliminating all of the virtues and merits one has worked so hard to accumulate during one's existence, or sometimes many lifetimes." Also, in the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: Like a well-trained horse, touch by the whip, even so be strenuous and zealous. By faith, by virtue, by effort, by concentration, by investigation of the Truth, by being endowed with knowledge and conduct, and being mindful, get rid of this great suffering (144). To repent the mind-karma, sincere Buddhists should think that the three karmas of Greed, Hatred, and Ignorance of the mind are the roots and foundations of infinite karmic transgressions. The mind-karma is the web of ignorance which masks our wisdom and is the affliction and worry that cover our true nature. It should be feared and needs be avoided. Sincere Buddhists should use their heart and mind to sincerely confess and repent, be remorseful, and vow never again to commit such offenses.

IV. Buddha's Examples of Reducing Afflictions Through A Wonderful Renunciation:

As a matter of fact, detachment is one of the most wonderful ways of reducing afflictions in Buddhist cultivation. Detachment is the

attitude of those who give up, forget, do not attach any importance for what they have done for the benefit of others. In general, we feel proud, self-aggrandized when we do something to help other people. Quarrels, conflicts, or clashes between men or groups of men are due to passions such as greed or anger whose source can be appraised as self-attachment or dharma-attachment. The Buddha taught that if there is someone who misjudges us, we must feel pity for him; we must forgive him in order to have peace in our mind. The Bodhisattvas have totally liberated themselves from both self-attachment and dharma-attachment. When people enjoy material or spiritual pleasures, the Bodhisattvas also rejoice, from their sense of compassion, pity, and inner joy. They always consider human beings as their benefactors who have created the opportunities for them to practice the Four Immeasurable Minds on their way to Enlightenment. In terms of the Immeasurable Detachment, the Bodhisattvas consider all men equal, the clever as the stupid, themselves as others, they do everything as they have done nothing, say everything as they have said nothing, attain all spiritual levels as they have attained nothing. Renunciation in Buddhism means to renounce the worldly world. Basically, renunciation is the recognition that all existence is permeated by suffering. When you realize this, it leads to what we might call a turning point. That is to say, the realization that all of common life is permeated by suffering causes us to look for something more or something different, something which is absent of sufferings and afflictions. For the Buddha, after realizing all nature of life and human suffering in life; all living beings kill one another to survive, and that is a great source of suffering, Crown Prince Siddhattha stopped enjoying worldly pleasures. Furthermore, he himself saw an old man, a sick man, and a corpse, that led him to ponder why it was, he also felt unsettled by these sights. Clearly, he himself was not immune to these conditions, but was subject to the inevitable succession of old age, sickness and death. Thus, He thought of leaving the world in search of truth and peace. In the silence of that moonlit and breezy night (it was the full-moon day of July) such thoughts as these arose in him “Youth, the prime of life ends in old age and man’s senses fail him at a time when they are most deeded. The health is weakened when diseases suddenly creeps in. Finally, death comes, sudden perhaps and

unexpected, and puts an end to this brief span of life. Surely there must be an escape from this unsatisfactoriness, from aging and death." Then, at the age of twenty-nine, in the flower of youthful manhood, on the day Princess Yasodara had given birth to Rahula, Prince Siddhartha Gotama, discarding and disdaining the enchantment of the royal life, scorning and spurning joys that most young people yearn for, the prince renounced wife and child, and a crown that held the promise of power and glory. He cut off his long locks of hair with his sword, doffed his royal robes, and putting on a hermit's robe retreated into forest solitude to seek solution to those problems of life that so deeply stirred his mind. He became a penniless wandering ascetic to struggle for enlightenment. First, He sought guidance from two famous sages at the time, Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta, hoping that they, being famous masters of meditation, would teach him all they know, leading him to the heigths of concentrative thought. He practiced concentration and reached the highest meditative attainments, but was not satisfied with anything less than a Supreme Enlightenment. These teachers' range of knowledge and experience, however, was insufficient to grant him what he so earnestly sought. Though both sages asked him to stay to teach their followers, he declined and left. He continued to practice many penances and underwent much suffering. He practiced many forms of severe austerity. However, he got no hope after six years of torturing his body so much that it was reduced to almost a skeleton. He changed his method as his penances proved useless. He gave up extremes and adopted the Middle Path and became a Buddha at the age of 35. It is extremely important to remember that renunciation in Buddhism is never caused by despair in the ordinary course of life. As for the Buddha, he enjoyed the greatest possible happiness and privilege known in his day; however, he recognized the suffering inherent in sentient existence, and realized that, no matter how much we may indulge ourselves in pleasures of the sense, eventually we must face the realities of old age, sickness, and death. In short, renunciation in Buddhism means to renounce the worldly pleasures (which will eventually cause sufferings and afflictions) to seek the truth of life which is absent of greed, anger and ignorance, so that we can obtain a life of eternal happiness.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

Ecaping the Ocean of Life and Death by Being Always Try to Cultivate Unwholesome Mental States

I. An Overview of Wholesome Minds & Unwholesome Minds:

According to Buddhist teachings, both wholesome and unwholesome minds have great influence in practitioners' cultivation. "Kusala" means volitional action that is done in accordance with the Aryan Eightfold Noble Path. So, Kusala is not only in accordance with the right action, but it is also always in accordance with the right view, right understanding, right speech, right livelihood, right energy, right concentration and right samadhi. Meanwhile, unwholesome deeds (anything connected with the unwholesome root or akasula mula) accompanied by greed, hate or delusion and cause undesirable karmic results or future suffering. There are two kinds of causes in the world: good causes and bad causes. If we create good causes, we will reap good results; if we create bad causes, we will surely reap bad results. According to The Path of Purification, unwholesome deeds are both unprofitable action and courses that lead to unhappy destinies. Kusala karmas or good deeds will help a person control a lot of troubles arising from his mind. Inversely, if a person does evil deeds, he will receive bad results in this life and the next existence which are suffering.

Wholesome mind or good heart associates with good thoughts. Good mind initiates beneficial intentions towards others, compassion, loving-kindness, generosity, patience, good speech, tolerance, love, faith, wishing to help others, etc. Wholesome mind can be used to dispel negative minds. According to Buddhism, wholesome mind also means Rectifying Mind with a true-hearted will. In cultivating the Way, we must lay a solid foundation. Although we know it is clear that the mind is not our self, not belonging to us, not "I", not "Mind"; however, if we want to put an end to birth and death, we must exert efforts in cultivating the wholesome mind. We must obtain the wholesome mind before cultivating the body. It means we should get rid of our lust, random thoughts and materialistic desires. Materialistic desires include the desires for wealth, sex, fame, food and sleep. In addition,

wholesome mind also means making the will sincere. It is to say that once we make a decision to cultivate wholesome dharma, we will be always the same, not to cultivate today and stop cultivating tomorrow. Once we have faith in Buddhism, that faith should be everlasting, true-hearted and firm.

Meanwhile, according to Buddhism, unwholesome or evil means negative or not good, contrary to the right and harmful to present and future life. According to The Long Discourses of the Buddha, Sangiti Sutra, unwholesome minds initiate unwholesome thoughts which are the three root causes of all evil, namely: thoughts of lust (craving), hate and delusion. Unwholesome minds lead to unwholesome deeds which include the following, but not limited to: greed, anger, stupidity, arrogance, doubt, improper views, killing living things, stealing, or taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, and wandering thoughts. According to The Path of Purification, ten unwholesome deeds are both unprofitable action and courses that lead to unhappy destinies: killing living things, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, false speech, malicious speech, harsh speech, gossip, covetousness, ill-will, and wrong view. In cultivation, Buddhist practitioners must try to cultivate to eliminate negative or unwholesome mind, the mind that creates negative or unwholesome thoughts (anger, hatred, harmful thoughts, wrong views, etc), speech (lying, harsh speech, double-tongued, etc), as well as deeds which are the causes of our sufferings, confusion and misery. Negative or unwholesome mind creates negative or unwholesome thoughts (anger, hatred, harmful thoughts, wrong views, etc), speech (lying, harsh speech, double-tongued, etc), as well as deeds which are the causes of our sufferings, confusion and misery. Unwholesome or negative mind will destroy our inner peace and tranquility.

According to the Abhidharma, unwholesome consciousnesses rooted in either "Greed," or in "Delusion." *Unwholesome Consciousnesses Rooted in Greed (accompanied by greed):* Consciousness that accompanied by joy, associated with wrong view (the view that may be either reinforce the attachment from which the consciousness springs by providing it with a rational justification, or the view itself may be an object of attachment in its own right), unprompted (the absence of prompting), i.e. with joy, holding the view

that there is no evil in stealing, a boy spontaneously steals an apple from a fruit stall. Consciousness that accompanied by joy, associated from wrong view, prompted (the presence of prompting), i.e. with joy, holding the view that there is no evil in stealing, a boy steals an apple through the prompting of a friend. Consciousness that accompanied by joy, dissociated from wrong view, unprompted, i.e. with joy, a boy steals an apple (without any prompting) from a fruit stall, knowing that stealing is an evil deed (does not hold any wrong view). Consciousness that acompanied by joy, dissociated from wrong view, prompted, i.e. with joy and prompting from a friend, a boy steals an apple from a fruit stall, knowing that stealing is an evil deed (does not hold any wrong view). Consciousness that accompanied by equanimity, associated with wrong view, unprompted, i.e. with neutral feeling (not joy nor sorrow), a boy steals an apple, without any prompting, holding the view that there is no evil in stealing (does hold wrong view). Consciousness that accompanied by equanimity, associated with wrong view, prompted, i.e. with neutral feeling, prompting from a friend, a boy steals an apple from a fruit stall, holding the view that there is no evil in stealing. Consciousness that accompanied by equanimity, dissociated from wrong view, unprompted, i.e. with neutral feeling, without any prompting, a boy steals an apple even though he knows that stealing is an evil deed (dissassociated with wrong view). Consciousness that accompanied by equanimity, dissociated from wrong view, prompted, i.e. with neutral feeling and prompting from a friend, a boy steals an apple, even though he knows that stealing is an evil deed (dissassociated from wrong view). *Unwholesome Consciousnesses Rooted in "Hatred" (accompanied by hatred):* Consciousness that accompanied by displeasure, associated with aversion, unprompted, i.e. with hatred a man murders another in a spontaneous fit of rage. Consciousness that accompanied by displeasure, associated with aversion, prompted, i.e. with hatred; one man murders another after premeditation. *Unwholesome Consciousnesses Rooted in "Delusion" (accompanied by delusion):* Consciousness that accompanied by equanimity, associated with doubt, i.e. due to delusion, a man doubts the enlightenment of the Buddha or the efficacy of the Dharm as a way to deliverance. Consciousness that accompanied by equanimity,

associated with restlessness, i.e. due to delusion, a person is so distracted in mind that he canot focus his mind on any object.

II. A Summary of the Functioning Mind and Its onditions In Buddhist Teachings:

An Overview of The Functioning Mind and Its Conditions:

As mentioned in previous chapters, “mind” is another name for Alaya-vijnana. However, according to Buddhism, unlike the material body, immaterial mind is invisible. We are aware of our thoughts and feelings and so forth by direct sensation, and we infer their existence in others by analogy. The mind is the root of all dharmas. In Contemplation of the Mind Sutra, the Buddha taught: “All my tenets are based on the mind that is the source of all dharmas." The mind has brought about the Buddhas, the Heaven, or the Hell. It is the main driving force that makes us happy or sorrowful, cheerful or sad, liberated or doomed. The mind is so closely linked with the body that mental states affect the body’s health and well-being. Some doctors even confirm that there is no such thing as a purely physical disease. Unless these bad mental states are caused by previous evil acts, and they are unalterable, it is possible so to change them as to cause mental health and physical well-being to follow thereafter. Man’s mind influences his body profoundly. If allowed to function viciously and entertain unwholesome thoughts, mind can cause disaster, can even kill a being; but it can also cure a sick body. When mind is concentrated on right thoughts with right effort and understanding, the effect it can produce is immense. A mind with pure and wholesome thoughts really does lead to a healthy and relaxed life. As a matter of fact, Outside the mind, there is no other thing. Mind, Buddha, and all the living, these three are not different (the Mind, the Buddha and sentient beings are not three different things). Buddhist practitioners should always remember that nothing exists outside the mind (consciousness), since all phenomena are projections of consciousness. All is mind, mind pervades in all places, in all the bodies. The ignorance perceive multiplicity, but there is nothing predicable in Mind-Only. The functions of mind are very extensive and numberless. That’s why the Buddha always remineded his disciples, “Mind is like an unrest monkey jumping from one tree to another.” Fundamental

Consciousness is the functioning mind and the later is its qualities or conditions.

A Summary of the Fundamental Consciousness in Buddhist Teachings: *Fundamental consciousness is the will, the directive or controlling mind, or the functioning mind as a whole in daily life.* All of us have the so-called "Fundamental Consciousness". This Eighth Consciousness, which is comparable to the king of all consciousnesses. This king of all consciousnesses surrounded by the Seventh, the Sixth, and all the other Five consciousnesses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. These are the five outer thieves. The Sixth Consciousness is the mind, the inner thief. The Seventh clings to the cognizant faculty of the Chief, of Eighth Consciousness as its own great ego. Under its leadership the Sixth and other five consciousnesses attach themselves to colors, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches, etc.; and thus, the Chief Consciousness is entwined tightly by them and has no chance to turn its head around. The "head phrase" that Buddhist practitioners are working on right now is like a sharp sword with which we may slaughter all these harassing thieves and thus transform the Eighth Consciousness into the Wisdom of the Great Mirror, the Seventh Consciousness into the Wisdom of Equality, the Sixth into the Wisdom of Observation, and the five senses into the Wisdom of Performance. But the most important thing is to transform the Sixth and the Seventh Consciousnesses first, because it is these two faculties that take the lead and impose their influence on the rest. Their function is to distinguish, to differentiate, to conceptualize, and to fabricate. According to Zen Master Hsu-Yun in Hsu-Yun's Records of Teachings, now the poems and stanzas that you have composed, and the light and the Void, etc., that you have perceived, were all the fabrication of these two consciousnesses. Buddhist practitioners should forget all these things and stick to your "head phrase". Also, you should know that there is another pitfall into which a Buddhist pratitioner may easily fall, that is to meditate idly and make his mind deadly dull in utter torpidity. This is the worst error of all...

A Summary of The Qualities of the Functioning Mind in Buddhist Teachings: *The qualities of the functioning mind are the qualities or conditions of the functioning mind or the fundamental consciousness, such as lust, anger, ignorance, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing,*

stealing, and lying, and so on. The qualities of the functioning mind is also called the conditions (mental actions) of the functioning mind are also called the mental factors, also called psychic factors or jhana factors, that help raise the practitioner from lower to higher levels of mental purity. There are five jhana factors: initial application, sustained application, rapture, happiness, and one-pointedness of mind. Mental conditions or emotions; the attributes of the mind, especially the moral qualities, emotions, love, hate, etc. Mental factor intention includes all of our desires develop because of the thoughts of our mental factor intention. When we see an attractive object, we develop a wish to obtain that object. In contrary, when we see an unattractive object, we develop a wish not to obtain that object; sometimes we hate the object.

III. Ecaping the Ocean of Life and Death by Being Always Try to Cultivate Unwholesome Mental States:

Practitioners should always remember that our mind tremendously and profoundly influences and affects the body. If we allow it to function freely to external conditions, it can cause unmeasurable disasters. The path of cultivation of any Buddhist is a war between wholesome and unwholesome mental states. And most of the time, unwholesome mental factors keep attacking any devout Buddhists. Buddhist teaching (Buddhism) is eay to say, but not easy to do or to practice. However, when we really want to cultivate, we have no other choice but trying to let go all unwholesome factors, for being able to do this also means that we have already pushed away great obstacles on our own path of cultivation. In short, according to Buddhist teachings, cultivation of unwholesome mental states is one of the most wonderful methods of escaping the ocean of life and death.

