

CHAPTER VII

DIALOGUES OF THE PATRIARCH.

(The literal translation of the title of this chapter is 'Temperament and Circumstances', which means 'Instructions given according to the disciples' temperament and to the circumstances of the case'.)

Upon the Patriarch's return to Tso Hau Village of Shiu Chow from Wong Mui where the Dharma was duly transmitted to him, he was still an unknown figure. At that time, it was a Confucian scholar named Liu Chi Luk who gave him a warm welcome and a liberal treat. Chi Luk happened to have an aunt named Wu Chun Chong who was a Bhikkhuni (a female member of the Order). She used to recite the Maha-Parinirvana Sutra. After hearing the recitation for only a short while, the Patriarch grasped the profound meaning of that work and began to explain it to her. Whereupon, she picked up the book and asked him the meaning of certain words.

"I am illiterate," he replied, "but should you wish to know the purport of this work, please ask." "How can you catch the meaning of the text," she rejoined "when you do not know even the words?" To this he replied, "The profundity of the teachings of the various Buddhas has nothing to do with the written language."

This answer surprised her very much; and knowing that he was no ordinary Bhikkhu, she made it widely known to the pious elders of the village. "This is a holy man," she added, "and we should ask him to stay and get his permission to allow us to supply him food and lodging."

Whereupon, a descendant of Marquis Wu of Ai Dynasty, named Tso Shuk Leung, together with other villagers came one afternoon to tender homage to the Patriarch. The historical Po Lam Monastery devastated by war at the end of Chu Dynasty was then reduced to a heap of ruin. On the old site, they rebuilt it and asked the Patriarch to stay there. Before long, it became a very famous temple.

After being there for nine months and odd days, his wicked enemies traced him and persecuted him again. Thereupon, he took refuge in a yonder hill. The villains then set fire to the wood (where he was in hiding), but he escaped by forcing his way to a rock. This rock which has since been known as the 'Rock of Refuge' has thereon the knee-prints of the Patriarch in the squatting pose and also the impressions of the texture of his gown.

Recollecting the instruction of his master, the Fifth Patriarch, that he should stop at Wei and seclude himself at Wui, he made these two districts (*i.e.* Wei Chap and Sze Wui) his places of retreat as well as his circuit.

Bhikkhu Fat Hoi, a native of Hook Kong of Shiu Chow, in his first interview with the Patriarch, asked the meaning of that well-known saying, 'What mind

is, Buddha is.' The Patriarch replied, "Let not a passing thought rise up again is 'mind'. Let not the coming thought be annihilated is Buddha. To manifest all kinds of phenomena is 'mind'. To be free from all forms (*i.e.* to realise the unreality and the illusiveness of every conceivable form of phenomena) is Buddha. If I am going to give you a full explanation, the topic cannot be exhausted even I take up the whole time of one Kalpa. So listen to my stanza:—

Prajna is 'What mind is',

Samadhi is 'What Buddha is'.

In practising Prajna and Samadhi, let each keep pace with the other,
Then our thoughts will be pure.

This teaching can be understood

Only through the 'habit of practice'.

Samadhi functions, but inherently it becomes not.

The orthodox teaching is to practise Prajna as well as Samadhi.

After hearing what the Patriarch had said, Fat Hoi was at once enlightened. He praised the Patriarch with the following stanza:—

'What mind is, Buddha is' is naturally true, indeed!

But I humiliate myself by not understanding it.

Now I know the principal cause of Prajna and Samadhi,

Both of which I shall practise to set me free from all forms (*i.e.* arbitrary concept of phenomena).

Bhikkhu Fat Tat, a native of Hung Chow, who joined the order at the early age of seven, used to recite the Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus of the Good Law Sutra). When he came to tender homage to the Patriarch, he failed to lower his head down to the ground. For his mutilated courtesy, the Patriarch reproved him, saying, "If you object to lower your head down to the ground, would it not be better to do away with salutation entirely? There must be something in your mind that makes you so puffed up. Please tell me what work do you do in your daily exercise."

"Reciting the Saddharma Pundarika Sutra", replied Fat Tat, "I have read the whole text three thousand times."

"Had you grasped the meaning of the Sutra," remarked the Patriarch, "you would not have assumed such a lofty bearing, even if you had read it ten thousand times. When this is the case, you are then treading the same Path as mine. But now what you have accomplished has already made you so self-conceited, and moreover, you do not seem to realise that this is wrong. Listen to my stanza:—

"Since the object of ceremony is to curb arrogance,

Why did you fail to lower your head to the ground?

'To believe in a self (egoism)' is the source of sin,

But 'to treat any attainment as void' attains merit incomparable indeed!"

The Patriarch then asked for his name, and upon being told that his name was Fat Tat (meaning Understanding of the Law), he remarked, "Your name is

Fat Tat, but you have not yet understood the Law." He concluded his remark by uttering another stanza:—

Your name is Fat Tat.

Diligently and steadily you recite the Sutra.

Lip-repetition of the text goes by the pronunciation only (*i.e.* without grasping the meaning),

But he whose mind is enlightened by grasping the meaning, is a Bodhisattva indeed!

On account of Pratyaya (conditions which bring about any given phenomena) which may be traced to our past lives,

Let me explain this to you.

