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SONG OF ENLIGHTENMENT

By Great Master Yung Chia of The T'ang Dynasty

Commentary by Tripitaka Master Hsuan Hua

Translated into English by International Institute For The Translation of Buddhist Texts
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PREFACE

Since the wonderful meanings of the Ch'an School are apart from words and speech, and apart from the mind and its conditions, Bodhidharma did not establish a literature when he came from the West. He pointed directly to the mind of people, so that they might perceive their nature and become Buddhas. How then can there be a Song, and how can there be an explanation of the Song?

Because in Ch'an Master Hsuan Chueh's stillness, ultimately a thought moved, and, finally speechless, he opened his mouth. He was apart from the characteristics of words and speech, and yet he spoke words. His kindly heart compelled him to spontaneously express the inexpressible while in a playful samadhi. He explained this secret formula, this Song of Enlightenment, not failing to wish to guide living beings to reach, as he had, the region of the Sages.

And I Hsuan Hua, chatter on, heedless of my untutored rusticity and dearth of learning, speaking like one who groans when he isn't even sick. And so, with the intention to cast out bricks to attract jade, exhausting my stupid sincerity I've briefly commented, describing my view as seen through a hollow reed. Whether it is a case of merit or offense is not my concern.

COMMENTATOR'S VOWS IN VERSE

Hsuan Hua purifies his body, mouth and mind,
Dedicates his life and bows to the Buddha, Dharma and Sanga,
And to all the Buddhas of the ten directions and the three kperiods of time--
The past, the present, and the future;
To all the honored Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas;
To the succession of Patriarchs of East and West,
And to the lamp of holy sagehood still passed on from of old.
I only hope the Triple Jewel will confer aid and protection,
Explain for me the Proper Enlightenment and turn the Dharmma Wheel,
So that seeing, hearing, and persevering, I become irreversible,
Turning the boat of kindness around to rescue my fellow beings
Until every single living being is taken across to stillness
And I return to my original Dharma-nature body
And behold the ancient, kind visage of awesome sound Buddha.

The Seventh Day of the Twelfth (Lunar) Month, 1965

Chứng Đạo Ca Dịch Âm
và Phiên Dịch, Trúc Thiên

Mười Chín Chân Trời
Thiền, Trúc Thiên

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Trang 05

Trang 06

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Master Hsuan Hua
Translated into English

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Thiền sư Huyền Giác -
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Thiền Sư Thích Từ Thông
Giảng Chứng Đạo Ca...
(thảo luận)

FOREWORD

Yung Chia is the name of a place founded at Wen Chou (in Zhung Kuo's (China) southern Che Chiang province) during the Ta'ang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.) It was know as Wen Chou Prefecture during the Sung, Yuan, Ming, and Ch'ing Dynasties. The name has since been changed to Yung Chia County.

The Master is called by the place where he lived, rather than by his own name, in order to show respect for him. "Great Master" is also a title of respect. His name was Hsun Chueh,¹ and he was a son of the Tai family of Wen Chou. He left the home-life as a pure youth, and red widely in the Tripitaka, specializing in the T'ien T'ai. Of all the vaipulya Sutra, it was upon studying the Vimalakirti Nirdisha sutra that he was awakened to the principles of the Buddha-mind. He was tole by Dharma Master Hsuan Ch'e,² whom he happened to meet, that he had tallied with the mind of the Patriarchs. He thereupon went to see the Sixth Patriarch.³ After he had been certified, he wrote this Song of Enlightenment.⁴

* * * * *

Translation Notes

1. Hsuan Chueh (袁Ā±) means "Profound Awakening."
2. Hsuan Ch'e received the Dharma from the Sixth Patriarch, Great Master Hui Neng, and travelled widely propagating his teachings.
3. See Venerable Master Hua's commentary to the Sixth Patriarch Sutra, Chapter Seven, "Opportunities and Conditions," for a lively narration of thier meeting. (BTTS Publication)
4. Literally, "Song of the Certified Way" (ĀD°q Cheng dau ge). The zhung Wen (Chinese) word cheng (ĀÒ), means to verify, prove, certify, or confirm. Great Master Hsuan Cheh had the way, and Great Master Sixth Patriarch, confirmed and certified it.

TEXT:

HAVE YOU NOT SEEN PEOPLE WHOSE STUDY HAS ENDED,
WHO DO NOTHING, WHO ABIDE IN THE WAY AT EASE?
THEY DO NOT BANISH FALSE THOUGHTS, THEY DO NOT SEEK THE TRUTH,
THE TRUE NATURE OF IGNORANCE IS THE BUDDHA-NATURE;
THIS EMPTY BODY, AN ILLUSORY TRANSFORMATION, IS THE DHARMA-BODY.

IN THE DHARMA-BODY'S ENLIGHTENMENT, THERE IS NOT A SINGLE THING;
AT ITS SOURCE THE INHERENT NATURE IS THE BUDDHA OF KIVINE
INNOCENCE,
THE FIVE SKANDHAS, LIKE FLOATING CLOUDS, EMPTILY COME AND GO;
THE THREE POISONS, LIKE BUBBLES OF WATER, RISE AND SINK,UNREAL.

COMMENTARY:

HAVE YOU NOT SEEN.... The meaning is twofold: first, have you not seen these people of the Way? And second, they are very difficult to see.

PEOPLE WHOSE STUDY HAS ENDED, WHO DO NOTHING, WHO ABIDE IN THE WAY AT EASE? People of the way at ease are those who have attained Enlightenment and in pure leisure, area undefiled by desire. They have already completed their studies

and there is no more to learn. There is nothing that they do not do, but there is nothing to do. In other words, they have done what there was to be done.

THEY DO NOT BANISH FALSE THOUGHTS, THEY DO NOT SEEK THE TRUTH. Their false thoughts are already ended, and so they have no further need to eliminate them. Because they have already been certified as having attained the truth, they have no further need to seek it.

THE TRUE NATURE OF IGNORANCE IS THE BUDDHA-NATURE. Right within the real nature of the ignorance (of living beings), is the complete Buddha-nature. It is not that the Buddha-nature exists apart from ignorance.

THIS EMPTY BODY, AN ILLUSORY TRANSFORMATION, IS THE DHARMA-BODY. Right within this illusory, empty body, completely within it, is the Dharma-body. The Dharma-body cannot be sought outside the empty-body. What is the Dharma-body? It has no shape or form, and so it is said:

IN THE DHARMA-BODY'S ENLIGHTENMENT, THERE IS NOT A SINGLE THING; AT ITS SOURCE THE INHERENT NATURE IS THE BUDDHA OF DIVINE INNOCENCE. THE FIVE SKANDHAS, LIKE FLOATING CLOUDS, EMPTYLY COME AND GO. None of the five heaps, or skandhas--form, feeling, thought, activity, and consciousness--have any inherent nature. Fundamentally, their substance is emptiness, like that of floating clouds drifting naturally in the sky. They were never created, and so no one controls them and no one has authority over them.

THE THREE POISONS, LIKE BUBBLES OF WATER, RISE AND SINK, UNREAL. The three poisons of greed, hatred, and stupidity are as strong as putrid meat, as poisoned wine, as opium, and every other poison; yet they too, have no inherent nature. In general, they come from defiled habits; they are like bubbles, produced of themselves and extinguished of themselves. Suddenly they are there; suddenly they are gone. Empty and false, they rise and sink--they are unreal.:

TEXT:

WHEN ONE IS CERTIFIED TO THE CHARACTERISTIC OF REALITY,
THERE ARE NO PEOPLE OR DHARMAS,
THE KARMA OF THE AVICHI IS CANCELLED IN A KSHANA.
IF I WERE DECEIVING LIVING BEINGS WITH UNTRUE WORDS,
I'D INVITE UPON MYSELF THE RIPPING OUT OF TONGUES FOR AEONS AS MANY
AS DUST AND SAND.

COMMENTARY :

WHEN ONE IS CERTIFIED TO THE CHARACTERISTIC OF REALITY. That is, when one has been certified as having attained the fruition of Enlightenment, which has no characteristics, THERE ARE NO PEOPLE OR DHARMAS. Both people and dharmas vanish, and one miraculously tallies with True Emptiness.

THE KARMA OF THE AVICHI IS CANCELLED IN KSHANA. In an instant, the offense karma deserving the uninterrupted Hell, is wiped out. How can this be? The Superior One cuts out the consciousness-seeds of beginningless karma with the Royal Vajra Jewelled Sword.

IF I WERE DECEIVING LIVING BEINGS WITH UNTRUE WORDS.

What I, Master Yung Chia, now say is the true and genuine testimony of Enlightenment. If I were cheating living beings with lies, I'd certainly cause myself to fall into a hell where my tongue would be ripped out for as many ages as there are particles of dust and sand, and I would undergo unlimited suffering in retribution. These lines express the Master's kindheartedness and concern. He was afraid that people would be skeptical and disbelieve what he said, so he make this vow to strengthen the faith of living beings and enable them to be certified to Unconditional Enlightenment. The Great Master's compassion for living beings was extremely deep.

TEXT:

WITH SUDDEN ENLIGHTENED UNDERSTANDING OF THE DHYANA OF THE THUS COME ONES,
THE SIX CROSSINGS-OVER AND TEN THOUSAND PRACTICES ARE COMPLETE IN SUBSTANCE.
IN A DREAM, VERY CLEARLY, THERE ARE SIX DESTINIES;
AFTER ENLIGHTENMENT, COMPLETELY EMPTY, THERE IS NO UNIVERSE.

COMMENTARY:

WITH SUDDEN ENLIGHTENED UNDERSTANDING OF THE DHYANA OF THE THUS COME ONES. Suddenly there is a great opening up of complete understanding: then there are no gradual steps to Enlightenment to this Dharma-door of the Mind-ground.

THE SIX CROSSINGS-OVER AND TEN THOUSAND PRACTICES ARE COMPLETE IN SUBSTANCE. We should know from the beginning that the merit and virtue of the six crossings-over--giving, holding Precepts, patience, vigor, Dhyana samadhi, and wisdom--and the ten thousand practices, are all in our inherent nature, fundamentally complete and perfect. They are not lacking, nor are they in excess.

IN A DREAM, VERY CLEARLY, THERE ARE SIX DESTINIES. While people are in a confused dream, the six paths of gods, humans, asuras, hells, hungry ghosts, and animals, are distinctly evident. Yet AFTER ENLIGHTENMENT, COMPLETELY EMPTY, THERE IS NO UNIVERSE. After one becomes Enlightened and is roused from the confused dream, emptiness is pulverized, home is broken, and people vanish. Then how could the Three Thousand Great Thousand World system exist?

TEXT:

NO OFFENSES OR BLESSINGS, NO BENEFIT OR LOSS,
IN THE STILL, EXTINCT NATURE NO QUESTIONS OR SEEKING,
RECENTLY THE DUSTY MIRROR HAS NOT BEEN POLISHED,
TODAY WE MUST ANALYZE AND MAKE CLEAR DISTINCTIONS.

COMMENTARY:

NO OFFENSES OR BLESSINGS, NO BENEFIT OR LOSS. In the principle and substance of the inherent nature, the creation and destruction of offenses and blessings and the increase or decrease of benefit and loss, are fundamentally intangible characteristics.

IN THE STILL, EXTINCT NATURE NO QUESTIONS OR SEEKING. The still, extinct nature of all dharmas cannot be explained with words, so the verse says that there are

"no questions or seeking."

RECENTLY THE DUSTY MIRROR HAS NOT BEEN POLISHED. Fundamentally, everyone is replete with the still, extinct nature. No one lacks it. However, it is like a mirror covered with dust; it is hard for its light to appear. One must polish it by the power of cultivating Dhyana samadhi and pour over it the efficacious Dharma-water of sweet dew. Having polished it, having rubbed and burnished it, one will be able to go back to the origin and return to the source.

TODAY WE MUST ANALYZE AND MAKE CLEAR DISTINCTIONS. In past lives we were born drunk and died dreaming. We did not consider escaping from the burning house of the three realms. We mistook suffering for bliss, and we did not meet a good Knowing One to guide and transform us. But now we must make distinctions very clearly. How can we just let things slide again, letting the months and years slip by, numb to the piercing needle's pain? We should analyze ourselves without delay and proceed to stop this vicious cycle.

TEXT:

WHO IS WITHOUT THOUGHT? WHO IS WITHOUT BIRTH?
IF THERE IS REALLY NO PRODUCTION, THERE IS NOTHING NOT PRODUCED.
SUMMON A WOODEN STATUE AND INQUIRE OF IT.
APPLY YOURSELF TO SEEKING BUDDHAHOOD; SOONER OR LATER YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH IT.

COMMENTARY:

WHO IS WITHOUT THOUGHT? WHO IS WITHOUT BIRTH? Who can be without false thinking, wearisome sense impressions, and not turn in the revolving wheel of birth and death?