Cultivation of Fourteen Unwholesome Factors Is One of the Most Wonderful Methods of Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death: According to Buddhist teachings, cultivation of unwholesome mental states, including fourteen unwholesome mental states that are interactive with the mind is one of the most wonderful methods of escaping the ocean of life and death. According to The Abhidharma, there are fourteen unwholesome factors that practitioners should always observe. Practitioners should always remember that if we know how to concentrate on thoughts with right

understanding and right behavior, the effects that the mind can produce are immense and profound too. *The First Unwholesome Mind Is the Mind of Ignorance:* Delusion or moha is a synonym for avijja, ignorance. Its characteristic is mental blindness or unknowing. Its function is non-penetration, or concealment of the real nature of the object. It is manifested as the absence of right understanding or as mental darkness. Its proximate cause is unwise attention. It should be seen as the root of all that is unwholesome. Ignorance is not seeing things as they really are. It is failing to understand the truth about life. As long as we have not developed our minds to obtain wisdom, we remain ignorant of the true nature of things. *The Second Unwholesome Mind Is the Mind of Shamelessness:* Shamelessness is the absence of disgust at bodily and verbal misconduct. Practitioners should control their body-specch-mind, not letting them go at will. *The Third Unwholesome Mind Is the Mind of Fearlessness of Wrong Doing:* Moral recklessness is the absence of dread on account of bodily and verbal misconduct. This happens due to lack of respect for self and others. *The Fourth Unwholesome Mind Is the Mind of Restlessness:* It has the characteristic of disquietude, like water whipped up by the wind. Its function is to make the mind unsteady, as wind makes the banner ripple. It is manifested as turmoil. Its proximate cause is unwise attention to mental disquiet. *The Fifth Unwholesome Mind Is the Mind of Greed:* Greed, the first unwholesome root, covers all degrees of selfish desire, longing, attachment, and clinging. Its characteristic is grasping an object. Its function is sticking, as meat sticks to a hot pan. It is manifested as not giving up. Its proximate cause is seeing enjoyment in things that lead to bondage. *The Sixth Unwholesome Mind Is the Mind of Wrong View:* Perverted (wrong) views or opinions, not consistent with the dharma, one of the five heterodox opinions and ten evils. This view arises from a misconception of the real characteristic of existence. There were at least sixty-two heretical views (views of the externalist or non-Buddhist views) in the Buddha's time. Buddhism emphasizes on theory of causation. Understanding the theory of causation means to solve most of the question of the causes of sufferings and afflictions. Not understanding or refuse of understanding of the theory of causation means a kind of wrong view in Buddhism. According to the Buddha, sentient beings suffer from sufferings and afflictions because of dersires, aversions, and delusion, and the causes of these harmful actions are not only from ignorance, but also from wrong views. False view means seeing wrongly. Its characteristic is unwise or unjustified interpretation or belief. Its function is to preassume. It is manifested as a wrong interpretation or belief. Its proximate cause is unwillingness to see the noble ones. Practitioners should always remember that perverted (wrong) views or opinions, or not consistent with the dharma, is one of the five

heterodox opinions and ten evils. This view arises from a misconception of the real characteristic of existence. Buddhism emphasizes on theory of causation. Understanding the theory of causation means to solve most of the question of the causes of sufferings and afflictions. Not understanding or refuse of understanding of the theory of causation means a kind of wrong view in Buddhism. According to the Buddha, sentient beings suffer from sufferings and afflictions because of dersires, aversions, and delusion, and the causes of these harmful actions are not only from ignorance, but also from wrong views. *The Seventh Unwholesome Mind Is the Mind of Pride:* Conceit has the characteristic of haughtiness. Its function is self-exaltation. It is manifested as vainglory. Its proximate cause is greed disassociated from views. It should be regarded as madness. *The Eighth Unwholesome Mind Is the Mind of Ill-Will:* Doso, the second unwholesome root, comprises all kinds and degrees of aversion, ill-will, anger, irritation, annoyance, and animosity. Its characteristic is ferosity. Its function is to spread, or burn up its own support, i.e. the mind and body in which it arises. It is manifested as persecuting, and its proximate cause is a ground for annoyance. It is unwise or unsystematic attention that brings about ill-will, which when not checked propagates itself, saps the mind and clouds the vision. It distorts the entire mind and its properties and thus hinders awakening to truth, and blocks the path to freedom. Lust and ill-will based on ignorance, not only hamper mental growth, but act as the root cause of strife and dissension between man and man and nation and antion. Hatred narrows down our path of cultivation and closes the door of emancipation; while the mind of 'loving-kindness' broadens the path of cultivation and opens the door of liberation for us. Hatred brings remorse; loving-kindness brings peace. Hatred agitates; loving-kindness quietens, still, and calm, and so on and so on. Practitioners should always remember that 'there is no ill-luck worse than hatred', and the mind of 'loving-kindness' is not only the best antidote for anger in ourselves, but it is also the best medicine for those who are angry with us. Practitioners should always develop the mind of 'loving-kindness' through thinking out the evils of hate and the advantages of non-hate. *The Ninth Unwholesome Mind Is the Mind of Envy:* Envy has the characteristic of being jalous of other's success. Its function is to be dissatisfied with other's success. It is manifested as aversion towards that. Its proximate cause is other's success. Envy is a vicious habit shared by almost every body in the society. People with the mind of envy cannot feel happy when others are progressing, but they rejoice over the failures and misfortunes of others. Practitioners should always meditate and contemplate on the impermanence of all things, and contemplate on the vicissitudes of life. Once we can see the impermanence and emptiness of all things, and understand the vicissitudes of life, we have nothing to attach, thus we can put an end to the mind of envy. On

the contrary, we can cultivate the virtue of appreciating others' happiness, welfare and progress. When we learn to rejoice the joy of others, our hearts get purifed, serene and lofty. *The Tenth Unwholesome Mind Is the Mind of Avarice:* The characteristic of avarice or stinginess is concealing one's own success when it has been or can be obtained. Its function is not to bear sharing these with others. It is manifested as shrinking away from sharing and as meanness or sour feeling. Its proximate cause is one's own sucess. Practitioners should always remember that giving is one of the ten weapons of enlightening beings, destroying all stinginess. Enlightening Beings who abide by these can annihilate the afflictions, bondage, and compulsion accumulated by all sentient beings in the long night of ignorance. *The Eleventh Unwholesome Mind Is the Mind of Worry:* Worry or remorse after having done wrong. Its characteristic is subsequent regret. Its function is to sorrow over what has or what has not been done. It is manifested as remorse. Practitioners should always remember that worries and miseries are twin evils that go hand in hand. They co-exist in this world. If you feel worried, you are miserable, and vise-versa; when you are miserable, you are worried. Devout Buddhists should always remember that worries are made by our own minds and by nothing else we create them in our own minds for we fail to understand the danger of attachment and egoistic feelings. To be able to overcome these problems, we must try to contemplate and to train our minds carefully because an untrained mind is the main cause of all the problems including worries and miseries. The most important fact is that we should always have a smile for ourselves as well as for others in any circumstances. The Buddha taught: "Worries only arise in the fool, not in the wise." Worries and miseries are nothing but states of mind. Negative thoughts produce worries and miseries, while positive thoughts produce happiness and peace. *The Twelfth Unwholesome Mind Is the Mind of Sloth:* Sloth is sluggishness or dullness of mind. Its characteristic is lack of driving power. Its function is to dispel energy. It is manifested as the sinking of the mind. Its proximate cause is unwise attention to boredom, drowsiness, etc. Sloth is identified as sickness of consciousness or cittagelanna. According to Most Venerable Piyadassi in "The Buddha's Ancient Path," thina or Middha is sloth or morbid state of the mind and mental properties. It is not, as some are inclined to think, sluggishness of the body; for even the Arahats, the Perfect Ones, who are free from this ill also experience bodily fatigue. This sloth and torpor, like butter too stiff to spread, make the mind rigid and inert and thus lessen the practitioner's enthusiasm and earnestness from meditation so that he becomes mentally sick and lazy. Laxity leads to greater slackness until finally there arises a state of callous indifference. *The Thirteenth Unwholesome Mind Is the Mind of Torpor:* Torpor is the morbid state of the mental factors. Its characteristic is

unwieldiness. Its function is to smother. It is manifested as drooping, or as nodding and sleepiness. Sloth and torpor always occur in conjunction, and are opposed to energy. Torpor is identified as sickness of the mental factors or kayagelanna. When practicing meditation, sometimes cultivators drift into a dark heavy mental state, akin to sleep, this is the delusive obstruction of drowsiness. Drowsiness, or sloth as a hindrance to progress to fulfil good deeds. *The Fourteenth Unwholesome Mind Is the Mind of Doubt:* Doubt signifies spiritual doubt, from a Buddhist perspective the inability to place confidence in the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha, and the training. Doubting is natural. Everyone starts with doubts. We can learn a great deal from them. What is important is that we do not identify with our doubts. That is, do not get caught up in them, letting our mind spin in endless circles. Instead, utilizing meditation and contemplation to watch the whole process of doubting, of wondering. See who it is that doubts. See how doubts come and go. Then we will no longer be victimized by our doubts. We will step outside of them, and our mind will be quiet. We can see how all things come and go. Let go of our doubts and simply watch. This is how to end doubting. Buddhist teaching (Buddhism) is eay to say, but not easy to do or to practice. However, when we really want to cultivate, we have no other choice but trying to let go all unwholesome factors, for being able to do this also means that we have already pushed away great obstacles on our own path of cultivation. In short, according to Buddhist teachings, cultivation of unwholesome mental states is one of the most wonderful methods of escaping the ocean of life and death.

Cultivation of Fifty-One Unwholesome Mental States That Are Interactive with the Mind Is One of the Most Wonderful Methods of Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death: According to Buddhist teachings, all of our desires develop because of the thoughts of our mental factor intention. When we see an attractive object, we develop a wish to obtain that object. In contrary, when we see an unattractive object, we develop a wish not to obtain that object; sometimes we hate the object. Therefore, according to Buddhism, cultivation of unwholesome mental states, including fifty-one unwholesome mental states that are interactive with the mind is one of the most wonderful methods of escaping the ocean of life and death. According to the Kosa Sastra, there are one hundred divisions of all mental qualities and their agents of the Consciousness-Only School, or five groups of one hundred modes or things. Mental factors are also called psychic factors including mental conditions or emotions; the attributes of the mind, especially the moral qualities, emotions, love, hate, etc. Fifty-one mental states are one of important groups in the One Hundred Dharmas of the Mahayana Buddhism. In the Studies of the Vijnaptimatra, mental states are set up by the Fundamental Consciousnesses. In other words, mental conditions or emotions; the attributes of the mind,

especially the moral qualities, emotions, love, hate, etc. According to the Kosa Sastra, there are one hundred divisions of all mental qualities and their agents of the Consciousness-Only School, or five groups of one hundred modes or things. Mental factors are also called psychic factors including mental conditions or emotions; the attributes of the mind, especially the moral qualities, emotions, love, hate, etc. In the third power of change, six consciousnesses of perceiving object correspond to these fifty-one mental states and three states of Vedana (sensation): painful (suffering), pleasurable (happy or joyful), and freedom from both suffering and joyfull. *Dukkha vedana:* The painful feeling or unpleasant feeling. *Sukha-vedana:* Pleasant bodily feeling, The sensation or perception of pleasure. *Upeksa-vedana:* The state of renunciation or indifference to sensation, the state in which one has abandon both pain and pleasure. Fifty-one mental states are divided into six parts. **Part One Is the Five Universally Interactive Mental States (sarvatraga):** *The first mental state* is the attention (manaskara) or paying attention on something. *The second mental state* is the contact (sparsha), which means after paying attention on something, one has a tendency to want to come in contact with it. *The third mental state* is the feeling (vedana), which means once contact is established, feeling arises. *The fourth mental state* is the conceptualization (samjna), which means once feeling arises, conceptualization occurs. *The fifth mental state* is the deliberation (cetana), which means once there is "conceptualization," then "deliberation" sets in. **Part Two Is the Five Particular States (viniyata):** *The sixth mental state* is the desire (chanda). Desire means to want for something. *The seventh mental state* is the resolution (adhimoksha). Resolution means supreme understanding without any doubt at all. *The eighth mental state* is the recollection (smriti). Recollection means remembering clearly. *The ninth mental state* is the concentration (samadhi). Concentration means exclusively pay attention to something. *The tenth mental state* is the judgment (prajna). Judgment means ability to judge which average person possesses. **Part Three Is the Eleven Wholesome States (kushala):** *The eleventh mental state* is the faith (shraddha). Faith means to have a sense of belief or an attitude of faith. *The twelfth mental state* is the vigor (virya). Once one has faith, one should put it into action with vigor. *The thirteenth mental state* is the shame (hri). Shame also means "Repentance." *The fourteenth mental state* is the remorse or embarrassment (apatraya). *The fifteenth mental state* is the sbsence of greed (alobha). *The sixteenth mental state* is the absence of anger (advesha). *The seventeenth mental state* is the absence of ignorance (amoha). *The eighteenth mental state* is the light ease (prashraddhi). Light ease, an initial expedient in the cultivation of Zen. Before samadhi is actually achieved, one experiences "light-ease." *The nineteenth mental state* is the non-laxness (apramada) or to

follow the rules. *The twentieth mental state* is the renunciation (upeksha). Renunciation means not to grasp on the past, but to renounce everything within the activity skhandha which is not in accord with the rules. *The twenty-first mental state* is the non-harming (ahimsa), which means not harming any living beings. **Part Four Is the Six Fundamental Afflictions (klesha):** *The twenty-second mental state* is the greed (raga). Greed for wealth, sex, fame, food, sleep or greed for forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and objects of touch. *The twenty-third mental state* is the anger (pratigha). Not obtaining what one is greedy for leads to anger. *The twenty-fourth mental state* is the ignorance (moha). Once anger arises, one has nothing but "ignorance." *The twenty-fifth mental state* is the arrogance (mana). Arrogance means pride and conceit which causes one to look down on others. *The twenty-sixth mental state* is the doubt (vicikitsa). Cannot believe or make up one's mind on something. *The twenty-seventh mental state* is the improper views (drishti). **Part Five Is the Twenty Derivative Afflictions (upaklesha):** Derivative Afflictions include ten minor grade afflictions, two intermediate grade afflictions, and eight major grade afflictions. *Ten minor grade afflictions include wrath, hatred, covering, rage, deceit, conceit, harming, flattery, jealousy, and stinginess: The twenty-eighth mental state* is the wrath (krodha). Wrath which comes sudenly and is a combination of anger and hatred. *The twenty-ninth mental state* is the hatred (upanaha). Hatred happens when one represses the emotional feelings deep inside. *The thirtieth mental state* is the rage (pradasa). Rage, of which the emotional reaction is much more severe than hatred. *The thirty-first mental state* is the hiding (mraksha). Hiding means covering or concealing something inside. *The thirty-second mental state* is the deceit (maya). Deceit means false kindness or phone intention. *The thirty-third mental state* is the flattery (shathya). *The thirty-fourth mental state* is the conceit (mada). Conceit means to think high of self and low of others. *The thirty-fifth mental state* is the harming (vihimsa). Harming means to want to harm other people. *The thirty-sixth mental state* is the jealousy (irshya). Jealousy means to become envious of the who surpass us in one way or other. *The thirty-seventh mental state* is the stinginess (matsarya). One is tight about one's wealth, not wishing to share it with others. *Two intermediate grade afflictions include lack of shame and lack of remorse: The thirty-eighth mental state* is the lack of shame (ahrikya). Lack of shame means to do wrong, but always feel self-righteous. *The thirty-ninth mental state* is the lack of remorse (anapatrapya). Lack of remorse means never examine to see if one is up to the standards of others. *Eight major grade afflictions include lack*

of faith, laziness, laxiness, torpor, restlessness, distraction, improper knowledge and scatteredness: The fortieth mental state is the lack of faith (ashraddhya). Lack of faith means not trust or believe in anyone, not to believe in the truth. *The forty-first mental state* is the laziness (kausidya). Laziness means not to try to eliminate unwholesome deeds and to perform good deeds. *The forty-second mental state* is the laxiness (pramada). Laxiness means not to let the body and mind to follow the rules but does whatever one pleases. *The forty-third mental state* is the torpor (styana). Torpor means to feel obscure in mind or to fall asleep in the process. *The forty-fourth mental state* is the restlessness (auddhatya). One is agitated and cannot keep still. *The forty-fifth mental state* is the distraction (mushitasmriti). Distraction means to lose proper mindfulness. *The forty-sixth mental state* is the improper knowledge (asamprajanya). One becomes obssesses with defilement. *The forty-seventh mental state* is the scatteredness (wikshepa). **Part Six Is the Four Unfixed Mental States (aniyata):** *The forty-eighth mental state* is the falling asleep to obscure the mind (middha). *The forty-ninth mental state* is the regret (kaudritya) or repent for wrong doings in the past. *The fiftieth mental state* is the investigation (vitarka means to cause the mind unstable). *The fifty-first mental state* is the correct Examination (vicara means to pacify the mind).

In short, lives and acts of any Buddhist practitioners always aim at a state of mental purity where disturbing passions and impulses are subdued and calmed down so that the mind becomes concentrated and collected and enters into a state of clear consciousness and mindfulness. All methods of practicing in Buddhism stick to activities of daily lives, not sitting in tranquility for gaining union with any supreme being, nor for bringing about mystical experiences, nor for any self-hypnosis. It is for gaining tranquility of mind (Samadhi) and insight (vipassana), for the sole purpose of attaining unshakable deliverance of the mind, that supreme security from bondage attainable through the total extirpation of all mental defilements. Although the supreme goal of Buddhism is the supreme Enlightenment and liberation, the Buddha also taught that Buddhist practice is the source of happiness. It can lead to the end of human suffering and miseries. The Buddha was also a man like all other men, but why could he

become a Great Enlightened One? The Buddha never declared that He was a Deity. He only said that all living beings have a Buddha-Nature that is the seed of Enlightenment. He attained it by renouncing his princely position, wealth, prestige and power for the search of Truth that no one had found before. As Buddhist followers, we practice Buddhist tenets, not for entreating favors but for for following the Buddha's examples. Besides, cultivation in Buddhism also means to change your narrow-minded heart into a heart full of love and compassion towards all beings. In other words, cultivation in Buddhism means to accomplish the four boundless hearts, especially the hearts of loving-kindness and compassion. True Buddhists should always remember that sooner or later everyone has to cultivate once.

