

6

Repentance and Reform

SEEING that the literati and people from Kuang Chou (Kwangchow), Shao Chou (Shiukwan) and the four quarters had assembled in the mountain to listen to the Dharma, the Patriarch ascended to his seat and addressed them as follows:

'Learned friends, please come in. This business should begin with the self-nature. At all times, instant after instant, you should purify your own minds, practise self-cultivation, realize your own Dharmakāya, perceive the Buddha of your own minds, effect your self-liberation and observe your self-discipline (śīla) so that your coming shall not be in vain. As you have come from afar for this gathering, this is due to a common co-operating cause. Please all kneel down and I will transmit to you first the five kinds of fragrance of the fivefold Dharmakāya¹ of the self-nature and will teach you the immaterial repentance and reform.'²

As the whole assembly knelt down, the Patriarch continued:

'First, the fragrance of discipline (śīla). If your mind is not tainted with evil, wickedness, envy, jealousy, concupiscence, hate, spoliation and killing, this is the fragrance of śīla.

'Second, the fragrance of samādhi (imperturbability). In all circumstances, either good or bad, if your mind remains undisturbed, this is the fragrance of samādhi.

'Third, the fragrance of wisdom. If your self-mind is free from obstructions, if you constantly use your wisdom to look into and illumine your self-nature, if you do not commit evil actions, if while performing good actions your mind is free from all graspings, if you respect your superiors and have kind thoughts for your inferiors and if you have sympathy and compassion for orphans and those in distress, this is the fragrance of wisdom.

1. Pañca-dharmakāya, the five attributes of Dharmakāya, or spiritual body of Buddha, i.e. that he is above all moral conditions; tranquil and apart from false ideas; wise and omniscient; free, unlimited, unconditioned which is the state of nirvāṇa; and that he has perfect knowledge of this state.

2. Repentance and reform which are beyond the form, appearance, aspect and characteristic of things.

'Fourth, the fragrance of liberation. If your self-mind is free from all grasping, if it thinks of neither good nor evil and if it is independent and comfortable, free from all obstruction, this is the fragrance of liberation.

'Fifth, the fragrance of perfect knowledge of liberation. When your mind is free from all grasping and all concepts of good and evil, you should not abide in the voidness and stillness or else you will be brought to a standstill. You should widen your field of learning and hearing to know your self-mind and attain to the fundamental law of all Buddhas; you should be congenial when meeting others and free from the idea of self and others until you realize Bodhi and the unchanging true nature. This is the fragrance of the perfect knowledge of liberation.

'Learned friends, these five kinds of fragrance should perfume us from within and cannot be sought from without.

'Now I teach you the immaterial repentance and reform so as to eradicate all your sins committed in the past, present and future and to purify your three karmas (of deed, word and thought).¹ Learned friends, please follow me and repeat:

'We so-and-so are disciples of Buddha. May our past, present and future thoughts, (that is to say) all our thoughts, be free from the taints of ignorance and delusion. We now (sincerely) repent of our former evil conduct in deed, word and thought due to our ignorance and delusion; may all these sins be obliterated at once and may ignorance and delusion never arise again (within us).

'We so-and-so are disciples of Buddha. May our past, present and future thoughts, (that is to say) all our thoughts, be free from the taints of arrogance and deception. We now (sincerely) repent of our former evil conduct in deed, word and thought due to our arrogance and deception; may all these sins be obliterated at once and may arrogance and deception never arise again (within us).

'We so-and-so are disciples of Buddha. May our past, present and future thoughts, (that is to say) all our thoughts, be free from the taints of envy and jealousy. We now (sincerely) repent of our former evil conduct in deed, word and thought due to our envy and jealousy; may all these sins be obliterated at once and may envy and jealousy never arise again (within us).

'Learned friends, the above are the immaterial repentance and reform. (Now) what is repentance and what is reform? Repentance is contrition for former sins, for evil conduct in deed, word and thought due to ignorance, delusion, arrogance, deception, envy and jealousy so that

1. Trividha-dvara in Sanskrit.

these shall never arise again (within us). Reform concerns sins which we may commit in future. Henceforward, since we are awakened from evil conduct in deed, word and thought, due to ignorance, delusion, arrogance, deception, envy and jealousy which we (vow to) cut off for ever, we will never commit these sins again.

'Ordinary men who are ignorant and deluded, only know how to repent of their past sins but not how to reform in respect of future sins. Since they do not so reform, their past sins cannot be obliterated and will be repeated in the future. As former sins are not obliterated and since new ones are again committed, how can this be called repentance and reform?

'Learned friends, as you have repented of your sins and have reformed, I now teach you how to take the four Universal Vows. All of you should listen attentively:

*We vow to save countless living beings in our own minds,
We vow to put an end to the limitless kleśas of our minds,
We vow to study and learn the endless Dharma doors of our own nature, and
We vow to attain the Supreme Buddhahood of our own nature.*

'Learned friends, is it not the idea of the whole assembly that the vow is taken to save countless living beings? If so (how can you save them?) as even I myself, Hui Neng, do not save them.

'Learned friends, speaking of the living beings in our minds, they are what we call the erroneous and deluded mind, the deceptive and false mind, the evil mind, the envious and jealous mind and the wicked and poisonous mind; all these minds are living beings. Each of them should be self-delivered by his own nature and this is true deliverance. What is self-deliverance by self-nature? It means that all living beings holding heterodox views as well as passionate, ignorant and stupid beings are to be delivered by correct views. Once they hold correct views, they use prajñā-wisdom to destroy ignorant, stupid, deluded and false beings so that each of them can be self-delivered. The heterodox is to be delivered by the orthodox, the deluded by the awakened, the ignorant by the wise and the evil by the good, and deliverance in this manner is true deliverance.

'Speaking of the vow to put an end to limitless kleśas, this is the use of the prajñā-wisdom of one's own nature to eradicate all erroneous and false thinking of the mind.

'Speaking of the vow to study and learn endless Dharma doors, self-

perception of one's own nature and unceasing practice of the correct Dharma are necessary. This is called true study and true learning.

'Speaking of the vow to attain Supreme Buddhahood, we should, with humility on all occasions, practise the true and correct (Dharma), by discarding both ignorance and enlightenment and should constantly give rise to wisdom to eliminate both the real and the unreal; all this will lead to perception of the Buddha nature. This is the achievement of attaining Buddhahood at will. You should always bear in mind the practice of this Dharma of the power of vows.

'Learned friends, as you have taken the four Universal Vows, I will now teach you the three immaterial formulas of surrender.¹

'Learned friends, we surrender ourselves to and rely on the Enlightened (One), the most honoured among two-footed (beings).² We surrender ourselves to and rely on the correct (One), the most honoured One free from desires. We surrender ourselves to and rely on the pure (One), the most honoured of the Order.

'From now on, we will call the Enlightened (One) our teacher and will no longer surrender ourselves to and rely on demons (māra) and heretics. We should, on all occasions, clearly prove our own selves by means of the Triple Gem of our self-nature. Learned friends, I advise you all to surrender yourselves to and rely on the Triple Gem of your own nature: Buddha is the Enlightened (One), Dharma is the correct (One) and Saṅgha is the pure (One).

'If your minds surrender themselves to and rely on the Enlightened (One), error and delusion will no longer arise within you; you will be content with few desires and will be able to give up wealth and indulgence in the flesh. This is called (being) the most honoured among two-footed (beings).

'If your minds surrender themselves to and rely on the correct (One), all your thoughts will be free from heterodox views, and because of this freedom, there will be no clinging to the idea of self and others, as well as to pride, desire and cupidity; this is called (being) the most honoured (One) free from desires.

1. The three formulas of refuge: Trīśaraṇa or Śaraṇagamana. They are: Buddhāṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchāmi, surrender to the Buddha; Dharmāṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchāmi, surrender to the Dharma; and Saṅghaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchāmi, surrender to the Order. The exact translation of the Chinese is: To surrender oneself to, or to return to, go back to, and rely on.

2. The most honoured among men and devas, lit. 'among two-footed beings', a title of the Buddha. The two feet are compared to commandments and meditation, blessing and wisdom, relative and absolute teachings, Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, meditation and action.

'If your minds surrender themselves and rely on the pure (One), your own nature will be free from the taints of passion, love and desire; this is called (being) the most honoured (One) of the Order.

'If the above are practised, this is surrender to and reliance on your own selves. Ordinary men do not understand all this and offer the formulas of surrender all day long from morning to evening when accepting the precepts. If they surrender themselves to and rely on the Buddha, where is Buddha? If the Buddha is not seen, to whom do they surrender themselves and on whom do they rely? This is tantamount to falsehood.

'Learned friends, you should look into yourselves and should not make wrong use of your self-minds. The (Avatamsaka) Sūtra clearly says that one should surrender oneself to and rely on one's own Buddha. It does not say that one should surrender oneself to and rely on another Buddha. If you do not surrender yourself to your own Buddha, there will be no one on whom to rely. Now that you are self-awakened, each of you should surrender himself to and rely on the Triple Gem of his own mind. Within, the mind should be in harmony with the self-nature and without, other people should be respected. This is surrender to and reliance on one's own self.

'Learned friends, now that you have surrendered yourselves to and relied on your own Triple Gem, all of you should listen attentively to my talk on the trikāya¹ in one body of the self-natured Buddha so that you can perceive the threefold body and realize self-awakening to the self-nature. Please all of you repeat after me:

*'We surrender ourselves to (or we return to) and rely on the pure and clean Dharmakāya Buddha who is in our physical body;
We surrender ourselves to (or we return to) and rely on the completely perfect Sambhogakāya Buddha who is in our physical body; and
We surrender ourselves to (or we return to) and rely on myriads of Nirmāṇakāyas of the Buddha who is in our physical body.*

'Learned friends, the physical body is an inn² to which there can be no return. Every worldly man possesses the Trikāya Buddha in his own nature. When his mind is deluded, he does not perceive his inner nature, so he looks for the Trikāya Tathāgata from without, but does not see the

1. Trikāya: the three bodies of a Buddha: Dharmakāya, Sambhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya; the threefold body.

2. Where a traveller only stops for a short while but does not stay for ever.

Trikāya Buddha who is in his own body. As you have listened to my talk, you will be able to see that in your own bodies, your self-nature possesses the Trikāya Buddha, which is begotten by your own nature and does not come from without.

'What is the pure and clean Dharmakāya Buddha? The worldly man's nature is fundamentally pure and clean and can produce all things. When evil things are thought of, evil actions follow and when good things are thought of, good actions follow. Thus all things in the self-nature are like the permanently clear sky and permanently bright sun and moon which are (temporarily) hidden by floating clouds above which there is brightness and below which there is darkness. Suddenly the clouds are blown away by the wind and there is brightness above and below with everything appearing clearly. The human disposition is constantly moving, like clouds floating in the sky.

'Learned friends, knowledge is like the sun and wisdom is like the moon. Knowledge and wisdom are always bright, but if external objects are grasped, the self-nature will be hidden by the floating clouds of one's own thoughts and will not be clear and bright. If one meets an enlightened person and listens to his expounding of the true and correct Dharma one will get rid of one's own delusion and errors with the result that there will be penetrating brightness within and without and all things will appear within the self-nature. This is also the case of those who perceive their self-nature. This is called the pure and clean Dharmakāya Buddha.

'Learned friends, when your minds surrender themselves to and rely on your own nature, it is surrender to and reliance on the true Buddha. Surrender to and reliance on one's own self will break up the evil mind, the envious and jealous mind, the flattering and crooked mind, the mind clinging to the concept of an ego, the deceptive and false mind, the contemptuous, the arrogant, and the heterodox mind and all other evils which may rise in the self-nature at any time. If you (can) always see your own faults and stop talking about the good and evil of others, this is surrender to and reliance on your own selves. If you are always humble and polite to others, this shows that you have thoroughly perceived your own nature without any further obstructions. This is surrender to and reliance on your own selves.

'What is the perfect Sambhogakāya? Like the light of a lamp which can disperse darkness that has lasted for a thousand years, a ray of wisdom can obliterate ignorance that has persisted for ten thousand years. Do not think of the past because it has gone and is irrecoverable. Think always of the future and all your thoughts should be perfectly clear so that the

fundamental nature can be perceived. Although good and evil differ from each other, the fundamental nature is non-dual. The non-dual nature is the true one. When there are no taints of good and evil in the true nature, this is the perfect Sambhogakāya Buddha.

'If the self-nature gives rise to an evil thought, it will destroy good causation¹ for ten thousand aeons. If the self-nature gives rise to a good thought, it will obliterate as many evils as there are sand grains in the Ganges, until one attains Supreme Bodhi. If thought after thought the self is perceived without losing sight of the fundamental thought,² this is the Sambhogakāya.

'What are the myriad Nirmāṇakāyas? If there is no thinking of anything, the (self-) nature is fundamentally like voidness. If in one thought, there is thinking and comparing, there will be transformation. If there is thinking and comparing of evil things, there will be transformation into hell. If there is thinking and comparing of good things, there will be transformation into heaven. Cruelty and harmfulness are transformed into dragons (nāga) and snakes. Kindness (maitrī) and pity (karuṇā) are transformed into Bodhisattvas, wisdom into a high world (of devas) and ignorance and stupidity into the lowest worlds of existence. Transformations of the self-nature are very numerous but deluded men are not awakened to this; there arise in them only evil thoughts and they always tread evil paths. If a thought is turned to the good, it will beget wisdom. This is called the Nirmāṇakāya Buddha of the self-nature.

