**The Shurangama Sutra**

**VOLUME 4**

**CHAPTER 4**

**The Two Decisive Doctrines**

H2 The Thus Come One teaches him to deeply enter one door.  
I1 He distinguishes the door by means of two decisive doctrines.  
J1 He shows the wonderful path of cultivation.  
 **Sutra:  
  
The World Honored One then took pity on the soundhearers and the condition-enlightened ones in the assembly, all those who were not yet at ease with the Bodhi mind, and on all living beings to come after the Buddha's extinction during the Dharma-ending Age. He revealed the wonderful path of cultivation of the unsurpassed vehicle.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
The World Honored One then took pity on the soundhearers and the condition-enlightened ones in the assembly, all those who were not yet at ease with the Bodhi mind, they were not yet enlightened, and on all living beings to come after the Buddha's extinction during the Dharma-ending Age. He explained this dharma-door not only for the members of that dharma assembly, but for living beings in the Dharma-ending Age, which refers to us living beings right now. Don't suppose that the Buddha didn't speak this sutra directly for us. When the Buddha was still in the world, he knew already that living beings of the Dharma-ending Age would be difficult to tame and difficult to subdue; therefore, he reveals here the wonderful path of cultivation of the unsurpassed vehicle: the great white-ox cart, which the Buddha discussed in the Dharma Flower Sutra. The Buddha revealed this dharma so that those of us who cultivate during the present age will be able to reach accomplishment more easily.  
  
The period when the Buddha was in the world is called the Proper Dharma Age. This period lasted for a thousand years, and during it people were strong in Chan samadhi. After the Buddha had entered extinction and the thousand years of the Proper Dharma Age had passed, the Dharma Semblance Age began. It, too, lasted for a thousand years. During this period, people were strong in the building of temples and stupas. They didn't cultivate Chan samadhi, but sought the reward of blessings. When the Buddha was in the world, people sought wisdom, but during the Dharma Semblance Age they renounced the roots and grasped at the branches. After the Dharma Semblance Age, came the Dharma Ending Age, when people are neither strong in Chan samadhi nor strong in the building of temples and stupas. They are strong in fighting. Wherever you go in the present age, people quarrel with people, families fight with families, and countries war against countries. In every space and corner of the world there is contention and unrest. So now, when we sit in meditation and lecture on and study the sutras, it is nothing other than the appearance of the Proper Dharma Age within the Dharma-ending Age. But we have to really do it, really practice what the sutras teach, without being the least bit sloppy about it. If we step forward firmly and practice it intensely, then there will be a response.  
  
Now I'm not encouraging you, according to the method I discussed earlier, as when the Bodhisattva Manjushri encouraged Ananda and Matangi's daughter, because, in fact, your enlightenment is your own; it's not something you do for me. All I'm doing is pointing out the way to you.  
  
J2 He explains the two decisive doctrines.  
K1 A general statement.  
 **Sutra:  
  
He proclaimed to Ananda and to the great assembly, "If you want to have decisive resolve for Bodhi and not grow weary of the wonderful samadhi of the Buddha, the Thus Come One, you must first understand the two resolutions regarding initial resolve for enlightenment. What are the two resolutions regarding initial resolve for enlightenment?"  
  
Commentary:**  
  
He proclaimed to Ananda and to the great assembly; the Buddha instructed Ananda and Purna and all the great Bodhisattvas and arhats, if you want to have decisive resolve for Bodhi, for enlightenment, and not grow weary of the wonderful samadhi of the Buddha, the Thus Come One. The word "samadhi" is transliterated from Sanskrit into Chinese in various ways, but they all represent the same word. "Wonderful samadhi" refers to the inconceivable Shurangama Samadhi. Don't grow weary. Don't become lazy and get hung up in sleeping all day long, so that you never work at developing your skill. If you keep your spirits up and apply yourself with vigor every day, then you won't become weary. You must first understand the two resolutions regarding initial resolve for enlightenment. You have to be clear about the initial resolve for Bodhi. There are two resolutions regarding this. What are the two resolutions regarding initial resolve for enlightenment? What is this two-fold process of selection that should be made so that you will be able to know which doctrines are correct and which are incorrect?

Purification of the Turbidities  
  
K2 Categorizing the two doctrines.  
L1 The decisive doctrine that the cause is identified with the result,  
the purification of the turbidities is entry into nirvana.  
M1 He causes him to look into cause and effect.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Ananda, the first resolution is this: if you wish to renounce the position of sound-hearer and cultivate the Bodhisattva Vehicle, and to enter the knowledge and vision of the Buddha, you must carefully consider whether the resolve on the cause ground and the enlightenment on the ground of fruition are the same or different.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Ananda, the first resolution is this: if you wish to renounce the position of sound-hearer, if you sound-hearers and conditionenlightened ones want to relinquish the small vehicle, the two lesser vehicles, and cultivate the Bodhisattva Vehicle, the most supreme vehicle, and to enter the knowledge and vision of the Buddha, you must carefully consider whether the resolve on the cause ground and the enlightenment on the ground of fruition are the same or different. You should investigate in minute detail what the mind is which brings forth the initial resolve at the time of planting causes. The "ground of fruition" is the state of a Bodhisattva. Is the mind on the cause-ground and the enlightenment on the ground of fruition the same?  
 **Sutra:  
  
Ananda, it is impossible while on the cause-ground to use the mind subject to production and extinction as the basis for cultivating in quest of the Buddha vehicle, which is neither produced nor extinguished.  
  
Commentary:**  
Ananda, it is impossible while on the cause-ground, at the time you have first brought forth the resolve for enlightenment, to use the mind subject to production and extinction, your sixth mind-consciousness, as the basis for cultivating in quest of the Buddha vehicle, which is neither produced nor extinguished. If you try using the mind subject to production and extinction as the foundation of your cultivation of the Way and expect to accomplish Buddhahood and attain nirvana with its four virtues of permanence, bliss, true self, and purity, you will find that it is impossible. It can?t be done.  
 **Sutra:  
  
For this reason, you should realize that all existing dharmas in the material world will decay and disappear. Ananda, contemplate the world: what thing is there that will not waste away?  
  
Commentary:**  
For this reason, based on the above reasoning that you can't seek the Buddha-Way with a mind subject to production and extinction, you should realize that all existing dharmas in the material world will decay and disappear. Use your wisdom to look into this: The material world is the world of dependent retribution, composed of the mountains, the rivers, the earth, and the various buildings. All of these existing dharmas will change and become extinct.  
  
Ananda, contemplate the world: what thing is there that will not waste away? Is there any one among all the conditioned dharmas which create form and appearance that will not spoil? Which among them will not be destroyed?  
 **Sutra:  
  
But, has anyone ever heard of the disintegration of the void? Why not? It is because the void does not exist, and so it can never be destroyed.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
But, has anyone ever heard of the disintegration of the void? You've never heard of the obliteration of empty space. Why not? It is because the void does not exist, and so it can never be destroyed. The void is not something created or man-made. The void is fundamentally devoid of anything at all; that's why it is called emptiness. Anything that can be made is not the void. And, since it basically isn't anything at all, it can't be destroyed. The void is always there.  
  
M2 He describes the five turbidities.  
N1 He explains the substance of the turbidities.  
  
**Sutra:  
  
While you are in your body, what is solid is of earth, what is moist is of water, what is warm is of fire, and what moves is of wind. Because of these four bonds, your tranquil and perfect, wonderfully enlightened bright mind divides into seeing, hearing, sensation, and cognition. From beginning to end there are the five layers of turbidity.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
The Buddha now discusses the four elements. While you are in your body, what is solid is of earth. The skin, flesh, muscles, and bones are the solid parts of the body. What is moist is of water. Saliva, tears, blood, and secretions belong to the element water. What is warm is of fire. Body heat and temperature belong to the element fire. This functions so that the body always maintains a fairly constant temperature. What moves is of wind. Circulation and respiration belong to the element wind. Because of these four bonds: the four elements combine. They intermingle. This one gets connected with that one, and they form an independent company. Before you know it, the four elements have linked up together and formed a party called the 'body bloc." Then there is no way for your inherent Buddha-nature to appear. And so relying on truth, falseness arises. Your tranquil and perfect, wonderfully enlightened bright mind: the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One, which is tranquil, the true nature of Bodhi, divides. Your wonderful enlightened bright mind separates; some of it goes to the eyes, into seeing. Some of it goes to the ears as hearing.  
  
Thus it is said:  
  
The original, single pure brightness,  
Divides into six different aspects.  
  
It goes to the body and becomes sensation. And when it goes to the mind it is called cognition. From beginning to end there are the five layers of turbidity. The four elements of earth, water, fire, and wind bring about the five layers of turbidity, the evil world of the five turbidities.  
  
N2 A general analogy for the appearance of the turbidities.  
 **Sutra:  
  
"What is meant by 'turbidity?' Ananda, pure water, for instance, is fundamentally clear and clean, whereas dust, dirt, ashes, silt, and the like, are basically solid substances. Such are the properties of the two; their natures are not compatible. Suppose, then, that an ordinary person takes some dirt and tosses it into the pure water. The dirt loses its solid quality and the water is deprived of its transparency. The cloudiness which results is called 'turbidity.' Your five layers of turbidity are similar to it."  
  
Commentary:**   
  
What is meant by "turbidity?" In discussing the five turbidities, I will first explain the word "turbid" for you. Ananda, pure water, for instance, is fundamentally clear and clean, there is not the least bit of murkiness about it, whereas dust, dirt, ashes, silt, and the like, are basically solid substances. They are not transparent. Such are the properties of the two. These are properties of water and earth; when they are not mixed together, water is clear and dirt is solid. Their natures are not compatible. Water won't go along with the dirt, and the dirt won't comply with the water.  
  
Suppose, then, that an ordinary person takes some dirt and tosses it into the pure water. The ordinary person mentioned here is of the common, vulgar sort, a stupid worldly person who does not cultivate the Way. He doesn't have anything to do, so he goes looking for something to do. He makes a little work for himself. He takes some dirt and puts it in the water. How much dirt? Maybe a little, maybe a lot. If he has a jar of water, then he probably takes a handful of dirt. If it is a bucketful of water, he probably takes a shovelful of dirt. If he finds a whole pool of water, he will have to use a ton of earth. There's nothing fixed about it. The point is that the water and the dirt get mixed up together. It can be a little or a lot, big or small.  
  
There's no big, no small, no inside, no outside.  
One cultivates oneself, understands by oneself,  
And makes one's own arrangements.  
  
The same principle applies here. He arranges it himself. He uses whatever amount he uses. What do you suppose happens when he throws the dirt into the water? There is a chemical reaction. The dirt loses its solid quality and the water is deprived of its transparency. When the dirt hits the water it dissolves, losing its solidity. And the water which was originally clean and clear turns murky. The result is a mixture that is neither water nor dirt. This is how the science of chemistry was discovered; you should not think it is such a simple matter. The cloudiness which results is called "turbidity." Your five layers of turbidity are similar to it. Your four elements of earth, water, fire, and wind bring about the five turbidities by the same process.

N3 He explains in detail the names of the turbidities.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Ananda, you see that emptiness pervades the ten directions. There is no division between emptiness and seeing. However, although emptiness has no substance and your seeing has no awareness, the two become entangled in a falseness. This is the first layer, called the turbidity of time.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Ananda, you see that emptiness pervades the ten directions. There is no division between emptiness and seeing. Can you distinguish which is your seeing and which is emptiness? Is there a line drawn between your seeing and empty space? The meaning is that the nature of seeing and emptiness are one and the same. You can see, but basically there is not any "thing" that sees. There is no substance in evidence. The seeing is simply emptiness, and the emptiness is the seeing. However, although emptiness has no substance, "Its substance is just emptiness," someone argues. Well, get hold of that substance and let me see it. You can't grasp it. There isn't anything there after all. The seeing is just within emptiness. Yet there could never be any contention between the seeing and emptiness. Though it is present, the seeing would never demand the evacuation of emptiness. There is no clash between them. Although this is the Dharma-ending Age, strong in fighting, seeing and emptiness are not at odds.  
  