The content of this writing is not a professional nor a profound philosophical study of the mind in Buddhism, but it simply emphasizes in the matter of ecaping the ocean of life and death by being always try to cultivate unwholesome mental states as well as the teachings the Buddha on the mind and its roles in daily cultivation. Devout Buddhists should always remember that cultivation is only effective when we actually apply the Buddha's teachings into practicing well-being exercises that are linked to established daily life patterns, makes our lives more peaceful, mindful, and happier. Devout Buddhists should always remember the goal of any Buddhist cultivator is to achieve self-enlightening, that is examining with one's own intelligence, and not depending upon another; enlightening or awakening of others, then achieve the final enlightenment and liberation in this very life. For devout Buddhists, once you make up your mind to enter the path of cultivation, should persevere and never have the intention of retreat; step by step, you should try your best to set a strong foundation on calmness, mindfulness and happiness. Over the times, this will help us form habits which make our life better and better. In fact, once we have these habits, they will become our natural habits. Once they become integrated in our lifestyle, we will always live with them. In doing this, we are travelling on the right track of the path that leads to escape the ocean of life and death as the goal of this writing.

Chapter Thirty

Cultivation of Letting Go Is One of the Most Wonderful Methods of Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death

I. An Overview of Letting Go:

Upeksa is one of the seven Bodhyangas. The Buddha taught: "If one wishes to penetrate into the profound realm of liberation of the Maha-Bodhisattvas, Buddhists must first be able to let go of all of the five desires of ordinary people." According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, when Manjusri Bodhisattva called on to enquire after Upasaka Vimalakirti's health, Manjusri asked Vimalakirti about "Upeksa". Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: "What should be relinquish (upeksa) of a Bodhisattva?" Vimalakirti replied: "In his work of salvation, a Bodhisattva should expect nothing (i.e. no gratitude or reward) in return." In Buddhism, abandonment is one of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with it, we can turn away from the five desires. Equanimity is one of the chief Buddhist virtues, that of renunciation, leading to a state of iddifference without pleasure or pain, or independence of both. It is defined as the mind in equilibrium, i.e. above the distinction of things or persons, of self or others; indifferent, having abandoned the world and all things, and having no affections or desirs. Once we have fully developed Upeksa, we will feel true compassion for all beings, and we will have the ability to eliminate any partiality from our daily attitudes toward other people. Usually, our view of others dominated by various kinds of discriminating emotions. We always feel closeness and sympathy toward loved ones. In contrast, toward strangers we always feel distant and indifferent, and for those we dislike we feel aversion or contempt. That is to say we always classify friends and enemies clearly. However, we should always remember that our sympathy, closeness and/or hatred have no effect on others, these feelings do not nurture or harm others. It is we who will suffer the ill-consequences of our actions. Upeksa is one of the seven Bodhyangas. The Buddha taught:

"If one wishes to penetrate into the profound realm of liberation of the Maha-Bodhisattvas, Buddhists must first be able to let go of all of the five desires of ordinary people." Detachment is the attitude of those who give up, forget, do not attach any importance for what they have done for the benefit of others. In general, we feel proud, self-aggrandized when we do something to help other people. Quarrels, conflicts, or clashes between men or groups of men are due to passions such as greed or anger whose source can be appraised as self-attachment or dharma-attachment. The Buddha taught that if there is someone who misjudges us, we must feel pity for him; we must forgive him in order to have peace in our mind. The Bodhisattvas have totally liberated themselves from both self-attachment and dharma-attachment. When people enjoy material or spiritual pleasures, the Bodhisattvas also rejoice, from their sense of compassion, pity, and inner joy. They always consider human beings as their benefactors who have created the opportunities for them to practice the Four Immeasurable Minds on their way to Enlightenment. In terms of the Immeasurable Detachment, the Bodhisattvas consider all men equal, the clever as the stupid, themselves as others, they do everything as they have done nothing, say everything as they have said nothing, attain all spiritual levels as they have attained nothing. Immeasurable Equanimity, a mind of great detachment, or infinite equanimity. Limitless indifference, such as rising above all emotions, or giving up all things. Here a monk, with a heart filled with equanimity. Thus, he stays, spreading the thought of equanimity above, below, across, everywhere, always with a heart filled with equanimity, abundant, magnified, unbounded, without hatred or ill-will. Equanimity is also considered as a divine abode. It is the state of mind that regards others with impartiality, free from attachment and aversion. An impartial attitude is its chief characteristic, and it is opposed to favouritism and resentment.

II. Who Binds Us?:

Bindings mean Fetters or Bondages or Illusions which chain men to the cycle of birth and death. Bindings or Fetters also mean bondages. The bondage and instigators of the passions, two other names for afflictions. The fetters are the ten states beginning with greed for the

fine-material, so called because they fetter aggregates in this life to aggregates of the next, or karma to its fruit, or beings to suffering. For as so long the ones exist there is no cessation of the others. There are three kinds of bindings: *The tie of false views of permanent ego*, *the tie of wrong discipline* or taking hold of the merit accruing from the observance of the rules of morality, and *the tie of doubt on correct teachings*. In the Nirvana Sutra, the Buddha said: "Srota-apanna though has cut off inummerable illusions; however, the three ties are so serious that if he is able to cut off these three ties, he can cut off all other ties.

Our world is a world of desire. Every living being comes forth from desire and endures as a combination of desires. We are born from the desires of our father and mother. Then, when we emerge into this world, we become infatuated with many things, and become ourselves well-springs of desire. We relish physical comforts and the enjoyments of the senses. Thus, we are strongly attached to the body. But if we consider this attachment, we will see that this is a potential source of sufferings and afflictions. For the body is constantly changing. We wish we could remain alive forever, but moment after moment the body is passing from youth to old age, from life to death. We may be happy while we are young and strong, but when we contemplate sickness, old age, and the ever-present threat of death, anxiety overwhelms us. Thus, we seek to elude the inevitable by evading the thought of it. The lust for life and the fear of death are forms of attachment. We are also attached to our clothes, our car, our storied houses, and our wealth. Besides, we are also attached to memories concerning the past or anticipations of the future.

According to the Vajra Sutra, the Buddha taught: "Anything with shape or form is considered a "dharma born of conditions." All things born of conditions are like dreams, illusory transformations, bubbles of foam, and shadows. Like dewdrops and lightning, they are false and unreal. By contemplating everything in this way, we will be able to understand the truth, let go of attachments, and put an end to random thoughts." According to the Sutra In Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 18, the Buddha said: "My Dharma is the mindfulness that is both mindfulness and no-mindfulness. It is the practice that is both practice and non-practice. It is words that are words and non-words. It is

cultivation that is cultivation and non-cultivation. Those who understand are near to it; those who are confused are far from it indeed. The path of words and language is cut off; it cannot be categorized as a thing. If you are off (removed) by a hair's breadth, you lose it in an instant."

In order to let go and cut off of all affairs, we have no other choice but cultivating on the Buddha's Path. According to the Potaliya Sutta in the Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, there are eight things in the Noble One's Discipline that lead to the cutting off of affairs. *First,* "with the support of the non-killing of living beings, the killing of living beings is to be abandoned." So, it was said. And with reference to what was this said? Here a noble disciple considers thus: 'I am practicing the way to abandoning and cutting off of those fetters because of which I might kill living beings. If I were to kill living beings, I would blame myself for doing so; the wise, having investigated, would censure me for doing so; and on the dissolution of the body, after death, because of killing living beings an unhappy destination would be expected. But this killing of living beings is itself a fetter and a hindrance. And while taints, vexation, and fever might arise through the killing of living beings, there are no taints, vexation, and fever in one who abstains from killing living beings.' So, it is with reference to this that it was said: "With the support of the non-killing of living beings, the killing of living beings is to be abandoned." *Second,* "with the support of taking only what is given, the taking of what is not given is to be abandoned." (the rest remains the same as in 1). *Third,* "with the support of truthful speech, false speech is to be abandoned." (the rest remains the same as in 1). *Fourth,* "with the support unmalicious speech, malicious speech is to be abandoned." (the rest remains the same as in 1). *Fifth,* "with the support of refraining from rapacious greed, rapacious greed is to be abandoned." (the rest remains the same as in 1). *Sixth,* "with the support of refraining from spiteful scolding, spiteful scolding is to be abandoned." (the rest remains the same as in 1). *Seventh,* "with the support of refraining from angry despair, angry despair is to be abandoned." (the rest remains the same as in 1). *Eighth,* "with the support of non-arrogance, arrogance is to be abandoned." (the rest remains the same as in 1). There are also ten actions of let go and cut off of all affairs which produce no regrets, they are: First, not killing.

Second, not stealing. Third, not committing sexual misconduct. Fourth, not lying. Fifth, not telling a fellow-Buddhist's sins. Sixth, not drinking wine. Seventh, not praising oneself and discrediting others. Eighth, not being mean to other beings. Ninth, not being angry. Tenth, not defaming the Triratna.

Buddhists believe in a just rational of karma that operates automatically and speak in terms of cause and effect instead of rewards and punishments. Every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect; every resultant action has its cause. Likewise there is a cause of binding on someting, there must be a result of attachments and sufferings and affliction on the so-called something. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism goverining all situation. Buddhists believe in a just rational of karma that operates automatically and speak in terms of cause and effect instead of rewards and punishments. It's a fundamental principle for all living beings and all things that if one sows good deeds, he will surely reap a good harvest; if he sows bad deeds, he must inevitably reap a bad harvest. Though the results may appear quickly or slowly, everyone will be sure to receive the results that accord with their actions. Anyone who has deeply understood this principle will never do evil.

According to Buddhism, every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise, every resultant action or effect has its cause. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations. The Moral Causation in Buddhism means that a deed, good or bad, or indifferent, brings its own result on the doer. Good people are happy and bad ones unhappy. But in most cases "happiness" is understood not in its moral or spiritual sense but in the sense of material prosperity, social position, or political influence. For instance, kingship is considered the reward of one's having faithfully practiced the ten deeds of goodness. If one meets a tragic death, he is thought to have committed something bad in his past lives even when he might have spent a blameless life in the present one. Causality is a natural law, mentioning the relationship between cause and effect. All things come into being not without cause, since if there is no cause, there is no effect and vice-versa. As so sow, so shall you reap. Cause and effect never conflict with each other. In other words, cause and effect are always consistent with each other. If we want to

have beans, we must sow bean seeds. If we want to have oranges, we must sow orange seeds. If wild weeds are planted, then it's unreasonable for one to hope to harvest edible fruits. Likewise it is impossible for us to plant the cause of bindings to things in life and wish to reap a result of emancipation.

If we really know who binds us, there will be opportunities for us to cultivate to unbind these knots and attachments, then we will see that to unbind these and to experience the escape of sufferings and afflictions in order to have peace, mindfulness and happiness does not mean that we have to be in a place where there is no noise, no trouble, or no hard work. As a matter of fact, peace is really to be in the midst of those things and still be calm in our heart. For devout Buddhists, once you make up your mind to cultivate to unbind these knots and attachments, should persevere and never have the intention of retreat; step by step, you should try your best to practice on a daily basis. Over the times, this will help us form habits which make our life to be untied on many aspects in a better and better way. Devout Buddhists should always remember that according to Buddhis, the mind is the root of all dharmas. The mind can give rise to karma, it can also destroy it. If the mind binds us; only it can unbind us, and no-one else can do this. In Contemplation of the Mind Sutra, the Buddha taught: "All my tenets are based on the mind that is the source of all dharmas." The mind has brought about the Buddhas, the Heaven, or the Hell. It is the main driving force that makes us happy or sorrowful, cheerful or sad, liberated or doomed. Therefore, only our mind can bind us and only this very mind can unbind us, no one else can do this.

III. What Would We Let Go?:

Letting-go in Buddhism means to renounce things that belong to the worldly world. Basically, renunciation is the recognition that all existence is permeated by suffering. When you realize this, it leads to what we might call a turning point. That is to say, the realization that all of common life is permeated by suffering causes us to look for something more or something different, something which is absent of sufferings and afflictions. In Buddhism, we have always been hearing about letting go and not clinging to anything. What does the Buddha mean on letting go? He means in daily activities, no way we can let go

everything. We have to hold on things; however, try not to cling to them. For example, we try to make money for our living expenses, but not try to cling on making a lot of money to accumulate regardless of the means of making the money. A basic teaching of the Buddha on how to calm and rein in the "monkey" mind. When we feel asleep, just lie down in a quiet place, put the lights out and let go our minds and bodies. Practioners do everything with a mind that lets go. Do not expect any praise or reward. If we let go a little, we will have a little peace. If we let go a lot, we will have a lot of peace. If we let go completely, we will know complete peace and freedom. Buddhism goes a little further to encourage its devotees to practice 'Equanimity,' or 'Upeksa', for this is one of the most important Buddhist virues.

Upeksa refers to a state that is neither joy nor suffering but rather independent of both, the mind that is in equilibrium and elevated above all distinctions. In fact, after a short period of time of practicing renunciation, we are able to eliminate the troublesome and illusory "I" as well as all artificial worries. Practitioners should always have this attitude 'Looking but not seeing, hearing but not listening, smelling but not noticing the scent.' Why is it described as 'looking, but not seeing?' Because the person is returning the light to shine within, and introspecting. Why is it 'hearing, but not listening?' Because he is turning the hearing to listen his own nature. Why does it say, 'smelling, but not noticing the scent?' Because he has gathered back his body and mind, and is not disturbed any longer by scent. At this time, the cultivator's eyes contemplate physical forms, but the forms do not exist for him. His ears hears sounds, but the sounds do not exist for him. His nose smells scents, but those scents do not exist for him. His tongue tastes flavors, but for him, those flavors do not exist. His body feels sensations, but does not attach itself to those sensations. His mind knows of things, but does not attach to them. Equanimity is not an intellectual concept, nor is it another thought to play with in our mind. It is a state of mind, a specific quality of consciousness or awareness to be attained through cultivation. In order to obtain equanimity, we have to exert a great deal of effort to cultivate on it, we have to train our mind and transform our basic attitude towards others. Equanimity does not only mean to renounce the material world, but it also means not to develop attachment, nor aversion towards anybody. There is no room

for biased views or unequality in the mind of equanimity. A person with the mind of equanimity will take this unbiased views and equality that he has towards both friends and unknown people. If after a period of time of cultivation on the mind of equanimity, our feeling of attachment to our friends, aversion to our enemy and indifferent to unknown people will gradually fade away. This is the sign of progress in our cultivation. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that the mind of equanimity does not mean becoming indifferent to everyone, but it is a mind of equality and unbiased views towards anyone.

Equanimity, or letting go, or Upeksa is one of the seven Bodhyangas. The Buddha taught: "If one wishes to penetrate into the profound realm of liberation of the Maha-Bodhisattvas, Buddhists must first be able to let go of all of the five desires of ordinary people." According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, when Manjusri Bodhisattva called on to enquire after Upasaka Vimalakirti's health, Manjusri asked Vimalakirti about "Upeksa". Manjusri asked Vimalakirit: "What should be relinquish (upeksa) of a Bodhisattva?" Vimalakirti replied: "In his work of salvation, a Bodhisattva should expect nothing (i.e. no gratitude or reward) in return." Abandonment is one of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with it, we can turn away from the five desires. Equanimity is a basic teaching of the Buddha on how to calm and rein in the "monkey" mind. When we feel asleep, just lie down in a quiet place, put the lights out and let go our minds and bodies.

Zen masters Ekido and Tanzan were on a journey to Kyoto. When they approached the river side, they heard a girl's voice calling for help. When they arrived they saw a young pretty girl, stranded in the river. Ekido immediately jumped down the river and carried the girl safely to the other side where, together with Tanzan, he continued his journey. As the sun began to set, and they made arrangements to settle down for the night, Tanzan could no longer contain himself and blurted out: "How could you pick up that girl? Do you remember that we are not allowed to touch women?" Ekido replied immediately: "I only carried the girl to the river bank, but you are still carrying her." Equanimity, one of the most important Buddhist virues. Upeksa refers to a state that is neither joy nor suffering but rather independent of both, the mind that is in equilibrium and elevated above all distinctions.

On the contrary, to give rein to one's emotion means to surrender one's heedlessnesses. In Buddhism, we have always been hearing about letting go and not clinging to anything. What does the Buddha mean on letting go? He means in daily activities, no way we can let go everything. We have to hold on things; however, try not to cling to them. For example, we try to make money for our living expenses, but not try to cling on making a lot of money to accumulate regardless of the means of making the money. Practioners do everything with a mind that lets go. Do not expect any praise or reward. If we let go a little, we will have a little peace. If we let go a lot, we will have a lot of peace. If we let go completely, we will know complete peace and freedom. In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "Craving grows like a creeper which creeps from tree to tree just like the ignorant man wanders from life to life like a fruit-loving monkey in the forest (Dharmapada 334). Self-conquest is, indeed, better than the conquest of all other people. To conquer onself, one must be always self-controlled and disciplined one's action. By sustained effort, earnestness, temperance and self-control, the wise man may make for himself an island which no flood can overwhelm (Dharmapada 25)."