'Learned friends, the Dharmakāya is complete in each individual. If, instant after instant, the self-nature sees itself, this is the Sambhogakāya Buddha. If the Sambhogakāya thinks and compares, it is the Nirmāṇakāya Buddha. The self-awakening to and self-practice of the meritorious virtues of the self-nature are true surrender (or true return) to and true reliance on the self-nature. Skin and flesh are the physical body which is like an inn for one cannot return to or rely on it. When one is awakened to the trikāya of the self-nature, one will recognize the self-natured Buddha. I have an immaterial hymn and if you repeat and observe it, you will, at a stroke, obliterate all sins accumulated during aeons of delusion. The hymn is:

*'Deluded men practise blessed virtues, not the truth
Which they say these virtues are. To give alms*

1. A good cause for a good effect.

2. Fundamental thought: thought of one's self-nature, of the true self.

*And offerings result in boundless blessings, but
Already in the mind have the three poisons been distilled.¹
If they hope for expiation by practising these blessed virtues
They will gain in their next lives much blessing, but their former
sins remain.*

*They should in their own minds destroy the cause of sin
By repentance and true reform within their nature.
Suddenly they awaken to the Mahāyāna's repentance and reform
Obliterating sins by their right conduct and all heresies forsaking.
Students of truth who ever contemplate
Their own nature will be what Buddhas are.
My ancestors² transmitted nothing but this Instantaneous
Dharma. May (then) all (the living) see the oneness of their nature.
If we seek the future Dharmakāya we must wash
From out our minds and throw away all dharma forms.
Exert yourselves to see your nature, take not things easy,
(For) when the last thought ceases your present life is o'er.
Once awakened to Mahāyāna and aware of your own nature
With reverence join your palms and pray for it with all your
(strength and) mind.'*

The Patriarch continued: 'Learned friends, all of you should recite this hymn and observe it in your self-cultivation. If after hearing me, you can perceive your own nature, you will always be at my side even if you are a thousand miles away from me, (but) if after hearing me, you are not awakened, although you are at my side, a thousand miles will separate us. What then, is the use of coming from afar to hear my discourses? Now take good care of yourselves and return to your own places.'

After the sermon, the whole assembly was awakened; everyone was filled with joy and observed the teaching.

1. The three poisons: desire, anger and stupidity are created by the deluded mind and so long as delusion remains, these poisons cannot be obliterated.

2. Past Patriarchs.

Potentiality and Condition

AFTER he had acquired the Dharma at Huang Mei, the Patriarch returned to Ts'ao Hou village in Shao Chou prefecture where no one recognized him, but a scholar named Liu Chih Lueh received him with reverence. This scholar had an aunt named Wu Chin Ts'ang who was a nun and used to recite the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra. When the Patriarch heard her recitation, he immediately understood the profound meaning which he explained to her. When she showed him the sūtra and asked about some characters, he said: 'I (am illiterate and) do not know the characters, but you can ask me about the meaning.' She asked: 'If you do not know the characters, how can you understand the meaning?' He replied: 'The Buddha's profound doctrine is beyond written words.'

The bhikṣuṇī was very surprised and told the story to pious elders of the village, saying: 'He is an enlightened Buddhist and should be asked to (stay with us to) receive our offerings.' A man named Ts'ao Shu Liang, who was a great-great-grandson of a marquis of the Wei dynasty, came with the villagers to pay reverence to the Patriarch.

At the time, the ancient Pao Lin monastery was in ruins, having been destroyed by war and fire towards the end of the Sui dynasty. When it had been rebuilt on the old site, the Patriarch was invited to stay and it soon became a precious place.¹ He was there for over nine months but evil men came again in pursuit of him. He hid himself on a hill in front of the monastery and they set fire to the brushwood and trees, but he escaped by worming his way through the rocks. One over which he crawled can still be seen today with his knee-prints and marked by the texture of his clothes. It is called the 'Rock of Escape'.

As he remembered the Fifth Patriarch's suggestion that he would halt and hide at Huai and Hui (respectively), he went there to conceal himself.

A monk named Fa Hai, who was a native of Ch'u Chiang town in Shao Chou prefecture, called on the Patriarch for the first time and said to him: 'Will you please enlighten me on the saying "Mind is Buddha"?'
 1. A famous monastery.

The Patriarch replied: 'When the preceding thought is not born,¹ it is mind (and) when the following thought does not end, it is Buddha.² Mind is that which produces all phenomena and Buddha is that which discards all phenomena. If I were to discuss this fully, the whole aeon would not be long enough for me to complete my statement. Now listen to my gāthā:

*'When Mind is Wisdom called
 Buddha is in Samādhi.³
 When Wisdom and Samādhi match
 Manas is pure and clean.
 You will not awaken to this Dharma door unless
 Your habit be to cultivate your nature.⁴
 Since the function (of Samādhi) is in essence uncreated
 The twin cultivation (of Wisdom and Samādhi) is correct.'*⁵

After hearing the Patriarch's gāthā, Fa Hai was greatly awakened and chanted:

*'Mind is in essence Buddha, (but) I, when not
 Awake, humiliate my own nature. Only now
 Do I understand the (true) cause of Wisdom and Samādhi
 Of which twin cultivation means discarding everything.'*

A monk named Fa Ta, who was a native of Hung Chou,⁶ left his

1. The first half of the Patriarch's reply: 'When the preceding thought is not born, it is mind' meant the same thing that he had said before to Ch'en Hui Ming: 'Do not think of either good or evil' (see page 27), i.e. when no thought stirs the mind, or when all thoughts have been banished, look into the mind.

2. The second half of the Patriarch's reply: 'When the following thought does not end, it is Buddha' meant the same thing that he had said before to Ch'en Hui Ming: 'At this very moment (of thoughtlessness) what is the Venerable Hui Ming's fundamental face?' (see page 27). This is the moment when one should look into one's self-natured Buddha. The whole reply means that the self-nature is beyond birth and death.

3. If the mind does not move and is thereby transmuted into Wisdom which is function, the self-natured Buddha who is body, is simultaneously apparent in his usual state of Samādhi. This explains the saying: Mind is Buddha.

4. One's awakening depends on the habit of cultivating the self-nature.

5. Wisdom and Samādhi are simultaneous and are beyond birth and death. Therefore, the twin cultivation of Samādhi and Wisdom is the correct practice of this teaching of instantaneous enlightenment.

6. Now called Nan Chang, capital of Kiang Si province.

home at the early age of seven and used to recite the Lotus Sūtra. (One day) he called on the Patriarch and knelt down before him but his head did not touch the ground.

The Patriarch reprimanded him and said: 'If your head does not touch the ground, what is the use of kneeling?'¹ There must be something (wrong) in your mind; tell me what is your daily practice.'

Fa Ta replied: 'I have already recited the Lotus Sūtra three thousand times.' The Patriarch said: 'Even if you have recited it ten thousand times, have understood its meaning and have not claimed to surpass others, you would only walk with me (on the same Path). You have failed in your calling and do not even realize that you are wrong. Listen to my gāthā:

*'Since ceremony is to subdue arrogance,
Why touches not your head the ground? (Clinging fast
To) ego is the cause of sin, (but) merits,
When forgotten, matchless blessings gain.'*

The Patriarch then asked: 'What is your name?' Fa Ta replied: 'Fa Ta.' The Patriarch said: 'Your name means Dharma Penetration, but have you ever penetrated the Dharma?' He then chanted:

*'Your name is Dharma Penetration (and) you have
Diligently recited the sūtra without pause.
Aimlessly to recite is to follow (but) the sound,
(While) he who realizes Mind is Bodhisattva called.
Now that you have a co-operating
Cause, I will explain this (clearly) to you:
If you believe that Buddha's speechless
Then from your mouth will bloom the lotus.'*²

After hearing the gāthā, Fa Ta, in deep remorse (for his arrogance) thanked the Patriarch and said: 'Henceforth I will be humble and respectful towards everybody. I recited the Lotus Sūtra but did not understand its meaning about which I (still) have doubts. As your knowledge and wisdom are great and wide, will you please give me a short outline of

1. When kneeling, the five members, i.e. the knees, elbows and head are placed on the ground, thus implying the utmost respect.

2. If you can believe that the absolute has no room for words and speeches, you will realize your self-natured Buddha.

the sūtra?' The Patriarch replied: 'Dharma Penetration, the Dharma is very penetrating but not your mind. The sūtra contains nothing that is doubtful. You recite it but do you know its doctrine?' Fa Ta replied: 'I have a dull nature and character; I only follow the text which I recite but I really do not know its doctrine.' The Patriarch said: 'I (am illiterate and) do not know the text but if you take the sūtra and recite it, I will explain it to you.'

Thereupon, Fa Ta read the sūtra aloud and when he came to the chapter on parables, the Patriarch stopped him and said: 'The cause of (the Buddha's) appearance in this world is the doctrine of this sūtra and the many parables spoken of do not go beyond it. What is this cause? The sūtra says: "All Buddhas, the most honoured Ones in the world, appeared for the sake of a great cause. This great affair is the penetrative power of the Buddha's wisdom. Worldly men are under delusion and cling to external phenomena and internal (relative) voidness. If one discards all externals while in the midst of phenomena and if one banishes (relative) voidness when facing it, delusion will vanish within and without. If this Dharma is comprehended, the mind will be opened up in the flash of a thought. This is the opening up of Buddha's wisdom, and Buddha is the Enlightened One. This (Dharma) has four stages:

- (1) The opening up of the Enlightened One's wisdom;
- (2) The revelation of the Enlightened One's wisdom;
- (3) The awakening to the Enlightened One's wisdom; and
- (4) The entry into the Enlightened One's wisdom.¹

If one hears about the opening up and revelation of the Enlightened One's wisdom, one will readily wake up and enter it. This wisdom which comes fundamentally from the true self-nature, will manifest itself. You should not misinterpret the meaning of the sūtra. When you hear about opening, revealing, awakening and entering, you should not think that all this is the wisdom of the Buddha and does not concern you. If you do so, you will vilify the sūtra and defame the Buddha. As He is a Buddha, His wisdom is already complete so what is the use of opening it up again? Now you should believe that this Buddha's wisdom is only that of your own mind. All living beings obscured their own light and, being pushed

1. (1) K'ai: to open up the (hidden) treasure of the (self-natured) Buddha's wisdom. (2) Shih: to indicate (or reveal) its meaning. (3) Wu: to cause men to awaken to it; and (4) Ju: to lead them into it. The self-natured Buddha's wisdom is self-existent and inherent in man but is hidden by ignorance. It appears only after ignorance has been wiped out, but cannot be developed or grown because fundamentally it is self-existent. Bodhi, therefore, is beyond practice and cultivation.

by external concurrent circumstances and internal disturbances, their avidity and fondness for the surrounding six sense-data made them willing slaves thereof. And so the World Honoured One took the trouble of coming out of His Samādhi tenderly to urge them to give up their attachments and to stop seeking things from the outside so that they could be on an equality with Buddha. This is the opening up of the Buddha's wisdom.

'I also exhort all worldly men constantly to open up the Buddha's wisdom which is in their own minds. They have depraved minds, are ignorant, deluded and commit sins. While their mouths speak of good things, their minds are evil. They are greedy, hateful, envious, jealous, flattering, arrogant, usurping and harmful. Thus they develop the views of living beings.

'If one has a correct mind, it will always beget wisdom which will enable one to have an insight of one's own mind, to stop evil actions and to perform good ones. This is the opening-up of the Buddha's wisdom. You should, instant after instant, develop this and not the views of living beings. The development of the one is supramundane and that of the other is worldly. If you only take the trouble to cling to your recitation and regard it as an achievement, you do not differ from a yak that loves its tail.'

Fa Ta said to the Patriarch: 'Then, if only the meaning is to be understood, is it still necessary to recite the sūtra?' The Patriarch replied: 'What is wrong in the sūtra which can obstruct your thoughts? Delusion or enlightenment depends on the reciter and advantage or disadvantage is self made. If the mouth recites and the mind acts (accordingly), this is turning the sūtra round.¹ If the mouth recites and the mind does not follow (the teaching), this is (the reciter who is) turned round by the sūtra. Now listen to my gāthā:

*'When the mind is in delusion, the Lotus (Sūtra) turns it round,
When the mind is (all) enlightened, it turns round the Lotus (Sūtra).
You have long recited it without comprehension
(Because) you quarrel with its meaning.
The non-existence of a thought proves that thought correct,
(While) the existence of a thought proves that it is wrong.
When existence and non-existence cease to be
One rides for ever in the white-bullock cart.'²*

1. To turn round a sūtra is to recite it from end to end.

2. The white-bullock cart is the Supreme or Buddha Vehicle; a quotation from the Lotus Sūtra.

Fa Ta heard the gāthā and was moved to tears. Instantaneously he was greatly awakened and said to the Patriarch: 'Up to now I have not turned the Lotus Sūtra round but have been turned round by it.'

He continued: 'The sūtra says: "Even if the great Śrāvakas and Bodhisattvas combined their efforts and exhaustively used all their powers of thinking and comparing, they would never be able to fathom the Buddha's wisdom." Now, if (as you say) an ordinary man's mere awakening to his own mind enables him to acquire the Buddha's wisdom, (I am apprehensive that) those who have no superior roots, will certainly doubt and abuse what you say. The sūtra also mentions the three carts, drawn by a goat,¹ a deer² and an ox³; how do they differ from the white-bullock cart? Will you kindly enlighten me on this point?'

