

THE ŚŪRĀṄGAMA SŪTRA (Leng Yen Ching)

CHINESE RENDERING BY
MASTER PARAMITI OF CENTRAL
NORTH INDIA AT CHIH CHIH MONASTERY,
CANTON, CHINA, A.D. 705

Commentary (abridged) by
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and cannot produce the wondrous brightness of His golden hued body, in admiration of which I shaved my head to follow Him.'

The Buddha said: 'Ānanda and all of you should know that living beings, since the time without beginning, have been subject continuously to birth and death, because they do not know the permanent True Mind whose substance is, by nature, pure and bright. They have relied on false thinking which is not Reality so that the wheel of saṃsāra turns. Now if you wish to study the unsurpassed Supreme Bodhi to realize this bright nature, you should answer my questions straightforwardly. All Buddhas in the ten directions trod the same path to escape from birth and death because of their straightforward minds, with the same straightforwardness of mind and speech from start to finish without a trace of crookedness.

'Ānanda, when you developed that mind because of the Buddha's thirty-two excellent characteristics, tell me what saw and loved them.'

Ānanda replied: 'World Honoured One, my love came from the use of my mind, my eyes seeing and my mind admiring them, so that it was set on relinquishing birth and death.'

The Buddha continued: 'As you just said, your love was caused by your mind and eyes but if you do not know where your mind and eyes really are, you will never be able to destroy delusion. For instance, when the country is invaded by bandits, the king, before sending his soldiers to destroy them, should first know where they are. That which causes you to transmigrate without interruption comes from defects in your mind and eyes. Now tell me where your mind and eyes are.'

Ānanda replied: 'World Honoured One, all living beings born in the world through the ten types of birth hold that this knowing mind is in the body. As I look at the lotus-blue eyes of the Buddha, I see that they are on His face. Hence my understanding that my eyes are on my face whereas my knowing mind is in my body.'

The Buddha asked: 'Now as you sit in this hall, where do you see Jetavana park?'

Ānanda replied: 'World Honoured One, this great hall is in Jetavana park which is, therefore, outside the hall.'

The Buddha asked: 'What do you see first in this hall?'

Ānanda replied: 'World Honoured One, in this hall, I see first the Tathāgata, then the assembly, and only when looking outside do I see the park.'

The Buddha asked: 'When you see the park, what causes you to do so?'

Ānanda replied: 'It is because the doors and windows are open that I, though sitting in this hall, see the park outside.'

The Buddha then extended His golden hued arm and touched Ānanda's head with His hand, saying: 'There is a samādhi called the all-embracing Supreme Śūraṅgama, a gateway through which all Buddhas in the ten directions attained to the wondrous Majestic Path. Ānanda, listen now attentively.'

Ānanda prostrated himself at the Buddha's feet and knelt to receive the holy instruction.

The Buddha said: 'If you (are right) that, while sitting in this hall, you see the park outside through open doors and windows it would be possible for someone sitting here to see only things outside without seeing the Buddha (within).'

Ānanda replied: 'One cannot see the grove and stream outside without seeing the Buddha (here).'

(The Buddha said:) 'Ānanda, it is the same with you; (if your mind is not deluded), it will be clear about all this. However, if your knowing mind was really in your body, you should first be clear about everything inside it. You should, therefore, see everything in your body before seeing things outside it; even if you cannot see your heart, liver, spleen, and stomach, at least you should be clear about your growing nails and hair, about that which moves along your nerves and the pulsing of your veins. Why are you not clear about all this? If you do not see things within, how can you see those outside? Therefore, your contention that your knowing mind is inside your body is groundless.'

Ānanda bowed and said: 'After hearing the Buddha's Dharma-voice, I now understand that my mind is really outside my body. For instance a lamp should light up everything in a room before the courtyard outside through the open door. If I do not see what is in my body but see things outside it, this is like a lamp placed outside a room which cannot light what is in it. This being so clear

that there can be no doubt, am I still wrong about what the Buddha means?’

The Buddha said: ‘All the bhikṣus followed me to Śrāvastī to beg for food and have now returned to Jetavana park. I have taken my meal but as one bhikṣu is still eating, is the whole community well-fed?’

Ānanda replied: ‘No, World Honoured One, though they are arhats, they have not the same body or life span then how can one by eating cause all the others to satisfy their hunger?’

The Buddha said: ‘If your knowing mind is outside your body, the two are separate. Thus when your mind knows something, your body should not feel it and when your body feels something, your mind should not be aware of it. Now as I show you my hand, when your eyes see it, does your mind discern it?’

Ānanda replied: ‘Yes, World Honoured One, my mind discerns it.’

The Buddha said: ‘If so, how can your mind be outside your body? Therefore, your contention that your knowing and discerning mind is outside your body is groundless.’