IF THERE IS REALLY NO PRODUCTION, THERE IS NOTHING NOT PRODUCED. If there is indeed no production, there is both no destruction and nothing that isn't produced.

SUMMON A WOODEN STATUE AND INQUIRE OF IT. If you want to understand this principle, you can ask a wooden statue. He will give you a most wondrous answer.

APPLY YOURSELF TO SEEKING BUDDHAHOOD; SOONER OR LATER YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH IT. One should not incline to either extreme of knowing only to seek the Buddha or only seeking the self, or one will be unable to reach the ultimate meaning of the Middle Way. The result will be a perverse arising of inverted views. In seeking the Buddha, one becomes attached to the characteristic of "otherness" and gives rise to an attitude of dependence. If one does not make reckonings of "Sooner" or "later," there can be accomplishment. But if one seeks the self, one will become attached to the characteristic of self and give rise to an obstinate grasping.

How can confusion and Enlightenment be spoken of as slow or quick? People who incline to extremes keep working at the gates of the six sense-organs, which is like stirring water to stop it from boiling instead of using the sensible method of putting out the fire under the pot.

The verse also says that if you apply yourself single-mindedly to seeking Buddhahood, you will be successful sooner or later.

TEXT:

LET THE FOUR ELEMENTS GO, DO NOT GRASP AT THEM.
THE NATURE OF STILL QUIESCENCE ACCORDS WITH DRINKING AND EATING.
ALL ACTIVITIES ARE IMPERMANENT; EVERYTHING IS EMPTY.
THAT IS THE GREAT AND PERFECT ENLIGHTENMENT OF THE THUS COME ONE.

COMMENTARY:

LET THE FOUR ELEMENTS GO. DO NOT GRASP AT THEM. We people are made from the combining of the solidity of earth, the moisture of water, the wormth of fire, and the breath of wind. We should not grasp and become attached to these characteristics or to the complications which arise from having a self.

THE NATURE OF STILL QUIESCENCE ACCORDS WITH DRINKING AND EATING. The nature of still quiescence accords with conditions, yet does not change. Unperturbed, it is always Thus. Wearing clothes, eating a meal, drinking tea--none are not the Middle way. Right in your native surroundings is your inherent family treasure.

ALL ACTIVITIES ARE IMPERMANENT; EVERYTHING IS EMPTY. Every kind of activity belongs fundamentally to impermanence, so the verse says that everything is empty.

THAT IS THE GREAT AND PERFECT ENLIGHTENMENT OF THE THUS COME ONE. The merit and virtue of wonderful Existence are entirely complete within True Emptiness, and just that is the Thus Come One's perfect, great Enlightenment of the Buddha-nature. When there is the perfection of the Threefold Enlightenment and repleteness with the ten thousand virtues, then one is called the Buddha. The Threefold Enlightenment is Enlightenment of self, Enlightenment of others, and the Perfection of Enlightened Practice.

TEXT:

IT IS CERTAIN THAT THESE WORDS EXPRESS THE TRUE VEHICLE,
WHOEVER DOES NOT ACCEPT THEM MAY INQUIRE AS THEY WISH.
IT CUTS DIRECTLY THROUGH TO THE SOURCE;
IT IS SEALED BY ALL BUDDHA.
I CANNOT PLUCK LEAVES AND SEEK OUT BRANCHES.

COMMENTARY:

IT IS CERTAIN THAT THESE WORDS EXPRESS THE TRUE VEHICLE. These words definitely do express the most supreme True Vehicle. However, WHOEVER DOES NOT ACCEPT THEM MAY INQUIRE AS THEY WISH. That is, if there are people who still harbor doubts and do not believe these principles, they may raise questions as they wish in order to air their misgivings.

IT CUTS DIRECTLY THROUGH TO THE SOURCE; IT IS SEALED BY ALL BUDDHAS. This is the Dharma that cuts through most directly, that penetrates completely to the very bottom, that goes directly through to the treasure's source. It is sealed and certified by all Buddhas. It does not arise out of some selfish individual's contrivances to gain fame and fortune.

I CANNOT PLUCK LEAVES AND SEEK OUT BRANCHES. As for the purport of the Small Vehicle--those twigs and branches, those distorted principles--on that I will not waste time and words. The Buddhas of the ten directions elucidated the one Supreme Dharma; and in speaking of the Way with a single voice, the Great Masters left nothing

out. Now, unless I wish to reiterate those many; words, there is no call for me to open my mouth.

TEXT:

PEOPLE DO NOT RECOGNIZE THE MANI-PEARL,
THEY MAY RECEIVE IT IN PERSON IN THE TREASURY OF THE THUS
COME ONE.
THE SIX KINDS OF SPIRITUAL FUNCTIONINGS ARE EMPTY,
YET NOT EMPTY.
THIS PEARL OF PERFECT BRIGHTNESS HAS FORM, YET HAS NO FORM.

COMMENTARY:

PEOPLE DO NOT RECOGNIZE THE MANI-PEARL. This precious wish-granting Mani-pearl is spiritual, miraculous, and hard to conceive of, and the result is that people do not recognize it.

THIS SIX KINDS OF SPIRITUAL FUNCTIONINGS ARE EMPTY, YET NOT EMPTY. The heavenly eye, the heavenly ear, the ability to know others' thoughts, the ability to know past lives, the exhaustion of out-flows, and spiritual completeness are all perfect spiritual functionings of this Mani-pearl. Though empty, they are yet not empty.

THIS PEARL OF PERFECT BRIGHTNESS HAS FORM, YET HAS NO FORM. The Mani-jewel belongs with the form dharmas, and yet this pearl of perfect brilliance is actually for which is apart from form; an appearance which has no appearance. The Vajra Sutra says,

One who sees me in form, or seeks me in sound,
Practices a deviant way and cannot see the Thus Come One.

The same is true of the Mani-pearl; since it cannot be sought in emptiness, it even less can be seen in form. Ultimately, then, what is it like? You simply go in person to retrieve this precious pearl in the Treasury of the Thus Come Ones. After that, you will be able to comprehend it clearly for yourself.

TEXT:

PURIFY THE FIVE EYES; ATTAIN THE FIVE POWER,
SIMPLY ACCOMPLISH THEM AND KNOW
WHAT'S HARD TO FATHOM,
SHAPES IN A MIRROR ARE NOT HARD TO SEE,
BUT THE MOON IN THE WATER--HOW CAN ONE PLUCK IT OUT?

COMMENTARY:

PURIFY THE FIVE EYES; ATTAIN THE FIVE POWERS. Having attained the six kinds spiritual functionings, then purify the five eyes: the Buddha-eye, the Dharma-eye, the Wisdom-eyes, the Heavenly-Eye, and the Flesh-Eye; and then to aid them, bring forth the five powers: faith, vigor, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom.

SIMPLY ACCOMPLISH THEM AND WHAT'S KNOW WHAT'S HARD TO FATHOM. To be able to understand these states, one simply needs to accomplish them oneself. They cannot be fathomed by thinking or by making distinctions.

SHAPES IN A MIRROR ARE NOT HARD TO SEE. Every-one can see shapes which are reflected in a mirror; there is nothing difficult in that. The meaning here is that when one sees a Sage, one should aspire to be like him; and when one sees someone who is not a Sage, one should reflect the light inward and examine oneself.

BUT THE MOON IN THE WATER--HOW CAN ONE PLUCK IT OUT?

One shouldn't be like a dolt who mistakes the moon in the water for the real moon. Even if he were to give up his life trying to grab it, how could he succeed? Therefore it says, "How can one pluck it out?" This is an analogy for cultivating blindly and smelting recklessly; for taking side doors and externalist paths, for practicing austerities which are not beneficial, and for being attached to characteristics or attached to emptiness. Such are the foolish people who try to pull the moon out of the water; how could they possibly pluck it out?

TEXT:

EVER PRACTICING IN SOLITUDE, EVER WALKING ALONE
THOSE WHO HAVE PENETRATED, ROAM NIRVANA'S ROAD
TOGETHER.
THEIR TUNE IS ANCIENT, THEIR EXPRESSION PURE,
THEIR BEARING NATURALLY LOFTY.

THEIR APPEARANCE IS HAGGARD, THEIR INTEGRITY UNSHAKEABLE.
PEOPLE IGNORE THEM.

COMMENTARY:

EVER PRACTICING IN SOLITUDE, EVER WALKING ALONE. To cultivate the Way, one must choose a still and quiet place to practice concentration and regularly cultivate. When one tallies with enlightenment through Dhyana Samadhi, one certifiably attains the mutually responding wisdom.

THOSE WHO HAVE PENETRATED, ROAM NIRVANA'S ROAD TOGETHER. If those who have understanding, who are of like resolve, and whose paths are the same should meet, they do not hinder one another in roaming the proper path of pure Nirvana.

THEIR TUNE IS ANCIENT, THEIR EXPRESSION PURE, THEIR BEARING NATURALLY LOFTY. Although their song is ancient, their expression is pure, and those who can harmonize with this song have always been rare. How can their bearing not be lofty of itself? So it is said,

There are very few who are in tune with the highest songs.

THEIR APPEARANCE HAGGARD, THEIR INTEGRITY UNSHAKEABLE. PEOPLE IGNORE THEM. The external appearance of these cultivators of the way is haggard and emaciated, but their principles and moral integrity are as solid as Vajra and diamond. Common, ordinary people cannot recognize them, and when they see them they turn their backs on them.

TEXT:

THE SHAKYAN DISCIPLES SAY THAT THEY ARE POOR,
THEY ARE INDEED POOR IN BODY, BUT NOT POOR IN THE WAY.

AS TO POVERTY, THEIR BODIES ARE EVER WRAPPED IN COARSE RAGS.
AS TO THE WAY, A PRICELESS JEWEL IS STORED IN THEIR HEARTS.
A PRICELESS JEWEL. ITS USES INEXHAUSTIBLE,
FOR BENEFITTING BEINGS, RESPONDING TO POTENTIALS ALWAYS
GENEROUSLY, THREE BODIES, FOUR WISDOMS ARE COMPLETE IN
THE SUBSTANCE.
EIGHT LIBERATIONS, SIX SPIRITUAL POWERS ARE IN THE MIND-
GROUND SEAL.

COMMENTARY:

THE SHAKYAN DISCIPLES SAY THAT THEY ARE POOR. Cultivators of the way call themselves "poor robes."

THEY ARE INDEED POOR IN BODY, BUT NOT POOR IN THE WAY. Actually, although they seem to be poor, they are rich in the way. Why is this said?

AS TO POVERTY, THEIR BODIES ARE EVER WRAPPED IN COARSE RAGS. They are poor in that they always wear tattered rags from the garbage heap, with hundreds of patches and thousands of stitches.

AS TO THE WAY, A PRICELESS JEWEL IS STORED IN THEIR HEARTS. But in terms of virtue in the Way, and of being at ease in the inherent nature, there is a priceless jewel stored in the immeasurable, boundless Dharma door of the mind-ground.

What is poverty? Poverty is an attitude of greed. What are riches? They are a mind without greed. What is the Way? It is cultivation. What is the jewel? It is to be without selfishness or self-seeking. Therefore I say,

To stop the mind and cut off thought is true wealth and honor;

to put a complete end to selfish lust is the true field of blessings.

A PRICELESS JEWEL, ITS USES INEXHAUSTIBLE. It is the Dharma wealth of merit and virtue. Taking from it does not use it up. Using it does not exhaust it.

FOR BENEFITTING BEINGS, RESPONDING TO POTENTIALS ALWAYS GENEROUSLY. With it, they universally rescue beings everywhere in response to myriad opportunities; they are never stingy.

THREE BODIES, FOUR WISDOMS ARE COMPLETE IN THE SUBSTANCE. The three bodies are the Dharma-body, the Retribution-body, and the Transformation-body. The Four Wisdoms are these:

1. Turning the five consciousnesses around, which is the Wisdom of Accomplishing what is to be Done.
2. Turning the sixth or mind-consciousness around, which is Wisdom through wonderful Contemplation and investigation.
3. Turning the seventh or manas consciousness around, which is the Wisdom of Equality.
4. Turning the eighth or alaya consciousness around, which is the Wisdom of the Great Perfect Mirror.

The substance of this original nature is perfect and full, and lacks nothing.

EIGHT LIBERATIONS, SIX SPIRITUAL POWERS ARE IN THE MIND-GROUND SEAL.

The Eight Liberations are these:

1. The contemplation of external form when there are internal thoughts of form.
2. The contemplation of external form when there are no internal thoughts of form.
3. The complete state of personally accomplishing pure liberation.
4. The place of boundless emptiness.
5. The place of boundless consciousness.
6. The place where nothing exists.
7. The place where there is neither thought nor lack of thought.
8. The complete state of personally accomplishing the samadhi of the extinction of feeling and thought.