The Patriarch replied: 'The sūtra is already clear but you are deluded. Those in the three carts cannot fathom the Buddha's wisdom as the trouble lies in their thinking and comparing⁴; the more exhaustively they think and investigate, the farther they will be from it. The Buddha's expounding is for ordinary men and not for another Buddha. If they do not want to believe this doctrine, let them leave the assembly.⁵ They did not know they were already riding in the white-bullock cart and tried to look for the other three carts outside the door.⁶ Moreover the text of the sūtra is clear and mentions only one Buddha Vehicle beside which there are no other vehicles. When mention was made of the second or third vehicle, of numberless expedient methods, of all kinds of cause,⁷ parables, words and terms, all these Dharmas were used solely for (expounding) the One-Buddha Vehicle. Why do not you wake up? The three carts were unreal and were formerly used (in the temporary teaching).⁸ The One-Buddha Vehicle was real and was for the present

1. The goat-cart: the vehicle used by Śrāvakas, or hearers, disciples of Buddha who understood the four dogmas, rid themselves of the unreality of the phenomenal and entered the incomplete nirvāṇa.

2. The deer-cart: the vehicle used by Pratyeka Buddhas who lived apart from others and attained enlightenment alone, or for themselves, in contrast with the altruism of the Bodhisattva principle.

3. The ox-cart: the Bodhisattva-vehicle.

4. Thinking and comparing with their discriminating minds.

5. When the Buddha expounded the Lotus Sūtra, five thousand monks, nuns, and male and female devotees who did not believe it, left their seats, paid Him reverence and withdrew. See the Lotus Sūtra.

6. A parable quoted from the Lotus Sūtra.

7. Primary and secondary causes.

8. At the beginning, the Buddha urged His disciples to forsake their attachments to worldly things to realize Nirvāṇa which they took for their abiding place. This was the Hinayāna, or incomplete teaching.

(fundamental, complete) teaching.¹ You are taught to relinquish the unreal and return to the real, after which even the real is inexpressible. You should know that all treasure and wealth belong to you and are for your own use. You should think of neither the father, nor the son nor of the use (of riches).² This is called observance of the Lotus Sūtra. In this manner, from aeon to aeon, you will (really) hold the sūtra in your hand, and from morning to evening, you will (really) recite it without interruption.³

As his mind was opened up to the teaching, Fa Ta was filled with joy and chanted the following hymn of praise:

*'Although I have recited three thousand times this sūtra
A sentence heard at Ts'ao Ch'i made me forget it all.
Before I understood the aim of His appearance in the world
How could I dissipate delusions due to my former lives?
The carts drawn by goat and deer and ox are but expedients
To illustrate the first, intermediate and final stages.
Who would have thought that in this burning house
The real dweller is the Dharma king?'⁴*

The Patriarch said: 'Henceforth, you can be called a sūtra reciting monk.'

From that day, (although) Fa Ta understood the profound meaning, he continued to recite the sūtra without pause.

A monk named Chih T'ung, who was a native of An Feng in Shao Chou prefecture, had read the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra over a thousand times but still failed to understand the meaning of the threefold body (trikāya) and the four wisdoms. He called on the Patriarch and asked him to explain what they meant.

The Patriarch said: 'The three bodies are: the pure and clean Dharmakāya which is your (own) nature; the perfect Sambhogakāya which is

1. The present teaching revealed the real or absolute. The Buddha taught them to relinquish even Nirvāṇa in order to realize the absolute or their self-natured Buddhas. This was the Mahāyāna or complete teaching.

2. A parable quoted from the Lotus Sūtra; the father symbolizing the Buddha who pointed out to the poor son (His disciples) all the wealth of the latter's wisdom.

3. The proper way of turning the sūtra round.

4. A quotation from the Lotus Sūtra: the burning house symbolizes the three worlds of existence (desires, forms and formless). When a man is enlightened, he becomes the king of the Law, i.e. Buddha.

your wisdom; and the countless Nirmāṇakāyas which are your actions. If you stray from your own nature and speak of the trikāya, this is called a body without wisdom. If you understand that the three bodies have no self-nature, this is called the Bodhi of Four Wisdoms. Now listen to my hymn:

*'The trikāya are immanent in the self-nature
Which manifests itself through the four wisdoms.
No need is there to stray from what you see and hear
Which can be overleaped to reach the Buddha-bhūmi.¹
I expound this to you so that in it you can believe
And from delusion thus be free for evermore.
Try not to look for it outside. All day
Talk not in vain about the Bodhi.'*

Chih T'ung asked again: 'May I hear something about the meaning of the four wisdoms?' The Patriarch replied: 'Since you have understood the three bodies (trikāya), you should also be clear about the four wisdoms. Why do you ask again? If you stray from the trikāya and speak of the four wisdoms, that is bodiless wisdoms. In such a case, even if there really were (four) wisdoms, they would ultimately be non-existent.' The Patriarch then chanted the following hymn:

*'The great mirror wisdom is pure and clean by nature,
The wisdom of equality frees the mind from ills,
The profound observing wisdom is not discriminating,
The perfecting wisdom matches that of the great mirror.
The five, eighth, sixth and seventh, effects and causes turn,
But only names are used which have no real nature.
If, as they turn, you do not feel attachment to them,
The myriad (thoughts) that rise in Nāga-samādhi dwell.'²*

The following note is inserted in the Text:

The above is the transmutation of consciousnesses into (the four) wisdoms. The sūtra says: 'The first five consciousnesses are transmuted into the perfecting

1. Buddha-bhūmi: the Buddha-stage, being the tenth stage when a Bodhisattva has arrived at the point of highest enlightenment and is just about to become a Buddha.

2. Nāga-samādhi: dragon's samādhi; dragons are noted for their samādhi or stillness of mind.

wisdom, the sixth consciousness into the profound observing wisdom, the seventh consciousness into the wisdom of equality and the eighth consciousness into the great mirror wisdom.' In spite of the transmutation of the sixth and seventh consciousnesses as causes, and of the first five consciousnesses and the eighth consciousness as effects, there is only a change of terms and no change in substance.'

Chih T'ung was instantaneously awakened to his self-natured wisdom and submitted the following hymn (to the Patriarch):

*'The trikāya are immanent in my own body,
The four wisdoms are only of my own enlightened mind.
Bodies and wisdoms blend in one without obstruction, in response
To appeals by living beings they take on various forms.
To practise them is wrong, to cling
To them is misplaced zeal.¹
Thanks to my master I now understand their meaning
Forgetful of impurities² which are only words.*

A monk named Chih Chang, who was a native of Kuei Ch'i town in Hsin Chou prefecture, left his home (to become a monk) when he was still a child in order to perceive his self-nature. One day, he called on the Patriarch to pay him reverence.

The Patriarch asked him: 'Where do you come from and what do you want?' Chih Chang replied: 'Recently I went to Pai Feng mountain to call on Master Ta T'ung, who explained to me the meaning of perception of the self-nature and attainment of Buddhahood, but I still have some doubt about it and have come from afar to pay you reverence and to ask you to be compassionate enough to clear this up for me.' The Patriarch asked: 'What instruction did that master give you? Try to repeat what he said.' Chih Chang replied: 'After my arrival there, although three months had elapsed, the master did not give me any instructions. As I was eager to learn the Dharma, one night I entered

1. The trikāya and four wisdoms cannot be attained by practice and should not be clung to.

2. The self-nature is fundamentally pure and clean and does not rely on practice to get rid of impurities which are non-existent.

alone the abbot's room and asked him what were my own mind and nature. He said to me: "Do you see space?" I replied: "Yes, I see it." He asked me: "Do you see its outward appearance?" I replied: "Space has no form, how can it have an appearance?" He said: "Your own nature is like space. The non-seeing of a single thing is correct seeing and the non-knowing of a single thing is true knowing. There is not a thing that is either blue or yellow and either long or short, but there is only the seeing of that which fundamentally is pure and clean and of the perfect body of Bodhi. This is called perception of (self-) nature and attainment of Buddhahood. This is also called the Tathāgata's wisdom." Although I listened to his instruction, I am still not clear about it. So I pray you to enlighten me.' The Patriarch said: 'That master's saying showed that he still clung to seeing and knowing and this is why you are still not clear (about mind and self-nature). I now give you the following gāthā:

*'The non-seeing of a thing is clinging to non-seeing,
This is like drifting clouds that hide the (brightness of the) sun.
The non-knowing of a thing is clinging to the knowing
Of voidness, like a lightning flash in the clear (void of) space.
The momentary uprising of what you know and see
Proves that expedients cannot be understood.
In a thought realize yourself that this is wrong¹
Then your own inner light will shine for evermore.'*

After hearing the gāthā, Chih Chang was awakened and chanted one of his own:

*'The uprising without cause of what you see and hear
Is like the quest of Bodhi while clinging (fast) to forms.
The clinging to a thought about awakening
Is no better than the delusion of the past.
Thus the fundamental Bodhi of self-nature
Vainly follows the uprising in its ceaseless flow.
If I had not entered the (Sixth) Patriarch's room, I should still
Be undecided about my bias towards the two extremes.'*

1. The uprise of not seeing and not knowing is wrong because seeing and not seeing as well as knowing and not knowing are pairs of extremes which should be discarded so that the absolute can appear.

One day, Chih Chang asked the Patriarch: 'The Buddha spoke of the three vehicles and again mentioned the Supreme Vehicle; I do not understand His idea and ask you please to enlighten me.' The Patriarch replied: 'You should look into your own mind and never cling to externals. The Dharma does not possess the four vehicles but men's minds differ from one another. Those who rely on their seeing and hearing and decide to recite sūtras belong to the small vehicle. Those who are awakened to Dharma and understand the meaning of sūtras, belong to the middle vehicle. Those who cultivate themselves in the practice of Dharma belong to the great vehicle. Those who comprehend all Dharmas and possess all Dharmas, who are free from (all) impurities, who discard all externals and who reap no gain whatever (in return) belong to the supreme vehicle. A vehicle is a means of conveyance and is not a matter for argument. You should cultivate yourself and should not ask me anything more. At all times, the self-nature is by itself in the state of suchness.'

Chih Chang bowed to the Patriarch and thanked him; he stayed on and served him until the death of his master.

A monk named Chih Tao, who was a native of Nan Hai of Kuang Chou prefecture (now Canton city), came for instruction and said to the Patriarch: 'Since I left my home, I have read the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra for over ten years but I have not understood its main points. Will you please enlighten me?' The Patriarch asked: 'About which section of the sūtra are you not clear?' Chih Tao replied: '(The sūtra says:) "Whatever is phenomenal is impermanent; this is the Dharma of birth and death. The annihilation of birth and death brings bliss in Nirvāṇa." I have some doubts about these sentences.' The Patriarch asked: 'Why are you doubtful about them?'

Chih Tao replied: 'All living beings have two bodies, the physical one and the Dharmakāya. The physical body is impermanent and is not free from birth and death. The Dharmakāya is permanent and is free from knowing and feeling. The sūtra says: "The annihilation of birth and death brings bliss in Nirvāṇa." I do not know which body will be annihilated and which one will enjoy the bliss. If the physical body enjoys the bliss, when it dies, the four elements (earth, water, fire and air) will scatter and there will be only suffering, and suffering is certainly not bliss. If the Dharmakāya was in the state of calmness and extinction (of

reincarnation), it would be like grass, plants, tiles and stones; then who would enjoy the bliss? Moreover, the Dharma nature¹ is the body of birth and death and the five aggregates (skandhas) are functions of birth and death. With one body having five functions, birth and death are permanent; when the body is born, it begets the five functions and when it dies, the functions return to the body. If there is rebirth, all sentient beings would not be subjected to cessation or extinction. If there is no rebirth, there would be eternal stillness and extinction, and (then) all sentient beings would not differ from inanimate objects. Thus all things (dharma) would be suppressed by Nirvāṇa and since there would be no birth, who would enjoy the bliss?'

The Patriarch said: 'You are a disciple of Buddha; how can you hold the heterodox views of annihilation (uccheda) and of permanence (śāśvata) and criticize the Dharma of the Supreme Vehicle? According to what you say, there is a Dharmakāya outside the physical body and a Nirvāṇa that can be won by straying from birth and death. You also infer that there is a body which enjoys the permanent bliss of Nirvāṇa. This is due to your obstinate clinging to birth and death and your indulgence in worldly pleasures. Now you should know that because all deluded men wrongly took the combination of the five skandhas as their own bodies; discriminatively regarded all things as external; loved birth and hated death; indulged in the unceasing flow of thoughts; did not know that all illusions were false and non-existent; endured to no purpose the round of transmigrations; mistook the bliss of Nirvāṇa for suffering and looked for something else the whole day long, the Buddha took pity upon them and revealed to them the true bliss of Nirvāṇa where there was neither birth nor death in a single kṣaṇa and where there was no real birth or death that could be annihilated. When Nirvāṇa appears, it is beyond all inference² and this is called permanent bliss for there is no enjoyer of it and no non-enjoyer of it. How can there be such a term as a body with five functions? Still less should you speak of a Nirvāṇa which suppresses all things so as to stop their production for ever. This is vilification of Buddha and defamation of Dharma. Now listen to my gāthā:

1. Dharma nature or Dharmatā: the nature underlying all things, the Bhūtatahatā, a Mahāyāna philosophical concept unknown in Hīnayāna. It is discussed in its absolute and relative, or static and dynamic, senses. In the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra the term means inherent Dharma or Buddha nature; abiding Dharma nature; Dharmakāya, embodiment of Dharma; region of reality; nature of the void or immaterial nature; Bhūtatahatā.