Ānanda said: ‘World Honoured One, as you have said, if my mind does not see what is in my body, it is not within it, and if my body and mind know each other, they are not separate and my mind is, therefore, not outside my body. Now after thinking about this, I know where my mind is.’

The Buddha asked: ‘Where is it?’

Ānanda replied: ‘Since my knowing mind does not see what is in my body but can see things outside, I think it is hidden in my sense organ. For instance, if one covers one’s eyes with a crystal bowl, the latter does not obstruct this sense organ which simply follows the (faculty of) seeing to distinguish all things seen. Thus if my knowing mind does not see what is in (my body), it is because it is in the sense organ, and if it sees clearly what is outside without being obstructed, it is because it is hidden in that organ.’

The Buddha asked: ‘As you just said, the mind is hidden in the same way that the eyes are covered by the crystal bowl: now when one so covers them and sees the mountain and river, does one also see the bowl?’

Ānanda replied: ‘Yes, World Honoured One, one also sees the bowl.’

The Buddha said: 'If your mind is like the crystal bowl, when you see the mountain and river, why do you not see your own eyes? If you do they should be outside and should not follow your faculty of seeing. If they cannot be seen, how can you say that this knowing mind is hidden in the sense organ, like the (eyes) covered by the crystal bowl? Therefore, your contention that the knowing mind is hidden in the sense organ is groundless.'

Ānanda asked: 'World Honoured One, I now think of the bowels concealed in the body and of the apertures on its surface. Therefore, where there is concealment there is darkness and where there are openings there is light. As I am now before the Buddha, I open my eyes and see clearly and this is called outward seeing, and when I close them, I see (only) darkness and this is called inward seeing. What does the Buddha think of this?'

The Buddha said: 'When you close your eyes and see darkness, is this darkness opposite to your eyes or not? If it is, it is in front of them, then how can this be inward seeing? Even if there is really such inward seeing, when you sit in a dark room without the light of the sun, moon or a lamp, this darkness should also be in your bowels. If it is not opposite to your eyes, how can there be any seeing? Now let us forget (your so-called) outward seeing and assume that there is inward seeing, then when you close your eyes and see only darkness, which you call seeing what is in your body, why when you open them and see clearly, do you not see your face? If you do not, there is no such inward seeing. Now assuming that you can see your face, your knowing mind and organ of sight should be in the air, and then how can there be inward seeing? If they were in the air, they should not belong to your body, and the Buddha who now sees your face, should be your body as well. Thus when your eyes see something, your body should have no feeling. If you insist that both body and mind have separate feelings, there should be two separate perceptions and then your body should (one day) become two Buddhas. Therefore, your contention that to see darkness is inward seeing is groundless.'

Ānanda said: 'I have always heard the Buddha when teaching monks, nuns and male and female devotees say: "When the mind stirs all sorts of things are created and then all kinds of mind appear." I now think that the substance of (my) thinking is the

nature of mind which arises when it unites with externals and which is neither within nor without nor in between.'

The Buddha said: 'You have just said that because phenomena are created, all kinds of mind appear when uniting with them. So this mind has no substance and cannot unite with anything. If that which has no substance can unite with externals, this is union of the nineteenth realm of sense with the seventh sense datum.¹ This is sheer nonsense. If the mind has substance, when your hand grasps your body, does your mind feeling this (touch) come from within or without? If from within, you should see what is in your body and if from without, you should see your face.'

Ānanda said: 'It is the eyes that see and the mind that knows is not the eyes: to say that it sees is wrong.'

The Buddha said: 'If the eyes can see, when you are in a room, do you see the door (outside)?² Those who are dead and still have eyes, should see things; if they still see, how can they be dead? Ānanda, if your knowing mind has substance, is that substance single or manifold? As it is in your body, does it spread to every part of it or not? If it is one substance, when you grasp a limb, all four should feel that they are grasped; if so there would be no grasping (of any particular limb). If there is, the contention of a single substance does not hold good. If it is a manifold substance there should be many persons; then which substance is yours? If it spreads to every part of your body, this is the same as in the previous case of grasping. If it does not spread, then when you touch your head and foot at the same time, while your head feels that it is touched, your foot should not, but this is not so. Therefore, your contention that the mind arises where there is union with externals is groundless.'

Ānanda said: 'World Honoured One, I have heard the Buddha discuss Reality with other sons of the King of the Law (i.e. Bodhisattvas); He also said that the mind is neither within nor without. I now deduce that if the mind is in the body, it does not see anything within and if it is outside, they both cease to feel each other.

1. No such union can occur because there are only eighteen realms of sense and six sense data.

2. A reference to Ānanda's previous contention that the mind is in the body (i.e. the room) and the eyes are apertures on its surface (i.e. the outside doors).

