**The Shurangama Sutra**

**VOLUME 8**

**CHAPTER 3**

**The Feeling Skandha**

H2 The characteristics of demons of the feeling.  
I1 Overview of the beginning and the end.  
J1 In the beginning, cultivation has not yet broken out of this region.  
K1 Review of the ending of the previous form skandha.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Ananda, when the good person who is cultivating samadhi and shamatha has put an end to the form skandha, he can see the mind of all Buddhas as if seeing an image reflected in a clear mirror.  
  
Commentary:**  
Ananda, when the good person who is cultivating samadhi, who cultivates the skill of directing the hearing inward to hear his own nature, who cultivates perfect understanding through the faculty of hearing, and shamatha, the quieting of thoughts, the practice of "stopping" so that contemplation is possible, has put an end to the form skandha, he can see the mind of all Buddhas as if Seeing an image reflected in a clear mirror. What happens when he puts an end to the form skandha? He can see the dharmadoor of the mind seal of all Buddhas, just as if he were seeing his own reflection in a mirror.  
  
K2 Introduction to the region of the feeling skandha.  
 **Sutra:  
  
He seems to have obtained something, but he cannot use it. In this he resembles a paralyzed person. His hands and feet are intact, his seeing and hearing are not distorted, and yet his mind has come under a deviant influence, so that he is unable to move. This is the region of the feeling skandha.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
He seems to have obtained something, but he cannot use it. In this he resembles a paralyzed person. I talked before about the kumbhanda ghost (paralysis ghost). When a person falls under the influence of such a ghost, his hands and feet are intact, not missing, his seeing and hearing are not distorted or confused, and yet his mind has come under a deviant influence, so that he is unable to move. This is the region of the feeling skandha. This state falls within the realm of the feeling skandha.  
  
J2 Ultimately it breaks up and reveals its false source.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Once the problem of paralysis subsides, his mind can then leave his body and look back upon his face. It can go or stay as it pleases without further hindrance. This is the end of the feeling skandha. This person can then transcend the turbidity of views. Contemplating the cause of the feeling skandha, one sees that false thoughts of illusory clarity are its source.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Once the problem of being immobilized by the paralysis ghost subsides, his mind can then leave his body and look back upon his face. When you are within the feeling skandha, it is like being paralyzed by a kumbhanda ghost, so you cannot get free. If this situation disappears and the feeling skandha is broken through, your mind can leave your body and you can see your own face. It can go or stay as it pleases. You may go or not go as you wish. You are completely unfettered and without further hindrance. This is the end of the feeling skandha. The feeling skandha is gone. This person can then transcend the turbidity of views, which is one of the turbidities of "the evil world of the five turbidities." Contemplating the cause of the feeling skandha, one sees that false thoughts of illusory clarity are its source. Once the feeling skandha is broken through, its source is also done away with.  
  
I2 The ten states within this region.  
J1 Suppression of the self leads to sadness.  
K1 The characteristics of its beginning.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Ananda, in this situation the good person experiences a brilliant light. As a result of the excessive internal pressure in his mind, he is suddenly overwhelmed with such boundless sadness that he looks upon even mosquitoes and gadflies as newborn children. He is filled with pity and unconsciously bursts into tears.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Ananda, in this situation the good person experiences a dazzling, brilliant light. As a result of the excessive internal pressure in his mind, a kind of feeling arises spontaneously. He has continually been controlling his own thoughts and has overdone it. When the inner suppression becomes excessive, he is suddenly overwhelmed with such boundless sadness and compassion for living beings that he looks upon and cherishes tiny creatures, even mosquitoes and gadflies, as if they were his own newborn children. The Chinese word for newborn means "red," referring to the red color of infant children's skin. He is filled with pity and unconsciously bursts into tears. Without knowing it, he starts to cry.  
  
K2 Giving its name and instructions to awaken.  
 **Sutra:  
  
This is called 'overexertion in suppressing the mind in the course of cultivation.' If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sage-hood. If he realizes that and remains unconfused, then after a time it will disappear.**K3 Showing how confusion will certainly bring a fall. **But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon of sadness will enter his mind. Then, as soon as he sees someone, he will feel sad and cry uncontrollably. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
This is called "overexertion in suppressing the mind in the course of cultivation." This situation may arise in the course of cultivation. It happens because you have been suppressing your thoughts too hard. If he understands, then there is no error. If you understand and say to yourself, "why have I started crying for no reason? I should change this state," then there will not be any problem. This experience does not indicate sagehood. It does not mean you have attained the "great compassion of oneness with all." Don't think that caring for mosquitoes and other small creatures as if they were your own children is genuine "great compassion of oneness with all." If he realizes that and remains unconfused, then after a time it will disappear. The state will go away. But if he considers himself a sage, if he says, "Oh! Now I have the 'great compassion of oneness with all! My cultivation has really succeeded!" then a demon of sadness that is an expert at crying will come. It cries no matter whom it meets. This demon will enter his mind and take possession of him. Then as soon as he sees someone, he will feel sad and cry uncontrollably, without knowing why he is so sad.  
  
When I was in Manchuria I knew a woman named Liu Jintong who was like that whenever she met someone, she would start crying and say, "In the past, you were my son, and now you've come back. You've found your mother!" With her tears, she managed to confuse the other person into believing that he had actually met his mother. In fact, he'd encountered a demon. Lacking proper samadhi, proper concentration, he will certainly fall. If you follow a demon, you will fall into the hells.  
  