The Six Spiritual Powers are these:

1. The heavenly eye.
2. The heavenly ear.
3. The knowledge of others' minds.
4. The knowledge of past lives.
5. The attainment of spiritual states.
6. The exhaustion of outflows.

All of them are inherently complete in the Dharma-seal of the mind-ground.

TEXT:

CERTAIN ABOUT ONE THING, SUPERIOR PEOPLE UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING,
MIDDLING AND INFERIOR PEOPLE LEARN MUCH, YET DOUBT MUCH.
SIMPLY CAST OFF YOUR OWN CHERISHED DIRTY CLOTHES,
WHO COULD GO OUT AND BOAST ABOUT HIS VIGOR?

COMMENTARY:

CERTAIN ABOUT ONE THING, SUPERIOR PEOPLE UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING.
People with superior wholesome roots hear one thing and awaken to a thousand things.
They thoroughly understand all dharmas and harbor no doubts.

MIDDLING AND INFERIOR PEOPLE LEARN MUCH, YET DOUBT MUCH. Middling and inferior people, having poor roots, may be learned, but they have many doubts and do not grow in faith.

SIMPLY CAST OFF YOUR CHERISHED DIRTY CLOTHES. Cultivators of the way seek only to understand their own basic mind and see their own basic nature. That is like removing filthy clothes from oneself.

WHO COULD GO OUT AND BOAST ABOUT HIS VIGOR? ASince cultivation is naturally each individual's own responsibility, why would anyone find it necessary to introduce himself to the world, boast about his vigor, yet not be serious about really practicing himself?

TEXT:

LET OTHERS SLANDER ME; I BEAR THEIR CONDEMNATION.

THOSE WHO TRY TO BURN THE SKY ONLY EXHAUST THEMSELVES.
WHEN I HEAR IT, IT'S JUST LIKE DRINKING SWEET DEW.
THUS SMELTED AND REFINED, SUDDENLY ONE ENTERS THE
INCONCEIVABLE.

COMMENTARY:

LET OTHERS SLANDER ME; I BEAR THEIR CONDEMNATION. The Dharma door of the mind-ground is profoundly subtle and wonderful, and it cannot be understood by common people or those of the Two Vehicles. Thus their baseless slander ends with the hearing of it. Why should anything be said in return?

THOSE WHO TRY TO BURN THE SKY ONLY EXHAUST THEMSELVES. People who malign others are like people who try to burn the sky with a torch. They tire themselves out with their futile efforts. How could they possibly injure the sky?

WHEN I HEAR IT, IT'S JUST LIKE DRINKING SWEET DEW. When he hears irritable and fault-finding words, a true cultivator should feel thankful. since for him, it is the same as drinking sweet dew, or entering a cool, refreshing pool.

THUS SMELTED AND REFINED, SUDDENLY ONE ENTERS THE INCONCEIVABLE. One who is capable of this kind of contemplation obtains benefit from the Dharma through its opposite. He is confronted with the poisons of greed, hatred, and stupidity, which are powerful as arsenic and stronger than wild beast; but he must undergo this process of refining. Then, invisibly and quite suddenly, he enters his contentment is inexhaustible.

TEXT

CONTEMPLATE VICIOUS WORDS AS MERIT AND VIRTUE,
THEN VICIOUS WORDS BECOME ONE'S WISE AND GOOD ADVISORS.
DO NOT LET ABUSE AND SLANDER AROUSE ENMITY OR LIKING.

HOW ELSE CAN THE POWER OF COMPASSION AND PATIENCE
WITH NON-PRODUCTION BE MANIFEST?

COMMENTARY:

CONTEMPLATE VICIOUS WORDS AS MERIT AND VIRTUE. To cultivate the way, one must practice patience. One should see vicious words as the mother of merit and virtue. Not only should one not become angry, but in addition, one should be grateful for the merit and virtue of it, as the Patient Immortal was towards the King of Kalinga.

THEN VICIOUS WORDS BECOME ONE'S WISE AND GOOD ADVISORS. The vicious words and behavior become our great and learned counselors.

DO NOT LET ABUSE AND SLANDER AROUSE ENMITY OR LIKING. In response to ridicule or backbiting, don't give rise to enmity or liking, but maintain the great and equal compassion even towards those with whom you have no affinities--the great compassion of identity in substance. Your measure of patience under insult should be as big as the Dharma Realm.

HOW ELSE CAN THE POWER OF COMPASSION AND PATIENCE WITH NON-
PRODUCTION BE MANIFEST? If one cannot face situations of insult and mistreatment, how can patience with the non-production of dharmas, which one has

cultivated and certified to, be demonstrated? How can the spirit and unsurpassed samadhi power of patience under insult be manifest? How can samadhi power of great valor, great strength, great kindness, great vows, and great patience be evidenced?

TEXT:

THE SCHOOL PENETRATED AND THE WORDS PENETRATED,
CONCENTRATION AND WISDOM ARE COMPLETELY CLEAR;
I DO NOT STAGNATE IN EMPTINESS.
BUT I AM NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS GOT THROUGH TO COMPREHENSION.
ALL THE BUDDHAS, MYRIAD AS GANGES' SANDS, ARE OF THE
VERY SAME SUBSTANCE.

COMMENTARY:

THE SCHOOL PENETRATED AND THE WORDS PENETRATED. The "school" is the Ch'an School, and the "words" are the principles of its teachings. The two must be understood together; then one can be called a craftsman of the School--a Dharma Master.

CONCENTRATION AND WISDOM ARE COMPLETELY CLEAR; I DO NOT STAGNATE IN EMPTINESS. Since the master craftsman has penetrated both the School and its explanations, it is certain that his samadhi power has become perfectly fused and the foundation of his wisdom is bright and penetrating. He never falls into the stagnant sickness of vacant stillness.

BUT I AM NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS GOT THGOUGH TO COMPREHENSION. I certainly haven't cated special or shown off as uniqre and different, claiming that I alone have penetrated this Dharma door and understood this wonderful principle.

ALL THE BUDDHAS, MYRIAD AS GANGES' SANDS, ARE OF THE VERY SAME SUBSTANCE. The Buddha of the ten diredtions and the three periods of time, their numbers as measureless and boundless as the grains of sand in the ganges River, are all identically replete with the capabilities of nature of this substance and principle. They are one with and not different from the living beings that are myriad as Ganes' sands, Thus it is said,

Every single living being has the buddha. All can become Buddhas.

TEXT:

ROAR OF THE LION IS FESARLESS PROCLAMATION,
WHEN THE HUNDRED WILD BEASTS HEAR IT, THEIR BRAINS
SPLIT, AND THE MUSK-ELEPHANT FLEES IN CONFUSION, LOSING HIS
AWESOMENESS.
THE GODS AND DRAGONS LISTEN IN STILLNESS AND IN GREAT JOY.

COMMENTARY:

THE ROAR OF THE LION IS PEARLESS PROCLAMATION. My speaking of this Dharma is like a great lion's roar; it is not in the least bit fearful.

WHEN THE HUNDRED WILD BEASTS HEAR IT, THEIR BRAINS SPLIT. When the Dharma King speaks the Dharma, it islike the roar of the lion, and when the wild animals hear it, they all tremble in submission. Their very brains split open, and there is fear in

their hearts.

AND THE MUSK-ELEPHANT FLEES IN CONFUSION, LOSING HIS AWESOMENESS. The musk-elephant is a mighty wild beast, but it becomes disoriented when it hears this sound. It flees, losing its usual virile, awesome, powerful, and ruthless disposition.

THE GODS AND DRAGONS LISTEN IN STILLNESS AND IN GREAT JOY. The gods, people, dragons, and spirits listen in still silence to this Dharma, and they praise it joyfully, bowing in worship and reverently making offerings. They give rise to great joy. The Buddha's speaking Dharma is like the lion's roar, and the hundred wild beasts are like the warped teachers of deviant doors to aberrant paths, who mislead people. When they hear this proper Dharma, they are frightened and lose control of themselves.

TEXT:

ROAMING THE RIVERS AND OCEANS, CROSSING MOUNTAINS AND STREAMS; SEARCHING FOR A MASTER TO ASK ABOUT THE WAY OF INVESTIGATING DHYANA,, SINCE I CAME TO KNOW THE TS'AO CREEK ROAD, I UNDERSTAND BIRTH AND DEATH AND HAVE NO CONNECTION WITH THEM.

COMMENTARY:

ROAMING THE RIVERS AND OCEANS, CROSSING MOUNTAINS AND STREAMS. The Ancient Worthies traveled everywhere on foot along the great rivers of both south and north, crossing oceans and visiting famous mountains and large streams. In navigating oceans and scaling mountains, they tasted to the full the suffering involved in travel by land and sea.

SEARCHING FOR A MASTER TO ASK ABOUT THE WAY OF INVESTIGATING DHYANA. Although they suffered greatly, they were determined in their aim to find a clear-headed teacher who understood: someone who had arrived there, whom they could ask about the essentials of the way--how to end birth and death, how to investigate Dhyana, and the miraculous merging with non-production.

SINCE I CAME TO KNOW THE TS'AO CREEK ROAD. At first, the Great Master had practiced according to the teachings of the T'ien T'ai School, and, although he had become Enlightened in certain respects, he had yet to become one with his original face. Later, he visited Nan Hua Monastery at Ts'ao Creek, where the Great Master Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch, explained and transmitted the principle of the Ch'an School which had come from the West. He became Enlightened to the wonderful principle of non-production. He understood the mind, and he saw the nature. Since he had been given the Patriarch's Seal of Certification, he said, "I came to know the Ts'ao Creek road."

I UNDERSTAND BIRTH AND DEATH AND HAVE NO CONNECTION WITH THEM. He had become Enlightened to the path of non-production and non-extinction, so he said, "I completely understand birth and death and basically have no connection with them.

TEXT:

WALKING IS DHYANA; SITTING IS ALSO DHYANA, IN SPEECH OR SILENCE, IN MOVEMENT OR STILLNESS, MY SUBSTANCE IS AT PEACE. EVEN IF I MEET WITH A KNIFE'S POINT, I AM ALWAYS COMPLETELY TRANQUIL.

IF I AM GIVEN A POESONOUS DRUG, I AM STILL TOTALLY AT EASE.
OUR MASTER MET BURNING-LAMP BUDDHA AFTER MANY AEONS AS
A PATIENT IMMORTAL.

COMMENTARY:

WALKING IS DHYANA; SITTING IS ALSO DHYANA. The daily functions of walking, standing, sitting, and lying down all take placae within Dhyana Samadhi.

IN SPEECH OR SILENCE , IN MOVEMENT OR STILLNESS, MY SUBSTANCE IS AT PEACE. Whether speaking or silent, moving or still, my basic substance is peaceful and at ease.

EVEN IF I MEET WITH A KNIFE'S POINT, I AN ALWAYS COMPLETELY TRANQUIL. Even if I encounter some unexpected countrary event, I remain tranquil, without the least bit of fear, just as the Sixth Patriarch did while he was waiting for his avenger. He knew he was coming and waited for him without fear.

IF I AM GIVEN A POISONOUS DRUG, I AM STILL TOTALLY AT EASE. If a cultivator should meet with a secret RRWMPR RO Hem him--he is just the way he always is, and he is unharmed by the poison. Such was the case with the First Patriarch, Bodhidharma, who was poisoned by people of an outside way, but did not die.

OUR MASTER MET BURNING-LAMP BUDDHA AFTER MANY AEONS AS A PATIENT IMMORTAL. He passed through boundless vast ages specializing in cultivating the practice of patience under insult.

TEXT:

HOW MANY BIRTHS? HOW MANY DEATHS? BIRTHS AND DEATHS
STRETCH FAR INTO THE DISTANCE, WITH NO FIXED END.
SINCE I SUDDENLY AWAKENED AND UNDERSTOOD NON-
PRODUCTION, HOW CAN I BE TRIEVED BY INSULT, OR PLEASED
BY GLORY?

COMMENTARY:

HOW MANY BIRTHS? HOW MANY DEATHS? Since time without beginning, we have left mountains of bones behind us as we have revolved through the six paths. No one knows the number of times we have met birth and met death, first rising, then falling.

BIRTHS AND EARTHS STRETCH FAR INTO THE DISTANCE, WITH NO FIXED END. Thus we are born and then die again, and again, reaching far across Kalpas as many as there are motes of dust, far through the months and years. There is no tome when it stops. Thus the line says, "with no fix end."

SINCE I SUDDENLY AWAKENED AND UNDERSTOOD NON-PRODUCTION. When I encountered the principles explained by the Six Patriarch of Ts'ao Creek and the supreme Dharma-door of the mind-seal, I was guided to sudden awakening, and I understood the principle of non-production and non-extinction.

