

### **III. Explication**

**The theme has been stated, and the next section focuses on explanation. This consists of three subdivisions, namely 1) Demonstrate right meaning, 2) Refute false grasping, and 3) Distinguish the aspirations toward, and achievements along, the Buddhist path.**

**To demonstrate the right meaning is to show the two gateways to the dharma of one mind, namely 1. The gateway of the true thusness mind, and 2. The gateway of the originating and ceasing mind. These two gateways each encompass all dharmas. What does this mean? It means that the two gateways are not separate from one another.**

The theme has been explained in the previous section. This section then will focus on explanation. There are three parts to this explanation: 1) *Demonstrate right meaning* -- to illustrate the principal meaning of one mind, two gateways, 2) *Refute false grasping* -- to relinquish the grasping of self and of Dharma, and 3) *Distinguish the aspirations toward, and achievements along, the Buddhist path* --

to illustrate the various aspirations that a Bodhisattva may have, and the different achievements that a Bodhisattva may attain along his way to Buddhahood. This then is really the primary section, which explains the fundamental meaning across three subdivisions.

### 1) *Demonstrate right meaning*

To demonstrate the right meaning is to elaborate upon the correct meaning established in the theme: namely, in the mind of sentient beings alone the meaning of Mahayana is revealed. This is the central theme of the entire discourse, which is composed by summarizing and synthesizing various sutras, such as the *Lankavatara Sutra*. The idea of two gateways for one mind comes directly from these sutras. The *Sutra* says: "Calm and ceasing are the very names for the one mind. This one mind is, in turn, named the treasure of Tathagata (*Tathagata-garbha*)." [*Tathagata-garbha*, or Buddha Nature, is one of the principle tenets of East Asian Mahayana Buddhism.] Hence, the *Lotus Sutra* says: "All dharmas, from their origin, have always had the fundamental characteristic of calm and ceasing." It further says: "The characteristic of calm and ceasing

of all dharmas cannot be put into words."

On the topic of the two gateways, the first is the gateway of the true thusness mind – when the one mind is in the true thusness state, the delusions of names or characteristics are all void, existence and emptiness are both relinquished, and there is not a single dharma to be obtained. The second is the gateway of the originating and ceasing mind – in this state of mind originating or ceasing will follow external circumstances. If the treasure of Tathagata, (namely, one's Buddha nature) is perfumed by circumstances arising from dharmas of purity, then truth will have overriding power while delusion will lack power. Consequently, defiled circumstance may be overpowered by and transformed into dharmas of purity and become means of purity, in a manner beyond any thought or expression. On the other hand, if it (the Buddha nature) is perfumed by defiled circumstances arising from ignorance, then delusion will have overriding power while truth will lack power. Consequently, the virtue of purity may be overpowered and transformed into defiled circumstance and become means of unwholesome karma, in a manner beyond any thought or expression. Therefore, though there is but the one treasure of Tathagata, due to perfuming and transforming by either purity or defilement, it may reach the two

different states -- truth or delusion. The true state of mind and the deluded state of mind are different yet they are interrelated, it is thus said *it means that these two gateways are not separate from one another.*

## 1. The gateway of the true thusness mind

**The true thusness mind: this is the embodiment of the essential characteristic of the entire phenomenal world in its totality. That is to say that the nature of mind neither originates nor ceases. All dharmas are distinguishable only through delusory thoughts. Apart from subjective thoughts, there will not be any characteristic of a phenomenal world. Therefore, all dharmas, fundamentally, have no characterization through speech, no characterization through words or names, and no characterization through perception. They are absolutely equal, subject neither to transformation nor to destruction. They are but the one mind only and therefore called true thusness.**

This paragraph focuses on and explains the phrase *the inherent true thusness of the mind* in the previous section. *The entire phenomenal world* points to the unified, non-dual perception of the true mind, to which all dharmas appear equal in characteristics, and to which myriads of dharmas owe their origination; indeed, *phenomenal world* here implies that the perception of the objective world as the cause for the arising of all dharmas. The words *embodiment* and *essential characteristic* refer to the fact that every primary or secondary cause and fruit with respect to the saint or the uninitiated are all embodied in the one mind. There is no other characteristic, so it is referred to as the *essential characteristic*. Since there is no dharma that is not perceived, and no dharma that is not embraced, by this mind, the word *totality* is employed here. The embodiment of this mind fundamentally does not originate or cease, thus it is the ever abiding true mind.

If there is any difference among *all dharmas*, such difference may be *distinguishable only through delusory thoughts*. Regarding the origin of such different characteristics, it is initially caused by an unenlightened thought which deludes the true mind and occupies it with illusion. Such illusory thoughts in turn give rise to illusory realms; thus different

characteristics may be distinguished. Regarding the present state of such differences, it is all accounted for by sentient beings' pervasive grasping. Because of their deluded grasping of real existence, they perceive different characteristics among all dharmas. *Apart from subjective thoughts, there will not be any characteristic of a phenomenal world:* since the above perception of different characteristics of the phenomenal world is due to delusory thoughts, it is like seeing flowers in the void from deluded, afflicted eyes. There are no flowers in the void to start with, and seeing them is due to afflicted sight. Without sight affliction there is fundamentally no flower. Similarly, without delusory thought there is fundamentally no characteristic of a phenomenal world.

The passage from *therefore, all dharmas to they are but the one mind only and therefore called true thusness* explains away illusion and turns to true thusness. This is because all dharmas have the nature of dependent arising. Sentient beings do not understand that this dependent arising is like illusory magic, nor that their delusion gives rise to pervasive grasping. They do not realize that what they grasp is fundamentally empty. Thus, all dharmas, fundamentally, are but the one mind only. They can be conveyed by neither language nor speech, they can

be explained by neither name nor word, and they can be reached by neither perception nor thought. Rather, in approaching them, there is no road through language and thinking; there is no path through the mind's actions. Thus it is said *no (characterization), no, no*. These three phrases leave illusions behind and call forth truth.

The three phrases from *They are absolutely...* leave transformations behind and call forth thusness. Since all dharmas are of one flavor, one characteristic, they are absolutely equal. Since they cannot be tempered with the four characteristics -- phenomenal world, speech, words and perceptions -- there are no changes or transformations. Since they do not belong to the conditioned they cannot be destroyed. They are but the one mind only; there is no other dharma. Because this mind is without illusion and without change, it is called true thusness.

**All language and speech are provisional designations without real validity. Since they are only associated with delusory thoughts, the expression of true thusness cannot be obtained through them. Besides, what is called true thusness does not have any characteristic that may be verbalized either. It is only the farthest that**

**language and speech can reach in trying to express this concept. In using this verbalization of “true thusness,” all other such designations are dismissed. However, in the embodiment of true thusness, there is nothing to be dismissed, since all dharmas are all true. There is nothing to be established either, since all dharmas are all in the same state of thusness. It should be known that all dharmas cannot be spoken of, cannot be thought of, and are therefore called true thusness.**

This paragraph further elaborates how in the previous paragraph true thusness is revealed by setting it outside the realm of all external circumstances. How is true thusness set outside the realm of language and speech? It is because all language and speech are only temporary designations; all are essentially without real meaning. For example, when people speak of fire, the sound or the word of "fire" is not really hot. How is true thusness set outside the realm of the mind's perception of sense objects? It is because the mind's various perceptions of sense objects correspond only to delusory thoughts; they are images of these former sense objects without any essential embodiment.

What is called true thusness is not only inexpressible through language and speech, inexpressible through the mind's perception of sense objects, but even its own embodiment has no characteristic either. The *embodiment* of true thusness is without either name or characteristic. The name “true thusness” is the farthest that language and speech can reach in trying to express this concept of true thusness. In using “true thusness,” all other expressions are dismissed. Indeed it is trying to establish a name for the un-namable, tentatively calling it true thusness. An analogy would be the sound used to stop noise and ensure quietude in the meditation hall. Without this sound, the other sounds may not stop; therefore it is using sound to stop other sounds. Thus this sound is used specially for the purpose of stopping all other sounds. It is the same for true thusness. It is the description used to dismiss all other descriptions of a state that is in fact beyond any verbal description whatsoever. In reality, the meaning of true thusness is far beyond any communication through language.

