

with no desire, and able to enter or leave this state of dhyāna at will. These are the manifestations of genuine dhyāna. As an illustration, when you work with an evil man, he will irritate you but if you work with a good man, his excellent behaviour will satisfy you. Distinction between an evil and a genuine dhyāna is made in the same way.

(c) The practice of chih-kuan for preserving manifestly excellent roots

When his inner excellent qualities manifest during meditation, the practiser should employ the chih-kuan method to advance further. He should practise chih or kuan as the case requires, as taught above.

### 8. DISCERNING MĀRA'S HARMFUL INTERFERENCE

The Sanskrit word 'māra' means 'murderer' in Chinese. Māra robs the practiser of his wealth of merits and destroys the life of his wisdom,<sup>1</sup> hence the aims of evil demons. The Buddha's aim is to lead, by means of merits and wisdom, all living beings to nirvāṇa, but māra's target is to destroy their good roots so as to condemn them to drift in the stream of birth and death. If we can quiet the mind to practise the right Tao, we will find out that māra grows fiercely as our Tao progresses higher; hence the need to discern māra's aim.

There are four kinds of māra: the demon of trouble (kleśa), the demon of the five aggregates, the demon of death and demoniac spirits. The first three are common being created by the self-mind and should be eradicated by it. They are (well known and are, therefore) not dealt with here. As to demoniac spirits, they should be known and are now discussed. There are three kinds:

1. The mischievous māras who are typified by the twelve animals which stand for the twelve hours of day and night and which take various bodily forms, either as girls or elderly men and various frightening appearances to deceive and trouble the meditator. These demons choose their characteristic times to come and annoy him and should be recognized. If a demon comes between 3 and 5 a.m., he stands for a tiger; between 5 and 7, a rabbit: between 7 and 9, a dragon: between 9 and 11, a snake: between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., a horse: between 1 and 3 p.m., a sheep: between 3 and 5, a monkey: between 5 and 7, a chicken: between 7 and 9, a dog: between 9 and 11, a pig: between 11 p.m. and 1 a.m. a rat and between 1 and 3, a buffalo.<sup>2</sup> If the

1. Wisdom life, a Buddhist term, means wisdom as life, being the basis of spiritual character.

2. These twelve symbolic animals can be likened to the twelve signs of the zodiac: aries, taurus, gemini, cancer, leo, virgo, libra, scorpio, sagittarius, capricorn, aquarius and pisces.

practiser regularly sees them coming at specific hours, he will know that they are animal spirits. He should name and shout at them and they will disappear at once.

2. The harassing māras who aim to trouble the meditator and who appear as worms and grubs that sting his head, tickle him under the arms, clutch at him, make a disturbing noise or appear as beasts or in other strange forms to annoy him. He should recognize them, close his eyes, concentrate on his single mind and scold them, saying: 'I know you; you are the fire-eating, incense-smelling and offerings-stealing demons of this world, who hold evil views and delight in breaking the precepts. I keep the commandments and am not afraid of you.' If the practiser is a monk, he should read the śīla text, and if he is a layman, he should recite the three formulas of refuge and the five prohibitions, whereat these demons will crawl away. There are many ways of getting rid of them which are taught in the sūtra.

3. The confusing māras who create conditions of sense data to destroy the meditator's mental progress, such as: (1) an adverse surrounding of five fearful sense data to scare him; (2) a favourable surrounding of five pleasant sense data to incite him to cling to them; and (3) a surrounding of ordinary sense data, which is neither favourable nor adverse, to confuse him. Hence, they are called murderers, flowery (i.e. attractive) arrows, or the five arrows that hit a man's five senses.

They produce all kinds of states to deceive and mislead the meditator, such as: friendly states in which his parents, his brothers, Buddhas and respectable men and women appear to arouse his attachment to them; hostile states in which wild beasts such as tigers, wolves, lions and malignant spirits (rākṣasas) come in frightful forms to terrify him; and ordinary states that are neither friendly nor hostile to divert and confuse his mind, causing his failure to realize dhyāna; hence they are called māras. Sometimes they make pleasant or unpleasant speeches or sounds, give off fragrant or offensive smells, produce good or bad flavours and create happy and unhappy situations that affect his body; these are demonic influences which are too many to be counted. To sum up, they assail the senses in all kinds of ways to annoy and upset the meditator, causing him to deviate from all good Dharmas and to get involved in all sorts of kleśa. They all belong to māra armies that aim to destroy the universal Buddha Dharma and to obstruct the Tao by causing desire, sadness, hatred, sleep, etc., as said in the following gāthā:

*Desire is the first of your armies;  
Worry and sadness is the second;  
The third is thirst and hunger;  
Craving for love's the fourth:*

*The fifth is sleep and drowsiness;  
 While awe and fright compose the sixth;  
 Doubt and repentance are the seventh;  
 Anger and resentment make the eighth;  
 Gain and preservation form the ninth;  
 While pride and self-importance are the tenth.  
 With so many troops you aim  
 To destroy the Saṅgha.  
 I use strong dhyāna wisdom  
 To break up all your strength  
 And when I am a Buddha  
 To free all living beings.*

When the practiser is aware of these māra disturbances, he should avoid them. There are two ways of so doing:

(i) By the practice of *chih*. When encountering these external māra states, he should know that they are all unreal and should never worry or be frightened. Neither should he accept or reject them and give rise to discrimination. Directly he stops all the activities of his mind and sets it at rest, they will disappear of themselves.