To say that it is within is wrong for it does not know anything in the body. To say that it is without is also faulty since body and mind can perceive each other. As they do so and since nothing is seen in the body, the mind should be between the two (i.e. the inside and outside).'

The Buddha said: 'If your conception of a mind "in between" is correct, it implies a position for it. Now according to your inference, where is this intermediate position? Do you mean that it is (in or on) the body? If it is on the surface of the body, it cannot be in its center, and the conception of a mind in the center is no different from that of a mind in the body (which was refuted earlier). (Moreover) is its position manifest or not? If it is not, it does not exist. If it is, it is not fixed. Why? For instance, if a stake is driven into the ground to mark a center, when seen from the east it is in the west and when seen from the south it is in the north. As this stake can only lead to confusion, so is (your conception of) a mind in between completely chaotic.'

Ānanda said: 'The intermediate position that I mentioned is not these two. As the World Honoured One has said, the eyes and form are causes from which sight-perception arises. While the eyes can distinguish, form does not follow anything and perception lies between them; hence the mind arises.'

The Buddha said: 'If the mind lies between sense organs and sense data, does it include both or not? If it does, its substance and what is outside will be mixed up together, and since the mind perceives while its objects do not, two opposites will be set up; then how can there be an intermediate (position)? If it is not inclusive, (that is if it is independent of the sense organs and sense data), being neither the knower (subject) nor the known (object), it has no substance; then what is this intermediate? Therefore, your contention that it is in between is groundless.'

Ānanda said: 'World Honoured One, previously when I saw the Buddha, with His four chief disciples, Mahā-Maudgalyāyana, Subhūti, Pūrṇamaitrāyaṇīputra and Śāriputra, turn the Wheel of the Law, He always said that the nature of the knowing and discriminating mind is neither within nor without nor between the two, exists nowhere and clings to nothing, hence it is called mind. Is that which does not cling to things called mind?'

The Buddha replied: 'You just said that the nature of the knowing and discriminating mind exists nowhere. Now in this world, all things in the air, in water and on the ground, including those that fly and walk, make the existing whole. By that which does not cling to anything, do you mean that it exists or not? If it "is not," it is just the hair of a tortoise or the horn of a hare, then how can there be (this extra) non-clinging? If it "is" it cannot be said not to exist. That which "is not" is simply non-existent and that which "is" should have a position; then how can there be no clinging?'¹ Therefore, your contention that that which does not cling to anything is the knowing mind is groundless.'²

1. The very idea of existence implies a dwelling place, hence its clinging. Therefore, both 'is' and 'is not' are a dualism which has no room in the True Mind.

2. The absolute One Reality is the Eternal Mind which is beyond birth and death and is the common source of both Buddhas and living beings. Man, because of his basic ignorance caused, since the time without beginning, by the first thought which screened his True Mind, became subject to birth and death. Thus both the permanent and impermanent united to transform (that True Mind) into the store consciousness (*ālaya vijñāna*), the root of *saṃsāra*. This *ālaya* consciousness has three characteristics: a karmic one which is basic ignorance resulting from *self-evidencing*; a changing one which turns fundamental wisdom into false *perception*, the root of the first seven consciousnesses; and its expression in appearance, or *form*. Because of basic ignorance, the spiritual, bright, and nirvanic Absolute Voidness was changed into dull and deluded emptiness. Hence, Mañjuśrī said (in his *gāthā* later on): 'Thus in delusion there appeared one-sided emptiness.' Within this dull emptiness, ignorance gradually crystallized and turned into illusory Form made of four elements, resulting in a world created within the void. Hence Mañjuśrī continued: 'In which an imaginary world arbitrarily was built.' When false Perception confronted Form, a very small portion of this Form was gradually grasped as being self-possessed, and being supported by wrong perception, mind and form united and grasped at this dim (little) form as an Ego, thereby creating a living being made of five aggregates. Hence Mañjuśrī continued: 'Steadying itself the thinking process made the continents - While the (illusory) knower became a living being.' This is the origin of a living being. Ever after, this living being grasped at his body and mind as his Ego. How then can he now recognize his (essential) boundless True Mind? So in delusion, he thinks that his mind is in his body. Since Ānanda clung to a mind within his body, he mistook this (illusory) mind for True Mind; hence he saw only the Buddha's excellent characteristics which he admired but failed to realize that neither body nor mind exist. As he relied on the five aggregates, he divided

Refuting the false mind to eliminate the third aggregate and expose the unreality of the sixth consciousness

THEREUPON Ānanda rose from his seat, uncovered his right shoulder, knelt upon his right knee, reverently joined the palms of his hands and said to the Buddha: 'I am the Tathāgata's youngest

them wrongly into six sense organs with corresponding sense data. He further clung to the four elements that produced five sense data as his Ego's fields of activities, thereby (creating) six consciousnesses and indulging in discriminations, illusions and karmic acts.