And your seeing has no awareness. The seeing it self is devoid of awareness; the awareness lies with you yourself, not with your seeing per se. In this situation, where the emptiness has no substance and the seeing no awareness, the two become entangled in a falseness. This is the first layer, called the turbidity of time. That's how time, the kalpa, comes into being. Ignorant worldly people with nothing in particular to do toss some dirt into clean water; and now you have gotten your seeing mixed up with emptiness in much the same way. The result is the turbidity of time. "Time" here is the word "kalpa," a Sanskrit word which is interpreted as meaning a division of time.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Your body appears in full, with the four elements composing its substance, and from this, seeing, hearing, sensation, and cognition become firmly defined. Water, fire, wind, and earth fluctuate between sensation and cognition and become entangled in a falseness. This is the second layer, called the turbidity of views.  
  
Commentary:**  
Your body appears in full, with the four elements composing its substance. You cannot become liberated, and the four elements combine into your body. With this combination come the awarenesses, such as seeing, hearing, sensation, and cognition. The four elements cause these awarenesses to become firmly defined. Water, fire, wind, and earth fluctuate between sensation and cognition. They go back and forth, back and forth, and a false awareness and comprehension arise. When that happens, they become entangled in a falseness. This is the second layer, called the turbidity of views. The false comprehension and awareness combine yet again to form another falseness, the turbidity of views.  
  
The explanation of the five turbities I gave earlier is entirely different from this one. That explanation was in terms of the world. This explanation is in terms of your own body. In fact, the external turbidities exist because of the five internal turbidities. By the same token, if you can get rid of your five corporeal turbidities, the five external turbidities will subside as well.

**Sutra:  
  
Further, the functions of memory, discrimination, and verbal comprehension in your mind bring into being knowledge and views. From out of them appear the six defiling objects. Apart from the defiling objects there are no appearances. Apart from cognition they have no nature. But they become entangled in a falseness. This is the third layer, called the turbidity of afflictions.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Further, the functions of memory, discrimination, and verbal comprehension in your mind bring into being knowledge and views. "Verbal comprehension" refers to study of either Buddhist texts or secular books. From out of them appear the six defiling objects. These functions bring into being knowledg, the realization of things you originally didn't know " and views" the understanding of things you originally didn't understand. But the knowledge gained from books is worldly; it is not the ultimate, genuine revelations of the self-nature. Once you have knowledge, the six defiling objects "forms, sounds, smells, tastes, objects of touch, and dharmas" appear. Apart from the defiling objects there are no appearances. If you separate from the wearisome dust, there are no substances or appearances. Apart from cognition they have no nature. But they become entangled in a falseness. If they didn't get together, there wouldn't be any falseness. Once there's a true, there's a false. Without the true there is no false. When there is the false, then there is the true. "True" and "false" are relative concepts. It's as Lao Zi said:  
  
Once the great Way is gone, humaneness appears.  
Once the wise appear, then comes great deceptiveness.   
Once close relatives are at odds, then comes the filial child.  
Once the country is in turmoil, then come the loyal ministers.  
  
Only when the great Way is gone do we talk about humaneness. When the great Way is still in evidence, there is no need for a concept like humaneness. When everyone is cultivating the Way, everyone knows enough not to cause others to give rise to affliction. All know enough to respect themselves and respect others, so there's no need to speak of humaneness. When people are all of fairly average intelligence, there is not much possibility of them cheating one another. It's only when someone intelligent appears and notices how stupid the others are by comparison that he decides he can play a trick and cheat them without their ever realizing it. So when the wise ones appear, there is great deception. If they all practiced the five-fold method of kindness between:  
  
1) prince and minister;  
2) father and son;  
3) husband and wife;  
4) brothers; and  
5) friends,  
  
no one would put on airs about being a kind father or a filial son. But, if the father is not kind, the child must compensate; this is when filiality arises. Or if the child is not filial, the father must compensate with kindness. Thus, "Once the close relatives are not in harmony, then comes the filial child."  
  
How do you tell who the loyal officials are in times of peace? Who are the traitors? When the country is at peace, the loyal ministers don't wear placards which read, "LOYAL," nor does anyone brand the heads of the traitors. But when there is unrest in the country, the ministers' loyalty will reveal itself. Why is it that to this day people speak so highly of Yao Fei? It is because when the country was in turmoil he was able to combat the enemy.  
  
The principle here in the sutra text is the same that Lao Zi was expressing. If there were only one element involved, things would not become turbid. The one true dharma-realm, or the treasury of the Thus Come One, or empty space, that would not give rise to turbidity. But because they get together and form a bloc, a falseness arises. This proves that there is truth and falseness in everything. So, even in the treasury of the Thus Come One, falseness comes forth from truth. In just the same way, we people have bodies which are tangible, solid objects, but in addition each of us also has a shadow. In the analogy the shadow stands for the false which arises from the true; it represents our ignorance. It is from ignorance that all our various problems arise. And here, the falseness which arises is the third layer, called the turbidity of afflictions.  
 **Sutra:  
  
And then day and night there is endless production and extinction as your knowledge and views continually wish to remain in the world, while your karmic patterns constantly move you to various places. This entanglement becomes a falseness, which is the fourth layer, called the turbidity of living beings.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
And then day and night there is endless production and extinction. Again and again your thoughts arise and cease, all day long without stopping, as your knowledge and views continually wish to remain in the world. "Knowledge and views" here refer to your intention, which is to remain in the world. You want to be immortal. You want to stay in this world forever and never die, while your karmic patterns constantly move you to various places. Your retribution body moves from one country to the next, from one land to another. This entanglement becomes a falseness, which is the fourth layer, called the turbidity of living beings. Because the thoughts in your mind are continually born and continually die, they are like living beings who are continually born and continually die. It is, therefore, referred to as the turbidity of living beings.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Originally, your seeing and hearing were not different natures, but a multitude of defiling objects has divided them until suddenly they became different. Their natures have a mutual awareness, but their functions are in opposition. Sameness and difference arise and they lose their identity. This entanglement becomes a falseness, which is the fifth layer, called the turbidity of a lifespan.  
  
Commentary:**  
Ananda, and all of you people who have not attained the state of being without outflows, originally, your seeing and hearing were not different natures. They weren't of two sorts to begin with. They were one and the same. But a multitude of defiling objects has divided them until suddenly they became different. Their natures have a mutual awareness, but their functions are in opposition. Seeing and hearing share a common knowledge. The meaning is this:  
  
The original single pure brightness,  
Divides into six different aspects.  
  
So the pure, bright nature has a common awareness, but the functions of the six aspects differ. The division into six aspects calls up different functions which are in mutual opposition. Eyes can see but cannot hear. Ears can hear but they cannot see. The nose smells scents. It cannot see or hear. The tongue senses tastes and cannot smell or see or hear. Sameness and difference arise and they lose their identity. They have no fixed definition. Since the six sense organs have lost their mutual identity, their functions lose their accuracy. They are not the same and not different, but with regard to both aspects, there is a lack of clear definition. Hence, it says, "Sameness and difference arise and they lose their identity." This entanglement becomes a falseness, which is the fifth layer, called the turbidity of a lifespan.  
  
M3 He makes clear what he must subdue.  
N1 He should decide on what to accept and what to reject.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Ananda, you now want to cause your seeing, hearing, sensation, and cognition to return to and tally with the permanence, bliss, true self, and purity of the Thus Come One.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Ananda, you now want to cause your seeing, hearing, sensation, and cognition " smelling and tasting are included here as well" to return to and tally with the permanence, bliss, true self, and purity of the Thus Come One. Seeing, hearing, sensation, and cognition originally arose from false conditions. Now you want to cause them to return to and tally with the treasury of the Thus Come One and the four virtues of nirvana: permanence, bliss, true self, and purity.  
 **Sutra:  
  
You should first decide what the basis of birth and death is by relying on the perfect, tranquil nature which is neither produced nor extinguished.  
  
Commentary:**  
You want to tally with the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One. You should first decide what the basis of birth and death is by relying on the perfect, tranquil nature which is neither produced nor extinguished. Use the perfectly fused, pure, and tranquil nature; then you can unite with the treasury of the Thus Come One.  
  
N2 The subduing and severing described in terms of dharma and by analogy.  
O1 First he speaks of the dharma.  
 **Sutra:  
  
By means of this tranquility, turn the empty and false production and extinction so that they are subdued and return to the source of enlightenment. The attainment of this source of bright enlightenment, which is neither produced nor extinguished, is the mind on the cause-ground.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
By means of this tranquility, turn the empty and false production and extinction. Use the tranquility of the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One to cause your empty, false nature to come back and be false no longer, so that they are subdued and return to the source of enlightenment. Subdue your afflictions and return to your fundamental enlightenment, which is neither produced nor extinguished. This is the mind on the causeground of cultivation. This is the mind you use in initial cultivation. Don't use the mind subject to production and extinction; use the perfect, tranquil nature which is neither produced nor extinguished.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Then you can completely accomplish the cultivation of and certification to the ground of fruition.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
If on the cause-ground you use the mind which is neither produced nor extinguished, then you can completely accomplish the cultivation of and certification to the ground of fruition. The "ground of fruition" refers to the accomplishment of Bodhisattvahood or Buddhahood. If you apply your effort in cultivation and understand genuine principle, then you can quite naturally and very quickly cultivate and be certified to the fruition.  
  
O2 He explains by analogy.  
 **Sutra:  
  
It is like purifying muddy water by placing it in a quiet vessel which is kept completely still and unmoving. The sand and silt settle, and the pure water appears. This is called the initial subduing of the guest-dust affliction.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
There is an analogy for cultivation and certification of the mind on the cause-ground. It is like purifying muddy water. As we just discussed, when someone throws dirt into clean water, the water turns muddy. The dirt loses its solidity, and the water loses its clarity. This represents living beings who are originally in the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One, but who then get mixed up with the four elements and the five turbidities and give rise to ignorance and affliction. From the one truth arises the false. This falseness is not true; the truth is not false. It's as I explained earlier. The true can be represented by our bodies and the false by our shadows. Is the shadow true? No. It only exists when there is a light shining on the body. The shadow then represents ignorance, be cause ignorance is also basically unreal; it is something false which arises from the true. But, because this one falseness arises, every kind of falseness arises. This can be illustrated by the analogy here of dirt being thrown into water, causing both the dirt and the water to lose their fundamental qualities and become mixed together.  
  
Now the mind on the cause-ground cultivates to return to purity; this is like putting the muddy water in a quiet vessel which is kept completely still and unmoving. What is this quiet vessel? This represents you who sit in Chan. When we sit in meditation and investigate Chan, we are purifying the muddy water by sitting there unmoving. When we have developed samadhi-power, we pour the pure water of samadhi into our self-nature. Then your body is like the quiet vessel. But you must be completely unmoving. It's not the case that you can move your legs at the first sign of pain, or that you can lean back and relax when your back hurts. Those of you who stretch out your legs at the slightest inclination or stack pillows behind you in a nest have not yet learned how to conserve your blessings. You are always looking for ways to get comfortable. In America, people are forever concerned about comfort, and even in the poorest households there is a television set. We can't say this is being "completely still and unmoving." One who is still and unmoving is not afraid of anything. A little leg pain is no big deal. The sand and silt settle, and the pure water appears. The sand and silt represent your ignorance and affliction. When they are gone, your self-nature, represented by the pure water, appears. The water of samadhi becomes evident, and you develop some samadhipower.  
  