(ii) By the practice of *kuan*. When these māra states appear, if he fails to avoid them by means of *chih*, he should look into the subjective mind that beholds them. He will find that since his mind leaves no traces,<sup>1</sup> no demon can trouble it. By so practising *kuan*, these states will vanish.

If they do not disappear, he should set his mind aright and avoid giving rise to fear. He should, even at the sacrifice of his own life, remain unperturbed in his right thought. For he should know that the (fundamental) condition of suchness of the māra realm is identical with that of the region of Buddhas. Since both conditions are of the same absoluteness, they are but one and are, therefore, non-dual. Thus he will understand that while the māra realm should not be rejected, the region of Buddhas should not be grasped and, as a result, the Buddha Dharma will manifest itself before him, with all māra states vanishing of themselves.

If these māra states do not disappear, he should not worry and if they vanish, he should not be delighted. Why? Because, up to now, no meditator has actually seen a demon take the form of a tiger or a wolf to come and devour him. Neither has a meditator actually seen a demon take a human form of the opposite sex to come and live with him (or her) as wife or husband. An ignorant man who does not know that these transformations are illusory is scared or gives rise to attachment, thereby upsetting his own mind and becoming insane (in the worst case). Thus he harms himself

1. Lit. has no whereabouts.

because of his ignorance and his troubles are certainly not caused by demons.

If these māra states last for months or even a whole year without any likelihood of their disappearance, the meditator should set his mind aright and firmly abide in the right thought, even at the peril of his body and life, without giving way to worry and fear. He should recite the Mahāyāna and Vaipulya sūtras, silently repeat the māra-repulsing mantras and fix his mind on the Three Gems. After his meditation, he should repeat the mantras for self-protection, observe the rules of repentance and reform and read the pratimokṣa.<sup>1</sup> Since wickedness is no match for righteousness, these māra states will sooner or later disappear of themselves. They are too numerous to be listed, but they should be recognized by beginners who should call on learned masters for guidance. These difficult situations show that māras have entered the mind of the practiser to deceive and disturb him and to cause him to be either happy or sad, thereby bringing harm or even death to the victim. Sometimes they mislead him so that he realizes evil dhyāna, evil knowledge, evil spiritual power and evil dhāraṇīs (i.e. black magic), preaches wrongly and leads others to evil ways. He then believes in and submits to them and they encourage him to break the saṅgha's rules of conduct and to destroy the right Dharma. There are so many of these states that they cannot be given in full. I have mentioned only the important ones so that students sitting in dhyāna can know how to avoid them. To sum up, the avoidance of depravity in order to return to righteousness consists in looking into the (underlying) reality of all things (dharma) in the practice of *chih* and *kuan* which will destroy all depravity. Hence, Nāgārjuna said in his Commentary on the Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra: 'Besides the reality underlying all dharmas (i.e. the Bhūtatathatā), there is not a thing that does not pertain to māra.' This is explained in the following gāthā:

*Discrimination, thought and recollection  
 Are the net of Māra.  
 Imperturbability and non-differentiation  
 Are the seal of Dharma.*

## 9. THE HEALING OF AILMENTS

During his practice of self-cultivation, the meditator may fall ill because of either his (wrong) contemplation of mind and counting of breaths which may bring into play disharmony between the four elements or because of his

1. The 250 precepts for monks in the vinaya; they are read in assembly twice a month.

(improper) control of body, breath and mind, thereby affecting his health. If the mind is properly controlled during the meditation, all the 404 ailments<sup>1</sup> will be eliminated, but if it is wrongly regulated, they will manifest. Therefore, during his own practice or when teaching others, the meditator should know the origins of ailments and the method of healing them by means of mind (control) while sitting in dhyāna, because not only do illnesses hinder his self-cultivation but also (in the worst case) they may endanger his life.

To heal ailments requires the knowledge of diagnosis and treatment.

#### (a) Diagnosis of ailments

In spite of a great number of illnesses, diagnosis does not exceed the following two modes: the condition of the four elements and of the five viscera.

Chih I here details in turn the ailments due to an excess in the body of the elements of earth, water, fire and air and those which are caused by some irregularity in the heart, liver, lungs, stomach or kidneys. He then continues:

Furthermore, there are three different causes of ailments: excessive or deficient conditions of the four elements and five viscera, as already explained; harmful interference by ghosts and spirits; and karmic influences.

Ailments are easy to eliminate if they are treated at the very beginning, but if they are allowed to worsen with the passing of time, when the body is greatly affected and becomes emaciated, it is very difficult to cure them.

#### (b) Treatment of ailments

After diagnosis has determined the origin of an ailment, a method should be employed to cure it. There are many ways of treating illnesses, but essentially only two are expedient, chih and kuan.