HOW CAN I BE GRIEVED BY INSULT, OR PLEASED BY GLORY? Since I awakened to the principle of non-production and non-extinction, I am not alarmed. If they are foisted upon me without reason, I am not enraged. Although I may be praised and glorified, I don't become happy. If there is insult and ridicule, I am not grieved about it.

TEXT:

DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS DWELLING IN AN ARANYA,
SECLUDED FAR ON A LONELY PEAK BENEATH THE TALL PINES.
CAREFREE, I SIT IN MEDITATION, A RUSTIC MONK AT HOME.
IN QUIETUDE I LIVE AT EASE IN TRUE LIGHTHEARTEDNESS

COMMENTARY:

DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS DWELLING IN AN ARANYA. I live as a recluse, secluded deep in the mountains at the far end of a valley, in an aranya (that is, a still and quiet place), where I work hard at cultivation for the Way and return to my original face.

SECLUDED FAR ON A LONELY PEAK BENEATH THE TALL PINES. The lonely peaks are steep and high, their seclusion far and deep. There are caves in the high mountains, beneath the tall pines and blue cedars, and I sit under the luxuriant trees all day long. I wash myself clean in a pure spring, pluck fruit to eat, and scoop up handfuls of water to drink. In these simple and rustic pleasures, my joy is inexhaustible.

CAREFREE, I SIT IN MEDITATION, A RUSTIC MONK AT HOME. With no restraints, no ties, no hindrances, no obstructions, I roam at ease; practicing concentration and investigating Dhyana, I sit in tranquility. In this primitive life is this rustic monk at home.

IN QUIETUDE I LIVE AT EASE IN TRUE LIGHT-HEARTEDNESS. Dwelling in this pure place filled with stillness, free of clamor, I am genuinely lighthearted.

TEXT:

ENLIGHTENMENT IS COMPLETION, THERE IS NO FURTHER EFFORT,
IT IS NOT THE SAME AS ANY CONDITIONED DHARMAS.
TO DWELL IN CHARACTERISTICS WHILE GIVING IS TO CREATE THE
BLESSINGS OF THE HEAVENS;
IT IS LIKE LOOKING UP AND LOSING AN ARROW INTO THE SKY.

COMMENTARY:

ENLIGHTENMENT IS COMPLETION. THERE IS NO FURTHER EFFORT. By this Dharma door of the mind-ground, one opens Enlightenment suddenly, rather than passing through asamkhyeyas of Kaopas, or for a hundred Kaopas planting the seeds of one's hall-marks and characteristics. Therefore the text says, "There is no further effort."

IT IS NOT THE SAME AS ANY CONDITIONED DHARMAS. All the ordinary conditioned dharmas, with shape and characteristics, are by no means the same as the unconditioned dharma of the mind-ground.

TO DWELL IN CHARACTERISTICS WHILE GIVING IS TO CREATE THE BLESSINGS OF THE HEAVENS. If an attitude of attachment to goodness has not yet been emptied, one may plant the seeds of success, but will do no more than attain the smaller fruits of the human or heavenly reward of blessings.

IT IS LIKE LOOKING UP AND LOSING AN ARROW INTO THE SKY. When one exhausts one's heavenly blessings, one falls. That is like looking up into the sky and losing an arrow: how can it be on target? The Vajra Sutra says,

Anything with characteristics is empty and false.
If one perceives all characteristics as non-characteristics,
Then one sees the Thus Come One.
Those words are true indeed!

TEXT:

WHEN ITS FORCE IS EXHAUSTED, AN ARROW FALLS BACK DOWN;
WHICH IS TO SAY, FUTURE LIVES WILL NOT BE AS ONE WISHES--
UNLIKE THE DOOR TO THE REAL CHARACTERISTIC OF THE
UNCONDITIONED:
A SINGLE LEAP'S STRAIGHT ENTRY TO THE GROUND OF THE THUS
COME ONES.

COMMENTARY:

WHEN ITS FORCE IS EXHAUSTED, AN ARROW FALLS BACK DOWN. The time comes when the smaller result that one has cultivated, the reward of human or heavenly blessings, reaches its end. It is like the arrow which, pointed up, has been loosed into the air--when its force is expended, that arrow will fall back down.

WHICH IS TO SAY, FUTURE LIVES WILL NOT BE AS ONE WISHES. Having fallen then into the turning wheel of the six paths, one receives the retribution over and over; an unending web, forever sinking into the bitter sea of birth and death, from which it is difficult to escape. Therefore the text says, "Which is to say, future lives will not be as one wishes."

UNLIKE THE DOOR TO THE REAL CHARACTERISTIC OF THE UNCONDITIONED. This is the unconditioned Dharma door of the Treasury of the Proper Dharma Eye, of the wonderful mind of Nirvana, of the characteristic of reality which has no characteristics, of the special transmission outside the teachings. Having awakened to one thing, one awakens to everything; having been certified to one thing, one is certified to everything. This is not like the crooked cultivation according to the Two Vehicles.

A SINGLE LEAP'S STRAIGHT ENTRY TO THE GROUND OF THE THUS COME ONE. Through this Dharma door, one suddenly awakens to what is fundamental and leaps straight to the ground of the Buddhas, reaching the treasure trove. One does not stagnate in the Transformation City. In fruition, one is certified to non-production and in position, one tallies with Wonderful Enlightenment. One carries on the Triple Jewel, teaching and transforming. The adornments of a Buddha become one's own adornments.

TEXT:

ONLY GET THE ROOT; HAVE NO CONCERN FOR THE BRANCH-TIPS, LIKE A PURE CRYSTAL CONTAINING A JEWELLED MOON, WHEN THIS WISH-GRANTING PEARL CAN BE UNDERSTOOD, SELF-BENEFIT AND THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS ARE FOREVER UNENDING.

COMMENTARY:

ONLY GET THE ROOT; HAVE NO CONCERN FOR THE BRANCH-TIPS. It must be on the mind-ground that the cultivator of the way applies his spiritual skill. When he reaches the root, he will understand his own fundamental mind and see his inherent, basic nature. It is said that upon attaining the One, the myriad matters are resolved. So what is the use

of bothering with the branch-tips?

LIKE A PURE CRYSTAL CONTAINING A JEWELLED MOON. The example is of a jeweled moon contained in a clear, pure crystal. How could the root be forsaken to pursue the ramifications?

WHEN THIS WISH-GRANTING PEARL CAN BE UNDERSTOOD. When you can tell the fundamental derivative--when you recognize your inherent nature, which is the wish-fulfilling pearl--its miraculous uses will be inexhaustible.

SELF-BENEFIT AND THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS ARE FOREVER UNENDING. Then this precious wish-fulfilling pearl can be of benefit to oneself, by one's Enlightenment to the fundamental substance. It can also benefit others, by its Enlightenment of other people. The benefits are ever-flowing, without end.

TEXT:

IN THE RIVER THE MOON SHINES; IN THE PINES THE WIND SIGHS.
WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IN THE CLEAR, LONG NIGHT?
THE BUDDHA-NATURE'S PRECEPT-PEARL IS THE MIND-GROUND
SEAL. FOG AND DEW, CLOUDS AND MISTS ARE THE BODY'S CLOTHING.

COMMENTARY:

IN THE RIVER THE MOON SHINES; IN THE PINES THE WIND SIGHS. When the moon appears in the water of the clear mind, and in the sky of concentrated thought there are no clouds, then there is a state of great naturalness. Nothing further is done in this natural and rustic existence. One's happiness is inexhaustible and transcendental.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IN THE CLEAR, LONG NIGHT? Nothing is done, and yet nothing is left undone. There are great creations and great transformations, great penetration, and Great Enlightenment. Beginning and end are connected, and the myriad existing things are contained.

THE BUDDHA-NATURE'S PRECEPT-PEARL IS THE MIND-GROUND SEAL. One's inherent nature is pure, clean undefiled, and its light shines everywhere, neither internal nor external. All flows forth from the Dharma door of the mind-ground; therefore, it is called the "mind-ground seal."

FOG AND DEW, CLOUDS AND MISTS ARE THE BODY'S CLOTHING. Fog and dew are illusory and temporary. Clouds and mists are vacuous and false. They have no inherent substantive nature. Like the clothes on our bodies, they do not last. This is an analogy for the poisons of greed, hatred, stupidity, arrogance, and so forth. Although they can veil Buddha-nature and cast a shadow over it, they; are yet like fog and dew, like clouds and mists. Although they can screen out the clear sky, they are nothing more than temporary phenomena.

TEXT:

THE ALMS-BOWL SUBDUES THE DRAGONS; THE TIN STAFF
VANQUISHES TIGERS, AND THE GOLDEN RINGS OF ITS TWO
PARTS SOUND IN CLEAR SUCCESSION.
IT IS NO SYMBOLIC FORM UNSUPPORTED BY REAL EVENTS;
IT IS THE JEWELLED STAFF OF THE THUS COME ONE, WHICH HE
HIMSELF PASSED DOWN.

COMMENTARY:

THE ALMS-BOWL SUBDUES THE DRAGONS; THE TIN STAFF VANQUISHES TIGERS. When the nature is concentrated, dragons are subdued. When one's way of life is right, tigers are tamed. Once the dragons and tigers of one's nature are conquered, external dragons and tigers, too, are naturally subdued.

AND THE GOLDEN RINGS OF ITS TWO PARTS SOUND IN CLEAR SUCCESSION. The staff which vanquishes tigers has two sections, which represent the two kinds of truth: the genuine and the common. Suspended from each section are three golden rings, which represent the Six Paramitas.

IT IS NO SYMBOLIC FORM UNSUPPORTED BY REAL EVENTS. This staff is not just a symbol, an empty show with no real basis.

IT IS THE JEWELED STAFF OF THE THUS COME ONE, WHICH HE HIMSELF PASSED DOWN. The Thus Come One, Shakyamuni Buddha, transmitted in person to his assembly of disciples the methods of practicing, cultivating and maintaining the way, and bequeathed to them the Dharma-jewel of his tin staff.

TEXT:

DO NOT SEEK THE TRUE, DO NOT CUT OFF THE FALSE,
COMPREHEND THAT BOTH DHARMAS ARE EMPTY; THEY
HAVE NO CHARACTERISTICS.
WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS, THERE IS NO EMPTINESS
AND NO NON-EMPTINESS.
JUST THAT IS THE TRUE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE THUS COME ONE.

COMMENTARY:

DO NOT SEEK THE TRUE, DO NOT CUT OFF THE FALSE. The man of the way without a mind has already awakened to non-production, and so he undergoes no further existences. Therefore, there is no truth that can be sought, and there is no falseness that can be cut off.

COMPREHEND THAT BOTH DHARMAS ARE EMPTY; THEY HAVE NO CHARACTERISTICS. One should completely understand that the two dharmas of truth and falsity, the two dharmas of form and mind, the two dharmas of existence and non-existence, and so forth, are all totally empty and without characteristics. How could one pursue such illusory dust? It would just be a waste of time.

WITHOUT NO NON-EMPTINESS. Since there are no identifiable characteristics, then even less is there any emptiness to speak of. It is said,
The mouth wants to speak, but words are lost.
The mind wants to reason, but concepts have gone.
Therefore, the text says, "and no non-emptiness."

JUST THAT IS THE TRUE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE THUS COME ONE. This is the state in which,

The path of speech is cut off;
The place of the mind's workings is destroyed.

It is inconceivable, the transcendence of both the relative and the absolute. It is the Dharma-body of all Buddhas, and the place of study of all Bodhisattvas. This is what the characteristic of true actuality of the Thus Come One is like.

TEXT:

THE MIND-MIRROR IS BRIGHT; ITS REFLECTIONS ARE UNHINDERED.
VAST, LUSTROUS, AND SHINING, IT PERVADES WORLDS LIKE SAND-
GRAINS.

IN IT APPEAR THE IMAGES OF THE MYRIAD PHENOMENA;
A PEARL OF PERFECT LIGHT, NEITHER WITHIN NOR WITHOUT

COMMENTARY:

THE MIND-MIRROR IS BRIGHT; ITS REFLECTIONS ARE UNHINDERED. One's own mind is like a great, bright mirror, which reflects all the ten thousand things without any one of them hindering any other. Each thing retains its basic characteristics and is not confused in the substance of the mirror.

VAST, LUSTROUS, AND SHINING, IT PERVADES WORLDS LIKE SAND-GRAINS. This mind-mirror is far-reaching, great, bright, and still, permeating the "Great-thousand" universes, numerous as grains of sand. Nowhere does its light fail to circulate; nowhere does its brightness fail to shine. It is so great that there is nothing outside of it, and so small that there is nothing within it.

IN IT APPEAR THE IMAGES OF THE MYRIAD PHENOMENA. Not a single one of the myriad forms in the universe fails to appear in its light. Yet the light is not apart from the images, and the images are not apart from the light. The rays of light each shine upon another, and all the images are in perfect fusion. Therefore, all the images appear within it.