If you only believe that Buddha speaks no words (*i.e.* truth is ineffable),

Then the Lotus will blossom in your mouth (*i.e.* you will then know the right way to recite a Sutra).

Having heard this stanza, Fat Tat became remorseful and apologised to the Patriarch. He added, "Hereafter, I will be humble and polite on all occasions. As I do not quite understand the meaning of the Sutra I recite, I am always doubtful as to its proper interpretation. With your profound knowledge and high wisdom, will you kindly give me a short explanation?"

The Patriarch replied, "Fat Tat, the Law is quite clear: it is only your mind that is not clear. The Sutra is free from doubtful passages: it is only your mind that makes them doubtful. In reciting the Sutra, do you know its principal object?"

"How can I know, Sir," replied Fat Tat, "since I am so dull and stupid? What I know is to recite it word by word."

The Patriarch then said, "Will you please recite the Sutra over once, as I cannot read it myself. I shall then explain the meaning to you."

Fat Tat recited the Sutra loudly. When he came to that chapter entitled 'Parables', the Patriarch stopped him, saying, "The key-note of this Sutra is to set forth the aim and object of a Buddha's incarnation in this world. Though parables and illustrations are numerous in this book, none of them goes beyond this pivotal point. Now, what is that object? What is that aim? The Sutra says, 'It is for a sole object, a sole aim, verily a lofty object and a lofty aim that the Buddha appears in this world.' Now that sole object, that sole aim, that lofty object, that lofty aim referred to is the sight of Buddha-Knowledge."

"Common people attach themselves to objects without; (*i.e.* to accept phenomenal things as something real) and within, they fall into the wrong idea of 'Vacuity' (which involves the fallacious view of annihilation). Should they be able to free themselves from attachment to objects when in contact with objects, and to free themselves from the fallacious view of annihilation on the doctrine of 'Void' (*cunya*); then they are free from delusions within and from illusions without. He who understands this and whose mind is thus enlightened in an instant is said to have opened his eyes for the sight of Buddha-Knowledge."

"The word 'Buddha' is equivalent to 'Enlightenment', which may be dealt with (as in the Sutra) under four heads:—

- To open the eyes for the sight of Enlightenment-knowledge.
- To show the sight of Enlightenment-knowledge.
- To awake to the sight of Enlightenment-knowledge.
- To be firmly established in the Enlightenment-knowledge.

"Should we be able, upon being taught, to grasp and understand thoroughly the teaching of Enlightenment-knowledge, then our inherent quality or true nature, i.e. the Enlightenment-knowledge, will have an opportunity to manifest itself. You should not misinterpret the text and come to the conclusion that Buddha-knowledge is something special to Buddha and not common to us, because you happen to find in the Sutra this passage, 'To open the eyes for the sight of Buddha-knowledge, to show the sight of Buddha-knowledge, etc.' Such a misinterpretation would amount to slandering Buddha and blaspheming the Sutra. Since he is a Buddha, he is already in possession of this Enlightenment-knowledge and there is no occasion for himself to open his eyes for it. You should therefore accept the interpretation that Buddha-knowledge is the Buddha-knowledge of your own mind and not that of any other Buddha.

"Being infatuated by sense-objects and thereby shutting themselves from their own light, all sentient beings, tormented by outer circumstances and inner vexations, act voluntarily as slaves to their own desires. Seeing this, our Lord Buddha had to take the trouble of rising from his Samadhi (exalted state of concentration) in order to exhort them with earnest preaching of various kinds to suppress their desires and to refrain from seeking happiness from without, so that they may become the equals of Buddha. For this reason, the Sutra says, 'To open the eyes for the sight of Buddha-knowledge, etc.'

"I also advise people to open their eyes constantly for the Buddha-knowledge within their mind. But in their perversity, they commit sins under delusion and ignorance; they are kind in words, but wicked in mind; they are greedy, malignant, jealous, crooked, flattering, egotistic, offensive to men, and destructive to inanimate objects. Thus, they open their eyes for the 'Common-people-knowledge' (instead of Buddha-knowledge). Should they rectify their heart, so that wisdom arises perpetually, the mind is under introspection, and evil doing is substituted by the practice of good; then they would initiate themselves into the Buddha-knowledge.

"You should, therefore, from Ksana to Ksana (momentary sensations) open your eye not for 'Common-people-knowledge', but for Buddha-knowledge, which is super-mundane, while the former is worldly. On the other hand, if you stick to the arbitrary concept that mere recitation (i.e. without understanding the meaning of the Sutra) as daily exercise is good enough, then you are infatuated like the yak by its own tail." (Yaks are known to have a very high opinion of their own tails.)

Fat Tat then said, "If that is so, then we have only to know the meaning of the Sutra, and there would be no necessity for us to recite it. Is that right, Sir?"

"There is nothing wrong in the Sutra," replied the Patriarch, "so that you should refrain from reciting it. Whether Sutra-reciting will enlighten you or not, benefit you or not, all depends on you yourself. He who recites the Sutra with the tongue and puts its teaching into actual practice with his mind 'turns round' (*i.e.* masters) the Sutra. He who recites it without putting it into practice is 'turned round' by the Sutra. Listen to my stanza:—

"When our mind is under delusion, the Saddharma Pundarika Sutra 'turns round' us.