Detachment is the attitude of those who give up, forget, do not attach any importance for what they have done for the benefit of others. In general, we feel proud, self-aggrandized when we do something to help other people. Quarrels, conflicts, or clashes between men or groups of men are due to passions such as greed or anger whose source can be appraised as self-attachment or dharma-attachment. The Buddha taught that if there is someone who misjudges us, we must feel pity for him; we must forgive him in order to have peace in our mind. The Bodhisattvas have totally liberated themselves from both self-attachment and dharma-attachment. When people enjoy material or spiritual pleasures, the Bodhisattvas also rejoice, from their sense of compassion, pity, and inner joy. They always consider human beings as their benefactors who have created the opportunities for them to practice the Four Immeasurable Minds on their way to Enlightenment. In terms of the Immeasurable Detachment, the Bodhisattvas consider all men equal, the clever as the stupid, themselves as others, they do everything as they have done nothing,

say everything as they have said nothing, attain all spiritual levels as they have attained nothing.

A basic teaching of the Buddha on how to calm and rein in the "monkey" mind. When we feel asleep, just lie down in a quiet place, put the lights out and let go our minds and bodies. The state of mental equilibrium in which the mind has no bent or attachment, and neither meditates nor acts, a state of indifference. Equanimity, one of the most important Buddhist virues. Upeksa refers to a state that is neither joy nor suffering but rather independent of both, the mind that is in equilibrium and elevated above all distinctions. In Buddhism, we have always been hearing about letting go and not clinging to anything. What does the Buddha mean on letting go? He means in daily activities, no way we can let go everything. We have to hold on things; however, try not to cling to them. For example, we try to make money for our living expenses, but not try to cling on making a lot of money to accumulate regardless of the means of making the money. Practioners do everything with a mind that lets go. Do not expect any praise or reward. If we let go a little, we will have a little peace. If we let go a lot, we will have a lot of peace. If we let go completely, we will know complete peace and freedom.

According to Buddhist tradition, there are seven abandonments or riddences: First, cherishing none and nothing. Second, no relations with others. Third, riddance of love and hate. Fourth, riddance of anxiety about the salvation of others. Fifth, riddance of the clinging of form. Sixth, giving to others. Seventh, benefitting others without hope of return. According to the Flower Adornement Sutra, Chapter 27, there are ten kinds of nonattachment of Great Enlightening Being. Great enlightening beings abide in the concentration of the differentiated bodies of all sentient beings can attain ten kinds of non-attachment: *First,* non-attachment in all lands. *Second,* non-attachment in all places. *Third,* non-attachment in all times. *Fourth,* non-attachment in respect to all beings. *Fifth,* non-attachment in respect to all phenomena. *Sixth,* non-attachment in respect in respect to all Enlightening Beings. *Seventh,* non-attachment in respect to all Enlightening Beings' vows. *Eighth,* non-attachment in respect to all concentrations. *Ninth,* non-attachment in respect to all Buddhas. *Tenth,* non-attachment in respect to all the stages of enlightenment. Enlightening Beings who abide by

these can quickly overturn all concepts and attain supreme pure wisdom: Non-attachment to all worlds; non-attachment to all sentient beings; non-attachment to all phenomena; non-attachment to all actions; non-attachment to all roots of goodness; non-attachment to all place of birth; non-attachment to all vows; non-attachment to all practices; non-attachment to all Enlightening Beings; non-attachment to all Buddhas. Also, according to the Flower Adornment Sutra, Chapter 38, there are ten kinds of equanimity of Great Enlightening Beings: *First,* Equanimity in accumulating all virtues. *Second,* Equanimity in undertaking all different vows. *Third,* Equanimity in regard to all living beings. *Fourth,* Equanimity in regard to the consequences of actions of all living beings. Fifth, Equanimity in regard to all phenomena. *Sixth,* Equanimity in regard to all pure and defiled lands. *Seventh,* Equanimity in regard to understandings of all sentient beings. *Eighth,* Equanimity in regard to nonconceptualization of all practices. *Ninth,* Equanimity in regard to the nondifference of all Buddhas' powers. *Tenth,* Equanimity in regard the wisdom of all Buddhas. Enlightening beings rest in these will attain the supreme great equanimity of Buddhas.

IV. Always Learn the Teachings So We Know What Should Be Ridden of:

In order to know what we should let go, we must first learn the teachings. Besides, through learning the teachings we also see so many other benefits, for owing to our study the teachings, we understand Dharma; owing to our study the teachings, we stop committing wrong doings; owing to our study the teachings, we abandon the meaningless behaviors; owing to our study the teachings, we eventually achieve nirvana. In other words, by virtue of our study the teachings, we will know all the key points for modifying our behavior. Owing to study the teachings, we will understand the meaning of the Vinaya Basket and, as a result, will stop committing sins by following the high training of ethics. Owing to study the teachings, we will understand the meaning of the Sutra Basket, and as a result, we will be able to abandon such meaningless things as distractions, by following the high training in single-pointed concentration. Also owing to study the teachings, we understand the meaning of the Abhidharma Basket, and so come to abandon delusions by means of the high training in wisdom. Study the

teachings is the lamp to dispel the darkness of ignorance. It is the best of possession that thieves cannot rob us of it. As a matter of fact, if we destroy a little ignorance, we will have a little more wisdom. If we destroy a lot of ignorance, we will have a lot more of wisdom. If we destroy ignorance completely, we will have a complete wisdom. At that time, our life is a life with complete wisdom at all times. At that time, what is our life if we don't want to say it is a life of peace, mindfulness, enlightenment, and complete happiness? Study the teachings is also a weapon to defeat our enemies of blindness to all things. It is our best friend who instructs us on the means. Study the teachings is a relative who will not desert us when we are poor. It is a medicine against sorrow that does us no harm. It is the best force that dispatches against our misdeeds. Devout Buddhists should always remember that when we know one more letter, we get rid of ourselves a bit of ignorance around that letter. So, when we know the other letters, we have dispelled our ignorance about them too, and added even more to our wisdom. The more we study the teachings the more light of wisdom we gain that helps us decrease ignorance. A Bhiksu or Bhiksuni should not study the teachings without applying the basic and essential practices of Buddhism in order to transform his or her afflictions and habit energies. A Bhiksu or Bhiksuni who is studying teachings of a profound, metaphysical, and mystical nature, should always ask himself or herself how he or she may apply these teachings in his or her daily life to transform his or her suffering and realize emancipation.

Should we read worldly books and magazines? A Bhiksu or Bhiksuni who reads worldly books and magazines, including videos, video discs, television and internet programs, as well as conversations on telephone and other images or sounds that have toxic effect, watering the seeds of sexual desire, fear, violence, sentimental weakness, and depression, commits an Expression of Regret Offence. However, in addition to reading books on Buddhism, he or she can read books on the history of civilizations of the world, general history and teachings of other religious faiths, applied psychology, and most recent scientific discoveries because these areas of knowledge can help him or her to understand and share the teachings to people in a way that is appropriate to their situation. However, laypeople, especially those

who are practicing mindfulness, can read healthy and useful books and magazines for their living.

V. Rejection of Means of Life or Rejection of Pleasures?:

Most of us want to do good deeds; however, we are always contraditory ourselves between pleasure and cultivation. A lot of people misunderstand that religion means a denial or rejection of happiness in worldly life. In saying so, instead of being a method for transcending our limitations, religion itself is viewed as one of the heaviest forms of suppression. It's just another form of superstition to be rid of if we really want to be free. The worst thing is that nowadays, many societies have been using religion as a means of political oppression and control. They believe that the happiness we have here, in this world, is only a temporary, so they try to aim at a so-called "Almighty Creator" to provide them with a so-called eternal happiness. They deny themselves the everyday pleasures of life. They cannot enjoy a meal with all kinds of food, even with vegetarian food. Instead of accepting and enjoying such an experience for what it is, they tie themselves up in a knot of guilt "while so many people in the world are starving and miserable, how dare I indulge myself in this way of life!" This kind of attitude is just mistaken as the attitude of those who try to cling to worldly pleasures. In fact, this just another form of grasping. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that we deny to indulge in worldly pleasures so that we can eliminate "clinging" to make it easy for our cultivation. We will never reject means of life so we can continue to live to cultivate. A Buddhist still eat everyday, but never eats lives. A Buddhist still sleeps but is not eager to sleep round the clock as a pig. A Buddhist still converse in daily life, but not talk in one way and act in another way. In short, sincere Buddhists never reject any means of life, but refuse to indulge in or to cling to the worldly pleasures because they are only causes of sufferings and afflictions.

VI. Buddha's Examples of Renunciation:

Detachment is the attitude of those who give up, forget, do not attach any importance for what they have done for the benefit of others. In general, we feel proud, self-aggrandized when we do something to help other people. Quarrels, conflicts, or clashes between

men or groups of men are due to passions such as greed or anger whose source can be appraised as self-attachment or dharma-attachment. The Buddha taught that if there is someone who misjudges us, we must feel pity for him; we must forgive him in order to have peace in our mind. The Bodhisattvas have totally liberated themselves from both self-attachment and dharma-attachment. When people enjoy material or spiritual pleasures, the Bodhisattvas also rejoice, from their sense of compassion, pity, and inner joy. They always consider human beings as their benefactors who have created the opportunities for them to practice the Four Immeasurable Minds on their way to Enlightenment. In terms of the Immeasurable Detachment, the Bodhisattvas consider all men equal, the clever as the stupid, themselves as others, they do everything as they have done nothing, say everything as they have said nothing, attain all spiritual levels as they have attained nothing. Renunciation in Buddhism means to renounce the worldly world. Basically, renunciation is the recognition that all existence is permeated by suffering. When you realize this, it leads to what we might call a turning point. That is to say, the realization that all of common life is permeated by suffering causes us to look for something more or something different, something which is absent of sufferings and afflictions. For the Buddha, after realizing all nature of life and human suffering in life; all living beings kill one another to survive, and that is a great source of suffering, Crown Prince Siddhattha stopped enjoying worldly pleasures. Furthermore, he himself saw an old man, a sick man, and a corpse, that led him to ponder why it was, he also felt unsettled by these sights. Clearly, he himself was not immune to these conditions, but was subject to the inevitable succession of old age, sickness and death. Thus, He thought of leaving the world in search of truth and peace. In the silence of that moonlit and breezy night (it was the full-moon day of July) such thoughts as these arose in him “Youth, the prime of life ends in old age and man’s senses fail him at a time when they are most deeded. The health is weakened when diseases suddenly creeps in. Finally, death comes, sudden perhaps and unexpected, and puts an end to this brief span of life. Surely there must be an escape from this unsatisfactoriness, from aging and death.” Then, at the age of twenty-nine, in the flower of youthful manhood, on the day Princess Yasodara

had given birth to Rahula, Prince Siddhartha Gotama, discarding and disdaining the enchantment of the royal life, scorning and spurning joys that most young people yearn for, the prince renounced wife and child, and a crown that held the promise of power and glory. He cut off his long locks of hair with his sword, doffed his royal robes, and putting on a hermit's robe retreated into forest solitude to seek solution to those problems of life that so deeply stirred his mind. He became a penniless wandering ascetic to struggle for enlightenment. First He sought guidance from two famous sages at the time, Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta, hoping that they, being famous masters of meditation, would teach him all they know, leading him to the heigths of concentrative thought. He practiced concentration and reached the highest meditative attainments, but was not satisfied with anything less than a Supreme Enlightenment. These teachers' range of knowledge and experience, however, was insufficient to grant him what he so earnestly sought. Though both sages asked him to stay to teach their followers, he declined and left. He continued to practice many penances and underwent much suffering. He practiced many forms of severe austerity. However, he got no hope after six years of torturing his body so much that it was reduced to almost a skeleton. He changed his method as his penances proved useless. He gave up extremes and adopted the Middle Path and became a Buddha at the age of 35. It is extremely important to remember that renunciation in Buddhism is never caused by despair in the ordinary course of life. As for the Buddha, he enjoyed the greatest possible happiness and privilege known in his day; however, he recognized the suffering inherent in sentient existence, and realized that, no matter how much we may indulge ourselves in pleasures of the sense, eventually we must face the realities of old age, sickness, and death. In short, renunciation in Buddhism means to renounce the worldly pleasures (which will eventually cause sufferings and afflictions) to seek the truth of life which is absent of greed, anger and ignorance, so that we can obtain a life of eternal happiness.

VII.Cultivation of Letting Go Is One of the Most Wonderful Methods of Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death:

An Overview of Cultivation of Letting Go or Relaxation: In Buddhist cultivation, the Buddha advises practioners to do everything with a mind that lets go. Do not expect any praise or reward. If we let go a little, we will have a little peace. If we let go a lot, we will have a lot of peace. If we let go completely, we will know complete peace and freedom. In other words, cultivation of letting go is one of the most wonderful methods of escaping the ocean of life and death that can be fully achieved right in this very life. According to Buddhism, in Zen practices, cultivation of letting go is one of the most wonderful methods of escaping the ocean of life and death. Our world is a world of desire. Every living being comes forth from desire and endures as a combination of desires. We are born from the desires of our father and mother. Then, when we emerge into this world, we become infatuated with many things, and become ourselves well-springs of desire. We relish physical comforts and the enjoyments of the senses. Thus, we are strongly attached to the body. But if we consider this attachment, we will see that this is a potential source of sufferings and afflictions. For the body is constantly changing. We wish we could remain alive forever, but moment after moment the body is passing from youth to old age, from life to death. We may be happy while we are young and strong, but when we contemplate sickness, old age, and the ever present threat of death, anxiety overwhelms us. Thus, we seek to elude the inevitable by evading the thought of it. The lust for life and the fear of death are forms of attachment. We are also attached to our clothes, our car, our storied houses, and our wealth. Besides, we are also attached to memories concerning the past or anticipations of the future. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, when Manjusri Bodhisattva obeyed the Buddha's command to call on Vimalakirti to enquire after his health, Vimalakiriti reminded that a Bodhisattva should not tie himself up (with wrong views). What is tying and what is untying? Clinging to serenity (dhyana) is a Bodhisattva's bondage, but his expedient rebirth (for the salvation of others) is freedom from bondage. Further, he is held in bondage by wisdom which lacks expedient methods (upaya), but is liberated by wisdom supported by expedient device; he is (also) held in bondage by expedient methods which are not upheld by wisdom but is liberated by expedient methods backed by wisdom. What is bondage by wisdom unsupported by expedient methods? It is bondage

caused by the Bodhisattva's desire to embellish the Buddha land (with merits) in order to bring living beings to perfection while practicing for his self-control (the three gates to nirvana, namely,) voidness, formlessness and inactivity. This is called bondage by wisdom unsupported by expedient methods (upaya). What is liberation by wisdom backed by expedient methods? It is liberation achieved in the absence of desire to embellish the Buddha land (with merits) in order to bring living beings to perfection, while practicing unremittingly for his self-control (the three gates to nirvana, namely) voidness, formlessness and inactivity. This is called liberation by wisdom supported by expedient methods (upaya). What is bondage by expedient methods unsupported by wisdom? It is bondage caused by a Bodhisattva's lack of determination to keep from desire, anger, perverse views and other troubles (klesa) while planting all wisdom roots. This is called bondage by expedient methods which lack wisdom. What is liberation by expedient methods sustained by wisdom? It is liberation won by a Bodhisattva who keeps from desire, anger, perverse views and other troubles (klesa) while planting all virtuous roots which he dedicates to his realization of supreme enlightenment. This is called liberation by expedient methods sustained by wisdom.

To Cultivate to Let Go Greed, Anger, and Jealousy: The defilements we call lust or greed, anger and delusion, are just outward names and appearances, just as we call a house beautiful, ugly, big, small, etc. These are only appearances of things. If we want a big house, we call this one small. We create such concepts because of our craving. Craving causes us to discriminate, while the truth is merely what is. Look at it this way. Are you a person? Yes. This is the appearance of things. But you are really only a combination of elements or a group of changing aggregates. If the mind is free it does not discriminate. No big and small, no you and me, nothing. We say 'anatta' or 'not self', but really, in the end, there is neither 'atta' nor 'anatta'.

Meanwhile, envy is generated by one's feeling of inferiority, while pride, haughtiness, and arrogance are born from a false sense of superiority. These kinds of pride and arrogance are caused by looking at things from a distorted, self-centered point of view. Those who have

truly understood the Buddha's teachings and been able to obtain a right view of things will never succumb to such warped thinking. Jealousy means to be jealous of another person, thinking he or she has more talent than we do (to become envious of the who surpass us in one way or other). Jealousy can be a consuming fire in our mind, a state of suffering. If we want to let go jealousy, practitioners should see and feel it without judgment or condemnation for judgment and condemnation only nourish jealousy in our mind.