This growing samadhi-power is called the initial subduing of the guest-dust affliction. The reason it is called "guest-dust" is that it is not real. It is the false that arises from the true. From true nature of Bodhi a false thought is produced, and from it come ignorance and affliction. "Guest-dust" means that it is not something inherent in you but is something external. The dust of ignorance and affliction is false and does not come from your self nature. Since it has no origin, it is called "guest-dust affliction." It is not real.  
 **Sutra:  
  
The complete removal of the mud from the water is called the eternal severance of fundamental ignorance.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
The previous passage explained how, if muddy water is put in a quiet vessel and kept still, the sand and silt will settle to the bottom. But, if there is a complete removal of the mud from the water, if the water is put in another, clean vessel, then there is what is called the eternal severance of fundamental ignorance. If you simply let the mud stay in the bottom of the vessel, saying that the water is clean, so there's no need to bother about the mud, then as soon as the vessel is moved, the mud will be stirred up again. That represents ignorance and affliction coming up again. Getting rid of the mud is called eternally cutting off basic ignorance. It takes a long time for the sand and silt thrown into the clear water to settle to the bottom. Then to remove the sediment altogether from the water is a lot more work. But only then do you reach a state of total purity. Fundamental ignorance refers to the appearance-ofproduction ignorance, and it is not at all easy to get rid of. You shouldn't think it's so simple. Even a Bodhisattva at the stage of equal enlightenment has one bit of it left. When that last bit of the appearance-of-production ignorance is severed, one realizes Buddhahood.  
  
N3 He concludes with certification to the ultimate fruition.  
 **Sutra:  
  
When clarity is pure to its essence, then no matter what happens there is no affliction. Everything is in accord with the pure and wonderful virtues of nirvana.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
When clarity is pure to its essence, you've gotten rid of the sediment entirely. The clarity is totally devoid of falseness; it is one hundred percent true. This represents arrival at the ultimate fruition, the accomplishment of Buddhahood. At that time there is a clear appearance. "Pure to its essence" means "devoid of any ignorance or affliction whatsoever." Then no matter what happens there is no affliction. At this stage we no longer say that affliction is Bodhi, because by this time there isn't any affliction at all. When you sever fundamental ignorance there naturally is no affliction. Everything is in accord with the pure and wonderful virtues of nirvana. Everything is in harmony with the principle of no production and no extinction. Everything is pure and undefiled, like the subtle, wonderful merit and virtue of nirvana.

Liberation of the Organs  
  
L2 The decisive doctrine that the liberation of the organ by untying the knot is entry  
into the perfect penetration.  
M1 He teaches him to untie the knot from within the organ.  
N1 He must resolve on the most superior mind.  
 **Sutra:  
  
The second resolution is this: if you definitely wish to bring forth the resolve for Bodhi and to be especially courageous and dedicated in your cultivation of the Bodhisattva Vehicle, you must decisively renounce all conditioned appearances.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
I've finished explaining the first decisive resolution for you. The second resolution is this: if you definitely wish to bring forth the resolve for Bodhi, with me here are sound-hearers and condition-enlightened ones who have something left to study and who have decided to turn from the small toward the great, to make the resolve for enlightenment, and to be especially courageous and dedicated in your cultivation of the Bodhisattva Vehicle, then when you bring forth the resolve for Bodhi, you should practice the Bodhisattva Way. Be courageous and fierce. Don't quickly advance and then all of a sudden retreat. Don't go forward two steps and then back three. If you are "courageous" you will be the ultimate victor. If you are "dedicated" you will be like a tiger whose attack is so strong and violent that none can withstand it. The great generals of old, like Zhu Ba Wang, were courageous and fierce in this way; they would stand until they had won and would never admit defeat. They were not afraid to die, let alone undergo every sort of difficulty. No matter how tough the enemy was, they were not afraid. You must decisively renounce all conditioned appearances. Be decisive; don't waver. Don't vacillate between the great vehicle and the small vehicle, as Ananda does, unable to make up his mind. He wants to bring forth the resolve for the great vehicle, but he can't let go of the dharma of causes and conditions. He says, "The Buddha's explanation of causes and conditions is really good. Why has the Buddha decided to reject it now and even to tell us not to cultivate it?" When you decide to do something, be firm about it. Don't stand with each foot in a different boat. There's a saying in China,  
  
One person has feet in two boats;  
He wants to go south on the river,  
and he wants to go north.  
  
Where do you think he'll be able to go as he stands there with each foot in a different boat? This is a prime example of indecisiveness. But now the Buddha is telling them to he decisive and renounce all conditioned appearances. The conditioned dharmas belong to the small vehicle. "Conditioned" refers to all creation. Anything with form and appearance is a conditioned dharma. All conditioned dharmas, anything with form and appearance, will eventually undergo destruction. Unconditioned dharmas have no form and appearance and so they can never be destroyed. Earlier in the sutra the Buddha gave the example of empty space, asking when it would be destroyed. The answer was that it would never be destroyed, since it has no form or appearance. That was another case in which the Buddha used empty space to represent the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One.  
  
N2 An analogy to show that he must know where the knot is.  
 **Sutra:  
  
You should carefully consider the origin of affliction and the beginningless creation of karma and perpetuation of rebirth, who creates it and who endures it?  
  
Commentary:**  
  
You should carefully consider the origin of affliction. You should look into this in the most minute detail. The Buddha tells Ananda, "What is the origin of affliction?" Do we know what the origin of affliction is? Where does affliction come from, anyway? And the beginningless creation of karma and perpetuation of rebirth. If you can't finish things up this life, you have to be reborn and come back next life. Who creates it and who endures it? Who creates karma and who undergoes the retribution?  
 **Sutra:  
  
Ananda, if in your cultivation of Bodhi you do not carefully consider the origin of affliction, you cannot realize the empty falseness of the sense-organs and sense-objects or the location of delusion. If you don't even know its location, how can you subdue it and reach the level of the Thus Come One?  
  
Commentary:**  
Ananda, if in your cultivation of Bodhi, the Enlightened Way, the dharma of the great vehicle Bodhisattvas, you do not carefully consider the origin of affliction, you cannot realize the empty falseness of the sense-organs and sense-objects. You won't recognize the illusoriness of the four elements, the six sense-organs and six defiling objects, the five skandhas, and the like, or the location of delusion. You won't know where you are upside-down and where you are not upside-down. If you don't even know its location, if you don't understand where delusion comes from, what its origin is, how can you subdue it? How can you tame the upside-down ignorance and afflictions? You won't be able to do it, or to reach the level of the Thus Come One. If you can?t subdue it, how can you obtain the ultimate, wonderful fruition of the Thus Come One?  
 **Sutra:  
  
Ananda, consider the ordinary person who wants to untie a knot. If he can't see where the knot is, how can he untie it?**

**Commentary:**  
  
Shakyamuni Buddha calls out again, "Ananda, consider the ordinary person who wants to untie a knot. Suppose a string gets all tangled up, and someone wants to untangle it. If he can't find the knot, how can he untie it?" This passage, of course, refers to the above instruction that you must know the location of the arisal of delusion; only then can you get rid of it. If you don't even know the origin of the delusion, how can you get rid of it? If you don't know the location of what is upside-down, you cannot develop your skill in cultivation.  
 **Sutra:  
  
But I have never heard that one can obliterate empty space. Why? It is because emptiness has no form or appearance; therefore there are no knots to untie.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Now the Buddha brings up an example of something without any knots to be untied. What is it? He says, "But I have never heard that one can obliterate empty space. I've never heard of anyone smashing empty space or slicing it into little pieces. Why? It is because emptiness has no form or appearance; therefore there are no knots to untie. The nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One inherent in you is the same as empty space."  
  
N3 He tells him that the organ is actually the knot.  
 **Sutra:  
  
But now your visible eyes, ears, nose and tongue, as well as your body and mind, are like six thieving matchmakers who plunder the jewels of your household.  
  
Commentary:**  
But now your visible eyes, ears, nose and tongue, as well as your body and mind, are like six thieving matchmakers. People think that the six sense-organs are helpful, but actually it is just these six destructive things that steal the dharma-jewels of our selfnature.  
  
But you still don't realize this. You consider the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind to be your best friends. Who would have guessed that these six are what invite the thieves into the house. They plunder the jewels of your household. For instance, your eyes catch sight of something. Before you saw it, everything was fine. As it says:  
  
What the eyes don't see,  
the mouth won't hanker for.  
What the ears don't hear,  
the mind won't commit offenses about.  
  
Someone is eating something and you see it, and you grow a hand in your throat which reaches out, grabs the thing, and eats it. Why does the mouth become so gluttonous? Because the eyes see something good to eat. You say your eyes help you because they enable you to see things, but just because you see things you give rise to a lot of affliction. For instance, you see something or someone beautiful and you want it. But once you get it, it's a source of affliction. And if you don't get it, that's affliction, too, because you just keep chasing after it.  
  
The ears hear some pleasant sound and they become greedy to hear more. Once greed arises, then if you haven't got what you want, you think of ways to get it, and if you do get it, you are afraid of losing it. So the ears bring you a lot of affliction, too. To "plunder the jewels of your household" just means to lead you to give rise to afflictions. If you are without any affliction, you will not lose the gems of your household, but once you give rise to affliction, your gems are gone. As it says,  
  
The firewood gathered in a thousand days,  
Goes up in a single blaze.  
  
By the same token, you cultivate for a thousand days and all the progress you make, perhaps a state of light ease, will disappear with the first evidence of affliction, the first signs of ignorance. It is said:  
  
A spark of fire burns down a forest of merit and virtue.  
  
When your nose smells something fragrant, your mind gets greedy. When your tongue tastes a fine flavor, you also give rise to greed. The body comes in contact with objects of touch. Some objects of touch bring pleasant sensations, and some bring unpleasant ones. The mind conditions dharmas. In short, because of your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, you give rise to various kinds of afflictions, and the gems of your household are all taken away from you.  
  
We speak about no outflows. Well, the six consciousnesses that are produced by the interaction of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind with their defiling objects are what are called outflows. If you can reach the level where,  
  
The eyes see shape and form,  
but inside there is nothing;  
The ears hear the defiling sounds,  
but the mind does not know of them,  
  
then you will not be plundered by thieves. But if you don't have the required skill; if you lack samadhi-power; if you chase after the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind and cannot return the light and illumine within, then you have outflows and are being robbed of your inherent wealth.  
  
The six sense-organs are described here as "thieving matchmakers." It used to be in China that weddings had to be arranged through a matchmaker. In early Chinese history, during the Zhou dynasty, prior to the Lie Guo, there were no matchmakers. People just found their own mates in the way that is customary in the West today. In fact, during the Zhou dynasty things between men and women were extremely casual. There were no rules to speak of at all. Then Confucius revised and edited the Six Classics: the Book of Poetry, the Book of History, the Book of Changes, the Book of Rites, the Book of Music, and the Spring and Autumn Annals. From then on there had to be a matchmaker whose job it was to select men and women who were well suited for one another. Then, if they were about the same age and size, overtures would be made. "Such and- such a young lady is very virtuous." "Such-and-such a student is very intelligent.' Once the introductions were complete, everything was arranged.  
  
Here, the use of the word "matchmaker" in the text carries much the same meaning. The six sense-organs interact with the six defiling objects, and between them the six consciousnesses arise. The communications that occur between the sense-organs, the sense-objects, and the consciousnesses are a lot like the job of a matchmaker. The match is made and the involvement happens before anyone realizes that a thief is present. But the thief steals your wealth of merit and virtue. It plunders the gems of your household.  
  
What are the gems of your household? You should know that yourself. Whatever you take to be your gems, you should carefully protect. I don't know what your gems are, and you don't know what my treasures are.  
  
"I know what my gems are," you say. "They are gold, silver, and diamonds."  
  
No, they're not. Although I don't know what your gems are, I do know that if you think those are your gems, you're mistaken. "Well, what are my household gems, then?" you wonder.  
  