With an enlightened mind, we 'turn round' the Sutra instead.

To recite the Sutra for a considerable time without knowing its principal object

Indicates that you are a stranger to its meaning.

To recite the Sutra without holding any arbitrary belief is the correct way; Otherwise, it is wrong.

He who is above 'Affirmative' and 'Negative',

Rides permanently in the White Bullock Cart (the Vehicle of Buddha)."

Having heard this stanza, Fat Tat was enlightened and moved to tears unconsciously. "It is quite true," exclaimed he, "that heretofore I was unable to 'turn round' the Sutra. It was rather the Sutra that 'turned' me round."

He then raised another point: "The Sutra says, 'From various Cravakas up to Bodhisattvas, if they were to speculate with combined efforts, they would be unable to comprehend the Buddha-knowledge'. But you, Sir, give me to understand that if an ordinary man realises his own mind, he is said to have attained the Buddha-knowledge. I am afraid, Sir, that with the exception of those gifted with superior mental dispositions, others may doubt your remark. Further, three kinds of Carts are mentioned in the Sutra, namely, Carts yoked with goats (*i.e.* the vehicle of Cravakas), Carts yoked with deers (the vehicle of Pratyeka Buddha), and Carts yoked with bullocks (the vehicle of Bodhisattvas). How are these to be distinguished from the White Bullock Carts? Will you please tell me."

The Patriarch replied, "The Sutra is quite plain on this point: it is you yourself who misunderstand it. The reason why Cravakas, Pratyeka Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas cannot comprehend the Buddha-knowledge is because they speculate on it. They may combine their efforts to speculate; but the more they speculate, the farther they are away from the truth. (Note: Buddha-knowledge is to be realised; it cannot be known by speculation). It was to the ordinary men, not to other Buddhas, that Buddha Gautama preached this Sutra. As to those who could not accept the doctrine he then expounded, he let them leave the assembly. You do not seem to know that since we are already riding in the White Bullock Cart (the vehicle of Buddhas), there is no necessity for us to go out to look for the other three vehicles. Moreover, the Sutra tells you plainly that there is only the Buddha Vehicle; and that there are no other vehicles, such as the second or the third. It is for the sake of this sole vehicle that Buddha had to preach to us with innumerable skilful means, such as various reasons and arguments, various parables and illustrations, etc. Why can you not understand that the

other three vehicles are makeshifts, for the past only; while the sole vehicle, the Buddha Vehicle, is the ultimate, meant for the present?

"The Sutra teaches you to dispense with the makeshifts and to resort to the ultimate. Having resorted to the ultimate, you will find that even the very name 'Ultimate' disappears. You should know that you are the sole owner of these valuables and that they are entirely subject to your disposal. (Note: An allusion made to the chapter entitled 'Parables' in the Sutra, exemplifying that Buddha-knowledge is innate in every man.) When you are free from the arbitrary conception that they are the father's, or they are the son's, or they are subject to so and so's disposal; then you may be said to have known the right way to recite the Sutra. In that case, from Kalpa to Kalpa, the Sutra will virtually be in your hand always; and from morning till midnight, you are reciting the Sutra all the time."

Being thus awakened, Fat Tat praised the Patriarch, in a transport of great joy, with the following stanza:—

The delusion that I have attained great merits by reciting the Sutra three thousand times over

Is all dispelled by an utterance of the Master of Tso Kai (*i.e.* the Patriarch).

He who has not yet understood the object of a Buddha's incarnation in this world

Is unable to suppress the wild passions accumulated in many lives.

The three vehicles yoked by goat, deer and bullock respectively, are makeshifts only,

While the three stages, Preliminary, Intermediate, and Final, in which the orthodox Dharma is expounded, are ingeniously spoken, indeed!

Who knows that within the very burning house (*i.e.* the burning pains of mundane existence)

The King of Dharma is to be found therein!

The Patriarch then told him that thenceforth—but not before—he might call himself a 'Sutra-reciting Bhikkhu'. After that interview, Fat Tat was able to grasp the profound meaning of Buddhism; and yet he continued to recite the Sutra as before.

Bhikkhu Chi Tong, a native of Shau Chow of An Fung, had read over the Lankavatara Sutra nearly a thousand times; but could not understand the meaning of Trikaya (three bodies of the Buddha) and the four Prajnas (Wisdom). Thereupon, he called on the Patriarch for an interpretation.

"As to the three bodies," explained the Patriarch, "the Pure Dharmakaya (the body of truth or Law) is your nature; the Perfect Sambhogakaya (the body of perfect endowment) is your wisdom; and the Myriad Nirmanakayas (bodies of transformation) are your actions. If you deal with these three bodies apart from

the essence of mind, there would be 'bodies without wisdom'. If you realise that these three bodies have no positive essence of their own, (Note: Because they are only the properties of the essence of mind) then you attain the Bodhi (enlightenment) of the four Prajnas. Listen to my stanza:—

"The three bodies are inherent in our essence of mind,
By development of which, the four Prajnas are manifested.
Thus, without shutting your eyes and your ears to keep away from the
external world,
You may reach Buddhahood directly.
Now, I have made this plain to you;
And if you believe it firmly, you will forever be free from delusions.
Follow not those who seek 'Enlightenment' from without:
These people talk about Bodhi all the time, (but they can never find it)."