(i) Treatment by chih. How should one employ chih to cure ailments? A master said: 'Just fix the mind on the affected spot and the ailment will be cured.' Why so? Because mind is mainly responsible for the rewards and punishments in a lifetime.<sup>2</sup> It is like a king from whom, when he comes to a place, bandits flee in all directions.

Another master said: 'Within an inch below the navel is the udāna,

1. Each of the four elements (earth, water, fire, wind) is responsible for 101 ailments; thus  $101 \times 4 = 404$  ailments in all.

2. Lit. is the chief in a retributive lifetime.

called tan. 'ien in Chinese.<sup>1</sup> If the mind is definitely fixed there, all ailments can be cured in time.'

A (third) master said: 'If, while walking, standing, reclining and sleeping, the mind is fixed on the soles of the feet, one will cure all ailments.' Why so? Because illnesses are caused by the four elements being out of order. This is due to the mind and its cognition that float up to follow external causes and so upset the four elements. If the mind is brought down, the four elements will not be affected and will be in their proper working condition, with the elimination of all ailments.

A (fourth) master said: 'If all things (dharma) are perceived as unreal and non-existent and if no ailments are thought of (all stirring) will cease in the state of stillness; many ailments are thereby eradicated.' Why so? Because of the stirring mind that rouses the four elements and so produces illnesses. If the mind is at rest and in a happy state, all ailments will disappear. Hence, the Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra says: 'Where do ailments originate? From attachment to (external) causes. How is this cut off? By realizing that the mind does not gain anything therefrom.'

The above are different methods of curing illnesses by means of chih. Therefore, we know that if chih is properly practised, all ailments can be eradicated.

(ii) Treatment by kuan. A master said: 'Just visualize your thinking mind as defeating ailments by either of the six kinds of breath.' This is cure by kuan. The six breaths are the puffing,<sup>2</sup> expelling,<sup>3</sup> shouting,<sup>4</sup> sighing,<sup>5</sup> soothing<sup>6</sup> and restful<sup>7</sup> breaths which are expediently imagined as coming from the mouth and thrown out continuously to drive away all illness. Hence, this stanza:

*All sages know that a sigh heals the heart; a puff, the kidneys;  
Breathing out will cure the stomach and a restful breath, the lungs;  
A soothing breath cools heat in the liver,  
While indigestion is stopped by a shout.*

Chih I here quotes at length from another master who listed twelve other types of breathing and the respective ailments which each could cure.

1. Tan 'ien: a reservoir of the vital principle that can be transmuted into the Elixir of Life according to the Taoists.

2. A puffing breath: a short quick blast of cold breath to blow ailments away.

3. An expelling breath: an audible exhalation, expressive of discharge.

4. A shouting breath: an audible exhalation, expressive of driving away.

5. A sighing breath: an audible expiration of warm breath, expressive of relief.

6. A soothing breath: a slow expiration of warm breath to soothe.

7. A restful breath: a fine breath to harmonize body and mind and so to ensure recovery.

A (third) master said: 'If visualization is effective, it can cure all illnesses.' For instance, when a man suffers from a shivering fever, he should (mentally) visualize a rising fire in his body and so get rid of the chill. This is taught in the *Saṃyuktāgama Sūtra*<sup>1</sup> which lists seventy-two secret methods (of visualization).

A (fourth) master said: 'Just employ the *chih-kuan* method to examine and analyse all illnesses due to the four elements (because these) ailments cannot be found in either body or mind, and you are on your way to recovery.'

These are different methods of treating illnesses and if they are well understood (and properly employed), they can all cure ailments. So we know that with the efficient use of *chih-kuan*, there is not a single illness that cannot be healed. Nowadays, however, man's roots are very shallow and so these methods are not practised properly; hence they have been forgotten. Since people do not follow (the Taoist) method of developing the vital principle (*prāṇa*) and of abstaining from cereals, lest they fall into heresy,<sup>2</sup> they use medicinal herbs and minerals which can also cure illnesses.

If illnesses are caused by the harmful influences of demons, one's mind should be strengthened by repeating mantras to overcome them. If they are due to karmic influence, one should repent, reform and cultivate one's field of blessedness (with moral actions), thereby rooting them all out. If we understand only one of these two courses, we can practise it effectively for our own benefit and can also teach it to others; how much more so if both courses are well understood and followed? If we do not know them, we will be unable to cure our illnesses; and then, not only will we be compelled to give up the right Dharma, but our lives may even be in danger. How then can we practise the Dharma and teach it to others? Therefore, in our practice of *chih-kuan*, we should understand perfectly the methods of treating diseases by means of our inner minds. These methods are many and comprehension of them depends on individual (responsiveness); how can they be handed down by writing?

Furthermore, the mental treatment of illness during meditation should include ten beneficial essentials which are: faith, practice, exertion, non-deviation, discernment of the causes of illness, expediency, long endurance, ability to retain or drop, taking care and awareness of hindrances.

What is faith? Faith in this method which can heal illnesses. What is practice? Practice of the method as occasion requires. What is exertion?

