**The Shurangama Sutra**

**VOLUME 4**

**CHAPTER 1**

**The Reason for Continual Arisal**

G2 He casts out the subtle delusions by explaining about two aspects of the treasury of the Thus Come One.
H1 Purnamaitreyani retraces the former teaching and brings up two doubts.
I1 He praises the Thus Come Ones wonderful instructions.

Sutra:
 **Then Purnamaitreyaniputra arose from his seat in the midst of the great assembly, uncovered his right shoulder, knelt on his right knee, put his palms together respectfully, and said to the Buddha, The most virtuous and awe-inspiring World Honored One has for the sake of living beings expounded the primary truth of the Thus Come One with remarkable eloquence.**
Commentary:

Then, after Ananda had finished speaking his verse in praise of the Buddha, Purnamaitreyaniputra arose from his seat in the midst of the great assembly. Purnamaitreyaniputra means son of fulfillment and compassion. Fulfillment was his father's name; compassion was his mother's name. He immediately stood up. The Buddha's disciples were especially respectful toward him. When they wanted to ask a question, they stood in reverence. He uncovered his right shoulder. The Chinese sash is styled so that it does not cover the right shoulder, in order to represent this gesture of respect. In India it is never cold, winter or summer, so it was all right to leave the right shoulder completely exposed. One wouldn't get cold. But the climate in China is very cold, and if one's right shoulder were always exposed it would be easy to catch cold. So in China the monks wore clothing under their sashes. This accorded with the climate, the geographical location, and the customs in China.

The sashes in India did not have a clasp like the Chinese sashes do. Now in India, Burma, Ceylon, and Thailand, where the Theravada teachings are practiced, monks still don't have clasps on their sashes. Why do Chinese sashes have a clasp? This too came about because of the climate of China, for if the monks wore clothing inside their sashes, and if there were no clasp to hold the sash in place, it could slip off without their being aware of it. So the patriarchs of China invented the clasp to solve this problem. The sashes of the other countries mentioned above have the same number of pieces, but they lack the clasp, because the climate is so warm that they don't wear clothing under their sashes. If it starts to slip off, they are aware of it since it is next to their skin.

After I left the home-life, I investigated the question of the clasp on the Chinese sash with a lot of elder dharma masters and elder monks. I asked them why the monks from other countries did not have clasps on their sashes; why did the Chinese monks add this thing to their sashes? But they all shook their heads. They didn't know. It's a small matter, but nevertheless, they didn't know. They had never known. In the end, then, who told me? No one told me. I just compared the climate of China to that of the other countries and figured out for myself that the first patriarchs who came to China must have invented the clasp to make it more convenient to wear clothes under the sash. When I brought up my opinion, the elder dharma masters and monks said, Oh, of course, that's how it was. Probably that's how it was. It was a small question, so no one had stopped to think about it, but I know that Americans like to look into things thoroughly, so now I've explained the origin of the clasp on the Chinese-style sashes without waiting to be asked.

Purna uncovered his right shoulder and knelt on his right knee. The monks in present-day Burma and Ceylon have this practice. For instance, if a junior monk sees a senior monk he does not stand to talk but kneels with his right knee on the ground and his palms together.

Purna put his palms together respectfully, and said to the Buddha, The most virtuous and awe-inspiring World Honored One has for the sake of living beings expounded the primary truth of the Thus Come One with remarkable eloquence. He said that the Buddha is one of awesome virtue who can subdue all the living beings in the three realms. His awesomeness has the power to cause all living beings to submit. His virtue moves all living beings, so that when they hear his name they change their faults and become good. The Buddha uses wholesome clever expedient devices to teach and transform living beings. He speaks the dharma for the sake of living beings; he tells them in detail of the primary truth of the Thus Come One, the Tathagata's most wonderful doctrine.

I2 He discloses his own doubtfulness.

**Sutra:**
 **The World Honored One often singles me out as the foremost among speakers of dharma. But now when I hear the wonderful and subtle expression of the dharma, I am like a deaf
person who at a distance of more than a hundred paces tries to hear a mosquito, which in fact cannot be seen, let alone heard.

Commentary:**

Purna has just bowed to the Buddha and made a request. Why did he do that? Because he had some doubts. Right now Ananda doesn't have any doubts, but Purna, first among those who speak dharma, has given rise to doubts. He is not clear about the dharma that the Buddha has spoken. Therefore he says, The World Honored One often singles me out as the foremost among speakers of dharma. You often choose me as the best among those who lecture the sutras and speak dharma. I, Purna, rank number one. He expresses well the wonderful meaning of all dharmas.

If this sutra were being explained now by Purna, flowers would rain from the heavens and golden lotuses would well up from the ground. It wouldn't be like my dry and bland explanation which puts my listeners to sleep. The dharma Purna spoke was the foremost, most subtle and wonderful of dharmas. He excelled in distinguishing the characteristics of all dharmas. But now when I hear the wonderful and subtle expression of the dharma, I am like a deaf person who at a distance of more than a hundred paces tries to hear a mosquito, which in fact cannot be seen, let alone heard. His meaning is that someone who is truly deaf of course cannot hear such a small sound as the hum of a mosquito if he is more than a hundred paces away from it.

You can't even see a mosquito at that distance. This represents the fact that the dharma the Buddha speaks is most subtle and wonderful, wonderful to the ultimate. Therefore, though Purna hears it because he is in the dharma assembly, he is like a deaf person. He doesn't understand. So if there are people in the present who don't understand the sutra, it's no wonder. You see, even Purna, who was foremost in speaking dharma, had questions and said he didn't understand. In fact he says he's deaf. Whether you understand or not, you all can at least hear the explanation of the sutra. This is a hundred times better than Purna. Don't be so hard on yourself.

When the Buddha spoke the Avatamsaka Sutra, adherents of the two vehicles could not see the thousand-foot Nishyanda body of the Buddha. Instead they saw the Buddha as a venerable six-foot tall bhikshu. When the Buddha spoke the Avatamsaka Sutra, some of his listeners had ears but did not hear the Buddha speaking dharma. Purna is in a similar situation here. He certainly is not scolding the Buddha, nor is he saying that he does not believe the dharma the Buddha speaks. It's not that he doesn't believe it; he hasn't understood it. That's what this analogy represents.

Some people explain this phrase wonderful and subtle expression of the dharma as meaning a very small sound; they say that the Buddha spoke the dharma in a very quiet voice. They say that subtle here means small. But that explanation is not correct. Subtle means rare and esoterically wonderful; it means an extremely clear explanation of the dharma. It certainly does not mean that the Buddha spoke with a soft voice. Some people say, "Why does Purna compare himself to a mosquito?" Because the Buddha spoke the dharma with such a small voice that Purna felt it was like trying to hear a mosquito at a hundred paces. There are a lot of dharma masters who swallow the date whole, so to speak; they don't know the flavor of the text. They explain it like this:

Basically a deaf person can't hear anything; even less can he hear the Buddha speaking dharma when he speaks with as small a voice as the sound of a mosquito. But this rendering of the words of the text is incorrect. Purna is using an analogy. Some people misunderstand, saying, "Oh, is Purna slandering the Buddha by calling him a mosquito?" That is not the case; you should not have that kind of doubt. In his analogy Purna likens himself to a deaf person; it is not that he likens the Buddha to a mosquito. **Sutra:

World Honored One, although Ananda and those like him have become enlightened, they have not yet cast out their habits and outflows.

Commentary:**

World Honored One, although Ananda and those like him have become enlightened, they have not yet cast out their habits and outflows. Although they have understood the principle of becoming enlightened, their habits go back many lives, many aeons. And where do outflows come from? They come from habits. Habits aren't created in a day. They are learned from time without beginning, through life after life, in time after time, and from these learned habits come all kinds of outflows. What is meant by outflows? Outflows are afflictions. The afflictions and habits of Ananda and those like him have not been completely done away with. They are called remaining habits the ones left-over from former lives. They are more or less like karma.

The Buddha had a disciple called Pilindavatsa. One day he wanted to cross a river, and since he had been certified as having attained the fruition of arhatship, he had certain powers. Rivers have spirits, and the spirit of this particular river was female. When Pilindavatsa got to the bank of the river he called out, Little Servant, stop the flow! One who is an arhat has the spiritual power to part the waters when he crosses a river. But the one who stops the flow of the river must be the river-spirit. That is why Pilindavatsa called out, Little Servant, stop the flow! The first time he did that, the river-spirit was annoyed, but did not dare say anything because Pilindavatsa was an arhat. But after he'd addressed her as Little Servant a number of times, the river-spirit finally went to the Buddha to state her case.

"When your disciple Pilindavatsa wants to cross the river he always addresses me as Little Servant, she complained. And I'm outraged. Buddha, you should teach your disciples not to be so ill-mannered. How can he call me a name like that and command me the way he does?"

So the Buddha called for Pilindavatsa. "Apologize to the riverspirit," he said, "and don't talk that way any more." So what do you suppose Pilindavatsa did?

He said, "Little Servant, don't hold a grudge." The whole reason that she had become upset was that he had called her "Little Servant" in the first place!

Of course the river-spirit was furious. "See!" she cried. "Your disciple calls me that right in front of you!" Shakyamuni Buddha said, "Do you know why he calls you 'Little Servant'? In five hundred former lives you were his servant. You've worked for him for so long that when he sees you he reverts to his former habits and that name just slips off his tongue. He hasn't been able to change that habit from the past."

After the Buddha explained to the river-spirit, she realized it was a question of cause and effect and there was nothing more to say. The situation was resolved. That is an example of not having cast out their habits and outflows.
 **Sutra:

We in the assembly have reached the level of no outflows. Yet, although we have no outflows, we still have doubts about the dharma we have now heard the Thus Come One speak.

Commentary:**

Purna said, "We in the assembly, the multitude of sages, have reached the level of no outflows. We have received the reward of the spiritual power of having extinguished all outflows. Yet, although we have no outflows, we still have doubts about the dharma we have now heard the Thus Come One speak. We still think up doubts. We still don't understand."

Now if those who had attained the fourth fruition with the extinction of outflows didn't understand, how much the less would Ananda have understood, since he had only been certified as having attained the first fruition. Although he had attained that level of enlightenment, I believe he still wasn't clear about the meaning the Buddha had just expressed.

I3 He expresses two deep doubts.
J1 He wonders about the causes for the continual arisal of the myriad things.
 **Sutra:

World Honored One, if all the sense organs, sense objects, skandhas, places, and realms in all the world are the treasury of
the Thus Come One, originally pure, why do all conditioned appearances such as the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth suddenly arise?