"May I know something about the four Prajnas?" asked Chi Tong a second time. "If you understand the three bodies," replied the Patriarch, "you would know the four Prajnas as well; so your question is quite unnecessary. If you deal with the four Prajnas apart from the three bodies, there would be Prajnas without bodies. When such is the case, the so-called Prajnas would not be Prajnas."

The Patriarch then uttered another stanza:—

The Mirror-like Wisdom is pure by nature.
The Equality Wisdom frees the mind from all impediments (literally, illness).
The All-Discerning Wisdom sees things intuitively without going through the process of reasoning.
The All-Performing Wisdom has the same characteristics as the Mirror-like Wisdom.

The first five vijnanas (the first five kinds of consciousness dependent respectively upon the five sense organs) and the Alaya vijnana (Repository or Receptacle consciousness) are 'transmuted' to Prajna (Wisdom) in the Buddha Stage (literally Fruit Stage, *i.e.* the fruit of Buddhahood); while the Klista-Mano vijnana (soiled-mind consciousness or self-consciousness) and the Mano vijnana (thinking consciousness), in the Bodhisattva Stage (literally Cause Stage, *i.e.* the preparatory or the training period of a Bodhisattva for Buddhahood. There are altogether ten stages for a Bodhisattva to go through.)

Note:—It is in the First Stage 'Mudita' or Joyous Stage when a Bodhisattva realises the voidness of self and Dharma (things) that he 'transmutes' the Klista-Mano Vijnana to the All-Discerning Wisdom. When Buddhahood is attained, the first five vijnanas will be 'transmuted' to the All-Performing Wisdom; and the Alaya Vijnana to the Mirror-like Wisdom.

These so-called 'transmutations of vijnana' are only changes of appellations and not change of substance.

Note:—In the essence of mind, there is no such thing as 'transmutation.' When a man is enlightened, the term 'Prajna' is used; otherwise, the term 'vijnana' is applied. In other words, the word 'transmutation' is used in the figurative sense only.

When you are able to free yourself entirely from attachment to sense-objects at the time these so-called 'transmutations' take place,

Then you will forever abide in the repeatedly-arising Naga Samadhi (an exalted state of ecstasy as powerful as a dragon).

(Upon hearing this), Chi Tong realised suddenly the Prajna of his essence of mind and submitted the following stanza to the Patriarch:—

Intrinsically, the three Bodies are within our essence of mind.

When our mind is enlightened, the four Prajnas will appear therein.

When Bodies and Prajnas absolutely identify with each other,

We may be able to respond (in accordance with their temperaments and dispositions) to the appeals of all beings, no matter what forms they may assume.

To make a start to seek for the Trikaya and the four Prajnas is to take an entirely wrong course. (Because they are inherent in us, they are to be realised and not to be sought.)

To try to 'grasp' or 'confine' them is to go against their intrinsic nature. (Because they are inherent in the essence of mind which pervades everywhere, it is impossible to 'grasp' or 'confine' them.)

Through you, Sir, I am now able to grasp the profundity of their meaning; And henceforth, I may discard for ever their false and arbitrary nomenclatures. (Note: Having grasped the spirit of a doctrine, one may dispense with the names used therein, since all names are makeshifts only.)

Bhikkhu Chi Sheung, a native of Kwai Kai of Shun Chow, joined the order in his childhood, and was very zealous in his efforts to realise the essence of mind. One day, upon his coming to pay homage to the Patriarch, he was asked by the latter whence he came and for what he came.

"I have recently been to the White Cliff Mountain in Hung Chow," replied he, "to interview Upadgyaya (High Priest) Ta Tung who was good enough to teach me how to realise the essence of mind and thereby attain Buddhahood. But as I still have some doubts, I travelled far to come here to pay you respect. Will you kindly clear them up for me, Sir."

"What instruction did he give you?" asked the Patriarch. "Will you please repeat it."

"After staying there for three months, I was not yet given any instruction. Being zealous for the Dharma, I went alone to his chamber one night and asked him what was my essence of mind. 'Do you see the illimitable void?' he asked. 'Yes, I do,' I replied. Then he asked me whether the void had any particular form and upon being told that the void is formless and therefore cannot have any particular form, he said, 'Your essence of mind is exactly like the void. To realise that nothing can be seen is 'Right View'. To realise that nothing is knowable is

'True Knowledge'. To realise that it is neither green nor yellow, neither long nor short; that it is pure by nature; that its quintessence is perfect and clear; is 'to realise the essence of mind and thereby attain Buddhahood', which is also called the Buddha-knowledge. As I do not quite understand his teaching, will you please enlighten me, Sir."

"His teaching indicates," said the Patriarch, "that he still retains the arbitrary concept of 'Views' and 'Knowledge', and this explains why he fails to make it clear to you. Listen to my stanza:—

"To realise that nothing can be seen but retain the concept of 'Invisibility'
Is somewhat like the surface of the sun obscured by passing clouds.
To realise that nothing is knowable but retain the concept of
'Unknowability'

May be likened to the spotless sky disfigured by lightning flash.
To let these arbitrary concepts rise spontaneously in your mind
Indicates that you have misidentified the essence of mind and that you
have not yet known the skilful means to realise it.
If you realise for one moment that these arbitrary concepts are wrong,
Then your own spiritual light will shine forth permanently."