This was the origin of the cycle of births and deaths caused by attachment to body and mind as an Ego. This strong attachment hardened as aeons succeeded one another and can now be broken only by a powerful samādhi. For this reason, the Buddha before proclaiming this samādhi, asked Ānanda where his mind and eyes actually were. The mind which Ānanda thought to be in the body showed the place held by the bandits where the king should send his soldiers to destroy them. Since Ānanda always treasured his Ego, he would suffer shock and alarm if it was suddenly crushed. In order to calm him, the Buddha put His hand on the disciple's head, reassuring him that there was a samādhi called the all-embracing Supreme Śūrangama, a gateway through which all Buddhas had reached the profound Majestic Path.

From this point until He spoke later of two kinds of Basic Inversion, the Buddha aimed to wipe out the duality of Ego and things (dharmā) thereby revealing the fundamentally enlightened True Mind with the aid of the transcendental power of that Great Samādhi.

To break up the illusory Ego made of five aggregates which all living beings hold as existing, Ānanda was pressed in turn to point out the seven different places in which he thought the mind could be found. Actually, the first two aggregates rūpa (form and matter) and vedanā (reception, sensation and feeling) were destroyed for previously the four elements had been grasped as having an Ego, with the idea of there being a mind in the body; this is body as an abode of mind. As Ānanda failed to locate his mind in his body, he turned to a position outside it but could not find his mind there either. So after seeking vainly in seven different positions, the conclusion was that rūpa was non-existent and that vedanā was equally false. Careful reading of the text on the mind's so called seven positions shows the wiping out primarily of the illusion of rūpa and incidentally of vedanā. And, as dealt with later in the text, the other three aggregates sañjñā (conception or discerning), saṃskāra (discrimination) and vijñāna (consciousness) were gradually eliminated. Readers should attend to all this in order to understand this profound Teaching.

cousin and because of His great affection, I have been allowed to be His disciple, but I have presumed on His compassion. And so although I have heard much of His preaching, I have failed to avoid the worldly and have been unable to overcome the magic which has turned me round, causing me to visit a house of prostitution. All this is because I failed to reach the region of Reality. May the World Honoured One be compassionate enough to teach us the Path of Śamatha for the benefit of those lacking faith and holding perverted views.' After saying this, he prostrated himself with knees, elbows and head on the ground. Then he stood up in reverent silence, with the whole assembly keenly awaiting the Teaching.

REVEALING THE BRIGHT SAMĀDHI

By the Buddha's transcendental power, all sorts of rays of light, as brilliant as hundreds and thousands of suns, shone from His forehead, illuminating all the Buddha-lands which shook with six kinds of quake. Thus a number of worlds, uncountable as the dust, appeared simultaneously and (by the same power) united into a single world wherein each of the great Bodhisattvas, while staying in his own realm, brought his palms together to listen to the Dharma.¹

1. This Light revealed the whole substance of the Great Samādhi. Since Ānanda had failed to awaken to the unreality of mind and body, he again asked for the Teaching on the Path of Śamatha (on the meditative study of the Void). He did not realize that the Buddha had first mentioned this Great Samādhi and then pressed Him hard about the mind's positions for the sole purpose of urging him instantly to awaken to the non-existence of the four elements and the falseness of the five aggregates, so that the substance of Samādhi appeared in full on the spot.

Had Ānanda been sharp rooted, he could have cast away all illusions, the meeting would have been dismissed and the Śūraṅgama assembly would have then come to an end. However, he was deluded and the Buddha was obliged to use expedients to awaken him. For his delusion was due to his grasping at illusory birth and death which he mistook for reality. Hence His teaching in the following text on the two basic inversions to root out the third aggregate saṃjñā.

As the Buddha was about to explain these inversions, He sent out from His forehead rays of light to reveal what Lin Chi called 'the true man of no

ORIGIN OF INVERSION

The Buddha said: 'Since the time without beginning, all living beings have given rise to all sorts of inversion because of the karmic seed (of ignorance) which is like the akṣa shrub.² This is why seekers of the Truth fail to realize Supreme Enlightenment but achieve only (the states of) śrāvakas, pratyeka-buddhas, heretics, devas and demons, solely because they do not know the two basic inversions, thereby practising wrongly like those who cannot get food by cooking sand in spite of the passing of aeons as countless as the dust. What are these two basic inversions? Ānanda, the first is the basic root of birth and death caused, since the time without beginning, by the wrong use of a clinging mind which people mistake for their own nature, and the second is their attachment