Commentary:**

Purna has doubts about the doctrines the Buddha has been explaining. He doesn't believe them. World Honored One, if all the sense organs; eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind; sense objects; forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and dharmas; skandha, form, feeling, thought, activity, and consciousnesses, if all these dharmas in all the world are the treasury of the Thus Come One, why do all conditioned appearances such as the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth suddenly arise? If they arise from the bright substance and pure nature of the everlasting true mind and are originally pure, then why does there suddenly arise in the purity of the treasury of the Thus Come One so many things which are all conditioned appearances that
suddenly arise? Once finished, they begin again. Done once more, they start over. Ended, they arise once more. When do they ever stop? Never. What's the principle in it?

This is the doubt that Purna asks the World Honored One about.

J2 He wonders about the feasibility of the perfect fusion of the elements.
 **Sutra:

Moreover, the Thus Come One said that earth, water, fire, and wind are by nature perfectly fused, are all-pervasive in the dharma-realm, and are all tranquil and everlasting.

Commentary:**

This is Purnamaitreyaniputra's second doubt. 'What is the principle here?" he asks. **Sutra:

World Honored One, if the nature of earth is pervasive, how can it contain water? If the nature of water is pervasive, then fire does not arise. Further, how do you explain that the natures of fire and water can each pervade empty space with out displacing one another? World Honored One, the nature of earth is solid; the nature of emptiness is penetrating. How can they both pervade the dharma-realm? I don?t know where this
doctrine is leading.**
**Commentary:**

Purna probably was smarter than Ananda. Ananda hadn't even thought of such questions as these. So now Purna, for his part, has some doubts and asks about these principles. He says: World Honored One, if the nature of earth is pervasive, how can it contain water? Earth overcomes water; where there is dry land there is no water. If the nature of earth pervades the dharma-realm, how can there be water there, too? Earth and water are not compatible.

If the nature of water is pervasive, then fire does not arise. Water overcomes fire; where there is water, there is no fire. Water puts fire out. If the nature of water were to pervade the dharmarealm, fire would certainly disappear. This is the same line of argument the Buddha used earlier with Ananda when he said that if there is light there can't be darkness and if there is darkness there can't be light. Now the Buddha's disciple uses the same pattern of questioning on the Buddha. "Water and fire don't mix," Purna points out. "This is a fixed principle.'

Further, how do you explain that the natures of fire and water can each pervade empty space with out displacing one another? How do you come to understand that both fire and water pervade the dharma-realm? I could believe that one or the other was all-pervasive, but if two incompatible things are both all-pervasive, then which one is going to win out? How do you know they can both be all-pervasive and not oppose one another, not harm one another or destroy one another?

World Honored One, the nature of earth is solid; the nature of emptiness is penetrating. How can they both pervade the dharma-realm? Purna imagines that by now he probably has thoroughly confused the Buddha, so he calls out to him, "World Honored One!" Or maybe he was afraid that the Buddha was asleep. "Earth is a solid object," he reasons. "Emptiness is penetrating, vacuous, there isn't anything there at all. So if there is earth, there is no emptiness; if there is emptiness, there is no earth. How can you say both these natures are all-pervasive? I don't know where this doctrine is leading. Buddha, your explanation of dharma has managed to confuse me now. I can't tell what you're getting at. Where is this principle headed? What's its aim? I don't understand."

I4 He hopes for the Buddha's greatly compassionate instruction.
 **Sutra:

I only hope the Thus Come One will compassionately explain in order to rend the clouds of confusion in me and among the great assembly. After saying this, he made a full prostration and respectfully and expectantly awaited the Thus Come One's unsurpassed compassionate instruction.

Commentary:**

In stating these principles, Purna was certainly not trying to debate with the Buddha; he truly had such doubts. "Water and fire are not brothers; they can't dwell in the same household. Earth and emptiness are not compatible either." These questions made him nervous. "How can they all pervade the dharma-realm?' he wondered, and on impulse, heedless of everything, he began to question the Buddha. In his haste, he even forgot about propriety. So, in conclusion, he says: I only hope the Thus Come One will compassionately explain in order to rend the clouds of confusion in me and among the great assembly. World Honored One, please let flow forth your heart of great compassion and explain this matter for us. My failure to understand these doctrines is like a bank of clouds covering me. Not only do I have these doubts, the members of the great assembly do also. After saying this, he probably realized that he had been impertinent and over-exuberant, so he made a full prostration and respectfully and expectantly awaited the Thus Come One's unsurpassed compassionate instruction. He quickly knelt and' bowed to properly make his request of the Buddha. With reverence, he waited as if excessively thirsty for the Thus Come One to nourish him with the water of dharma.

H2 The Thus Come One sequentially casts out the two doubts.
I1 In order to enable them to attain benefit, he promises to explain.
 **Sutra:

The World Honored One then told Purna and all the arhats in the assembly who had extinguished their outflows and had reached the level of no study, "Today the Thus Come One will explain in depth the true, supreme meaning within the supreme meaning in order to cause all of you in the assembly who are fixed-nature sound-hearers and those arhats who have not realized the two kinds of emptiness, but are dedicated to the superior vehicle, as well as the others, to obtain the place of still extinction, the one vehicle, the true aranya, the proper place of cultivation. Listen attentively and I will explain it for you."

Purna and the others, revering the Buddha?s expression of dharma, listened silently.

Commentary:**
The World Honored One then told Purna and all the arhats in the assembly who had extinguished their outflows and had reached the level of no study; those who had been certified as having attained the fourth fruition of arhatship. Today the Thus Come One will explain in depth the true, supreme meaning within the supreme meaning. Here the Buddha is referring to himself when he says, "...the Thus Come One, True, supreme meaning within the supreme meaning" refers to the most superior miraculous doctrine. He explains it in order to cause all of you in the assembly who are fixed-nature sound-hearers, that is, people who gain a little and are satisfied. They hang around in emptiness and stop searching. I'm at a place where there isn't anything at all. It's not bad! they think and become content. They gain a little and that's enough. That's why the Buddha calls them the "fixed-nature, sound-hearer," the arhats, "sterile seeds and withered sprouts" in order to scold them out of their complacency. They don't have the impetus to go on. Having been certified as having attained the first or second fruition, they don't seek to progress. They indulge in passivity. It's fine here, they decide.

The Buddha will also explain for those arhats who have not realized the two kinds of emptiness, but are dedicated to the superior vehicle. This refers to arhats who have not yet understood the emptiness of people and the emptiness of dharmas, but who have turned from the small toward the great. And he will speak as well for all the others in the great assembly.

Shakyamuni Buddha is prepared to express the true superior meaning within the superior meaning, the wonderful within the wonderful, to cause the arhats to obtain no outflows, to obtain the level of no study. To have no outflows means to have gotten rid of all one's individual habits and faults, to have no afflictions, to have no fundamental ignorance. So if one destroys fundamental ignorance, afflictions also disappear. Since afflictions and ignorance are invisible, we don't think of them as being plentiful; but in fact if they took form, they would fill up empty space throughout the dharma-realm.

Now the Buddha wants to cause all living beings, all the arhats, to obtain the place of still extinction, the one vehicle, the true aranya, the proper place of cultivation. The one vehicle is the final meaning of the Middle Way, the principle of the actual appearance. It is the great white-ox cart discussed in the Dharma Flower Sutra. That sutra says that there was a large house in which a great elder lived with his children. One day, when the elder was gone briefly, the children were playing in the house when suddenly it caught on fire. When the elder returned and saw the children in the burning house oblivious of the danger, he said to them, Come to the door quickly! Outside I have sheep carts, and deer carts, and ox carts for you to play with. When the children heard there were carts and things to play with, they came running out. The house burned to the ground, but the children did not perish. Once the children got out of the house, they demanded the carts from the elder. He gave them instead a great white-ox cart magnificent beyond any of their expectations.

The sheep carts and deer carts represent the two vehicles. The ox carts represent the Bodhisattva vehicle. The great white-ox cart represents the one Buddha vehicle. It can transport all living beings across the current of afflictions from this shore of birth and death to the other shore of nirvana.

An "aranya' is a Bodhimanda, a quiet place for cultivation. Why is the aranya described as 'true"? Are there also false aranyas? A true aranya is a place where there is no chaos. No one talks. A lot of people dwell together, but it's as if there weren't anyone there at all. Not even the sound of a mosquito's breathing can be heard. If you want to cultivate the Way, you should learn not to talk so much. When there is too much talking, other people cannot reach samadhi. When it's time to talk, you should talk. But some disciples talk when it's not time to talk, and when it is time to talk, they don't. Would you say they are obedient or disobedient? An obedient disciple talks when it is time to talk, and when it is not time to talk he closes his mouth. If you are a good student, you are a good Buddhist disciple. If you are a good Buddhist disciple, in the future you will become a good Buddha. Are there Buddhas who are not good? Of course not. All Buddhas are good. But if you are not good you cannot become a Buddha. You first have to be good in order for it to count. In a true aranya people keep a tight schedule. Listen attentively and I will explain it for you. This is not simply the Buddha telling Purna and Ananda to listen carefully. Now I am explaining this sutra, and it is me telling you to listen carefully.

Purna and the others, revering the Buddha's expression of dharma, listened silently. "Revering" means that they listened with great respect to the Buddha speaking dharma; they listened with very great regard for him; they listened silently. Not only do I tell you not to talk, Purna and Ananda were also silent. They closed their mouths.

I2 His explanation.
J1 He answers Purna.
K1 First he speaks of the not-empty treasury of the Thus Come One to explain the reason for the continual arisal.
L1 He answers the first question.
M1 He reiterates the question.
 **Sutra:

The Buddha said, "Purna, you have asked why in fundamental purity the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth suddenly arise."

Commentary:**
This passage begins an extremely important section of the Shurangama Sutra. It explains why people become people. The Buddha said, "Purna, you have asked why in fundamental purity the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth suddenly arise. You wonder why these things come to be in the originally pure treasury of the Thus Come One." The Buddha reiterates the question Purna has just asked. Now he will answer it.

M2 He investigates the question.
 **Sutra:

"Have you not often heard the Thus Come One expound upon the wonderful light of the enlightened nature and the bright wonder of the fundamental enlightenment." Purna said, "Yes, World Honored One, I have often heard the Buddha expound upon this subject."

Commentary:**
The Buddha said to Purna: Have you not often heard the Thus Come One expound upon the wonderful light of the enlightened nature and the bright wonder of the fundamental enlightenment? Thus Come One is one of the ten titles of a Buddha. It is just another name for Buddha. Some people think there is a certain Buddha named Thus Come One, but that is not the case. Every Buddha in fact is called the Thus Come One.