1. A miscellaneous treatise on abstract meditation, one of the four Āgamas.

2. The Taoist practice referred to is not that taught by Lao-tzu but was known before him.

Exertion in the correct practice until recovery. What is non-deviation? The mind in close conformity with this method without deviating from it for even an instant. What is discernment of the causes of illness? Discernment as explained in the earlier paragraph on the diagnosis. What is expediency? Expediency in proper breathing and in skilful visualization for recovery. What is long endurance? If the practice does not give an immediate result, it should be continued unremittingly, without taking into account the number of days or months required for success. What is ability to retain or drop? This means that in the subtle state of the mind concentrated on the cure of illness, whatever proves beneficial to ultimate recovery should be retained whereas whatever proves harmful should be dropped. What is taking care? It is the skilful discernment (and avoidance) of all discordant causes. What is awareness of hindrances? Whatever is profitable should not be (lightly) disclosed to others; before (a method) is proved harmful, there should be neither distrust nor criticism (of it). If these ten essentials are fulfilled, recovery from the illness is assured.

#### 10. THE FINAL REALIZATION

If the meditator so practises the *chih-kuan* method, he will be able clearly to realize that all things are created by the mind and are void because all the direct and circumstantial causes of their creation are unreal. As they are void, their names and terms are also unreal.<sup>1</sup> This is the stopping (*chih*) of all rising causes for apprehension of Reality.<sup>2</sup> He who achieves this stage will perceive neither the Buddha fruit, high above, that can be realized, nor living beings, here below, who can be liberated. This is meditation on the unreal resulting in realization of the void, which is also called meditation on the void, or wisdom's eye, or all-knowledge.<sup>3</sup> If you stay in this meditation, you will fall into the *śrāvaka* and *pratyeka-buddha* stages. Hence the *sūtra* says: 'The *śrāvakas* declared: "If we hear about (the teaching which consists in) purifying Buddha lands and in teaching and converting living beings, we are not happy. Why? Because all things are in the *nirvāṇic* condition which is beyond creation and destruction, which is neither large nor small and which is above the worldly plane and in the transcendental

1. Lit. 'their names and designations cannot be found anywhere', because they do not show anything that really exists. We live in the world of illusions because we cling to names and terms which have no substance of their own.

2. See also p. 130, paragraph (iii).

3. The first of the three kinds of wisdoms which are: (1) *śrāvaka* and *pratyeka-buddha* knowledge that all things are void and unreal; (2) *Bodhisattva* knowledge of all things in their proper discrimination and (3) perfect Buddha knowledge of all things in their every aspect and relationship past, present and future; omniscience.

(wu wei) state. Thinking thus, we are unhappy." You should know that he who perceives the wu wei state and thereby reaches the right position, will never be able to develop the sambodhi mind.<sup>1</sup> This is due to excess of dhyāna (i.e. stillness over wisdom), hence inability to perceive the Buddha nature.

If, for the benefit of all living beings, a Bodhisattva achieves all Buddha Dharmas, he should not grasp the wu wei state for self-attainment of nirvāṇa. He should shift his contemplation of the void to that of the seeming and thereby realize that although the nature of his mind<sup>2</sup> is void, it can, when encountering external causes, create all phenomena which are like illusions and transformations, and, though not in a fixed and real state, can perform the various functions of seeing, hearing, feeling and knowing. In such a meditation, although he knows that fundamentally all things are in the void state of nirvāṇa, in this voidness, he is able to do everything perfectly, like someone planting trees in the emptiness (of space), and to discern the different roots (propensities) of all living beings because of the countless desires that arise in their natures. He will expound (to them) countless Dharmas and if he realizes the unhindered power of speech, he will be able to look after the welfare of living being in the six realms of existence.

This is the expedient method of following external causes in the practice of chih meditation, which consists in shifting the contemplation of the void to that of the seeming, called universal meditation, or Dharma mind or wisdom of the Tao seed.<sup>3</sup> While staying in this meditation, because of excess of wisdom (over dhyāna), although a Bodhisattva perceives the Buddha nature, he does not see it distinctly.

Although the practiser achieves these two kinds of meditation, they are only expedients and are not the right insight. Hence the sūtra says that they are two expedient paths and that contemplation of the emptiness of both leads to right insight into the 'Mean' which is inclusive of both and wherein the mind in its nirvāṇic condition will of itself flow into the sarvajña ocean (omniscience). If a Bodhisattva wishes to achieve in the flash of a thought the wholeness of all Buddha Dharmas, he should practise laying down (chih) the two extremes to achieve right insight into the Mean. What does the practice of right insight mean? If the nature of mind is cognized as being neither real nor unreal, the mind that ceases to grasp both the real and the false is right. Insight into the nature of mind which is neither void nor false, free from the annihilation of both the void and the seeming, will ensure

1. As he clings to the wu wei state, this attachment hinders his realization of sambodhi, or universal enlightenment which is free from all differentiation. The right position is the Buddha stage or Buddhahood which should not be grasped.

