

# *A Buddhist Discourse on Meditation from Tun-Huang*

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE discovery of the Thousand Buddha Caves at Tun-huang in north-western China by L. de Lóczy and Count Szechenyi of Hungary in 1879, and the subsequent collection of a large number of Chinese Buddhist manuscripts by Sir Aurel Stein in 1907 were two great events in the history of modern Chinese studies.<sup>1</sup> According to Stein's report the size of the pile of manuscripts and other objects of art was about 500 cubic feet. Undoubtedly Stein was fortunate enough to secure the best selection of manuscripts from Tun-huang. He collected over 6,000 scrolls and sent them to the British Museum in London, as his expedition to the Tun-huang region was financed by the British and Indian Governments. In the wake of Stein, Professor Paul Pelliot, a noted French Sinologist, went to Tun-huang in 1908 and carried away another 2,000 scrolls of manuscripts, paintings and other objects of art to France. These are housed in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris. Realising the importance of these literary documents, the then Chinese Government hastened to collect whatever was left behind. A final collection of over 8,000 scrolls was made and sent to the National Peiping Library in Peking. However, it is obvious that the best collections of Tun-huang manuscripts and other art objects are to be found in England and France and not in China. China had failed to take prompt action to prevent these priceless treasures from falling into the hands of private parties.

Each of the collections of Chinese manuscripts kept in London, Paris and Peking consists of two main divisions, Buddhistic and non-Buddhistic. In the Buddhist section, the majority are texts from the Chinese Tripiṭaka, viz., Sūtras, Vinaya and Śāstras, in addition to the philosophical, doctrinal, historical and literary compositions made by Chinese scholars. Among the writings a special literary creation called '*pien-wen*,' or dramatized versions of Buddhist topics, such as the life of the Buddha, the subdual of Māra by Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, the story of Maudgalyāyana's rescuing his

1. Chou Shao-liang: *Tun-huang-pien-wen-hui-lu*, pp. 1-2. Shanghai, 1952; Aurel Stein: *On Ancient Central Asian Tracks*, p. 193.

mother from hell, the Jātaka stories, and the popularized versions of the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-Sūtra*, the *Sukhāvātī-vyūha-Sūtra*, the *Vimalakīrti nirdeśa-Sūtra* and so forth, has made a great contribution to Chinese folk literature. It is generally written in prose and poetry, and has a great beauty of its own. The Chinese Buddhists from the eighth century onwards used to recite this type of composition to large audiences for the purpose of propagating Buddhism on account of its popular appeal. Consequently other writers adopted this form to write literary pieces on non-Buddhist topics which are also known as *Pien-wen*.<sup>2</sup> There is a good collection of such works in the three centres mentioned above.

In the non-Buddhist section literary writings on diverse topics ranging from texts of Taoism, Confucianism and Manichism to history, topography, poems, songs, ballads, biographies, divination, measurements, club-rules and a host of miscellaneous subjects are found. For further information on this matter, L. Giles's exhaustive list of topics may be consulted.<sup>3</sup>

The present translation is made from one of the Tun-huang Chinese manuscripts kept in the British Museum. There are three slightly different versions of the same text in the Stein Collection bearing Nos. S. 2669, S. 3558 and S. 4046. I have used No. S. 4046 as the base and consulted the other two whenever necessary. The author of this essay was a well-known figure in Zen history. He was the teacher of Hui Nēng, the 6th Patriarch of the Zen School. Historically speaking Bodhidharma was not the first Patriarch<sup>4</sup> of Zen Buddhism in China, as his teachings and practices are quite different from those of the later Zen masters. That being the case, this discourse of Hung Jen becomes all the more important. Probably he was the first Chinese teacher to write a treatise on meditation, and it must have influenced greatly some of the later Zen masters, including Hui Nēng. We are sure this work will help students of Buddhist history in tracing the early teachings of Zen Buddhism. Regarding the date of composition, we are not in a position to say anything definitely at this stage. As Hui Nēng, his pupil, passed<sup>5</sup> away in 713 A.D., it must have been completed before that year, if not earlier.