The enlightened nature refers to each person's truly enlightened self-nature. "Wonderful light" means stillness and constant illumination. The word "wonderful" also represents purity. The enlightened nature is the one true principle the Buddhanature inherent in us all, the primary nature that multiplies to become myriad things. "Bright wonder" refers to illumination and everlasting quietness. Although it is quiet, it has the ability to illumine the entire dharma-realm the three thousand great thousand world system. "Fundamental enlightenment" refers to the natural, primary essence inherent within us, which neither increases nor decreases, is neither produced nor destroyed, is neither defiled nor pure. Fundamental enlightenment is also called initial enlightenment.

Ignorance comes from the arisal of falseness in the primary truth. Based on fundamental enlightenment, there arises a kind of falseness the function of according with conditions. Purna said, "Yes, World Honored One, I have often heard the Buddha expound upon this subject. The Buddha frequently explains this doctrine."

M3 He pinpoints his delusion.
 **Sutra:

The Buddha said, "You speak of the light of enlightenment; is it that the natural light is called enlightenment? Or are you saying that enlightenment is initially without light and that then there is a so-called brightening of the enlightenment?"

Commentary:**

The Buddha said, "You speak of the light of enlightenment; is it that the natural light is called enlightenment?" "Light of enlightenment" refers to the "wonderful light of the enlightened nature" and to the bright wonder of the fundamental enlightenment. The Buddha asks Purna, 'Are you saying that the nature of enlightenment is definitively bright? Is that what you refer to when you say "enlightenment"? Or are you saying that enlightenment is initially without light and that then there is a so-called brightening of the enlightenment? Is this what you mean by "bright enlightenment"? he asks Purna.
 **Sutra:

Purna said, "If the absence of light is called enlightenment, then there is no light whatever."

Commentary:**

At this point Purna is as impulsive as Ananda in answering the Buddha. Purna said, "If the absence of light is called enlightenment, then there is no light whatever. If enlightenment can be called enlightenment without bright added to it, then there isn't anything that is bright." His meaning here is that one certainly has to add light to enlightenment. But he is mistaken. Why? Enlightenment is fundamentally bright, and therefore there is no need to add any light to it. The light you add is not genuine light. This can be likened to the mani gem which is fundamentally bright. There is certainly no way to separate the mani pearl from its brightness. It's not that brightness is added to the mani pearl to make it shine. Needing to add brightness would be like needing to turn on the light for it to be bright. But there is no need to turn on enlightenment because its fundamental substance is brightness. So Purna makes a mistake here.
 **Sutra:

The Buddha said, "If there is no bright enlightenment without light added to it, then it is not enlightenment with it; and it is not light without it. The absence of light is not the still, bright nature of enlightenment, either."

Commentary:**
The Buddha said, 'If there is no bright enlightenment without light added to it, then it is not enlightenment with it. If you say that unless light is added there is no bright enlightenment, I say it is not enlightenment if you have to add light to it. And it is not light without it. Perhaps you say that there is no need to add light to enlightenment because enlightenment is not bright; however, the absence of light is not the still, bright nature of enlightenment, either." The "absence of light" refers to fundamental ignorance. "Your ignorance is not the still, bright nature of enlightenment" is what the Buddha is saying. The still enlightenment is neither produced nor extinguished, neither defiled nor pure. Enlightenment is said to be "still' because it is as calm and clear as water. Thus it is a mistake to suppose that you have to add light to enlightenment. To add light to enlightenment is to add falseness to truth. If you don't add light to it, there is no false in the true.
 **Sutra:

The nature of enlightenment is essentially bright. It is false for you to make it bright enlightenment.

Commentary:**

The nature of enlightenment refers to the inherent enlightenment of the self-nature. It is essentially bright, Purna. It is false for you to make it bright enlightenment. If you say that light must be added to the nature of enlightenment, you create a falseness. If you falsely add light to enlightenment, it is not genuine enlightenment. It is an enlightenment created from false thinking. It is not the original enlightenment.

M4 He explains continual arisal.
N1 Initially there is sudden arisal.
O1 There is no enlightenment and the three subtle appearances arise.
 **Sutra:

Enlightenment is not something that needs to be made bright, for once that is done, an object is established because of this light. Once an object is falsely set up, you as a false subject come into being.

Commentary:**
Enlightenment is not something that needs to be made bright. The enlightened nature and the basic enlightenment are certainly not something to which light must be added to make them enlightenment. They are bright enlightenment inherently. For once that is done, an object is established because of this light. If you add light to it, you set up an object; something about which there is an enlightenment. "An object" refers to the appearance of karma, the first of the three subtle appearances of delusion. This delusion establishes the object, the appearance of karma. Once an object is falsely set up, you as a false subject come into being. Once there is a falseness, the appearance of karma, you react to the falseness. It is the source of your false thinking. Basically there was no need to add light to enlightenment, but with this false thought the appearance of karma comes into being and from it your false subjectivity is created an unreal process, which is the second appearance of delusion: the appearance of turning.

The general import of this section of text is that basically we are all Buddhas. Well, then, if we originally were Buddhas, how did we become ordinary beings? And why haven't living beings become Buddhas? Where does the problem lie? Originally we were no different from a Buddha. But living beings can be transformed from within the Buddha nature. How are they transformed? The Buddhas have millions of transformation bodies which come out of their light and nature. The Buddha-nature is light; but that refers to the wonderful light of basic enlightenment. Basic enlightenment is the natural inherent enlightenment of us all, and it is also the Buddha's light. And it is from within this light that the beings are transformed. To illustrate this point, I will use an analogy which is not totally apt, but which will suffice to make the principle clear. A transformation body of the Buddha is like a photograph of a person, except that the photograph has no awareness; it's inanimate, where as the Buddha's photographs are transformations. By transformation he produces a person whose nature comes from the Buddha and whose features have a likeness to the Buddha's. It's also like a reflection in a mirror. When we pass by the mirror there is a reflection; once we've gone by it disappears. The Buddha's transformation-bodies are like this, too.

Basic enlightenment is like the mirror. Suddenly in the mirror an image appears; this is likened to the arisal of the first ignorant thought. As soon as that thought arises, living beings come into existence. Now we are talking about bright enlightenment. The basic substance of enlightenment is bright. Purna wants to add brightness to enlightenment. But enlightenment is like a light which is already on. If you flipped the switch, you have added something extra, and in the process you have turned it off. Purna thought that if you turned on the light it would get bright, and that before he flipped the switch there was no light. But it was fundamentally unnecessary. The fundamental substance of enlightenment is bright, without anything more having to be done to it. And that is where the important point lies.
 **Sutra:

In the midst of what is neither the same nor different, difference blazes forth. And what is different from that difference becomes sameness, because of the difference. Once sameness and difference are created then due to them what is neither the same nor different is further established.

Commentary:**
The false setting up of the appearance of karma produces the appearance of turning. Once the appearance of turning arises then in the midst of what is neither the same nor different, difference blazes forth. In the original emptiness where there is nothing that is the same and nothing that is not the same, difference comes into being, hot and bright as a fire. Originally there wasn't any sameness or difference in emptiness, but suddenly these two come into being to create the world. And what is different from that difference becomes sameness, because of the difference. Next there comes into being what is not the same as the difference that has blazed forth in emptiness. After the appearance of turning arises the appearance of manifestation; thus in emptiness the world manifests.

Purna asked why in the treasury of the Thus Come One there suddenly arise the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth; the Buddha is now answering that question. Once sameness and difference are created then due to them what is neither the same nor different is further established. Emptiness originally has no appearance, but now the world manifests appearances. "What is neither the same nor different" refers to living beings. They are said to be "not the same" because each living being has a different appearance. They are said to be "not different" because all living beings share the quality of sentience. The appearance of karma, the appearance of turning, and the appearance of manifestation are all created from ignorance. This section has discussed the appearance of manifestation. One unenlightened thought creates The three subtle appearances. What is experienced from them becomes the conditions For the growth of the six coarse appearances. These three delusions are primary and not easy to discern.

O2 The external environment becomes the conditions and extends into six coarse appearances.

**Sutra:

This turmoil eventually brings about weariness. Prolonged weariness produces defilement. The combination of these in a murky turbidity creates affliction with respect to wearisome defilement.

Commentary:**
Now the six coarse appearances will be discussed. This section explains the first five coarse appearances.

The six coarse appearances are:

1. The appearance of knowledge.
'This represents an inherent attachment to dharmas. The knowledge here is not ultimate wisdom; it is an appearance of awareness and is endowed with the ability to discriminate.

2. The appearance of continuation.
This represents a discriminating attachment to dharmas.

3. The appearance of grasping.
This represents the inherent attachment to self.

4. The appearance of reckoning names.
This represents the discriminating attachment to self.

5. The appearance of the arisal of karma.

6. The appearance of suffering bound to karma.

Because one is attached to karma, the appearance of this suffering follows.

The first time you hear these you probably won't understand much about them, but after you investigate them over a period of time you will come to understand. For now, let it pass into your ears, and in your eighth consciousness there will be an impression. If you investigate the Buddhadharma for a long time, it is certain that you will come to a point where things connect and you suddenly understand.

This turmoil: in the midst of what is not the same and not different spoken about above, and the world and emptiness, difference blazes forth, and a turmoil is created, lacking any order. This turmoil eventually brings about weariness. In this sameness and difference which is suddenly created, a weariness eventually arises. The weariness is the first of the six coarse appearances: the appearance of knowledge. Prolonged weariness produces defilement. Prolonged weariness is the second coarse appearance: the appearance of continuation. Defilement is the third coarse appearance: the appearance of grasping. The combination of these in a murky turbidity. They get mixed up together and appearance: the appearance of reckoning names. This turbidity creates affliction with respect to wearisome defilement. Wearisome defilement is affliction; affliction is simply wearisome defilement. The 84,000 kinds of wearisome defilement are simply the 84,000 kinds of afflictions. From the various conditions just discussed, afflictions arise, and with afflictions come the mountains, the rivers, the great earth, and everything else. This is the fifth coarse appearance: the appearance of the arisal of karma.

**Sutra:

Arisal is the world; stillness is emptiness. Emptiness is sameness; the world is difference. What is neither sameness nor difference is the actual conditioned dharmas.