Having heard this, Chi Sheung at once felt that his mind was enlightened. Thereupon, he submitted the following stanza to the Patriarch:—

To allow the concepts of 'Invisibility' and 'Unknowability' to rise
spontaneously in the mind
Is to seek Bodhi (Enlightenment) without freeing oneself from the arbitrary
concepts of phenomena. (Note: Bodhi is above phenomena and
beyond concept and speech.)
He who is puffed up by the slightest impression, 'I am now enlightened'
Is no better than what once he was when under delusion.
Had I not put myself at the feet of the Patriarch,
I would have been bewildered without knowing which is
the right way to go.

One day, Chi Sheung asked the Patriarch, "Buddha preached the doctrine of 'Three Vehicles' and also that of 'Supreme Vehicle'. As I do not understand them, will you please explain."

The Patriarch replied, "(In trying to understand these), you should introspect your own mind and act independently of outward Dharmalaksana (things and phenomena). The distinction of these four vehicles exists not in the Dharma itself, but in the differentiation of the people's mind. To see, to hear, and to recite the Sutra is the Small Vehicle. To know the Dharma and to understand its meaning is the Middle Vehicle. To put the Dharma into actual practice is the Great Vehicle. To understand thoroughly all Dharmas, to have them completely in us, to be free from all attachments, to be above Dharmalaksana, and to be in possession of nothing, is the Supreme Vehicle.

"Since the word 'Yana' (Vehicle) means 'motion' (*i.e.* action or figuratively actual practice), verbal argument on this point is quite unnecessary. All depends on self-practice and so you need not ask me any more. (I may also tell you that) at all times, the essence of mind is in a state of 'Thusness'."

Chi Sheung made obeisance and thanked the Patriarch. Henceforth, he acted as his attendant until the death of the Master.

Bhikkhu Chi Tao, a native of Nam Hoi of Kwong Tung, came to the Patriarch for instruction, saying, "Since I joined the order, I have read the Maha Parinirvana Sutra for more than ten years; but I have not yet grasped its main idea. Will you please teach me."

"Which part of it do you not understand?" asked the Patriarch.

"It is this part, Sir, that I am doubtful: 'All things are impermanent and so they belong to the Dharma of Becoming and Cessation (*i.e.* Samskrtta Dharma). When both Becoming and Cessation cease to operate, the bliss of Perfect Rest and Cessation of Changes (*i.e.* the bliss of Nirvana) arises'."

"What makes you doubt?" asked the Patriarch.

"All beings have two bodies—the physical body and the Law body (Dharmakaya)," replied Chi Tao. "The former is impermanent: it exists and deceases. The latter is permanent: it knows not and feels not. Now, the Sutra says, 'When both Becoming and Cessation cease to operate, the bliss of Perfect Rest and Cessation of Changes arises.' I do not know which body ceases to exist and which body enjoys the bliss. It cannot be the physical body that enjoys; because when it deceases, the four Mahabhutas (ultimate material elements, *i.e.* earth, water fire and air) will disintegrate, and disintegration is pure suffering, the very opposite of bliss. If it is the Dharmakaya that ceases to exist, it would be in the same state as the inanimate objects, such as the grass, the tree, the stone, etc.; and who will then be the enjoyer?"

"Moreover, Dharma-nature is the quintessence of 'Becoming and Cessation' whose functions are the five Skhandkas (aggregates; they are: Rupa, Vedana, Samjna, Samskara, and Vijnana). That is to say, with one quintessence, there are five functions. The process of 'Becoming and Cessation' is everlasting. When function or operation 'arises' from the quintessence, it becomes; when the operation or function is 'absorbed' back to the quintessence, it ceases to exist. If reincarnation is admitted, there would be no 'Cessation of Changes', as in the case of sentient beings. If reincarnation is out of the question, then things will remain forever in a state of liveless quintessence, like the case of inanimate objects. When this is the case, then under the limitation and restriction of Nirvana, even living is impossible to all beings (literally Dharmas or things): what enjoyment can there be?"

"You are a son of Gina (*i.e.* the son of Buddha, or a Bhikkhu)", said the Patriarch, "why do you adopt the fallacious views of Eternalism and Annihilationism held by the heretics, and venture to criticise the teaching of the Supreme Vehicle?

"Your argument implies that apart from the physical body, there is a Law body; and that 'Perfect Rest' and 'Cessation of Changes' may be sought apart from 'Becoming and Cessation'. Further, from the statement, 'Nirvana is everlasting joy', you infer that there must be somebody to play the part of the enjoyer.

"Now, it is exactly these fallacious views that make people crave for sensate existence and indulge in worldly pleasure. You should know that it is for these people, the victims of ignorance, who identify the union of five skhandhas as the 'self', and regard all other things as 'not-self' (literally, outer sense objects); who crave for individual existence and have an aversion to death; who are drifting about, from one Ksana to another, in the whirlpool of life and death without realising the hollowness of mundane existence which is only a dream or an illusion; who commit themselves to unnecessary sufferings by binding themselves to the wheel of re-birth; who mistake the state of everlasting joy of Nirvana to be a mode of suffering; and who are always after sensual pleasure; that the compassionate Buddha preached the real bliss of Nirvana.