2. Direct or sense inference, and comparative or logical inference.

*'The Supreme Mahāparinirvāṇa
Is perfect and is permanently still
And shining. The ignorant call it death,
Heretics annihilation term it,
Śrāvakas and Pratyeka-buddhas
Assert that it is non-activity.
These are speculations based on (worldly) feelings
And they cause the two and sixty (depraved) views.¹
Hence baseless terms are arbitrarily
Invented, but what do they really mean?
Only those whose minds no longer measure things
Understand Nirvāṇa which they grasp not
Nor reject. They know the karma of five skandhas,²
The ego (said to be) therein, the external
Appearance of all forms that can be seen,
Of every sound and voice that can be heard,
They know are like a dream and an illusion.
They are unmindful of both saints and sinners,
They do not try Nirvāṇa to interpret,
For them the three times and both extremes have disappeared.
In the normal functioning of their senses
No more do they give rise to thoughts of function.
In their discerning of all dharmas
They banish their discrimination.
Even in the aeons of destruction when flames will scorch the bottom
Of the sea and winds will rock the peaks to knock against each other,
The permanent reality enjoys the bliss of stillness
And extinction. Such, then, is Nirvāṇa
Which you have compelled me to describe
(To help you) to abandon your wrong views.*

1. The 62 views originate from the 5 skandhas. Consider them under the three sorts of time. In the past each had permanence, impermanence, both or neither ($5 \times 4 = 20$). In the present, and here we deal with space or extension, each is finite, infinite, both or neither ($5 \times 4 = 20$). In the future each either continues or not, both or neither ($5 \times 4 = 20$), that is 60 in all. To reach the grand total of 62 add the two ideas that body and mind are a unity or different.

2. The 100 dharmas of the 5 skandhas or the 100 divisions of all mental qualities and their agents of the Vijñapti-mātra-tāśiddhi school, also known as the 5 groups of 100 modes or 'things': (1) the 8 perceptions, or forms of consciousness; (2) the 51 mental images; (3) the 5 physical organs and their 6 modes of sense, e.g. ear and sound; (4) the 24 indefinites, or unconditioned elements; (5) the 6 inactive or meta-physical concepts – wu wei.

*If you take not all this literally,
You may know a little of Nirvāṇa.'*

Chih Tao was greatly enlightened after hearing the gāthā. He was filled with joy, made obeisance to the Patriarch and withdrew.

Ch'an master Hsing Szu was born of a Liu family in An Ch'eng town of Chi Chou prefecture.¹ When he heard that the Patriarch had converted a number of people, he went straight to Ts'ao Ch'i, called on him and asked him this question: 'What should one do in order not to fall into the progressive stages?' The Patriarch asked back: 'What have you practised of late?' Hsing Szu replied: 'I have not even practised the sacred truths.'² The Patriarch asked: 'Then into what progressive stages (could you) fall?' Hsing Szu replied: '(Since) even the sacred truths are not practised, where are the progressive stages?'

The Patriarch had a high opinion of Hsing Szu and made him the leader of the assembly. One day, he said to him: 'You should take charge of the conversion of people in another place to continue the (instantaneous) teaching.'

Having now acquired the Dharma, Hsing Szu returned to Ch'ing Yuan mountain at Chi Chou, where he spread the Dharma and carried on the conversion of people there. After his death, the emperor conferred upon him the posthumous title of Ch'an master Hung Chi.

Ch'an master Huai Jang was the son of a Tu family at Ching Chou.³ At first he called on state-master Hui An of Sung Shan mountain who urged him to go to Ts'ao Ch'i for instruction.

On arrival, he made obeisance to the Patriarch who asked him: 'Where do you come from?' Huai Jang replied: 'From Sung Shan.' The Patriarch asked: 'What thing is it and how does it come?' Huai Jang

1. In Kiangsi province.

2. The Four Noble Truths are: misery; the accumulation of misery, caused by passions; the extinction of passions, being possible; and the doctrine of the Path leading to the extinction of passions.

3. In Shensi province.

replied: 'To say that it is like something is to miss the mark.' The Patriarch asked: 'Can it still be cultivated and experienced?' Huai Jang replied: '(Although) its cultivation and experiencing are not uncalled for, it cannot be sullied.' The Patriarch said: 'Just that which cannot be sullied is protected and thought of by all Buddhas. It is so for you and also for me. In India, (the Twenty-seventh Patriarch) Prajñātāra had predicted that under your feet, a colt¹ would rush out, trample on and kill people all over the world. The answer will be found in your mind but do not speak of it too soon.'

Thereupon, Huai Jang's mind was completely awakened (to the Dharma). He stayed and served the Patriarch as his attendant for fifteen years during which time he gradually penetrated into the profound and abstruse (Dharma). Later he went to Nan Yo where he spread the Ch'an doctrine. At his death, the emperor conferred upon him the posthumous title of Ch'an master Ta Hui (Great Wisdom).

Ch'an master Hsuan Chueh of Yung Chia was the son of a Tai family of Wen Chou.² When he was young, he studied sūtras and śāstras³ and was well-versed in the śamatha-vipaśyanā⁴ Dharma door of the T'ien T'ai school.

After he had read the Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra, he realized his own mind. One day, by chance, Hsuan Ts'e, a disciple of the Patriarch, came to see him and they had a pleasant chat. Seeing that his talk agreed with the Patriarch's teaching, Hsuan Ts'e asked him: 'From which master have you acquired the Dharma?' Yung Chia replied: 'I have listened to the (expounding of the) Vaipulya sūtras and śāstras and have a master

1. A colt or horse is called ma in Chinese. Ma was also the surname of a Dharma successor of Huai Jang, called Ma Tsu, or ancestor Ma. The Ch'an sect flourished when Ma Tsu spread the instantaneous doctrine and his spiritual descendants were found all over the country.

2. Also called Wenchow, a seaport south of Shanghai.

3. Sūtras and śāstras: sermons and treatises.

4. Śamatha-vipaśyanā: Chih kuan in Chinese. Chih is silencing the active mind and getting rid of distraction for moral ends, and kuan is observing, examining, sifting evidence. In practice there are three methods of attaining such abstraction: (1) by fixing the mind on the nose, navel, etc.; (2) by stopping every thought as it arises; (3) by dwelling on the thought that nothing exists of itself, but from a preceding cause. When the physical organism is at rest, it is called chih and when the mind is seeing clearly it is kuan. The chief object is the concentration of the mind by special methods for the purpose of clear insight into truth and to be rid of illusion.

for each school. Later, after reading the Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra, I was awakened to the doctrine of Buddha mind but I still have no one to verify and bear witness to my awakening.' Hsuan Ts'e said: 'Before the advent of the Buddha (called the) "King-with-awe-inspiring-voice"¹ a master could be dispensed with, but since the advent of that Buddha, all those who are self-awakened and have no masters to testify to their awakening, are heretics of the school of uncaused existence.' Yung Chia said: 'Will you please testify it for me?' Hsuan Ts'e replied: 'My words are not weighty but there is the Sixth Patriarch at Ts'ao Ch'i where people come from the four quarters to (learn and) receive the Dharma. If you go, I will accompany you.'

Thereupon, Yung Chia went with Hsuan Ts'e to Ts'ao Ch'i and called on the Patriarch. (On arrival) he circumnambulated the Patriarch thrice and holding his staff, stood still before him.

The Patriarch said: 'A monk is the embodiment of three thousand moral rules² and 80,000³ minor good conducts. Where does the Virtuous One come from and what makes him so proud?' Yung Chia replied: 'The question of birth and death is a great one and impermanence (i.e. death) is coming quickly (at any moment).⁴ The Patriarch said: 'Why do not you embody that which is not created and clearly perceive that which is not quick?' Yung Chia replied: 'The body itself is not created and fundamentally there is no quickness in clear perception?' The Patriarch said: 'Exactly so! Exactly so!'⁵

Thereupon, Yung Chia paid reverence to the Patriarch with full ceremony. A short while later, he took leave of the Patriarch who said:

1. The Sanskrit name of this Buddha is: Bhiṣma-garjita-ghoṣa-svara-rāja, the king with awe-inspiring voice, the name of countless Buddhas successively appearing during the kalpa or aeon, called the 'kalpa free from the calamities of decadence, famine, epidemics, etc'.

2. There are 250 rules which are multiplied by four to cover the states of walking, standing, sitting and sleeping and thus 1,000, this when multiplied by 3 for the past, present and future, brings the total to 3,000.

3. An abbreviation for 84,000. (See page 33, footnote 1.)

4. Since death may come at any moment, I am in a hurry and have no time to waste on ceremony. Yung Chia wanted to probe the Patriarch's enlightenment before paying him reverence in full ceremony.

5. The Patriarch said, 'Exactly so! Exactly so!' to confirm the visitor's awakening. Readers will note the very interesting questions and answers. The Patriarch probed Yung Chia's understanding of the self-natured Dharmakāya by using the words 'embody' and 'clearly perceive', to see if the visitor realized both 'body' and 'function'. In his answer Yung Chia showed that he not only understood both body and function, but that he had also wiped out both space and time by mentioning the uncreated body and the non-existent quickness. Thus the visitor's comprehension of the absolute was confirmed by the Patriarch.

'Why are you leaving so quickly?' Yung Chia replied: 'How can there be quickness where fundamentally there is no motion?' The Patriarch asked: 'Who knows there is no motion?' Yung Chia said: 'The Virtuous One is giving rise to discrimination.' The Patriarch said: 'You have got an idea of the uncreate.' Yung Chia asked: 'Does the uncreate (still) have an idea?' The Patriarch asked: 'If there is no idea, who does the discerning?' Yung Chia replied: 'Discerning does not come from ideation.' The Patriarch said: 'Excellent! Just stay for a night.'¹

For this reason, Yung Chia was at the time called 'The overnight-enlightened-one'. Later he wrote the 'Song of Enlightenment', which was widely read in the country. After his death, the emperor conferred upon him the posthumous title of great master Wu Hsiang (The Immaterial). He was called by his contemporaries Ch'an master Chen Chueh (Truly Enlightened).

A Ch'an monk named Chih Huang, who previously had sought instruction from the Fifth Patriarch and who thought that he himself had attained the (state of) imperturbability (Samādhi), stayed for twenty years in a small temple where he used to sit in meditation all the time.

Hsuan Ts'e, a disciple of the Patriarch, when wandering from place to place, (one day) reached the north bank of the Yellow River, where he heard of the name of the Ch'an monk. Hsuan Ts'e came to see him and asked him: 'What are you doing here?' Chih Huang replied: 'I am entering Samādhi.' Hsuan Ts'e asked: 'So you say, but are you mindful

1. The Patriarch again probed Yung Chia to make sure that his enlightenment was complete, by using once more the word 'quick' to set a trap. Yung Chia refused to be trapped by revealing the unchanging self-nature which is immutable and is beyond both quickness and slowness, i.e. a dualism.

The Patriarch again probed him by asking him who knew that which was not in motion to see if the visitor still clung to the subject who knew and the object, non-existent motion. Yung Chia retorted that the Patriarch gave rise to discrimination since the absolute is free from all dualisms.

Again the Patriarch set a new trap by insinuating the more subtle view of the subjective 'you' and the objective 'idea of the uncreate', i.e. ego and dharma as explained by the Buddha in the Diamond Sūtra. (See *Ch'an and Zen Teaching*, Series One.) Yung Chia's reply, 'Does the uncreate still have ideas?' wiped out this finest view which is imperceptible to a practiser just entering the stream of right meditation. In his next probe, the Patriarch tried again to induce Yung Chia into error by asking, 'Who does the discerning?' Yung Chia's reply, 'Discerning does not come from ideation,' really means: 'He who is versed in the skilful discerning of all phenomena, remains immutable in the Supreme Reality.' (See the last sentence of Chapter 4, pages 47.)

or unmindful of your entry. If you are unmindful, all inanimate things such as grass, plants, tiles and stones should also be in (the state of) Samādhi. If you are mindful, all living beings should also be in Samādhi.' Chih Huang replied: 'When I enter Samādhi, I am mindless of existence and non-existence (or of "is" and "is not").' Hsuan Ts'e said: 'If you are mindless of "is" and "is not", that is eternal Samādhi, so how can there be entering into and coming out of it? If there is entering and leaving, it is not the great Samādhi.'

Chih Huang was dumbfounded and after a long while, he asked: 'Who is your master?' Hsuan Ts'e replied: 'My master is the Sixth Patriarch at Ts'ao Ch'i.' Chih Huang inquired: 'Then what is Samādhi according to the Sixth Patriarch?' Hsuan Ts'e replied: 'According to my master's teaching, the self-nature is perfect and still and its body and function are in the realm of the absolute. (Within it) fundamentally the five skandhas are void and the six sense-data are non-existent. It does not go in and does not come out. It is neither still nor disturbed. The dhyāna nature is non-abiding and is beyond the calmness of dhyāna. The dhyāna nature is uncreated and is beyond the thought of dhyāna. The mind is like space and is beyond the capacity of space.'