It should be noted that in the *embodiment* of true thusness there is fundamentally nothing to be dismissed, because it is completely true and without delusion. As all dharmas are true, dharma upon dharma are each true, and there is not a single dharma

to be dismissed. Not only no dharma may be dismissed, but no dharma may be established either. Beyond true thusness there is no other dharma to be established since all dharmas share the same embodiment with true thusness and the embodiment of true thusness is without characteristics. When one is true, all are true, and one is thusness, all are thusness. Therefore, there is none to be dismissed and none to be established. So it should be known that all dharmas have this principle: all dharmas are true, all dharmas are thusness; they can neither be spoken of, nor be thought of. To reach them, there is no path via language and speech; and there is no road through the mind's actions. They are ultimately without characteristics and therefore called true thusness.

**Question:** If this is the meaning [of true thusness], then how do sentient beings respond in accordance with this, and consequently achieve the enlightened state [of true thusness]?

**Response:** If one knows that with respect to all dharmas, although they are spoken of, in reality, there is no one who can speak of anything and nothing that is spoken of; and although they are thought of, there is no one who is thinking and

**nothing that is thought of. This is, so called, in accordance with [true thusness]. Responding in this way until one reaches detachment from subjective thought, it will be called achieving the enlightened state of true thusness.**

This paragraph deals with anticipated doubts via a question and answer format. Someone with doubt would ask: As stated in the previous paragraph, there is no path through language and thought to approach true thusness; if so, how should sentient beings respond in accordance with, and consequently attain entry to, true thusness? How to *respond in accordance with* is a question seeking expedient contemplation, namely, efficient methods to cultivate the mind; how to *achieve the enlightened state* is a question seeking rightful contemplation.

The Bodhisattva replies: Even if one knows that dharmas are spoken by the Buddha everywhere, there is no definite, absolute dharma to be spoken of. Regarding the Dharma spoken by the Buddha, one should not attempt to grasp the Dharma, because in reality, there is no one who can speak of anything and nothing is being spoken of, because the sutras tell us that Buddhist teachings should be viewed like the finger pointing at the moon -- merely

guiding the way to the moon, and not being the moon itself. Sentient beings should understand that the Buddha does not speak of anything and has nothing to speak of. Then even when they initiate thought to practice contemplation, they will also understand that there is no one who is thinking and nothing that is thought of. One should skillfully cultivate the mind – to use the wisdom of rightful thought in its various magical manifestations to counter the realms of delusory thought in its various magical manifestations. This is the so-called expedient contemplation in accordance with true thusness.

*Responding in this way until one reaches detachment from subjective thought, it will be called achieving the enlightened state of true thusness:* this is the reply to the inquiry of rightful contemplation. If one practices the expedient contemplation, when the contemplation is practiced continuously, it will flourish. Eventually one may detach his mind from subjective thought and keep the mind at a state of non-thought. This is so-called achieving the enlightened state of true thusness. Only through wisdom can one enter this state of true principle. The *Hua-yen (Avatamsaka) Sutra* states: “The deep and profound state of the true nature of Dharma is achieved through wonderful wisdom in accordance with true thusness.” This state of detachment from

subjective thought belongs only to the enlightened. Thus it is said achieving the enlightened state of true thusness.

The previous paragraph shows that true thusness has no characterization through language. This paragraph illustrates how one should apply this understanding in contemplation and further apply wisdom in encounters with external circumstances. It continues to explain how such contemplation in accordance with true thusness leads one to enlightenment.

**Also, for true thusness, there are two perspectives distinguished by means of language and speech: What are the two? First, it [true thusness] is essentially empty – because it is capable of ultimately revealing its essential state. Second, it [true thusness] is essentially not empty – because it has inherent embodiment that fully contains all the merits that are without attachment.**

Previously, the *embodiment* of true thusness is revealed by showing what it is not, namely true thusness having no characterization through language. Now, by means of language, two

perspectives of true thusness are illustrated. Perspective is just another word for *characteristic*, that is, the *characteristic* of the *embodiment*. *It is essentially empty* – this refers to the *embodiment* of true thusness being empty of all attachments and defilements. Since it is without delusory attachments, its essential embodiment can be naturally revealed. Thus it can be said that *it is capable of ultimately revealing its essential state*.

*It is essentially not empty* – this indicates true thusness has inherent embodiment as opposed to delusion which has no embodiment. *It contains fully all the merits that are without attachment* as opposed to the numerous delusory passions, like the sands of the Ganges River that are with attachments. The *Buddha Nature Treatise* states: “Because it is empty of guest-like dusts (sense objects), it is separate from the phenomenal world; and because it is not empty of highest, unrivaled (unconditioned) dharmas, it is a part of the phenomenal world.” Therefore, though true thusness is empty of delusory attachments, it is not empty of the characteristic of merits.

## The true thusness mind: emptiness

**It is said to be empty: this is because fundamentally it [true thusness] does not correspond to any defiled dharma. In other words, it is separate from all the distinguishing characteristics of dharmas; and it is without any temporary, delusory, subjective thought.**

This paragraph briefly explains the perspective of emptiness. The reasoning is that because true thusness is without any defilement or attachment, its embodiment is essentially empty. Thus it is said *fundamentally it does not correspond to any defiled dharma*. To be *separate from all the distinguishing characteristics of dharmas*: this means it is devoid of the external phenomenon that one grasps or becomes attached to. To be *without any temporary, delusory, subjective thought*: this means it is devoid of the state of mind that is capable of grasping or becoming attached to the external phenomenon. With no such phenomenon to be grasped and no such capacity to grasp, mind and phenomenon are both empty -- therefore, this is called essentially empty.

**It should be noted that the inherent nature of true thusness is not with characteristics, not without characteristics, not-not with characteristics, not-not without characteristics, and not both with and without characteristics. It is not of one characteristic, not of different characteristics, not-not of one characteristic, not-not of different characteristics, and not of both one and different characteristics.**

This paragraph broadly explains the meaning of emptiness, or in other words, the essential embodiment of true thusness. The definition is achieved through a series of logical deductions that show what true thusness is not equal to. The deductions are based on the series of four logical assumptions [one, the other, neither, and both] applied in multiple ways, in totally giving one hundred definitions that do not define true thusness. The pervasive delusions of sentient beings, though many, do not go beyond the two applications of the four logical aspects [one, the other, neither, and both] here. These four logical aspects constitute four likely approaches that may misrepresent the essential nature of true thusness: "with characteristic" tends to exaggerate, "without characteristic" tends to belittle, "both with and without characteristic" tends to contradict, "neither with nor without characteristic"

tends to make light of it through word play.

To say it is not with characteristic is to say true thusness is away from possessing delusions, and thus it is said *not with characteristic*. However, in case confused people think that since it is not with characteristic, then it should be without characteristic and accordingly transfer their grasping, so it is said that it is *not without characteristic*. In case confused people further grasp the dharma that true thusness is neither with characteristic nor without characteristic, it is said that true thusness is *not-not with characteristic* and *not-not without characteristic*. Similarly, confused people may grasp the dharma that true thusness is both with and without characteristic, so it is said that it is *not both with and without characteristic*. The four logical aspects pertaining to *one characteristic* and *different characteristics* can be understood through the same logical deductions. These four approaches show what true thusness is not.

The hundred descriptions that do not define it: The same logical deductions may apply to each one of the four aspects already discussed which sentient beings may grasp. This in turn gives sixteen descriptions. Apply the three time periods: the past, the present and the future to each of the sixteen descriptions. Altogether, this gives forty-eight

descriptions. Now, apply the two perspectives of principle and phenomenon to each of the forty-eight descriptions. This makes ninety-six descriptions. Adding the original four gives a total of one hundred. All of these describe what true thusness is not. Thus, logically, there could be a hundred descriptions that define what true thusness is not.

**To summarize then, since all sentient beings have delusory minds, their thoughts are each of them discerning, none of them leading [to true thusness]. Thus, [in order to set true thusness outside the realm of such thoughts] it [true thusness] is said to be empty [of such thoughts]. [If the mind is] without delusory thoughts, there is really nothing to be empty of.**

This paragraph summarizes the explanation of the perspective of emptiness. It says that the essential *embodiment* of true thusness cannot be reached through discerning thoughts and deliberations. Therefore sentient beings' various delusory thoughts of discernment all fall under the nature of pervasive grasping. All of them do not lead to the *embodiment* of true thusness. Now, in order to set [true thusness] outside the realm of these

delusory thoughts, this discourse points out that the *embodiment* of true thusness is empty of such thoughts. When the mind is without delusory thoughts, the entire *embodiment* of true thusness is manifested such that even emptiness may not be established. Since emptiness itself is not an entity to be empty of, it is said that *there is really nothing to be empty of*.