"Within a Ksana (moment), Nirvana has neither the phenomena of Becoming, nor that of Cessation, nor even the ceasing of operation of Becoming and Cessation. Thus is the manifestation of 'Perfect Rest and Cessation of Changes'; and at the time of manifestation, there is even no concept of manifestation; and so it is called the 'Everlasting Joy' which has neither enjoyer nor non-enjoyer.

"There is no such thing as 'one quintessence and five functions' (as you allege); and you are slandering Buddha and blaspheming the Law, since you go so far as to state that under that limitation and restriction of Nirvana, living is impossible to all beings. Listen to my stanza:—

"The Supreme Maha Parinirvana
Is perfect, splendid, permanent, calm, and illuminating.
Common people and ignorant ones miscall it death,
While heretics hold arbitrarily that it is annihilation.
Those who belong to the Cravaka Vehicle or the Pratyeka Buddha Vehicle
Regard it as 'Non-action'.
All these are mere intellectual speculations,
And they form the basis of the Sixty-two fallacious views.
Since they are mere fictitious names invented for the occasion,
They have nothing to do with the Absolute Truth.
Only those of super-eminent mind
Can understand thoroughly what Nirvana is and take up the attitude of
neither attachment nor indifference towards it.*

* While ordinary people are bewildered by the whirlpool of birth and death, the Cravakas and Pratyeka Buddhas' attitude towards it is one of detestation. Neither of them is in the right. A treader of the Path does not cling to sensate existence nor does he shun it purposely. Because the idea of a 'self' and that of a 'person' are foreign to him and because he takes up the attitude of neither attachment nor aversion towards all things, freedom is within his reach all the time and he is at ease under all circumstances. He may go through the process of birth and death; but such a process can never bind him, so to him the question of 'birth and death' is no question at all. He who is able to do this may be called a man of super-eminent mind.

—DIH PING TSZE.

They know that the five Skhandhas
And the so called 'ego' arising from the union of these Skhandhas,
Together with all external objects and forms,
And the various phenomena of sound and voice,
Are equally unreal, like a dream, or an illusion.
They make no discrimination between a sage and an ordinary man,
Nor do they have any arbitrary concept on Nirvana.
They are above 'Affirmation' and 'Negation'; and they break the barrier
of the past, the present, and the future.
They use their sense organs, when occasion requires;
But the concept of 'Using' does not arise.
They may particularize on all sorts of thing,
But the concept of 'particularization' arises not.
Even during the cataclysmic fire at the end of a Kalpa, when ocean-beds
are burnt dry;
Or during the blowing of the catastrophic wind when one mountain topples
on another;
The real and everlasting bliss of 'Perfect Rest' and 'Cessation of Changes'
Of Nirvana remains in the same state and changes not.
Now, I am trying to describe to you something which is ineffable,
So that you may get rid of your fallacious views.
If you do not interpret my words literally,
You may perhaps know a wee bit of the meaning of Nirvana.
Having heard this stanza, Chi Tao was highly enlightened. In a rapturous
mood, he made obeisance and departed.

Bhikkhu Hang Shi, a Dhyana Master, was born at An Sheng of Kat Chow
of a Liu family. Upon hearing that the preaching of the Patriarch had enlightened
a great number of people, he at once came to Tso Kai to tender him homage,
and ask him this question:

"What should a learner direct his mind to, so that his attainment cannot
be rated by the (usual) 'Stage of Progress'?"

"What work have you been doing?" asked the Patriarch.

"Even the Noble Truths taught by various Buddhas I am not going to
have anything to do with," replied Hang Shi.

"What 'Stage of Progress' are you in?" asked the Patriarch.

"What 'Stage of Progress' can there be, when I refuse to have anything
to do even with the Noble Truths taught by Buddhas?" he retorted.

His repartee commanded the great respect of the Patriarch who made him
the leader of the assembly.

One day the Patriarch told him that he should propagate the Law in one of the districts, so that the teaching might not come to an end. Thereupon, he returned to Ching Un Mountain in his native district. The Dharma having been transmitted to him, he spread it widely and thus perpetuated the teaching of his Master. Upon his death, the posthumous title 'Dhyana Mastar Hung Tsai' was conferred on him.

Bhikkhu Wei Yang, a Dhyana Master, was born of a Tao family in Kim Chow. Upon his first visit to National Teacher (an honorary title conferred on Buddhist monks) Wei On of Sung Shan Mountain, he was directed by the latter to go to Tao Kai to interview the Patriarch.

Upon his arrival and after the usual salutation, he was asked by the Patriarch whence he came.

"From Sung Shan," replied he.

"What thing is it (that comes)? How did it come?" asked the Patriarch

"To say that it is similar to a certain thing is wrong," he retorted

"Is it attainable by training? asked the Patriarch.

"It is not impossible to attain it by training; but it is quite impossible to pollute it," he replied.

Thereupon, the Patriarch exclaimed, "It is exactly this unpolluted thing that all Buddhas take good care of. It is so to you, and it is so to me as well. Patriarch Prajnata of India foretold that under your feet, a colt (Note: This refers to Wei Yang's famous disciple, Ma (Horse) Tso, through whom the teaching of the Dhyana School was spread all over China) would rush forth and trample on the people of the whole world. I need not interpret this oracle too soon, as the answer shall be found within your mind."