So now you yourself don't know what they are? Even though you don't know, I can tell you, although I'd rather not. But since you want to know, I think I should comply and tell you, except that I'm afraid you won't believe me. Do you see what a spot I'm in? I can't figure out if it's better to tell you or not. If I tell you and you don't believe me, then I've wasted some energy. But if I don't tell you when you want to know, there's always the chance that you might believe me. So now I've decided to tell you. What are your treasures? They are simply the pure nature and bright substance of your eternal true mind within the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One.  
  
The Buddha-jewel of your self-nature, the dharma-jewel of your self-nature, and the Sangha-jewel of your self-nature are your gems, too. Also, in your own physical being you should cultivate precepts, cultivate samadhi, and cultivate Wisdom, as they, too, are the gems of your household. The light of your enlightened nature is also a true gem of your household.  
  
"I can't even see those things; how can I lose them?" you ask. Ah, that's the very reason I didn't want to tell you. You don't believe what you can't see, and so it's no wonder you don't believe this, because it really is an invisible thing. But you have some sense of awareness, even though you can't see it. If your awareness is coupled with wisdom, you will have more jewels. If you are stupid, however, you will lose your jewels. Examine yourself: are you wise or stupid? This is not to say, though, that you should stand up and announce that you have wisdom like the Buddha's, like a certain person who calls himself a patriarch. All I did with him was to say I was going to kill him, and he fled in terror. Next time you meet up with a person like this, just beat him up from head to foot, and if he cries, "Why are you beating me?" you can answer, "I'm just beating empty space, since you basically don't exist, right? How can you be aware of pain? If you are aware of pain, you're no different from an ordinary person, and you can't compare yourself to the Buddha. If you aren't aware of the pain, then you're just a block of wood or a piece of rock. You don't have any sensation, so you're just like excrement." Tell him that, and say, "Take my advice and don't go around acting crazily the way you have been. Don't go around saying, 'I'm just like the Buddha without any difference. I am the Buddha, I am a patriarch.' If you do that, in the future you will fall into the uninterrupted hells." Such people are insane; how can they cultivate and accomplish Buddhahood? Have you ever heard of a crazy Buddha? No. Crazy people like that cannot enter the Buddhadharma because they are already immersed in the views of heavenly demons and externalist ways. The Buddha himself cannot save such people. They are really a pitiful lot.  
  
**Sutra:  
  
And, thus, from beginningless time living beings and the world have been bound up together, so that the material world cannot be transcended.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
And, thus, from beginningless time living beings and the world have been bound up together. The six sense organs, the six defiling objects, and the consciousnesses in between communicate back and forth until they are as dependent upon one another as the two beasts, lang and bei. The lang has the use of its two front legs, and the bei has the use of the two back legs. So the lang and the bei have to work together in order to walk. If they aren't in harmony, the lang can't move, and the bei can't go anywhere by himself, either. The same kind of interdependence is required of the six sense-organs, the six sense-objects, and the six consciousnesses between them. They play the same kind of trick. From time without beginning there has been the continuity of the world and the continuity of living beings. The two get stuck together until living beings can't get out of the world, and the world can't exist without living beings. They are glued together, so that the material world cannot be transcended. The "material world" refers to all the mountains, the rivers, the great earth, the buildings, and other manmade objects. "Living beings" refers to the realm of sentience.  
  
Eventually living beings cannot separate themselves from the material world, and the material world cannot be free of the sentient world. The material world draws in the sentient world, enticing it until the two interlock and cannot transcend one another. So there is a definite interdependence among the continuity of living beings, the continuity of the world, and the continuity of karmic retribution. Without any living beings, there would be no world; without any world, there would be no karmic retribution. To have a world there must be karmic retribution and there must be living beings. If one does not exist, none exist.  
  
N4 He shows the efficacy of the six organs.  
O1 He asks about and explains what living beings and time and space are.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Ananda, what is meant by the time and space of living beings? 'Time' refers to change and flow; 'space' refers to location.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
"Ananda, now I'll ask you. What is meant by 'living beings'? What is meant by 'time and space'? Do you know?" Ananda didn't answer, so the Buddha explained it for him: What is meant by the time and space of living beings? 'Time' refers to change and flow; 'space' refers to location. Time and space in Chinese are rendered here as shi and jie respectively. This compound also means 'world.'  
 **Sutra:  
  
You should know by now that north, east, south, west, northeast, northwest, southeast, southwest, above and below are space. Past, present, and future are periods of time. There are ten directions in space and three periods of time.  
  
Commentary:**  
You should know by now that north, east, south, west, the four directions, and northeast, northwest, southeast, southwest, the four intermediate directions, as well as above and below are space. Past, present, and future are periods of time. There are ten directions in space and three periods of time.  
  
O2 He calculates its inherent efficacy step by step.  
 **Sutra:  
  
All living beings come into being because of false interaction. Their bodies go through changes and they are caught up in time and space.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
All living beings come into being because of false interaction. These false appearances become involved with each other. Their bodies go through changes. It's like a small commercial enterprise or trade center. You give me something in return for something you don't have. And they are caught up in time and space. They are caught up in the 'world.' You may not see it, but there is a definite connection between one?s physical body and the world. People?s bodies are a small business, and their interaction with the world is big business. In this way they keep appearing and disappearing, as their involvement forever grows.  
 **Sutra:  
  
However, although there are ten directions in space, those known in the world as north, south, east, and west are the only ones that can be clearly fixed. Above and below have no position; the intermediates have no definite direction. Determined clearly to be four in number, they are then combined with the three periods of time. Three times four, or, alternately, four times three, make twelve.  
  
Commentary:**  
However, although there are ten directions in space, those known in the world as north, south, east, and west, everyone knows them, are the only ones that can be clearly fixed. Most people speak of only four directions. Above and below have no position; the intermediates have no definite direction. When you say something is in between, what are you relating it to? You can't establish a fixed middle. Determined clearly to be four in number, everyone agrees on this; it's very obvious they are then combined with the three periods of time. Three times four, or, alternately, four times three, make twelve. Here we have fixed the number of the world, the three periods of time and the four directions.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Increase it three times: itself multiplied by ten and again by ten, to reach the thousands: one thousand two hundred is the greatest possible efficacy of the six organs.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Increase it three times. Consider twelve three ways: as itself, that is, twelve; multiplied by ten, which makes one hundred and twenty; and again by ten, which makes one thousand two hundred; this is to reach the thousands: one thousand two hundred is the greatest possible efficacy of the six organs. Beginning with twelve and increased to a maximum of twelve hundred: this is the limit of the efficacy of each of the six organs, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind when they interact with the world. The 'increase (by) three times' has to do with the three kinds of continuity, of living beings, of the world, and of karmic retribution.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Ananda, you can thereby establish their value. For example, the eyes see darkness behind and light in front. The front is totally light; the back is totally dark. With your peripheral vision included, you can see two thirds around at most. Therefore, its capacity can be expressed as an efficacy which is not complete. One third of its efficacy is without virtue. Know, then, that the eyes have an efficacy of only eight hundred.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
This is the way Shakyamuni Buddha explained the sutra. The meanings will be explained as the sutra continues. Don't be nervous at this point. Ananda, you can thereby establish their value. You can decide for yourself which of the six organs are superior and which are inferior.  
  
For example, the eyes, which potentially have an efficacy of twelve hundred, see darkness behind and light in front. They can see what's in front, but not what's behind. Of course, this does not refer to the Buddha eye. A person with the Buddha eye can see not only in front, but behind, to both sides, above, and below, he can see the entirety of empty space. That's not at issue here, because we are talking about the ordinary flesh eye at this point. The front is totally light; the back is totally dark. With your peripheral vision included, you can see two thirds around at most. You can't see all the way around. Therefore, its capacity can be expressed as an efficacy which is not complete. One third of its efficacy is without virtue. You can see in front and to the sides, but you can't see behind. Know, then, that the eyes have an efficacy of only eight hundred. They are not a superior organ since they don't use the entire potential of their efficacy.  
  
What is being explained now is explained in preparation for the instruction given by the twenty-five sages when they discuss their perfect penetration. Each has selected an organ for perfect penetration.  
  
O3 He reveals the range of efficacy of the six sense-organs.  
 **Sutra:  
  
For example, the ears hear everywhere in the ten directions, without loss. They hear movements, whether far or near, and stillness without bounds. Know, then, that the organ of hearing is complete with an efficacy of twelve hundred.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Shakyamuni Buddha told Ananda: For example, the ears hear everywhere. The ears' sensation of hearing is unobstructed. They're not like the eyes, which use only a part of their potential. The organ of hearing reaches everywhere, to the front, back, left, and right, and above, below; wherever there is a sound, it can hear it in the ten directions, without loss. There's nothing the ears cannot hear. They hear movements, whether far or near, and stillness without bounds. Know, then, that the organ of hearing is complete with an efficacy of twelve hundred.  
 **Sutra:  
  
For example, the nose smells odors with each inhalation and exhalation of the breath. It is deficient at the point between the inhalation and exhalation. The organ of smell can be considered to be deficient by one third. Know, then, that the nose has an efficacy of only eight hundred.  
  
Commentary:**  
For example, the nose smells odors, it has the ability to smell, with each inhalation and exhalation of the breath. It is deficient at the point between the inhalation and exhalation. Between inhaling and exhaling there is a moment's pause during which no smelling takes place. The organ of smell can be considered to be deficient by one third. It is also deficient by one third. Know, then, that the nose has an efficacy of only eight hundred.  
 **Sutra:  
  
For example, the tongue can proclaim the entirety of worldly and transcendental wisdom. Although language varies according to locality, the principles go beyond boundaries of any kind. Know, then, that the organ of the tongue is complete with an efficacy of twelve hundred.  
  
Commentary:**  
Basically, the tongue is the organ of taste, but that is not its only function. Here the tongue's ability to speak is discussed. For example, the tongue can proclaim the entirety of worldly and transcendental wisdom. The tongue can speak dharma; it can express both worldly and world-transcending dharmas. Although language varies according to locality, there are differences in language and dialect, the principles go beyond boundaries of any kind. When the patriarch, Bodhidharma, came from India to China, he was confronted by the language barrier. The Chinese did not understand his language so they nicknamed him "the barbarian," as an expression of their prejudice. Most people wouldn't even speak to him, and those who tried didn't understand much of what he had to say, so no matter where Patriarch Bodhidharma went, no one paid any attention to his teaching of the Buddhadharma. That being the case, he went to Loyang to Bear's Ear mountain and sat in meditation facing a wall. This was a case of a language barrier preventing someone from establishing conditions with people.  
  
Although the languages differ, the principles are inexhaustible. Know, then, that the organ of the tongue is complete with an efficacy of twelve hundred. It fulfills its maximum potential.  
 **Sutra:  
  
For example, the body is aware of touch, registering it as pain or pleasure. When it makes contact, it is aware of the thing touched; when in isolation, it has no tactile knowledge of other things. Isolation has a single and contact has a dual aspect. The organ of the body can be considered as deficient by one third. Know, then, that the body has an efficacy of only eight hundred.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
For example, the body is aware of touch; the body senses physical contact, registering it as pain or pleasure. You find some kinds of contact undesirable and some enjoyable. When it makes contact, it is aware of the thing touched. When the organ of the body and the object which is external to it come together, there is an awareness of contact. When in isolation, it has no tactile knowledge of other things. When the contact is withdrawn, there is no knowledge of it; one is unaware of it. Isolation has a single and contact has a dual aspect. In isolation we become an individual entity; when we come in contact with something, there is an experience of touch, either painful or pleasurable. The organ of the body can be considered as deficient by one third. Of the potential efficacy of twelve hundred, it is deficient by one third. Know, then, that the body has an efficacy of only eight hundred.  
 **Sutra:  
  
For example, the mind silently includes all worldly and transcendental dharmas of the ten directions and the three periods of time. Regardless of whether it be sagely or ordinary, everything is included in its boundlessness. Know, then, that the organ of the mind is complete with an efficacy of twelve hundred.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
For example, the mind silently includes all worldly and transcendental dharmas of the ten directions and the three periods of time. The realm of the five defiling objects has just been discussed. The "mind" here refers to the sixth mind-consciousness. The mind is quiet, but in its discriminations it encompasses all the dharmas of the world and what is beyond the world. Regardless of whether it be sagely or ordinary, everything is included in its boundlessness. Know, then, that the organ of the mind is complete with an efficacy of twelve hundred. The mind also fulfills its entire potential of twelve hundred efficacies.