With regard to the principal arguments found in the discourse, the author was of the opinion (1) that the mind is inherently pure and is in a

2. Wang Chung-min and others (ed.): *Tun-huang-pien-wen-chü*. Peking, 1957.

3. Lionel Giles: *Descriptive Catalogue of the Chinese Manuscripts from Tun-huang in the British Museum*. London, 1957.

4. W. Puchow: *Zen Buddhism and Bodhidharma*. The Indian Historical Quarterly. Vol. XXXII, Nos. 2 and 3, Calcutta, 1956.

5. Taishō Nos. 2007 and 2008: *The Sūtra of Wei Lang (Hui Nēng)*, London, 1953.

state of neither existence nor non-existence, (2) that the common folk and the Buddha are placed on an equal footing, as both possess a similar kind of mind. The reason for their being in a different state is due to the fact that the Buddha has realized the nature of the *Dharma*, whereas other living beings are ignorant of it, and thereby they wander on the path of birth and death. The way which will lead the common folk to attain enlightenment is to undergo a course of meditational practice retaining mindfulness. 'Mindfulness' has occupied a very important place in this essay. It is, according to the author, the foundation of, and stepping-stone to Buddhahood and Nirvāṇa.

Generally speaking, the teaching of Hung Jen is fairly close to the early Buddhist tradition of Dhyāna, though it has been influenced, to a certain extent, by the theory of Buddha-nature which is inherent in every individual. We are, however, unable to agree with the statement that the self and Nirvāṇa are ultimately void, whereas the *dharmatā* is not so, or it exists permanently. Normally *dharmatā* and Nirvāṇa are considered to be similar in character and both are *asaṃskṛta-dharmas*. The author's trying to make a distinction between them appears unnecessary.

Finally we hope that the discourse of Hung Jen will enable us to understand the theory and practice of Zen as known in the 7th century in China. It is very clear that the particular type of Zen practised by most of the Zen masters after the 8th century, has very little to do with Hung Jen, and has nothing to do with Bodhidharma, the so-called founder of Chinese Zen Buddhism.

## II. THE TEXT

### **An Important Discourse on the Cultivation of the Mind which leads the Profane to Holiness and to the Realization of MUKTI**

By Upādhyāya Hung Jen of Ch'ichow.

Regarding the cultivation of the essence of Tao, one should know that the self is originally pure. It is neither born, nor destroyed, nor has it any differentiations. To see one's own Teacher with the inherent, perfect and pure mind is much better than keeping remembrance of the Buddhas of the ten quarters.

[1] Question : How do you know that one's own mind was originally pure ?

Answer : The *Daśabhūmi-Sāstra* says:

“In the body of the living beings there exists the vajra-like Buddha-nature which resembles the bright, full, perfect, immense and endless Sun. On account of its being obstructed by dense clouds of the five *skandhas*, the Sun cannot shine, just as the flame of a lamp inside a jar.”

To dwell further on the simile of the Sun, we may cite the example that, when clouds and mist rise from the eight quarters, the whole universe becomes dull and cloudy. Why is there no sunshine? Is it because the Sun is defective? In reply to this, we say that the sunshine is not defective, but that it is being obscured by clouds and fog. The pure mind of the living beings is in the same state, but for its being covered by the dense clouds of attachment, false thoughts and diverse views. If one is able to maintain mindfulness distinctly, the false ideas will not emerge and the *Nirvāṇa-dharma*-Sun will automatically appear. We know, therefore, that one's own mind was originally pure.

[2] Question : How do you know that one's own mind was originally neither existent nor non-existent ?

Answer: It is stated in the *Vimalakīrti-Sūtra*:

“Suchness (*Tathatā*) has no existence nor non-existence. This suchness is the *Bhūtatahatā* Buddha-nature, and the source of self-existent pure mind. *Bhūtatahatā* is self-existent and not produced by the conditioning causation.

Further, it is said: “All living beings are in a state of suchness, the sages and saints are also in a state of suchness.” We are the living beings while the sages and saints are the Buddhas. They may be called differently; however, in them, the *dharmatā* of suchness which is neither existent, nor non-existent is the same. Therefore, I say, all are in a state of suchness. Hence we know that one's own mind was originally neither existent, nor non-existent.