[December 2,1993]  
  
In the past Liu Jintong was possessed by the demons described in the fifty skandha-demon states, and now there are two others, one of whom is especially powerful because she knows a dharma for summoning spirits. A woman from San Jose who took refuge with me later went to study under her and contracted cancer upon her return. It was that person's doing. The San Jose woman came back to see me, but I paid no attention to her. Even if I were to do something to help her, I wouldn't let other people know.  
  
J2 He praises himself as being equal to the Buddhas.  
K1 The characteristics of its beginning.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Further, Ananda, in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. At that time he has a sublime vision and is overwhelmed with gratitude. In this situation, he suddenly evinces tremendous courage. His mind is bold and keen. He resolves to equal all Buddhas and says he can transcend three asamkhyeyas of eons in a single thought.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Further, Ananda, in this state of samadhi, the good person, which includes all good people who are cultivating the Way, sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. Among the five skandhas, he knows that the form skandha is gone, and he is quite clear about the feeling skandha. At that time he has a sublime vision and is overwhelmed with gratitude. A very special and rare vision appears in his mind, and he feels excessively grateful for it. However, excess is as bad as insufficiency. There is little difference between going too far and not going far enough. Neither is in accord with the Middle Way. For example, while traveling, if you go beyond your destination, it is the same as if you had not arrived at all.  
  
In this situation, in this state of samadhi, he suddenly evinces tremendous courage. His mind is bold and keen, fearlessly vigorous. He resolves to equal all Buddhas, saying, "The Buddha and I are the same." And he says he can transcend three asamkhyeyas (limitless numbers) of eons in a single thought. He says that he can transcend the first, second, and third asamkhyeyas of eons in the space of a single thought. Therefore, he says he is a Buddha. Not only does he say he is a Buddha, he says everyone is a Buddha. Such a person has fallen prey to wrong knowledge and views. It's true that everyone is potentially a Buddha, but one has to cultivate in order to realize Buddhahood. Even when one cultivates, it is not possible to become a Buddha in a single thought. It takes a long time. Although the time can be shortened if one understands the Buddhadharma and practices according to it, one still cannot attain Buddha-hood in a single thought. This person cultivates, but he lacks wisdom and does not have a good and wise advisor to instruct him. Although he works hard at cultivation, he develops wrong views along the way. Seeing that such a long time has passed without his becoming a Buddha, he simply states that he is a Buddha. This is the experience of "praising oneself as the equal of the Buddhas" that occurs during the breakdown of the feeling skandha. He says he is the same as all Buddhas. Actually, with that one mistaken thought, he is already possessed by a demon.  
  
K2 Giving the name and instructions to awaken.  
 **Sutra:  
  
This is called 'being too anxious to excel in cultivation.' If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood.**  
  
K3 Showing how confusion will certainly bring a fall.  
 **If he realizes that and remains unconfused, then after a time it will disappear. But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon of insanity will enter his mind. As soon as he sees someone, he will boast about himself. He will become extraordinarily haughty, to the point that he recognizes no Buddha above him and no people below him. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
In the lecture on the Shurangama Sutra, we have now reached the very important section on the fifty kinds of deviant states caused by the five skandhas. If people who cultivate do not understand these fifty skandha demons, they will easily go astray in their cultivation. If you can recognize the states of these skandha demons, then you will not get carried away with reckless boasting and assume that you are an extraordinary individual. Therefore, I invite you to encourage your relatives and friends to come listen to this section on the fifty skandha demons, so they will know about the states which occur in cultivation.  
  
This is called "being too anxious to excel in cultivation." This state occurs as a result of your efforts in cultivation. Because of this overexertion resulting from transformations within your own nature, you become courageous. There is nothing wrong with courage and vigor if you use them to advance in your cultivation of the Buddhadharma. But you must not become conceited and say, "Oh! I'm a Buddha myself" So you're a Buddha? The Buddha spoke the three treasuries and the twelve divisions of the canon. How many treasuries and divisions have you spoken? You don't even understand them, yet you say you are a Buddha. Isn't that absurd? The Buddha spoke the entire canon, and you haven't spoken even a single treasury or division of the canon, so how can you claim that you have become a Buddha? Even if you could explain the treasuries and divisions and understand their principles, at best you could call yourself a disciple of the Buddha, not a Buddha. But this person, feeling that everyone in the world reveres the Buddha, wants to be a Buddha, too, so that after he dies, people will make offerings to him. Actually, after death he will be buried in the ground. He will turn to dust and nothing will be left of him. If he understands, then there is no error. It is all right to have such courage, as long as you understand that it is merely a state and does not mean you have become a sage. This experience does not indicate sagehood. If he realizes that and remains unconfused then after a time it will disappear.  
  
But if he considers himself a sage, saying, "Oh, this means I've become a Buddha!" then a demon of insanity will enter his mind. So you see, if you do not even recognize the fifty skandha demons, how can you become a Buddha? This demon is one of arrogance, pride, and conceit. It bores into his mind and takes possession of him, driving out his soul. The demon king takes over and acts as his soul. As soon as he sees someone, no matter who the person is, he will boast about himself and how he is right and everyone else is wrong. He denigrates others to exalt himself. They are all in the wrong, and he alone is honored; he thinks he has become a Buddha!  
  
He will become extraordinarily haughty toward everyone, to the point that he recognizes no Buddha above him. There are no Buddhas above. Why? Because he's a Buddha himself. And he sees no people below him. Then what does he see? He says that everyone is a Buddha, that he himself is a Buddha, and that there is no Buddha above him. He himself is Buddha, and in the future everyone will become a Buddha along with him. That is why he sees no people below. Lacking the proper state of samadhi, he will certainly fall.