A PEARL OF PERFECT LIGHT, NEITHER WITHIN NOR WITHOUT. This perfection of radiance, this brilliance of light is the fundamental substance of our mind's light. It is neither long nor short, neither black nor white, neither square nor round, neither within nor without. The foolish people of the world do not understand this principle, and they run outside to look for it. They are said by the Thus Come One to be pitiful.

TEXT:

IF ONE PASSES INTO EMPTINESS AND DENIES CAUSE AND EFFECT,
THEN GROSS AND RECKLESS, ONE INVITES CALAMITIES.
THIS IS THE MISTAKE OF ABANDONING EXISTENCE AND BEING
ATTACHED TO EMPTINESS--
JUST AS IF, TO ESCAPE DROWNING, ONE WERE TO LEAP INTO A FIRE.

COMMENTARY:

IF ONE PASSES INTO EMPTINESS AND DENIES CAUSE AND EFFECT. Since a cultivator should not be attached to existence, he should even less fall into emptiness. If he does, it is to be feared that he will fall into the error of denying cause and effect, and his deviant views will proliferate, indeed.

THEN GROSS AND RECKLESS, ONE INVITES CALAMITIES. Crude and coarse, drifting along carelessly, one will bring all manner of unexpected disasters rushing in, one after another. In the end, one's body will perish and the way will be lost. This is the

irredeemable result.

THIS IS THE MISTAKE OF ABANDONING EXISTENCE AND BEING ATTACHED TO EMPTINESS. To abandon existence but be attached to emptiness is to make just this sort of mistake. JUST AS IF, TO ESCAPE DROWNING, ONE WERE TO LEAP INTO A FIRE. One whobcomes attache to emptiness is like a person who wishes to escape the misfortune of drowning , and yet casts himself instead into a fire, and is painfully burned.

TEXT:

SOME REJECT THE FALSE MIND TO GRASP TRUE PRINCIPLE,
BUT THE MIND THAT GRASPS AND REJECTS IS INGENIOUS
AND FRAUDULENT.
STUCENTS WHO DO NOT UNDERSTAND AND USE IT IN CULTIVATION.
REALLY ARE MISTAKING A THIEF FOR THEIR OWN SON.

COMMENTARY:

SOME REJECT THE FALSE MIND TO GRASP TRUE PRINCIPLE. Cultivators who lack wisdom wrongly use their human mind to reject the false and grasp at the true. This is an essential point to understand for those who would crectly regard the way.

BUT THE MIND THAT GRASPS AND REJECTS IS INGENIOUS AND FRAUDULENT. One should know that grasping and rejecting in the mind beling among the relative dharmas. Such groping is like grabbing for the moon in the water, or like watching flowers in a mirror: they are merely ingenious, empty, and fraudulent.

STUDENTS WHO DO NOT UNDERSTAND AND USE IT IN CULTIVATION. Students of the wah who do not understand theerror in this make mistaken use of it in their cultivation, not knowing what is right and what is wrong in it.

REALLY ARE MISTAKING A THIEF FOR THEIR OWN SON. That kind of cultivation is actually opening the door and greeting the burglar. It is no different from mistaking a thief for one's own son.

TEXT:

DHARMA WEALTH IS LOST, AND MERIT AND MIRTUE DESTROYED,
DUE TO NOTHING ELSE THAN THE CONSCIOUS MIND,
THROUGH THE DOOR OF DHYANA THE MIND IS ENDED,
AND ONE SUDDENLY ENTERS THE POWERFUL, UNPRODUCED
KNOWLEDGE AND INSIGHT.

COMMENTARY:

DHARNA WEALTH IS LOST, AND MERIT AND VIRTUE DESTROYED. Those who mistake a thief for their own child and open that door to the burglar, will surely lose the ewealth of their inherent Dharma-nature and destroy their original endowment of abilities and virtues. Mistaken themselves, and leading other into error, they are to be pitied.

DUE TO NOTHING ELSE THAN THE CONSCIOUS MIND. To follow this to its source, to get to the heart of it, it comes from nowhere else than the mind and its consciousness-- they are to blame.

THROUGH THE DOOR OF DHYANA THE MIND IS ENDED. For this reason, the methods of the Dhyana School teach people how to end their conscious minds by taking the path of non-doing in their cultivation.

AND ONE SUDDENLY ENTERS THE POWERFUL, UNPRODUCED KNOWLEDGE AND INSIGHT. If one takes the path of non-doing in cultivation, then in the course of time, one can suddenly enter into the power of the unsurpassed knowledge and insight.

TEXT:

THE GREAT HERO WIELDS THE WISDOM SWORD.
FROM ITS PRAJNA POINT, A VAJRA BLAZE! IT NOT ONLY
DESTROYS THE MIND OF EXTERNAL PATHS.
IT ALSO HAS LONG SINCE TERRIFIED THE HEAVENLY DEMONS!

COMMENTARY:

THE GREAT HERO WIELDS THE WISDOM SWORD. The knight who cultivates the way and transcends the world must sever love and take leave of affections. He must cast off the common and part with the dust; he must have a resolve that soars to heaven. Then he may be called a person who performs marvels. The great hero wields the enlightening sword of wisdom to cut away delusions, both coarse and subtle, along with those like dust and sand--all ignorance and afflictions.

FROM ITS PRAJNA POINT, A VAJRA BLAZE! This sword is cast in Prajna, and its sharp point is wisdom. It emits a gright vajra blaze which fills the three-thousand-great-thousand world-realms.

IT NOT ONLY DESTROYS THE MIND OF EXTERNAL PATHS. The vajra king jeweled sword does not simply destroy the deviant mind that takes side doors and external paths, but IT ALSO HAS LONG SINCE TERRIFIED THE BEAVENLY DEMONS. It has already frightened the heavenly demons and their retinues, and sapped their courage.

Cultivators definitely should pay attention to this section of the Song, ponder over it, and gain from it.

TEXT:

ROLL THE DHARMA THUNDER, BEAT THE DHARMA DRUM.
CLOUDS OF KINDNESS GATHER.. SWEET DEW IS DISPERSED;
DRAGONS AND ELEPHANTS TREAD UPON IT, MOISTENING
EVERYTHING. THE THREE VEHICLES AND FIVE NATURES ARE ALL
ROUSED AWAKE, THE HIMALAYA PINODHNI GRASS IS UNALLOYED
INDEED; PURE GHEE PRODUCED FROM IT I HAVE OFTEN PARTAKEN
OF, ONE NATURE COMPLETELY PERVADES ALL NATURES.
ONE DHARMA EVERYWHERE CONTAINS ALL DHAYMAS.
ONE MOON UNIVERSALLY APPEARS IN ALL WATERS,
THE MOONS IN ALL WATERS ARE BY ONE MOON GATHERED IN.
THE DHARMA BODY OF ALL BUDDHAS ENTERS MY NATURE; MY NATURE ALSO
MESHES WITH THE THUS COME ONES.
ON A SINGLE LEVEL, EVERY LEVEL IS COMPLETE,
IT IS NEITHER FORM, NOR MIND, NOR THE KARMA OF ACTION--
IN A FINGER-SNAP, EIGHTY THOUSAND DOORS ARE FULLY REALIZED.
IN A KSHANA, THREE ASAMKHYEYA KALPAS ARE EXTINGUISHED.

NO NUMBER OR PHRASE CAN DESCRIBE IT, WHAT RELATION
COULD THEY HAVE TO OUR SPIRITUAL AWAKENING?

COMMENTARY:

ROLL THE DHARMA THUNDER, BEAT THE DHARMA DRUM. Propagating the proper Dharma and teaching and transforming sentient beings is like rolling a great Dharma thunder and beating a great dharma drum. The deaf are aroused, and the blind are shaken.

CLOUDS OF KINDNESS GATHER.. SWEET DEW IS DISPERSED. Auspicious clouds of kindness gather so that all who are ready to receive it are in its universal shade. Being everywhere are moistened by the timely downpour of rain and dew, so that all are led to make the resolve for Bodhi and to be certified together to patience with non-production.

DRAGONS AND ELEPHANTS TREAD UPON IT, MOISTENING EVERYTHING. The Dharma doors' dragons and elephants walk upon the sweet dew, nourishing over and over the limitless, boundless living beings.

THE THREE VEHICLES AND FIVE NATURES ARE ALL ROUSED AWAKE. The Sound Hearers, the Conditioned Enlightened Ones, and Bodhisattvas, those of unfixed nature and those who lack the nature, are all awakened.

THE HIMALAYA PINODHNI GRASS IS UNALLOYED INDEED. In the fertile soil of the Himalayas grows a succulent grass which the large white cows eat to produce their milk.

PURE GHEE PRODUCED FROM IT I HAVE OFTEN PARTAKEN OF. I have tasted the wonderful flavor of unmixed, clarified ghee produced from it.

ONE NATURE COMPLETELY PERVADES ALL NATURES. That is
A single root divides into ten thousand differences.
Ten thousand differences yet return to the one root.

ONE DHARMA EVERYWHERE CONTAINS ALL DHARMAS. One is yet all, and all is but one.

ONE MOON UNIVERSALLY APPEARS IN ALL WATERS. This is an analogy. The one moon is able to be similarly reflected in all waters.

THE MOONS IN ALL WATERS ARE BY ONE MOON GATHERED IN. The moons in all the waters are basically the one moon, which unites them all.

THE DHARMA BODY OF ALL BUDDHAS ENTERS MY NATURE. The Dharma body--the pure, fundamental substance--of all Buddhas of the ten directions and the three periods of time, enters my nature--becomes of one substance with my own nature.

MY NATURE ALSO MESHES WITH THE THUS COME ONES. The substance of my nature and all the Buddhas are not two, not different. They are united as one.

ON A SINGLE LEVEL, EVERY LEVEL IS COMPLETE. On a single level, every level is already complete; there is no passing through stages.

IT IS NEITHER FORM, NOR MIND, NOR THE KARMA OF ACTION--the inherent nature is not a dharma of physical marks. Nor is it a dharma of the mind's conditions. It is even less a dharma of karmic action. It is the great dharm of the unconditioned.

IN A FINGER-SNAP, EIGHTY THOUSAND DOORS ARE FULLY REALIZED. As quick as a snap of the fingers, the samadhis of eighty-four thousand kinds of Dharna doors are realized perfectly and completely.

IN A KSHANA, THREE ASAMKHYEYA KALPAS ARE EXTINGUISHED. In a single kshana, three great asamkhyeya kalpas can be transcended; and three great asamkhyeya kalpas can shrink to a single kshana.

NO NUMVER OR PHRASE CAN DESCRIBE IT. No numbers or words can describe this subtle and miraculous Dharma door. It is apart from the four tenets and dispenses with the hundred fallacies.

WHAT RELATION COULD THEY HAVE TO OUR SPIRITUAL AWAKENING? What relation could numbers, words, language, and literature have with the spiritual, bright, Enlightened substance of our inherent nature?

TEXT:

IT DANNOT BE SLANDERED AND CANNOT BE PRAISED,
ITS SUBSTANCE IS LIKE SPACE; IT HAS NO SHORE,
IT DOES NOT LEAVE WHERE IT IS; IT IS ALWAYS CLEAR.
IF YOU SEARCH FOR IT, KNOW THAT YOU WILL NOT SEE IT.
IT CANNOT BE GRASPED; IT CANNOT BE REJECTED.
JUST WHAT CAN BE OBTAINED WITHIN THE UNOBTAINABLE?

COMMENTARY:

IT CANNOT BE SLANDERED AND CANNOT BE PRAISED. This wonderful Dharma door is the one Supreme Path. If one has not yet awakened completely, one absolutely may not malign it; even less may one praise it.

ITS SUBSTANCE IS LIKE SPACE; IT HAS NO SHORE. The basic substance of the inherent nature we humans possess is like empty space. It has no boundaries, and so even less does it have limits. It is equal and undifferentiated.`

IT DOES NOT LEAVE WHERE IT IS; IT IS ALWAYS CLEAR. All people are fundamentally complete with this basic substance, and no one lacks it. It never leaves where it is, but is always clear, still, and undisturbed.

IF YOU SEARCH FOR IT, KNOW THAT YOU WILL NOT SEE IT. If you intentionally seek it, though you may go to the far corners of the ocean or the limits of the heavens insearch of it, you will not be able to see it. But if it is evoked without thought, you will be immediately, suddenly Enlightened to the fundamental source--the original face of your natural, inherent Buddhahood.

IT CANNOT BE GRASPED. The inherent nature is like space. Since it cannot be seized or grasped, how then could it have the characteristics of a tangible form ?