fixed position who, from his forehead, sends out the light that shakes the world.' (See Ch'an and Zen Teaching, Second Series, p. 110. Rider.) However, because of self-deception, people do not recognize this man of no fixed position in spite of his daily activities and are separated from him by screens and obstructions put up by their wrong thinking which divides (their individed whole) into six sense organs and sense data. Now the Buddha-Light (which is inherent in all of us) shone on the realms of the sense organs, sense data and consciousness which are identical with Reality (the underlying principle from which they spring). This is why the text mentions the appearance of Buddhas in their lands suddenly revealed in this Light which destroyed the darkness of ignorance. Hence the six kinds of quake to overthrow the six sense organs and sense data and so remove their obstructions, so that all the worlds could become one. This is Reality *shining* on darkness and performing its function (see Ch'an and Zen Teaching, Second Series, p. 102) of dissipating it at once, thus enabling all serious practisers to climb without effort the Transcendental Path. Hence countless Bodhisattvas appeared in this Light seated in their own places, and bringing their palms together to listen to the Buddha's teaching on the Great Samādhi.

By means of its Light, the Buddha revealed the whole substance of the Samādhi. In the following chapters, the Teaching merely reveals this state of Brightness, and if it is understood, there will be no need to study the Buddha Dharma. Because Ānanda was not awakened to it, the Buddha was obliged to make further revelations one after the other. In answer to Ānanda's renewed request for instruction on śamatha, the Buddha began his (further) Teaching by showing this Brightness.

2. The akṣa seed is threefold and so illustrates the simultaneous character of illusion, action and suffering.

to causal conditions (which screen) the basically bright essence of consciousness which is the fundamentally pure and clean substance of Nirvanic Enlightenment. Thus they ignore this basic brightness and so transmigrate through (illusory) realms of existence without realizing the futility of their (wrong) practice.¹

ACTUAL INVERSION

THE INVERTED MIND

Probe into the false mind

‘Ānanda, as you have enquired about the Śamatha Gateway through which to escape from birth and death, I must ask you a question.’ The Buddha then held up His golden hued arm and bent His fingers, saying: ‘Ānanda, do you see this?’ Ānanda replied: ‘Yes.’ The Buddha asked: ‘What do you see?’ Ānanda replied: ‘I

1. The Buddha, before teaching the Great Samādhi, revealed the root cause of birth and death by declaring that since the time without beginning all living beings had given rise to all sorts of inversion because of their karmic delusion about Basic and Fertilized Ignorance. This (twofold) ignorance causes all sorts of karmic seeds which produce the bitter fruits of delusion, action and suffering, and so are likened to the threefold akṣa seeds. This illusion can only be broken up by the Great Samādhi which was pointed out first. Seekers of the Truth cannot realize Supreme Enlightenment but are misled by delusion into other ways simply because they cannot distinguish two basic roots: first, the root cause of birth and death which is the discriminating mind which they mistake for their self-nature; and second, the fundamentally pure and clean substance of Nirvanic Enlightenment realized by all past Buddhas, that is the Essence of their Consciousness which is basically bright but can give rise to causal conditions. By clinging to these (illusory) conditions, they ignore the basic brightness and suffer aimlessly from birth and death. This Essence of Consciousness is the substance of the Eighth Consciousness which is basically bright and is the wonderful shining True Mind of Basic Enlightenment. Since all living beings fail to realize this wondrous Bright Mind, it is (screened by delusion and) transformed into the Essence of Consciousness which leads to wrong thinking. Therefore, the Buddha aimed first to root out this false thinking and then the Essence of Consciousness so that the basically enlightened True Mind could manifest through the Great Samādhi. Hence His revelation of Samādhi before wiping out false thinking. The following text deals with the elimination of falsehood to expose Reality with His teaching on Śamatha, the Path to Reality; that which was to be wiped out was precisely these two (basic) inversions.

see the Buddha raise His arm and bend His fingers, showing a shining fist that dazzles my mind and eyes.' The Buddha asked: 'How do you see it?' Ānanda replied: 'I and all those here use the eyes to see it.' The Buddha asked: 'You say that I bend my fingers to show a shining fist that dazzles your mind and eyes; now tell me, as you see my fist, what is that mind which perceives its brightness?' Ānanda replied: 'As the Tathāgata asks about the mind and since I am using my own to search for it exhaustively, I conclude that that which searches is my mind.'