2. The self-existing fundamental pure mind, or Tathāgata-garbha.

3. Or Bodhisattva knowledge, the second of the three kinds of knowledge. See also p. 151, note 3.

attainment of the Mean that includes both. If the Mean inclusive of both the void and the-seeming is perceived within the self-mind, it is also perceived within all things (dharma), but should not be grasped for its fixed nature is undiscoverable. This is called right insight into the Mean as explained in the following gāthā of the Mādhyamika śāstra:

*All things causally produced  
I say are void,  
Are but false names  
And also indicate the Mean.*

Ponder over the deep meaning of this gāthā which not only fully defines the Mean but also the aims of the other two expedient meditations (on the void and the unreal). You should know that right contemplation of the Mean is the Buddha's eye or omniscience (sarvajña). He who stays in this meditative stage will equalize dhyāna with wisdom, will clearly perceive the Buddha nature, will abide comfortably in (the state of) Mahāyāna, will tread the Path evenly and correctly and, advancing like the wind, will automatically flow into the sarvajña ocean (where) he will act like the Tathāgata (by) entering the Tathāgata abode, wearing the Tathāgata robe and sitting on the Tathāgata throne.<sup>1</sup> Thus he will adorn himself with the Tathāgata majesty, purify his six sense organs, enter the Buddha realm and free himself from defilement in the midst of all phenomena (dharma). Since he is now well versed in all Buddha Dharmas,<sup>2</sup> he will achieve the samādhi of the Remembrance of Buddha<sup>3</sup> and will abide in the Śūraṅgama Samādhi. Thus he will (be able to) appear in bodily forms in all Buddha lands in the ten directions to teach and convert living beings, embellish all Buddha realms, make offerings to all Buddhas in the ten directions, receive and uphold the Teachings of all Buddhas, achieve all perfections (pāramitā) and awaken to and enter upon the great Bodhisattva (Mahāsattva) stage where he will keep company with Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī, will not stray from the Dharmakāya, will receive praise from all the Buddhas who will foretell his future attainments, that is his embellishment of the Tuṣita heaven (with his saving work), his coming birth from the sacred womb of a mother, his retirement from the world, his sitting at a holy site (bodhimāṇḍala), his overcoming of all demons, his realization of Universal Enlightenment, his turning of the Wheel of Dharma, his entry into Nirvāṇa, his

1. A quotation from the Lotus Sūtra. Tathāgata abode stands for universal compassion for all living beings; Tathāgata robe, for kindness and forbearance; and Tathāgata throne, for immutability within the voidness of all things.

2. Lit. 'Since all Buddha Dharmas now appear in front of him'.

3. A samādhi realized by contemplating the Buddha and by repeating his name. See Chapter 3, The Pure Land School.

accomplishment of all Buddha works in all lands in the ten directions and his acquisition of the two bodies.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, he is a Bodhisattva whose mind is newly initiated (into the Mean).

The Avatamsaka Sūtra says: 'At the time of his mind's initiation (to the Mean, a Bodhisattva) realizes the right bodhi, clearly perceives the true nature of all things and understands that his body of wisdom<sup>2</sup> is self-be-gotten.' It also says: 'A newly initiated Bodhisattva who realizes one Tathāgatakāya<sup>3</sup> can transform it into countless Nirmāṇakayas.'<sup>4</sup> It further says: 'A newly initiated Bodhisattva is but Buddha.' The Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra says: 'The newly initiated mind and the ultimate mind do not differ from each other; of the two, the former is difficult (to realize).' The Sūtra of the Long Chapter<sup>5</sup> says: 'Subhūti, there are Bodhisattvas and Mahāsattvas who, from the moment their minds are initiated (to the Mean), sit in the bodhimaṇḍala and turn the Wheel of Right Dharma;<sup>6</sup> you should know that they act like the Buddha.' As said in the Lotus Sūtra, Nāgarkanyā<sup>7</sup> presented her gem to the Buddha to bear witness to her speedy realization. These sūtras clearly show that a newly initiated mind is complete with all Buddha Dharmas. This is but the first letter Ā<sup>8</sup> mentioned in the Sūtra of the Long Chapter; the opening up of Buddha knowledge inherent in all living beings, in the Lotus Sūtra; and the perception of Buddha nature for abiding in Final Nirvāṇa, in the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra.

We have explained briefly the realization of (bodhi) fruit as a result of the practice of chih-kuan by Bodhisattvas whose minds are newly initiated

1. Real body comprising the Dharmakāya, Sambhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya or transformation body.

2. The first of the five kinds of Dharmakāya: (1) the spiritual body of existent wisdom, (2) of all meritorious achievements, (3) of incarnation, (4) of unlimited power of transformation and (5) of boundless space. The first and second are defined as Sambhogakāya, the third and fourth as Nirmāṇakāya, and the fifth as Dharmakāya which possesses all the others.

3. Body of suchness, or absolute body.

4. Transformation body.

5. Kumārajīva translated into Chinese two chapters of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra (600 chuan or rolls) and edited them separately: the long one is called Ta Pin Ching or the Sūtra of the Long Chapter (27 chuan) and the short one, called Hsiao Pin Ching or the Sūtra of the Short Chapter (10 chuan).