To let go greed, anger, jealousy, and other evil thoughts to which people are subject, we need strength of mind, strenuous effort and vigilance. When we are free from the city life, from nagging preoccupation with daily life, we are not tempted to lose control; but when we enter in the real society, it becomes an effort to check these troubles. Meditation will contribute an immense help to enable us to face all this with calm. There are only two points of divergence between the deluded and the enlightened, i.e., Buddhas and Bodhisattvas: purity is Buddhahood, defilement is the state of sentient beings. Because the Buddhas are in accord with the Pure Mind, they are enlightened, fully endowed with spiritual powers and wisdom. Because sentient beings are attached to worldly Dusts, they are deluded and revolve in the cycle of Birth and Death. To practice Pure Land is to go deep into the Buddha Recitation Samadhi, awakening to the Original Mind and attaining Buddhahood. Therefore, if any deluded, agitated thought develops during Buddha Recitation, it should be severed immediately, allowing us to return to the state of the Pure Mind. This is the method of dropping afflictions with the meditating mind. Devout Buddhists, even though seeing that letting go of greed-anger-ignorance is not an easy thing to do; this is not easy to do in one or two days, but when we want to follow the Buddha's Path, we have no other choice but to let them go.

Cultivation of Letting Go Through Meditation: Buddhist practitioners should always have this attitude 'Looking but not seeing, hearing but not listening, smelling but not noticing the scent.' Why is it described as 'looking, but not seeing?' Because the person is returning the light to shine within, and introspecting. Why is it 'hearing, but not listening?' Because he is turning the hearing to listen his own nature. Why does it say, 'smelling, but not noticing the scent?' Because he has

gathered back his body and mind, and is not disturbed any longer by scent. At this time, the cultivator's eyes contemplate physical forms, but the forms do not exist for him. His ears hear sounds; but the sounds do not exist for him. His nose smells scents, but those scents do not exist for him. His tongue tastes flavors, but for him, those flavors do not exist. His body feels sensations, but does not attach itself to those sensations. His mind knows of things, but does not attach to them. If we do our sitting meditation for a considerable time, we may feel fatigued, we may need to ease our aching limbs a little bit. Then we can start our walking meditation. Walk slowly mindful of the movements, now we need not think of the breath but become aware of the walk. If our mind wanders give attention to our walking without getting involved in other thoughts. If we stop, turn or look around, be mindful and apply clear comprehension. When our foot touches the earth we get the sensation, become aware of it. Walking is also an exercise in mindfulness. When we are following a meditation course let us try to be mindful always everywhere. When sitting, standing, walking, working, eating, drinking, talking, laughing, wearing clothes, or even when we are silent, etc., let us be always mindful. If our limbs get numbed while in meditation, rub and stretch them. We can also relax in a lying down position; however, this we may do at the end of a sitting meditation. Lie on our back on a flat surface, and try to avoid using a pillow or cushion under our head. Keep our legs stretched out slightly apart and arms loosely by our sides, keep our eyes shut, do not go to deep thinking, but allow your mind to relax, and not wander. Relax each muscle, be completely relaxed for a few minutes. At times, we may slightly fall asleep for a couple of minutes, at the end of the relaxation, get up feeling fit. We could do this type of relaxation, not only during the meditation hours, but also at any time we feel fatigued or when we have the inclination to relax.

A basic teaching of the Buddha on how to calm and rein in the "monkey" mind. When we feel asleep, just lie down in a quiet place, put the lights out and let go our minds and bodies. In Buddhism, we have always been hearing about letting go and not clinging to anything. What does the Buddha mean on letting go? He means in daily activities, no way we can let go everything. We have to hold on things; however, try not to cling to them. For example, we try to make money

for our living expenses, but not try to cling on making a lot of money to accumulate regardless of the means of making the money. Practioners do everything with a mind that lets go. Do not expect any praise or reward. If we let go a little, we will have a little peace. If we let go a lot, we will have a lot of peace. If we let go completely, we will know complete peace and freedom. In Zen, this 'abandonment' means the moral courage of taking risks; it helps practitioners plunging into the unknown which lies beyond the topography of relative knowledge. This 'abandonment' may seem an easy thing to do, but after all it is the last thing any practitioner can do, for it is done only when we are most thoroughly convinced that there is no other way to meet the situation. We are always conscious of a tie, which we thought it's slender, but we will see how strong it is when we try to cut it off. It is always holding us back when we wish to let go. In conclusion, the ultimate goal of any Buddhist cultivator is to achieve self-enlightening, that is examining with one's own intelligence, and not depending upon another; enlightening or awakening of others, then achieve the final accomplishment, to go beyond the cycle of births and deaths, that is to reach the state of mind of a Nirvana. In short, cultivation of letting go is one of the most wonderful methods of escaping the ocean of life and death that can be fully achieved right in this very life.

Chapter Thirty-One

Be the Master in the Middle of All Kinds of Differences and Distinctions Means Escaping the Ocean of Life & Death

According to Buddhism, it is due to lack of self-mastery that conflicts of diverse kinds arise in our mind. Thus, be the self-master in the middle of all kinds of differences and distinctions is not only extremely important and essential for any Buddhist practitioners; but it is also a wonderful mean of escaping the ocean of life and death. Self-mastery means mastering our minds, emotions, likes and dislikes, and so on. These are extremely difficult to achieve. Thus, the Buddha says: "Though one may conquer in battle a million men, yet he indeed is the noblest victor who conquers himself." Self-mastery of the mind is the key to happiness. It is the force behind all true achievement. Actions without self-mastery are purposeless and eventually failed. According to the Buddha, meditation or mind training is the best way to self-mastery. According to the Buddhist point of view, the mind or consciousness is the core of our existence. All our psychological experiences, such as pain and pleasure, sorrow and happiness, good and evil, life and death... are not caused by any external agency. They are the result of our own thoughts and their resultant actions.

Control of the self or of one's own mind is the key to happiness. It is the force behind all true achievement. The movement of a man void of control are purposeless. It is owing to lack of control that conflicts of diverse kinds arise in man's mind. And if conflicts are to be controlled, if not eliminated, man must give less rein to his longings and inclinations and endeavor to live a life self-governed and pure. Everyone is aware of the benefits of physical training. However, we should always remember that we are not merely bodies, we also possess a mind which needs training. Mind training or meditation is the key to self-mastery and to that contentment which finally brings happiness. The Buddha once said: "Though one conquers in battle thousand times thousand men, yet he is the greatest conqueror who

conquers himself." This is nothing other than "training of your own monkey mind," or "self-mastery," or "control your own mind." In other words, it means mastering our own mental contents, our emotions, likes and dislikes, and so forth. Thus, "self-mastery" is the greatest kingdom a man can aspire unto, and to be subject to oue own passions is the most grievous slavery.

According to Most Venerable Piyadassi in "The Buddha's Ancient Path," control of the mind is the key to happiness. It is the king of virtues and the force behind all true achievement. It is owing to lack of control that various conflicts arise in man's mind. If we want to control them we must learn to give free to our longings and inclinations and should try to live self-governed, pure and calm. It is only when the mind is controlled that it becomes useful for its pocessor and for others. All the havoc happened in the world is caused by men who have not learned the way of mind control. When Shoichi met Emperor Gosaga in 1245, he presented him with a copy of the "Source Mirror Record," an immense compendium of Buddhist teachings compiled by a famous Chinese Zen master of the tenth century. The emperor used to read this book whenever he had free time. When he finished, he wrote in the back of the text, "Having received this book from Master Shoichi, we have now seen essential nature." When the courtier Fujiwara Michiie asked him for Zen instruction, Shoichi said, "It is a matter of having decisive willpower, so that you can be the master in the middle of all kinds of differences and distinctions."

To be able to master ourselves in the middle of all kinds of differences and distinctions, practitioners should cultivate until cravings are eliminated because cravings for things beget sorrow. According to the Anattalakkhana Sutta, the Buddha taught: The thirst for things begets sorrow. When we like persons or things, we wish that they belonged to us and were with us forever. We do not stop to think about their true nature or in our great enthusiasm refuse to think about their true nature. We expect them to survive time, but time devours everything. Youth must yield to old age and the freshness of the morning dew disappears before the rising sun. Both are expression of the natural law of change. To be able to master ourselves in the middle of all kinds of differences and distinctions, practitioners should cultivate until the whole body is our ear and eye. Zen sects use the

term to encourage practitioners to ignore both subjective and objective concepts in order to reach the realm of oneness. In example 89 of the Blue Cliff Record, we find a mondo (questions and answers) between Tao-wu and Yun-yen T'an-sheng, another student and dharma succesor of Yueh-shan: "Yun-yen asked Tao-wu, 'The great compassionate bodhisattva makes us use many hands and eyes. How is that?' Tao-wu said, 'It is as with someone who in the middle of the night reaches behind him to straighten his pillow.' Yun-yen said, 'I understand.' Tao-wu said, 'His whole body is hands and arms." Tao-wu said, 'What you've said is well spoken, but it says only eight-tenths.' Yun-yen said, 'What does the master think then?' Tao-wu said, 'His whole body is hands and arms.'"

Chapter Thirty-Two

Walking with the Buddha Means Escaping the Ocean of Life & Death Meanwhile Walking with Dust Guests Means Entering the Ocean of Life & Death

According to Buddhism, walking with the Buddha means advancing to the direction of enlightenment and emancipation with a life of peace, mindfulness and happiness. While walking with dust guests means entering into the ocean of life and death. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that it is due to lack of an enlightened mind that conflicts of diverse kinds arise in our mind. Thus, achieving of an enlightened mind or walking with the Buddha in the middle of all kinds of differences and distinctions in nowadays busy life is not only extremely important and essential for any Buddhist practitioners; but it is also a wonderful mean of escaping the ocean of life and death. It's very simple, in order to follow the Buddha, one must take refuge in the Triratna and cultivate the Buddha's teachings. During the time of the Buddha always confirmed his disciples that He was only a guide who showed the Way of Enlightenment and Liberation; and He could never be able to liberate anyone. Those who listen to the Buddha's Teachings on methods of cultivation, then follow these teachings to cultivate will lead to enlightenment. In other words, those who want to advance to the Buddhahood, everybody should study, understand, believe, and then practice to become a Buddha. The birth of the Buddha's teachings is the pinnacle of the Buddha's achievement. The Buddha's enlightenment was in some respects the pinnacle of his achievement, but it was his subsequent teaching of Dharma (Truth) that laid the foundation for his enduring legacy. The community of monks and nuns that he established ensured the transmission of this doctrine to future generations, and in the 3rd century B.C. the reign of the emperor Asoka played an instrumental role in the dissemination of Buddhism in India. After he had attained enlightenment, the Buddha remained for seven weeks at the site of the Bodhi Tree and enjoyed great bliss. During this period he realized that what he had come to understand was a profound

and difficult truth, which other people relished worldly attachment, would find hard to grasp. According to the Buddha, the Buddha-dharma is simply worldly dharma in which we turn ourselves around. It is the dharma that most ordinary people are unwilling to use. Worldly people are sinking and floating in the worldly dharma; they are always busy running here and there, constantly hurried and agitated. The source of all these activities is invarably selfishness, motivated by a concern to protect their own lives and properties. Buddha-dharma, on the other hand, is unselfish and public-spirited, and springs from a wish to benefit others. Sincere cultivators always think of others' welfare. Sincere cultivators always forget their own "Ego". They always give up their own interests in service to others, and never bring uncomfortable circumstances and afflictions to others. However, most people fail to clearly understand the basic ideas that the Buddha once preached. As a result as we can see now, within Buddhist circles we find struggle and contention, troubles and hassles, quarrels and strife. These problems seem to be no different from that of ordinary people, if we do not want to say worst than what we can find in worldly life. The Buddha predicted all these problems; thus, He concluded that it would be pointless to try to teach others about his enlightenment, but the great god Brahma Sahampati intervened and implored the Buddha to share his discoveries with humankind. Impelled by his great compassion, the Buddha decided to survey the world. He saw that beings are of different kinds: like lotuses in a pond, some are immersed underwater, other grow and rest on the surface, and other again come right out of the water and stand clear, He understood that just as some people have good qualities and others bad, some would be easy to teach and others would be difficult. Because of this diversity and out of his great compassion for all beings, the Buddha changed his mind and resolved to teach. The Buddha's first sermon was addressed to the five ascetics who had been his companions before the enlightenment. At the deer park at Sarnath, near present day Varanasi, he explained to them the content of his enlightenment in the form of the Four Noble Truths. These ascetics were so struck by the depth of his insight and the novelty of his message that one of them instantly became an arhat, a "worthy one" who attains nirvana through a Buddha's teaching. The other four followed suit in the days to come. This momentous first

sermon, which has become one of the better-known articulations of the Buddha's teaching and of Buddhism in general, is called the "Setting in Motion of the Wheel of Dharma." It is still celebrated in most Theravada countries in the festival called "Asalha Puja," which takes place on the full moon day of the month of July. For the next forty-five years, until his ultimate extinction, the Buddha taught Dharma. The number of his followers increased steadily and the community of monks, the Sangha, began to form. The Buddha himself continued wandering and begging for his food. He taught indiscriminately, talking to kings and paupers alike, and ceased traveling only in the three months of the rainy season. The Buddha did not appoint a successor. When his disciples asked who would lead them after his death, he retorted that they must turn to themselves and be guided by the Dharma as he had taught it to them. It would be the duty of the Sangha to maintain the Dharma when he was gone. At his death approached, the Buddha asked the assembled monks if they had any questions. The gathering remained silent. The Buddha's last words to the monks were: "All things composed are perishable. Now strive diligently." Then, lying on his right side between two "sal" trees, he began meditating into the many stages of his complete and final extinction (parinirvana), after which he would never again be reborn. His body was cremated and, in accordance with his wish, the remains were divided among humans and gods. Stupas (dome-shaped funerary mounds) were erected over the relics. Stupas can be seen today at such sites as Sanchi and Amaravati in India, Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka and Borobudur in Indonesia. Nowadays, to practice the path, practitioners should always remember that in any undertaking, the most difficult part is right at the start, but a thousand-mile journey begins with just one first step. According to Zen Master Shunryu Suzuki in Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind, practice does not mean that whatever you do, even lying down, is zazen. When the restrictions you have do not limit you, this is what we mean by practice. When you say, "Whatever I do is Buddha nature, so it doesn't matter what I do, and there is no need to practice zazen," that is already a dualistic understanding of our everyday life. If it really does not matter, there is no need for you even to say so. As long as you are concerned about what you do, that is dualistic. If you are not concerned about what you do, you will not say so. When you sit, you

will sit. When you eat, you will eat. That is all. If you say, "It doesn't matter," it means that you are making some excuse to do something in your own way with your small mind. It means you are attached to some particular thing or way. That is not what we mean when we say, "Just to sit enough," or "Whatever you do is zazen." Of course, whatever we do is zazen, but if so, there is no need to say it.