Thinking is unreal

The Buddha said: 'Hey! Ānanda, this is not your mind.' Ānanda stared with astonishment, brought his two palms together, rose from his seat and asked: 'If this is not my mind, what is it?' The Buddha replied: 'Ānanda, this is your false thinking which arises from external objects, deludes your true nature and deceives you into mistaking, since the time without beginning, a thief for your own son, thereby losing (sight of) that which is basically permanent; hence the round of birth and death.'¹

1. This eliminated the false mind to expose the first inversion. Before wiping out this false mind, the Buddha spoke of the Path of Śamatha because His aim was now to reveal the substance of the Great Samādhi. Śamatha is meditative study of the void. As the pure and clean True Mind of the Tathāgata store (or the Absolute in the midst of delusion caused by the passions and desires), is fundamentally devoid of a single (foreign) thing (dharma) it should be the object of this meditation on the void. Beside this meditation on substance, there is no other method, but due to the false mind and false thinking caused by defiling causes, the True Mind is hidden and does not appear. Now if (illusory) mind and seeing are eliminated, all causal conditions cease to exist and the True Mind will manifest. Cognition of all causal creations as having no nature of their own are the state of True Mind. Hence the Buddha's answers, based on the substance of the Samādhi of the Absolute, to Ānanda's questions arising from his false mind and false seeing that discriminated between causal conditions. And so He had to break the false mind before teaching the Path of Śamatha.

When the Buddha first asked Ānanda why he left home, the disciple replied that it was because his eyes saw and his mind loved His excellent physical characteristics. The Buddha declared: 'That which causes you to transmigrate ceaselessly is the fault of that mind and those eyes.' This shows their falseness. Then Ānanda looked in vain for his mind in seven different

The sixth consciousness is empty

Ānanda said: 'I am the Buddha's beloved youngest cousin whose mind so admired Him that I left home to serve and make offerings to the Tathāgata and to all Buddhas and enlightened teachers in lands as countless as sand grains in the Ganges. If I am determined to do all difficult Dharma duties, it is because I use this mind, and even if I now slander the Dharma, causing my excellent qualities to weaken for ever, it is also because of this mind. If it was not mind, I would have no mind and would be like the earth or a log for nothing exists beyond what I feel and know. Why does the Buddha now say that it is not mind? This frightens me and also this assembly and not one of us here can avoid being doubtful and suspicious about it. Will you be so compassionate as to enlighten us?'

From His lion seat the Buddha in order to teach Ānanda and the assembly so that they could all achieve the Patient Endurance of the Uncreate (Anutpattika-dharma-kṣānti), held out His hand to touch Ānanda's head, saying: 'The Tathāgata has always said that all phenomena are manifestations of mind and that all causes and effects including (all things from) the world to its dust, take shape (solely) because of the mind. Ānanda, if we look at all the worlds

positions, and though the mind was searched for, the body was also found not to be its dwelling place, so that unreality of the body was shown.

The Buddha, replying to Ānanda's renewed inquiry about the Samādhi gateway, skilfully eliminated first the false mind and then the false seeing. Therefore, he held up His fist and asked Ānanda: 'As your eyes see my fist, what is your mind?' to point out the non-existence of the false mind. As the disciple said that that which searched for his mind was the mind itself, without knowing that he wrongly mistook the mind that discriminates in saṃsāra for the real one, the Buddha shouted: 'Hey! This is not your mind.' This shout was like a previous vajra-sword that cut off (Ānanda's) discriminating mind, but unfortunately he was not awakened. So he stared with astonishment and asked: 'If this is not my mind, what is it?' The Buddha replied that it was only false thinking arising from external objects, that is the discriminating Sixth Consciousness which derived from an accumulation of causal conditions, and which he mistook for his True Mind; this Sixth Consciousness actually screened his true nature and should not have been regarded as real. Since he recognized that false mind and disregarded his permanent True Mind, he was caught on the turning wheel of birth and death.

and all existing (things) including even grass and leaves, and investigate their roots, they are all made of matter and have qualities, and even the empty void has its name and appearance; then how can the pure and clean profound Bright Mind which is the (underlying) nature of every (discriminating) mind be without its own substance? If you grasp firmly the knowledge which comes from your discrimination between feeling and seeing as your true mind, it should have its own nature independent of all (sense data such as) form, smell, taste and touch. As you now listen to my sermon on the Dharma, you differentiate because you hear my voice.'

The seventh consciousness is unreal

'Even if you (succeed in) putting an end to all seeing, hearing, feeling and knowing, and so preserve inner quiet, the shadow of (your) differentiation of things (dharmā) still remains. I do not want you to hold that this is not mind, but you should examine it carefully and minutely: that which continues to possess discerning nature even in the absence of sense data is really your mind; (on the other hand) if this discerning nature ceases with sense data, this is merely the shadow of (your) differentiation of them, for they are not permanent and when they cease to exist, so does this (so-called) mind, like the hair of a tortoise and the horns of a hare. If your Dharmakāya can so easily cease to be, who will then practise and realize the patient endurance of the Uncreate?'