The true thusness mind: non-emptiness

**It is said to be not empty: since the embodiment of Dharma [referring to true thusness] has been revealed to be empty of delusions, it is indeed the true mind. It stays thus forever without change, completely fulfilled with dharmas of purity and is therefore called not empty. However, there is no characteristic to be obtained from being "not empty" either. This is because this state of detachment from subjective thoughts is exclusive to enlightenment.**

This paragraph explains the perspective of non-emptiness. It says that "not empty" does not

mean that there is a different dharma called "not empty." Rather, the embodiment of Dharma revealed by the previous perspective of emptiness is empty of delusory attachments or defilements, but not empty of its own embodiment, and is indeed the true mind. This *embodiment* of true mind stays thus forever without change, fundamentally containing virtues of purity numerous like the sands of the Ganges River. Often when it is obscured by delusory attachments and defilements, it does not get to be revealed. Now, if it is without various delusory attachments, then it inherently contains dharmas of purity perfectly and fully. It is in this perspective that it is called "not empty." Though it is called not empty, there is no separate dharma for this. Rather, this *embodiment* [of true thusness] that is not empty is in the state of detachment from subjective thoughts. This state is exclusive to enlightenment realized by the wisdom of non-discernment. This completes the explanation of the gateway of the true thusness mind.

## 2. The gateway of the originating and ceasing mind

**The originating and ceasing mind: It is from the treasure of Tathagata (*Tathagata-garbha*) that the originating and ceasing mind arises. It is the coming together and joining of that which neither originates nor ceases and that which originates and ceases -- not the same yet not different. This is called the *alaya* consciousness (*alaya-vijnana*).**

This paragraph explains the second gateway of the one mind as introduced in the section of theme – the mind’s characteristic of originating and ceasing given causes and circumstances. The Theme states: *what is called Dharma is the mind of sentient beings*. This refers to the mind as the coming together and joining of the true and the deluded. Speaking of the true only, then it refers to the gateway of the true thusness mind; if including the ignorant also, then it refers to the gateway of the originating and ceasing mind. Now, the text states that the originating and ceasing mind arises from the treasure of Tathagata, in other words, the inherent Buddha

nature of sentient beings.

But, how is the treasure of Tathagata accounted for? Its embodiment should be mentioned first -- its embodiment is true thusness. With true (but may be temporarily obscured by ignorance) as the cause, and ignorance as the external circumstance, these together give rise to *alaya*. *Alaya* is the *alaya* consciousness, also called "store consciousness." When the true mind is deluded by ignorance, it becomes the store consciousness. Ignorance arises from an unenlightened thought. Just as the Sutra states, "The store consciousness is the treasure of Tathagata." The store consciousness is the fundamental consciousness. The store consciousness contains and stores the seeds of all dharmas of defilement and purity; and thus the fundamental consciousness is the origin of all the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas. The karmic causes and fruits of the saints or the uninitiated from the phenomenal worlds in all ten directions depend on the store consciousness, or in other words, the treasure of Tathagata.

With respect to the gateway of the originating and ceasing mind, the purpose here is to reveal that this mind is indeed the source of both the deluded and the enlightened states. So here it is said:

*It is from the treasure of Tathagata (Tathagata-garbha) that the originating and ceasing mind arises. An analogy will be waves arising from the ocean. The next part states: it is the coming together and joining of that which neither originates nor ceases and that which originates and ceases -- not the same yet not different. This is called the alaya consciousness (alaya-vijnana). Here the analogy of waves arising from the ocean exactly describes how all dharmas arise from consciousness only. Therefore, according to the Lankavatara Sutra, from the gateway of the true thusness mind, everything is empty; nothing may be put into speech. On the other hand, from the gateway of the originating and ceasing mind is whatever that allows speech. This is the central theme of the entire discourse.*

**This consciousness has two functions: it embraces all the dharmas, and it gives rise to all the dharmas. What are two perspectives of the same consciousness? The first is the enlightened perspective; the second is the non-enlightened perspective.**

This paragraph shows two perspectives of this *alaya* consciousness through the coming together

and joining of the true and the deluded. By means of this, the causes of enlightenment and delusion are clarified. The two perspectives are the enlightened and the non-enlightened perspectives. First, from the enlightened perspective: This consciousness is fundamentally the treasure of Tathagata. The non-originating and non-ceasing state of the mind is the very Buddha nature of all sentient beings. Second, from the non-enlightened perspective: When the wind of ignorance stirs, delusion gives rise to the originating and ceasing state which in turn hinders the inherent Buddha nature.

Now, for the two functions: This consciousness can embrace all the dharmas, that is the primary or secondary, wholesome or unwholesome, karmic causes and fruits relating to either the saint or the uninitiated are all established through this consciousness. Everything is included, nothing is left out -- so it is said *embraces all the dharmas*. In other words, all dharmas are but consciousness only.

This consciousness can give rise to all the dharmas -- when "fundamental enlightenment," namely, the fundamentally enlightened state of the mind, is influenced by "non-enlightenment," this consciousness gives rise to various defiled dharmas of the secular world resulting in cycles of life and death.

Then, when "beginning enlightenment" is initiated by fundamental enlightenment, this consciousness gives rise to pure dharmas transcending this world, resulting in attainment of nirvana. Therefore, universally, this consciousness gives rise to all defiled and pure dharmas. Thus it is said *gives rise to all the dharmas*.

The enlightened perspective:

**The so-called enlightened perspective refers to the inherent state of the mind that is detached from subjective thought. This characteristic of detachment from subjective thought is equivalent to the entirety of the void -- there is nowhere it does not encompass. This unified essential characteristic of the phenomenal world is exactly the universal Dharma body (*Dharma-kaya*) of all the Tathagatas. It is by this Dharma body that "fundamental enlightenment" is defined.**

This paragraph illustrates the state of mind defined as "fundamental enlightenment." It refers to the inherent Buddha nature of all sentient

beings. It is defined as "fundamental enlightenment" [in the present discussion], and is also named the treasure of Tathagata [in the previous paragraph]. As the *sutra* states, "The treasure of Tathagata has thirty two characteristics that are contained in all sentient beings; and that is why they are called sentient beings." This inherent state of the mind may be obscured by delusion, but never lost. Since sentient beings' minds have not yet reached the state of detachment from subjective thought; this inherent state of the mind has not been revealed.

If the mind is able to detach itself from subjective thoughts, then its inherent state will be like the entirety of the void such that there is nowhere it does not reach. When all the different realms of delusory thoughts melt down to the sole characteristic of the true mind, then the entire phenomenal world is reduced to a unity, a single characteristic. This unified essential characteristic of the phenomenal world is indeed the characteristic of "without characteristic," and the same universal Dharma body of all the Tathagatas. This Dharma body neither increases for the saints; nor decreases for the uninitiated; fundamentally it belongs equally to all sentient beings. So, it is upon this Dharma body of the Tathagatas that the meaning of "fundamental enlightenment" is based. As the *sutra* states: "It is

in all sentient beings that I (the Tathagata) attain the supreme enlightenment."

**Why is that? The meaning of "fundamental enlightenment" is designated in order to contrast with the meaning of "beginning enlightenment." Actually beginning enlightenment is the same as fundamental enlightenment. As for the meaning of beginning enlightenment: beginning enlightenment comes from non-enlightenment, and non-enlightenment comes from fundamental enlightenment. Further, if enlightenment reaches the source of the mind, it is called "perfect enlightenment;" if the enlightenment does not reach the source of the mind it is not perfect enlightenment.**

This paragraph explains the motivation for the definition of "fundamental enlightenment." The purpose is to illustrate that "beginning enlightenment" is the wisdom needed to return from the cycles [of life and death] back to purity. The present discussion of the meaning of enlightenment with respect to the gateway of the originating and ceasing mind focuses on sentient beings' inherent nature for enlightenment. This inherent nature for

enlightenment is called Buddha nature, and is also defined as "fundamental enlightenment" here.