J3 Samadhi out of balance brings much reverie.  
K1 The characteristics of its beginning.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Further, in this state of samadhi the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. With no new realization immediately ahead of him, and having lost his former status as well, his power of wisdom weakens, and he enters an impasse in which he sees nothing to anticipate. Suddenly a feeling of tremendous monotony and thirst arises in his mind. At all times he is fixated in memories that do not disperse. He mistakes this for a sign of diligence and vigor.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Further, in this state of samadhi the good person who cultivates the Way sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. With no new realization immediately ahead of him, and having lost his former status as well, his power of wisdom weakens. Going forward, there is nothing new to attain; and behind him, the state where he dwelled before is also gone. His wisdom is inadequate now, and he isn't as bold and keen as before. This is a case of suddenly advancing and then suddenly retreating in one's skill. And he enters an impasse, a place where he is about to fall, in which he sees nothing to anticipate. He does not feel or see anything.  
  
Suddenly a feeling of tremendous monotony and thirst arises in his mind. His feeling is one of enormous monotony, dryness, and thirst. He feels everything is meaningless and boring, and he is thirsty because he needs to be moistened by the water of the Buddhadharma. He feels he is drying up and withering away because, for him, there is nothing at all. This is similar to the way ordinary people who do not cultivate start to feel lonely and bored. This loneliness and boredom are sure to lead to trouble, the same old trouble. I did not intend to bring this up, but because I'm afraid people might not understand, I will still talk about it. It is as when a woman thinks about a man. She keeps thinking about him until she feels incredibly anxious and restless. When men think about women, they also have this feeling of restlessness. They are lonely and bored, as if they have lost something which they cannot find. At all times he is fixated in memories that do not disperse. It is the way a man and a woman who are lovesick for each other keep thinking and thinking about each other and never forget. He mistakes this for a sign of diligence and vigor. This state of fixation on thoughts that don't disperse appears to him to indicate vigor.  
  
K2 Giving the name and instructions to awaken.  
 **Sutra:  
  
This is called 'cultivating the mind but losing oneself due to a lack of wisdom.' If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood.**K3 Showing how confusion will certainly bring a fall.  **But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon of memory will enter his mind. Day and night it will hold his mind suspended in one place. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Within the states of the feeling skandha, this is called "cultivating the mind but losing oneself due to a lack of wisdom." You don't have any wisdom. But don't worry about having no wisdom, for if he understands, then there is no error. If you realize that it's only a state, then there is no problem. But if you don't understand, and you are always getting attached to emptiness and caught up in stillness, if you are always lost in reverie, then you will wither away without any accomplishment. This experience does not indicate sagehood. This does not mean you have attained something or have realized sagehood. Do not "mistake a thief for your son."  
  
But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon of memory will enter his mind. Did you hear that! This is truly dangerous! If you consider it a fine state, a demon of memory will come and help you remember things. So you can;t remember something? It will help you to think. It sees how much you would like to remember, so it comes to help you and enters into your mind. Day and night it will hold his mind suspended in one place. Your mind will be preoccupied and kept in one spot. Lacking proper samadhi, unable to attain samadhi, he will certainly fall into the hells in the future.  
  
J4 Wisdom out of balance brings much arrogance.  
K1 The characteristics of its beginning.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Further, in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. His wisdom becomes stronger than his samadhi, and he mistakenly becomes impetuous. Cherishing the supremacy of his nature, he imagines that he is a Nishyanda (Buddha) and rests content with his minor achievement.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Further, in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. His wisdom becomes stronger than his samadhi. His wisdom power exceeds his samadhi power.  
  
And he mistakenly becomes impetuous. He experiences a feeling of rash vigor. Cherishing the supremacy of his nature, he imagines that he is a Nishyanda (Buddha). In this state, he considers his nature to be supreme and extraordinary, and he is always thinking about it. Cherishing this thought of supremacy, he suspects himself to be a Nishyanda Buddha. "Nishyanda" is Sanskrit and means "light shining everywhere." He thinks he is already a Nishyanda Buddha and rests content with his minor achievement. He has made a little progress, and he becomes satisfied. His samadhi-power falls way short of the Buddha's, and yet he claims he has become a Nishyanda Buddha.  
  
K2 Giving the name and instructions to awaken.  
 **Sutra:  
  
This is called 'applying the mind, but straying away from constant examination and becoming preoccupied with ideas and opinions.' If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood.**  
  
K3 Showing how confusion will certainly bring a fall.  
 **But if he considers himself a sage, then a lowly demon that is easily satisfied will enter his mind. As soon as he sees someone, he will announce, "I have realized the unsurpassed absolute truth." Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
This is called "applying the mind, but straying away from constant examination, he is not skilled at constantly examining himself, and becoming preoccupied with ideas and opinions." Unable to clearly distinguish what he knows and thinks, he gets caught up and stuck in his own ideas and opinions. If he understands, then there is no error. There will not be any problem. This experience does not indicate sagehood.  
  
But if he considers himself a sage and thinks that he has realized some supreme state, then a lowly demon, a most vile and worthless sort of demon that is easily satisfied with any situation, will enter his mind. It will bore into his mind and take possession of him, driving out his soul. All that will be left is a false shell of a person, but he will not realize that. As soon as he sees someone, he will announce, "Hey! Do you know? I have realized the unsurpassed, the highest, absolute truth."  
  