After hearing this, Chih Huang went straight to (Ts'ao Ch'i where) the Patriarch asked him: 'Where do you come from?' Chih Huang related the talk he had had with Hsuan Ts'e and the Patriarch said: 'What my disciple said was correct. If your mind is like space without clinging to the concept of space, free from all obstructions in its function, indifferent to both the mutable and immutable, mindless of both the worldly and the saintly, and disentangled from both subject and object, the self-nature is in the realm of the absolute and is in permanent Samādhi.'

Thereupon Chih Huang was fully enlightened. What he had regarded as his realization (of Samādhi) during the past twenty years had now completely vanished. That night, on the north bank of the Yellow River, the literati and people heard a voice in the air announcing: 'Today Ch'an master Chih Huang has attained enlightenment.'

Later, he took leave of the Patriarch and returned to the north bank of the Yellow River, where he taught and converted monks, nuns and male and female devotees.

(One day) a monk asked the Patriarch: 'Who (can) acquire the Huang Mei doctrine?' The Patriarch replied: 'He who comprehends the Buddha

Dharma.' The monk asked: 'Have you acquired it?' The Patriarch replied: 'I do not comprehend the Buddha Dharma.'¹

One day the Patriarch wanted to wash the robe he had inherited (at Huang Mei) but there was no clear water in the vicinity. So he went to a place about five miles behind the monastery where he found a luxuriant grove surrounded with an aura of felicity. There he raised his staff and thrust it into the ground, and a stream gushed out which soon became a pond. He knelt down and washed the robe on a rock.

Suddenly a monk came, paid reverence to him and said: 'My name is Fang Pien and I am a native of Hsi Shu (Western Szechwan). Yesterday, in South India, I met Bodhidharma who urged me to return quickly to China where he had transmitted Mahākāśapa's right Dharma eye treasury and patched robe which have been handed down to the sixth generation at Ts'ao Ch'i in Shao Chou prefecture whither I should go to see them and to pay reverence. I come from afar and wish to see the robe and bowl which you have inherited.'

After showing him the robe and bowl, the Patriarch inquired about his calling. Fang Pien replied: 'I am good at making clay images (of Buddha).' In all seriousness the Patriarch said: 'Please try to make one.'²

Fang Pien was at a loss what to do, but a few days later he completed a seven-inch life-like image of the Patriarch which was a real work of art (and which he presented to him). The Patriarch smiled and said: 'You only know the nature of images but you do not know the Buddha nature.' Then he stretched out his hand which he laid on Fang Pien's head, saying: 'You shall be for ever a field of blessedness for men and devas.' He also rewarded him with a robe.

Fang Pien received the robe which he divided into three parts, one for dressing the image, one which he kept for himself and one which he wrapped with palm leaves and buried in the ground, swearing: 'When this robe is dug up, I will appear in the world to be the abbot of this monastery which I will rehabilitate.'

1. The Patriarch's answer aimed at smashing the monk's attachment to the so-called doctrine which, if clung to, would be a real obstruction to the realization of his self-nature. If the monk were of high spirituality, he would be suspicious about the answer and would strive to find a solution thereto until he achieved himself the perception of his fundamental face which is the source of all Dharmas or doctrines of the Buddha.

2. The Patriarch told the monk to try to make an image of the Buddha nature.

A monk chanted the following gāthā composed by Ch'an master Wo Lun:

*'Able is Wo Lun and skilful,
He can cut off all his thoughts.
Facing forms no thought rises,
Bodhi grows from day to day.'*¹

The Patriarch heard of this and said: 'This gāthā shows that the composer does not realize his mind; the practice of it will bind with additional ties.' Then he read to the monk:

*'Hui Neng has no ability nor skill,
He does not cut off any thoughts.
Facing forms thoughts oft arise,
How then can Bodhi grow?'*²

1. The first two lines of the gāthā show that the composer still clung to the twin concept of the reality of an ego (i.e. Wo Lun himself) and of the reality of dharma, or things (i.e. thoughts). His self-nature was, therefore, held in bondage by the dual concept of subject (i.e. Wo Lun himself) and object (i.e. thoughts). The last two lines denote his attachment to the four notions of an ego (facing forms), a personality (his mind not giving rise to thoughts), a being (the Bodhi that grows) and a life (from day to day). These four notions are described in the Diamond Sūtra (See *Ch'an and Zen Teaching*, Series One).

2. Skill and ability are two empty words and have nothing to do with the absolute self-nature of Hui Neng which cannot be disturbed by passions (i.e. thoughts) and remains indifferent to illusions (i.e. forms). It is like a mirror in which all things appear without leaving a trace behind. Bodhi fundamentally does not change and cannot, therefore, be increased or decreased; how can it grow?

Instantaneous and Gradual Enlightenment

WHILE the Patriarch was staying in Pao Lin monastery at Ts'ao Ch'i, the great master Shen Hsiu was at Yu Chuan monastery in Ching Nan prefecture. At that time, the two schools flourished side by side and were called the Southern Neng and Northern Hsiu; hence their division into the instantaneous school of the south and the gradual school of the north.

As his followers did not know the main purpose of the teaching, the Patriarch said to them: 'Although men are divided into southerners and northerners, this Dharma has one aim only. Although there is only one Dharma, men's awakening may be slow or quick. What is instantaneous and what is gradual? The Dharma itself is neither the one nor the other, but men have either sharp or dull potentialities, hence instantaneous and gradual achievement.'

(In spite of the above statement) Shen Hsiu's disciples continued to expose the Patriarch to ridicule by saying that he was illiterate and did not have a single good point. (However) Shen Hsiu said to his disciples: 'His wisdom was attained without a teacher (i.e. his enlightenment was self-attained) and since he is awakened to the teaching of the Supreme Vehicle, I am really inferior to him. Moreover, our master, the Fifth Patriarch, did not hand down the robe and Dharma to him without a good reason. I am retained here by state patronage of which I am not worthy and I hate not being able to make the long journey to call on him. But you men should not linger here any more; you should go to Ts'ao Ch'i and call on him (for instruction).'

One day, Shen Hsiu called in his disciple Chih Ch'eng and said: 'You are very intelligent and wise. You may go to Ts'ao Ch'i so that I can listen to the Dharma (expounded there). Note down carefully and memorize all you hear and repeat it to me when you return.'

As ordered, Chih Ch'eng journeyed to Ts'ao Ch'i and joined the assembly without disclosing where he came from. The Patriarch said to the assembly: 'Today there is a plagiarist of my Dharma who has come in secret to join the assembly.' Thereupon, Chih Ch'eng came forward, knelt down and told the Patriarch about the object of his visit. The

Patriarch said: 'You come from Yu Chuan and must be a spy.' Chih Ch'eng replied: 'No, I am not a spy.' The Patriarch asked: 'Why not?' Chih Ch'eng replied: 'Had I not told you about the object of my call, I would be a spy, but since I have told you about it, I am not one.' The Patriarch asked: 'How does your master instruct his disciples?' Chih Ch'eng replied: 'His instruction is as follows: The mind should abide in the meditation on purity and the meditator should keep up the sitting position all the time without lying down.' The Patriarch said: 'If the mind abides in the meditation on purity, this is illness and not ch'an. The constant sitting will restrain the body; what advantage does it give? Listen to my gāthā:

*'When one is born, one comes to sit;
When one dies, one reclines to go.
How can a set of stinking bones
Be used for training purposes?'*¹

Chih Ch'eng bowed again and said: 'I studied the Dharma for nine years at the monastery of the great master Shen Hsiu but my mind was not up to his teaching and I am still not awakened to it. Now my mind accepts your instruction as soon as I hear it. As the question of birth and death is a great one, will you be compassionate enough to teach me further?'

The Patriarch said: 'I hear that your master gives his disciples instruction on śīla, dhyāna and prajñā,² but I do not know how he expounds śīla-dhyāna-prajñā to them. Please tell me something about his instruction.' Chih Ch'eng replied: 'According to the teaching of the great master Shen Hsiu, abstention from all evil actions is śīla, performance of all good actions is prajñā and purification of the self-mind is dhyāna. This is how he teaches us but I do not know what kind of Dharma you teach here.' The Patriarch said: 'If I say I have a Dharma to give to others, I tell you a lie. (Mine consists) only in untying bonds according to each individual case (so that the students will attain a state) expediently called samādhi. Your master's expounding of śīla-dhyāna-prajñā is truly inconceivable (but) my conception of śīla-dhyāna-prajñā is different.' Chih Ch'eng asked: 'There is only one kind of śīla-dhyāna-prajñā; how can there be another kind?'

1. This gāthā wipes out all dualisms, such as birth and death, coming and going and sitting and reclining, to expose the absolute state.

2. Discipline, abstract meditation and wisdom. See also note 1 of page 44 for the meaning of 'dhyāna', or ting in Chinese.

The Patriarch replied: 'The (kind of) śīla-dhyāna-prajñā expounded by your master is to receive men of Mahāyāna and that expounded by me is to receive men of the Supreme Vehicle. Comprehension and interpretation being different, realization is accordingly slow or quick. As you are listening to my talk, do you see that it is similar to your master's teaching? The Dharma expounded by me does not stray from the self-nature.¹ If the expounding of Dharma strays from the self-nature, it is an expounding of externals,² and then the self-nature is still under delusion. You should know that all Dharmas are but the self-nature's functions. This is the true Dharma of śīla-dhyāna-prajñā. Listen to my gāthā:

*'The mind when free from evils is the self-natured śīla,
The mind when free from delusion is self-natured prajñā,
Free from disturbances it is self-natured dhyāna.
That which neither grows nor shrinks is the self-diamond.³
The bodily coming and going from samādhi arise.'*⁴

After hearing this, Chih Ch'eng, repentant (of his doubts), thanked the Patriarch and submitted to him the following gāthā:

*'The illusion body is created by the skandhas,⁵
In what does the illusion ultimate?⁶
A bias for the Bhūtatathatā
Results (only) in an impure Dharma.'*⁷

The Patriarch approved Chih Ch'eng's (correct interpretation) and said further: 'Your master's (way of expounding) śīla-dhyāna-prajñā is for wise men of small roots and mine is for men of big roots. If the self-nature is realized, there is no need to set up (such Dharmas as) bodhi and

1. This is the 'host' position.

2. This is the 'guest' position.

3. Self-diamond: the self-nature as indestructible as a diamond.

4. The motion of the body in coming and going is but manifestation of the self-nature which fundamentally is in the imperturbable condition of samādhi.

5. Lit. 'illusory body of five aggregates'.

6. The ultimateness, or root, of illusion is Bhūtatathatā, or the absolute, temporarily hidden by ignorance, and from which all arises.

7. A Dharma containing a bias for the Bhūtatathatā is not pure and is certainly not a correct Dharma or method for realizing the self-nature because of the false concept of gain. (See also the Heart Sūtra which says: 'There is neither gain nor wisdom.')

nirvāṇa and even the knowledge and experience of nirvāṇa. It is only when the (doctrine of) the non-acquisition of a single Dharma has been experienced that myriads of Dharmas can be established. The (correct) interpretation of this is called Buddha body.¹ It is also called bodhi and nirvāṇa. It is also called the knowledge and experience of nirvāṇa. It is up to a realizer of the self-nature to set up or not to set up Dharmas, for he is free to come and to go and does not encounter any more interference and obstruction. He will act when called upon to exercise his function and will answer when questioned and in spite of transformation bodies around him, he does not stray from the self-nature. He is independent and comfortable in his omnipresence while in the (state of) vikriḍita-samādhi.² This is called the perception of self-nature.'

Chih Ch'eng again asked: 'What do you mean by the non-setting up (of Dharma)?' The Patriarch replied: 'The self-nature is free from evil, ignorance and disturbance. It is kept constantly enlightened as the result of insight by prajñā and it always discards all externals, thus ensuring its freedom and comfortable independence. As it can move either lengthwise or crosswise, what then can be set up (as Dharma doors)? The self-nature is to be self-awakened; its instantaneous awakening and instantaneous cultivation do not develop gradually step by step. Hence the non-setting up (of Dharma doors). Since all Dharmas (fundamentally) are in the nirvāṇic condition, where is their gradualness?'

Chih Ch'eng made obeisance and stayed with the Patriarch, serving him day and night with diligence.

A monk named Chih Ch'e was a native of Chiang Hsi (Kiangsi) province. His lay surname was Chang and lay name was Hsing Ch'ang. When he was young, he was a flower of chivalry. After the division of the sect into southern and northern schools, although the two masters did not distinguish between them, their followers stirred up strong feelings of love and hate.

At the time, the followers of the northern school wanted to elevate their master to the Sixth Patriarchate, but being apprehensive that the story of the transmission of the robe might already be known in the country, they sent Hsing Ch'ang to murder the Patriarch.

1. Embodiment of the Buddha-truth.

2. The vikriḍita-samādhi is attained only when a Bodhisattva is able to enter into, stay in and come out of all other kinds of samādhi at will. He is like a fearless lion moving freely in the midst of other wild beasts. See Sūtra of Complete Enlightenment.

As the Patriarch possessed the transcendental power of knowing others' minds, he knew of the plot in advance and put ten silver taels at the side of his seat. That night, Hsing Ch'ang entered the master's room with the intention of killing him. The Patriarch stretched out his neck to receive the sword. Hsing Ch'ang chopped thrice but could not harm the master who said:

*'A straight sword is not crooked,
A crooked sword is not straight.
I only owe you cash,
I do not owe you life.'*

Hsing Ch'ang was terrified and fell to the ground. After a good while, he recovered consciousness, was seized with remorse, begged for mercy and vowed to become a monk. The Patriarch gave him the money and said: 'You must leave this place at once lest my disciples harm you. Later you may change your appearance and come back; I will receive you.'