In this paragraph the meaning of enlightenment is subdivided into fundamental enlightenment and beginning enlightenment. The purpose is to show that returning from the deluded to the enlightened state of mind relies on the wisdom of beginning enlightenment as the foundation for practice. Although the nature for enlightenment [fundamental enlightenment] is universally contained in all people, without the wisdom of beginning enlightenment, there is no way for it to be manifested. Thus it says: *the meaning of "fundamental enlightenment" is designated in order to contrast with the meaning of "beginning enlightenment."* How does one become aware of fundamental enlightenment? Once beginning enlightenment is motivated through non-enlightenment, it leads back to the realization of fundamental enlightenment. Actually, there is really nothing new to be realized [because beginning enlightenment merely brings out sentient beings' inherent nature for enlightenment]. Therefore, *beginning enlightenment is just the same as fundamental enlightenment.*

On the other hand, while fundamental enlightenment needs beginning enlightenment to

manifest its existence, how is beginning enlightenment to be accounted for? *Non-enlightenment comes from fundamental enlightenment*, that is, when fundamental enlightenment is not realized, this is called non-enlightenment. From non-enlightenment there could be delusory thoughts due to the grasping of illusory names and characteristics. Now, if one learns about fundamental enlightenment from the Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha), contemplates the characteristic of fundamental enlightenment and aspires to seek realization, then one may initiate the wisdom of beginning enlightenment. In other words, beginning enlightenment arises initially from non-enlightenment. Therefore, *beginning enlightenment comes from non-enlightenment.*

So, beginning enlightenment functions in response to non-enlightenment. When the wisdom of beginning enlightenment reaches the source of the mind, that is, fundamental enlightenment, then the "beginning" and the "fundamental" become solely one with no duality. And further, there is no longer non-enlightenment. Non-enlightenment has completely become fundamental enlightenment, and only then is it *called perfect enlightenment.* Otherwise, *it is not perfect enlightenment.*

The enlightened perspective:

beginning enlightenment

**What does this mean? For uninitiated people, once their mind realizes the defilement of the previous subjective thought, they can stop the origination of the next defiled thought. Though this state of mind may be called enlightened, actually it is still non-enlightenment.**

From this paragraph onward the meaning of "perfect" enlightenment and "not perfect" enlightenment is demonstrated through the characteristics of beginning enlightenment. These are the four sequential characteristics of subjective thoughts: 1- originating, 2- abiding, 3- differentiating, and 4- ceasing. By realizing these four characteristics one at a time, the gradual return of the mind from deluded states to the perfect enlightened state may be illustrated. This is the route of the uninitiated to the saint. This process is beginning enlightenment.

*For uninitiated people, when their mind realizes the defilement of the previous subjective thought, they can stop the origination of the next defiled thought:* This refers to the realization of the fourth characteristic of subjective thought, namely ceasing, at the "positions of contemplating action." The "positions of contemplating action" refers to the ten faiths, namely the first ten positions for preliminary Buddhist practice. The realization of the characteristic of ceasing [of subjective thought]: For sentient beings, their mind continues to commit karmic deeds with subjective thoughts originating and ceasing one after another. Now, at the moment when their mind realizes the ceasing of the previous defiled subjective thought, this momentary mental state of ceasing of this single subjective thought can stop the defilement of the next subjective thought, and prevent defiled thought to originate. In this way, the ceasing of each subjective thought stops each succeeding defiled thought. Through continued effort of ceasing and stopping, the merit of this practice is strengthened. Eventually, the mind is able to experience a state of no defiled thought and not let any defiled thought originate.

However, this practice may stop defilement and wrong doing, but the mind is still restraining and subduing subjective thoughts in the

gateway of the originating and ceasing mind. The mind has not yet realized the nature of the non-originating and non-ceasing state. Thus it is said: *Though this state of mind may be called enlightened, actually it is still non-enlightenment.*

In the subsequent text of this treatise, the three finer and the six crude characteristics of non-enlightenment are introduced. [The three finer characteristics: act of ignorance, perception, and phenomenon; the six crude characteristics: initial awareness, continuous clinging to preference, grasping, assigning names and words to graspings, committing of karma, and suffering due to karma. These are explained in depth in the following volume. The four characteristics of beginning enlightenment can be mapped to these three finer and six crude characteristics of non-enlightenment.] The above mentioned characteristic of beginning enlightenment, realization of ceasing, corresponds to the realization of one of the six crude characteristics of non-enlightenment, namely committing of karma.

**For the practitioners of the two vehicles [of *arhat* and *pryataka Buddha*], and the beginners in the Bodhisattva path etc., once their mind realizes the differentiating of thoughts, their thoughts will no**

**longer have this characteristic of differentiating. Since this relinquishes the crude characteristics of discernment, and of grasping, [by subjective thoughts,] it is called "enlightenment in appearance."**

This paragraph explains the realization of the third characteristic of subjective thought, namely differentiating. This realization is achieved through the positions of the three sagacities [the ten abodes, the ten practices and the ten dedications, in total thirty positions] for Buddhist practice. The positions of the three sagacities are equivalently known as the "positions of appearance." *The practitioners of the two vehicles [arhat and pryataka Buddha]* refer to those of the two vehicles who are practicing wisdom meditation, contemplating the emptiness of self in order to relinquish the grasping of self as a result of discernment. *The beginners in the Bodhisattva path* refer to bodhisattvas who have just initiated their mind for Bodhisattva practice at the beginning position of the ten abodes [first of the thirty positions]. "*Etc.*" refers to those bodhisattvas who are practicing at the next twenty-nine [of the thirty] positions of the three sagacities. This means that both the practitioners for the two vehicles and the bodhisattvas at varying positions of the three sagacities are all

trying to relinquish the grasping of self as a result of discernment. For bodhisattvas, practicing contemplation, they should contemplate the dual emptiness of self and dharma. However, since at this point they have not yet relinquished the grasping of dharma, their practice is therefore similar to that of the practitioners of the two vehicles of *arhat* and *pryataka* Buddha.

*Once their mind realizes the differentiating of thoughts, their thoughts will no longer have this characteristic of differentiating:* For the practitioners of the two vehicles, in their contemplation of the grasping of self and personality, and of the resulting delusions, commitment of karmic deeds, and suffering, their contemplation will reveal these various differences in thoughts. Once they relinquish the grasping of self, then delusions, karmic deeds and suffering will no longer be distinguished in their contemplation. Thus, it is said *their thoughts will no longer have this characteristic of differentiating.*

Bodhisattvas at the initial levels in their practice for Buddhahood practice contemplation of the dual emptiness [of self and dharma]. Having already attained the positions of the ten faiths previously, they begin at the ten abodes [first ten of

the three sagacities] until ultimately their mind has fulfilled the ten dedications and attained the so-called “enlightenment in appearance.” Their practice is to realize the differences in thoughts in their mind. They will gradually realize that the different thoughts grasped by their mind are really nothing to be attained. Thus it is said *their thoughts will no longer have this characteristic of differentiating.*

The above mentioned characteristic of beginning enlightenment, realization of differentiating, corresponds to the realization of two of the six crude characteristics of non-enlightenment, namely grasping and assigning names and words to graspings. Thus it is said *this relinquishes the crude characteristics of discernment, and of grasping, [by subjective thoughts].* Since such realization does not reveal true thusness, but does provide insight through contemplation, it is called “enlightenment in appearance.”

**For those bodhisattvas who are on the way to acquiring Dharma-body (*Dharma-kaya*), when their mind realizes the presence of subjective thoughts, their thoughts will no longer have this characteristic of abiding. Since this further relinquishes the discernment of the crude**

**subjective thoughts themselves, it is called "approximating enlightenment."**

This paragraph explains the realization of the second characteristic of subjective thought, which is called abiding. This pertains to the bodhisattvas of the initial ground till the ninth ground of Bodhisattvas practice. They are all called bodhisattvas on the way to acquire Dharma-body and therefore are referred to as "those bodhisattvas" here. It is because they all aspire to have true thusness as their embodiment.

*When their mind realizes the presence of subjective thoughts, their thoughts will no longer have this characteristic of abiding:* The characteristic of beginning enlightenment called realization of abiding corresponds to the realization of two of the six crude characteristics (initial awareness and continuous clinging to preference), and two of the three finer characteristics (perception and phenomenon) of non-enlightenment. These four characteristics are also known as the two inherent graspings of self and of dharma.

Now those bodhisattvas, who are practicing on the ten grounds, endeavor to realize the

principle of true void. They may already understand the emptiness of dharma, that all dharmas are but consciousness, and consequently do not grasp the crude discernment of external phenomena outside the mind. However, when they are not in meditation, they still grasp dharmas manifesting in their mind and distinguish between pure or defiled dharmas, thoughts after thoughts which have not yet been forgotten. Their mind is still attached, abiding by the internal circumstances. Thus, the goal of Bodhisattva practice is for *their mind to realize the presence of subjective thoughts.*

In order to relinquish the grasping of dharma, the bodhisattvas must first relinquish the grasping of the dharmas of form. This practice leads from the first ground to the seventh ground of Bodhisattva practice. At the first ground the bodhisattvas start by relinquishing the characteristic of continuous clinging to preference, that is, the grasping of dharmas as a result of discernment, and at the seventh ground, conclude with the relinquishing of the characteristic of initial awareness, that is, the inherent grasping of dharmas. These two graspings of dharmas both rise from external phenomena, and are therefore called grasping of the dharmas of form. The bodhisattvas at the eighth ground realize that the characteristic of phenomenon is but mind only; and

those at the ninth ground realize that the characteristic of perception is also mind only.