Now there is a character who stands on Grant Avenue in Chinatown, in the heart of the San Francisco business district, dressed in a flashy and colorful costume. He tells people, "I lived in the mountains for five years and became enlightened. Now I have such-and-such spiritual powers." Earlier he took me as his teacher and became my disciple. But he did not follow what I taught him. Before I came to America, guess what he did? He carried a big gourd on his back with a sign painted on it that proclaimed he was my disciple and that he had learned many skills from me. Further, he claimed he could solve any problem people might bring him. He used my name to swindle others before I arrived in this country. Now that I am here in America, he is still cheating people, but he no longer uses my name. This is the very kind of demon the sutra is talking about here. He claimed to have attained the absolute truth. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall. He has lost the proper state of concentration, and he doesn't follow what I taught him, either. Since I arrived here, he has never come to listen to the sutra lectures or dharma talks, but just says he has attained the Way, is enlightened, and has spiritual powers. Ultimately what are his spiritual powers? You would never guess. They are money, money, money! He swindles people. I don't know why he wants so much money! Therefore, he will certainly fall.  
  
J5 Passing through danger leads to anxiety.  
K1 The characteristics of its beginning.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Further, in this state of samadhi the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. He has not yet obtained any results, and his prior state of mind has already disappeared. Surveying the two extremes, he feels that he is in great danger. Suddenly he becomes greatly distraught, as if he were seated on the Iron Bed, or as if he has taken poison. He has no wish to go on living, and he is always asking people to take his life so he can be released sooner.  
  
Commentary:**  
Further, in this state of samadhi, the good person, the cultivator, now with somewhat deeper power in samadhi, sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. He has not yet obtained any of the results that he should obtain from his cultivation of the Way, and so his prior state of mind has already disappeared. Surveying the two extremes, past and future, he finds both are gone, and he feels he is in great danger. He thinks, "Oh no, this is really dangerous! It's too terrible!" Suddenly he becomes greatly distraught. He feels worried and afflicted about everything. The worries lead to afflictions, and what is it like to have afflictions? It's as if he were seated on the Iron Bed. From morning to night he thinks to himself, "Oh, I'm in the hells sitting on the Iron Bed! What can I do? To have this body is to suffer." Or he feels as if he has taken poison and is about to die. He has wish to go on living. All day long he thinks, "I'd be better off dead. I'd be better off dead." In China, there is a saying "I'd be better off dead. I'd be better offdead. It would save on pants and coats." This person probably thinks that way, so he says, I'd be better off dead. I'd be better off dead."  
  
Ghosts are involved in most suicide cases. The ghost bows to the person and then recites a mantra, but the person does not hear the ghost reciting. The meaning of the mantra is, "You'd be better off dead! You'd be better off dead! Hurry up and die. The sooner you die the better." Even though the person contemplating suicide cannot hear it with his ears, subconsciously it penetrates his mind. Since ghosts have the spiritual power of knowing others' thoughts, they can use their demonic energy to get into your mind and persuade you to want to die. Your mind hears the ghost and believes what it says. Then you may take poison, hang yourself, cast yourself into the ocean, or jump off the Golden Gate Bridge. That's how you die! There are lots of ghosts around the Golden Gate Bridge. They dare not bother you if you are full of yang energy. But if someone comes along whose yang energy is weak, who is lacking in essence, energy, and spirit, the ghosts say, "You'd be better off dead. You'd be better off dead," and get the person to jump off the Golden Gate Bridge. Most suicides are caused by demonic ghosts that provoke people into taking their own lives. And he, the person who experiences tremendous anxiety, is always asking people to take his life so he can be released sooner. He is always saying to people, "Kill me! If you have a way to do me in, that would be great! I'll be free!"  
  
K2 Giving the name and instructions to awaken.  
 **Sutra:  
  
This is called 'cultivating, but not understanding expedients.' If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood.**  
  
K3 Showing how confusion will certainly bring a fall.  
 **But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon of chronic depression will enter his mind. He may take up knives and swords and cut his own flesh, happily giving up his life. Or else, driven by constant anxiety, he may flee into the wilderness and be unwilling to see people. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall.  
  
Commentary:**  
This is called "cultivating, but not understanding expedients." Since the person does not understand the dharma doors of expedient means, he develops this attachment. After developing it if he understands, then there is no error, no problem. This experience does not indicate sagehood. This does not mean he has become a sage.  
  
Having heard these principles in the sutra, you should be extremely careful not to casually indulge in random thoughts. Do not start thinking that you want to die, or that you cannot get what you want. If you keep thinking like that, you will attract this kind of demon. There are a great many of them in the world, so you should not indulge in random thoughts or speak carelessly. If you do, this demon may possess you. When that happens, you will not be able to endure it. You will not be free, and even if you do not want to die, there will be no way to avoid it.  
  
But if he considers himself a sage, then there will be a demon of chronic depression. So you think you're depressed? Depression also involves demons. Why are you depressed or angry? If you have opened the Buddha eye, you see that when a person is not angry, there is no ghost but as soon as he gets angry, a ghost comes to goad him on, saying, "Get angrier, get madder! Make more trouble!" Behind the scenes, it urges you to lose your temper. Even if you don't believe me, what I am saying is true. If you do not believe it, just take your time and try it out.  
  
The demon will enter his mind and possess his body. He may take up knives and swords and cut his own flesh. Did I not tell you about Filial Son Wang (Great Master Chang Ren), who practiced filiality beside his parents' graves? Once, while in samadhi, Filial Son Wang saw that bandits had captured his nephew and were about to shoot him. Filial Son Wang was about five miles away. But just as the bandit was about to pull the trigger, from within samadhi he used his hand to ward off the gun so that the shot missed his nephew, who was able to escape. Behind this incident there was a ghost that wanted the nephew's life, and it had caused the bandits to tie the boy up and try to kill him. Those were the causes and effects involved. When Filial Son Wang thwarted the ghost in its efforts to kill his nephew, the ghost went after Filial Son Wang, but could not do anything to him. Then it went to find his younger brother, Wang Erye, and possessed him instead. Taking a knife, the brother went to find Filial Son Wang at the graveside, intending to commit suicide in front of him.  
  