Hsing Ch'ang obeyed the command and fled away the (same) night. Later he joined the order at another monastery, where he received the full ordination and pursued his practice (of the Dharma) with vigour. One day, remembering what the Patriarch had told him, he made a long journey and came to pay him reverence.

The Patriarch said: 'I have been thinking of you all the time, why have you come so late?' Hsing Ch'ang replied: 'You so kindly forgave me but although I have left my home and have practised austerity, I shall never be able to repay the debt of gratitude I owe you. May I do so by spreading the Dharma for the salvation of living beings? I am a regular reader of the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra but I do not understand what permanence and impermanence mean. I pray that you will be compassionate enough to explain it.' The Patriarch said: 'That which is impermanent is the Buddha nature and that which is permanent is the mind discriminating about good and evil.' Hsing Ch'ang said: 'Your explanation contradicts the sūtra!' The Patriarch replied: 'I am transmitting the Buddha's mental seal;¹ how dare I contradict the Buddha's sūtra?' Hsing Ch'ang said: 'The sūtra says that the Buddha nature is permanent and you say it is impermanent. (It says) all good and evil things including even the Bodhi mind are impermanent and you say

1. Buddha's mental seal: intuitive certainty; the mind is the Buddha mind in all which can seal or assure the truth; the term indicates the intuitive method of the Ch'an school which is independent of the spoken or written word.

they are permanent. Your contradiction only increases my doubts and perplexities.' The Patriarch replied: 'Long ago, when I heard the nun Wu Ching Ts'ang reciting the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra, I immediately expounded it to her and my every word and meaning agreed with the sūtra. Even now as I am speaking to you, it is just the same exposition.' Hsing Ch'ang said: 'My knowledge is shallow; pray take the trouble to enlighten me.'

The Patriarch replied: 'Don't you know this? If the Buddha nature is permanent, what is the use of speaking of so-called good and evil things and why in the whole long aeon is there not a single man who develops the Bodhi mind? This is why I speak of impermanence which is exactly the true permanence expounded by the Buddha.¹ Again, if all things were impermanent, their nature would be subjected to birth and death, and if so, the nature of eternal reality would not be all-pervading (as it is). Therefore, the permanence of which I speak is exactly the true impermanence expounded by the Buddha.² It is because all worldly men and heretics clung to false permanence and because Śrāvakas, and Pratyeka-buddhas mistook permanence for impermanence, thus making

1. If the Buddha nature were permanent, all living beings would have been Buddhas long ago and there would be no need to expound so many sūtras to convert them and to ferry them across the sea of mortality. Why for so long has no man developed the Bodhi mind? Therefore, when speaking of the ignorant, it can be said that the Buddha nature is impermanent and when speaking of the enlightened, it can be said that the Buddha nature is permanent. Because worldly men clung to the idea that the Buddha nature was impermanent, the Buddha expounded the permanent. Now, because Hsing Ch'ang clung to the idea that the Buddha nature was permanent, the Patriarch expounded the impermanent which in reality was the true permanence expounded by the Buddha. As the Buddha said in the Diamond Sūtra, he did not tie others with a firm Dharma for His teaching consisted solely in stripping the ignorant of their false views so that their Buddha nature could freely manifest itself.

2. The self-nature is free from birth and death which are a dualism. Now if all things were impermanent, their nature would be subjected to birth and death. Assuming that this is so, the eternal reality which is beyond birth and death, would not pervade everywhere as it should. The Sixth Patriarch said that all good and evil things were permanent because the omnipresent self-nature is free from birth and death. Because the ignorant grasped the discriminating mind as permanent, the Buddha spoke of its impermanence. Because Chih Ch'ang grasped the discriminating mind as impermanent, the Sixth Patriarch spoke of its permanence. As the Buddha nature is constantly hidden by illusions, it can also be said that it is impermanent. Therefore the Patriarch said: 'The permanence of which I speak is exactly the true impermanence expounded by the Buddha.' The words permanence and impermanence were used by the Buddha and the Patriarch to wipe out the wrong views of permanence and impermanence held by the ignorant to strip them of illusions, for the self-nature is neither permanent nor impermanent and is beyond all dualisms because it is absolute.

in all the eight perverted views¹, that the Buddha, in His teaching of the "whole truth" in the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra, broke up their relative notions to reveal true eternity, true bliss, true personality and true purity.² Now you only rely on the wording of the sūtra and quarrel with its meaning. You wrongly interpret the last subtle words of the Buddha's "complete teaching" by holding that which is subjected to cessation and annihilation is impermanent and by clinging to lifeless (and so-called) permanence. Even if you read the sūtra a thousand times, you will gain no advantage in the end.'

(Upon hearing the teaching), Hsing Ch'ang was suddenly awakened and chanted the following gāthā:

*'Since people cling to the changing mind,³
Buddha taught that nature does not change.
He who this expedient method cannot understand
Is like one who picks up (and treasures)
Pebbles from a pond. Now I make no effort,
(My) Buddha nature manifests before me.
'Tis no gift from my Master
And I gain not anything.'*

The Patriarch said: 'You are now thoroughly awakened and should call yourself Chih Ch'e (Purpose Realized).' Chih Ch'e bowed his thanks and withdrew.

A little fifteen-year-old (monk) called Shen Hui who was born of a Kao family in Hsiang Yang district, arrived from Yu Chuan and called on the Patriarch who said: 'Learned friend, you must have endured hardship in coming from a distant place but have you brought the fundamental along with you? If you possess the fundamental, you should know its owner. Try to say something about it.' Shen Hui replied: 'That which abides not anywhere is the fundamental and that which sees is

1. Wordly men and heretics believe in permanence, pleasure, personality and purity, or the four inverted views; the two Hīnayāna vehicles deny these both now and in Nirvāṇa, thus making another four, or in all eight inverted views.

2. The four transcendental realities revealed in the 'whole truth' in the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra which was the last sermon expounded by the Buddha before he passed away.

3. The wrong view held by heretics and those of the two Hīnayāna vehicles.

the owner.' The Patriarch said: 'How can this novice talk loosely?' Shen Hui then asked the Patriarch: 'When you sit in meditation, do you still see or not?' The Patriarch struck him thrice with the staff and asked: 'As I strike you, do you feel pain or not?' Shen Hui replied: 'Both pain and no pain.' The Patriarch said: 'I see and also see not.' Shen Hui asked: 'What do you mean by seeing and not seeing?'

The Patriarch replied: 'My seeing is the constant sight of my mind's errors and faults, and is not that of others' right or wrong and good or evil. This is my seeing and not seeing. What is your "both pain and no pain"? If you feel no pain, you are like a stone or a piece of wood. If you feel pain, you are like an ordinary man and will give rise to anger and hate. Your "seeing and not seeing" are a pair of extremes and your "pain and no pain" are (the cause of) birth and death. You do not even perceive your own nature and yet you dare to mock others.' Shen Hui knelt down, begged for forgiveness and thanked the Patriarch (for his instruction).

The Patriarch continued: 'If your mind is deluded and if you do not perceive (your own nature), you should ask learned people to show you the way. If your mind is awakened, you perceive your own nature and should cultivate yourself according to the Dharma. You are self-deluded and do not perceive your own nature, yet you come and ask me if I see or not. If I perceive it, I know this myself but how can I replace you and take over your delusion? If you perceive it yourself, you will also not act as my substitute and take over my delusion. Why, instead of knowing and perceiving it yourself, do you ask me if I perceive it or not?' Thereupon, Shen Hui again bowed down over a hundred times and begged for the master's pardon. (Thereafter) he served the Patriarch with diligence and never left him.

One day, the Patriarch said to the assembly: 'I have a thing that has neither head nor tail, neither name nor term and neither front nor back. Do you know what it is?' Shen Hui came forward and said: 'It is the fundamental source of all Buddhas; it is Shen Hui's Buddha nature.' The Patriarch said: 'As soon as I speak of that which has neither name nor term, you immediately call it the fundamental source and Buddha nature. Even if you go away to live in a thatched hut (for further studies), you will only become a follower of those who seek knowledge and interpretation.'

After the death of the Patriarch, Shen Hui went to the capital, Lo Yang, where he spread the Ts'ao Ch'i doctrine of instantaneous enlightenment. He wrote the 'Hsien Tsung Chi' (The Sect's Revelations) which

circulated widely in the country. He was then known as Ch'an master Ho Che.

(One day) seeing that he was surrounded by adherents of other schools who asked him embarrassing questions with bad intention, the Patriarch took pity on them and said: 'All students of the truth should wipe out all thoughts, whether good or evil. No word can be used for that which is the self-nature. The non-dual nature is the real nature upon which all Dharma doors (doctrines) are established for the teaching. It should be self-perceived as soon as heard.' After hearing this, all those present paid him reverence and asked him to be their master.

9

Imperial Patronage

ON the fifteenth of the first lunar month of the first year of the Shen Lung reign (A.D. 705), empress dowager Tse T'ien and emperor Chung Tsung issued the following imperial mandate:

'We have invited the two great masters Hui An and Shen Hsiu to stay in the palace to receive our offerings so that, after the performance of our busy imperial duties and in our spare time, we can inquire about the Vehicle of Oneness.¹ The two masters have been very modest and have recommended Ch'an master Hui Neng of the south, saying that he had truly inherited the robe and the Dharma from the great master Hung Jen who transmitted to him the Buddha's mental seal.

'We now send the court attendant, Hsieh Chien, with this imperial mandate to invite and welcome the master with the hope that he will be compassionate and will come to the capital as soon as possible.'

The Patriarch sent in reply a petition to the throne declining the imperial invitation on the ground of illness and expressing the wish that he be allowed to spend his remaining years at the foot of the mountain (at Ts'ao Ch'i).

Hsieh Chien said to the Patriarchs: 'In the capital, all Ch'an masters have said: "If one wishes to understand the Tao,² one should sit in dhyāna meditation and practise Samādhi. There is no such thing as deliverance without dhyāna and Samādhi." I do not know how you expound the Dharma here.' The Patriarch replied: 'Tao is to be understood by the awakening mind and has nothing to do with sitting (in meditation). The Diamond Sūtra says: "He who says that the Tathāgata comes or goes, sits or lies, treads the heterodox path. Why? Because the Tathāgata has neither whence (to come) nor whither (to go)." Because it is beyond birth and death, it is the Tathāgata's pure and clean Ch'an. When all things (are perceived as) void and still, this is the Tathāgata's pure and clean sitting. There is even no realization in the end, still less is there sitting (in meditation).'

1. The Supreme Vehicle.

2. Tao: road, way, path, doctrine, truth, self-nature, reality, the absolute.

Hsieh Chien said: 'When I return to the capital, their majesties will certainly ask me about your teaching. I hope you will be compassionate enough to instruct me on its main points so that I can submit my report to the two palaces and to students of Tao in the capital. It will be like a lamp that will light hundreds and thousands of other lamps so that all darkness will disappear and the light will be boundless.' The Patriarch replied: 'Tao is neither light nor darkness. Light and darkness convey the meaning of alternation. Even limitless light implies a limit, because the words (limit and limitless) are relative. And so the Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra says "The Dharma is above comparison because it is absolute."'

Hsieh Chien said: 'By way of illustration, light is wisdom and darkness is kleśa. In one's self-cultivation, if one does not use wisdom to shine on and break up kleśa, on what should one rely to escape from the round of births and deaths which is without a beginning?' The Patriarch replied: 'Kleśa is identical with Bodhi; they are neither two (separate) nor different (things). If wisdom is used to illumine and break up kleśa, this is the Hīnayāna interpretation and shows the qualification of (those who ride in) the goat and deer carts (for receiving the truth). Men of superior wisdom never interpret in this manner.'

Hsieh Chien asked: 'What is the Mahāyāna interpretation?' The Patriarch replied: 'Light and darkness are seen by ordinary men as two (different) things, but for the enlightened with clear perception both are of the same nature; the non-dual is real. Real nature does not decrease with the ignorant; nor does it increase with the sage. It is not disturbed in the midst of kleśa and is not still in the state of Samādhi. It is neither permanent nor impermanent. It neither comes nor goes. It is neither within nor without nor between the two. It is not born and will not die. Its nature and phenomenal expressions are in the absolute state of suchness. It is eternal and unchanging. It is called Tao.'

Hsieh Chien asked: 'You speak of that which is not born and will not die; how does your saying differ from that of heretics?' The Patriarch replied: 'According to the heretics who speak of that which is not born and will not die, death is the end of life, and birth is to reveal death. What they call death is not real extinction and what they call birth does not really take place (hence the wheel of transmutations). What I mean by non-existent birth and death is this: fundamentally there was no birth and now there will be no death. Therefore, my saying differs from that of heretics. If you wish to know the essential mind, it will suffice to think of neither good nor evil and you will be able to enter into the pure and clean body of mind which is constantly and clearly still and of which

the wondrous functions are as many as sand grains in the River Ganges.'

After receiving the instruction, Hsieh Chien was greatly awakened. He made obeisance, bade farewell to the Patriarch and returned to the capital where he presented it (to the two palaces).