In this order, from the first until the ninth ground, the bodhisattvas relinquish the four characteristics [of non-enlightenment], namely the characteristics of continuous clinging to preference, initial awareness, phenomenon, and perception. In this manner they enter the contemplation of true thusness, observing their own mind, where every thought, though present, is without the characteristic of abiding. Thus, they can relinquish the characteristic of abiding that distinguishes the crude subjective thoughts. Since the relinquishment is approximated in succeeding order, so is the realization. This is called “approximate enlightenment.”

**For bodhisattvas who have completed all the grounds of the bodhisattva path, and have fully accomplished the expedient means, their mind wholeheartedly leads to the state [of non-thought]. Once their mind realizes the initial originating [of subjective thought] their mind will no longer have this characteristic of originating [of subjective thought]. Since this relinquishes even the subtlest subjective thoughts such that the inherent true nature of the mind is revealed and that the mind**

**stays thus in its true state, it is called "perfect enlightenment."**

This paragraph explains the realization of the first characteristic of subjective thought, namely originating. The *bodhisattvas who have completed all the grounds of the bodhisattva path* means that they have accomplished all the ten grounds and have thus relinquished endless delusions. They *have fully accomplished the expedient means* indicates that they have completely fulfilled the path of expedient means in their practice of the contemplation of actions. *Their mind wholeheartedly leads to the state [of non-thought]*: This refers to the uninterrupted path, namely, the contemplation of the mind wholeheartedly without interruption and thus entering the state of non-thought.

The *Discourse on the Dharma* states: “The path of perfect enlightenment refers to a state of concentration like the diamond. There are two types, one encompassed in the path of expedient means, and one encompassed in the uninterrupted path.”

*Once their mind realizes the initial originating [of subjective thought] their mind will no longer have this characteristic of originating [of*

*subjective thought*]: This refers to employing the wisdom, which arises from the wholehearted contemplation that leads to non-thought, to comprehend any initial sway of the mind toward delusory thought [subjective thought] at the very source of the mind. This is to realize and comprehend the characteristic of the primary origination of fundamental ignorance, in other words, the moment of the initial rising of the restless subjective mind. Thus it is said *their mind realizes the initial originating [of subjective thought]*.

Actually, in the inherent embodiment of the mind there is no such characteristic of initial originating at all. The mind itself is fundamentally in a state of tranquility and extinction [of all passions], without origination. It is due to enlightenment that delusion is perceived. However, ignorance has no real embodiment, and now that delusion has been realized, it simply ceases. The enlightened mind does not give rise to delusion, it is the only true mind and thus *their mind will no longer have this characteristic of originating [of subjective thought]*.

*Since this relinquishes even the subtlest subjective thoughts* refers to the characteristic of the primary origination of fundamental ignorance -- the subtlest ignorance. Now the mind has relinquished

this, the true mind of non-thought is revealed. Thus it is said *the inherent true nature of the mind is revealed*. This is the very source -- the only source of the mind. It has no characteristic of originating, differentiating or transforming. *The mind stays thus in its true state*. At this point, the beginning enlightenment and the fundamental enlightenment become one; therefore *it is called "perfect enlightenment."*

The above mentioned characteristic of beginning enlightenment, realization of originating, corresponds to the realization of one of the three finer characteristics of non-enlightenment, namely the act of ignorance.

**Thus, the Sutra [Lankavatara Sutra] states: if there are sentient beings who are able to contemplate the state of non-thought, then they are on the way to the wisdom of the Buddhas.**

By quoting from the [Lankavatara] Sutra, this paragraph demonstrates that non-thought [no subjective thought] is the key to Buddhahood. This means that not only do bodhisattvas, who practice relinquishment, hold non-thought as their ultimate

goal, but so do uninitiated sentient beings, whose minds are not yet detached from subjective thoughts. Even uninitiated sentient beings, if they are able to contemplate the state of no subjective thought, may be on their way to attaining the wisdom of the Tathagatas. Indeed, there is no better key to Buddhahood than this, and thus it is particularly emphasized here.

**Further, with respect to the initial originating of subjective thought, there is actually no such characteristic of originating [of subjective thought] to be realized. This realization of the characteristic of originating [that there is in fact no characteristic of originating] is equivalent to attaining the mental state of non-thought. Thus, it follows that all sentient beings cannot be said to be enlightened because from the beginning-less beginning their mind has been occupied by continuous subjective thoughts. Their mind has not yet detached from subjective thought. Thus it is said ignorance presides from beginning-less time.**

This paragraph further demonstrates the state of non-thought in order to clarify any misunderstanding regarding the characteristic of

originating [of subjective thought] in the mind. In case deluded people, having heard *once their mind realizes the initial originating [of subjective thought]*, attempt to claim that there is indeed any initial characteristic to be realized, it is said here: *Further, with respect to the initial originating of subjective thought, there is actually no such characteristic of originating [of subjective thought] to be realized.*

Now, *this realization of the characteristic of originating* refers to knowing that there is fundamentally no characteristic of originating. This realization is attained through the wisdom from wholehearted contemplation [of non-thought]. Characteristic pertains to mind's perception of external phenomenon while realization pertains to wisdom. Wisdom here is the wisdom of non-thought, namely, non-discerning wisdom. Characteristic here refers to the characteristic of “without characteristic,” or true characteristic. In other words, the wisdom of non-thought and the characteristic of “without characteristic” represent a realm of non-duality when non-thought reaches and merges with the very source of the mind. So it is said *this realization of the characteristic of originating [that there is in fact no characteristic of originating] is equivalent to attaining the mental state of non-thought.*

Therefore, *it follows that all sentient beings cannot be said to be enlightened because from the beginning-less beginning their mind has been occupied by continuous subjective thoughts. Their mind has not yet detached from subjective thought.* It is because they have such subjective thoughts that *ignorance presides from beginning-less time.*

**If one attains the state of non-thought, then one is able to realize that the characteristics of originating, abiding, differentiating, and ceasing [of subjective thought] are no different from [source of the mind] which is equivalent to the state of non-thought. In fact there are no such four characteristics that together constitute "beginning enlightenment" because these four characteristics of subjective thought are simultaneous and equally lacking inherent existence. Therefore, beginning enlightenment is fundamentally equivalent to and same as "fundamental enlightenment."**

This paragraph clarifies the ultimate source of the mind. If one attains the state of non-thought, then one realizes that the four characteristics of subjective thought, namely

originating, abiding, differentiating, and ceasing, are caused by delusion. Their fundamental nature is empty, no different from the source of the mind. The source of the mind is equivalent to the state of non-thought, and because of this equivalence, one realizes that the four characteristics of subjective thought are just the same as the source of the mind.

In relinquishing delusions, from the crude to the finest, there may seem to be four different characteristics of subjective thought [to be relinquished], but actually, there are not really four different realizations that make up beginning enlightenment. This is because these four characteristics appear simultaneously without sequential order; their embodiments are all empty, that is, *simultaneous and equally lacking inherent existence.* Therefore, in the enlightened mind, the four realizations of beginning enlightenment for relinquishing the four characteristics of subjective thought are fundamentally equivalent -- one and the same as fundamental enlightenment. There is no difference between the beginning and the fundamental.

This is to distinguish from the previous context when beginning enlightenment is initiated in response to non-enlightenment. However in the

present context, when the state of non-thought is attained, there is no non-enlightenment to start with, so how could there be beginning enlightenment aside from fundamental enlightenment?

The enlightened perspective:

fundamental enlightenment

**Further, in face of defilement, the fundamental enlightenment gives rise to two characteristics that, though differentiable, are no different from fundamental enlightenment itself. What are the two? First: the characteristic of purifying wisdom. Second: the characteristic of karmic merits which are beyond any thought or expression.**

In the previous discussion of the enlightened perspective, the definition of beginning enlightenment is explained in detail. Next, the explanation will focus on fundamental enlightenment, specifically, on the two characteristics that arise when fundamental enlightenment returns to purity from the

hindrance of ignorance. Speaking of *gives rise to* it has been said previously that the *alaya* consciousness gives rise to all the dharmas, though here it refers to those dharmas of purity only. As fundamental enlightenment perfumes the mind from within, it initiates the wisdom of beginning enlightenment and thus turns defilement into purity. So it is due to defilement that wisdom is initiated, which is then capable of turning the defiled state back to the purified state of the mind while manifesting two characteristics. Therefore, it is said *gives rise to*.