Commentary:**
This section explains the sixth coarse appearance: the appearance of the suffering bound to karma. Arisal is the world. Arisal is coming forth movement. Stillness is emptiness. Stillness is quiet unmoving. Emptiness is sameness; the world is difference. What is emptiness the same as? Originally emptiness is the same as everything. It is not different from anything because in emptiness there are no distinctions. It is just because there are no distinctions that it is called emptiness. But with the arisal of the world there is difference. The world is different from emptiness in that it has form, shape, and appearance. The arisal of the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth produce the world. This will be explained in detail later in the text.

What is neither sameness nor difference is the actual conditioned dharmas. Originally there isn't anything in emptiness that can be said to be the same or different, with the arisal of:

1. the appearance of karma,
2. the appearance of turning, and
3. the appearance of manifestation

as well as

1. the appearance of knowledge,
2. the appearance of continuation,
3. the appearance of grasping,
4. the appearance of reckoning names,
5. the appearance of the arisal of karma, and
6. the appearance of suffering bound to karma.

We use the terms sameness and difference to describe what takes place.

N2 Afterwards there is continuation.
O1 The continuation of the world.
P1 The birth of the subjective realm becomes four elements.
 **Sutra:

The interaction of bright enlightenment and dark emptiness sets them in a perpetual rotation; thus there is the pervasiveness of wind which supports the world.

Commentary:**
The world has four elements: earth, water, fire, and wind. First we will discuss the pervasiveness of wind. When light is added to the genuine fundamental bright enlightenment, ignorance arises and the light is bound in duality with darkness. Dark emptiness: emptiness is some times murky and obscure. When the darkness of emptiness and the light of enlightenment interact, the interaction sets them in a perpetual rotation. Emptiness and the substance of bright enlightenment that is ignorance which has resulted from adding bright to enlightenment are set in opposition and eventually there is movement. As soon as there is movement, there is the pervasiveness of wind. With that movement, wind arises. Beneath the earth there is a pervasive wind which supports the world. Nowadays we talk about space where there is no atmosphere, but out beyond space there are other places where there is wind. "Pervasiveness" here is lun in the Chinese text; lun means "wheel," but such a literal translation is not necessary here, as the connotation is "pervasiveness." The wind has a power which supports the world. This will be discussed in detail later in the text.

**Sutra:

Because emptiness produces movement, hardened light sets up a solidity which is the store of metal. Bright enlightenment makes this hardness; thus there is the pervasiveness of metal which secures the lands.

Commentary:**

Because emptiness produces movement, hardened light sets up a solidity which is the store of metal. The combination of light which has been added to enlightenment and the darkness of emptiness creates a movement which becomes wind. The hardness of this false light creates an obstructiveness which becomes metal. Metal is the hard quality of the element earth. Bright enlightenment makes this hardness. Because the light of metal is added to enlightenment, a solid quality arises; thus there is the pervasiveness of metal which secures the lands. Within earth, water, fire, and wind, metal plays a part of supporting the world.
 **Sutra:

Obstinate attachment to unenlightened awareness results in the formation of metals, while the vibration of illusory awareness causes wind to rise up. The wind and metal rub together; thus there is the light of fire which is changeable by nature.

Commentary:**
Obstinate attachment to unenlightened awareness results in the formation of metals. Metal is hard and so is earth. This hardness collects in a store, while the vibration of illusory awareness causes wind to rise up. The metal creates a state of movement, and from that wind arises. In this situation the wind and the metal come in contact. The wind and metal rub together; thus there is the light of fire which is changeable by nature.
 **Sutra:

The brightness of the metal produces moisture, and from the light of fire steam arises; thus there is the pervasiveness of water which encompasses realms in the ten directions.

Commentary:**
The brightness of the metal produces moisture. When metal is heated it will sweat; water drops will appear in its glossy surface. Because of the fire, a moisture is eventually produced on the metal. This moisture is one aspect of water. And from the light of fire steam arises. From the moisture of the metal a moist vapor is produced. When the light of fire from below rises, it creates steam as it passes over the metal. Thus there is the pervasiveness of water which encompasses realms in the ten directions. Because of the phenomenon of condensation and evaporation when the metal meets fire, there is the water cycle which encompasses the lands of the ten directions.

P2 The arisal of the objective realm becomes four habitats.

**Sutra:

Fire rises and water falls, and the combination sets up a solidity. What is wet becomes the oceans and seas; what is dry becomes the continents and islands.

Commentary:**

After explaining the pervasiveness of water, the Buddha tells how the seas and mountains come into being. Fire rises and water falls. Fire leaps high; water flows down. The previous passage says that the metal sweats and the fire rises so the moisture evaporates thus creating the water cycle. So the fire rises and the water falls, and and the combination sets up a solidity. This produces the solid earth. What is wet " the water that descends and collects becomes the oceans and seas; what is dry becomes the continents and islands" the dry land.

**Sutra:

Because of this, fire often rises up in the oceans, and on the continents the streams and rivers ever flow.

Commentary:**
Because of this, because the fire rises and the water falls, what is wet becomes the seas and what is dry becomes the land, fire often rises up in the oceans. Volcanoes and the like arise. Although it is the sea, there often arises the light of fire. And on the continents the streams and rivers ever flow. The rivers and streams flow on ceaselessly.

**Sutra:

When the power of water is less than that of fire, high mountains result. So it is that mountain rocks give off sparks when struck, and become liquid when melted.

Commentary:**
Water and fire battle with one another and when the power of water is less than that of fire, high mountains result. When the fire overpowers the water, high mountains are formed. So it is that mountain rocks give off sparks when struck, and become liquid when melted. When you pound the rock, sparks form out of it. When you heat rocks to a certain point, they melt like in a volcanic eruption. How can volcanoes spew forth fire? It is because of the battle for power between water and fire.
 **Sutra:

When the power of earth is less than that of water, the outcome is grasses and trees. So it is that groves and meadows turn to ashes when burned and ooze water when twisted.

Commentary:**
When the power of earth is less than that of water, the outcome is grasses and trees. When the strength of the earth is not as great as the strength of water the conditions of water and earth produce the grasses and trees. So it is that groves and meadows turn to ashes when burned and ooze water when twisted. Ashes are simply earth. If you twist the blades of grass or parts of the tree, liquid will flow out.

P3 The result becomes the seed for continuation.
 **Sutra:

A falseness is produced with interaction as the seeds, and from these causes and conditions comes the continuity of the world.

Commentary:**
A falseness is produced with interaction as the seeds. A false thought arises and fire and water become the seeds of mountains by mutual interaction. From these causes and conditions comes the continuity of the world. From this interaction which forms the seeds, the world ends and then begins again. It is destroyed and then arises once more. Once it arises it is again destroyed. From production, dwelling, decay, and emptiness, and various circumstances, the continuity of the world is perpetuated, which goes on without cease.

O2 The continuation of living beings.
P1 The six kinds of falseness come into being.
 **Sutra:

Moreover, Purna, the false brightness is none other than the mistake of adding light to enlightenment.

Commentary:**
Moreover, Purna, I will explain further. The false brightness is none other than the mistake of adding light to enlightenment. It's not something else playing tricks on you; it's simply that you wanted to add light to enlightenment. That's how the problem arose. Adding light to enlightenment is just like putting a head on top of a head.
 **Sutra:

After the falseness of an object is established, the faculty of understanding cannot transcend it. Due to this cause and condition, hearing does not go beyond sound, and seeing does not surpass form.

Commentary:**

After the falseness of an object is established, the faculty of understanding cannot transcend it. The "falseness of an object" refers to the appearance of karma and corresponds to the earlier passage: Once an object is falsely set up. The word "faculty" here refers to a false ability, the appearance of turning and corresponds to the earlier passage: "Your false subject arises." "Understanding" here refers to ignorance, which is not flexible and cannot transcend the falseness of an object. Due to this cause and condition, hearing does not go beyond sound, and seeing does not surpass form. Because of the appearance of karma and the condition of the appearance of turning, we don't hear anything beyond sound when we listen, and we don't see anything beyond form and appearance when we look.

**Sutra:

Forms, smells, tastes, and objects of touch ; six falsenesses are realized. Because of them there is division into seeing, sensation, hearing, and knowing.

Commentary:**
Because seeing does not surpass form, there arise forms, smells, tastes, and objects of touch. This list of forms implies sounds and dharmas as well, the state of the six defiling objects. Thus six falsenesses are realized. The six organs and six objects together create the six consciousnesses. Because of them there is division into seeing, sensation, hearing, and knowing, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, sensation, and knowing, the six consciousnesses. The six consciousnesses are originally the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One. So it is said:

One pure brightness in its origin,
It divides into six interacting aspects.

The one pure brightness is the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One. The six interacting aspects are the eyes, which see form; the ears, which hear sounds; the nose, which smells scents; the tongue, which tastes flavors; the body, which is aware of sensation; and the mind, which knows dharmas. They are said to be six but in reality they are one. They are a function of the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One.

P2 Four kinds of birth happen in response.
 **Sutra:

Similar karma binds together: union and separation bring about transformation.

Commentary:**
Similar karma refers to the karma one creates and to one's father and mother, these causes and conditions are similar. "Similar karma" also refers to the mutual arisal of thoughts of love which binds together. Similar karma produces emotional love and prevents separation. Men and women become stuck together like glue. This binding together creates birth by womb and eggs.
 **Sutra:

One sees that a bright spot is generated. At the sight of the bright spot conception comes into being. Differing views produce hatred; similar views create love. The flow of love becomes a seed, and the conception is drawn into the womb. Intercourse happens with a mutual attraction of similar karma. And so there are the causes and conditions that create the kalala, the arbuda, and the rest.

Commentary:**

One sees that a bright spot is generated. How do people become people? When a person comes into being, consciousness which arrives first, and when a person dies, the eighth consciousness is the last to leave. So it is said:

Last to go;
First to come.
Thus it is the host.

Before the eighth consciousness leaves, the body will remain warm. Once the eighth consciousness goes, the body gets cold. Once it goes it becomes the intermediate yin-body. If one was a person, then one's intermediate yin-body has the appearance of a person. If one was an animal, the intermediate existence body has the appearance of an animal. It's just as if it was cast from a mold. No matter how far away from its potential father and mother it may be, it will find them if it has conditions with them. To the intermediateexistence body, everything is pitch black. We have lamplight and sunlight and moonlight, but the intermediate-existence body can't see them. What it sees is black as ink. So when the potential father and mother have intercourse, it will see a pinpoint of light at that place, because it has connections with them. At the sight of the bright spot conception comes into being. What is conceived? Thoughts. Differing views produce hatred. When people's opinions are not the same as yours, you come to hate them. Similar views create love. When someone has false thoughts identical with your own, you grow to love them.