That year, on the third of the ninth lunar month, an imperial mandate was issued praising the master as follows:

'The master has declined our invitation on the ground of old age and illness. He is devoting his time to the practice of Tao for our benefit and is thus a field of blessedness for the nation. Like Vimalakīrti who pleaded illness in Vaiśālī, he spreads the Mahāyāna widely, transmits the Buddha mind and expounds the non-dual Dharma.

'Hsieh Chien has brought back the master's instruction on the Tathāgata's wisdom. It must be due to the abundance of blessings resulting from our accumulated virtuous deeds and good roots planted in former lives that we are contemporaries of the Master and are now instantaneously awakened to the Supreme Vehicle. We are grateful for his grace which we carry on our heads.¹ We now present in return a Korean (Mo Na) robe and a crystal bowl as gifts (to the master). We hereby command the district magistrate of Shao Chou to renovate and decorate the monastic buildings and to convert the master's old abode (at Hsin Chou) into a temple to be called Kuo En (The State's Gift of Grace).'

1. A conventional expression of gratitude.

10

His Last Instruction

ONE day, the Patriarch summoned his disciples, Fa Hai, Chih Ch'eng, Fa Ta, Shen Hui, Chih Chang, Chih T'ung, Chih Ch'e, Chih Tao, Fa Chen and Fa Ju, and said to them: 'You are men above the average. After my death, each of you should be the master of a region. I will now teach you how to expound the Dharma in order not to stray from our sect.

'Let us begin with the three categories of Dharma doors (to enlightenment) followed by the application of thirty-six pairs of opposites, with avoidance of the two extremes while moving hither and thither¹ and without deviation from the self-nature while expounding all Dharmas.

'If someone suddenly asks you about the Dharma, your answer should be based on a pair of extremes depending upon each other for their existence, until both are wiped out, leaving nothing behind.

'The three categories of Dharma doors are: skandhas, dhātus and āyatanas.²

'There are five skandhas which are: form (rūpa), reception (vedanā),³ conception (sañjñā),⁴ mental activities (saṃskāra)⁵ and consciousness (vijñāna).⁶

'There are twelve entrances (āyatana),⁷ which are divided into six external sense-data, such as sight, sound, smell, taste, touch and idea, and six internal gates (sense-organs), such as eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.

'There are eighteen realms of sense (dhātu) which comprise the six sense-data, six gates and six consciousnesses.

1. Used in a figurative sense. Textually 'while appearing and disappearing' or 'while coming in and going out'.

2. *Skandha*: the five aggregates; *dhātu*: the eighteen realms of sense and *āyatana*: the twelve entrances.

3. *Vedanā*: reception, sensation, feeling, the functioning of the mind or senses in connexion with affairs and things.

4. *Sañjñā*: conception or discerning; the functioning of the mind in distinguishing.

5. *Saṃskāra*: the functioning of the mind in its process regarding like and dislike, good and evil, etc.

6. *Vijñāna*: mental faculty in regard to perception and cognition, discriminative of affairs and things.

7. The twelve entrances, or bases through which consciousness enters.

'As the self-nature is capable of containing myriads of things, it is called the store consciousness (ālaya-vijñāna).¹ As soon as thinking and comparing arise, it is transmuted into consciousness and begets the six consciousnesses which come out of the six gates and perceive the six sense-data. Thus the eighteen dhātus come from the functioning of the self-nature. If the self-nature is wrong, it gives rise to eighteen wrong (things) and if the self-nature is right, it gives rise to eighteen right (things). If its functioning is evil, it is the functioning of living beings and if good, it is the functioning of Buddha. How does the functioning operate? It originates from the self-nature facing externals.

'External inanimate things consist of five pairs of opposites: heaven and earth, sun and moon, light and darkness, negative and positive and water and fire.

'The aspects of things consist of twelve pairs of opposites: speech and dharma, existence and non-existence, form and the formless, the material and the immaterial, the stream of birth and death and "beyond the stream of birth and death", matter and the void, motion and stillness, purity and impurity, the worldly and the saintly, the saṅgha and the laity, old and young, and big and small.

'The activities of self-nature consist of nineteen pairs of opposites: long and short, wrong and right, delusion and wisdom, ignorance and knowledge, disturbance and imperturbability (samādhi), kindness and cruelty, morality and immorality, straight and crooked, real and unreal, partiality and impartiality, kleśa and bodhi, permanence and impermanence, pity and harmfulness, joy and anger, renunciation and stinginess, advance and retreat, birth and death, Dharmakāya and Rūpakāya, and Nirmāṇakāya and Sambhogakāya.

'These thirty-six pairs of opposites, if well interpreted and well used, will enable you to go through the doctrines (Dharma) of all sūtras by discarding the two extremes when moving hither and thither. When the self-nature is applied to your talks to others, outwardly you should discard all phenomena while facing phenomena, and inwardly you should discard the void while facing the void. If you cling to forms, you will increase heterodox views (and) if you grasp the void you will increase ignorance.

'Those who cling to the void, vilify the sūtras by saying that they do not use written words (Scriptures). (If they were correct in) saying that written words should not be used, it would not be right even to speak because the spoken is also an aspect of the written word. They also

1. The store-house of all knowledge.

say: "The direct way establishes not written words" (but they forget that) the two words "establishes not" are also words. As soon as they see someone expounding (the Dharma), they immediately criticize him on the ground that he clings to written words. You should know that it is already bad enough for them to delude themselves but in addition they vilify the Buddha's sūtras. You should never defame the sūtras because of the barriers of sin¹ which will result therefrom.

'Those clinging to externals while performing ceremonies in their quest of the truth, or while setting up spacious Bodhimaṇḍalas where they expose the error and falsehood (of the notions) of existence and non-existence will not for many aeons perceive their own nature.

'You should listen to the Dharma and cultivate yourselves in accordance with it. You should not refrain from thinking, because this will obstruct your own nature. If you listen to the teaching and do not practise it, you will cause heterodox thoughts to rise in the minds of other people. Just follow the Dharma and practise the almsgiving of Buddha truth with a mind not abiding in externals.

'If you are awakened to my teaching and adhere to it in your speech, application, performance and deeds, you will not err from our sect.

'If someone puts a question to you and asks you about the existing, mention the non-existent in your answer. If you are asked about the non-existent, mention the existing in your answer. If you are asked about the worldly, mention the saintly in your answer. If you are asked about the saintly, mention the worldly in your answer. (Thus) the mutual dependence of the two extremes will bring to light the significance of the "mean". If all questions are answered in this manner, you will not err from the principle.

'Suppose someone asks you: What is darkness? you should reply: Light is the primary and darkness the secondary cause. When light disappears, darkness appears. Light reveals darkness and darkness reveals light. The significance of the mean arises from the mutual dependence of light and darkness.

'All other questions should be answered in the same manner. In future, in your transmission of Dharma (to your disciples), you should comply with and hand down this teaching in order not to err from the aim of our sect.'

1. Veil of sin which hinders the obtaining of good karma and the obedient hearing of the truth.

In the seventh lunar month of the year Jen Tsu (A.D. 712), which was the first year of the T'ai Chi and Yen Ho reigns,¹ the Patriarch sent some of his disciples to Hsin Chou to erect a stūpa in Kuo En monastery and ordered them to hasten its construction, which was completed by the end of the summer in the following year.

On the first of the seventh lunar month, he assembled his disciples and said to them: 'I want to leave this world in the eighth month. If you have any doubts (about my teaching), you should ask me in time so that I can break them up and you will be free from delusion, because after my departure, there will be no one to teach you.'

Upon hearing this, Fa Hai and the other disciples wept, while Shen Hui alone remained unmoved and did not weep. The Patriarch said: 'The young master Shen Hui has attained a state in which good and evil are (for him) the same, in which he is not disturbed by either blame or praise and in which he is free from grief and joy. None of the others have achieved this. What Dharma have you practised on the mountain during these years? For whom are you worried and for whom do you weep? Are you sad because I do not know where to go? (But) I know myself where I will go, because if I do not, how can I foretell my departure? You are weeping because you do not know where I will go (but) if you know, you should not weep. Nature underlying all things (dharmatā) is beyond birth and death and beyond coming and going. All of you, please sit down and I will give you a hymn called the gāthā of the real and the unreal and of the mutable and immutable. If you read and observe it, you will be in accord with my meaning and if you practise it in your self-cultivation, you will not err from the aim of our sect.'

The whole assembly knelt down before the Patriarch and implored him to read the gāthā which ran as follows:

*All things are unreal, as real
They should not be perceived. For if
Perceived as real, the perception
Is entirely false. If the mind
Can apprehend the real, when the unreal
Is discarded, (then) the mind will real be.
If the mind discards not that which is unreal,
Where, since all's unreal, can the real be found?
Mobile are sentient beings. Without
Motion are (all) inanimate things.*

1. A change of two reigns in the same year.

If when motionless one meditates, 'tis like
 Things that are inanimate and motionless.
 If the true immutable is sought,
 One finds it above the motion.
 If immobile (sitting) is for this mistaken, 'tis like
 Inanimate things devoid of the seed of Buddhahood.
 Whoe'er with skill discerns all Dharma forms
 Stays changeless in Reality Supreme.¹
 If what you perceive accords with the above,
 Of Bhūtatathatā it is the function.
 Learn, seekers of the truth,
 How to exert yourselves.
 In this (instantaneous) door of Mahāyāna cling
 Not to the (false) knowledge that causes birth and death.
 In your talks to others with responsive minds
 You can Supreme Reality discuss.
 If you meet people unresponsive, bring
 Your palms together and so cheer them.²
 This Sect is not a matter for debate,
 For discussion will destroy its meaning.
 Clinging to contradiction and debating
 Brings self-nature to (the round) of birth and death.³

After hearing the gāthā, all his disciples bowed down before the Patriarch. In accordance with his instruction, they concentrated their minds on the practice of Dharma and refrained from differentiation.

As it was known that the Patriarch would soon leave the world, the head monk, Fa Hai, bowed again and asked him: 'After your entry into Nirvāṇa to whom will the robe and Dharma be transmitted?' The Patriarch replied: 'Ever since I expounded the Dharma at Ta Fan temple, all my discourses have been recorded and circulated in a volume entitled *The Altar Sūtra of the Dharma Treasure*. You should take good care of it and hand it down (to future generations) for the deliverance of living beings. The expounding (of this Dharma) in accordance with its teaching is (that of) the correct Dharma. I only expound the Dharma to you but will not transmit the robe, because the roots of your faith are genuine and ripe and, since you are all free from doubts, you are qualified to

1. See the last sentence of Chapter IV.

2. Merely salute them to make them happy but do not reveal supreme Reality to them.

undertake this great affair. According to (the First Patriarch) the great master Bodhidharma's gāthā on the transmission of Dharma, the robe should not be handed down. It read:

'My aim in coming to this country
 Was to transmit the Dharma and liberate all beings.
 A flower of five petals¹
 Cannot fail to fruit.²'

The Patriarch added: 'Learned friends, please all purify your minds and listen to my expounding of the Dharma. If you wish to realize the (Buddha's) infinite wisdom (sarvajñā)³ you should achieve the Samādhi of One Undivided Whole⁴ and the Samādhi of Universality.⁵

'Wherever you may happen to be, if your minds do not abide in externals, are free from love and hate (for them), from grasping and rejecting (them), from (the ideas of) gain and loss, etc., are above disturbance and reach an undivided state, being anchored in calm and quiet, this is called the Samādhi of One Undivided Whole.

'Wherever you may happen to be, if you can keep a straightforward mind while walking, standing, sitting and lying, it is the imperturbable Bodhimaṇḍala and the true Pure Land, this is called the Samādhi of Universality.

'If one attains these two Samādhis, one may be likened to the ground in which seeds are sown; buried in the mud, they absorb nourishment, grow and bear fruit. It is the same with the Samādhis of One Undivided Whole and Universality (or Sameness). My expounding of the Dharma is likened to seasonable rain which thoroughly moistens the great earth. Your Buddha nature is likened to seeds which receive moisture and will grow in full.

'Whoever adheres to my doctrine will certainly obtain enlightenment (bodhi) and whoever follows this line of conduct will certainly attain the excellent fruit. Listen to my gāthā:

'The mind ground holds the seeds which sprout
 When falls the (all) pervading rain.

1. The five Chinese Patriarchs.

2. A prediction of the prosperity of Ch'an in China. (See *Ch'an and Zen Teaching*, Series One, Part I.)

3. Sarvajñā: All wisdom, Buddha wisdom, perfect knowledge, omniscience.

4. The body of Dharmakāya.

5. The function of Dharmakāya.

*The presentient flower of instantaneous awakening
Is in nature followed by the bearing of Bodhi fruit.'*

After chanting the gāthā, the Patriarch said: 'This Dharma is non-dual and so is the mind. The self-nature is pure and clean and is devoid of externals. You should refrain from contemplating stillness and from emptying the mind. Fundamentally the mind is pure and neither grasps nor rejects anything. You should exert yourselves and may now leave and act according to circumstances.'

Thereupon, the disciples made obeisance and withdrew.