However, the characteristics that arise from *embodiment* are no different from the *embodiment* itself. The fundamental enlightenment is great in *embodiment*. The characteristic of purifying wisdom, which arises from this *embodiment*, is great in *characteristic*. The characteristic of karmic merits beyond any thought or expression, which also arises from this *embodiment*, is great in *application*. These three greats of *embodiment*, of *characteristic*, and of *application* are inherently no different from one another. Thus it is said *the fundamental enlightenment gives rise to two characteristics that are no different from fundamental enlightenment itself*.

**The characteristic of purifying wisdom: This is to discipline [the mind] by means of the perfuming power of Dharma, practice truthfully [according to the Dharma], and thus fulfill [karmic merits] through expedient means. This relinquishes the joining consciousness [*alaya* consciousness, the coming together and joining of that which neither originates nor ceases and that which originates and ceases], and ceases the characteristics of the mind that give rise to continuous subjective thoughts. Thus, the genuine and pure wisdom of Dharma-kaya is manifested.**

This paragraph demonstrates the characteristic of purifying wisdom in restoring fundamental enlightenment from the hindrance of ignorance. *Discipline [the mind] by means of the perfuming power of Dharma*: this refers to the cause and circumstance that returns the mind to its fundamentally enlightened state [in Buddhist diction, all phenomenal existences are viewed as temporary unions of various causes and circumstances]. Namely, the perfuming power of the inherent dharma of fundamental enlightenment from within is the cause, and the perfuming power of the dharma of the Three Jewels [the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha] from without is the circumstance. With the

power of such dharmas to perfume from within and without, the fundamental enlightenment gives rise to the beginning enlightenment which is able to transform ignorance to enlightenment -- this is the so-called characteristic of purifying wisdom. According to Buddhist practice this belongs to additional practices after the three sagacities. The practice entailed here is the additional practice of appearance, namely, disciplining the mind by means of the perfuming power of dharma.

*Practice truthfully [according to the Dharma]*: this refers to the practice of bodhisattvas just embarking on the practice of the ten grounds. They endeavor to realize true thusness by gradually relinquishing ignorance and gradually manifesting Dharma-kaya. They practice in accordance with truth and are so-called *practicing truthfully [according to the Dharma]*.

*Thus fulfill [karmic merits] through expedient means*: this refers to the bodhisattvas who have accomplished the practice of the eighth through the tenth grounds. They have relinquished the diamond-like stronghold, the last bastion of subjective thought. They have fully completed the causal ground: wisdom is purified and merits are fulfilled. Thus it is said *fulfill [karmic merits] through expedient*

means.

*This relinquishes the joining consciousness [the alaya consciousness, the coming together and joining of that which neither originates nor ceases and that which originates and ceases]:* this means to relinquish the fundamental ignorance within the joining consciousness, in other words, to relinquish the ignorance within the eighth consciousness [*alaya* consciousness] which is the coming together and joining of the true and the deluded. When this fundamental ignorance of primary origination is relinquished, the mind is without any such coming together and joining, thus it is said *this relinquishes the joining consciousness*.

*[This] ceases the characteristics of the mind that give rise to continuous subjective thoughts:* this refers to the ceasing of the three finer characteristics of non-enlightenment, namely, the characteristic of the act of ignorance, the characteristic of perception, and the characteristic of phenomenon, which collectively are also the characteristics that give rise to continuous subjective thoughts. Ceasing this will stop those continuous thoughts and enable beginning enlightenment to return to its source and become fundamental enlightenment. Since the defiled circumstance is

completely relinquished, the Dharma-kaya of fundamental enlightenment will be naturally revealed. This shows that the embodiment of enlightenment is able to stay genuinely pure all because of the efficacy of beginning enlightenment.

**What does this mean? All the characteristics of the mind [that give rise to subjective thoughts] are caused by ignorance. Yet the very characteristic of ignorance is no different from the nature of enlightenment itself; it is neither destructible, nor indestructible. Consider the water in the ocean. The motion of the waves is caused by wind. Though the characteristic of water and the characteristic of wind are interrelated, by nature, water has no motion on its own. If the wind ceases, the motion [of the waves] ceases, but the liquid nature [of water] stays unchanged. Similarly, the inherently clear and pure mind of sentient beings is only disturbed by the wind of ignorance. Although neither has any physical characteristics, mind and ignorance are interrelated. However, by nature, the mind has no disturbance [from subjective thoughts]. If ignorance ceases, then the continuous subjective thoughts cease; but the nature of wisdom [of the mind] stays unaffected.**

This paragraph illustrates that though characteristics cease, the nature [of the mind] stays unaffected. The purpose here is to clarify any misunderstanding regarding the ceasing of continuous subjective thoughts discussed in the previous paragraph. People in doubt may attempt to claim that this doctrine falls into nihilism, using the following argument: As established in the previous paragraph, the *alaya* consciousness is the coming together and joining of that which neither originates nor ceases and that which originates and ceases. It further established that the originating and ceasing state of this consciousness is just the continuous subjective thoughts of the mind. Does it not follow that the ceasing of subjective thoughts of the mind means that the embodiment [of the mind] would also cease altogether?

Therefore, it is explained here that the originating and ceasing state is the characteristic of mind while the non-originating and non-ceasing state is the embodiment of mind. The text tries to demonstrate that anything which originates and ceases, such as the three finer and the six cruder characteristics, belong to characteristics of the mind, therefore all belonging to ignorance. However, the characteristic of ignorance itself is without inherent embodiment. It arises from the true, thus it is said

*no different from the nature of enlightenment itself.* Outside the context of fundamental enlightenment how can delusion even be spoken of? Ignorance is neither the same nor different from fundamental enlightenment. Therefore *it is neither destructible, nor indestructible.* Since it is not the same, it is not indestructible. This is because ignorance originates and ceases. It is illusory, without inherent nature, and thus destructible. [Since ignorance is no different from fundamental enlightenment], the nature of enlightenment [and therefore ignorance as well] neither originates nor ceases, it is true thusness without change, and thus not destructible.

*Consider the water in the ocean. The motion of the waves is caused by wind. Though the characteristic of water and the characteristic of wind are interrelated -- this is using an analogy to demonstrate the meaning. It indicates that water of the ocean follows the circumstance of wind and results in the motion of the waves. Similarly, true thusness follows the circumstance of ignorance and results in all the characteristics of the mind. However, the motion of the waves is the characteristic of water as well as the characteristic of wind. These two characteristics cannot be separated, thus it is said are interrelated.*

*By nature, water has no motion on its own-- the nature of water is its liquid state. If wind ceases, then the motion of the waves will cease. This is analogous to the role of ignorance. But the liquid nature [of water] stays unchanged-- this is analogous to fundamental enlightenment being unchanged and not destructible.*

*Similarly, the inherently clear and pure mind of sentient beings is only disturbed by the wind of ignorance: this is to use this analogy to explain the Dharma [the mind of sentient beings]. The inherently clear and pure mind of sentient beings is analogous to the water in the ocean, while [the mind] is only disturbed by the wind of ignorance is analogous to the motion of the waves is caused by the wind. Ignorance, a dharma of mind is analogous to the wind. Ignorance disturbs the clear and pure mind and thus gives rise to crude or finer defiled thoughts. This corresponds to wind stirring the ocean water to generate rough or mild waves.*

*Although neither has any physical characteristics, mind and ignorance are interrelated: Since they have no physical characteristics, it is difficult to understand. Therefore, the explanation here uses the analogy of the characteristics of water, of wind, and of waves which do have physical*

characteristics. The purpose is to show by this analogy that fundamental enlightenment and ignorance are interrelated. *However, by nature, the mind has no disturbance [from subjective thoughts] is analogous to by nature, water has no motion on its own.*

*If ignorance ceases, then the continuous subjective thoughts cease: this means if fundamental ignorance ceases, then the characteristics which lead to continuous subjective thoughts, namely the characteristics of the act of ignorance, of perception, and of phenomenon, will all cease. This is analogous to if the wind ceases, the motion [of the waves] ceases. However, the nature of wisdom [of the mind] stays unaffected-- the nature of wisdom stays unaffected is equivalent to the nature of enlightenment stays unaffected. This is because 1) the nature of wisdom is the naturally enlightened state, and thus stays unaffected, and 2) when the wisdom of beginning enlightenment and the nature of fundamental enlightenment merge as one, then both wisdom and nature stay unaffected, in the same way that the liquid nature of water staying unchanged.*

**The characteristic of karmic merit which are beyond any thought or expression: Now purified**

**through wisdom the enlightened mind is able to create all the superior and wondrous realms. That is to say, this characteristic of immeasurable karmic merits can continue forever without interruption. It naturally corresponds to and complies with the capacities of sentient beings, manifesting in various ways to ensure they receive benefits.**

This paragraph illustrates that when fundamental enlightenment is returned to its pure state, the application [of fundamental enlightenment] creates karmic merits which are beyond any thought or expression. This implies that if fundamental enlightenment is under the hindrance of ignorance, sentient beings may commit karmic deeds due to delusion. It may be said that the karmic force is beyond any thought or expression. Now, after this fundamental enlightenment is liberated from hindrance and restored to purity, it is capable of magically wondrous application, which is beyond any thought or expression, and creates supreme, wondrous realms. This greatness in *application* relies on the greatness in characteristic of purifying wisdom. Actually, the greatness in application relies on both the greatness of *embodiment* and the greatness of *characteristic*.