N5 He teaches him to enlighten and perfectly enter.  
O1 He causes him to investigate and enlighten to the perfection of the six.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Ananda, now you wish to oppose the flow of desire that leads to birth and death. You should turn back the flow of the organs to reach a state of neither production nor extinction.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
The Buddha again calls to Ananda: Now you wish to oppose the flow of desire that leads to birth and death. You don't want to follow along with that flow any more but want to develop the skill to oppose the flow. You should turn back the flow of the organs to reach a state of neither production nor extinction. You want to return and find the source of the flow of birth and death.  
 **Sutra:  
  
You should investigate all of these six functioning organs to see which are uniting, which are isolated, which are deep, which are shallow, which will penetrate perfectly, and which are not perfect.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
You should first figure out which organ penetrates the most perfectly, without obstruction, and which organ will not lead to perfect penetration.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Once you have awakened to the organ which penetrates perfectly, you should thereupon reverse the flow of its beginningless involvement in false karma. Then you will know the difference between one that penetrates perfectly and one that does not. Then a day and an aeon will be one and the same.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Once you have awakened to the organ which penetrates perfectly, if you can find the source of birth and death and oppose the flow of karma, you will know which organ penetrates most perfectly. You should thereupon reverse the flow of its beginningless involvement in false karma. You don?t have to comply with the flow of birth and death, you can counteract it. Then you will know the difference between one that penetrates perfectly and one that does not. When you understand which organ penetrates most perfectly, and if you then cultivate, then a day and an aeon will be one and the same. Before you understood about the perfect organ, you could have cultivated for an aeon and still not become a Buddha. Once you understand the perfect organ which is not subject to birth and death, you can cultivate for one day, and it will equal the cultivation of a great aeon.  
  
O2 He causes him to enter one and liberate six.  
 **Sutra:  
  
I have now revealed to you the fundamental efficacy of the tranquil perfect brightness of these six. This is what the numbers are; it is up to you to select which one to enter. I will explain more to aid your progress in it.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
I have now revealed to you the fundamental efficacy of the tranquil perfect brightness of these six. I have explained the principle very clearly for you. The basic nature of these six is very still and pure. I have told you the extent of the efficacy of each organ. You know now which organs function with the greatest capacity and which are less efficient. This is what the numbers are; it is up to you to select which one to enter. I have explained to you the degree of each organ's potential. It's up to you, Ananda, to make a careful choice in deciding which one can be entered. See which organ you respond to.  
  
Basically, it's already been made clear that the organ of hearing penetrates most perfectly, but the Buddha is not going to tell Ananda that directly. He's going to let Ananda pick it out. The Buddha simply stated the degree of each organ's capability and leaves it up to Ananda to make the choice. And that's what he tells him now.  
  
I will explain more to aid your progress in it. After you have made your selection, I will explain things for you in greater detail. I will reveal to you how to work with that organ in order to advance in your cultivation.  
 **Sutra:  
  
The Thus Come Ones of the ten directions cultivated by means of all of the eighteen realms and obtained perfect, unsurpassed Bodhi. All of them were generally adequate.  
  
Commentary:**  
The Thus Come Ones of the ten directions. The Buddha brings up the Tathagatas of the ten directions as certification. They cultivated by means of all of the eighteen realms and obtained perfect, unsurpassed Bodhi. All of them were generally adequate. The five skandhas, the six entrances, the twelve places, and the eighteen realms: of these, none was more adequate than any other.  
 **Sutra:  
  
But you are at an inferior level and are not yet able to perfect comfortable wisdom among them. Therefore, I shall give you an explanation, so that you will be able to enter deeply into one door.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
But you are at an inferior level. The Thus Come Ones of the ten directions become perfected by means of the five skandhas, the six entrances, the twelve places, and the eighteen realms and can obtain unsurpassed Bodhi through any of them. For them, any one of these is as adequate as any other. None is less effective. But you are different, your root-nature is inferior at this point. You are still very stupid and are not yet able to perfect comfortable wisdom among them. You can't choose just any one of the five skandhas, the six entrances, the twelve places, or the eighteen realms and obtain through it the wisdom that is perfect and masterful. Therefore, I shall give you an explanation, so that you will be able to enter deeply into one door. I will explain the workings of each organ for you until you understand how to enter deeply into one door.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Enter one without falseness, and the six sense organs will be simultaneously pure.  
  
Commentary:**  
Enter one without falseness. You enter deeply into one organ to the point that the false is gone and the purity is absolute. When one organ is without falseness, the six sense organs will be simultaneously pure. They will all become pure and comfortable at the same time.  
  
M2 He instructs him to untie the knot and enter perfect penetration.  
N1 Ananda restates the Buddha?s words and asks for benefit.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Ananda said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, how do we oppose the flow, enter deeply into one door, and cause the six organs to simultaneously become pure?"  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Ananda still didn't really understand what he had heard the Buddha say, and so he asked the Buddha about it. Ananda said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, how do we oppose the flow? What do you mean by opposing the flow of birth and death? How do we enter deeply into one door? Which door should we enter into deeply? Where is this door? How do we cause the six organs to simultaneously become pure? How do we enter one without falseness and thereby cause all the six organs to be pure at once? What's the principle involved here?"  
  
N2 The Thus Come One answers the question with a multifold statement.  
O1 The knot of delusion is deep.  
 **Sutra:  
  
The Buddha told Ananda, "You have already obtained the fruition of a Shrotaapanna. You have already extinguished the view-delusions of living beings in the three realms, but you do not yet know that your organs have accumulated habits that are without beginning. It is through cultivation that one severs not simply these habits, but also their numerous subtleties as they pass through arisal, dwelling, change, and extinction."  
  
Commentary:**  
  
The Buddha told Ananda, "You have already obtained the fruition of a Shrotaapanna, the first fruition of arhatship." "Shrotaapanna" means "entering the flow," entering the flow of the dharma-nature of a sage. It also means "opposing the flow," of the six defiling objects that ordinary people experience. [The Vajra Sutra](http://cttbusa.org/vajra/vajrasutra.asp) explains the four fruitions very clearly. It says that one who "enters the flow" does not enter forms, sounds, smells, tastes, objects of touch, or dharmas. "Not entering" means one is not turned around by the six sense-objects. Whether what people at this stage see is beautiful or not beautiful, their minds are not moved, because they have already severed the eighty-eight categories of view-delusion. They are not moved by anything they see, hear, smell, or otherwise perceive. This stage of arhatship is also called "preparing for the flow" of the sage.  
  
You have already extinguished the view-delusions of living beings in the three realms. This refers to the eighty-eight categories of view-delusion. But you do not yet know that your organs have accumulated habits that are without beginning. These habits have been piling up for numerous lives and numerous aeons. It is through cultivation that one severs not simply these habits, but also their numerous subtleties as they pass through arisal, dwelling, change, and extinction. There are all sorts of divisions, sections, interrelationships, circumstances, and causes and conditions. It is by cultivating that you can sever the habits of many aeons.  
  
O2 The one and the six are due to falseness.  
 **Sutra:  
  
You should now contemplate the six organs further: are they one or six? If you say they are one, Ananda, why can't the ears see? Why can't the eyes hear? Why can't the head walk? Why can't the feet talk?  
  
Commentary:**  
  
The Buddha says to Ananda, "You should now contemplate the six organs further: are they one or six? You ask me why are all the six organs pure when one organ is free of falseness? But take a look now: are they six or one? Are they one or six? If you say they are one, Ananda, if you say that the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind are of a single substance, why can't the ears see? Why can't the eyes hear? What's the reason that eyes can only see things and cannot hear them? Why can't the head walk? If they were a single substance, the feet could walk and the head could, too. The eyes could see and could also hear, if they were one substance. Why can't the feet talk?" That reminds me of the man who came to visit yesterday and said he was the American patriarch. I told him that he was indulging in "intellectual talk- Zen," to which he replied that his was "intellectual foot-Zen." He thought his answer was really wonderful. Here, the Buddha asks Ananda, "Why can't the feet talk?'  
  
Ultimately, are the ears capable of seeing? They are. Are the eyes capable of hearing? They are. Is it possible for the head to walk? No, the head can't walk. Is it possible for the feet to talk? No, the feet can't talk. How can you say that the ears can talk and the eyes can hear? This principle is something which each person must come to know for himself or herself. A person who has experienced it understands this principle of the mutual functioning of the six organs. But Ananda is now only a first-stage arhat, so he has not yet experienced the simultaneous inter-functioning of the six sense organs. The mouth, too, can not only speak, but can also see and hear.  
  
"Dharma master," someone protests, "the things you say aren't even in the sutras. You're just blabbering nonsense." There are a lot of things that aren't found in the sutras. If the sutras fully explained it all, there would be no need for commentaries such as mine. As t the sutras, the printed words are black, the paper is white, and if you pursue the sutras simply of themselves, you're running after something that's dead, not something that's alive.  
  
Although we say the sutra is like a road, and can be recited,  
It has no direct relation to your very life!  
  
If you want to end birth and death, you have to use the mind not subject to production and extinction in your cultivation of the Way. The sutra is something subject to production and extinction. In the future, the sutras will disappear. The very first to go will be the Shurangama Sutra. In the Dharma-ending Age, the first to disappear will be this sutra, and that's why I like to lecture it wherever I go. Every time it's explained, people come to understand a little more of its principles. That's why I really like to lecture.  
  
Ananda hadn't experienced the mutual functioning of the six sense-organs, because he had not yet reached the fourth stage of arhatship. When one reaches that level, the eyes can eat and the ears can talk. Isn't that wonderful?  
  
What was originally one pure brightness,  
Divides into six separate functions.  
  
When these six separate functions return to the one original brightness, one experiences the mutual functioning of the six. If you believe such a state exists, that's fine. If you don't believe it, just relax. Eventually you will come to believe it. When it happens to you someday and you exclaim, "How is it my ears can talk?" then you will believe it. At that time you'll know that your teacher was not cheating you after all.  
  
You will have this experience when your six sense organs function in mutual accord. Before that happens, however, you shouldn't be obsessed with false thinking about it to the point that you decide to train your ears to talk. It's not something you can train your organs to do. Actually, you can train them if you want to, but do it by sitting in meditation and investigating dhyana. You have to develop your skill through hard work. You can't fear the pain in your legs or the ache in your back. Nor should you think it's something you can't do. Anyone can become a Buddha.  
  
All living beings have the Buddha-nature.  
All can become Buddhas.

Above all, you should learn the Shurangama Mantra by heart. We recite it twice every day in this Shurangama Sutra study session, which will probably last nearly three months, seventy days, at least. That,'s one hundred forty recitations of the mantra, let's say one hundred fifty in total. You should be able to memorize it in that many recitations. If you can't, you won't be allowed any excuses!  
 **Sutra:  
  
"If the six organs are definitely six, then as I now explain this subtle, wonderful dharma-door for you in this assembly, which of your six organs is receiving it?"   
  
Ananda said, "I hear it with my ears."  
  
The Buddha said, "Your ears hear by themselves; what does that have to do with your body and mouth? And yet you ask about the principles with your mouth, and your body displays veneration."  
  