If the intermediate-existence body is male, it will love the mother and hate the father. It will want to strike its father and steal its mother. It wants to have intercourse with its mother. So the origin of people is very bad. When it loves its mother and hates its father, with that one thought of ignorance it enters the womb; the flow of love becomes a seed, and the conception is drawn into the womb. If the intermediate-existence body is female, it will love the father and be jealous of the mother. That is how conception takes place.

Those who like to talk about love can't end birth and death. Love is the root of birth and death. Those who like to talk about love can very quickly end birth and death. How can I contradict myself this way and say that these opposite statements are both true? It's just here that the wonder lies. You advocate emotional love, but emotional love takes one down the road of birth and death. Why? People are born from love and desire and they die from love and desire. This is the ordinary occurrence. Everyone walks this road of birth and death.

So how can I say that if you think love is so important you can very quickly end birth and death? If you think love is so important, if you are so intent upon it, you should see through it and be done with it.

The sea of suffering is boundless
A turn of the head is the other shore.

If you see through it, you can end birth and death. People are like cabbage-worms, which are born in a cabbage and die in the cabbage. People are born in love and desire and die in love and desire.

The flow of love becomes a seed: men and women profess their love and keep expressing it until there is tangible evidence of it. Once the love becomes tangible, a seed can be produced. 'Conception" here refers to the eighth consciousness the intermediate yin-body, also called the intermediate existence body or the intermediate-skandha body.

And so there are the causes and conditions that create the kalala, the arbuda, and the rest. Kalala is a Sanskrit word that refers to the first week of embryonic development, the "slippery coagulation." The second week of development is called the arbuda, the globule. The third week is called peshi, or soft flesh. The fourth week is called ghana, or solid flesh. The fifth week is called prashakha, or rudimentary embryo.

Let us look at this from the point of view of the twelve links of conditioned causation. The reason men and women fall in love, just that thought of love is ignorance, that one thought of ignorance.

"Ignorance conditions activity." The activity is intercourse. "Activity conditions consciousness." This is the eighth consciousness referred to above in the line "conception is received into the womb." The consciousness is the intermediate-skandha body entering the womb.

"Consciousness conditions name and form." "Name" refers to the first through fourth weeks of embryonic development. "Form" refers to the fifth and later weeks of embryonic development. "Name and form condition the six entrances." By the seventh week of embryonic development, the organs are fully formed. The embryo has by now developed eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

"Six entrances condition contact." Once the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind are formed, there is an awareness of contact. The embryo in the mother's womb experiences the sensation of contact.

"Contact conditions feeling." The embryo is receptive to the contact. "Feeling conditions love." When it receives the contact, it gives rise to love. This is the real beginning of love. And so to answer the question why men and women come to love one another: it is because even at the fetal stage the cause has been planted already there are thoughts of love.

"Love conditions grasping." Once there are thoughts of love, one wants to have the object of love for one's own, one wants to become that thing. "Grasping conditions becoming, becoming conditions birth." Once you've got it, you're born.

"Birth conditions old age and death." Once there is birth there is death. So arhats contemplate the twelve links of conditioned causation and know that the seed, the causes and conditions, are impure. The father?s semen and the mother's blood are unclean things.

If you want to end birth and death, the first thing you must do is not give rise to ignorance. How do you do that? Don't have thoughts of emotional desire! Without ignorance there is no activity. Men and women get involved all because of that first thought of ignorance. And what is ignorance? It is "I don't know..." For instance when a man sees a woman she may be beautiful, but ultimately, why does his mind move? It is just when one's mind moves that one gives rise to ignorance. And when women have an emotional reaction to men, it is the same thing. Ignorance, therefore, is the root of birth and death. And it is the place that it all starts.

If you understand the twelve links of conditioned causation and are not turned around by them, then,

When ignorance is extinguished,
Activity is extinguished.
When activity is extinguished,
Consciousness is extinguished.
When consciousness is extinguished,
Name and form are extinguished.
When name and form are extinguished,
The six sense organs are extinguished.
When the six sense organs are extinguished,
Contact is extinguished.
When contact is extinguished,
Feeling is extinguished.
When feeling is extinguished,
Love is extinguished.
When love is extinguished,
Grasping is extinguished.
When grasping is extinguished,
Becoming is extinguished.
When becoming is extinguished,
Birth is extinguished.
When birth is extinguished,
Old age and death are extinguished.

This is the method of returning to extinction. If you take the road of arising in succession, you become a person. If you return to extinction, you can become a Buddha. So arhats contemplate the twelve links of conditioned causation and think, "How do people come into being? Ah, their coming is extremely unclean. The combination of the father's semen and the mother's blood to make an embryo is impure." So they sever ignorance and end birth and death.

During the reign of the Emperor Wu of Liang, the Buddhadharma flourished. Whenever there was a wedding reception dharma masters were invited to recite sutras. On children's birthdays, dharma masters were invited to recite sutras. In short, no matter what the occasion, dharma masters were invited to recite sutras and give their blessing. They would give a short speech about the auspiciousness of the event what a lucky occasion it was. At that time there was a wealthy man who was celebrating the marriage of his son. He invited Chan Master Zhi Gong to recite sutras and give the blessing. When Chan Master Zhi Gong arrived and looked around, he said:

How strange! How bizarre!
The grandson marries the grandmother.
The daughter eats the mother's flesh.
The drum the son beats is stretched
with the father's skin.
Pigs and sheep are on the seat.
The six close kin cook in the brazier.
People gather to celebrate.
I see all this as a form of suffering.

Why was the grandson marrying his grandmother? It was because when the grandson was two years old, his grandmother died. As she was dying, she grabbed her grandson's hand and said, "I'm at the point where I can let go of everyone else, but I can't forget about my grandson. Who will take care of him in the future?" And she died clutching her grandson's hand. After her death she went before King Yama and he said, "Oh, you love your grandson so much? Fine. Go back and be your grandson's wife." So she was reborn as a woman and when she came of age, her grandson chose her as his wife. How did Chan Master Zhi Gong know this? Because he had the ability to know
others' thoughts and the ability to perceive past lives, he had the Buddha eye.

When he looked in front of the house he said, "The daughter eats the mother's flesh," because he saw a little girl chewing on a chunk of pork. Her mother had died and been reborn as a pig. The pig had been slaughtered and cooked, and she was actually eating the flesh of her own mother!

When he inspected the musicians in the band by the entrance way, he said, "The drum the son beats is stretched with the father's skin." The drummer was hitting a drum stretched with deer-hide. His father had died and been reborn as a deer. The deer had been slaughtered and its hide tanned and the drummer was actually beating his own father!

Then Chan Master Zhi Gong noticed that "Pigs and sheep are on the seat." He saw pigs and sheep sitting like guests on the kang, the high brick beds in the house. They were people now, but in their former lives they had been pigs and sheep. In their former lives they themselves had been eaten, so now they were reborn as people who in turn ate pigs and sheep to even up the debt.

When the Chan master took a look at the cooking pots, he exclaimed, "Six close kin cook in the brazier." The six kinds of close kin refer to relatives on the father's side and the mother's side, kin of the brother and sisters, and so forth. They had been close relatives of these people but now had been reborn as pigs and sheep, had been slaughtered, and were being cooked in the brazier. Chan Master Zhi Gong summarized, "People gather to celebrate." Everyone who came was saying, "Congratulations!" and "Best wishes!" But the master notes, "I see all this as a form of suffering." What I see is actually suffering.

**Sutra:

The womb-born, egg-born, moisture-born, and transformation- born come about in response: the egg-born come from thought, the womb-born are due to emotion, the moisture-born arise from union, and transformations occur through separation.

Commentary:**
The womb-born, egg-born, moisture-born, and transformation- born: these are four kinds of birth. The "womb-born" are mammals. The 'egg-born' are feathered vertebrates' birds and the like. The "moisture-born" are creatures born out of water. The 'transformation-born" are beings that change form, they seem to be there and then disappear. They seem not to be there and then appear.

They come about in response. In every kind of birth there is a stimulus and a response. For instance, the egg-born come from thought. There must be four conditions present for birth from eggs to occur:

1. the condition of a father,
2. the condition of a mother,
3. the condition of individual karma, and
4. the condition of warmth.

With them, the egg-born come from thought. For example, a mother hen sits on her eggs all day long; she gets unbearably hot, but she won't get up. Once a day she leaves long enough to defecate and eat a little, and then she goes right back to sitting and thinking, 'Come out, little chicks. Hatch, little ones." That's why it says that the eggborn come from thought.

The womb-born are due to emotion, the moisture-born arise from union. Moisture-born beings can come about from two conditions:

1. the condition of sunlight, and
2. the condition of moisture.

Transformations occur through separation. These beings are created from karma alone and are changeable. They appear and disappear; disappear and appear. Transformation is attributable to a strong desire for the new and a dislike for the old, hence it occurs through separation.

P3 The results become continuation.
 **Sutra:

Emotion, thought, union, and separation go through further changes, and from all the karma received one either rises or sinks. From these causes and conditions comes the continuity of living beings.

Commentary:**
Emotion, thought, union, and separation go through further changes. There is a combined interaction involving change, over and over again. And from all the karma received one either rises or sinks. From the retribution undergone, beings vary from birds in the air to fish in the sea. From these causes and conditions comes the continuity of living beings. Living beings are those receiving twelve kinds of rebirth:

1. those born from wombs,
2. those born from eggs,
3. those born from moisture,
4. those born by transformation,
5. those born with form,
6. those born without form,
7. those born with thought,
8. those born without thought,
9. those born not totally with form,
10. those born not totally without form,
11. those born not totally with thought, and
12. those born not totally without thought.

This is the ceaseless continuation of living beings. First we discussed the continuity of the world. Next we have discussed the continuity of living beings.

O3 The continuation of karmic retribution.
P1 The source of karmic retribution is pointed out.

**Sutra:

Purna, thought and love become bound together so that people love each other and cannot bear to be apart. As a result, the world has seen an endless succession of births of parents, children, and grandchildren. And the basis for all of this is desire and greed.

Commentary:**

Purna, all the living beings in the world have thought and love that become bound together. False thinking and desirous love link up so that people love each other and cannot bear to be apart. They get attached to their feelings of love and cannot renounce them. This karmic response is such that they become stuck together like glue. As a result, the world has seen an endless succession of births of parents, children, and grandchildren. And the basis for all of this is desire and greed. These kinds of living beings base themselves in emotional desire.
 **Sutra:

Greed and love feed on one another until greed becomes insatiable. As a result, in the world all the sentient beings born of eggs, wombs, moisture, and by transformation tend to devour one another for the nourishment of their bodies to the extent that their strength permits. And the basis for all of this is killing and greed.