*This characteristic of immeasurable karmic merits:* This describes the characteristic of such wholesome karma in all directions of space at any one point in time through countless forms. Just like the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, who manifests in thirty-two forms in response to simultaneous calls, whose wondrous power is not deliberate and whose accomplishment is freely bestowed. *This characteristic of ... continue forever without interruption:* This describes the characteristic of such wholesome karma in the temporal direction. The characteristic of merits, achieved through precepts, meditation, and wisdom, benefits self as well as others, and extends to the future without limit.

*It naturally corresponds to and complies with the capacities of sentient beings--* This means the wholesome karmic roots of sentient beings are not equal in depth. Therefore the karmic merits, which are beyond any thought or expression, naturally comply with sentient beings according to their capacities. These supreme karmic merits do not go beyond three categories of action, speech, and intention: 1- Wholesome deeds of action in physical manifestation -- whatever bodily forms are needed to enlighten people, those wondrous appearances may simultaneously happen everywhere and at any time, just as thousands of moons would be reflected

simultaneously in thousands of rivers. 2- Wholesome deeds of speech in speaking the Dharma -- speaking the Dharma to people according to their capacities. When His [the Buddha's] perfect sound was voiced, people of various predispositions and diverse inclinations would equally understand [the Dharma]. 3- Wholesome deeds of intention in interpreting capabilities -- observing and gauging sentient beings' capacities and employing expedient means to enlighten them.

These various ways of manifesting karmic merits, without contrivance or deliberation, comply with sentient beings' capacities, thus ensuring the recipients' utmost benefits. This is the efficacy and expediency incorporated in the characteristic of karmic merits which are beyond any thought or expression.

**Further, the embodiment and the characteristic of enlightenment have four principal perspectives that compare it to the entirety of void and to a clear mirror. What are the four? First, like a mirror, it [fundamental enlightenment] is essentially empty. It is fundamentally separate from all characteristics of mental phenomenon, with no dharma to manifest. This [inherent**

**purity of enlightenment] does not require realization through contemplation.**

This paragraph introduces inherently pure fundamental enlightenment. There are two types of fundamental enlightenment: inherently pure fundamental enlightenment and fundamental enlightenment in face of defilement. This latter type, fundamental enlightenment in face of defilement, was explained previously as being revealed by beginning enlightenment. This pertains to the characteristic of purifying wisdom. This characteristic of purifying wisdom illustrates the efficacy of fundamental enlightenment in face of defilement by detaching itself from defilement through practice. Like gold from the mine, only through a purifying process does it become pure gold.

As mentioned above, the first type of fundamental enlightenment, inherently pure fundamental enlightenment can be described through four principal perspectives. These together reveal that, despite hindrances, the potential efficacy is inherent, like gold in the mine. Therefore, these four perspectives refer to *the embodiment and the characteristic of enlightenment*. Among the four, the former two illustrate the *embodiment* of

enlightenment. These perspectives are from the causal ground where fundamental enlightenment has not yet been revealed, but is inherently pure. The latter two perspectives illustrate the *characteristic* of enlightenment. These perspectives are from the ground of fruit where fundamental enlightenment has already been revealed, and is detached from defilement. Thus, the comparisons to the *entirety of void*, vast, all encompassing, and without characteristic, and the comparison to the *clear mirror*, pure, bright, and without defilement, are used to describe both the *embodiment* and the *characteristic* of fundamental enlightenment.

*Like a mirror, it [fundamental enlightenment] is essentially empty:* This refers to the first perspective of inherently pure fundamental enlightenment as the *embodiment* of true thusness. It is inherently pure and clear, belonging neither to delusion nor to realization, nor requiring any practice. It is in a state of calm and ceasing separate from any characteristic. Thus it is said *fundamentally separate from all characteristics of mental phenomenon*. It is separate from any discerning mind and any realm subject to mind's discernment. To say it is separate from such delusory mind and delusory phenomenon does not mean to say that because it is not the same as these, it is therefore

separate from these. Rather it means there are no mental phenomena at all, and that is why it is called *separate from*. As stated in the previous text: *this is because fundamentally it [true thusness] does not correspond to any defiled dharma*.

*With no dharma to manifest:* This means all delusory defiled dharma belong to pervasive grasping. Because they pertain to sentiment and not to true principle, they have no real characteristic, and therefore, cannot manifest. *This [inherent purity of enlightenment] does not require realization through contemplation:* This clarifies that fundamental enlightenment is inherently pure in nature therefore it does not embody any delusory dharma. The inherent purity of enlightenment, [its emptiness of delusory dharma] does not require realization through contemplative wisdom.

**Second, like a mirror, it [the fundamental enlightenment] is the cause of perfuming [the mind]. It is essentially not empty. Everything in the phenomenal world is reflected in this mirror [the fundamentally enlightened state]. However, nothing exits from it and nothing enters into it, nothing is lost and nothing is destroyed. It is the forever abiding one mind since all dharma are in a**

**state of true thusness. Further, it cannot be defiled by any defiled dharma. Its embodiment of wisdom cannot be swayed. It contains wholesome merits fully without attachment, thus perfuming [the mind of] sentient beings.**

This paragraph focuses on the second perspective of inherently pure fundamental enlightenment, namely the fact that it is the cause of perfuming the mind. This fundamental enlightenment causes the perfuming of the mind in two ways: 1- It is able to manifest all dharmas, and 2- It is able to perfume from within. The capability to manifest all dharmas will be explained first: Fundamental enlightenment is not empty because its *embodiment* is inherently pure in nature such that, like a great perfect mirror, all phenomena of the secular world can manifest in it. Indeed, the various characteristics of the primary and secondary karmic cause and fruit of defilement or purity of the phenomenal worlds in all ten directions are clearly reflected. The *Suramgama Sutra* states: “Like the entirety of void, the *embodiment* [of fundamental enlightenment] does not have any of the various characteristics, yet it does not disallow the manifestation of these characteristics.”

*Nothing exits from it, and nothing enters into it:* This is because the *embodiment* of enlightenment is true thusness and true thusness fundamentally has neither inside nor outside. Therefore the various characteristics, primary or secondary, of the ten worlds, neither exit from within, nor enter from without. *Nothing is lost and nothing is destroyed:* This indicates that all the primary or secondary dharmas of dependent arising of the ten worlds are manifested and revealed without fail; therefore, nothing is lost. Although fundamental enlightenment allows various characteristics to equally manifest, it keeps its inherent nature undestroyed; therefore, nothing is destroyed. Further, when any circumstance comes, it will manifest, and thus nothing is lost. Subsequently, whatever is manifested will be true, and thus nothing is destroyed.

*It is the forever abiding one mind:* This means although the entire phenomenal world can be manifested in inherently pure fundamental enlightenment, nothing exits and nothing enters, nothing is lost and nothing is destroyed. Since there is no characteristic of exiting, entering, losing or destroying, it [fundamental enlightenment] is separate from all characteristics that originate or cease. Thus it is called the *forever abiding one mind*. This mind is also named forever abiding Dharma-body because

all dharmas are in a state of true thusness. Therefore, in inanimate things it is called the nature of dharma, and in sentient beings it is called Buddha nature. Whether it is nature of dharma or Buddha nature, this nature is one and the same. It is inherent, and equally contained in all sentient beings, causing the perfuming from within.