Being thereby enlightened, Wei Yang realised intuitively what the Patriarch had said. Henceforth, he became his attendant for a period of fifteen years; and day by day, his knowledge of Buddhism got deeper and deeper. Afterwards, he made his home in Heng Shan where he spread widely the teaching of the Patriarch. Upon his death, the posthumous title, 'Dhyana Master Tai Wai' was conferred on him by imperial edict.

Dhyana Master Yuen Kwok of Wing Ka was born of a Tai family in Wenchow. As a youth, he studied Sutras and Shastras and was well-versed in the teaching of Samatha (inhibition or quietude) and Vipassana (contemplation or discernment) of the Tendai School. Through the reading of Vimalakirti Nirdesa Sutra, he realised intuitively the mystery of his own mind.

A disciple of the Patriarch by the name of Un Chak happened to pay him a visit. During the course of a long discussion, Un Chak noticed that the

utterance of his friend agreed virtually with the saying of the various Patriarchs. Thereupon he asked, "May I know the name of your teacher who transmitted the Dharma to you?"

"I had teachers to instruct me," replied Yuen Kwok, "when I studied the Sutras and the Shastras of the Vaipulya section. But afterwards it was through the reading of the Vimalakirti Nirdesa Sutra that I realised the significance of the Buddhacitta (Buddha-heart) School (the Dhyana School); and in this respect, I have not yet had any teacher to verify and confirm my knowledge."

"Before the time of Bhismagarjitasvara Raja Buddha," (Note: This is the first Buddha. Before his time, no Buddha exists.) Un Chak remarked, "it is possible (to dispense with the service of a teacher); but after that time, he who attains enlightenment without the aid and the confirmation of a teacher is a natural heretic."

"Will you, Sir, kindly act as my testifier," asked Yuen Kwok.

"My words carry no weight," replied his friend. "In Tso Kai, there is the Sixth Patriarch, to whom visitors in great numbers come from all directions with the common object of having the Dharma transmitted to them. Should you wish to go there, I shall be pleased to accompany you."

Subsequently they arrived at Tso Kai and interviewed the Patriarch. Having circumambulated the Patriarch thrice, Yuen Kwok stood still (*i.e.*, without making obeisance to the Master) with the Khakkharam (the Buddhist staff) in his hand.

(For his courtesy), the Patriarch made the following remark: "As a Srmana (Buddhist monk) is the embodiment of three thousand moral precepts and eighty thousand minor disciplinary rules, I wonder where do you come from and what makes you so conceited."

"The question of incessant re-births is a momentous one," replied he, "and as Death may come at any moment, (I have no time to waste on ceremony and wish you can give me a quick answer to this problem)."

"Why do you not realise the principle of 'Birthlessness' and thus solve the problem of the transiency of life?" the Patriarch retorted.

Thereupon Yuen Kwok remarked, "To realise the essence of mind is to be free from re-births; and once this problem is solved, the question of transiency exists no longer."

"That is so, that is so," concurred the Patriarch.

At this stage, Yuen Kwok gave in and made obeisance in full ceremony. After a short while he bid the Patriarch adieu.

"You are going away too quick, are you not?" asked the Patriarch.

"How can there be 'quickness' when motion intrinsically exists not?" he retorted.

"Who knows that motion exists not?" asked the Patriarch.

"I hope you, Sir, will not particularize," he observed.

The Patriarch then commended him for his thorough grasp of the notion of 'Birthlessness'; but he remarked, "Is there a 'notion' in 'Birthlessness'?"

"Without a notion, who can particularize?" asked the Patriarch.

"That which particularize is not a notion," replied Yuen Kwok.

"Well said!" exclaimed the Patriarch. He then asked Yuen Kwok to delay his departure and spend a night there. Henceforth Yuen Kwok was known to his contemporaries as the 'enlightened one who had spent a night with the Patriarch'.

Afterwards, he wrote the famous work, 'A Song on Spiritual Attainment'. which circulates widely. His posthumous title is 'Grand Master Wu Sheng' (He who is above form or phenomena), and he was also called by his contemporaries 'Dhyana Master Chun Kwok' (He who is really enlightened).

Bhikkhu Chi Wang, a follower of the Dhyana School, after his consultation with the Fifth Patriarch (as to the progress of his work), considered himself as having attained Samadhi (an exalted state of concentration). For twenty years, he confined himself in a small temple and kept up the squatting posture all the time.

Un Chak, a disciple of the Sixth Patriarch, in his excursion to the northern bank of Hoang Ho, heard about him (Chi Wang) and called at his temple.

"What are you doing here?" asked Un Chak.

"I am abiding in Samadhi," replied his friend.

"Abiding in Samadhi. Did you say so?" observed Un Chak. "I wish to know whether you are doing it consciously or unconsciously (literally with or without mind). If you do it unconsciously, it would mean that it is possible for all inanimate objects such as earthenware, stones, trees, and weeds, to attain Samadhi. On the other hand, if you do it consciously, then all animate objects or sentient beings would be in Samadhi also."

"When I am in Samadhi," observed Chi Wang, "I know neither consciousness nor unconsciousness."