6. In contrast with worldlings who are turned upside down by the wheel of birth and death.

7. A nāga maiden who, according to the Lotus Sūtra, presented her precious gem to the Buddha who immediately accepted it in the presence of His disciples to bear witness to her realization of enlightenment in the time that it took for the gem to pass from her hands to those of the World Honoured One.

8. Ā is the first letter of the Siddham alphabet and stands for the uncreate. It has seven meanings: (1) Bodhi mind, (2) Dharma, (3) Non-duality, (4) Dharmadhātu or realm of dharma, (5) Dharmatā, or Dharma nature, (6) Sovereignty and (7) Dharmakāya, or essential body.

(to the Mean). We will now deal with their realization of Ultimate Mind.

The stage attained by the Ultimate Mind cannot be known, but one can deduce from the Teaching that it does not stray from the twin method of chih and kuan. Why so? Because the Lotus Sūtra says: 'Persistent glorification of the wisdom of all Buddhas is what kuan (vipaśyanā) means.' This is kuan, a term used to describe the fruit realized. The Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra makes an extensive use of terms and expressions conveying the meaning of liberation to explain the Final Nirvāṇa, and by nirvāṇa<sup>1</sup> is meant chih (śamatha) which is a term employed to describe the fruit attained. Hence, this sūtra says: 'Mahāparinirvāṇa is called the eternally still samādhi.' By samādhi is meant chih.

Although the Lotus Sūtra uses the word kuan to describe the fruit realized that word also includes chih. Hence, this sūtra says: 'Even the eternal stillness and extinction (of passions) of Ultimate Nirvāṇa finally revert to the void.' Although the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra uses the word chih to describe the fruit attained, that word also includes kuan. Hence, this sūtra defines Mahāparinirvāṇa as possessing all three of the (meritorious) virtues.<sup>2</sup> Although the explanations in these two great sūtras differ, both use the two methods of chih and kuan to discuss the Ultimate and both depend on ting (dhyāna-samādhi) and hui (prajñā) to describe the Supreme Fruit. You should know that the initial, intermediate and final attainments are all inconceivable. Hence, the Suvarṇa-prabhāsa-uttamarāja Sūtra<sup>3</sup> says: 'The past Tathāgata was inconceivable, the present Tathāgata is adorned with all forms of majesty and the future Tathāgata will be eternal, being free from decay.' Thus the two chih and kuan states of mind are used to distinguish the (Supreme) Fruit.

A gāthā in the Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra says:<sup>4</sup>

*All Buddhas won liberation through the Mind*

*Which, when pure and clean, is also undefiled.<sup>5</sup>*

*The five worlds,<sup>6</sup> when spotless, are devoid of form:*

*He who studies this will realize great Tao.*

1. The nirvāṇic state of stillness and extinction of all passions.

2. The virtue of (1) the Buddha's Dharmakāya, (2) of his wisdom and (3) of his liberation from all bonds, i.e. Sovereignty.

3. Called Chin Kuang Ming Ching, or Golden Light Sūtra, translated in the sixth century and twice later, and used by the founder of the T'ien T'ai school.

4. A sūtra teaching the samādhi in which all the Buddhas in the ten directions are seen clearly like the stars at night. Its practice requires ninety days during which the practiser does not rest but persistently thinks of Amitābha Buddha and calls his name.

5. The stage of undefilement is the final one before attaining Buddhahood.

6. The five worlds of existence of (1) the hells, (2) hungry ghosts, (3) animals, (4) men and (5) asuras and devas.

Those who vow to tread this Path should eliminate the three obstructions<sup>1</sup> and the five screens<sup>2</sup> and if they fail to do so, all their efforts will be in vain.

When studying the above comprehensive treatise, we should not allow ourselves to be misled by the words 'For Beginners' in the title and think that it is ordinary and simple, for the practice of the Teaching is far from easy for beginners. Master Chih I warned his disciples against 'slighting the seeming shallowness of the text', for as he said, they 'would blush when finding its practice very difficult'. To make the text more clear, we divided the chapter into sections and subsections marked with numbers and letters. This important treatise of the T'ien T'ai school should be studied with the greatest care and attention so that it is thoroughly understood before one begins to practise it.

When I was young, I practised this T'ien T'ai meditation but failed miserably because of impatience for quick results which has always been my great weakness. Impatience is a very great obstacle in our spiritual training and should be overcome at all costs in the practice of any Dharma door. Once this obstruction has been removed and when the mind is free from all impediments, the various states described in the text will unfold of themselves, with the meditator as an unconcerned spectator. Only then can the training be effective.

After we have disengaged ourselves from all worldly feelings and passions, the excellent roots or qualities which lie dormant within us will manifest as described in section 7 (p. 139). The involuntary movements producing eight physical sensations will be described in full in Chapter 6 and show that the practiser, at this stage, is well on the right path. These experiences come automatically and unexpectedly to the practiser who should never intentionally wait for the outcome of his training in order to set his mind at rest. It is like flowing water which forms a channel of itself without outside help.

1. Self-importance, jealousy and desire.

2. See p. 118, Removal of Screens

Hence the ancients' repeated warnings against adding a second head to one's own, for if the mind is set on results, the practice will be handicapped and will lead nowhere.