On the eighth of the seventh lunar month, suddenly the Patriarch said to his disciples: 'I want to return to Hsin Chou, get a boat ready for me.' As his disciples were sad and insistently implored him to stay with them, he said: 'All Buddhas returned to Nirvāṇa after their appearance (in this world). It is quite in order that coming is to be followed by going. This body of mine must have a place to return to.' His disciples (consoled him and) said: 'If you want to visit the place, you will certainly be able to return sooner or later.' The Patriarch said: 'Fallen leaves return to the root.¹ When I came I had no mouth.'² When again asked: 'To whom will you transmit the treasury of the right Dharma eye?' he replied: 'The owner of self-nature will get it and the mindless will penetrate it.' When asked about any forthcoming misfortune which might befall him, he replied: 'Five or six years after my death, a man will come to take my head. Listen to my prediction:

*'Offerings made on the head as if
To parents.³ (Then) must a mouth be fed.⁴
When (one called) Man creates the trouble,
Officials will be Yang and Liu.'*

He added: 'Seventy years after my death, two Bodhisattvas, a monk and

1. The illusory transformation body, or Nirmāṇakāya, should return to the essential nature.

2. The essential nature has no mouth, is speechless; in reality there is no Dharma that can be expounded.

3. Offerings should be made with the deepest reverence as if placed on the head of the worshipper and made to his own parents. The prediction was that a Korean monk would try to take the Patriarch's head to Korea for worship.

4. Someone called Man who has to make money for his living will be hired by the Korean monk to steal the Patriarch's head.

a layman¹ will come from the east and will simultaneously contribute to the prosperity of the sect and the conversion of people. They will renovate and erect monasteries and will have a great following.'

When asked: 'Will you please let us know for how many generations the teaching has been transmitted since the first Buddhas and Patriarchs appeared in this world?' the Patriarch replied: 'The number of ancient Buddhas who made their responsive appearance² cannot be estimated but beginning with the seven Buddhas (of antiquity), we have:

Vipaśyin Buddha	}	of the Alamkāra-kalpa (or Glorious Kalpa)
Śikhin "		
Viśvabhū "		
Krakucchanda Buddha	}	of the present Bhadrakalpa (or Virtuous Kalpa)
Kanakamuni "		
Kāśyapa "		
Śākyamuni "		

'They were the first seven Buddhas (of antiquity). Śākyamuni Buddha handed down the transmission to Ārya Mahākāśyapa (and the Dharma passed from one Patriarch to another in the following order):

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Ārya Mahākāśyapa | 18. Ārya Gayaśāta |
| 2. " Ānanda | 19. " Kumārata |
| 3. " Sāṇakavāsa | 20. " Jayata |
| 4. " Upagupta | 21. " Vasubandhu |
| 5. " Dhṛtaka | 22. " Manorhita |
| 6. " Miccaka | 23. " Haklena |
| 7. " Vasumitra | 24. " Āryasimha |
| 8. " Buddhanandi | 25. " Basiasita |
| 9. " Buddhamitra | 26. " Puṇyāmitra |
| 10. " Pārśva | 27. " Prajñātāra |
| 11. " Puṇyayaśas | 28. " Bodhidharma |
| 12. Mahāsattva Aśvaghōṣa | 29. Great master Hui K'o |
| 13. Ārya Kapimāla | 30. " " Seng Ts'an |
| 14. Mahāsattva Nāgārjuna | 31. " " Tao Hsin |
| 15. Ārya Kānadeva | 32. " " Hung Jen |
| 16. " Rāhulata | 33. I, Hui Neng, am the thirty- |
| 17. " Saṅghānandi | third Patriarch |

1. Ma Tsu and upāsaka P'an Yung. Some say Huang Po and upāsaka P'ei Hsiu.

2. In response to the needs of men.

'Thus the transmission was handed down from one Patriarch to another. You should continue the transmission to future generations without fault.'

On the third of the eighth lunar month of the year Kuei Ch'ou, which was the second year of the Hsien T'ien reign (A.D. 713), after a meal at Kuo En temple, the Patriarch said to his disciples: 'Please take your seats so that I can bid you farewell.'

Fa Hai asked him: 'What teaching will you leave us so that deluded men of future generations can perceive their Buddha nature?' The Patriarch replied: 'All of you, please listen attentively. If deluded men of future generations recognize living beings, they will perceive the Buddha nature. If they do not, they will not be able to meet the Buddha for myriads of aeons. I now teach you how to recognize the living beings of your own minds and perceive the Buddha nature of your own minds. If you wish to perceive the Buddha, you will only have to recognize a living being. It is only a living being who deludes the Buddha as the Buddha does not delude a living being. If one is awakened to the self-nature, a living being is Buddha. If the self-nature is deluded, the Buddha is a living being. If the self-nature is impartial,¹ a living being is Buddha. If the self-nature is depraved and harmful, the Buddha is a living being. If your minds are crooked and dangerous, this means that the Buddha is within a living being. If a thought be impartial and straightforward, this means that a living being attains Buddhahood. Our self-mind has its own Buddha and the self Buddha is the true Buddha. If the mind does not have its own Buddha, where else should one look for a true Buddha? Your own minds are Buddhas, have no doubt about this. Outside the mind, there is not a single thing that can be set up, for the mind begets myriads of things. This is why the sūtra says: "When the mind stirs, every kind of thing is created; when the mind vanishes, every kind of thing also disappears." To bid you farewell, I give you now a hymn called the gāthā of the true Buddha of self-nature. Those of future generations who understand its meaning, will perceive their own minds and attain Buddhahood. Here it is:

*'The self-natured Bhūtatahatā is the true Buddha,
The three poisons of depraved views are the king of Māras.
When (mind) is deluded and depraved, Māra stays
At home, when views are right Buddha is in the hall.
Depraved views in the (self-) nature the three poisons breed,*

1. An equal attitude towards all things.

*This is the moment when the king of Māras stays at home.
When right views eliminate the three poisons of the mind,
Māra is transformed into the Buddha who is true.
The three kāyas of Dharma, Sambhoga and Nirmāṇa
Are the three bodies which in reality are one¹. If this
In the self-nature can be perceived, it will bring
Bodhi that (e'er) leads to Buddhahood's attainment.
From Nirmāṇakāya pure nature² is produced,
For that pure nature is immanent therein.
(If) the (self-) nature leads the Nirmāṇakaya down
The right Path, real infinite perfection follows.³
Lewdness in itself of pure nature is the cause,
When lewdness is destroyed that nature pure substance becomes.²
If the five desires⁴ within (self-) nature are eliminated,
The self-nature that in a moment is perceived will real be.
If in this life one enters this instantaneous Dharma door
Suddenly one finds self-nature and perceives the Bhagavat.⁵
He who when practising the Dharma seeks outside
For Buddha will know not where to find the real one.
If one can perceive the real in one's mind, the real found
Therein will be the cause of Buddhahood's attainment.
He who perceives not his self-nature, but will seek elsewhere
For Buddha, with such thought in mind is the most stupid man.
This instantaneous teaching is now handed down to liberate
(All) worldly men who should cultivate themselves in its
right practice.
I want to tell you and coming generations (this):
If you hold not to this view, you will only waste your time.'*

After chanting the gāthā, the Patriarch said: 'O disciples! Please stay on. After my departure, please do not follow worldly custom and please do not weep. If you receive messages of condolence from outsiders and if you wear mourning, you are not my disciples. Moreover, all this is not (in line) with the correct doctrine (of the Buddha). (What you should do is) only know your own mind and perceive your own nature; you

1. The three bodies in one.
2. The pure Dharmakāya.
3. Sambhogakāya.
4. Arising from the objects of the five senses, things seen, heard, smelt, tasted and touched.
5. Bhagavat: the holy one, world-honoured; an epithet of the Buddha.

should neither change nor be still, but be above birth and death, free from coming and going, from right and wrong and from staying and leaving. As I am apprehensive that your minds are still deluded and that you may not understand my ideas, I am instructing you again so that you will perceive your (own) nature. After my passing away, you should observe this teaching as when I was alive. If you disregard it, you would not benefit even if I were still with you.' He then chanted the following gāthā:

*'Without change are no virtues practised,
In comfort are no sins committed.
When sound and sight serenely are cut off,
The mind impartially grasps nothing.'*

After chanting the gāthā, the Patriarch sat formally until the third watch of the night, when suddenly he said to his disciples: 'I am leaving,' and passed away. The room was filled with a rare fragrance and a lunar rainbow appeared linking heaven to earth. The trees in the thicket turned white and birds and beasts cried mournfully.

In the eleventh lunar month, a dispute arose among the officials and the Patriarch's disciples, monks as well as laymen, of the three counties of Kuang Chou, Shao Chou and Hsin Chou, as each county claimed the body. Since the dispute could not be settled, they burned incense and prayed to the Patriarch, saying: 'The direction in which the smoke turns will indicate the place which should receive the body.' As the smoke drifted directly towards Ts'ao Ch'i, the coffin, together with the robe and bowl, were taken back to Ts'ao Ch'i on the thirteenth of the eleventh lunar month.

The following year, on the twenty-fifth of the seventh month, the body was taken out of the coffin, and Fang Pien, a disciple of the Patriarch, plastered it with a fragrant paste. As the disciples remembered the Patriarch's prediction about the (attempt to) cut off his head, they used an iron plate and a piece of lacquered cloth to wrap and protect his neck, and placed the body in the stūpa wherein suddenly a ray of white light appeared, going up straight towards the sky and not disappearing for three days. The magistrate of Shao Chou reported the (remarkable occurrence) to the throne and received an imperial order to erect a stone tablet with an inscription recording the master's religious life.

The Patriarch passed away at the age of seventy-six. At twenty-four, he inherited the robe; at thirty-nine his head was shaved (to join the

Order) and for thirty-seven years he expounded the Dharma to deliver living beings. Those who realized his doctrine and inherited his Dharma as his successors numbered forty-three men. Those who were awakened to the truth, thereby surpassing worldly men were so numerous that they could not be counted.

The robe handed down by Bodhidharma, the Korean (Mo Na) robe and the crystal bowl presented by emperor Chung Tsung, the master's statue by Fang Pien and all his sacred articles were entrusted to the good care of the monk in charge of the stūpa and were kept permanently in Pao Lin monastery to guard the welfare of the holy site. The Altar Sūtra was widely circulated to spread the aim of the sect for the prosperity of the Triple Gem and the universal profit of all living beings.

(Here follows the record of Ling T'ao, the monk in charge of the stūpa.)

The body of the Patriarch was placed in the stūpa. About midnight on the third of the eighth month of the year Jen Shu which was the tenth of the K'ai Yuan reign (A.D. 722), a noise was suddenly heard in the stūpa as if an iron rope was being pulled. Alarmed, the monks got up and saw a man (dressed) in mourning for his parents rushing out of the stūpa. Seeing that the neck of the Patriarch was damaged, they reported the case to the prefecture. The prefect Yang K'an and magistrate Liu Wu T'ien then ordered the immediate apprehension of the culprit. Five days later the thief was caught in Shih Chueh village and sent to Shao Chou for interrogation. The man declared that his name was Chang Chin Man, a native of Liang Hsien of Ju Chou prefecture and confessed that a Korean monk called Chin Ta Pei of K'ai Yuan temple at Hung Chou had given him twenty thousand coins to steal the head of the Patriarch and bring it to his country for veneration.

After hearing the case, magistrate Liu reserved judgement and personally went to Ts'ao Ch'i to consult the Patriarch's senior disciple Ling T'ao whom he asked: 'What decision should I take?' Ling T'ao replied: 'According to the state law, the culprit deserves capital punishment but since kindness and compassion are the essentials of the Buddha's teaching according to which both friends and foes should be treated equally, and since his motive was to obtain the head for veneration, his act can be excused.' Magistrate Liu was impressed and exclaimed: 'It is only now that I realize that the Buddha door is broad and extensive.' The thief was subsequently released.

In the first year of the Shang Yuan reign (A.D. 760) emperor Su Tsung sent an envoy to bring the Patriarch's robe and bowl to the palace for veneration. On the fifth of the fifth month of the first year of the Yung T'ai reign (A.D. 765), emperor Tai Tsung saw in a dream the Patriarch who claimed back the robe and bowl and on the seventh of the same month, the following imperial order was given to magistrate Yang Chien:

'I saw in a dream Ch'an master Hui Neng who asked for the return of the inherited robe (and bowl) to Ts'ao Ch'i and, now order the great minister of defence Liu Ch'ung Ching to carry the relics on his head and convey them (to Ts'ao Ch'i). I consider these relics as national treasures. You should place them properly in the monastery and instruct the monks who had personally received the Patriarch's teaching to take good care of them in order to avoid damage or loss.'

Thereafter each time the robe and bowl were stolen, they were always recovered in the neighbourhood and this happened several times.

Emperor Hsieng Tsung (A.D. 806-820) conferred upon the Patriarch the posthumous title of Ch'an master Ta Chien (lit. Great Mirror) and on the stūpa an inscription of (four Chinese characters) 'Yuan Ho Ling Chao' (Spiritual Shining of the Primal Unity). All other biographical records were inscribed on the stone tablet erected in the T'ang dynasty by president Wang Wei of the board of state, magistrate Liu Tsung Yuan and magistrate Liu Yu Hsi.

(The following is taken from a paragraph at the end of the Ts'ao Ch'i copy of the Altar Sūtra.)

The stone which the Patriarch used to attach to his waist when pounding rice bore an inscription of eight Chinese characters 'Lung Shuo Yuan Nien Lu Ch'u Shih Chih'. (The first year of the Lung Shuo Reign (A.D. 661) - Inscribed by upāsaka Lu). It was kept in Tung Ch'an monastery at Huang Mei. In the Chia Ching reign (A.D. 1522-1566) of the Ming dynasty, officials of Kuang Tung province took it to Ts'ao Ch'i where it is still kept (in good condition).