Commentary:**
Greed and love feed on one another until greed becomes insatiable. Every creature wants to nourish its own body. The greed cannot be stopped. As a result, in the world all the sentient beings born of eggs, wombs, moisture, and by transformation tend to devour one another for the nourishment of their bodies to the extent that their strength permits. Depending on how strong they are, they eat one another. You eat me and I eat you. Big worms eat little worms. Big fish eat little fish. Big beasts eat smaller creatures. For instance, if a tiger finds a being smaller than itself it will eat it. The weak become the food for the strong. Snakes feed on mice. But that's in the summer. In the winter, snakes are incapacitated by the cold. So then, the mice eat the snakes. You eat me; I eat you.

The great golden-winged Peng bird used to eat dragons from the ocean the way people eat noodles. The wingspan of the Peng bird is 330 yojanas. One small yojana is 40 li. (A li is about 1/3 of a mile.) A middle-sized yojana is 60 li. And a large yojana is 80 li. One flap of the Peng bird's wings would wash away all the water of the ocean and reveal the dry bed at the bottom. His method for eating dragons was to flap his wings over the ocean, which would part the waters and reveal the dragons on the bottom; then he would help himself to a meal. So the dragons kept getting taken by surprise. With nowhere to hide and no time to disappear and no way to escape, their numbers were dwindling rapidly. Finally some dragons went to the Buddha to protest.

Buddha, you are one of great compassion, the greatly enlightened World Honored One. The great Peng bird is eating our children and grandchildren and soon our whole species will become extinct. What can be done?

The Buddha replied, "Don't worry. I'll think of a way to help you." Next time the Peng bird came to see the Buddha, the World Honored One told him, "Don't eat dragons anymore. The dragons are becoming extinct because you eat so many of them." The Peng bird argued, "But if I don't eat dragons, I'll starve. I won't have anything to eat!"

"Don't worry," said the Buddha. "From now on every time my disciples eat, they will serve you a little food." So in Buddhism, at the noon meal, a little food is taken outside during the high meal offering. It is given to the great golden-winged Peng bird to eat. This story is another example of the competition for survival. And the basis for all of this is killing and greed. These kinds of living beings kill one another off. The fundamental characteristics of their karmic offenses come from greedy desire and a fondness for killing.
 **Sutra:

A person eats a sheep. The sheep dies and becomes a person. The person dies and becomes a sheep, and it goes on that way through ten births and more. Through death after death and birth after birth, they come back to eat one another. The evil karma becomes innate and exhausts the bounds of the future. And the basis for all of this is stealing and greed.

Commentary:**

A person eats a sheep. People like to eat lamb and mutton. Although only the sheep is mentioned in the text, all the other animals are implied. Pigs, cows, chickens, and the like are all included. So the person eats the flesh of the sheep. The sheep dies and becomes a person. I just recited Chan Master Zhi Gong's poem for you, and now the text verifies it. The person dies and becomes a sheep. "I don't believe it," you say. 'There's no such principle. How can a person become a sheep and a sheep become a person?" If you don't believe it, there's nothing left but for you to try it out. Go ahead and give it a try! When you die and go off to rebirth and wind up on the womb of a sheep, you'll think, "The dharma that dharma master was explaining was true after all." But then it will be too late. If you want to cultivate the Way then, it won't be easy to do so in the belly of a sheep.

And it goes on that way through ten births and more. "Ten births" can be explained as ten of the list of the twelve kinds of rebirth mentioned. It can also mean one life, two lives, three lives, four, five, six, and so forth. So it is said:

Once you lose a human body,
You may not get it back in ten thousand rebirths.

If you lose the body of a human being and turn into an animal, it's not at all easy to get back into the human realm. It might take one life, two lives, three lives, up to ten lives, and even then it's not certain you will be able to get back to the human realm. And so it's also said:

A human life is hard to get.
The Buddhadharma is difficult to encounter.

At present, all of us have human bodies. Regardless of what nationality or race we are, we are all human. So now that we have the good fortune of a human life, we should quickly cultivate. Let us just look at America, with its millions of people. The number who are truly studying the Buddhadharma and hearing it explained every day amount to us dozen or so here in San Francisco. There may be other places, but none of them study and practice as intensely as we do. And how many people in the United States can explain the entire Shurangama Sutra? Not more than two or three, and it might be pushing it to say two. So wouldn't you say the Buddhadharma is difficult to get to hear?

Through death after death and birth after birth, they come back to eat one another. The sheep dies and becomes a person. The person dies and becomes a sheep. You eat me and I eat you. You fill my belly and I fill your belly. We keep changing places; you eat my flesh, I eat your flesh. So the sheep gets plump and the person gets paunchy, until it becomes a contest to see who can outeat the other. Not only do they eat like this for one life, it goes on for ten lives and more. So, people, don't get too obese. Don't compete with the sheep to see who can get fatter. That's no way to even the score.

The evil karma becomes innate and exhausts the bounds of the future. The battle goes on: you take a bite of me in this life, next life I'll take two bites of you. You eat two bites of me, I'll help myself to four bites of you. The interest rate keeps multiplying. And this process never stops; it reaches to the bounds of the future. What are the "bounds of the future"? That means tomorrow. And tomorrow. Tomorrow and tomorrow. How many tomorrows are there? They exhaust the bounds of the future. They never cease. Now what about that? Dangerous or not? If you want to try it out, take my advice and don't. It's too dangerous to play around with. And the basis for all of this is stealing and greed. Stealing is taking what is not given. For instance, when you eat the flesh of a sheep, the sheep certainly did not give it to you. It's not like the case of the deer of the Deer Wilds Park who offered one deer to the king every day. They chose to do that, and perhaps there wouldn't even be a retribution to repay in that case. But if you capture and kill a sheep for no reason but to eat its flesh, you have stolen. You eat his flesh and thereby take what is not given, and so he gains rebirth as a person and you become a sheep in your next life and in this way you keep stealing from each other. You stole his flesh so now he steals your flesh. A sheep dies and becomes a person and his rebirth is a case of causal reward, though you may not realize it.

So the whole situation is extremely dangerous. I hope my disciples won't flirt with danger and try things out, only to end up as sheep or pigs, because I don't want my disciples to fall. I want them all to become Buddhas a little sooner. So today I urge you, don't try out that dangerous path!

P2 Karmic debts must be repaid.
 **Sutra:

"You owe me a life; I have to repay my debt to you." From these causes and conditions we pass through hundreds of thousands of aeons, in a sustained cycle of birth and death.

Commentary:**

You owe me a life; I have to repay my debt to you. If you take my life, you must repay me for it; if I take your life I also have to return it to you in kind. If you borrow from me you must repay the debt; if I borrow from you I must also pay you back. From these causes and conditions we pass through hundreds of thousands of aeons, in a sustained cycle of birth and death. Even after millions of aeons we are still caught in the perpetual cycle of birth and death.

**Sutra:

"You love my mind; I adore your form." From these causes and conditions we pass through hundreds of thousands of aeons, in a sustained mutual entanglement.

Commentary:**
As soon as this passage of text is read you should feel total fear. Look at what it says: You love my mind; I adore your form. The arisal of love is the birth of ignorance. "Adore your form" means there is activity. "From ignorance arises activity." This is again the topic of men and women. In fact, in this world, apart from the question of men and women, there's really nothing to say. Thus if the Buddha's sutras don't talk about it from one angle, they refer to it from another angle. But it's not the case that the Buddha advocated love when he said, "You love me and I love you.' He wasn't promoting free love which ignores all the rules. From these causes and conditions we pass through hundreds of thousands of aeons, in a sustained mutual entanglement. It is just as if you were glued together and can't get apart despite yourselves. You get really sticky. And you think the whole thing is just what you always wanted. But actually since you're stuck there, you can't get to the position of Buddhahood. And you still think it's not bad? Love, love, love, what?

P3 The result becomes continuation.

**Sutra:

Killing, stealing, and lust are themselves the basic roots. From these causes and conditions comes the continuity of karmic retribution.

Commentary:**
Where does karmic retribution come from? It is produced from killing, stealing, and lust. If you kill, you create the karma of killing. If you steal, you create the karma of stealing. If you lust, you create the karma of deviant sex. These three kinds of karma are also called the three evils of the body. They are themselves the basic roots. From these causes and conditions comes the continuity of karmic retribution.

The continuity of karmic retribution supports the continuity of living beings and the continuity of living beings supports the continuity of the world. The continuity of the world in turn supports the continuity of karmic retribution, and so the cycle completes itself and is endless. It ends and begins again, ends and begins again. That's the way this world is. If you think this world is really fine, exciting and beautiful, then go ahead and enjoy yourself. If you think it is not so good, you can come back home. Where's home? It's at the position of Buddhahood.

M5 He concludes his answer by showing the relationship among them.

**Sutra:

Therefore, Purna, the three kinds of upside down continuity come from the light which is added to enlightenment. With this false enlightening of the knowing-nature, subjective awareness gives rise to objective appearances. Both are born of false views, and from this falseness the mountains, the rivers, the great earth, and all conditioned appearances unfold themselves in a succession that recurs in endless cycles.

Commentary:**
After the Buddha finished explaining the continuity of the world, the continuity of living beings, and the continuity of karmic retribution, he called to Purna again. Therefore, Purna, the three kinds of upside down continuity come from the light which is added to enlightenment. The continuity of the world is the arisal, dwelling, change, and extinction of the world, which goes on perpetually. Living beings go through a similar process of birth, dwelling, change, and extinction, ceaselessly without end. Karmic retribution also occurs with production, dwelling, change, and extinction, forever and ever. These three kinds of continuity arise from ignorance.

The world is established because of ignorance. So there is the ignorance of the world, the ignorance of living beings, and the ignorance of karmic retribution. Every conditioned dharma arises from ignorance. Ignorance is the mother of all conditioned existence. Thus if people can smash ignorance, they can see the dharma-nature. Until you have smashed ignorance, you cannot see your dharma-nature.