For the benefit of practisers of T'ien T'ai meditation, we quote below some passages from the book *Yin Shih Tsu's Experimental Meditation for the Promotion of Health* (Yin Shih Tsu Ching Tso Wei Sheng Shih Yen T'an) by the late upāsaka Chiang Wei Ch'iao who was well known for the three books that he wrote after his successful practice of meditation according to the Taoist, T'ien T'ai and Tibetan schools. The above volume is his third book, under his usual *nom de plume* of Yin Shih Tsu, published in Taiwan and Hong Kong after his death on the Chinese mainland a few years ago.

#### THE CHIH-KUAN DHARMA DOOR

When a practiser sits in meditation, he should keep his body and limbs in the proper position and regulate his breath because his mind is very difficult to control. As man's mind is always accustomed to wander out in search of externals, it is really not easy to collect and hold it. Therefore, he should be very patient in his practice of the chih-kuan Dharma door. After he has made some progress in regulating his body, breath and mind, his training should be complemented with the chih-kuan method. Even if he fails to regulate his body, breath and mind, he can always practise chih-kuan.

Chih is stopping, that is halting the false (and misleading) mind. The mind is like a monkey and does not stop for an instant. What then should we do? We should prevent this monkey from moving by tying it to a stake and it will cease jumping about aimlessly. In the practice of chih, the first step is to fix the mind on an object (hsi yuan chih). When the false mind moves, it looks for something that is called its object. When all of a sudden it thinks of one object, then of another, and then of a third and a fourth; this is its clinging to objects. The purpose of the chih method is to fix the wandering mind to a post in the same way that a monkey is tethered to a stake; this stops it wandering. There are several ways of stopping (chih) the mind but the two usual ones are:

(1) By fixing it on the tip of the nose where the meditator does not see his breath coming in and out, nor its whence and whither; thus his mind will be gradually brought under control, and

(2) By fixing it on the spot just below the navel. As the body's centre of

gravity is in the belly, it is the most appropriate place in which to fix the mind. Then the practiser should visualize each in and out breath as passing in a vertical line from the nostrils down to the belly and vice versa, and as time passes, his wandering mind will be brought automatically to a stop. This exercise also helps to regulate the breath.

When the meditator is familiar with either of these two exercises of fixing the mind on objects, he should practise the (chih) method of restraining it (chih hsin chih). What is this restraining method? We have dealt with the method of tying the mind to (external) objects but the present one consists in grasping at the mind itself. This means that we should look into it to find out where a thought arises, thereby stopping it and preventing it from following externals. This method is much more subtle than the previous one of fixing the mind on an object: this is a shift from a coarse to a subtle exercise.

As a further step, the meditator should practise the (chih) method of embodying the real (t'i chen chih) which is much more advanced than restraining the mind. The first two methods are preliminary and the third one is the real method of stoppage (chih). What is this method of embodying the real? 'Embodying' means understanding or realizing, and 'the real' is but reality. It means close understanding that all passing thoughts belong already to the past as soon as they arise in the mind and are, therefore, unreal and devoid of reality. By not clinging to them, the mind will be void and thus there is no need to stop falsehood which will vanish by itself. When there is no more falsehood, that is reality. As the mind is in this state, this is 'embodying reality'.

The training according to the method of embodying the real consists, while sitting in meditation, in closing the eyes and in turning backward the contemplation to ponder over this human body which grows from childhood to manhood and then to old age and ends in death, and over each of its cells which changes and is replaced by a new one every second, without interruption, and which is, therefore, totally unreal: this shows that there is no reality of an existing ego that can be evidenced.

Then the practiser should turn inwards the contemplation to look into the thoughts that arise in his mind and flow without interruption; he will find that past thoughts have gone, that present ones do not stay and that future ones have not yet come. Then he should ask himself: 'Which of these thoughts is my mind?' Thus he will realize that his false mind which so rises and falls is also unreal and devoid of reality. Gradually, he will become familiar (with this unreality) and his false mind will then come to an end by itself. Where the false mind stops, reality appears.

At the beginning of his meditation, his mind is unsettled and cannot be easily controlled; this is the unsettled mind which always tends to soar. The

way to set it at rest is by means of stoppage (chih). If it is stopped again and again, the thinking process will gradually come to an end. A little later, he will be unaware that he is already inclined to drowsiness; this is the sinking mind. The way to awaken it is by contemplation (kuan). Contemplation does not mean looking outwardly; it consists in closing the eyes and turning inwards the contemplation to look into the self-mind. There are three kinds of contemplation (kuan):

(1) Contemplation of the void, which consists in looking into all things within the universe, from the largest including the great earth, mountains and rivers, to the smallest, including his own body and mind; he will perceive that all of them change every instant and are thus non-existent and void. So when his mind looks into this voidness, this is called contemplation of the void.

(2) When he is familiar with this contemplation of the void, he should look into his mind from which thoughts arise and he will find that each thought has its object which is either one thing or another. He will thus realize that all phenomena owe their existence to a union of inner direct cause and outer concurring circumstance.