The ghost wanted to kill the younger brother, but strangely, as it held the knife poised, ready to behead the younger brother, it could not bring the hand down. Meanwhile, Filial Son Wang was reciting the Vajra Sutra and holding a vow of silence. As he recited it silently, my teacher (Great Master Chang Ti), who had not yet left the home-life, felt very agitated, as if there were some crisis. He felt trepidation and could not put his mind at ease. He wondered, "Is there something going on with the Filial Son by the grave?" He rushed over there immediately to take a look, and sure enough, Wang Erye was holding a knife about to behead himself. Filial Son Wang wrote a few words telling my teacher, "Buy some paper for burning. (There is a Chinese custom of burning paper money for the dead.) I will recite sutras for the ghost and liberate it. There is a ghost involved here, and it wants to do such-and-such." After Filial Son Wang recited sutras and liberated the ghost, there were no more problems.  
  
On the one hand this is an example of the demon under discussion. But in this case the ghost came because it wanted someone's life, not because of cultivation. But you could also say it is from cultivation. Because Filial Son Wang cultivated and got too involved in someone else's business, he ended up with this kind of demon trying to kill his younger brother. The ghost couldn't kill Filial Son Wang because he had samadhi power and did not have any false thinking. The ghost couldn't do anything to him, so it went after his younger brother.  
  
Happily giving up his life, he may wish to die. Or else, he may be driven by constant incredible anxiety. Now that you've heard this passage, take care not to be unhappy all the time. Do not always cry and feel melancholy. If you keep feeling worried and depressed, this demon will take possession of you. That is based half on the demon's power and half on your own. The demon avails itself of your energy. If your thoughts are proper, there will be no problems. But if your thinking is improper, you will be influenced by the demon. If it tells you, "Worry," you worry, and you become more and more worried, until you flee into the mountains, refusing to see people. And, unable to tolerate people, he may flee into the mountain forests. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall. Such a person will fall into the hells in the future.

J6 Experiencing ease leads to joy.  
K1 The characteristics of its beginning.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Further, in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. As he dwells in this purity, his mind is tranquil and at ease. Suddenly a feeling of boundless joy wells up in him. There is such bliss in his mind that he cannot contain it.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Further, in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. As he dwells in this purity of samadhi, his mind is tranquil and at ease. His mind is exceptionally calm and settled, without any scattered thoughts. Right at that point, the feeling skandha produces another effect in him. Suddenly a feeling of boundless joy wells up in him. He feels a happiness that knows no bounds. There is such extreme bliss in his mind that its extent cannot be known, and he cannot contain it. Even if he wants to stop the joy, he cannot.  
  
K2 Giving the name, and instructions to awaken.  
 **Sutra:  
  
This is called, 'experiencing lightness and ease, but lacking the wisdom to control it.' If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
This is called, "experiencing lightness and ease, but lacking the wisdom to control it." He does not have the wisdom to control his own happiness. If he understands, then there is no error. If you realize what it is, then there is no problem. This experience does not indicate sagehood. This does not mean that you have become a sage.  
  
K3 Showing how confusion will certainly bring a fall.  
 **Sutra:  
  
But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon that likes happiness will enter his mind. As soon as he sees someone, he will laugh. He will sing and dance in the streets. He will say that he has already attained unobstructed liberation. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
But if he considers himself a sage, if you say, "Oh, now I've entered the ground of happiness! I'm a Bodhisattva of the ground of happiness!" then a demon that likes happiness will enter his mind. As soon as he sees someone, he will laugh uproariously. He will sing and dance in the streets. Like a hippie, he gets totally carried away, waving his arms and stamping his feet singing and dancing, making all kinds of music. He will say that he has already attained unobstructed liberation. Lacking proper samadhi he will certainly fall. He loses his proper concentration, his proper knowledge and views, and his powers of reasoning; and eventually, he will fall into the hells.  
  
J7 Seeing the sublime and becoming proud.  
K1 The characteristics of its beginning.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Further, in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. He says he is already satisfied. Suddenly, a feeling of unreasonable, intense self-satisfaction may arise in him. It may include pride, outrageous pride, haughty pride, overweening pride, and pride based on inferiority, all of which occur at once. In his mind, he even looks down on the Tathagatas of the ten directions, how much the more so on the lesser positions of sound-hearers and those enlightened by conditions.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Further, in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. He says he is already satisfied. He feels he already has enough of everything; he's already realized the fruition, become enlightened, and become a Buddha. Suddenly, a feeling of unreasonable, intense self-satisfaction may arise in him. Self satisfaction is a form of haughtiness. He respects no one. He looks down on everyone and thinks no one is as good as he is. It may include pride, arrogance; outrageous pride, which is extreme arrogance; haughty pride, there is no greater arrogance than this; overweening pride, pride added to pride; and pride based on inferiority, feeling that everyone is inferior to him and looking down on everyone. These are different kinds of pride, all of which occur at once.  
  
In his mind, he even looks down on the Tathagatas of the ten directions. To what extent does his pride go? Not only is he arrogant toward people, he is arrogant toward the Buddhas, so he regards even the Tathagatas of the ten directions with contempt, feeling they are not as good as he is. How serious would you say this pride is? It's really difficult to deal with! How much the more so on the lesser positions of sound-hearers and those enlightened by conditions. He looks down on them even more. His attitude is, "You're nothing but an arhat of the small vehicle! What's so special about you?" He thinks he's higher than the Buddha, but he hasn't come up with another name yet.  
  