Why is this world sustained by the three kinds of up side-down continuity? Adding light to fundamental enlightenment turns it into ignorance. With this false enlightening of the knowing-nature, subjective awareness gives rise to objective appearances. With the birth of ignorance, an empty and false knowing-nature comes into being and because of it, the objective realm is perceived. Both are born of false views, and from this falseness the mountains, the rivers, the great earth, and all conditioned appearances unfold themselves in a succession that recurs in endless cycles. Despite the vastness of the plains, forests, and all the myriad appearances, there is a definite sequence to it all, and never any randomness or disarray. Once this empty falseness arises, it goes on and on. It finishes and then begins again, ends and then starts over. For instance, people die and then are reborn, and once born they die again, and after death they are born again. They keep turning around. Yet people never wake up and wonder, "Why do I get born and then die, die and then get born?" They don't look into this question. They never figure out why they get born and why they die. So when they're born they don't understand what's going on and when they die they're even more confused. So the saying:

When you come you are disoriented.
When you go you are confused.

Since they are so unclear about their coming and going, you can imagine that their lives as people pass in a daze as well. And it's just in this lack of clarity that the process continues. They are born and die, die and are born. Pitiful? What ultimate meaning is there in all of this?

The ultimate meaning of being in this world is making a little money and eating a little food. You don't have any money so you have to go to work. You make money in order to buy food and clothes. Really, if all there is to this life is eating, wearing clothes, and living in a nice house, it's really meaningless! It would be better to die right this minute! Think about it: you have to go to work and when you come home you have to eat. You have to keep trying to fill that bottomless pit. You fill it up today, and by tomorrow it all has flowed out again. You fill it one day and the next day it's empty again, even to the point that you fill it in the morning and it's hungry by noon. Again you fill the hole, and by evening you're hungry yet again. You have to move out the old to make room for the new. Going through such a lot of trouble every day seems totally meaningless. There's a poem that goes:

From of old until today, few people have lived past seventy.
First subtract the early years and then the years of age:
Between the two there is not much time that is left at all.
And of that, remember, sleep takes up the better half!

From ancient times until the present day, the number of people who have lived past seventy are very few. And in the early years, before one is fifteen years old, one can't really do anything. Americans become of age at eighteen, but Chinese children still rely on their parents at twenty-five! So first you must subtract the early years. Someone says, "My kid carries papers and makes money." Sure, but he can't make much. You can't really count that as carrying on a business.

From the end of the lifespan you also have to subtract fifteen years, the years of old age. In the last fifteen years you are physically unable to do very much. Your eyes go bad, your ears get deaf, your teeth fall out, and your hands shake. You can't even get your legs to work right. Your four limbs are of no use any more. So if one lives to be seventy, and we take off fifteen years at the beginning and fifteen years at the end, there isn't much time left in between. There are forty years left. But that is not forty years of productiveness. Half of it is taken up in sleep. And then if you take into account going to the bathroom, putting on and taking off clothes, you'll have to subtract some more time. So at the very most a human lifespan has about twenty productive years to it. So what's so great about it?

That reminds me of three old men who got together to celebrate New Year's. One was sixty years old, one was seventy, and one was eighty. These three old cronies went out dutch to ring out the old and ring in the new, and the sixty-year-old said:

"This year we celebrate with wine and cheer. I wonder next year who won't be here."

The seventy-year-old said, "You're thinking too far in the future."

"Oh?" said the sixty-year-old. "What do you say about it?"

The seventy-year-old said:
"Tonight when I take off my shoes and socks, will I put them on again tomorrow or not?"

The eighty-year-old said, "You're looking too far ahead yourself."

"Well, what do you say about it?" asked the seventy year-old.

The eighty-year-old said:
"I let out this breath of air, and then I'm not sure if I'll ever breath in again."

These three old-timers were looking into the question of birth and death. In the end, could they end birth and death? If they had met a good knowing advisor, a bright-eyed teacher, they'd still have had a chance. If they didn't encounter a bright-eyed teacher, I believe they couldn't have ended birth and death.

There's another incident that had bearing on this topic. Once there was a man who died and went before King Yama. So a soon as he saw King Yama, he started to argue his case. He said, "You are really inhumane. If you wanted me to come see you, you should have written me a letter. If you had informed me clearly in advance, I could have prepared. But you didn't write a letter or make a phone call or send a telegram to let me know.

You just captured me without warning, and I find that totally unreasonable." King Yama said to him, "I sent you a lot of letters." You just didn't realize it.

"I never got any letters from you," the man protested. Yama said, "The first letter I gave you was when your neighbor had a child that died at birth. You were already quite old, and if a newborn child could die, weren't you even more vulnerable? You should have wakened up at that point and started to cultivate. "And then didn't there come the time when your eyes went bad and you could no longer see clearly? That was the second letter. In time your ears went deaf, right? That was the third letter. Wasn't there a point when your teeth fell out? That was the fourth letter."

'"I didn't recognize the words of your letters, Yama. What was the last one you sent?"

"Didn't you notice that your hair was getting white? That was the last letter. Now I see how much pork you have eaten, so you can go to rebirth as a pig."

So the man turned into a pig. When would he get to be a person again? Nobody knows.

Now that the continuity of karmic retribution has been explained, everyone should return the light and look within and figure out what he or she is going to do. Someone says, "I know. I'm going to leave the home-life."

You want to leave the home-life? That's fine if you really do it. Someone else says, "Hearing this, I think human life is really meaningless and I'd like to just lay down and die."

That's all right, too, but it's not for sure that you won't get sent off to be a pig like that old man was. Pigs are really doltish. So people who are dull-witted become pigs in the future. And the whole reason for studying the Shurangama Sutra is to learn how not to be a dolt. It is to help you open your wisdom. If you have wisdom, the three kinds of continuity won't have anything to do with you.

So you wonder, "Wouldn't it be anarchy if the world and living beings and karmic retribution didn't have anything to do with me?" No, because at that point you have a connection with the Buddhas. You are a relative of the Bodhisattvas, and a brother or sister of the arhats. So you certainly won't be an anarchist.

L2 The explanation brings up another question.
M1 Purna attaches to causes and doubts effects.

**Sutra:

Purna said, "If this wonderful enlightenment, this basic miraculous enlightened brightness which is neither greater than nor less than the mind of the Thus Come One, abruptly brings forth the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth, and all conditioned appearances, then now that the Thus Come One has attained the wonderful empty bright enlightenment, will the mountains, the rivers, the great earth, and all conditioned habitual outflows arise again?"

Commentary:**

Having heard Shakyamuni Buddha's explanation of the three kinds of upside-down continuities, Purna had something else to say. If this wonderful enlightenment, this basic miraculous enlightened brightness which is neither greater than nor less than the mind of the Thus Come One: this refers to the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One. On the part of a Buddha, the treasury of the Thus Come One does not increase, and on the part of living beings it does not decrease. Living beings are replete with the basic miraculous enlightened brightness, just as the Buddha is. Yet it abruptly brings forth the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth, and all conditioned appearances. Since that's the way it is, why for no reason do the mountains, the rivers, the great earth, and all the other conditioned appearances suddenly arise?

You say that they arise from the treasury of the Thus Come One. Why does that happen? There doesn't seem to be any reason for it. This section of text voices the doubt that Purna has now. He wonders if living beings' "causal mind' that is, their Buddhanature, has a beginning, and he wonders if the fruition of Buddhahood has an end. He's asking if there will be a time when the Buddha will no longer be a Buddha and will become a living being again. He says, 'Then now that the Thus Come One has attained the wonderful empty bright enlightenment, will the mountains, the rivers, the great earth, and all conditioned habitual outflows arise again? Buddha, you don't have any leftover habits, and you have extinguished your outflows. Would it be possible for you to give rise to conditioned outflows and habits in the future? You have already become a Buddha; can you give rise to ignorance again? Living beings arise from ignorance, you're a Buddha now, but in the future could you become a living being again?' This is what Purna was asking.

His reasoning was this: the mountains, the rivers, the great earth, and everything else arise from ignorance. Before they came into being there was fundamental enlightenment, the wonderful brightness of the enlightened nature, the fundamental enlightenment's bright wonder. Ignorance arose from true enlightenment. Therefore, now that the Buddha has become a Buddha when will he again give rise to ignorance?

After one accomplishes Buddhahood there is no more ignorance. A Bodhisattva at the level of equal enlightenment still has ignorance, but it is slight. In fact, it would be hard to compare it to anything in order to show how little there is of it. Living beings have 84,000 afflictions, which arise from ignorance. But a Bodhisattva of equal enlightenment is comparable to a Buddha, except that he has not actually reached wonderful enlightenment, that is, Buddhahood. Bodhisattvas of equal enlightenment still have one particle of ignorance which produces appearances that they have not destroyed. And this one particle is comparable to a mote of dust bordering on emptiness.

M2 The Thus Come One explains by analogy which distinguishes true and false.
N1 The false does not reoccur.
O1 Ignorance is basically empty.
 **Sutra:

The Buddha said to Purna, "Consider for example a person who has become confused in a village, mistaking south for north. Is this confusion the result of confusion or of awareness?

Purna said, "This person's confusion is the result neither of confusion nor of awareness. Why? Confusion is fundamentally baseless, so how could it arise because of confusion? Awareness does not produce confusion, so how could it arise because of awareness?"

Commentary:**
The Buddha said to Purna, responding to his question, "Consider for example a person who has become confused in a village, mistaking south for north." What was this person's situation? He got turned around. He'd lost his direction. Now in his confusion, when he mistakes south for north, does he in actuality lose south or north? No. South is still south, and north is still north. It's just that the man has lost his sense of direction. "Is this confusion the result of confusion or of awareness?" the Buddha asks.

Purna said, "This person's confusion is the result neither of confusion nor of awareness. It's not because of confusion that he gets confused, nor is it because of awareness that he gets confused. Why? Confusion is fundamentally baseless, so how could it arise because of confusion?" Confusion doesn't even exist. How could confusion arise from confusion, when there basically isn't any confusion to begin with? In the same way, basically people have no ignorance, so ignorance is not produced from ignorance.

Ignorance is like a shadow. Light represents wisdom, darkness represents stupidity. The ignorance is like a shadow. Our shadow is certainly not our body, but because there is a body, a shadow exists. When people turn their back on enlightenment and unite with defilement, there is ignorance. When they turn their back on defilement and unite with enlightenment, there isn't any more ignorance.

Ignorance is also like a reflection in a mirror. There aren't any reflections in the mirror to begin with, so when a reflection appears, it is obviously not there just because the mirror exists. It appears when there is an appearance external to it. So ignorance does not arise in true enlightenment. The falseness arises relying on the true. Confusion is fundamentally baseless; it has no root. How, then, can it produce confusion? A plant must have a seed in order to reproduce itself, but confusion has no seed and no root, so confusion can't be born from confusion.