[3] Question: What do you mean by calling the mind to be one's teacher?

Answer: The true mind is self-existent, not coming from outside, nor does it accept any restrictions.<sup>6</sup> In the three periods of existence there is no one who surpasses the most intimate relationship of the mind. If any one recognizes the *bhūtatathatā* and retains it, he will reach the Further-shore; the confused one who misses it, will fall into the three inferior states of suffering. Therefore, we know that the Buddhas of the three periods take the self-existent true mind to be their teacher.

It is stated in a *Sāstra*: "Living beings exist on the basis of the waves of false ideas."

Having realized this falsehood, one clearly retains mindfulness.<sup>7</sup> When false ideas do not arise, one reaches a state of no more birth. Therefore, we know that the mind is one's teacher.

[4] Question: What do you mean by saying that the mind of the ordinary people is better than that of the Buddhas?

Answer: One will not get rid of birth and death, if one constantly thinks of other Buddhas. However, if one retains one's mindfulness, he is sure to reach the Further-shore. It is, therefore, said in the *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-Sūtra*:

"If any one wishes to see me in form, or to seek me in sound, this person is treading an evil path and he cannot see the Tathāgata."

Therefore, to retain true mindfulness is better than the remembrance of other Buddhas.

Further, the word 'better' is merely intended to give encouragement to people who devote themselves to practice. In fact, the characteristic of the ultimate fruition is the same, and is on an equal footing.

[5] Question: Since the true characteristic of living beings and the Buddhas is the same, how is it that the Buddhas are in a state of neither existence, nor non-existence, free from obstruction and enjoy immense bliss, whilst we, ordinary beings, sink into the depth of birth and death suffering various kinds of miseries and sorrows?

6. 'Pu-so-shu-shiu' (see Appendix) has the meaning of 'Not to ask for any salary due to a teacher'. This does not make any sense here. Possibly it is a mistake for 'Pu-shou-shu-hsi' (see Appendix) which means, 'Not to accept any binding'. If we accept the second possibility, the sense is more clear.

7. 'Shou-hsin' (see Appendix) means to keep, to retain or to watch over the mind, hence we render it as 'mindfulness'.

Answer: Having realized the nature of the Dharma, the Buddhas of the ten quarters comprehend the source of the mind. Thus false ideas will not arise, righteous thought will be retained and the conception of what-belongs-to-me will disappear. Thereby they will not be subject to birth and death. As there is no birth and death, it will be the ultimate Nirvāṇa. Being in a state of Nirvāṇa, the ten thousand forms of bliss will flock to it of their own accord.

Being ignorant of what is truly holy, all the living beings do not know the diverse false causations of the mind, and do not cultivate righteous thought. As there is no righteous mindfulness, there emerges hatred and affection; because of hatred and affection, the mind-vessel is cracked and leaking; because of the damage to, and leakage of the mind, one undergoes birth and death. Since there is birth and death, all the sufferings are present. The *Hṛdaya-rāja-Sūtra* says :

“Suchness of the Buddha-nature is buried in knowledge and views. In the ocean of the six senses, one is sunk to the depth of birth and death, and shall never be freed from it.”

Be earnest ! When one retains true mindfulness, false thoughts will not arise, and the conception of what-belongs-to-me will disappear. Thus one will naturally attain the same state as the Buddhas.

[6] Question : Since suchness of the Dharma-nature (of the Buddhas and the living beings) is the same, bewilderment and enlightenment should be applicable equally to both. Why do only the Buddhas attain enlightenment, whereas the living beings are in a state of illusion and confusion ?

Answer : (Some of) the foregoing passages may be classified into the wondrous region which cannot be reached or comprehended by people who are still in a state of profanity. Knowing the mind, one is enlightened, losing one's nature, one is confused, and there will be union when the conditioning factors are put together. These are the things which cannot be said definitely. However, the transcendental truth, indeed, is in one's retaining true mindfulness. The *Vimalakīrti-Sūtra* says :

“It is not the self-existent nature, nor anything from outside. The Dharma does not come into being, so now it has no cessation.”