K2 Giving the name and instructions to awaken.  
 **Sutra:  
  
This is called 'viewing oneself as supreme, but lacking the wisdom to save oneself.' If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
This is called "viewing oneself as supreme." It is an occasional state that occurs in the feeling skandha. But it involves lacking the wisdom to save oneself. The person doesn't have the wisdom to save himself. If he understands, then there is no error. If he understands that this is an error, then the demon will not have its way with him. As it is said, "If you understand, then you won't be confused; but when you are confused, you lack understanding." If you understand, it is like taking a sword of wisdom and hacking through the confusion. This experience does not indicate sagehood. It does not mean you have realized sagehood.  
  
K3 Showing how confusion will certainly bring a fall.  
 **Sutra:  
  
?But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon of intense arrogance will enter his mind. He will not bow to stupas or in temples. He will destroy sutras and images. He will say to the Danapatis, 'These are gold, bronze, clay, or wood. The sutras are just leaves or cloth. The flesh body is what is real and eternal, but you don't revere it; instead you venerate clay and wood. That is totally absurd.' Those who have deep faith in him will follow him to destroy the images or bury them. He will mislead living beings so that they fall into the Relentless Hells. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
But if he considers himself a sage, if you say that this is a good state, then a demon of intense arrogance, an extremely haughty demon, will enter his mind and possess him. He will not bow to stupas or in temples. He will not bow to Buddhas or stupas when he sees them. Nor will he make obeisance when he goes into temples. He will destroy sutras and images. He will burn sutras and break images of the Buddhas. Destroying sutras and images are offenses that lead to the hells. But he will say, "These things are all false."  
  
He will say to the Danapatis. He has his own disciples, and he tells his disciples these things. Dana means giving and pati means to transcend, so in Buddhism, one who makes offerings to the Triple Jewel is called a danapati. He says to his own danapatis and followers, "These are gold, bronze, clay, or wood. The sutras are just leaves or cloth." Buddha images are made of gold, or of bronze; or they may be constructed of clay or wood. Sutras are written out on leaves, or on silk or cotton cloth. "What's the use of worshipping them? They have no consciousness. The flesh body is what is real and eternal. This flesh body of mine is real, but you don't revere it, you don't revere me; instead you venerate clay and wood. You'd rather bow to idols of clay and wood, what's the use of that? It would be better for you to bow to me than to them. That is totally absurd. What awareness do those pieces of wood have? It's ridiculous for you to bow to them!"  
  
Those followers who have deep faith in him, who deeply believe in him, will follow him to destroy the Buddha images and burn the sutras, or to bury them in the ground. Through such behavior, he will mislead living beings so that they will not believe in Buddhism, but will have doubts instead. He will hinder them like that, and they will definitely fall into the Relentless Hells. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall.  
  
J8 With wisdom comes lightness and ease, which leads to complacency.  
K1 The characteristics of its beginning.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Further, in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. In his refined understanding, he awakens completely to subtle principles. Everything is in accord with his wishes. He may suddenly experience limitless lightness and ease in his mind. He may say that he has become a sage and attained great self-mastery.**  
  
K2 Giving the name and instructions to awaken.  
 **This is called 'attaining lightness and clarity due to wisdom.' If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Further, in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. In his refined understanding, his understanding becomes even more refined than before, he awakens completely to subtle principles. At this time, he gains a thorough understanding of very fine and subtle principles. Everything is in accord with his wishes. He may suddenly experience a state of limitless lightness and ease in his mind. He may say that he has become a sage, a Buddha, and obtained great self-mastery, the greatest happiness and ease.  
  
This is called "attaining lightness and clarity due to wisdom." Having uncovered a little wisdom, you obtain a state of lightness and purity, and that's all, it certainly does not count as an extraordinary state. If he understands, then there is no error, no problem. This experience does not indicate sagehood. You should not think this state is the realization of sagehood, for it is not.  
  
K3 Showing how confusion will certainly bring a fall.  
 **Sutra:  
  
But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon that likes lightness and clarity will enter his mind. Claiming that he is already satisfied, he will not strive to make further progress. For the most part, such cultivators will become like the unlearned bhikshu. He will mislead living beings so that they will fall into the Avichi Hell. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall.  
  
Commentary:**  
But if he considers himself a sage, if, upon having this state of light ease, he thinks he has already been certified to the fruition of sagehood, then a demon that likes lightness and clarity will enter his mind. This demon, who also experiences the state of light ease and sublime clarity, will possess the person. Claiming that he is already satisfied, that he has perfected everything, he will not strive to make further progress. Above there is no Buddhahood to accomplish, and below there are no living beings to save. He does not need to become a Buddha, for he has already become one. Nor does he need to save living beings, for he has already finished saving them. He has already accomplished the Buddhahood he was supposed to accomplish, and he has saved the living beings he was meant to save. Therefore, he does not seek further progress.  
  
For the most part, such cultivators will become like the unlearned bhikshu mentioned earlier. Lacking wisdom, he thought the fourth dhyana was the fourth fruition of Arhatship. He will mislead living beings, so they do not know the proper path and do not recognize the Buddhadharma. He confuses and hinders living beings, so that they will fall into the Avichi Hell. In the future, this sort of person will fall into the Relentless Hells. Why? Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall. Since he has lost his proper samadhi, he is bound to fall into the Relentless Hells.  
  