Commentary:**  
"If the six organs are definitely six, if there's no doubt about it, then as I now explain this subtle, wonderful dharma-door for you in this assembly, I am expounding for you the rare, wonderful, and inconceivable dharma-door of the great Shurangama Samadhi, which of your six organs is receiving it? Since your six organs are definitely divided into six, which of them receives the dharma I am speaking?" That's what he asked Ananda. Ananda didn't even stop to consider. He just impulsively answered the Buddha. Ananda said, "I hear it with my ears." He only mentioned the organ of hearing.  
  
The Buddha said, "Your ears hear by themselves; what does that have to do with your body and mouth?" Your ears themselves do the hearing, and so it doesn't have anything to do with your body and mouth. And yet you ask about the principles with your mouth, why do you use your mouth to ask about the doctrines? Whether or not you understand what you hear shouldn't have anything to do with your body or mouth, because, after all, they are separate organs. They are not one. And your body displays veneration. You are upright and attentive to represent your respect for the dharma. Therefore, if you say they are six separate entities, why are these other two cooperating like this?  
 **Sutra:  
  
Therefore, you should know that if they are not one, then they must be six. And if they are not six, they must be one. But you can't say that your organs are basically one and six.  
  
Commentary:**  
Therefore, because of the foregoing, you should know that if they are not one, then they must be six: If they aren't one, they are six. And if they are not six, they must be one. But you can't say that your organs are basically one and six. You can't say they are both one and six.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Ananda, you should know that these organs are neither one nor six. It is from being upside-down and sinking into involvements throughout time without beginning that the theory of one and six has become established. As a Shrotaapanna, you have dissolved the six, but you still have not done away with the one.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Ananda, you should know that these organs, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, are neither one nor six. It is from being upside-down and sinking into involvements throughout time without beginning until the present that the theory of one and six has become established. It arose because relying on the truth, you gave rise to falseness and brought about ignorance and delusion in your self-nature. You end up sinking into involvements. You say, "You give me this, and I'll give you that." That's the way you get involved. It's like opening a big company with a main headquarters and branches. Because of delusion and involvements, the theory of one and six became established in the profoundly tranquil nature of the Thus Come One's treasury, in the eternal true mind. As a Shrotaapanna. Ananda, you have obtained the fruition of a first-stage arhat. The definition of a first-stage arhat is one who does not "enter into" forms, sounds, smells, tastes, objects of touch, or dharmas. You have dissolved the six. You are not turned around by the six defiling objects. You wouldn't say, "Is that food good to eat?" You wouldn't have that thought. Or, when looking at a form, you wouldn't say, "That's really beautiful." As soon as one thinks 'beautiful," one becomes attached; and one races after that beautiful thing. How far one runs, no one knows. One mile, two, three, four, or is it a hundred or two hundred miles? Who knows how far you will run after beauty? That's being turned by the defiling objects of form.  
  
As to smelling fragrances, I remember a time in Manchuria when I was reciting the Great Compassion Mantra with over a dozen of my disciples. We were kneeling as we recited, and after we'd said the mantras more than two hundred times, the entire room filled with a rare fragrance. There weren't any flowers in the room or anything else that would emit such a fragrance. In fact, the fragrance was out of this world, not like anything we'd ever smelled before. One of my disciples got greedy and began sniffing loudly and muttering, "How sweet, how fragrant!" The more he sniffed, the more fragrant it was, and the more he wanted to smell it.  
  
I said to him, "You're here reciting the Great Compassion Mantra. Don?t go chasing after scents." The tongue tastes flavors. One time I accompanied an experienced old cultivator to a layperson's house for a meal offering. This old cultivator supposedly possessed the status of elder years and lofty virtue in the Way. But when we were served the food, he remarked to me, "This food is really good. It's my favorite kind. Do you like it?"   
  
I said, "I don't know what it tastes like."   
  
"Oh? Haven't you eaten any?"   
  
"I ate it, but I don't know what it tasted like," I said.   
  
"Well, if you don't recognize tastes, haven't you turned into a piece of wood?"  
  
"But I ate," I retorted. "Wood can't eat. The reason I don't know what it tasted like is that I just ate my fill, I didn't pay attention to its flavor."  
  
But as a result of that conversation, I thought to myself, "Such a lofty old cultivator, and he's still expending his energy on food and drink. He's attached to what is good to eat and what is not. What's to be done?" Now the Shurangama Sutra discusses "dissolving the six." How do you do it? Once you are certified to the first fruition of arhatship, you get rid of that level of experiencing. Your eyes don't seek after beauty, your ears don't register fine sounds, your nose isn't greedy for fragrances, your tongue doesn't crave flavors, your body doesn't become attached to objects of touch, and your mind isn't aware of dharmas.  
  
But you still have not done away with the one. What is "the one?" It represents his attachment to dharmas, an attachment that still remains. Although forms, sounds, tastes, objects of touch, and dharmas have been dissolved, the attachment to dharmas has still not been severed.  
  
O3 He uses an analogy to clarify the dharma.  
 **Sutra:  
  
It is like emptiness fitting into differently shaped vessels. The emptiness is said to be whatever shape the vessel is. But if you get rid of the vessel and look at the emptiness, you will say it is one and the same.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Ananda, why is it that you have revolved head over heels on the wheel of rebirth from time without beginning and have given rise to these six organs which cannot be called one and cannot be called six? What's the reason? I'll bring up another analogy as further substantiation. It is like emptiness. That is, it's like our nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One, which is no one else's but ours. It's like putting emptiness into differently shaped vessels. In emptiness we make a lot of square vessels, and round vessels, and triangular vessels, and hexagonal vessels, and octagonal vessels. When we set them in emptiness, the emptiness becomes triangular, and square, and hexagonal, and octagonal, and round. The emptiness is said to be whatever shape the vessel is. Ultimately, though, did the emptiness change? It did not. It was just because the vessels were different that the emptiness took on different shapes. But if you get rid of the vessel and look at the emptiness, you will say it is one and the same. The emptiness is still just one. In fact, it isn't even one. If it were one, it wouldn't be emptiness. And that's the way the treasury of the Thus Come One is. The addition of the vessels is the existence of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.  
  
The fundamental, single, pure brightness,  
Divides into six separate functionings.  
  
That's why you can't say they are six and you can't say they are one. They are neither one nor six. They are just like the great void. If you're just like the great void, why do you want to retain so much ignorance and affliction? It's just because you won't reject these that you cannot perceive your original face. And, since you cannot realize your original face, you can't reach the ultimate understanding.  
 **Sutra:  
  
But how can that emptiness become alike and different at your convenience? Even less can it be one or not one. Therefore, you should understand that the six receptive functioning organs should be the same way.  
  
Commentary:**  
But how can that emptiness become alike and different at your convenience? How can you say that emptiness becomes the same or different? You can't say that, because emptiness is fundamentally unchanging. Even less can it be one or not one. How can you make it one or not one? In emptiness there isn't anything at all. That's why it's said:  
  
The self-nature is like emptiness;  
Both true and false are within it.  
  
Based on the true, the false arises, and when the false vanishes, the true appears. If you don't get rid of the false, the true won't appear. So in our cultivation we have to put an end to what is false. It's also said:  
  
Dust it today and scrub it tomorrow.  
Rub it and polish it until it's like a mirror.  
  
What is referred to here is the self-nature, expressing the same principle that the Great Master Shen Xiu expressed in his famous verse:  
  
The body is a Bodhi tree,  
The mind like a bright mirror stand.  
Time and again brush it clean,  
And let no dust alight.  
  
The line "Time and again brush it clean" refers to the kind of diligence that is necessary during cultivation. People criticize this verse, saying it is incorrect. It's not incorrect; it simply describes what is essential during cultivation of the Way. The Great Master Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch, wrote this verse in answer:  
  
Originally Bodhi has no tree.  
The bright mirror has no stand.  
Originally there is not a single thing;  
Where can dust alight?  
  
This verse describes the experience of a person who has been certified as having attained the fruition of sagehood. Thus, people who have not accomplished the fruition of sagehood should study the Great Master Shen Xiu's verse. Those who have been certified to the fruition should follow the verse of the Great Master, the Sixth Patriarch.  
  
Yesterday that "American patriarch' came and contended that the Sixth Patriarch said there is nothing profound and nothing shallow. That's an example of having a superficial knowledge without understanding the underlying reasons, and using it to indulge in intellectual talk-Zen. When I called him on this, he said his was "foot-Zen." As I told you, he thought his answer was very clever, but I thought to myself, "You came out here from New York in a broken-down car, but since you didn't have to walk, you say you have 'foot-Zen.' " The only trouble was that his "foot-Zen" didn't get him anywhere when he got here.  
  
Therefore, you should understand that the six receptive functioning organs should be the same way. I was explaining a four-line verse for you, and there are still two lines left. But I'm not a rakshasa ghost who wants to eat you. I'm not even hungry at the moment, so I'll finish the verse. Do you remember it?  
  
The self-nature is like emptiness.  
Both true and false are within it.  
When you awaken and fathom all dharmas,  
To penetrate one is to penetrate them all.  
  
That refers to the method discussed here of entering deeply into one door. If you enter one and awaken to its falseness, all six organs are purified.

O4 He states that the knot of the organs is because of the defiling objects.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Seeing occurs because the two appearances of darkness and light, and their like, firmly adhere to quietude in what originally was wonderful perfection. The essence of seeing reflects form and combines with form to become an organ. In its pure state the organ of the eye is the four elements. And yet it takes the name "eye-organ" and is shaped like a grape. Of the superficial sense-organs and the four defiling objects, this one races out after form.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Seeing occurs because the two appearances of darkness and light, these two kinds of form, and their like, including all other kinds of visible forms, influence one another. They firmly adhere to quietude in what originally was wonderful perfection. These forms stick to the tranquil nature. When this situation arises, the essence of seeing comes into being. The essence of seeing reflects form and combines with form to become an organ. "Combines" here echoes "adhere to" above. The essence of seeing and forms adhere to each other and turn into an organ. In its pure state the organ of the eye is the four elements. What is meant by "its pure state?" It means that the four elements are here very subtle, not something which the flesh eye can see. One needs the Buddha eye, the dharma eye, and the wisdom eye to be able to see them. The "form elements" still refer to earth, water, fire, and wind. And yet it takes the name 'eye-organ" and is shaped like a grape. And yet, because the elements are related in this way, the substance is an eye shaped like a grape. Of the superficial sense-organs and the four defiling objects. The eye is distinguished in three ways:  
  
It has a seeing-essence;   
It is a superior organ;  
It is a superficial defiled organ.  
  