This means the realization of the two extremes of attachment and detachment, and the attainment of the wisdom of non-discrimination. If one

understands this meaning, and always concentratedly retains the original pure mind while walking, standing, sitting and lying down, false ideas will not arise, the conception of what-belongs-to-me will disappear, and one will naturally attain *mukti* or liberation. If one wishes to raise further questions and get answers thereby, the terms and their meaning will multiply manifold. However, if one is desirous of knowing the essence of the Dharma, the retaining of the mind should come first. This mindfulness is the foundation of Nirvāṇa, the main gate to the Path, the principal of the twelve divisions of *Sūtras*, and the ancestor of the Buddhas in the three periods.

[7] Question : How do we know that mindfulness is the foundation of Nirvāṇa ?

Answer : The term 'Nirvāṇa' means the characteristic which is a state of peace, cessation, non-activity and bliss. Since the mind of one's self is true, false ideas will come to an end; when false ideas are no more, righteous mindfulness will take its position; when there is righteous mindfulness, wisdom of silent comprehension will emerge; when that wisdom is born, one understands thoroughly the Dharma-nature, and because of that understanding, one attains Nirvāṇa. Therefore, one should know that mindfulness is the foundation of Nirvāṇa.

[8] Question: How do we know that mindfulness is the main gate to the Path ?

Answer : (Among the various means), either one draws the image of the Buddha with one's finger nail, or performs meritorious deeds as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, it is merely the convenience of the Buddha for teaching the ignorant people to prepare for future excellent ground, (to receive) the reward of Karma, as well as to prepare them to meet the Buddha. If those persons wish to attain Buddhahood early, they should understand this true mindfulness which is not subject to cause. There are innumerable and endless Buddhas in the three periods, there is not, even a single instance to show that, any one who had attained Buddhahood could do away with true mindfulness. It is, therefore, said in the *Sūtra* :

"Everything will be done, if the mind is concentrated."  
Thus we know that true mindfulness is the main gate to the Path.

[9] Question : How do we know that true mindfulness is the principal of the twelve divisions of *Sūtras* ?

Answer : In all the *Sūtras*, the Tathāgata speaks extensively on sins and merits, causations and fruitions, or cites unlimited similes of mountains, rivers, plants and the universe and so forth, or manifests innumerable supernatural powers. These diverse transformations are meant for one purpose only, viz., to teach the ignorant beings who have many cravings and desires, and wish to perform innumerable meritorious deeds. It is on account of this, that the Blessed One leads them to permanent bliss in accordance with their mental conditions. Having realized that the Buddha-nature in living beings is originally pure, and similar to the Sun being covered by clouds, one should consciously retain true mindfulness, so that the Sun of wisdom will appear when the clouds of false thoughts are swept away. It is unnecessary that one should try to acquire more knowledge for knowing the doctrines and affairs of the three periods, because all these belong to the suffering of birth and death. It is like the polishing of a mirror,<sup>8</sup> when the dust is wiped off, naturally one sees the self-nature (*svabhāva*). It will be absolutely useless, even if one has learnt something with the ignorant mind now. If, however, one could consciously retain right mindfulness, and learn it with the mind which is not subject to cause, then, this is true learning. When we say 'true learning' it means that ultimately there is nothing to be learnt. Why ? because the self and Nirvāṇa are both void. There is neither one nor both. Therefore there is nothing to learn. But *Dharmatā* is not void, one should consciously retain true mindfulness, so that false thoughts will not arise, and the conception of what-belongs-to-me will disappear. Thus, it is stated in the *Nirvāṇa-Sūtra* :

“The one who, knows that the Buddha does not preach, is called a man of accomplished learning.”

Therefore, we know that true mindfulness is the principal of the twelve divisions of *Sūtras*.

[10] Question : How do we know that mindfulness is the forefather of the Buddhas of the three periods ?

Answer: The Buddhas of the three periods are born from consciousness, but false thought is not born from consciousness. When the idea of what-belongs-to-me is discarded, one recognizes the mind in consciousness. First of all, one retains true mindfulness, and later one will become a Buddha. Therefore, we know that mindfulness is the forefather of the Buddhas of the three periods.