Talking about coming guests without invitations, according to Buddhism, these are dust guests, external stains, guest-defilements, or afflictions that come from outside. The Sanskrit term “Agantu-klesa” literally means “pain,” “external dust,” “affliction,” or “something tormenting” and is translated as “affliction.” As there is nothing so tormenting spiritually as selfish, evil desires and passions, klesa has come to be understood chiefly in its derivative sense and external dust for agantuklesa. The foreign atom, or intruding element, which enters the mind and causes distress and delusion. The mind is naturally pure or innocent till the evil element enters. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that dust guests obstruct the righteous way and murder the wisdom-life of cultivators. In our daily life, we have so many coming guests without invitations; however, we can list some typical ones as follows:

The First Dust-Guest is the “Lust”: Lust is the string of craving and attachment confines us to samsara’s prison. In other words, craving and attachment are not only roots that prevent us from being sufficiently moved to renounce samsara, but they are also two of the main things that bind us to samsara. In order to overcome craving and attachment, we should contemplate on the impurity of the body. When we are attached to someone, for example, consider how that person is just a sack full of six kinds of filthy substances. Then our attachment and craving will diminish. *The Second Dust-Guest is the “Anger”:* Anger is the highly disturbed aspect of the mind that arises when we see something unpleasant. The objects of anger could be sentient beings or inanimate objects; when we involve ourselves with them they completely disturb and torment our mind and we wish to harm them. Anger does great damage, for it can destroy our root merits as if they had been burnt in a fire. Anger is responsible for people taking lives, beating or stabbing others. *The Third Dust-Guest is the “Ignorance”:* Ignorance is the opposite of the word ‘to know’. In Budhdism,

ignorance means ‘not knowing’, ‘not seeing’, ‘not understanding’, ‘being unclear’, and so forth. Whoever is dominated by ignorance is like a blind person because the eyes are shut, or not seeing the true nature of objects, and not understanding the truths of cause and effect, and so on. Ignorance is the root of all sufferings and afflictions. *The Fourth Dust-Guest is the “Pride”:* Pride is the inflated opinion of ourselves and can manifest in relation to some good or bad object. When we look down from a high mountain, everyone below seems to have shrunken in size. When we hold ourselves to be superior to others, and have an inflated opinion of ourselves, we take on a superior aspect. It is extremely difficult to develop any good qualities at all when one has pride, for no matter how much the teacher may teach that person, it will do no good. Haughtiness means false arrogance, thinking oneself correct in spite of one’s wrong conduct, thinking oneself is good in spite of one’s very bad in reality. Haughtiness also means arrogance and conceit due to one’s illusion of having completely understood what one has hardly comprehended at all. Haughtiness is one of the main hindrances in our cultivation. In cultivating the Way, we must have genuine wisdom. Those who have genuine wisdom never praise themselves and disparage others. These people never consider themselves the purest and loftiest, and other people common and lowly. In Buddhism, those who praise themselve have no future in their cultivation of the Way. Even though they are still alive, they can be considered as dead, for they have gone against their own conscience and integrity. *The Fifth Dust-Guest is the “Doubt”:* Doubt signifies spiritual doubt, from a Buddhist perspective the inability to place confidence in the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha, and the training. Doubt, as wavering uncertainty, a hindrance and fetter to be removed. One of the mula-klesa, or root causes of suffering. Skepticism, one of the five hindrances one must eliminate on entering the stream of saints. Vichikiccha is a Pali term, a combination of “vi”, means without; and “cikiccha” means medicine. One who suffers from perplexity is really suffering from a dire disease, and unless he sheds his doubts, he will continue to worry over and suffer from this illness. As long as man is subject to this mental itch, this sitting on the fence, he will continue to take a skeptical view of things which is most detrimental to mental ability to decide anything

definitely; it also includes doubt with regard to the possibility of attaining the jhanas. Doubting is natural. Everyone starts with doubts. We can learn a great deal from them. What is important is that we do not identify with our doubts. That is, do not get caught up in them, letting our mind spin in endless circles. Instead, watch the whole process of doubting, of wondering. See who it is that doubts. See how doubts come and go. Then we will no longer be victimized by our doubts. We will step outside of them, and our mind will be quiet. We can see how all things come and go. Let go of our doubts and simply watch. This is how to end doubting. *The Sixth Dust-Guest is the "Wrong Views":* According to Buddhism, perverted (wrong) views are views that do not accept the law of cause and effect, not consistent with the dharma, one of the five heterodox opinions and ten evils. This view arises from a misconception of the real characteristic of existence. There were at least sixty-two heretical views (views of the externalist or non-Buddhist views) in the Buddha's time. Buddhism emphasizes on theory of causation. Understanding the theory of causation means to solve most of the question of the causes of sufferings and afflictions. Not understanding or refuse of understanding of the theory of causation means a kind of wrong view in Buddhism. According to the Buddha, sentient beings suffer from sufferings and afflictions because of dersires, aversions, and delusion, and the causes of these harmful actions are not only from ignorance, but also from wrong views. Wrong views also means holding to the view of total annihilation, or the view that death ends life, or world-extinction and the end of causation, in contrast with the view that body and soul are eternal, both views being heterodox. The philosophic doctrine that denies a substantial reality to the phenomenal universe. *The Seventh Dust-Guest is the "Killing":* This is one of the ten kinds of evil karma, to kill living beings, to take life, kill the living, or any conscious being. According to The Buddha and His Teaching, written by Most Venerable Narada, killing means the intentional destruction of any living being. The Pali term pana strictly means the psycho-physical life pertaining to one's particular existence. The wanton destruction of this life-force, without allowing it to run its due course, is panatipata. Pana also means that which breathes. Hence all animate beings, including animals, are regarded as pana. Plants are not considered as "living beings" as they possess no

mind. Monks and nuns, however, are forbidden to destroy even plant life. This rule, it may be mentioned, does not apply to lay-followers. According to the Buddhist laws, the taking of human life offends against the major commands, of animal life against the less stringent commands. Suicide also leads to severe penalties in the next lives. *The Eighth Dust-Guest is the "Stealing":* Stealing means taking possession of anything that has not been given by its owner or stealing, is also wrong, even legally speaking. Stealing, one of the four grave prohibitions or sins in Buddhism. Stealing is taking what isn't given to us. It includes not paying taxes or fees that are due, borrowing things and not returning them, and taking things from our workplace for our own personal use. A Bhiksu or Bhiksuni who steals or violates the property of another, whether the property is privately or publicly owned, breaks the second of the Four Degradation Offences. He or she is no longer worthy to remain a Bhiksu or Bhiksuni and cannot participate in the activities of the Order of Bhiksus or Order of Bhiksunis. *The Ninth Dust-Guest is "Sexual Intercourse":* This is the third commandment of the five basic commandments for lay people, and the third precept of the ten major precepts for monks and nuns in the Brahma Net Sutra. Monks or nuns who commit this offence will be expelled from the Order forever. A Bhiksu or Bhiksuni who has sexual intercourse with another person, whether a female or male, and whether that person has given consent or not, breaks the first of the Four Degradation Offences. He or she is no longer worthy to remain a Bhiksu or Bhiksuni and cannot participate in the activities of the Bhiksu or Bhiksuni Sangha. A Bhiksu who, when motivated by sexual desire, tells a woman or a man that it would be a good thing for her or him to have sexual relations with him, commits a Sangha Restoration Offence. A Bhiksuni who is intent upon having sexual relations with someone, whether male or female, breaks one of the eight Degradation Offences. She is no longer worthy to remain a Bhiksuni and cannot participate in the actiivities of the Order of Bhiksunis. Through word or gesture arouses sexual desire in that person, breaks the seventh of the Eight Degradation Offences. Says to that person that she is willing to offer him or her sexual relations, breaks the Degradation Offences. *The Tenth Dust-Guest is the "Lying":* Lying means verbally saying or indicating through a nod or a shrug somethng we know isn't true.

However, telling the truth should be tempered and compassion. For instance, it isn't wise to tel the truth to a murderer about a potential victim's whereabouts, if this would cause the latter's death. According to the Dharmapada Sutra, verse 306, the Buddha taught: "The speaker of untruth goes down; also, he who denies what he has done, both sinned against truth. After death they go together to hells."

Besides, there are many more uninvited dust-guests but they still come such as: *1) The Dust-Guest of Deluded Thought:* False or misleading thoughts, the mental processes of living beings on greed, hatred and stupidity. Polluted thoughts comprise a wide range of thoughts. If we are greedy for delicious food, we have polluted thoughts on food. If we wish to listen to fine sounds, we have polluted thoughts on sounds. If we wish to experience sensual pleasures, we have polluted thoughts on sensual pleasures, and so on. If we practice meditation we can stop our idle thoughts and cultivate the Way with our true mind, then our merit and virtue will be measureless and boundless. But if we do not take time to cultivate, there is no use just talking dharma. According to the Study of Mind-Only, false thoughts are simply the objects of the six senses. If we understand this, we can reject false thoughts as soon as they appear. As a matter of fact, if we are determined to keep our mind clear of any thought, false thoughts automatically disappear. This is the simplest way of practicing meditation. When we are walking, standing, sitting or lying down, whenever a thought arises, we recognize it, but do not follow it, that is practicing of meditation. We do not have to wait for the time to sit down in meditation to practice meditation. Thus, for Zen practitioners, we can practice Zen at any time, anywhere, while at work or at home, just realize the truth. Zen practitioners should always remember that it is very crucial that we maintain a clear mind to gain wisdom and remove ignorance. We must use our perfect wisdom to realize that delusions are false, illusory, and they will automatically disappear. Practitioners should also always remember that if we are able to disregard when false thoughts arise, they will naturally vanish. *2) Seven Dust-Guests of Emotion:* Emotions, negative or positive, are impermanent (they would not last), but we cannot say we don't care about our emotions because they are impermanent. Buddhists cannot say both suffering and happiness are impermanent so we need not seek

nor avoid them. We all know that negative emotions lead to suffering, whereas positive ones lead to happiness, and the purpose of all Buddhists is to achieve happiness. So should try to achieve things that cause happiness, and whatever causes suffering we should deliberately happiness. According to Buddhism, there are seven kinds of emotions. What can be borne with ease is happiness. Ordinary happiness is the gratification of a desire. However, as soon as the thing desired is achived the we desire something else or some other kind of happiness, for our selfish desires are endless. Money cannot buy happiness, or wealth does not always conduce to happiness. In fact, real happiness is found within, and is not be defined in terms of wealth, power, honours, or conquests. The Buddha enumerates some kinds of happiness for a layman. They are the happiness of possession, health, wealth, longevity, beauty, joy, strength, property, children, etc. The Buddha does not advise all of us to renounce our worldly lives and pleasures and retire to solitude. However, he advised lay disciples to share the enjoyment of wealth with others. We should use wealth for ourselves, but we should also use wealth for the welfare of others. What we have is only temporary; what we preserve we leave and go. Only karmas will have to go with us along the endless cycle of births and deaths. The Buddha taught about the happiness of lay disciples as follows: “A poor, but peace life is real happiness. Leading a blameless life is one of the best sources of happiness, for a blameless person is a blessing to himself and to others. He is admired by all and feels happier, being affected by the peaceful vibrations of others. However, it is very difficult to get a good name from all. The wisemen try to be indifferent to external approbation, try to obtain the spiritual happiness by transcending of material pleasures.” Then the Buddha continued to remind monks and nuns: “Nirvana bliss, which is the bliss of relief from suffering, is the highest form of happiness.” Thus, the Buddha taught on Happiness in the Dharmapada Sutra: “Happy is the birth of Buddhas! Happy is the teaching of the True Law! Happy is the harmony in the sangha! Happy is the discipline of the united ones! (Dharmapada 194). Oh! Happily do we live without hatred among the hateful! Among hateful men we dwell unhating! (Dharmapada 197). Oh! Happily do we live in good health among the ailing! Among the ailing we dwell in good health! (Dharmapada 198). Oh! Happily do we live without greed

for sensual pleasures among the greedy! Among the greedy we dwell free from greed! (Dharmapada 199). Oh! Happily do we live without any hindrances. We shall always live in peace and joy as the gods of the Radiant Realm (Dharmapada 200). Victory breeds hatred, defeat breeds suffering; giving up both victory and defeat will lead us to a peaceful and happy life (Dharmapada 201). If by giving up a small happiness or pleasure, one may behold a larger joy. A far-seeing and wise man will do this (a wise man will leave the small pleasure and look for a larger one) (Dharmapada 290). It is pleasant to have friends when need arises. Enjoyment is pleasant when shared with one another. Merit is pleasant when life is at its end. Shunning of (giving up) all evil is pleasant (Dharmapada 331). To revere the mother is pleasant; to revere the father is pleasant; to revere the monks is pleasant; to revere the sages is pleasant (Dharmapada 332). To be virtue until old age is pleasant; to have steadfast faith is pleasant; to attain wisdom is pleasant; not to do evil is pleasant (Dharmapada 333). According to Buddhist thoeries, sorrow and joy, each producing the other, or each being inherent in the other. There is no greater love in this world than the love of the mother and father. If a person, carrying father on the left shoulder and mother on the right shoulder, were to walk around the Sumeru Mountain hundreds of thousands of times, with blood covering both feet, it would still not be enough to repay the love and hardship of child rearing (Dhammapada). The Buddha taught: "Love is the only way to destroy hatred. Hatred cannot be defeated with more hatred." Buddha taught: "When you hate others, you yourself become unhappy. But when you love others, everyone is happy." In order to eliminate "hate," you should meditate on loving-kindness, pity and compassion. Greed and lust are unrestrained desires for material possessions such as food, sleeping, sexual intercourse, etc., all related to sensual pleasures. We also have a desire for appropriations, showing off, authority, and profits. The cover of desire which overlays the mind and prevents the good from appearing. Since they are like bottomless barrel, neither obsessive greed nor desire can be stopped or satisfied. Through tricks, expedients, and manipulations we try to reach our goal irrespective of whatever happens to others. We Buddhists must see that greedy people are generally selfish, wicked, and prone to cause sufferings to others. As a result, they

transform this world into a battlefield where tears are shed like streams, and sufferings rise like an ocean tide. Desire for and love of the things of this life, such as craving (greed, affection, desire). Most people define happiness as the satisfaction of all desires. The desires are boundless, but our ability to realize them is not, and unfulfilled desires always create suffering. When desires are only partially fulfilled, we have a tendency to continue to pursue until a complete fulfillment is achieved. Thus, we create even more suffering for us and for others. We can only realize the true happiness and a peaceful state of mind when our desires are few. This is one of the great steps towards the shore of liberation. The Buddha taught: "Craving and desire are the cause of all unhappiness or suffering. Everything sooner or later must change, so do not become attached to anything. Instead devote yourself to clearing your mind and finding the truth, lasting hapiness." Knowing how to feel satisfied with few possessions help us destroy greed and desire. This means being content with material conditions that allow us to be healthy and strong enough to cultivate. This is an effective way to cut through the net of passions and desires, attain a peaceful state of mind and have more time to help others. In nowadays society, one fears everything, fear of no money, fear of homelessness, fear of sickness, old-age and death, etc. In fact, because of lack of understanding about the real nature of life, we try to maintain things that we are unable to, that's why we feel fear of everything. Buddhists should always remember that life is changeable and it composes of a bundle of changeable (impermanent) elements. Once we understand the real nature of life, we don't have the feeling of fear in life anymore. *3) Six Dust-Guests of Desire:* Craving (greed, affection, desire). Most people define happiness as the satisfaction of all desires. The desires are boundless, but our ability to realize them is not, and unfulfilled desires always create suffering. When desires are only partially fulfilled, we have a tendency to continue to pursue until a complete fulfillment is achieved. Thus, we create even more suffering for us and for others. We can only realize the true happiness and a peaceful state of mind when our desires are few. This is one of the great steps towards the shore of liberation. The Buddha taught: "Craving and desire are the cause of all unhappiness or suffering. Everything sooner or later must change, so do not become attached to

anything. Instead devote yourself to clearing your mind and finding the truth, lasting hapiness." Knowing how to feel satisfied with few possessions help us destroy greed and desire. This means being content with material conditions that allow us to be healthy and strong enough to cultivate. This is an effective way to cut through the net of passions and desires, attain a peaceful state of mind and have more time to help others. In the Middle Length Discourses, the Buddha taught: "O Bhikksus, with sense desires as cause, with sense desires as motives, kings are fighting with kings, khattiya are fighting with khattiya, brahmanas are fighting with brahmanas, householders are fighting with householders, mother is fighting with son, son is fighting with mother, father is fighting with brother, brother is fighting with sister, sister is fighting with brother, friend is fighting with friend. When they engage themselves in fighting, in quarrels, in disputes, they attack each other with hands, they attack each other with stones, they attack each other with sticks, they attack each other with swords. Thus, they are going to death, or to suffer like death. O Bhikksus, with sense desires as cause, with sense desires as motives, they take hold of spears, they take hold of shields, they wear bows and arrows. They arrange themselves in two lines, and arrows are thrown at each other, knives are thrown at each other, swords are slashed at each other. They pierce each other with arrows, they slash each other with knives, they cut each other heads with swords. Thus, they are going to death, or to suffer like death." Desires, negative or positive, are impermanent (they would not last), but we cannot say we don't care about our desires because they are impermanent. Buddhists cannot say both suffering and happiness are impermanent so we need not seek nor avoid them. We all know that negative desires lead to suffering, whereas positive ones lead to happiness, and the purpose of all Buddhists is to achieve happiness. So should try to achieve things that cause happiness, and whatever causes suffering we should deliberately happiness. According to Buddhism, six desires arising from the six organs of sense: Desires arising from the eyes, desires arising from the ears, desires arising from the nose, desires arising from the tongue, desires arising from the body, and desires arising from the mind. Practitioners of mindfulness always consider the six senses are objects of cultivation. According to Bikkhu Piyananda in The Gems of Buddhism Wisdom, you must always be

aware of the sense organs such as eye, ear, nose, tongue and body and the contact they are having with the outside world. You must be aware of the feelings that are arising as a result of this contact: eye is now in contact with forms (rupa); ear is now in contact with sound; nose is now in conatct with smell; tongue is now in contact with taste; body is now in contact with touching; and mind is now in contact with all things (dharma). In short, walking with the Buddha or with Dust Guests is totally depending on us, nobody can force us to do this. Be careful!

Chapter Thirty-Three

The Subjugation of a Ghost of Ignorance Is One of the Most Wonderful Means of Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death

According to Buddhism, it is the subjugation of a ghost of ignorance that prevents beings advancing to the direction of enlightenment and emancipation with a life of peace, mindfulness and happiness; and that very subjugation of a ghost of ignorance pushes beings into the ocean of life and death. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that it is due to ignorance, human beings cannot enlighten their mind so conflicts of diverse kinds arise in our mind. In cultivation, the subjugation of a ghost of ignorance means advancing to the direction of enlightenment and emancipation with a life of peace, mindfulness and happiness. This is not only one of the extremely important and essential facts for any Buddhist practitioners; but it is also a wonderful mean of escaping the ocean of life and death.