IT CANNOT BE REJECTED. The inherent nature cannot be grasped; then can it be rejected? No, it cannot be rejected either. Why? To the ends of empty space, throughout the Dharma Realm, there is nothing that is not included in this inherent nature. Therefore, it cannot be rejected either.

JUST WHAT CAN BE OBTAINED WITHIN THE UNOBTAINABLE? Within that which can

neither be obtained nor rejected, there is only nothing to be attained. Will the cultivator be able to obtain it?

TEXT:

WHEN SILENT, THERE IS SPEECH; WHEN SPEAKING,
THERE IS SILENCE. THE GREAT GATE OF GIVING IS OPEN AND UNBLOCKED.
SHOULD SOMEONE ASK WHAT THE PRINCIPLE OF MY EXPLANATIONS IS, I
INFORM HIM THAT IT IS THE POWER OF MAHAPRAJNA. PEOPLE DONT KNOW
WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT.
ONE MAY OPPOSE THE FLOW OR COMPLY, BUT THE GODS DO NOT
FATHOM IT..
I HAVE ALREADY CULTIVATED IT THROUGH MANY AEONS,
THIS IS NOT THE ORDINARY CASE OF MUTUAL LIES AND DECEIT.

COMMENTARY:

WHEN SILENT, THERE IS SPEECH; WHEN SPEAKING, THERE IS SILENCE. When a cultivator is still and silent, he can obtain the realization that the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth--phenomena of the universe--are all without exception, actually proclaiming the wonderful Dharma. Yet, even while they are proclaiming the wonderful Dharma, the fundamental substance of everything is forever still and undisturbed. It is silent and has no words.

THE GREAT GATE OF GIVING IS OPEN AND UNBLOCKED. This door of true and proper, great and fearless giving is open wide, and universally benefits the conscious beings of the Dharma Realm, so that they may ascend the shore of awakening together.

SHOULD SOMEONE ASK WHAT THE PRINCIPLE OF MY EXPLANATIONS IS--should someone inquire of me, "What is the guiding principle behind these explanations?" I INFORM HIM THAT IT IS THE POWER OF MAHAPRAJNA. I just answer that it is no other principle than the supreme guiding purport of Mahaprajna-power. Maha has three meanings: "great," "many," and "supreme."

PEOPLE DO NOT KNOW WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT. Ultimately, people do not know what this Mahaprajna-power is and what it is not; none of them recognize its wonderful meaning.

ONE MAY OPPOSE THE FLOW OR COMPLY, BUT THE GODS DO NOT FATHOM IT. Whether one opposes the flow and cultivates by oneself, or whether one complies with the flow and transforms other, even the gods find it hard to measure its heights and depths.

I HAVE ALREADY CULTIVATED IT THROUGH MANY AEONS. Since people cannot recognize it, gods find it even harder to fathom. But, because I have already steeped myself in cultivation of this dharma for many lifetimes through many aeons.

THIS IS NOT THE ORDINARY CASE OF MUTUAL LIES AND DECEIT. This is certainly not the common, ordinary sort of wasteful words with which people cheat and mislead one another.

This section of the Song was spoken by a man of wisdom. It would have been difficult for an ordinary person to have said it.

TEXT:

THE DHARMA BANNER IS RAISED; THE SCHOOL'S PURPORT IS ESTABLISHED. THE BUDDHA VERY CLEARLY DIRECTED THAT IT WAS TO BE AT TS'AO CREEK, WITH KASHYAPA, THE FIRST, BEGAN THE TRANSMISSION OF THE LAMP. TWENTY-EIGHT GENERATIONS WERE RECORDED IN INDIA.

COMMENTARY:

THE DHARMA BANNER IS RAISED; THE SCHOOL'S PURPORT IS ESTABLISHED. The great dharma banner is set up; the heavenly demons are defeated, and all the sects of outside ways are kept in order. They are led to take refuge with the proper teaching and to resolve their minds on Bodhi. The proper Dharma door are established and supreme teaching of the one Vehicle is propagated.

THE BUDDHA VERY CLEARLY DIRECTED THAT IT WAS TO BE AT TS'AO CREEK. The Buddha very clearly instructed that precious Glade (Bau Lin) Bodhimanda at Ts'ao Creek was to be where this great Dharma banner and these supreme principles would be transmitted.

WITH KASHYAPA, THE FIRST, BEGAN THE TRANSMISSION OF THE LAMP. Kashyapa was the first to transmit the Buddha's Mind-Seal, the wisdom lamp of the successive Patriarchs.

TWENTY-EIGHT GENERATIONS WERE RECORDED IN INDIA. From Patriarch to Patriarch these principles were handed down to Bodhidharma, the Twenty-Eighth Patriarch in India who came east and transmitted it himself at Ts'ao Creek.

TEXT:

THE DHARMA FLOWED EAST AND ENTERED THIS LAND. BODHIDHARMA WAS THE FIRST PATRIARCH, THE ROBE WAS TRANSMITTED TO THE SIXTH GENERATION, AS ALL THE WORLD HAS HEARD HOW COULD ONE COUNT THE PEOPLE WHO SINCE THEN HAVE REALIZED THE WAY?

TEXT:

THE DHARMA FLOWED EAST AND ENTERED THIS LAND. The buddhadharma flowed east and was transmitted to Zhung Kuo (China).

BODHIDHARMA WAS THE FIRST PATRIARCH. The twenty-eighth Patriarch in India, Bodhidharma, was also the First Patriarch in Zhung Kuo.

THE ROBE WAS TRANSMITTED TO THE SIXTH GENERATION, AS ALL THE WORLD HAS HEARD. It was transmitted to the Patriarch of the sixth generation, the Great Master Hui Neng, who received the robe and bowl in person from the Fifth Patriarch, as all the world has heard and knows.

HOW COULD ONE COUNT THE PEOPLE WHO SINCE THEN HAVE REALIZED THE WAY? This refers to students in later times who heard the Dharma and attained the Way. The flower bloomed with five petals, and the teaching spread into many schools. How indeed could one count the heirs to the Dharma?

TEXT:

THE TRUE IS NOT ESTABLISHED; THE FALSE IS FUNDAMENTALLY EMPTY. BOTH EXISTENCE AND NON-EXISTENCE ARE BANISHED, AND NON-EMPTINESS IS EMPTIED.
THE TWENTY DOORS TO EMPTINESS ARE BASICALLY IN ORDER TO BE NOT-ATTACHED.
THE SINGLE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE THUS COME ONE IS BASIC IDENTITY OF SELF.

COMMENTARY;

THE TRUE IS NOT ESTABLISHED, THE FALSE IS FUNDAMENTALLY EMPTY. Since the true is not established, the characteristics of words and speech are left behind. Since the false is fundamentally empty, the characteristics of thinking by the mind are left behind.

BOTH EXISTENCE AND NON-EXISTENCE ARE BANISHED, AND NON-EMPTINESS IS EMPTIED. The dual dharmas of existence and non-existence are both eliminated, and the thoughts of non-emptiness are also completely emptied.

THE TWENTY DOORS TO EMPTINESS ARE BASICALLY IN ORDER TO BE NOT-ATTACHED. The Prajna division speaks in detail of the twenty kinds of doors to emptiness, all of which without exception lead people not to become attached.

THE SINGLE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE THUS COME ONE IS BASIC IDENTITY OF SELF. The Enlightened substance of the Thus Come One of only one single characteristic, is fundamental self identity. "Thus" means unchanging; "come" means complying with conditions.

TEXT:

THE MIND IS THE ROOT; DHARMAS ARE THE DUST.
THE TWO ARE LIKE STREAKS ON A MIRROR.
WHEN THE STREAKS ARE ENTIRELY REMOVED, LIGHT BEGINS TO APPEAR.
WHEN MIND AND DHARMAS ARE BOTH FORGOTTEN.
THEN THE NATURE IS TRUE.

COMMENTARY:

THE MIND IS THE ROOT, DHARMAS ARE THE DUST. In the mind consciousness which carelessly blazes forth in the defiled minds of ordinary people, the six outer sense-organs (the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind), come into contact with the dust of dharmas (forms, sounds, smells, tastes, objects of touch, and dharmas).

THE TWO ARE LIKE STREAKS ON A MIRROR. The defiled mind and the dust of dharmas are like dirty stains on a bright mirror.

WHEN THE STREAKS ARE ENTIRELY REMOVED, LIGHT BEGINS TO APPEAR. Light is able to manifest once the dirty streaks are entirely gone.

WHEN MIND AND DHARMAS ARE BOTH FORGOTTEN, THEN THE NATURE IS TRUE. When the defiled mind and the dust of dharmas are completely purified, what

appears is the brilliant, inherent nature of True Suchness.

TEXT:

ALAS! IN THE EVIL TIME OF THE DHARMA-ENDING AGE,
LIVING BEINGS' BLESSINGS ARE SLIGHT; IT IS DIFFICULT
TO TRAIN THEM.

FAR INDEED FROM THE SAGES OF THE PAST!
THEIR DEVIANT VIEWS ARE DEEP. DEMONS ARE STRONG,
THE DHARMA IS WEAK; MANY ARE THE WRONGS AND
INJURIES. HEARING OF THE DOOR OF THE THUS COME ONE'S
SUDDEN TEACHING, THEY HATE NOT DESTROYING IT AS THEY
WOULD SMASH A TILE, THE DOING IS IN THE MIND;
THE BODY SUFFERS THE CALAMITIES, THERE'S NO NEED FOR
UNJUST ACCUSATIONS THAT SHIFT THE BLAME TO OTHERS.
IF YOU DON'T WISH TO INVITE THE KARMA OF THE UNINTERMITTENT.
DO NOT SLANDER THE THUS COME ONE'S PROPER DHARMA WHEEL.

COMMENTARY:

ALAS! IN THE EVIL TIME OF THE DHARMA-ENDING AGE. Alas! The minds of people today are not like those of the ancients. Their virtue in the way has fallen into ruin in this autumn of the Dharma-ending age. It is the evil time of the Five Turbidities.

LIVING BEINGS' BLESSINGS ARE SLIGHT; IT IS DIFFICULT TO TRAIN THEM. Living beings do not know how to plant good roots and to tend their blessings to fruition. Because their blessings are slight and their wisdom shallow, they are hard to train and hard to tame.

FAR INDEED FROM THE SAGES OF THE PAST! THEIR DEVIANT VIEWS ARE DEEP. The proper Dharma Age has already passed, and it has been even longer since the Buddha was in the world. Living beings have defiled habits and deviant views, the roots of which are deep and the stems of which are firm. It is hard to pull them out.

DEMONS ARE STRONG, THE DHARMA IS WEAK; MANY AGREE THE WRONGS AND INJURIES. The retinues of the Demon Kings are stronger every day, and the Buddhadharma every day is weakened. In a thousand directions there are hundreds of plots; injustices and enmity prevail, as thieves seek to harm one another, taking turns at revenge.

HEARING OF THE DOOR OF THE THUS COME ONE'S SUDDEN TEACHING. When they hear about this Dharma door of sudden transcendence.

THEY HATE NOT DESTROYING IT AS THEY WOULD SMASH A TILE. They hate it that they cannot immediately cause this Dharma door of the sudden Teaching to be destroyed as one would smash a ceramic tile to bits.

THE DOING IS IN THE MIND; THE BODY SUFFERS THE CALAMITIES. Offenses are created in the mind, but then the retribution of calamities and disasters is with the body.

THERE'S NO NEED FOR UNJUST ACCUSATIONS THAT SHIFT THE BLAME TO OTHERS. One cannot suppose so hurl curses at the heavens and blame other people. Therefore, IF YOU DON'T WISH TO INVITE THE KARMA OF THE UNINTERMITTENT. That is, if you do not wish to invite and receive the karmic retribution of falling into the unintermittent Hells.

DO NOT SLANDER THE THUS COME ONE'S PROPER DHARMA WHEEL. Be sure not to slander the Proper Dharma Wheel of the Thus Come One!

TEXT:

IN THE CHANDANA FOREST THERE ARE NOT OTHER TREES
DEEP IN THE DENSE AND LUSURIANT VEGETATION THE LION DWELLS.
IN THE QUIETUDE OF THE FOREST HE ROAMS ALONE.
BEASTS THAT WALK AND BIRDS THAT FLY ALL GO FAR AWAY.

COMMENTARY:

IN THE CHANDANA FOREST THERE ARE NO OTHER TREES. (Note: The Chandana, or Sandlewood, Forest is an analogy for the highest state). Only this one, highest Dharma is my practice; there are no other Dharma-doors. Thus the verse says, "There are no others."

DEEP IN THE DENSE AND LUXURIANT VEGETATION THE LION DWELLS. This highest Dharma-door is like the dense, luxuriant depths of forest vegetation, where the lion has its dwelling.

IN THE QUIETUDE OF THE FOREST HE ROAMS ALONE. In this state of purity, it roams by itself freely and at ease. There is no noise or disturbance there.