8. This refers to the mirrors made of metal in ancient China.



If we wish to explain extensively the four foregoing questions and answers, indeed, there will be no end to it. I simply wish that you should recognize your original mind, and therefore, be diligent about it. Even if you have read hundreds and thousands of *Sūtras* and *Śāstras*, there is nothing better than true mindfulness. This, however, needs effort. I cite a quotation from the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-Sūtra* as follows:

“I have shown you vehicles, treasures, bright jewels, wondrous medicines and so forth, but you do not take and use them. You pretend to be poor and suffering, how could anybody help you?”

When this is realized, false thought will not arise, and the conception of what-belongs-to-me will disappear; then, all merits will naturally become perfect and will not depend on any external seeking; (if it does,) it will return to the suffering of birth and death.

Under all circumstances and at every moment, the mind should be well-controlled. One should not experience the pleasure of the present, which may sow the seed of suffering in the future. Thus one may swindle oneself, as well as others, but it will not lead any one to the liberation from birth and death. One should strive hard. It may not be of much benefit now, but it prepares the ground for the future. One should not spend (the lives) of the three periods uselessly, and allow one's effort to go waste. The *Sūtra* says:

“Living constantly in hell, he behaves as if he is strolling leisurely in the parks and palaces, and remaining in the other inferior states of suffering, he likes them as if they are his home.”

It is rather strange that we ordinary beings, having seen it clearly, are not aware of the terrifying state of affairs. We do not have the faintest idea of running away from it.

If one is a beginner in the practice of meditation, he should follow the instruction given in the *Sukhāvativyūha-Sūtra*:

“Let him sit uprightly closing the eyes and mouth. At a certain distance from the front, as well as at the same level of his chest, he visualizes a Sun. That image must be retained and he should not allow himself to rest even for a moment.”

This will enable the practitioner to harmonize the breathing and silence any sound. He should not allow the breathing to become heavy or fine all of a sudden, as this will cause illness to him.

If one practises meditation in the night, one may see good or bad mental reflections, or enter the *samādhis* of blue, yellow, red and white colour and so forth, or see illuminations issuing from, and entering one's own body, or see the image of the Tathāgata, or there are manifestations of transformations; one should know what is proper, control the mind and not have any attachment to them. All these are void, and they appear through false thoughts. Thus, it is said in the *Sūtra*:

“Countries in the ten quarters are like the empty sky.”

Further it says:

“The three worlds are unreal and illusive; they are merely creations of the mind.”

If one is unable to gain *samādhi*, and does not see the objective mental projections, he should not be surprised, but should always consciously retain true mindfulness while walking, standing, sitting and lying down. When one realizes this, false ideas will not arise, and the conception of what-belongs-to-me will disappear. The *dharmas* amounting to ten thousand, are nothing beyond one's own mind. The reason for the Buddhas to explain it in many similes, is that among the living beings, each is different from the other. Therefore, the ways for teaching them are not the same. In fact, the 84,000 ways of the doctrine, the positions and substance of the three *yānas* and the principal practices of the 72 sages are nothing beyond the foundation of one's own mind. If one is able to comprehend his own mind, and train it at all times, he is, in each conscious moment, making constant offerings to the Buddhas of the ten quarters who are as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, and the twelve divisions of the *Sūtras*. He makes the Wheel of the Dharma turn at every moment.

If one understand the source of the mind, then the meaning concerning the mind will be inexhaustible; he will be endowed with everything and become perfect in practices. He has done all that ought to be done, and he will experience no further birth. When this is realized, false ideas will not arise, the conception of what-belongs-to-me will disappear, this physical frame will be given up and one is sure to attain the state of birthlessness which is beyond our comprehension. One should strive hard.

There is no speech greater and more important than this, which is rare to be heard. Among those who have heard it, there is only one, in a crowd like the sands of the Ganges, who will put it into practice; having practised it and reached the final goal, there is hardly any one in one hundred

million years. (Therefore), one should be perfectly tranquil, control the sense organs well, look sharp at the fountain of the mind, make it constantly function and pure, and not allow it to remain unrecorded (*Wu-chi*) or neutral.