From *further, it cannot be defiled by any defiled dharma...*: This explains the capability of inherently pure fundamental enlightenment to perfume [the mind] from within. This inherently contained pure, enlightened state, though under the defilement of sentient beings' ignorance, and therefore not separate from all the defiled minds and defiled phenomena of the five aggregates [the five groups of attachment], cannot be defiled by them. Although defilement may manifest under circumstances, this inherently pure fundamental enlightenment will not be defiled by the dharmas of defilement. Rather, it will demonstrate that its embodiment of wisdom is inherently pure, not to be swayed. Thus it is said *it cannot be defiled by any defiled dharma*. Like a clear mirror, it can reflect dirt, but it cannot be soiled by dirt. Indeed, it only shows that the mirror itself is inherently pure not influenced by whatever it may reflect. This comparison illustrates that it [inherently pure

fundamental enlightenment] may follow circumstances but does not change [under these circumstances] because all dharmas are in a state of true thusness and entirely manifested in it.

Thus, when the T'ien-t'ai school defines the meaning of wholesome or unwholesome nature, it claims that the one mind fully contains, with respect to all principle, phenomenon, nature, and characteristic, the thousand true thusnesses of one hundred worlds [ten worlds for each of the ten realms make a hundred worlds; ten true thusness for each of the hundred worlds make the thousand true thusnesses]. This understanding is only revealed to, and realized by, Bodhisattvas of the eighth ground.

The two concluding phrases of this paragraph state that because the wisdom embodied in inherently pure fundamental enlightenment cannot be swayed and because this inherently pure state contains innumerable pure merits without attachment like the grains of the Ganges River, it causes perfuming of sentient beings from within.

Inherently pure fundamental enlightenment enables sentient beings to realize impermanence, to tire of the suffering of birth and death, to aspire to Buddhist practice, and to seek the

path for relinquishment – all these rely on the inherent capability to perfume from within. The *Splendid Garland Sutra* [also named the *Sutra of Queen Srimala of the Loin's Roar*, (*Srimala-devi-simhanada-sutra*) in recent translation] states: “because [sentient beings] have Buddha nature, they are capable of tiring of birth and death, and joyfully seeking nirvana.”

**Third, like a mirror, it [fundamental enlightenment] detaches [itself from defilement] through Dharma. This means that the Dharma, which is essentially not empty, is capable of relinquishing the fetters of distressing passions and the fetters of wisdom. Further, it is capable of detaching [itself] from the joining consciousness [the coming together and joining of that which neither originates nor ceases and that which originates and ceases]. This is all because the enlightened state is inherently genuine, pure, and clear.**

This paragraph shows the third perspective of inherently pure fundamental enlightenment, namely the capacity to detach itself from defilement by means of Dharma. The previous

two perspectives focus on the inherently pure fundamental enlightenment under hindrances. The present focus is on this Dharma-body relinquishing hindrances and thus detaching itself from defilement. The *Jewel-Nature Treatise* (*Ratnagotravibhaga-mahayanottaratantra-sastra*) states: “There are two kinds of purity: 1- Purity of inherent nature -- characteristic to be constant and 2- Purity of detachment from defilement -- characteristic to surpass itself.”

The Dharma involved here for such detachment is the Dharma which is essentially not empty. This essentially-not-empty Dharma, I [the author] believe, refers to the beginning enlightenment discussed previously. It requires the function of beginning enlightenment to relinquish fetters and defilement, to detach from the joining consciousness [the coming together and joining of that which neither originates nor ceases and that which originates and ceases], and consequently, to reveal the inherent nature. The *embodiment* of enlightenment of sentient beings fundamentally contains all the virtues of Tathagata's wisdom. However, this may not be realized due to the following two fetters and the hindrance of the joining consciousness:

1-The fetters of distressing passions: This pertains to the result of the grasping of self -- the ten inducing passions, the delusions of view and thought, all the crude and finer defiled minds – which are all distressing and confusing, and inclusively called hindrance of distressing passions.

2-The fetters of wisdom: Wisdom is no fetter, but here it refers to the case when wisdom is hindered by ignorance, namely, when the understanding of the true principle is not thorough and complete – this is so-called hindrance of incorrect knowledge and also called grasping of dharma and self. That is, the ignorance that feeds the defiled mind, can hinder true wisdom, and is thus referred to as hindrance of wisdom.

3-The joining consciousness: This refers to the consciousness, which is the coming together and joining of that which neither originates nor ceases and that which originates and ceases, namely, the *alaya* consciousness. Here *detaching from the joining consciousness* means to be separated from that part of this consciousness which originates and ceases. Once that is accomplished, ignorance, the defiled mind - essentially everything - will cease.

This return from defilement to purity relies both on the perfuming by fundamental enlightenment and the efficacy of beginning enlightenment. Like grinding metal to make a bronze mirror, when the outside dirt is cleared, it becomes bright. Although the dirt has to be cleaned off, the brightness is inherent, not newly acquired. The mirror requires only the outside dirt to be cleaned off for the brightness to be revealed. Thus, it is *inherently genuine, pure, and clear*. It is genuine because it is separated from the muddied characteristics of the joining consciousness; it is pure because the crude or finer defiled minds have all been ceased; it is clear because the fetters due to ignorance have been relinquished.

**Fourth, like a mirror, it [the fundamental enlightenment] is the circumstance of perfuming [the mind]. Because it has already detached [itself from defilement] through Dharma, it universally illuminates the mind of sentient beings in order to induce [sentient beings] to practice wholesome karma and it manifests in accordance with the various thoughts [of sentient beings].**

This paragraph demonstrates the fourth perspective of inherently pure fundamental enlightenment, namely the fact that once detached from hindrance and defilement, it becomes the external circumstance [refer p47 for definition of cause and circumstance] of perfuming for sentient beings. *It is the circumstance of perfuming [the mind]*: This refers to the *application* of fundamental enlightenment to the three deeds of karma, namely, deed of action, deed of speech and deed of intention. It serves as a helping circumstance for sentient beings' Buddhist practice.

*It has already detached [itself from defilement] through Dharma*: This indicates that the present *application*, namely becoming an external circumstance for perfuming the mind, arises from the *embodiment* and *characteristic* of fundamental enlightenment, which has detached itself from fetters and hindrances. This *embodiment* of enlightenment is contained equally in sentient beings and the Buddha. This is the Buddha nature which has always been inherent in all sentient beings, and which, as explained in the second perspective, causes perfuming from within. Now, in Buddhist practice, fundamental enlightenment has detached itself from fetters and hindrances, and realized itself as the Dharma-body, and therefore *universally illuminates*

*the mind of sentient beings.*

Illuminating the mind is a deed of intention. The fundamentally enlightened state of mind, through contemplating the capacities of sentient beings, and through realizing the common inherent nature of all sentient beings, can initiate great compassion. It consequently manifests in various bodily forms in order to embrace and enlighten all sentient beings. In this manner, it [fundamental enlightenment] is the circumstance of perfuming the mind of sentient beings from without, inducing them to practice wholesome karmic deeds.

*It manifests in accordance with the various thoughts [of sentient beings]*: Manifests here refers to the two deeds of action and of speech. It means to appear in whatever bodily form, and to speak of whatever dharma, according to the various different thoughts [subjective thoughts] of sentient beings, as external circumstance for their practice. Like a great perfect mirror, everything is equally manifested in it [fundamental enlightenment], and thus it is said *like a mirror, it [the fundamental enlightenment] is the circumstance of perfuming [the mind]*. This paragraph completes the explanation of the four principal perspectives of inherently pure fundamental enlightenment.

At this point, the *Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana* concludes the enlightened perspective of the *alaya* consciousness in the context of the gateway of the originating and ceasing mind. This will also be the conclusion of the second volume of this translation of Dharma Master Chi Hoi's *An Edited Explication of the Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*. The third volume will begin with the non-enlightened perspective of the *alaya* consciousness and continue with the cause and circumstance for the originating and ceasing state of mind. These themes are explored extensively in the *Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*; and likewise, explained thoroughly in Master Chi Hoi's *Edited Explication*.

## Works by Master Chi Hoi

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<b>English Translation</b>
<i>Understanding the Heart Sutra</i>
<i>Perfect Realization by Mindfulness of Buddha</i>
<i>Bodhidharma's Meditation and the Fundamental Techniques of Sitting Meditation</i>
<i>Bodhisattva Forest of Awareness's Praise of Buddha</i>
<i>Understanding the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana (Vol I)</i>
<i>Understanding the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana (Vol II)</i>
<i>Walking the Buddhist Path</i>
<i>Dharma Rhymes by Master Chi Hoi (First Volume)</i>
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