If you cultivate successfully, the eye is called a superior organ. If you do not cultivate, it is called a superficial defiled organ. The four defiling objects referred to here are form, sound, smells, and tastes. This one races out after form. The Chinese word for "races" ( liu yi) combines the character liu, which means "flowing" like a swift river returning to the deep, or like the undertow of waves on the ocean, and the character yi, which means "unrestrained," like a fire raging out of control in the mountains, spreading in all directions at once. Together they mean "to race," like a thoroughbred horse. That is the way one races out to become attached to forms.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Hearing occurs because the two reverberations of movement and stillness, and their like, firmly adhere to quietude in what originally was wonderful perfection. The essence of hearing reflects sound and resounds with sound to become the organ of the ear. In its pure state, the organ of the ear is the four elements. It takes the name "ear organ" and is shaped like a fresh, curled leaf. Of the superficial sense-organs and the four defiling objects, this one is loosed upon sound.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Hearing occurs because the two reverberations of movement and stillness, and their like, firmly adhere to quietude in what originally was wonderful perfection. Because there is movement and stillness, a function is created in their midst, when this function occurs in the perfect quietude, the process of hearing comes into being. The essence of hearing reflects sound and resounds with sound to become the organ of the ear. It unites with the defiling object of sound. It becomes an organ in the same way the eye became one, as described above. In its pure state, the organ of the ear is the four elements. It is a certain process which results from the combination of the four elements. It takes the name "ear organ" and is shaped like a fresh, curled leaf. It is shaped like a fresh lotus-flower leaf, which has not yet uncurled. Of the superficial sense-organs and the four defiling objects, this one is loosed upon sound. Discussing the sense organs in terms of their being superficial and defiled, this organ races out and unites with sound.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Smelling occurs because the two appearances of penetration and obstruction, and their like, firmly adhere to quietude in what originally was wonderful perfection. The essence of smelling reflects scents and takes in scents to become the organ of the nose. In its pure state, the organ of the nose is the four elements. It takes the name "nose-organ" and is shaped like a double hanging claw. Of the superficial sense-organs and the four defiling objects, this one probes out after scents.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Smelling occurs because the two appearances of penetration and obstruction, and their like, firmly adhere to quietude in what originally was wonderful perfection. With the existence of the two substantive appearances of penetration and obstruction, a function occurs in the wonderful perfection of the mind. The appearances adhere to produce smelling. The essence of smelling reflects scents and takes in scents to become the organ of the nose. The essence of smelling and the defiling objects of scents mirror one another, and the process of smelling, of taking in the scents, becomes the function of this organ. In its pure state, the organ of the nose is the four elements. But it is given a name "nose-organ" and is shaped like a double hanging claw. The nose looks like two inverted claws. Of the superficial sense organs, seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing, and the four defiling objects, forms, sounds, scents, and flavors, this one probes out after scents. This one gets involved with the defiling objects of scents. The nose smells and is greedy for scents.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Tasting occurs because the two blends of blandness and variety, and their like, firmly adhere to quietude in what originally was wonderful perfection. The essence of tasting reflects flavors and becomes entwined with flavors to become the organ of the tongue. In its pure state the organ of the tongue is the four elements. It takes the name "tongue-organ" and is shaped like the crescent moon. Of the superficial sense-organs and the four defiling objects, this one pursues flavors.  
  
Commentary:**  
Tasting occurs because the two blends of blandness and variety, and their like, firmly adhere to quietude in what originally was wonderful perfection. Blandness refers to the ordinary tastelessness we experience. And from this normal state of blandness, one can perceive the flavor of something when one encounters it. Because of the involvement of blandness and the change to perception of a flavor and their blending together, there is an adherence to the quietude of the wonderful, perfect mind. The function is the awareness of taste. The essence of tasting reflects flavors and becomes entwined with flavors to become the organ of the tongue. The sense of taste becomes twisted together with flavors, just as strands of a rope are bound together. They become  
inseparable, and thus another organ comes into being. In its pure state the organ of the tongue is the four elements. It takes the name "tongue-organ" and is shaped like the crescent moon. Of the superficial sense-organs and the four defiling objects, this one pursues flavors. It is attracted to flavors.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Sensation occurs because the two frictions of separation and union, and their like, firmly adhere to quietude in what originally was wonderful perfection. The essence of sensation reflects contact and seizes upon contact to become the organ of the body. In its pure state, the organ of the body is the four elements. It takes the name "body-organ" and is shaped like a tabla. Of the superficial sense-organs and the four defiling objects, this one is compelled by contact.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Sensation occurs because the two frictions of separation and union, and their like, firmly adhere to quietude in what originally was wonderful perfection. The rubbing back and forth of separation and union creates an awareness in the wonderful perfection. The essence of sensation reflects contact and seizes upon contact to become the organ of the body. The awareness unites with the contact to make the organ of the body. In its pure state, the organ of the body is the four elements. It takes the name "body-organ" and is shaped like a tabla. The body is likened in shape to that particular kind of drum. Of the superficial sense-organs and the four defiling objects, this one is compelled by contact. This superficial sense-organ gravitates to the defiling object of contact.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Knowing occurs because the two continuities of production and extinction, and their like, firmly adhere to quietude in what originally was wonderful perfection. The essence of knowing reflects dharmas and grasps dharmas to become the organ of the mind. In its pure state, the organ of the mind is the four elements. It takes the name "mental cognition" and resembles seeing in a dark room. Of the superficial sense-organs and their four defiling objects, this one chases after dharmas.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Knowing occurs because the two continuities of production and extinction, and their like. Here the text discusses the organ of the mind, the sixth mind-consciousness, which is subject to production and extinction. As the former thought ceases, the next thought arises. The one races after the other, and they firmly adhere to quietude in what originally was wonderful perfection. They stick to the quietude and create the essence of knowing. The essence of knowing reflects dharmas and grasps dharmas to become the organ of the mind. The capacity of knowing seizes upon dharmas, which are defiling objects. In its pure state, the organ of the mind is the four elements. It takes the name "mental cognition" rather than mental "substance," because the mind is not a substantive thing, and resembles seeing in a dark room. Since the mind organ is an "internal" organ, whereas the five previous sense organs are "external" organs, it is likened to seeing in a dark room. Of the superficial sense-organs and their four defiling objects, this one chases after dharmas. The mind gravitates to the defiling objects of dharmas.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Ananda, in this way the six organs occur, because that bright enlightenment has a brightness added to it. Thus they lose their essence and adhere to falseness and create light.  
  
Commentary:**  
Ananda, in this way the six organs, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind discussed above, occur, because that bright enlightenment. "That" refers to the wonderful perfection of the true mind, the treasury of the Thus Come One. Originally the six organs are the treasury of the Thus Come One, but they come into being because the treasury of the Thus Come One has a brightness added to it. Basically the fundamental substance of enlightenment is brightness itself; there is no need to add brightness to it. It is like the wish-fulfilling pearl, the light of which is inherent in it; there is no need to add light to it. When light is added to enlightenment, it creates a false brightness, a false enlightenment. The brightness is not ultimately real, nor is the enlightenment that results from the addition of brightness. Thus they lose their essence and adhere to falseness and create light. Their original essence, the essence of seeing, the essence of hearing, the essence of smelling, of tasting, and of touching, and the knowledge of dharmas, loses its original characteristic and capability, and thereby it becomes mixed up with false brightness and false enlightenment. From this mutual adhesion, a false light comes forth. This light it not really a light; it simply designates their individual functions.  
  
O5 He states that when the defiling objects disappear, the organ is gone.  
P1 He explains that untying the knot is the answer to the question.  
Q1 He surmises that apart from the defiling objects there is no knot.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Therefore, apart from darkness and light there is no substance to seeing for you now; apart from movement and stillness, there, basically, is no disposition of hearing; without penetration and obstruction, the nature of smelling does not arise; in the absence of variety and blandness, tasting does not occur, lacking separation and union, the sensation of contact is fundamentally non-existent; without extinction and production, knowing is put to rest.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Therefore, because of the doctrine explained above, which is that one need not add brightness to enlightenment; it is only through the arisal of a false thought of adding brightness to enlightenment that it turns into false brightness and false enlightenment, as a result, the original essence is lost, and by an adhesion to falseness, the light of the category of seeing comes into being. This creates the separate functions of seeing, hearing, and their like. It belongs to the light of the eighth consciousness. Therefore, apart from darkness and light there is no substance to seeing for you now. The reason you can see is because the conditions of light and darkness aid you. Without darkness and light, the substance of seeing would cease to be. Apart from movement and stillness, there, basically, is no disposition of hearing. "Disposition" here also means substance. Without penetration and obstruction, the nature of smelling does not arise. Without these conditions you have no awareness of scents; you wouldn't know if something was fragrant or stinking. In the absence of variety and blandness, tasting does not occur. In an interval between experiencing variety and blandness, the awareness of tasting would be gone. Lacking separation and union, the sensation of contact is fundamentally non-existent. If there is no impulse to separate or to unite, the awareness of contact disappears. Without extinction and production, knowing is put to rest. If there isn't any production and there isn't any extinction, where does your knowing-nature abide? It is gone as well.  
  
Q2 He teaches him to enter one and liberate six.  
 **Sutra:  
  
You need only not follow the twelve conditioned appearances of movement and stillness, union and separation, blandness and variety, penetration and obstruction, production and extinction, and brightness and darkness.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
You need only not follow. This section of the sutra text is very important. Why haven't people become enlightened? Because they follow the course of birth and death. They cannot go against this current. They follow false, defiling objects and are turned around by them. They cannot gain control over the false defiling objects. Thus, the sutra says, "You need only not follow" them, you need to not accord with the realm of the six defiling objects and to not be turned around by them. You don't have to follow conditioned appearances and be turned around by them. Then you can go against the current. Don't follow the twelve conditioned appearances of movement and stillness, union and separation, blandness and variety, penetration and obstruction, production and extinction, and brightness and darkness. Don't be turned around by these twelve conditioned dharmas.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Accordingly, extract one organ from adhesion, free it, and subdue it at its inner core. Once subdued, it will return to inherent truth and radiate its innate brilliance. When that brilliance shines forth, the remaining five adhesions will be freed to accomplish total liberation.  
  
Commentary:**  
Accordingly, extract one organ from adhesion, free it. Of the six sense-organs of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, you should accordingly liberate one, freeing it from the circumstance of its adhesion, and subdue it at its inner core. Overcome the ignorance in yourself. Subdue this false thought. Once subdued, it will return to inherent truth. With the false thought and ignorance subdued, you will return to the source, to the wonderful perfection, the quietude of the true mind, and it will radiate its innate brilliance. Then the inherent brightness of enlightenment will reveal itself. When that brilliance shines forth, when the brilliant essence reveals this brightness, the remaining five adhesions will be freed to accomplish total liberation. When one sense-organ is freed, the others which are stuck will be pulled loose and liberated, as well. They will simultaneously obtain liberation. And the function of adhering to create seeing, adhering to create sensation, will cease. You will be free.  
  
P2 His accomplishment of the two wonders is testified to and looked into.  
Q1 In the sentient realm, liberation from the bond brings the wonder of mutual functioning.  
R1 First he reveals the wonder.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Do not follow the knowing and seeing that arise in response to the objects before you. True brightness does not comply with the sense-organs. Yet, lodged at the organs is the revelation of the brightness that permits the mutual functioning of the six organs.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
I have discussed the mutual functioning of the six organs before. Do not follow the knowing and seeing that arise in response to the objects before you. This is the advice that the Buddha gave above: "You need only not follow." Don't follow the six defiling objects that pair themselves with your seeing, knowing, and their like. If you don't follow along, you will see as if not seeing, and hear as if not hearing, because you are not obsessed by the realm of the six defiling objects. True brightness does not comply with the sense-organs. It does not make an encounter with a defiling object and thus bring brightness into existence. Awareness doesn't exist in that way. Your own enlightened brightness does not follow the organs and race out. And yet, lodged at the organs is the revelation of the brightness that permits the mutual functioning of the six organs. Our inherent enlightened brightness is nevertheless found at the gate of the six organs. When that inherent brightness reveals itself, it "permits the mutual functioning of the six organs." This doesn't happen if you use false brightness and false enlightenment; it only happens when you use the true brightness of true enlightenment. And then the six organs: the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, function in mutual accord. They can be used interchangeably. The eyes can speak and the ears can see.  
  
Today is the Buddha's "Happy Day." Now, of course, the Buddha is happy every day, but today he is happiest. Why? This is the last day of the summer retreat for people who have left the home-life. From the 15th of the fourth lunar month to the 15th of the seventh lunar month left-home people do not travel. Today is also the anniversary of the day Mahamaudgalyayana obtained the spiritual penetration of the heavenly eye. Upon obtaining it, the first thing he did was to look where his mother was. He saw she was in the hells undergoing suffering. How did his mother get into the hells? When she was alive she did not believe in the Buddha, didn't bow to the Buddha. She didn't believe in the dharma, she didn't study the Buddhadharma. She did not respect the Sangha; she even slandered members of the Sangha and talked about their transgressions.  
  