Ignorance is the main cause of our non-enlightenment. Ignorance also means an unenlightened and led astray mind. In Buddhism, delusion or moha is a synonym for avijja, ignorance. Its characteristic is mental blindness or unknowing. Its function is non-penetration, or concealment of the real nature of the object. It is manifested as the absence of right understanding or as mental darkness. Its proximate cause is unwise attention. It should be seen as the root of all that is unwholesome. However, ignorance is only a false mark, so it is subject to production, extinction, increase, decrease, defilement, purity, and so on. Ignorance is the main cause of our birth, old age, worry, grief, misery, and sickness, and death. In Buddhism, Avidya is ignorance or noncognizance of the four noble truths, the three precious ones (triratna), and the law of karma, etc. Avidya is the first link of conditionality (pratityasampada), which leads to entanglement of the world of samsara and the root of all unwholesome in the world. This is the primary factor that enmeshes (làm vướng víu) beings in the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. In a Buddhist sense, it refers to lack of

understanding of the four noble truths (Arya-satya), the effects of actions (karma), dependent arising (pratitya-samutpada), and other key Buddhist doctrines. In Madhyamaka, "Avidya" refers to the determination of the mind through ideas and concepts that permit beings to construct an ideal world that confers upon the everyday world its forms and manifold quality, and that thus block vision of reality. "Avidya" is thus the nonrecognition of the true nature of the world, which is empty (shunyata), and the mistaken understanding of the nature of phenomena. Thus "avidya" has a double function: ignorance veils the true nature and also constructs the illusory appearance. "Avidya" characterizes the conventional reality. For the Sautrantikas and Vaibhashikas, "Avidya" means seeing the world as unitary and enduring, whereas in reality it is manifold and impermanent. "Avidya" confers substantiality on the world and its appearances. In the Yogachara's view, "avidya" means seeing the object as a unit independent of consciousness, when in reality it is identical with it.

A young wife fell sick and was about to die. She told her husband: "I love you so much, I do not want to leave you! Do not go from me to any other woman. If you do, I will return as a ghost and cause you endless trouble." Soon the wife passed away. The husband respected her last wish for the first three months, but then he met another woman and fell in love with her. They became engaged and to be married. Immediately after the engagement a ghost appeared every night to the man, blaming him for not keeping his promise. The ghost was clever too. She told him exactly what had transpired between himself and his new sweetheart. Whenever he gave his fiancee a present, the ghost would describe it in detail. She would even repeat conversations, and it so annoyed the man that he could not sleep. Someone advised him to take his problem to a Zen master who lived close to the village. At length, in despair, the poor man went to him for help. The Zen master commented: "Your former wife became a ghost and knows everything you do. Whatever you do or say, whatever you give your beloved, she knows. She must be a very wise ghost. Really you should admire such a ghost. The next time she appears, bargain with her. Tell her that she knows so much you can hide nothing from her, and that if she will answer you one question, you promise to break your engagement and remain single." The man inquired: "What is the question I must ask

her?" The Zen master replied: "Take a large handful of soy beans and ask her exactly how many beans you hold in your hand. If she cannot tell you, you will know she is only a figment of your imagination and will trouble you no longer." The next night, when the ghost appeared the man flattered her and told her that she knew everything. The ghost replied: "Indeed, and I know you went to see a Zen master today." The man demanded: "And since you know so much, tell me how many beans I hold in this hand." There was no longer any ghost to answer the question.

Sincere practitioners should always remember that because of the ghost of ignorance, we are unaware that we are near the Truth. How near the truth indeed! Each one of us, from morning till night, is a continuous flow of knowing, and unending symphony of knowing, a rising and falling of knowing. We are never out of knowing; it is always present. It is a great mystery, and yet there is no mystery to it. The peace that comes from seeing this is not a peace without conflict, but a peace that sees that conflict too is knowing. Birds fly in the air, fish swim in the water, human beings live in knowing. Zen practitioners should always look for yourself. Never mind about all those people who have got this or that. Find for yourself. When you sit in zazen and breathe out, what is it? When you breathe in, what is it? Never mind what others have to say. What is it? Zen practitioners should not place ouselves in a situation that like one in water crying "I'm thursty!"

Owing to the obstruction of the ghost of ignorance, we are not willing to let go of anything in this world. In our daily life, we think of letting go as doing something: throwing things away, ending a relationship, getting rid of whatever's bothering us. But that works no better than just pulling our fingers in order to extricate them from the trap. We, ordinary people, let go by eliminating the separation between us and what we wish to let go of. Do we let go of anger by just saying good-bye or going away? Of course not! That does not work. In cultivation, the way of let go of anger is to enter the anger, become the anger rather than separate from it. Practitioners should always remember that if you even hold on to the notion of having to let go of it, you are still stuck. In order to overcome the obstruction of the ghost of ignorance, we have no other choice but letting go of everything. A basic teaching of the Buddha on how to calm and rein in the "monkey"

mind. When we feel asleep, just lie down in a quiet place, put the lights out and let go our minds and bodies. In Buddhism, we have always been hearing about letting go and not clinging to anything. What does the Buddha mean on letting go? He means in daily activities, no way we can let go everything. We have to hold on things; however, try not to cling to them. For example, we try to make money for our living expenses, but not try to cling on making a lot of money to accumulate regardless of the means of making the money. Practioners do everything with a mind that lets go. Do not expect any praise or reward. If we let go a little, we will have a little peace. If we let go a lot, we will have a lot of peace. If we let go completely, we will know complete peace and freedom. In daily life, we always label us with something. i.e., I'm a teacher, a lawyer, an engineer, a singer, a businessperson, and so on. Practitioners should be aware that who are we without these labels. When we really let go of all these things, who we are then? As a matter of fact, if we drop all these things, then who is left? At that time, ordinarily speaking we think we are nobody! We are nothing! But according to Buddhism, that's not true. In the contrary, when we really let go of everything, we become everything. At that point we are identified with all things; the mountains, the rivers, the forests, the flower, the tree, the star, and so on. Isn't that wonderful? Finally, in cultivation, this 'abandonment' means the moral courage of taking risks; it helps practitioners plunging into the unknown which lies beyond the topography of relative knowledge. This 'abandonment' may seem an easy thing to do, but after all it is the last thing any practitioner can do, for it is done only when we are most thoroughly convinced that there is no other way to meet the situation. We are always conscious of a tie, which we thought it's slender, but we will see how strong it is when we try to cut it off. It is always holding us back when we wish to let go. Practitioners should always be careful!

Chapter Thirty-Four

Escaping the Ocean of Life and Death by Always Trying to Extingish the Burning House in the Triple World

Escaping being drifted up and down with overloaded misfortune in the ocean of life and death also means escaping the burning house in the triple world. As mentioned above, according to Buddhist teachings, each individual living being comes into being as the result of a variety of different causes and conditions. The smallest living beings as ants, mosquitoes, or even the tiniest parasites are living beings. Every being is a combination of five elements: rupa, vedana, sanna, sankhara, and vinnana. Hence, one being is not essentially different from another, an ordinary man is not different from a perfect saint. But, is the nature and proportion of each of the five constituents existing in an individual be taken into account, then one being is different from another, an ordinary man is different from a perfect saint. The combination of elements is the outcome of Karma and is happening every moment, implying that the disintegration of elements always precedes it. The elements in a combined state pass as an individual, and from time immemorial he works under misconception of a self and of things relating to a self. His vision being distorted or obscured by ignorance of the truth he can not perceive the momentary combination and disintegration of elements. On the other hand, he is subject to an inclination for them. A perfect man with his vision cleared by the Buddhist practices and culture realizes the real state of empirical things that an individual consists of the five elements and does not possess a permanent and unchanging entity called soul.

According to Buddhism, the three realms of Desire, Form and Formless realms scorching sentient beings, such sufferings are limitless. The triple worlds as a burning house. In the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha taught: “The three worlds are unsafe, much like a house on fire. Suffering is all pervasive, truly deserving to be terrified and frightened.” Sentient beings in the three worlds, especially those in the

Saha World, are hampered constantly by afflictions and sufferings. Living crowded in the suffering conditions of this Saha World is similar to living in a house on fire, full of dangers, life can end at any moment. Even so, everyone is completely oblivious and unaware, but continues to live leisurely, chasing after the five desires, as if nothing was happening.

Truly speaking, the world is impermanent as master Yuren's words at the request of someone going into the service of a noble, Yuren wrote:

"When you're headed for good fortune,
don't forget to remember
that the world is inconstant."

Master Yuren continued to say: Whose body will be the kindling tomorrow?

"Looking over the fields,
I see the unknown smoke
Rising again today.
Whose body will be
The kindling tomorrow?

In the parable, there are two mice, one white, the other black, gnawing at the rope of life, i.e. day and night, or sun and moon. Once upon a time, there was a man who was traveling across a field encountered a tiger. He fled, the tiger chased after him. Coming to a precipice he caught hold of a thumb-sized root of a wild vine and swung himself down over the edge. The tiger sniffed at him from above. Trembling, the man looked down to where, far below, another tiger was waiting to eat him. Only the vine sustained him. Two mice, one white and one black little by little started to gnaw away the vine. At that time, the man saw a wild luscious strawberry near him. Grasping the vine with one hand, he plucked the strawberry with the other hand. How sweet it tasted! Sincere Buddhists should always remember this and should always diligently cultivate to seek liberation. The burning house, one of the seven parables in the Wonder Lotus sutra, from which the owner tempts his heedless children by the device of the three kinds of carts (goat, deer and bullock), especially the white bullock cart. The three realms of Desire, Form and Formless realms scorching sentient beings, such sufferings are limitless. The triple

worlds as a burning house. In the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha taught: "The three worlds are unsafe, much like a house on fire. Suffering is all pervasive, truly deserving to be terrified and frightened." Sentient beings in the three worlds, especially those in the Saha World, are hampered constantly by afflictions and sufferings. Living crowded in the suffering conditions of this Saha World is similar to living in a house on fire, full of dangers, life can end at any moment. Even so, everyone is completely oblivious and unaware, but continues to live leisurely, chasing after the five desires, as if nothing was happening. Sincere Buddhists should always remember this and should always diligently cultivate to seek liberation. Societies are filled with robberies, murders, rapes, frauds, deceptions, etc. All these continue without any foreseeable end. To speak of our individual mind, everyone is burdened with worries, sadness, depression, and anxieties, etc. In the Dharmapada Sutra, verse 146, the Buddha taught: "How can there be laughter, how can there be joy, when the whole world is burnt by the flames of passions and ignorance? When you are living in darkness, why wouldn't you seek the light?"

Devout Buddhist practitioners should always remember that if we want to extinguish the burning house in the triple world, besides practicing meditation, we should do a lot of good deeds, for the level of mind stillness depends not only on methods of zen, but also greatly depends the good deeds that we accomplished. If we are not completely emancipated, our happiness in meditation also synonymous with the happiness that we did for others. Therefore, a zen practitioner must be the one who always gives the happiness, peace, and mindfulness to others all his life. In other words, deside the effort for meditation, zen practitioners should always try to do many good deeds, for good deeds will support meditation result very well.

Three Poisons: greed, anger, and ignorance. Three defilements are also called three sources of all passions and delusions. The fundamental evils inherent in life which give rise to human suffering. The three poisons are regarded as the sources of all illusions and earthly desires. They pollute people's lives. Men worry about many things. Broadly speaking, there are 84,000 worries. But after analysis, we can say there are only 10 serious ones including the three evil roots of greed, hatred, and delusion. Three poisons of greed, hatred and

ignorance do not only cause our afflictions, but also prevent us from tasting the pure and cool flavor of emancipation (liberation). To refrain from greed, anger, jealousy, and other evil thoughts to which people are subject, we need strength of mind, strenuous effort and vigilance. When we are free from the city life, from nagging preoccupation with daily life, we are not tempted to lose control; but when we enter in the real society, it becomes an effort to check these troubles. Meditation will contribute an immense help to enable us to face all this with calm. There are only two points of divergence between the deluded and the enlightened, i.e., Buddhas and Bodhisattvas: purity is Buddhahood, defilement is the state of sentient beings. Because the Buddhas are in accord with the Pure Mind, they are enlightened, fully endowed with spiritual powers and wisdom. Because sentient beings are attached to worldly Dusts, they are deluded and revolve in the cycle of Birth and Death. To practice Pure Land is to go deep into the Buddha Recitation Samadhi, awakening to the Original Mind and attaining Buddhahood. Therefore, if any deluded, agitated thought develops during Buddha Recitation, it should be severed immediately, allowing us to return to the state of the Pure Mind. This is the method of counteracting afflictions with the meditating mind.

In Buddhist cultivation, subduing of of greed, anger and delusion is one of the most wonderful methods in extingishing the burning house in the triple world. Practitioners should always remember that the karma of greed, anger and delusion manifest themselves in many forms, which are impossible to describe fully. According to Most Venerable Thích Thiền Tâm in The Pure Land Buddhism in Theory and Practice, there are four basic ways to subdue them. Depending on the circumstances, the practitioner can use either one of these four methods to counteract the karma of greed, anger and delusion. ***The first method is "Suppressing Afflictions with the Mind"***. There are only two points of divergence between the deluded and the enlightened, i.e., Buddhas and Bodhisattvas: purity is Buddhahood, defilement is the state of sentient beings. Because the Buddhas are in accord with the Pure Mind, they are enlightened, fully endowed with spiritual powers and wisdom. Because sentient beings are attached to worldly Dusts, they are deluded and revolve in the cycle of Birth and Death. To practice Pure Land is to go deep into the Buddha Recitation Samadhi,

awakening to the Original Mind and attaining Buddhahood. Therefore, if any deluded, agitated thought develops during Buddha Recitation, it should be severed immediately, allowing us to return to the state of the Pure Mind. This is the method of counteracting afflictions with the mind. ***The second method is "Suppressing Afflictions with Noumenon"***. When deluded thoughts arise which cannot be suppressed with the mind, we should move to the second stage and "visualize principles." For example, whenever the affliction of greed develops, we should visualize the principles of impurity, suffering, impermanence, and no-self. Whenever the affliction of anger arises, we should visualize the principles of compassion, forgiveness and emptiness of all dharmas. ***The third method is "Supressing Afflictions with Phenomena"***. People with heavy karma who cannot suppress their afflictions by visualizing principles alone, we should use "phenomena," that is external forms. For example, individuals who are prone to anger and delusion and are aware of their shortcomings, should, when they are on the verge of bursting into a quarrel, immediately leave the scene and slowly sip a glass of cold water. Those heavily afflicted with the karma of lust-attachment who cannot suppress their afflictions through "visualization of principle," should arrange to be near virtuous Elders and concentrate on Buddhist activities or distant travel, to overcome lust and memories gradually as mentioned in the saying "out of sight, out of mind." This is because sentient beings' minds closely parallel their surroundings and environment. If the surroundings disappear, the mind loses its anchor, and gradually, all memories fade away. ***The fourth method is "Suppressing Afflictions with Repentance and Recitation"***. In addition to the above three methods, which range from the subtle to the gross, there is also a fourth: repentance and the recitation of sutras, mantras and the Buddha's name. If performed regularly, repentance and recitation eradicate bad karma and generate merit and wisdom. For this reason, many cultivators in times past, before receiving the precepts or embarking upon some great Dharma work such as building a temple or translating a sutra, would vow to recite the Great Compassion Mantra tens of thousands of times, or to recite the entire Larger Prajna Paramita Sutra, the longest sutra in the Buddha canon. In the past, during lay retreats, if a practitioner had heavy karmic obstructions and could not recite the Buddha's name with a pure mind or clearly visualize Amitabha Buddha, the presiding Dharma Master would usually advise him to follow the practice of "bowing repentance with incense." This method consists of lighting a long incense stick and respectfully bowing in repentance while uttering the Buddha's name, until the stick is burnt out. There are cases of individuals with heavy karma who would spend the entire seven or twenty-one-days retreat doing nothing but "bowing with incense."

Besides, wanting to extinguish the burning house in the triple world, practitioners should also be always careful with arrogance, doubt, and wrong views. In addition, practitioners must realize the state of suffering of envy. In fact, once we make up our mind in cultivation, we should try to see the real face of pride or arrogance. Pride is the inflated opinion of ourselves and can manifest in relation to some good or bad object. When we look down from a high mountain, everyone below seems to have shrunken in size. When we hold ourselves to be superior to others, and have an inflated opinion of ourselves, we take on a superior aspect. It is extremely difficult to develop any good qualities at all when one has pride, for no matter how much the teacher may teach that person, it will do no good. Haughtiness means false arrogance, thinking oneself correct in spite of one's wrong conduct, thinking oneself is good in spite of one's very bad in reality. Haughtiness also means arrogance and conceit due to one's illusion of having completely understood what one has hardly comprehended at all. Haughtiness is one of the main hindrances in our cultivation. Zen will help us to possess a genuine wisdom which is necessary for our cultivation. Those who have genuine wisdom never praise themselves and disparage others. These people never consider themselves the purest and loftiest, and other people common and lowly. In Buddhism, those who praise themselve have no future in their cultivation of the Way. Even though they are still alive, they can be considered as dead, for they have gone against their own conscience and integrity.