[11] Question: What do you mean by the unrecorded (*Wu-chi*) or neutral mind :

Answer: Owing to external conditions the gross mind of those practising concentration is temporarily coming to rest, but internally the true mind is fettered. When the mind is not in a tranquil state, the practitioner always consciously keeps a watch over it; that means he has not yet obtained perfect purity and independently comprehend the fountain of the mind. This is called unrecorded (*Wu-chi*) or neutral. It is also the mind with a discharge (*āsrava*) which will not be able to escape from the great disease of birth and death. (This is bad enough), not to speak of those who know nothing at all concerning mindfulness. These people will sink into the suffering ocean of birth and death. No one knows when they will be able to emerge from it. It is a pity. One should strive hard. The *Sūtra* says:

“If the living beings are not sincere, and have not made aspiration from within, even if they come across the Buddhas like the sands of the Ganges in the three periods (of existence), there is nothing that could be done for them.”

And another *Sūtra* says:

“The living beings who know the mind will gain salvation by themselves; the Buddhas cannot give salvation to them.”

In the past, there were as numerous Buddhas as the sands of the Ganges; in spite of that, why have we not yet attained Buddhahood? It is simply because there is no sincere aspiration from within, and thereby we are submerged in the sea of suffering. One should strive hard.

It is rather late to repent the past errors of which we are aware. Now in the present life we happen to listen to speeches of a distinctive character. We should understand them quickly and comprehend that mindfulness is the only way. Those who are unwilling to seek Buddhahood with sincere heart, from which immense and unfettered bliss would be enjoyed, begin

seriously to search for fame and riches by following worldly practices. They will, in future, fall into hells to undergo various pains and sufferings. What can we do for them ? One should strive hard.

It would be of great service to the world, if one is able to wear tattered rags, take coarse food, be consciously mindful and pretend to be insane ; these are the best ways to conserve one's energy and strength. The unenlightened folk who, do not know seeking the reason from the ignorant mind, have undergone great hardship by performing extensively visible meritorious deeds, with the hope of gaining *mukti*. But they return to the sorrows of birth and death.

“Clearly not to lose sight of righteous thought, and let the living beings gain salvation,”  
is the Bodhisattva of Great Might speaking to you in clear language which means that mindfulness is the best. I wish to hear from you that you are unwilling to bear the pains of the present life, but desirous of undergoing sufferings of ten thousand *kalpas*. What have you to say ?

With regard to “Not to be blown off by the eight kinds of wind”, it is indeed a rare<sup>9</sup> mountain of treasure. If one is desirous of knowing the characteristic of fruition, (it may be tested in this manner that,) while in various conditions one is able to multiply the functions as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, while one exhibits great eloquence, and while one gives medicines to the sick according to the disease, no false thought will arise in him and the conception of what-belongs-to-me will disappear. If one can do that, he is really a person who has gone beyond the world, and the Tathāgata will freely and endlessly bless him. I say this, because I am sincerely glad that you have no false thought, and have discarded the conception of what-belongs-to-me.

[12] Question: What do you mean by the conception of what-belongs-to-me ?

Answer: It is the conception that when one is a little better than the other, one thinks: I am able to be in such a position. The *Parinirvāṇa-Sūtra* says:

“It is like the space which can accommodate everything. However, the space itself will not say: ‘I am able to do this’.”

9. ‘Shu-shih’ (see Appendix) means ‘Distinguished or different times’. I think ‘Rare’ is a suitable rendering here.

This means that the conception of what-belongs-to-me is gone and it will lead to the *Vajra-samādhi*. These two conditions will function at the same time.

[13] Question: The sincere practitioners seek the true and permanent cessation (*nirvāṇa*). But the world is impermanent and not delighted in the transcendental truth; its goodness is gross, as the permanent and subtle one has not yet manifested. Whenever one is about to aspire and take to reasoning, there arises the thinking consciousness, that is the mind of discharge (*āsrava*) or imperfection; whenever one tries to guide the mind towards dwelling on nothing, there prevails the ignorance and darkness which are devoid of reason. However, if one does not guide the mind to the right path and to reasoning, there emerges the false view of void. In that case, one may possess a human body, but behave like an animal. At this stage, if one has not got *samādhi* and wisdom, he will not be able to see clearly the Buddha-nature, and it will be the drowning spot for him only. How could one proceed to the *Anupadhiśeṣa-Nirvāṇa*? I request you to show the true destination.