J9 Becoming attached to emptiness and slandering precepts.  
K1 The characteristics of its beginning.  
 **Sutra:  
  
?Further in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. In that clear awakening, he experiences an illusory clarity. Within that, suddenly he may veer towards the view of eternal extinction, deny cause and effect, and take everything as empty. The thought of emptiness so predominates that he comes to believe that there is eternal extinction after death.**  
  
K2 Giving its name and instructions to awaken.  
 **[This is called 'the mental state of samadhi dissolving so that one loses sight of what is right.'] If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Further in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. At that time, in that clear awakening, when he seems to understand but does not truly understand, he experiences an illusory clarity, which is not real. Within that illusory clarity, suddenly a change occurs. What is it? He may veer towards the view of eternal extinction, deny cause and effect, and take everything as empty. He says, "When a person dies, he is gone and dead forever. Therefore, to talk in terms of cause and effect is incorrect. There is no cause and effect. When people die, they no longer exist, so how could there be cause and effect? Everything is empty. Committing offenses is empty and so is creating blessings. It is all empty!" The thought of emptiness so predominates that he comes to believe that there is eternal extinction after death.  
  
The more he thinks, the more he feels he's right. "Oh! It is empty. Once you die, it is all over. Everything is empty." At that point, he becomes convinced that people are gone forever after they die. The text reads: "If he understands, then there is no error. It is not an indication of sagehood." One sentence must have been left out of the text when it was originally copied. We can insert it here: This is called "the mental state of samadhi dissolving so that one loses sight of what is right." At this point, his samadhi is gone, so he develops the thought of emptiness and loses his sense of what is right. If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood. This is not the state of realizing sagehood.  
  
K3 Showing how confusion will certainly bring a fall.  
 **Sutra:  
  
But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon of emptiness will enter his mind. He will slander the holding of precepts, calling it a 'small vehicle dharma.' He will say, "Since Bodhisattvas have awakened to emptiness, what is there to hold or violate?" This person, in the presence of his faithful danapatis, will often drink wine, eat meat, and engage in wanton lust. The power of the demon will keep his followers from doubting or denouncing him. After the ghost has possessed him for a long time, he may consume excrement and urine, or meat and wine, claiming that all such things are empty. He will break the Buddha's moral precepts and mislead people into committing offenses. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
But if he considers himself a sage, if he views this as certifying to the fruition of sagehood, then a demon of emptiness will enter his mind. It will enter and possess his body. He will slander the holding of precepts, calling it a "small vehicle dharma." He will say, "Don't observe the precepts. That's a dharma for the small vehicle. Great vehicle Bodhisattvas do not have so many bothersome restrictions. You don't have to pay attention to them. As it is said, "The great elephant does not travel along the rabbit's path. The great awakening is not confined by petty details." Once you are greatly enlightened, nothing matters anymore. Everything is empty. "Wine and meat pass through the intestines; the Buddha dwells in the mind." To the Buddha, everything is made from the mind alone. The mind is just the Buddha, and the Buddha is just the mind!" That's what he says. He even slanders the holding of precepts, saying, "Only adherents of the small vehicle observe precepts. Followers of the great vehicle do not need this."  
  
Actually, the precepts for the great vehicle are even more explicit and even less should one violate them. He just fools these uninformed people, who have never studied the Buddhadharma and do not understand any of the principles explained by the Buddha. That's why, no matter what he says, they take it as an order to be followed, believing that what he says is right. Why do they believe him? Just because they have never heard the Buddhadharma and don't even know what the Buddhadharma is.  
  
He will say, "Since great vehicle Bodhisattvas have already awakened to the emptiness of all dharmas, what is there to hold or violate? How can there still be a holding of precepts or a violating of precepts? There's no such thing." This person who is possessed by the demon, in the presence of his faithful danapatis, in the homes of dharma protectors who believe in him, will often drink wine, eat meat and engage in wanton lust. The phrase "engage in wanton lust" is very important. Buddhism teaches people not to have lust and desire, yet his desire is excessive. He engages in defiled practices of lust, yet people still believe in him because he has a demonic power. The power of the demon will keep his followers from doubting or denouncing him. They have tremendous faith in him.  
  
After the ghost has possessed him for a long time, he may consume excrement and urine or meat and wine, claiming that all such things are empty. Because he is possessed by a ghost, he will not think of excrement as something unclean, and he will also casually drink urine. He will say that eating excrement and drinking urine are "neither defiled nor pure," using the phrase from the Heart Sutra. That's how he will distort the sutra's meaning. This demon will behave in a way which shows that he doesn't care whether something is clean or dirty. He will say that eating meat and drinking wine are empty, and that eating excrement and drinking urine are empty. In general, everything is empty. He will break the Buddha's moral precepts and mislead people intocommitting offenses. Then, lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall. He deserves to fall into the hells.

J10 Becoming attached to existence and indulging in lust.  
K1 The characteristics of its beginning.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Further, in this state of samadhi, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha and understands the feeling skandha. He savors the state of illusory clarity, and it deeply enters his mind and bones. Boundless love may suddenly well forth from his mind. When that love becomes extreme, he goes insane with greed and lust.**  
  
K2 Giving its name and instructions to awaken.  
 **This is called 'when an agreeable state of samadhi enters one's mind, lacking the wisdom to control oneself and mistakenly engaging in lustful behavior.' If he understands, then there is no error. This experience does not indicate sagehood.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Further, in this state of samadhi, when the cultivator has attained the samadhi of the feeling skandha, the good person sees the disintegration of the form skandha, the form skandha is gone, and he understands the feeling skandha, being clear about it. He savors the state of illusory clarity which he has already attained, and now it deeply enters his mind and bones. A mental transformation may suddenly occur. What transformation? A boundless, immeasurable love may suddenly well forth from his mind. This is like a certain person who says he loves everyone. He has the kind of temperament being discussed. When that love and desire in his mind build up and become extreme, he goes insane with greed and lust. He cannot control his emotions. When he goes crazy, he is just like the woman Liu Jintong I mentioned earlier. Seeing a man, she would hug him, and cry, and make all sorts of seductive gestures. She was an example of this type of demon. How could the average man remain unmoved by such tricks? After she had confused him, she would tell him, "Take this amount of money and buy me that piece of jewelry," and he would say, "Okay, okay." Then she would say, "Take that amount of money and buy me that other thing," and he would agree to do it. Why? Simply because she engaged in lust with the man, and he was taken in by her demonic power. Here, when the love becomes extreme, the person goes insane with greed and lust. Lust arises from greed.  
  