BEASTS THAT WALK AND BIRDS THAT FLY ALL GO FAR AWAY. All the wild beasts that walk and birds that fly go far away in haste to avoid it. The lion is like the Dharma King, and the beasts that walk and birds that fly are like the ordinary people and those of sects of outside ways.

TEXT:

THE LION'S CUBS TOGETHER FOLLOW ALONG.
THREE YEARS, AND THEN THEY TOO CAN LOUDLY ROAR,
SHOULD JACKALS PURSUE THE DHARMA KING,
THEY ARE HUNDRED YEAR-OLD GOBLINS WHO OPEN THEIR
MOUTHS IN VAIN.

COMMENTARY:

THE LION'S CUBS TOGETHER FOLLOW ALONG. All those with the seed-nature of the Buddha's Great Vehicle, cultivators of Bodhisattva practices, people with the seed-nature for cultivating the Great Vehicle, follow after him in order to learn and practice.

THREE YEARS, AND THEN THEY TOO CAN LOUDLY ROAR. The nature of their roots is deep and thick, and the power of their wisdom is fully developed, so that even though they have not cultivated for very long, they can go ahead and spread the Dharma and benefit living beings.

SHOULD JACKALS PURSUE THE DHARMA KING. If those who do not have the root-nature of the Great Vehicle--those who are like jackals and other beasts--should chase after the Dharma King.

THEY ARE HUNDRED YEAR-OLD BOBLINS WHO OPEN THEIR MOUGHS IN VAIN.

They are merely century-old monsters who open their mouths to no avail, and who have no other skills at all.

TEXT:

THE COMPLETE AND SUDDEN TEACHING IS WITHOUT SENTIMENT, IF THERE IS DOUBT AND INDECISION, YOU SHOULD CONFRONT IT DIRECTLY. IT IS NOT THAT THE MOUNTAIN SANGHAN INDULGES IN SELF AND OTHERS; IT'S ONLY TO BE FEARED CULTIVATORS MIGHT FALL INTO THE PIT OF NIHILISM OR ETERNALISM.

"WRONG" IS NOT WRONG; "RIGHT" IS NOT RIGHT.

ERRING BY A HAIR'S BREADTH, ONE MISSES BY A THOUSAND MILES.

"RIGHT" WAS THE DRAGON-MAIDEN'S SUCCENLY ACHIEVING BUDDHAHOOD;

"WRONG" WAS GOOD STAR'S SINKING AND FALLING WHILE ALIVE.

COMMENTARY:

THE COMPLETE AND SUDDEN TEACHING IS WITHOUT SENTIMENT. The Dharma-door of the Complete and Sudden Teaching includes and unites the oceans of teachings and their measureless Dharma-doors. In it, there is not so much as a hair's breadth of sentimental influence.

IF THERE IS COUBT AND INDECISION, YOU SHOULD CONFRONT IT DIRECTLY. If there is any principle which is not yet understood, or some remaining doubt and indecision, then the matter must be straightforwardly discussed so that true principle can be clarified.

IT IS NOT THAT THE MOUNTAIN SANGHAN INDULGES IN SELF AND OTHER. By no means am I, the mountain Sanghan, falsely indulging in views of self and others or of right and wrong.

IT'S ONLY TO BE FEARED CULTIVATORS MIGHT FALL INTO THE PIT OF NIHILISM OR ETERNALISM. It is to be feared that people who cultivate the way will not understand True Principle, and will confound black and white and right and wrong. By becoming attached to nihilism or eternalism, they will fall into a pit.

"WRONG" IS NOT WRONG; "RIGHT" IS NOT RIGHT. In every cause and condition, and in cultivation and certification, there is right within the wrong, and there is also wrong within the right. It is a matter of whether the cultivator has fully developed his Selective Dharma Eye.

ERRING BY A HAIR'S BREADTH, ONE MISSES BY A THOUSAND MILES. If one is off by a hair's breadth, then one is certain to miss by a thousand miles. How can one not be careful and serious in these matters?

"RIGHT" WAS THE DRAGON-MAIDEN'S SUDDENLY ACHIEVING BUDDHAHOOD. The Dragon-maiden presented her pearl as an offering to the Thus Come One, and immediately evidenced the result of Buddhahood.

"WRONG" WAS GOOD STAR'S SINKING AND FALLING WHILE ALIVE. Good Star slandered the Dharma, inverting right and wrong. His retribution was immediately received; he fell alive into the suffering of the hells. In this matter of distinguishing right and wrong, cultivators should be especially wary.

TEXT:

IN MY EARLY YEARS, I SET OUT TO ACQUIRE LEARNING,
AND I STUDIED COMMENTARIES AND INQUIRED INTO SUTRAS
AND SHASTRAS.
DISTINGUISHING AMONG TERMS AND CHARACTERISTICS, I DIDN'T KNOW HOW
TO STOP.
ENTERING THE SEA TO COUNT THE SANDS I EXHAUSTED MYSELF IN VAIN.
BUT THE THUS COME ONE REPRIMANDED THIS FOLLY:
WHAT BENEFIT IS THERE IN COUNTING OTHER'S TREASURES?!
UNSUCCESSFUL ALL ALONG, I FELT I HAD PRACTICED IN VAIN.
MANY YEARS I WASTED AS A TRANSIENT, LIKE DUST IN THE WIND.

COMMENTARY:

IN MY EARLY YEARS, I SET OUT TO ACQUIRE LEARNING. Here the Great Master Yung Chia speaks about himself. "In the past, when I was young, I amassed a great deal of learning and sought after knowledge. I cultivated the teachings and contemplations of the T'ien T'ai. I never felt tired; I never wearied of it."

AND I STUDIED COMMENTARIES AND INQUIRED INTO SUTRAS AND SHASTRAS. I also research the commentaries and explanations of the ancient worthies, as well as the doctrines and principles of the Tripitaka (the Sutras, the Vinaya, and the Shastras).

DISTINGUISHING AMONG TERMS AND CHARACTERISTICS, I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO STOP. All day long I made distinctions among the meanings of manes and characteristics, not knowing how to stop, wasting my time futilely, letting the months and years slip by. How lamentable!

ENTERING THE SEA TO COUNT THE SANDS I EXHAUSTED MYSELF IN VAIN. It was like entering the great sea to try to count the sand in it, to the last grain. How could it be done? In the sea of teaching, the terms and characteristics are as numerous as the sands of the ocean. Therefore, he says, "I exhausted myself in vain."

BUT THE THUS COME ONE REPRIMANDED THIS FOLLY. I forsook the root to pursue the branches, searching far outside, for I did not know that I should turn the light around and illumine within. Therefore, I was scolded by the Thus Come One.

WHAT BENEFIT IS THERE IN COUNTING OTHERS' TREASURES? Counting others' jewels all day long, without even half a penny of your own, is a mistake; it is failure to cultivate the Dharma. To cultivate the way, one must actually practice it personally and not pass one's time emptily, vainly wasting the months and years.

UNSUCCESSFUL ALL ALONG, I FELT I HAD PRACTICED IN VAIN. From the beginning, I had gone nowhere with my time; I had wasted the years. There was not a hair's breadth of achievement. I felt that a whole life of practice was for nothing.

MANY YEARS I WASTED AS A TRANSIENT, LIKE DUST IN THE WIND. For many years I hurried to the east and ran to the west, interviewing in the south and paying visits in the north; wandering the wrong roads, uselessly, like a transient who is dust in the wind. Alas! What a shame, and how sorrowful! We should ponder these words.

TEXT:

WHEN THE NATURE OF THE SEED IS DEVIANT, ONE'S KNOWLEDGE
AND UNDERSTANDING WILL BE WRONG.

ONE WILL NOT ATTAIN THE THUS COME ONE'S COMPLETE AND SUDDEN MEASURE.

THOSE OF THE TWO VEHICLES ARE VIGOROUS, BUT LACK THE HEART OF THE WAY.

THOSE OF EXTERNAL PATHS MAY BE INTELLIGENT, BUT THEY LACK WISDOM. THEY ARE STUPID, PETTY, AND FOOLISH.

THEY MISTAKE THE EMPTY FIST AND POINTING FINGER AS PRODUCING GENUINE KNOWLEDGE;

BUT BECOMING ATTACHED TO THE FINGER AS BEING THE MOON IS WASTE OF EFFORT.

AMIDST THE DHARMAS OF SENSE ORGANS' STATES, IT IS BLAMEWORTHY TO MAKE EMPTY FABRICATIONS.

NOT TO PERCEIVE A SINGLE DHARMA: THIS IS THE THUS COME ONE.

THEN ONE MAY BE CALLED "ONE WHO CONTEMPLATES AT EASE."

ONCE ONE HAS UNDERSTOOD, KARMIC OBSTRUCTIONS ARE BASICALLY EMPTY.

BEFORE ONE HAS UNDERSTOOD, DEBTS FROM THE PAST MUST BE REPAID.

THE FAMISHED ENCOUNTER THE ROYAL BANQUET, YET CANNOT EAT.

THE SICK MEET THE PHYSICIAN KING, YET HOW CAN THEY BE CURED?

COMMENTARY:

WHEN THE NATURE OF THE SEED IS DEVIANT, ONE'S KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING WILL BE WRONG. When the seed is improperly planted or cultivated, the root-nature will be deviant. One's views and understanding will be wrong, but one will suppose them to be correct, and one won't know to reform.

ONE WILL NOT ATTAIN THE THUS COME ONE'S COMPLETE AND SUDDEN MEASURE. Since one's knowledge and understanding are wrong, one cannot see clearly and penetrate through to the mind-dharma of the world honored One, to the great measure and degree of the wonderful principle of the Perfect and Sudden, where one fathoms the essential path from beginning to end.

THOSE OF THE TWO VEHICLES ARE VIGOROUS, BUT LACK THE HEART OF THE WAY. Though the dull-rooted Arhats of the Two Vehicles practice with vigor, they lack the wisdom to awaken to the way.

THOSE OF EXTERNAL PATHS MAY BE INTELLIGENT, BUT THEY LACK WISDOM. The intelligence of most people who take side doors and external paths does not go beyond worldly knowledge and cleverness in debate. By no means is it Ultimate, Perfect, Sudden, and Genuine Wisdom.

THEY ARE STUPID, PETTY, AND FOOLISH. They are stupid, and yet self-satisfied. They are base, yet they like to act authoritatively. They do not like to learn with an open mind, and do not have the earnestness to learn from those beneath them. Like animals, their behavior is vague and dull. This describes the dull-rooted living beings, who all consider themselves to be extraordinary.

THEY MISTAKE THE EMPTY FIST AND POINTING FINGER AS PRODUCING GENUINE KNOWLEDGE. It is like the Buddha's empty fist that saved the little child, or like seeing the moon because of the finger that pointed to it. How could anyone who comes later gain genuine understanding from an empty fist or a pointing finger?

BUT BECOMING ATTACHED TO THE FINGER AS BEING THE MOON IS A WASTE OF EFFORT. If one becomes attached to the pointing finger as being the moon--not realizing

that the finger is basically not the moon, but that one merely makes use of the finger to see the moon--then one might cultivate the way for a myriad aeons, but it would be a total waste of effort.

AMIDST THE DHARMAS OF SENSE ORGANS' STATES, IT IS BLAMEWORTHY TO MAKE EMPTY FABRICATIONS. The dharmas of the states of the six sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind) and their objects--forms, sounds, smells, tastes, objects of touch, and dharmas--are empty fabrications, and imaginary creations.

NOT TO PERCEIVE A SINGLE DHARMA: THIS IS THE THUS COME ONE. The eighty-four thousand Dharma-doors are all established to counteract the sicknesses of the eighty-four thousand kinds of afflictions of living beings. When their diseases are cured, the medicines have no further use. It is the same with the Buddha's speaking Dharma.

THEN ONE MAY BE CALLED "ONE WHO CONTEMPLATES AT EASE." Those who can speak the Dharma, and the Dharma that is spoken, are in substance basically empty, and completely without a nature of their own. Upon awaking to the basic substance of the source of the Dharma, not a single dharma is established, and the ten-thousand dharmas are all thus. One totally understands the great functions of the entire substance. And when people and dharmas are both forgotten, this is contemplating at ease.

ONCE ONE HAS UNDERSTOOD, KARMIC OBSTRUCTIONS ARE BASICALLY EMPTY. After one has understood the mind and seen the nature, there are basically no karmic obstructions in the inherent nature. When this principle is understood, one knows that all karmic hindrances are basically empty, formless, shapeless, and without a nature of their own.

BEFORE ONE HAS UNDERSTOOD, DEBTS FROM THE PAST MUST BE REPAYED. If one has not yet been able to understand this principle of the original source of all dharmas, then one will be summoned by one's past karma to undergo the retribution.