After hearing this, Ānanda and all those present were completely bewildered.¹

1. Ānanda used to rely on his Sixth Consciousness, that is his clinging mind which he mistook for his True Mind. As he was scolded by the Buddha (for self-conceit), he was completely bewildered and thought that if he had no mind, he would be like earth or a log. The Buddha, out of compassion for the whole assembly, taught them how to develop non-creating mind; He extended His hand to touch Ānanda's head to reassure him and to wipe out his perplexity, saying: 'Why do you think that you are without a mind and are like a lifeless thing? I have always said that all phenomena are manifestations of the mind and that all worldly causes and effects, either direct or indirect, take shape because of the mind. This is True Mind; why do not you waken to it? All phenomena in the world, as well as the smallest things, are (made of) matter and have qualities, and even the empty void has its name and appearance; then how can the wondrous pure and clean Bright Mind

Refuting all inversion

The Buddha said: 'Practising students, even after they have realized the nine successive states of dhyāna,² still cannot step out of the stream of transmigration and so fail to become Arhats, because they cling to this saṃsāric false thinking which they mistake for Reality. This is why, though you have heard much (of my Dharma), you have failed to win the holy fruit.'³

THE INVERTED PERCEPTION

After hearing this, Ānanda, in bitter tears, prostrated himself with his head, knees and elbows on the ground, knelt and brought

which is the underlying nature of all mental states, have no substance? Instead of understanding the substance of True Mind, you grasp firmly at your false thinking that discriminates (aimlessly) about True Mind; is this not inversion? If it was True Mind, it should have a nature of its own even after all sense data have ceased to exist. Since it is no more when there are no sense data, is it not false? As you listen to my sermon on the Dharma, you differentiate solely because of my voice, but when I stop speaking, this mind of yours will cease to exist. This is the differentiating mind which arises when you hear my causal voice; this is your (discriminating) Sixth Consciousness which vanishes when sense data disappear.' This wiped out the third aggregate, saṃjñā, to expose the unreality of the Sixth Consciousness.

In the last paragraph of the text, the unreality of the Seventh Consciousness is exposed. It is not only the discriminating Sixth Consciousness which is false but 'If you put an end to all seeing, hearing, feeling and knowing to stop using all six senses and so preserve your inner quiet, there is still the shadow of (your) differentiation of things.' This is the Seventh Consciousness which grasps at the innermost self as an ego and which is the organ of the Sixth Consciousness; it is precisely the root of birth and death, so 'How can you hold it as Reality?' The Buddha was about to expose the falseness of the fourth aggregate, saṃskāra, and so wipe out the Seventh Consciousness, so He said: 'I do not want you to hold that it is not mind; what I want you to know is that false thinking is not True Mind; you should examine carefully and minutely this: that which has its independent substance when sense data cease to exist is your True Mind, but that which vanishes with sense data is (simply) non-existent, like the hair of a tortoise and the horns of a hare, in which case your Dharmakāya should also be subject to destruction, and if so, who will practise and realize the patient endurance of the Uncreate?'

2. The states of dhyāna in the four dhyāna heavens, the four heavens beyond form and the heaven beyond sensation and thought.

3. The Buddha had now wiped out false thinking: in the following text he removed false seeing (perception) as well.

his two palms together, saying: 'After I left home to follow the Buddha, I merely relied on His transcendental power and always thought that I could dispense with practice since He would bestow samādhi upon me. I did not know that He could not be my substitute and so lost (sight of) my fundamental Mind. This is why, though I joined the Order, my mind was unable to enter the Tao. I was like a destitute son running away from his father. I only realize now that, in spite of much listening (to the Dharma), if I do not practise it, I shall come to nothing as if I had not heard it, like a man who cannot satisfy his hunger by merely speaking of food. World Honoured One, I am caught by the two hindrances because I do not know the (real) nature of the still and permanent Mind. May the Tathāgata be compassionate enough fully to reveal to me that wondrous Bright Mind and so open my Tao eye.

A bright Light to reveal the One Reality

Thereupon the Tathāgata, from the sauvastika on His chest, sent out a radiant multi-coloured precious Light which illuminated the Buddha lands in the ten directions as countless as the dust and which, after shining on the heads of all Buddhas everywhere, veered to Ānanda and the assembly. The Buddha then said to Ānanda: 'I now hoist the banner of Great Dharma so that you and all living beings in the ten directions can realize the pure and bright Mind of your profound and subtle Nature and so win the Eye that is pure and clear.'¹

1. This eliminated the disciple's false seeing. Ānanda had heard the Buddha's teaching and had believed that the discriminating mind vanished as soon as all causal sense data ceased to exist and so realized that it was not True Mind. Therefore, his previous seeing of the Buddha was false. Hence he asked Him to reveal the wondrous Bright Mind so as to open his Tao eye which alone could put an end to his false seeing. This inverted perception was due to his inner Sixth Consciousness clinging to his outer body as an Ego, and was precisely his attachment to the dual reality of Ego and dharma; this discriminative attachment to the duality of Ego and dharma is called *discriminative perception* (as opposed to inborn or natural perception). Now the organ of his Sixth Consciousness, that is his Seventh Consciousness, clung to the characteristic *Perception* of the inner Eighth Consciousness as an Ego and was his inborn grasping at the duality of Ego and dharma. It is called one's *Inborn Perception*. Since sense organ and consciousness depend on each other, this is the field

Returning perception to Mind²

‘Ānanda, a moment ago you said that you saw my shining fist; tell me, how did its brightness come about, what caused it to take the form of a fist and with what did you see it?’