In realizing the state of suffering of envy, practitioners should try to see the state of sufferings caused by envy. Devout Buddhists should always remember that envy is generated by one's feeling of inferiority, while pride, haughtiness, and arrogance are born from a false sense of superiority. These kinds of pride and arrogance are caused by looking at things from a distorted, self-centered point of view. Those who have truly understood the Buddha's teachings and been able to obtain a right view of things will never succumb to such warped thinking. Jealousy means to be jealous of another person thinking he or she has more talent than we do (to become envious of the who surpass us in one way or other). Jealousy can be a consuming fire in our mind, a state of suffering. In meditation, if we want to eliminate jealousy, we should see and feel it without judgment or condemnation for judgment and condemnation only nourish jealousy in our mind.

Practitioners should also remember that doubt is one of the ten most dangerous robbers in our path of cultivation. Doubt signifies spiritual doubt, from a Buddhist perspective the inability to place confidence in the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha, and the training. Doubt is one of the five hindrances one must eliminate on entering the stream of saints. In fact, one who suffers from perplexity is really suffering from a dire disease, and unless he sheds his

doubts, he will continue to worry over and suffer from this illness. As long as man is subject to this mental itch, this sitting on the fence, he will continue to take a skeptical view of things which is most detrimental to mental ability to decide anything definitely; it also includes doubt with regard to the possibility of attaining the jhanas. However, doubting is natural. Everyone starts with doubts. We can learn a great deal from them. What is important is that we do not identify with our doubts. That is, do not get caught up in them, letting our mind spin in endless circles. Instead, watch the whole process of doubting, of wondering. See who it is that doubts. See how doubts come and go. Then we will no longer be victimized by our doubts. We will step outside of them, and our mind will be quiet. We can see how all things come and go. Let go of our doubts and simply watch. This is how to end doubting.

Wrong views are no better than the above-mentioned robbers. In Buddhism, Improper views or Wrong views means not recognizing the doctrine of normal karma. Perverted (wrong) views or opinions, not consistent with the dharma, one of the five heterodox opinions and ten evils. In fact, there is no specific definition for the term “wrong views” (micchaditthi) in Buddhism. During the Buddha’s time, the Buddha confirmed his disciples that even the validity of the Buddha’s own statements could be questioned.” The Buddha claimed no authority for his doctrine except his own experience. Perverted (wrong) views or opinions arises from a misconception of the real characteristic of existence. There were at least sixty-two heretical views (views of the externalist or non-Buddhist views) in the Buddha’s time. Buddhism emphasizes on theory of causation. Understanding the theory of causation means to solve most of the question of the causes of sufferings and afflictions. Not understanding or refuse of understanding of the theory of causation means a kind of wrong view in Buddhism. According to the Buddha, sentient beings suffer from sufferings and afflictions because of dersires, aversions, and delusion, and the causes of these harmful actions are not only from ignorance, but also from wrong views. Through Zen, we can see that holding wrong views involves vigorously and hostilely denying the existence of such things as past and future lives, the possibility of attaining Nirvana. Wrong views mean the false belief that the skandhas, or constituents of personality, contain an immortal soul. False view also means seeing wrongly. Its characteristic is unwise or unjustified interpretation or belief. Its function is to preassume. It is manifested as a wrong interpretation or belief. Its proximate cause is unwillingness to see the noble ones. Holding wrong views in Buddhism involves vigorously and hostilely denying the existence of such things as past and future lives, the possibility of attaining nirvana, the existence of the Buddhas, Dharma and Sangha. Doubt about these subjects does not constitute wrong views; however, if we neglect to resolve our doubts

by asking questions and investigating these issues, we could later generate wrong views by believing in deceptive doctrines.

In cultivation, wanting to extinguish the burning house in the triple world, practitioners should also be always careful with heedlessness and giving free rein to one's emotion because they are also great obstacles on our path of cultivation. The Buddha knows very well the mind of human beings. He knows that the foolish indulge in heedlessness, while the wise protect heedfulness. So, he advises the wise with right effort, heedfulness and discipline to build up an island which no flood can overflow. Who is heedless before but afterwards heedless no more, will outshine this world, like a moon free from clouds. To the Buddhas, a person who has conquered thousands of thousands of people in the battlefield cannot be compared with a person who is victorious over himself because he is truly a supreme winner. A person who controls himself will always behave in a self-tamed way. And a self well-tamed and restrained becomes a worthy and reliable refuge, very difficult to obtain. A person who knows how to sit alone, to sleep alone, to walk alone, to subdue oneself alone will take delight in living in deep forests. Such a person is a trustworthy teacher because being well tamed himself, he then instructs others accordingly. So the Buddha advises the well-tamed people to control themselves. Only the well tamed people, the heedful people, know the way to stop contentions, quarrels and disputes and how to live in harmony, in friendliness and in peace. To overcome the heedlessness, before practicing meditation, devout Buddhists should always remember the Buddha's teachings in the Dharmapada Sutra. One who conquers himself is greater than one who is able to conquer a thousand men in the battlefield. Self-conquest is, indeed, better than the conquest of all other people. To conquer onself, one must be always self-controlled and disciplined one's action. Oneself is indeed one's own saviour, who else could be the saviour? With self-control and cultivation, one can obtain a wonderful saviour. Whoever was formerly heedless and afterwards overcomes his sloth; such a person illuminates this world just like the moon when freed from clouds. Before teaching others, one should act himself as what he teaches. It is easy to subdue others, but to subdue oneself seems very difficult. He who sits alone, sleeps alone, walks and stands alone, unwearied; he controls himself, will find joy in the forest. You are your own protector. You are your own refuge. Try to control yourself as a merchant controls a noble steed. In short, extingishing the burning house in the triple world is not an easy matter, nor is it a matter of one or two days. However, wanting to escape the ocean of life and death, we must, by all means, to extinguish the burning house in the triple world right now, right here, right in this very life.

Chapter Thirty-Five

Try to Live in Relaxation Right in This Ocean of Life & Death

The world today is not what it was half a century ago. Ideas of good and bad are fast changing, attitudes toward moral and immoral conduct are different and the general outlook on men and things is also very different. We are living in an age of rush and speed. It is tension, tension everywhere. If you stand at the corner of a busy street and scan the faces of the people hurrying feverishly by, you will notice that most of them are restless. They carry with them an atmostphere of stress. They are most pictures of rush and worry. Rarely will you find a picture of calm, content and repose in any of these faces. Such is the modern world. The world of today is characterized by inordinate haste leading to quick decisions and imprudent actions. Some shout when they could speak in normal tones and other talk excitedly at a forced pitch for long periods and finish a conversation almost exhausted. Any kind of excitement is a stress in the psychologist's sense of the word, and stress causes the speeding up of bodily processes. It is not seldom that a person driving a vehicle gets agitated on seeing the green color of the traffic lights giving place to amber. The anxious man regards even a minor event as if it were a crisis or a threat. As a result man is worried and unhappy. Another feature of the modern world is its noisiness. "Music hatch charms," they say, but today, even such music is not agreeable to many if there is no noise; louder the noise greater is the music to them. Those of us who live in big cities have no time to think of the noise, we are conditioned by it and accustomed to it. This noise, this stress, and strain have done much damage by way of ailments: heart disease, cancer, ulcers, nervous tension and insomnia. Most of our illnesses are caused by psychological anxiety states, the nervous tension of modern life, economic distress and emotional unrest. Nervous exhaustion in man is increasing with the speeding up of life leading to delirious excitement. People often return home after work showing signs of nervous exhausation. As a consequence, man's concentration is weakened and mental and physical efficiency is

lowered. Man becomes easily irritated and is quick to find fault and pick a quarrel. He becomes morbidly introspective and experiences aches and pains and suffers from hyper-tension and sleeplessness. These symptoms of nervous exhausation clearly show that modern man's mind and body require rest, rest of a high quality. Let us bear in mind that a certain aloofness, a withdrawing of the mind from susiness of life is a requisite to mental hygiene. Whenever you get an opportunity try to be away from the town and engage yourself in quiet contemplation, call it "yoga," Concentration or meditation. Learn to observe the silence. Silence does so much good to us. It is quite wrong to imagine that they alone are powerful who are noisy, garrulous and fussily busy. Silence is golden, and we must speak only if we can improve on silence. The greatest creative energy works in silence. Observing silence is important. We absolutely do that in our meditation.

It is wrong to imagine that the Buddhist outlook on life and the world is a gloomy one, and that the Buddhist is in low spirit. Far from it, a Buddhist smiles as he walks through life. He who understands the true nature of life is the happiest individual, for he is not upset by the evanescent (extremely small) nature of things. He tries to see things as they are, and not as they seem to be. Conflicts arise in man when he is confronted with the facts of life such as aging, illness, death and so forth, but frustration and disappointment do not vex him when he is ready to face them with a brave heart. This view of life is neither pessimistic nor optimistic, but the realistic view. The man who ignores the principle of unrest in things, the intrinsic nature of suffering, is upset when confronted with the vicissitudes of life. Man's recognition of pleasures as lasting, leads to much vexation, when things occur quite contrary to his expectations. It is therefore necessary to cultivate a detached outlook towards life and things pertaining to life.

Buddhists should always try to live in relaxation in this ocean of life and death. In other words, Buddhists should always try to live in relaxation in nowadays busy life because this way of living will help us a lot. Relaxation can help you feel better, think more clearly, and relieve unwanted symptoms of stress, such as headaches and tight muscles. Whether you want to take a break from a stressful day or better manage your stress for the long-term, a regular practice of

relaxation can be very effective in returning to a calmer state. There are many ways to relax. The three steps discussed here are among the simpliest and most beneficial for busiest laypeople: deep breathing-in, progressive muscle relaxation, and then long breathing-out in a completely relaxed manner. Repeat over and over about ten times. When learning these skills, it is important to remove yourself from all outside distractions. try to practice once or twice a day for ten to twenty minutes per session. Although it may take two to three weeks to fully develop these skills, once you have trained your mind and body to relax, you will be able to produce the same relaxed feelings on the spur of the moment. The body responds to tense thoughts or situations with muscles tension, which can cause pain or discomfort. Progressive muscle relaxation means tensing and releasing each muscle group to create a deeper sense of relaxation. It can reduce muscle tension as well as general mental anxiety. Pick a place where you can stretch out comfortably, such as on a pad or carpeted floor. Tense each muscle group for five to ten seconds, hard but not to the point of cramping. Then completely release the muscle and give yourself ten to twenty seconds to relax each muscle group a little more each time you do this exercise. Before relaxation, clench them. Extend forearms and bend hands back at the wrist. Biceps and upper arms. Clench hands into fists, bend arms at elbows. Shrug the shoulders. Wrinkle forehead into a deep frown around the eyes and bridge of nose, close eyes as tightly as possible (for those who wear contact lens, remove them before beginning this exercise). Cheeks and jaws, Grin from ear to ear around the mouth, press lips together tightly. Back of the neck, press head back against the pad or supporting floor. Front of the neck, touch the chin to the chest. Take a deep breath and hold it, then exhale. Arch the back up and away from support surface. When starting to Relax, sit quietly in a comfortable position with eyes closed. Deep breathing-in can bring about a feeling of calm when it is purposefully done. It can help you let go of stress and worries and focus quietly on the present moment. Place both hands on lower part of your stomach and breathe in so that the incoming air expands your belly and gently pushes against your hands. Your stomach muscles should be completely relaxed. Then, gently push with your hands as you exhale slowly. If you prefer, imagine a balloon in your stomach that inflates when you

inhale and deflates when you exhale. Practice this several times. Finally, breathe in deeply and slowly, and then try to imagine the tension and stress leaving your body as you exhale while mentally saying to yourself, “I am becoming more and more relaxed and calm.” Wear loose, comfortable clothing and find a quiet, relaxing place to practice. Start practicing for just one to two minutes. Slowly increase your practice time up to five minutes. practice several times a day. In the beginning, instaed of sitting, you might find it helpful to practice deep breathing while lying down on your bed or on the floor. Lie on your back, bend your knees and place your feet comfortably apart. Lie on our back on a flat surface, and try to avoid using a pillow or cushion under our head. Keep our legs stretched out slightly apart and arms loosely by our sides, keep our eyes shut, do not go to deep thinking, but allow your mind to relax, and not wander. Relax each muscle, be completely relaxed for a few minutes. At times, we may slightly fall asleep for a couple of minutes, at the end of the relaxation, get up feeling fit. We could do this type of relaxation, not only during the meditation hours, but also at any time we feel fatigued or when we have the inclination to relax. If you feel light-headed, dizzy, or anxious, you may be breathing too deeply or too quickly. If this happens, stop practicing for a moment and breathe normally until the symptoms pass. Also remember that inhaling and exhaling through your nose can help prevent hyperventilation. As you progress, practice deep breathing in a variety of settings, i.e., sitting at your desk, waiting in line, or even when you are watching television, etc. Be patient and gentle with yourself. Become aware of your breathing. Breathing slow and steady, concentrate on breathing from your abdomen and not from your chest. With each exhalation, you can recite the Buddha’s name (or any other word or phrase that you like) silently or aloud. As an option, instead of focusing on a recitation, you may choose to fix your gaze on a stationary object. These manoeuvers can help you to shift your mind away from distracting thoughts. Continue this from 10 to 20 minutes. As distracting thoughts enter your mind, do not follow them. Just allow them to drift away. You should sit quietly and do not worry whether you are successful in becoming deeply relaxed. The key to this exercise is to remain passive, to let distracting thoughts slip away like waves on the beach. Practice for 10 to 20 minutes once or twice a day,

but not within two hours after a meal. When you have set up a routine, the relaxation response should naturally come with little effort. Walking meditation should be practiced after Relaxation. If we do our sitting in relaxation for a considerable time, we may feel fatigued, we may need to ease our aching limbs a little bit. Then we can start our walking meditation. Walk slowly mindful of the movements, now we need not think of the breath but become aware of the walk. If our mind wanders give attention to our walking without getting involved in other thoughts. If we stop, turn or look around, be mindful and apply clear comprehension. When our foot touches the earth we get the sensation, become aware of it. Walking is also an exercise in mindfulness. When we are following a meditation course let us try to be mindful always everywhere. When sitting, standing, walking, working, eating, drinking, talking, laughing, wearing clothes, or even when we are silent, etc., let us be always mindful. If our limbs get numbed while in meditation, rub and stretch them.

According to Buddhism, detachment can not bring more about frustration, disappointment and mental torment, because there is no clinging to one thing and another, but letting go. This indeed is not easy, but it is the sure remedy for controlling, if not eradicating, unsatisfactoriness. The Buddha sees suffering as suffering, and happiness as happiness, and explains that all cosmic pleasure, like all other conditioned attachings, is evanescent, is a passing show. He warns man against attaching too much importance to fleeing pleasures, for they sooner or later beget discontent. Equanimity is the best antidote for both pessimism and optimism. Equanimity is evenness of mind and not sullen indifference. It is the result of a calm, concentrated mind. It is hard, indeed, to be undisturbed when touched by the realities of life, but the man who cultivates truth is not upset. Absolute happiness can not be derived from things conditioned and compounded. What we hug in great glee this moment, turns into a source of dissatisfaction the next moment. Pleasures are short-lived, and never lasting. The mere gratification of the sense faculties we call pleasure and enjoyment, but in the absolute sense of the world such gratification is not happy. Joy too is suffering, unsatisfactory; for it is transient. If we with our inner eye try to see things in their proper perspective, in their true light, we will be able to realize that the world is but an illusion that

leads astray the beings who cling to it. All the so-called mundane pleasures are fleeting, and only an introduction to pain. They give temporary relief from life's miserable ulcers. This is what is known as suffering produced by change. Thus, we see that suffering never ceases to work, it functions in some form or other and is always at work.

According to the Sutra in Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 42, the Buddha said: "I look upon royal and official positions as upon the dust that floats through a crack. I look upon the treasures of gold and jade as upon broken tiles. I look upon clothing of fine silk as upon coarse cotton. I look upon a great thousand world-system as upon a small nut. I look upon the door of expedient means as upon the transformations of a cluster of jewels. I look upon the unsurpassed vehicle as upon a dream of gold and riches. I look upon the Buddha-Way as upon flowers before my eyes. I look upon Zen Samadhi as upon the pillar of Mount Sumeru. I look upon Nirvana as upon being awake day and night. I look upon deviancy and orthodoxy as upon the one true ground. I look upon the prosperity of the teaching as upon a tree during four seasons." As a matter of fact, according to Buddhist theory, a happy life means always to maintain a peaceful and happy mind. For monks and nuns, they should be always self-content and willing to practice religious disciplines. So long as a person still cherishes resentment, his mental attitude does not embody the ideal way of true believer of the Buddhist teaching; whatever misfortune may befall him, he must maintain a peaceful and calm mind. Thus, in the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "Look upon the world as one would look upon a bubble, just as one would look upon a mirage. If a man thus looks down upon the world, the king of death does not see him (Dharmapada 170). Supposed this world is like a brilliantly ornamented royal chariot; the foolish are immersed in it, but the wise do not attach to it (Dharmapada 171). Whoever was formerly heedless and afterwards overcomes his sloth; such a person illuminates this world just like the moon when freed from clouds (Dharmapada 172). Whoever was formerly heedless and afterwards does good deeds; such a person illuminates this world just like the moon when freed from clouds (Dharmapada 173). This work is so dark that only a few can see it clearly, like birds escape from a net but very few of them fly up straight (Dharmapada 174)."

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