THE FAMISHED ENCOUNTER THE ROYAL BANQUET, YET CANNOT EAT. The Buddha is like a king. Although he has rare delicacies of a hundred flavors at his table, no one dares eat of them if the king does not permit it.

THE SICK MEET THE PHYSICIAN KING, YET HOW CAN THEY BE CURED? The Buddha is like a physician king; although he has wonderful, life-prolonging medicine, people who have no wisdom are unwilling to take it. How then can their illnesses be cured?

TEXT:

PRACTICE DHYANA IN THE MIDST OF DESIRE, THROUGH THE POWER OF KNOWLEDGE AND INSIGHT.

THE LOTUS BORN IN THE FIRE IS NEVER DESTROYED.

COURAGEOUS DONOR'S OFFENSE WAS SERIOUS; THE AWAKENED TO NON-PRODUCTION.

HE REALIZED BUDDHAHOOD EARLY, AND IS HERE NOW.

COMMENTARY:

PRACTICE DHYANA IN THE MIDST OF DESIRE, THROUGH THE POWER OF KNOWLEDGE AND INSIGHT. Although Great Master Fu, and Kumarajiva has women attendants, they were not affected by desire, and cultivated Dhyana Samadhi and other practices. Their power of knowledge and insight was not misdirected.

THE LOTUS BORN IN THE FIRE IS NEVER DESTROYED. What was explained above is like a lotus which is planted in the midst of a fire and yet is never destroyed.

COURAGEOUS DONOR'S OFFENSE WAS SERIOUS; HE AWAKENED TO NON-PRODUCTION. Although the Bhikshu Courageous Donor committed a serious offense, he was nevertheless able to repent, and he awakened to non-production.

HE REALIZED BUDDHAHOOD EARLY, AND IS HERE NOW. He has already become a buddha, and is here right now.

TEXT:

THE LION'S ROAR IS FEARLESS PROCLAMATION.
I SIGH DEEPLY THAT CONFUSED, BARBARIC FOOLS KNOW ONLY HOW TO TRANSGRESS SERIOUSLY AND OBSTRUCT BODHI.
THEY DO NOT PERCEIVE THE MYSTERIES REVEALED BY THE THUS COME ONE.
THERE WERE TWO BHIKSHUS WHO TRANSGRESSED IN SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND KILLING.
UPALI'S FIREFLY-LIGHT EXAGGERATED THE OFFENSE.
THE BODHISATTVA VIMILAKIRTI IMMEDIATELY DISPELLED THEIR DOUBTS, JUST AS THE BURNING SUN MELTS THE FROST AND SNOW.

COMMENTARY:

THE LION'S ROAR IS FEARLESS PROCLAMATION. The Buddha's speaking of Dharma is like the roar of a lion; it is without the slightest fear.

I SIGH DEEPLY THAT CONFUSED, BARBARIC FOOLS KNOW ONLY HOW TO TRANSGRESS SERIOUSLY AND OBSTRUCT BODHI. Stupid people like these know only how to commit serious offenses. They break the precepts and block off the road to Bodhi. Thus they draw a boundary for themselves in mid-path; they give up halfway along the road. This is extremely pathetic. They know only how to commit serious offenses and obstruct the way. They are unwilling to cultivate vigorously without interruption. In particular, they do not know that the precepts spoken by the Thus Come One possess subtle shades of meaning regarding the various levels of offenses and also their exceptions. Although there are exceptions, there are actually no exceptions; although there are transgressions, there are actually no transgressions.

THERE WERE TWO BHIKSHUS WHO TRANSGRESSED IN SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND KILLING. When the Buddha was in the world, there were two Bhikshus who lived alone in the mountains. One of them was away, while the other was sleeping. A woman who was gathering wood came and had sexual relations with the Bhikshu without his knowledge. When the second Bhikshu returned, he knew what had happened, and he chased after the wood-gathering woman in anger. The woman did not watch her step, stumbled, and fell to her death.

UPALI'S FIREFLY-LIGHT EXAGGERATED THE OFFENSE. The Venerable Upali judged their offenses and decided that the two Bhikshus had committed serious offenses of sexual misconduct and killing which were beyond repentance. In this matter his wisdom was as small as a firefly's light.

THE BODHISATTVA VIMILAKIRTI IMMEDIATELY DISPELLED THEIR DOUBTS. The two Bhikshus themselves thought that they had not intentionally violated the Precepts, and so how could the offenses be beyond repentance? They gave rise to doubts, and they went to see the layman Vimilakirti to ask for instruction. Vimilakirti said, "Where there is no intent, there is no offense."

JUST AS THE BURNING SUN MELTS THE FROST AND SNOW. As soon as the great layman Vimilakirti spoke those words, it was as if the blazing hot sun hand instantly melted the frost, snow, and solid ice, so that they were immediately without shape or appearance.

TEXT:

THE POWER OF LIBERATION IS INCONCEIVABLE,
ITS MIRACULOUS FUNCTIONS ARE AS NUMEROUS AS THE GANGES'
SANDS, AND WITHOUT END.
DOES ONE DARE SHIRK THE TOIL IN AN OFFERING OF THE FOUR
NECESSITIES ?
THE THOUSAND OUNCES OF GOLD MAY ALSO BE RECEIVED.
ONE'S BONES MAY BE POWDERED, ONE'S BODY IN FRAGMENTS; STILL ONE
CAN'T REPAY THE DEBT IN FULL.
UNDERSTAND ONE SENTENCE, AND TRANSCEND THE HUNDRED MILLION.

COMMENTARY:

THE POWER OF LIBERATION IS INCONCEIVABLE. It cannot be thought about with mind or discussed with words. This is the kind of liberation-power it is.

ITS MIRACULOUS FUNCTIONS ARE AS NUMEROUS AS THE GANGES' SANDS. The wonderful functions of which this liberation-power is capable are sonumerous that even were the sands of the Ganges to be counted, it would still bedifficult to make a comparison.

DOES ONE DARE SHIRK THE TOIL IN AN OFFERING OF THE FOUR NECESSITIES?
One dare not shirk the responsibility entailed by the fourkinds of offerings--food and drink, clothing,bedding, and medicine.

TEN THOUSAND OUNCES OF GOLD MAY ALSO BE RECEIVED. Even if ten thousand ounces of gold were offered, that, too, may be received.

ONE'S BONES MAY BE POWDERED, ONE'S BODY IN FRAGMENTS; STILL ONE CAN'T REPAY THE DEBT IN FULL. Through profound kindness we are given the milk of this Dharma; although our bodies may be crushed to powder and our bones to fragments, we cannot repay the debt.

UNDERSTAND ONE SENTENCE, AND TRANSCEND THE HUNDRED MILLION. Upon suddenly understanding a single sentence of Dharma speech, one transcends millions upon millions of great kalpas.

TEXT:

THE KING AMONG DHARMAS IS THE HIGHEST, THE MOST SUPREME.
THUS COME ONES AS NUMEROUS AS GANGES' SANDS
HAVE ATTAINED IT EQUALLY.
I NOW UNDERSTAND THIS WISH-FULFILLING PERL.
ALL WHO RECIEVE IT IN FAITH WILL EVOKE A RESPONSE.

COMMENTARY:

THE KING AMONG DHARMAS IS THE HIGHEST, THE MOST SUPREME. This Dharma is the King among Dharmas--it is the highest and the most supreme.

THUS COME ONES AS NUMEROUS AS GANGES' SANDS HAVE ATTAINED IT EQUALLY. All the Buddhas, Thus come Ones, numerous as the Ganges River's sands, are alike in having been certified to the attainment of the Dharma body by means of this Dharma.

I NOW UNDERSTAND THIS WISH-FUFILLING PEARL. I have now understood this Dharma and have awakened to it. It is like a wish-fulfilling pearl which contains all Dharmas.

ALL WHO RECEIVE IT IN FAITH WILL EVOKE A RESPONSE. Those who faithfully receive it and respectfully practice it will certainly gain a response. They will all be able to be certified to the attainment of the principle and substance of the Dharma body of all the Buddhas of the ten directions and the three periods of time, and the miraculous virtues of Nirvana: permanence, bliss, true-self, and purity.

TEXT:

IT IS CLEARLY SEEN: THERE IS NOT A SINGLE THING.
NOR ARE THERE ANY PEOPLE; NOR ARE THERE ANY BUDDHAS.
THE GREAT THOUSAND WORLDS ARE BUBBLES IN THE SEA.
ALL THE WORTHY SAGES ARE LIKE FLASHES OF LIGHTNING.
EVEN IF AN IRON WHEEL WERE ROLLED OVER ONE'S HEAD,
SAMADHI AND WISDOM WOULD BE FULLY BRIGHT AND NEVER LOST.

COMMENTARY:

IT IS CLEARLY SEEN; THERE IS NOT A SINGLE THING. Once one is in mutual according with this Dharma, one will be clear and replete with true and proper knowledge and vision, and then not a single thing can be sought after.

NOR ARE THERE ANY PEOPLE; NOR ARE THERE ANY BUDDHAS. Since things are not established, people and Buddhas are empty, also.

THE GREAT THOUSAND WORLDS ARE BUBBLES IN THE SEA. Although the great thousand worlds, many as gains of sand, are very vast and extensive, they are yet like a single bubble of form in the ocean.

ALL THE WORTHY SAGES ARE LIKE FLASHES OF LIGHTNING. Since people and Buddhas are empty, dharmas are not established either. Therefore it says that "All the worthy Sages are like flashes of lightning."

EVEN IF AN IRON WHEEL WERE ROLLED OVER ONE'S HEAD. If a hot iron wheel were rolled over one's head, and one's body were burnt to a crisp.

SAMADHI AND WISDOM WOULD BE FULLY BRIGHT AND NEVER LOST. Though the strength of this samadhi and the power of this wisdom, one attains a state of perfect clarity which is absolutely never lost.

TEXT:

THE SUN MAY GROW COLD, THE MOON MAY GROW HOT;

THE MULTITUDE OF DEMONS CANNOT DESTROY TRUE SPEECH,
THE ELEPHANT'S CARRIAGE SLOWLY AND WITH DIGNITY
ADVANCES ALONG THE ROAD. WHO HAS SEEN A MANTIS THAT COULD DEFLECT
IT FROM ITS COURSE?

THE GREAT ELEPHANT DOES NOT TRAVEL IN THE RABBIT'S PATH.
THE GREAT AWAKENING IS NOT CONFINED TO A SMALL SPACE.
DO NOT DETRACT FROM THE AZURE SKY BY LOOKING AT IT THROUGH A REED.
FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE NOT UNDERSTOOD, I NOW IMPART
THE SECRET.

COMMENTARY:

THE SUN MAY GROW COLD, THE MOON MAY GROW HOT. Even if it were to actually happen that the sun should change from hot to cold, and the moon from cold to hot.

THE MULTITUDE OF DEMONS CANNOT DESTROY TRUE SPEECH. Whatever devilish trickery the multitudes of heavenly demons, adherents of external paths, and so forth, were to use, they still could not break up my true speaking of Dharma--the Dharma door of the Sudden Teaching.

THE ELEPHANT'S CARRIAGE SLOWLY AND WITH DIGNITY ADVANCES ALONG THE ROAD. The carriage drawn by the great elephant is dignified yet powerful. Although the elephant's pace seems slow, it progresses very swiftly.

WHO HAS SEEN A MANTIS THAT COULD DEFLECT IT FROM ITS COURSE? Who has ever seen a little praying mantis that could deflect from its course the carriage drawn by the great elephant? This is an illustration of how the lofty heights traversed by the great Bodhisattvas cannot be gauged by the heavenly demons or adherents to external paths.

THE GREAT ELEPHANT DOES NOT TRAVEL IN THE RABBIT'S PATH. The Bodhisattva of the Great Vehicle does not condescend to cultivate the Dharma-doors of the Small Vehicle, just as the great elephant does not walk in the rabbit's path.

THE GREAT AWAKENING IS NOT CONFINED TO A SMALL SPACE. By cultivating the great Vehicle Dharma-door of the Sudden Teaching, one will perceive the original source, the inherent nature, one's natural Buddhahood--in other words, the great breakthrough. This refers to great awakening to one's original face. Therefore, it "is not confined to a small space."

DO NOT DETRACT FROM THE AZURE SKY BY LOOKING AT IT THROUGH A REED. Don't let your vision be a peek at the sky through a reed; don't measure the ocean of knowledge with a gourd and go on to slander the great Vehicle Dharma-door of the Sudden Teaching.

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE NOT UNDERSTOOD, I NOW IMPART THE SECRET. If there are still those who have not been able to comprehend this perfect and Sudden, Dharma-door, I now explain for you the essential secrets for becoming Enlightened and attaining the Way.

Xin mời quý độc giả xem tiếp lời giảng Việt của cố Hoà Thượng Tuyên Hóa sau đây:



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