Answer: When faith is complete and the sincere vow is accomplished, you slowly quieten your mind, then I shall instruct you further: Pacify your mind and body well, so that they will not have any attachment; let yourself sit in an upright position and allow your breathing to become fine and well-controlled; the mind is neither within, nor without, and it is not in between; see it nicely and steadily, then you see the mobility of consciousness. It is like the flowing of water and the mirage which do not stay even for a moment. Having noticed that consciousness is neither internal nor external, you look at it leisurely, steadily and firmly. Then it will melt away, settle down and become motionless. That being so, the mobile consciousness will suddenly disappear. The disappearance of this consciousness means the destruction of obstacles for the Bodhisattvas in the ten stages (*daśabhūmi*), or, when the characteristic of the consciousness and so forth has gone, one's mind will become perfectly tranquil, detached, bright and serene. I cannot describe its conditions any further. If you are desirous of knowing it, I refer you to the chapter on *Vajrakāya* of the *Mahā-parinirvāṇa-Sūtra*, and the chapter on paying a visit to Akṣobhya Buddha of the *Vimalakīrti-Sūtra*. Think carefully that these words are true.

If any one retains mindfulness either while walking, standing, sitting and lying down, or when he is face to face with the five desires, or the eight winds, this person has achieved the *brahmacārya* and completed what he

ought to perform. He will ultimately receive no further physical frame which is subject to birth and death. The five desires are: Form, sound, smell, taste and sensation, and the eight winds are: Gain, loss; defamation, eulogy; praise, ridicule; sorrow and joy. This is the training and testing-ground of the Buddha-nature for the practitioners. One should not be surprised that the present life is not free. The *Sūtra* says:

“If there is no Buddha staying in the world, the Bodhisattvas of the ten stages will not be able to obtain the benefit of what they are.”

Regarding the getting rid of this rewarded body due to Karma, the living beings in the past had sharp and dull intellectual qualities which could not be equalized. Those belong to the higher grade, it is a matter of seconds, and those of the lower grade, it may take innumerable *kalpas*. If one has the ability, one should, according to the nature of the beings, arouse their good qualities of Bodhi (intelligence). This will bring benefit to one's self as well as to others.

To adore the Path of the Buddha, one should understand the four necessities, so that one may know fully the characteristics of reality. If one sticks to the letter, he will miss the true spirit.

With regard to the Bhikṣus who renounced the home and took to religious practices, this home-renouncing means leaving the home of birth and death. This is called leaving the home.

Those who are endowed with right mindfulness, and have accomplished the religious practices, will retain that mindfulness at the time of the final passing away, even if the joints and limbs of their bodies are cut into pieces. These are the disciples of the Buddha.

“The foregoing discourse speaks merely about the mind; it derives its meaning from the letter.”

If any one speaks in this manner which shows that he does not really and clearly understand and realize it. In case one misunderstands the holy teaching, he should make a confession and discard it. If, however, one understands properly the Holy Path, he should divert that merit to living beings, with the hope that they will understand their own minds and at once attain Buddhahood.

Any one who has heard this should strive hard for the Goal. If one attains Buddhahood in future, he should be in the lead to secure deliverance for my disciples.

[14] Question: From the beginning to the end, this treatise dwells on the theme that one's mind is the Path. In what ways does it include the practice and fruition :

Answer: This treatise chiefly shows the characteristic of *Ekayāna*. However, full attention of this discourse is directed towards guiding the unenlightened to liberation. First of all one should get rid of birth and death, then, he will be able to provide deliverance to others. Finally it speaks of self-benefit, and not that of others. This may, roughly, be included in the division of practice. If any one practises it according to this text, he will become a Buddha right away. If I am telling you a lie, I shall swear by Heaven and Earth that I may fall into the Eighteen Hells. If any one does not believe my words, he will be eaten by the tigers and wolves in every birth !

W. PACHOW