This is called "when an agreeable state of samadhi enters one's mind, lacking the wisdom to control oneself and mistakenly engaging in lustful behavior." A state of samadhi, with light ease and compliance, comes into his mind, but he lacks the wisdom to control his emotions and desire, and ends up indulging in all manner of lust. If he understands, then there is no error. This is only a temporary and occasional state. He should understand that this experience is a demonic state and does not indicate sagehood. If you understand, then it's all right. It is just to be feared that you do not recognize the state when you are in it, and you fall into an inescapable maze of confusion.  
  
K3 Showing how confusion will certainly bring a fall.  
 **Sutra:  
  
But if he considers himself a sage, then a demon of desire will enter his mind. He will become an outspoken advocate of lust, calling it the Way to Bodhi. He will teach his lay followers to indiscriminately engage in acts of lust, calling those who commit acts of lust his dharma heirs. The power of spirits and ghosts in the Ending Age will enable him to attract a following of ordinary, naive people numbering one hundred, two hundred, five or six hundred, or as many as one thousand or ten thousand. When the demon becomes bored, it will leave the person's body. Once the person's charisma is gone, he will run afoul of the law. He will mislead living beings, so that they fall into the Relentless Hells. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
But if he considers himself a sage, if he views this as the realization of sagehood, then because his views are mistaken, a demon of lust and desire will enter his mind and possess him. He will become an outspoken advocate of lust, calling it the Way to Bodhi. He will talk of nothing but lust. It is like a certain religion in America that promotes polygamy. They say, "The more wives you have, the better." They are just like this demon, who promotes lust and appeals to people's desires by saying, "It's all right to have more wives; it doesn't matter. That's the way of Bodhi, so the more wives you have the better!"  
  
He will teach his lay followers to indiscriminately engage in acts of lust. He says, "Don't discriminate between one another. Let's all get together and have an orgy!" Not caring whether it is their own wife or someone else's, they just do as they please. In America, there's a wife-swapping fad where everybody exchanges wives. This is similar to the kind of activity that this type of demon engages in, calling those who commit acts of lust his dharma heirs. These people who engage in lustful conduct with him will be his "dharma heirs" who carry on his dharma; they will receive his dharma transmission. The power of demonic ghosts, deviant spirits and deviant ghosts in the time of the Dharma-ending Age, will enable him to attract and confuse a following of ordinary, naive, ignorant people, numbering one hundred, two hundred, five or six hundred, or as many as one thousand or ten thousand. Eventually, when the demon king becomes bore, what happens? It will leave the person's body. What do you suppose happens when it leaves his body? He will no longer have spiritual powers.  
  
Once the person's charisma is gone, he will run afoul of the law. His charisma came from his spiritual powers. The demon king had spiritual powers, but now the demon king has left, so he no longer has spiritual powers. What do you suppose happens? He will violate the laws of the country. Before, when he had spiritual powers, the demon could help him escape the authorities. But when the demon leaves, and this ordinary person carries on as before, he will immediately break the law. People will find out that he is a crooked teacher who has been duping his followers and deluding them with strange incantations. Since he has broken the law, he will be arrested and executed. He will mislead living beings, so that they will not find the proper path and will fall into the Relentless Hells. Lacking proper samadhi, he will certainly fall in the Avichi Hell as well.  
  
I3 Conclusion on the harm, and command to offer protection.  
J1 Showing how this happens due to interaction.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Ananda, all ten of these states may occur in dhyana as one's mental effort interacts with the feeling skandha.**  
J2 Confusion will bring harm.  
 **Dull and confused living beings do not evaluate themselves. Encountering such situations, in their confusion they fail to recognize them and say that they have become sages, thereby uttering a great lie. They will fall into the Relentless Hells.  
  
Commentary:**  
Ananda, all ten of these states may occur in dhyana as one's mental effort interacts with the feeling skandha. Ananda! States like these which manifest in dhyana, "the stilling of thought," are all within the feeling skandha, interacting with one's mental effort. These events are a result of the various interactions that happen as one works hard at his cultivation.  
  
Dull and confused living beings do not evaluate themselves. They do not reflect within and take stock of themselves. Encountering such situations, in their confusion they fail to recognize them. They do not recognize who they are, and they say that they have already become sages. They say that they have attained what they have not attained and have been certified to what they have not been certified to. They claim they have already attained the Way and become certified as sages when they have not, thereby uttering a great lie. They will certainly fall into the Relentless Hells.  
  
J3 Command to offer protection.  
 **Sutra:  
  
In the Dharma-ending Age, after my nirvana, all of you should pass on the Tathagata's teachings, so that all living beings can awaken to their meaning. Do not let the demons of the heavens have their way. Offer protection so that all can realize the Unsurpassed Way.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Ananda, in the Dharma-ending Age, after my nirvana, all of you should pass on the Tathagata's teachings. Take these words which the Buddha has spoken, and pass them on, so that all living beings can awaken to their meaning. Let them all hear these principles, understand them, and awaken to them. Do not let the demons of the heavens have their way. Do not give them an opportunity to disturb those people. Offer protection so that all these living beings can realize the Unsurpassed Way.