Nor does it arise from awareness. Why? Awareness does not produce confusion, so how could it arise because of awareness? "Awareness" here refers to enlightenment, and since enlightenment is the opposite of confusion, how could awareness give rise to confusion?

**Sutra:

The Buddha said, "If a person who is aware points out the way to the person who is in the midst of confusion, and makes him aware, then do you suppose, Purna, that once the person is over his confusion he could lose his sense of direction again in that village?"

"No, World Honored One."

Commentary:**

The village in this analogy represents the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One. The confused person represents living beings who have given rise to mistaken perception to false thinking. South and north represent the false and the true, confusion and enlightenment. The confusion of the person in the village represents the arisal of ignorance on the part of living beings. Now the Buddha says to Purna: If a person who is aware points out the way to the person who is in the midst of confusion, and makes him aware. The confused person can't tell south from north; he thinks confusion is enlightenment. He's just like people who always think they are right. They see someone and decide he's against them, so they get angry at him. If they think someone else is good to them, they welcome him with open arms. And they think they are right in their opinions. Actually they are upside down. But they don't know that they are upside-down; they don't know that they have mistaken south for north. In that state of confusion, suppose they encounter someone who makes them aware. The person who is aware represents the Buddha or a good and wise advisor, who says to him, "You're confused and should turn from confusion and return to enlightenment. You think that way is south, but you are mistaken; it is north." He straightens him out about confusion and enlightenment. Then do you suppose, Purna, that once the person is over his confusion he could lose his sense of direction again in that village? After someone has told him the right directions, would he get even more confused? "No, World Honored One. That is not possible," Purna says. "Once he has been clearly told, he wouldn't get confused again." When we are confused, we are just dreaming. But we won't admit we are dreaming. I tell you that you are dreaming right now, but you say, "I'm not asleep and I'm not dreaming. Why do you say I am?" Suppose a person is having a dream that he is emperor or president or that he's as wealthy as a Rockefeller or a Kennedy. And there he is in the dream with everything he ever wanted wealth, riches, status, pleasures, luxuries. He's rich and he's a high official as well and all his relatives are either Ph.D.'s or full professors or members of the upper class. Then someone comes along and say: "You're dreaming." Do you think he'll believe that? Will he admit he's dreaming? No. The person who is dreaming of such wealth and status won't believe he's dreaming. When he wakes up from the dream, though, then he'll know he was just having a good dream, and will regret having awakened so soon. He'll long for the dream to continue.

This is just like people in the world who are busy all day long, running here today and there tomorrow, wondering what the future holds in store for them.

What you haven't got yet,
you want to get.
What you've already got,
you are afraid of losing.

So you get all attached and bound up. When you get enlightened, you wonder how you could have ever been so upside down. However, a person who has become enlightened won't long for his former state of being. That's the difference.
 **Sutra:

"Purna, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions are the same way. Confusion is groundless and ultimately empty in nature. There had basically been no confusion: it merely seemed as if there were confusion and enlightenment. When the delusion about confusion and enlightenment is ended, enlightenment does not give rise to confusion.

Commentary:**
The Buddha now says: Purna, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions are the same way. They are like the man in the village who, in the Buddha's analogy, will not become confused again once he is made aware of the right road. Confusion is groundless and ultimately empty in nature. He won't get confused again, because confusion has no root, so it can't produce new confusion. Basically there is no confusion, so it doesn't have a nature; and without a nature it is ultimately empty. There had basically been no confusion: it merely seemed as if there were confusion and enlightenment. To seem to be is to not really exist; it is to be empty and false, just as in the case of the person who gets confused about directions: the directions themselves aren't lost; it's just that he doesn't recognize them. When the delusion about confusion and enlightenment is ended, enlightenment does not give rise to confusion. You had a mistaken impression, but once you awaken and recognize the confusion, it ceases to be. As I often say to you:

Don't fear the arisal of your thoughts;
Just fear your enlightenment will be slow in coming.

Everyone has false thoughts, a profusion of them. When this one goes, that one comes. But don't be scared of the arisal of these false thoughts. Just fear that you will be slow in becoming enlightened. Get enlightened quickly: don't be slow about it. When a false thought comes up, you want to pursue it to its origin. Ask who the mother of that false thought is. Where did this false thought arise from? If you find the mother of that false thought, you can tell her to look after her child. Actually, though, that false thought doesn't have a mother, and so there's no one looking after it. When you find out it doesn't have a mother, it won't be naughty any more because it won't even exist. Without a mother, how could it be? When the confusion about enlightenment and confusion is ended, there will be no more confusion. After you become enlightened you won't be able to get confused again. Once you're enlightened, the confusion disappears, and so there can't be any more confusion to arise. Therefore, the Buddha, having already accomplished Buddhahood and cut off ignorance, won't give rise to confusion again.

O2 The manifestation of the myriad dharmas is not real.
P1 He brings up an analogy.
 **Sutra:

"It is also like a person with an eye-ailment who sees flowers in space. If he gets rid of his eye-ailment, the flowers in space will disappear. If he were so stupid as to quickly return to the spot where the flowers disappeared and wait for them to reappear, would you consider that person to be stupid or smart?

Commentary:**
The confused person is also like a person with an eye-ailment who sees flowers in space. The flowers were beautiful, but they were only there because of the eye-ailment. If he gets rid of his eye-ailment, the flowers in space will disappear. Let me ask you now: do you think there were any flowers in space after all? If you say there weren't any, why did he see flowers? Oh; it was because he had an eye ailment. When his eyes got better, the flowers disappeared. But did they really disappear? If he were so stupid as to quickly return to the spot where the flowers disappeared and wait for them to reappear, would you consider that person to be stupid or smart? If that confused person were to find the place in space where the flowers were last seen and wait there for them to reappear, would you call him stupid or smart, Purna?

P2 The discussion.
 **Sutra:

Purna said, "Originally there weren't any flowers in space. It was through a falseness in the seeing that they were produced and extinguished. To see the disappearance of the flowers in space is already upside down. To wait for them to reappear is sheer madness. Why bother to determine further if such a person is stupid or smart?"

Commentary:**

The Buddha said, "You are like the person waiting for the flowers to reappear in space. Would you consider that person to be stupid or smart?"

Purna said, "Originally there weren't any flowers in space. It was through a falseness in the seeing that they were produced and extinguished." Since no flowers arose, there were no flowers extinguished. For him to wait for the flowers to arise again is a mistake. They were only there in the first place because the eyes were sick. To see the disappearance of the flowers in space is already upside down. To wait for them to reappear is sheer madness. Why bother to determine further if such a person is stupid or smart? You say he waits for them to come out again? That is just as if I were to plant a flower and then wait for it to come up, just wait there without sleeping or eating. If we were as sincere in our study of the Buddhadharma as he was about waiting for those flowers, we'd probably be successful. But the person waiting for the flowers was sincere about the wrong thing. He was in fact incomparably stupid.

So Purna says, "The man is totally insane. He's out of his mind. That person isn't even up to being called stupid.

P3 Correlates analogy with dharma.
 **Sutra:

The Buddha said, "Since you explain it that way, why do you ask if the wonderful enlightened bright emptiness can once again give rise to the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth?"

Commentary:**
So Purna determines that the person waiting for the flowers is insane. The word kuang (insanity) is composed of two characters in Chinese, kuang and dian). Kuang results from excessive yang, and dian from excessive yin. These are the definitions assigned in Chinese medicine. Yang, the fire or temper of a person, results in madness when extreme. Yin, the lack of fire, results in another kind of insanity when extreme. To be obsessed with fame is a case of excessive yang, and to be obsessed with profit is a case of excessive yin. In the whole world there are only two people: one intent upon fame and one intent upon profit. If someone praises the first person and says something like,"'You're so good: intelligent and wise. Everything about you is wonderful," to him those words of praise are as sweet as candy. The other one, the one seeking profit, thinks of ways to cheat people out of their money. He thinks of every way possible. He's totally dishonest. For instance, when he sells rice, he adds a little water to it to make it heavier. And if he adds a little water to the beans, they swell, and he has to put fewer in the bag to fill it. So in China there was a rice seller who was struck down by lightning. And on his back they found four characters which no one could decipher until someone added one long stroke down the middle completing the four characters, which read:



When the world gets filled with too many evil people, one gets struck down by lightning to serve as an example for the others. The Buddha said, 'Since you explain it that way, why do you ask if the wonderful enlightened bright emptiness can once again give rise to the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth?" Once the Thus Come One has obtained the fruition of the wonderful enlightened bright emptiness, can he again have the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth arise? Why would you ask that?

The Buddhas, the Thus Come Ones, are like the confused person whom someone has set straight so that he is no longer confused. So to wonder whether one can again become ignorant once one has been certified as having attained the fruition of Buddhahood, is to be like the person who stands waiting for the flowers to reappear in space. Once one has reached the fruition of Buddhahood, one could not turn around in the treasury of the Thus Come One, one could not turn around and give rise to ignorance again.

N2 The truth does not change.
O1 He mentions two other analogies.
 **Sutra:

It is like a piece of ore containing gold and a mixture of other metals. Once the pure gold is extracted, it will not become an ore again. It is like wood that has been burned to ashes; it will not become wood again.

Commentary:**
Another analogy is given to show that after one becomes a Buddha one does not turn into an ordinary living being again. It is like a piece of ore containing gold and a mixture of other metals. The streaks of pure gold are mixed with other substances. With some amount of labor, you can extricate the gold from the ore. Once the pure gold is extracted, it will not become an ore again. The pure gold won't become mixed with sand, silt, or earth again. Also, it is like wood that has been burned to ashes; it will not become wood again. Once the wood is burned, it can't turn back into wood again. The wood can become ashes, but the ashes can't turn directly back into wood.
 **Sutra:

The Bodhi and Nirvana of all Buddhas, the Thus Come Ones, are the same way.

Commentary:**

All Buddhas, the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions; here two titles of the Buddha have been used together for the sake of literary style. The Bodhi and Nirvana are the same way. "Bodhi" is the fruition of enlightenment, and "Nirvana" has four wonderful virtues. They are just like the pure gold in the mine. When one is still a living being, one is like the unrefined gold in the mine. When one has already become a Buddha, one has turned into pure gold. And pure gold won't get mixed with impurities any more. One who has become a Buddha is also like the ashes, while living beings are like the wood. Wood can turn into ashes, but ashes can't turn back into wood. The Bodhi and Nirvana of the Buddhas of the ten directions, the fruition of Buddhahood, is like these examples. It cannot change back to what it was before.