For instance, a grain of rice sprouts because of a union of inner direct cause which is the seed, with outer concurring condition in the form of the water and mud that moisten and nourish it. If the grain is not sown and is left in the warehouse, it will never sprout because there is only an inner direct cause without an outer concurring condition and for lack of a union of both. If there are only water and mud without the seed being sown, they alone cannot produce the sprout because there is only an outer concurring circumstance without an inner direct cause and for lack of their union. Every phenomenon in the world is created by the union of direct and circumstantial causes and vanishes as soon as they disunite. Likewise, thoughts that rise and fall in the mind cannot be grasped. Contemplation in this manner is called looking into the unreal.

(3) Thus viewed from opposite positions, contemplation of the void pertains to one side and that of the unreal to another. When this stage is reached, the achievement is still incomplete, and the meditator should take a step further with zeal and diligence. When he achieves contemplation of the void, he should not cling to the void and when he achieves contemplation of the unreal, he should not grasp the unreal. When he succeeds in keeping from both extremes, the void and the unreal, his non-relying and non-clinging mind will be really bright; this is called contemplation of the 'mean'.

At first glance, the above chih-kuan Dharma door seems to imply different successive stages. In practice, the employment of either chih or kuan depends solely on the inclination of the mind during the meditation.

As a matter of fact, the purpose of chih is to return all thoughts to one (mind) and that of kuan is clear insight (into the truth for riddance of illusion). When stoppage (chih) is practised, it should not stray from contemplation (kuan) and when contemplation is practised, it should not stray from chih. Readers should not grasp at printed words but should practise the method intelligently according to circumstances.

## (II) THE SIX PROFOUND DHARMA DOORS

(LU MIAO FA MENG)

(taught by Master Chih I, or Chih Che, at Wa Kuan monastery)

Instead of translating this treatise, which is full of Buddhist terms and may not be very clear to readers unfamiliar with the Mahāyāna, we give below Chapter 6 of *Yin Shih Tsu's Experimental Meditation for the Promotion of Health* (Yin Shih Tsu Ching Tsu Wei Sheng Shih Yen Y'an) which explains clearly the Six Profound Dharma Doors as taught by Master Chih I.

Breath is the source of life. When breath stops, the body is just an (inanimate) corpse, and since the nervous system no longer works, the mind vanishes and life comes to an end. Life (therefore), is preserved by breath which links body with mind and thus ensures its existence.

Though imperceptible to the eyes, the air is actually inhaled and exhaled through the nostrils by the function of breathing. Thus we know that a human being is made of body, breath and mind and that breath plays the important role of uniting the other two components.

The six Profound Dharma Doors centre on breath and are a thorough method of meditation. It can be practised after training in the chih-kuan method as taught in the T'ung Meng Chih Kuan (p. 111), or alone without previous chih-kuan meditation.

This method consists of (1) counting, (2) following, (3) stopping (chih), (4) contemplating (kuan), (5) returning and (6) purifying.

(1) What is counting? This is the counting of breaths, of which there are two phases:

(a) Practice by counting. After a meditator has regulated his breath so that it is neither tight nor loose, he should count slowly, from one to ten,

either his inspiration or expiration, choosing whichever he likes, but on no account both. He should fix his attention on this counting so that his mind will not wander elsewhere. If before coming to the number ten, his mind suddenly thinks of something else, he should turn it back and start counting again from one. This is practice by counting.

(b) Realization by counting. As times passes, the meditator becomes familiar with this counting from one to ten which will be orderly, until his breath is so fine that it becomes uncountable. This is realization by counting.

(2) Then he should stop counting and practise the method of following (the breath) of which there are two phases:

(a) Practice by following (the breath). After stopping to count his breath, he should concentrate his mind on following each in and out breath. Thus his mind will accompany his breathing which also follows it until both mind and breath become mutually dependent closely and continuously. This is practice by following (the breath).

(b) Realization by following (the breath). As his mind gradually becomes refined and subtle, the meditator will notice the length of his breath, either long or short, and then will feel as if his breath passes through all the pores of his body. His intellect (or sixth consciousness) is now frozen, quiet and still. This is realization by following the breath.

(3) Gradually the meditator will notice that this method of following the breath is still coarse and should be given up and substituted with the practice of chih (stopping) of which there are two phases:

(a) Practice of chih. After ceasing to follow the breath, the meditator should, as if intentionally yet unintentionally, fix his mind on the tip of his nose. This is the practice of chih (stopping).

(b) In the course of this exercise, the meditator will suddenly perceive that his body and mind seem to vanish completely and he will thereby enter a state of stillness (dhyāna). This is realization by the practice of chih.

(4) At this stage, the meditator should know that though the state of dhyāna is good, he ought to turn back the light of his mind upon itself so that he can be clear about it and will not remain caught in this stillness. Thus he should practise contemplation of which there are two phases:

(a) Practice by contemplation (kuan). In this still state, he should look closely into his refined and subtle inspiration and expiration which are like wind in the void and have no reality of their own. This is the practice of contemplation.

(b) As time passes, little by little, the eye of his mind will open and he will clearly feel as if his breath enters and leaves his body through all its pores. This is realization by contemplation (kuan).

Although the two words chih and kuan are the same here and in the