"If this is the case", said Un Chak, "then it is the perpetual quietude; in which state, there is neither abiding nor leaving. That state which you can abide in or leave off is not Grand Samadhi."

Chi Wang was dumbfounded. After a long while, he asked, "May I know who is your teacher?"

"My teacher is the Sixth Patriarch of Tso Kai," replied Un Chak.

"How does he define Dhyana and Samadhi?" Chi Wang asked.

"According to his teaching," replied Un Chak, "the Dharmakaya (Body of the Law) is perfect and calm: its quintessence and its function are in a state of Thusness. The five Skhandhas (aggregates) are intrinsically void and the six sense-objects are non-existent. There is neither abiding nor leaving in Samadhi. There

is neither quietude nor perturbation. The nature of Dhyana is non-abiding, so we should get above the state of 'abiding in the calmness of Dhyana'. The nature of Dhyana is uncreative, so we should get above the notion of 'creating a state of Dhyana'. The state of the mind may be likened unto space, but (it is infinite) and so it is without the limitation of the latter."

Having heard this, Chi Wang went immediately to Tso Kai to interview the Patriarch. Upon being asked whence he came, he told the Patriarch in details the conversation he had with Un Chak.

"What Un Chak said is quite right," said the Patriarch. "Let your mind be in a state such as that of the illimitable void, but attach not to the idea of 'vacuity'. Let it function freely. Whether you are in activity or under rest, abide your mind nowhere. Forget the discrimination between a sage and an ordinary man. Ignore the distinction of subject and object. Let the essence of mind and all phenomenal objects be in a state of Thusness. Then you will be in Samadhi all the time."

Chi Wang was thereby fully enlightened. What he considered for the past twenty years as an attainment of his now all vanished. On that night, inhabitants of Ho Pei (the northern bank of the Yellow River) heard a voice in the air to the effect that Dhyana Master Chi Wang had gained enlightenment on that day.

Some time after, Chi Wang bid the Patriarch adieu and returned to Ho Pei where he taught a great number of men and women, the clergy as well as the laity.

A Bhikkhu once asked the Patriarch what sort of man could get the keynote of the teaching of Wong Mui (the Fifth Patriarch). "He who understands the Buddhist Dharma can get it", replied the Patriarch. "Have you, Sir, got it then?" asked the Bhikkhu. "I do not know the Buddhist Dharma", was his reply.

One day the Patriarch wished to wash the robe he inherited, but could find no stream good for the purpose. Thereupon he walked to a place about five miles from the rear of the monastery. There, he noticed plants and trees grew profusely and the environment gave an air of good omen. He shook his staff (Khakkharam. A tinkling noise is thereby made, as rings are attached to the top part of it) and stuck it on the ground. Immediately water spurted out and before long, a pool was formed.

While he was kneeling down on a rock to wash the robe, a Bhikkhu suddenly appeared before him and tendered him homage.

"My name is Fong Pin", said he, "and I am a native of Szechuen. When I was in South India, I met Patriarch Bodhidharma who instructed me to return to China. 'The Garbha (matrix) of Orthodox Dharma Eye' said he, 'together with

the robe which I inherited from Mahakasyapa has now been transmitted to the Sixth Patriarch who is now in Tso Kai of Shiu Chow. Go ye there to have a look at them and to pay respect to the Patriarch.' After a long voyage, I arrive here now. May I have a look at the robe and the begging bowl you inherited."

Having shown him the two relics, the Patriarch asked him what line of work was he taking up. "I am pretty good in sculptural work", replied he. "Let me see your work then," demanded the Patriarch in a serious mood.

Fong Pin was confounded at the time; but after a few days, he was able to complete a life-like statue of the Patriarch, about seven inches high, a masterpiece of sculptural work.

(Upon seeing the statue), the Patriarch laughed and said to Fong Pin, "You do know something about the nature of sculptural work; but you do not seem to know the nature of Buddha." He then stretched forth his hand to rub the crown of Fong Pin (the Buddhist way of blessing) and declared, "You shall for ever be the 'field of merit' for human beings and celestial beings."

In addition, the Patriarch rewarded his service with a robe which Fong Pin divided into three parts,—one for dressing the statue, one for his own reservation, and one for burying in the ground after covering it up with palm leaves. (When the burial took place), he took a vow to the effect that by the time the robe was exhumed, he would be reincarnated to be the abbot of the monastery and he would also undertake to renovate the shrine and the building.

A Bhikkhu quoted the following Gatha (stanza) composed by Dhyana Master Au Lun:—

Au Lun has ways and means
To insulate the mind from all thoughts.
When circumstances react not on the mind,
The Bodhi tree (symbol of wisdom) will grow steadily.

Hearing this, the Patriarch said, "This stanza indicates that the composer of it has not yet fully realised the essence of mind. To put its teaching into practice (will gain no liberation), but bind oneself more tightly". Thereupon, he showed the Bhikkhu the following stanza of his:—

Wei Lang has no ways and means
To insulate the mind from all thoughts.
Circumstances often react on my mind;
But I wonder how can the Bodhi tree grow.

(Note:—In the last line, the Patriarch challenged the statement that "the Bodhi tree will grow", as Bodhi neither increases nor decreases.)