Ānanda replied: ‘The Buddha’s golden hued body is like a precious hill and manifests (the state of) purity and cleanness, so that the fist shone. It was really my eyes that saw Him bend the fingers and form a fist which was shown to all of us.’

The Buddha said: ‘In truth wise people should be awakened by examples and analogies. Ānanda, if I had no hand I would have no fist and if you had no eyes, you would have no (faculty of) seeing. Is there any connection between your organ of sight and my fist?’

Ānanda replied: ‘Yes, World Honoured One. If I had no eyes, I would have no (faculty of) seeing; so there is an analogy between my organ of sight and the Buddha’s fist.’

The Buddha said: ‘Your reasoning is incorrect. For instance, a handless man has no fist, but a man without eyes still has his (faculty of) seeing. When you meet a blind man and ask him what he sees, he will tell you there is nothing but darkness in front of

of wrong thinking; hence the two hindrances that caught Ānanda.

Before teaching the elimination of falsehood, the Buddha sent out, from the *saṃvāstika* on His chest, a radiant multi-coloured Light to stress that wrong thinking was originally the great Wisdom-light of the True Mind in the Tathāgata store which, under delusion, turned into false thinking, and so transformed this Wisdom-light into false seeing. This Light illuminated all the ten directions to show its manifestation. As this Brightness is self-possessed by both the saintly and the worldly, it first shone on the heads of the Buddhas and then reached Ānanda and the whole assembly. He who seeks the True Mind and True Perception should only cognize this Brightness which, under delusion, turns into false thinking and seeing. Now to change the latter into the fundamental Brightness which is self-possessed, it is only necessary to change the false into the true. He who awakens to this True Light achieves instantly the wondrous pure Bright Mind and realizes the Eye that is pure and clean, so that his mind and perception become true. This was the Great Dharma banner set up by the Buddha.

2. This is the secret of Ch’an Transmission according to which *Function* should be returned to *Substance* for realization of mind and perception of self-nature. Readers are urged to pay particular attention to the profound meanings of these two idoms, *Substance* and *Function*, in their ch’an training.

him. Therefore, though things may be screened from view the (faculty of) seeing continues.'

Ānanda said: 'If a blind man sees nothing but darkness before him, how can this be called seeing?'

The Buddha asked: 'Is there any difference between the darkness seen by a blind man in front of him and that seen by a man who is not blind when he is in a dark room?'

(Ānanda replied): 'World Honoured One, there is no difference.'

The Buddha said: 'Ānanda, when a blind man who used to see only darkness suddenly recovers his sight and sees every thing clearly, if you say that it is his eyes which see, then when a man who saw darkness in a dark room suddenly lights a lamp which enables him to see what is there, you should say that it is the lamp that sees. If a lamp can see things, it should have (the faculty of) seeing and should not be called a lamp; if it really sees, it has no relation to you. Therefore, you should know that while the lamp can reveal form, seeing comes from the eyes but not from the lamp. Likewise, while your eyes can reveal form, the nature of seeing comes from the mind but not from the eyes.'¹

1. The Buddha, before exposing the unreality of indiscriminative seeing, held up His fist to probe Ānanda. The disciple, being still in the Hīnayāna stage, knew nothing of Ālaya's three characteristics (self-evidencing, perception and form), for he knew only the six consciousnesses and used to hold on to sense organs and sense perceptions, so that he relied on the eyes that 'can see' without realizing that this seeing originated in the mind. As the Buddha was about to teach him how to return this seeing to the mind, He held up His fist, asking: 'What do you use to see this?' Ānanda replied that he used his eyes to see the fist, for he still held that seeing derived from them. So the Buddha compared His fist with the disciple's eyes, asking: 'If I had no hands, there would be no fist, but if you had no eyes, would you have no (faculty of) seeing?' He then spoke of a blind man who saw only darkness, but had he really no (faculty of) seeing? Since the darkness seen by the blind man is the same as that seen by another who is not blind while sitting in a dark room, it follows that seeing does not come from the eyes. When the blind man recovers his sight and sees things, if this can be called the eyes' seeing, then when a man in a dark room suddenly lights a lamp, this should be called the lamp's seeing. This makes no sense for the lamp can only reveal objects but seeing belongs to the man. Therefore, the organ of sight can only reveal form but the nature of this seeing belongs to the mind and not to the eyes. This is returning perception to mind.