She also like to eat meat and fish. She especially liked fish eggs. Just think of how many lives are taken in one helping of caviar. Because she did not believe in or revere the Triple Jewel, and because she ate so many fish eggs, she went to the hells after she died. In the hells there was nothing to eat. So when Maudgalyayana obtained his spiritual penetrations, he went to give a bowl of rice to his mother. His mother took the bowl of rice when she saw it, and because she was so greedy, she held the bowl in her left hand and covered it with her right sleeve, so that none of the other hungry ghosts would see it and try to steal it from her. She hid it under her sleeve and ran to where she could be alone to eat. But her karmic obstructions were such that she could not have things to eat, and so when she put a bite of food in her mouth, the food turned to burning coals. Although Maudgalyayana had been certified to the fruition and had spiritual penetrations, he was unable to help her. Nothing he did worked. So he went to the Buddha to seek help. "What can be done?" he pleaded. His mother was in the hells and he asked the Buddha to help him save her.  
  
The Buddha told him, "Your mother's karmic offenses are too heavy. You cannot save her by yourself. You must ask the assembled Sangha of the ten directions to save her, and then she can leave suffering and obtain bliss." And, so from that time on, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month in the lunar calendar, offerings are made not only to help your mothers of this life to leave suffering and obtain bliss, but to take across your fathers and mothers from seven lives past and all your close relatives as well. The dharma assembly which commemorates the way in which the assembled Sangha helped save Maudgalyayana's mother is called [Ullumbana.](http://cttbusa.org/ullambana/ullambana_celebration.asp)  
  
R2 He cites certification to not following the sense organs.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Ananda, don't you know that now in this assembly there is Aniruddha, who is blind and yet can see; the dragon, Upananda, who is deaf and yet can hear; the spirit of the Ganges River, who has no nose and yet smells fragrance; Gavampati, who has an unusual tongue and yet senses flavor; and the spirit, Shunyata, who has no body and yet is aware of contact? In the light of the Thus Come One, this spirit is illumined temporarily as an ethereal essence without any substance. In the same way, there is also Mahakashyapa in this assembly, dwelling in the samadhi of extinction, having obtained the stillness of a sound-hearer. He has long since extinguished the mind-organ, and yet he has a perfectly clear knowledge which is not due to the mental process of thinking.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Ananda, don't you know that now in this assembly, in the Shurangama dharma assembly, there are people who possess the mutual functioning of the six organs? One is Aniruddha. You remember him; he was the one who went blind trying to stay awake. Aniruddha was the Buddha's cousin, the son of the White Rice King. He liked to sleep, and he fell asleep every time the Buddha lectured the sutras. The Buddha scolded him for this habit, saying:  
  
Hey! Hey! How can you sleep,  
Like an oyster or a clam?  
Sleep, sleep for a thousand years,  
But, you'll never hear the Buddha's name.  
  
After that scolding, in a burst of zeal, Aniruddha didn't sleep for seven days and nights. He finally went blind from lack of sleep. The Buddha took pity on him and taught him the vajra samadhi of delight in seeing the illuminating brightness. Upon cultivating this dharma he obtained the penetration of the heavenly eye. His ordinary eyes were useless, but he became foremost in the heavenly eye. His heavenly eye was perfect; he could see everything very clearly. You shouldn't think that "opening one's eyes" is the same in all cases. Some people see things clearly, and some not so clearly. Aniruddha saw the most clearly of all. Here in the text, the Buddha reminds Ananda of Aniruddha, who is blind and yet can see.  
  
Aniruddha's name means "free of poverty" (wu pin). I have told you before how he obtained a golden rabbit. When he cut off one of its legs to buy food with, he found that another golden leg grew back in its place. Every time he removed a section of the golden rabbit, the section grew back, and so he was never poor again.  
  
The Buddha also mentions: The dragon, Upananda, who is deaf and yet can hear. This dragon-spirit protects the city of Magadha, watching so that the winds and rains are in accord with the season. He was well liked by the people of that city, and that's why he has the name Upananda, "well liked" (shan huan xi). Although deaf, this dragon could listen with his whiskers instead of his ears. So Aniruddha didn't use his eyes and yet could see, and Upananda didn't have the use of his ears and yet could hear. This is the mutual functioning of the six organs that I've been discussing.  
  
There is also the spirit of the Ganges River, who has no nose and yet smells fragrance. The Ganges, the Sindhu, the Vakshu, and the Sutlej Rivers all rise in the Himalayas. This river spirit of the Ganges has no nose, but she can still smell things. She uses her eyes to smell with.  
  
There is Gavampati, who has an unusual tongue and yet senses flavor. Gavampati's name means "cow cud" (niu xi). Even when he wasn't eating, he kept chewing his cud and breathing coarsely like a cow. Why would someone who had been certified to the fruition of arhatship have such a habit? It's a result of something that happened to him when he was on the cause-ground as a novice.  
  
At that time he cultivated with an old monk who was certified as an arhat, but who in his old age had lost his teeth and, as a consequence, ate very slowly. He chewed so slowly that one day Gavampati, the novice, said to him, "You eat like a cow." It was because of that one sentence that he had to undergo the retribution of chewing his cud like a cow for life after life. But now he had been certified to the fruition of arhatship, so the Buddha instructed him to reside in the heavens, rather than in the human realm, for fear that someone would slander him in turn and say, "You eat like a cow," with the result that another person would end up having to be a cow for life after life. This should show you how careful you must be when you talk. You can't just say whatever pops into your head. If you say one wrong thing, you'll fall in accordance with the laws of cause and effect.  
  
There once was an elder bhikshu whom someone asked, "Do great cultivators fall in accordance with cause and effect?" The elder cultivator replied, "Great cultivators do not fall in accordance with cause and effect." Because that one sentence was incorrect, he had to undergo rebirth as a fox for five hundred lives. When Chan Master Bai Jiang was at Jiang Xi lecturing the sutras, there was an old man with a long beard who came to listen every day. No one knew who he was. He always left as soon as the lecture was over. The lectures were open to the public, of course, so no one asked him who he was; he was free to come and go with everyone else. In lecturing sutras, the rule is for the dharma master to return to his room immediately after he finishes lecturing. He should engage in conversation very rarely, lest he end up seeking advantage from conditions. He should not linger after the lecture in order to invite people to come back again, or the like. One day, then, when Chan Master Bai Jiang was returning to his quarters after the lecture, the old man with a long beard followed him and asked for instruction. His question was, "Does a great cultivator fall in accordance with cause and effect?"  
  
Chan Master Bai Jiang answered, "Great cultivators are not unclear about cause and effect." The old man immediately became enlightened.  
  
"Oh, so that's the way it is!" he exclaimed. Then he explained, "I am a fox who lives on the mountain behind here. Everyday I come to listen to the sutras, but I've never understood this principle." Then he explained that in the past he had been a high monk who had also lectured the sutras, but when someone had asked him that question, he had answered incorrectly, and as a result had to undergo five hundred lives as a fox. "Now that today I have finally understood, tomorrow I will go be reborn. You could come back to my cave and bury my corpse in order to establish affinities."  
  
The next day, Chan Master Bai Jiang, taking all the monks from the monastery with him, went back on the mountain to have a look. Sure enough, they found the corpse of an old fox. Chan Master Bai Jiang buried it with the ceremony used for monks and crossed him over. This is another example of how careful one must be in what one says. People who don't understand the principles of Buddhadharma  
  
tend to say whatever they feel like, but people who study the Buddhadharma know better than to do that. If someone asks you a question and you know the answer in terms of Buddhadharma, you can reply. But if you don't know, I exhort you not to think you know when you don't. If you say something wrong, the effect will be severe.  
  
Because of one careless remark to an arhat, Gavampati had to bear the retribution of chewing his cud like a cow for life after life. His tongue was like a cow's, too; nevertheless, he sensed flavor. There is the spirit, Shunyata, who has no body and yet is aware of contact. "Shunyata" means emptiness. This emptinessspirit has no physical body and yet senses touch. How does that happen? In the light of the Thus Come One, this spirit is illumined temporarily as an ethereal essence without any substance. The light of the Buddha enables this spirit to appear temporarily, even though she is as empty as the wind and has no body at all. But when she is able to appear through the Buddha's power, she, too, can experience the sensation of contact. That makes the spirit Shunyata very happy, "I really don't have a body, but now I've got one!" Beings are afraid of being without a body, and so when this spirit is allowed to manifest, she is delighted. In the same way, there is also Mahakashyapa in this assembly, dwelling in the samadhi of extinction. This is the ninth successive stage of samadhi, the extinction of the skandhas of thought and feeling. He had obtained the stillness of a soundhearer. Some members of the assembly had put an end to the skandhas of feeling and thought and some had been certified as having attained the fruition of arhatship. Who in the assembly has obtained the samadhi of extinction?   
  
"Maha" means "great," and refers to the elder Kashyapa, who had used to be a fire worshipper. In Buddhism he is known as the "Golden Ascetic" (jin se xian). He is now in samadhi in China at Ji Zi mountain in Yunnan province. He hasn't died and gone off to rebirth. He is in the samadhi of extinction, and in the future, when Maitreya Bodhisattva appears in the world, Mahakashyapa will present him with the robe and bowl of Shakyamuni Buddha. He's been in samadhi now for some three thousand years, but one can sit for thousands, or even tens of thousands of years in that samadhi without any problem.  
  
He has long since extinguished the mind-organ, and yet he has a perfectly clear knowledge which is not due to the mental process of thinking. His discriminating mind, which is subject to the production and extinction of thoughts, was long ago put to an end. Yet, his knowledge is complete and sharp; it does not result from thoughts in the mind, but springs from his fundamental wisdom.

Q2 In the material realm, transcendence of it brings the wonder of sudden enlightenment  
R1 First he reveals the wonder.  
  
**Sutra:  
  
Then, Ananda, after all your organs are completely freed, you will glow with an inner light. All the ephemeral, defiling objects and the material world will thereupon change their appearance like ice which is melted by hot liquid. In response to your mind, they will transform and become the knowledge and awareness which is unsurpassed enlightenment.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Then, Ananda, after all your organs are completely freed, if you can enter one, the other five will also cease to be. The six organs will be purified simultaneously. If you can perfect one organ completely, then the six organs will be freed from their particular habits, and you will glow with an inner light. Your self-nature will glow like a lustrous and flawless piece of jade. All the ephemeral, defiling objects and the material world, the mountains, rivers, great earth, dwellings, buildings, and so forth, will thereupon change their appearance like ice which is melted by hot liquid. They will disappear, just as ice does when boiling water is poured on it. In response to your mind, in a very short period of time, they will transform and become the knowledge and awareness which is unsurpassed enlightenment. When the false ceases to be, the true is pure. The "knowledge and awareness" referred to here is the true and actual knowledge and awareness, not the false knowing and awareness spoken of above. When the false is gone, the true appears; "in response to your mind" it reveals itself.  
  
R2 He verified that they do not rely on conditions.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Ananda, it is like an ordinary person who has confined seeing to his eyes. Ask him to close his eyes and he will immediately see darkness before him. The six organs and his head and feet will be enveloped in total darkness. If the person traces the shape of external things with his hands, then even though he cannot see, he will recognize someone's head and feet if he feels them. This knowledge and awareness are the same way.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Ananda, it is like an ordinary person. Let me give you an example. Consider a worldly person who has confined seeing to his eyes. He has gathered the seeing-essence into his eyes. Ask him to close his eyes and he will immediately see darkness before him. You say to him, "Shut your eyes immediately!" Suddenly he is plunged into darkness. The six organs and his head and feet will be enveloped in total darkness. If the person traces the shape of external things with his hands, then even though he cannot see, he will recognize someone's head and feet if he feels them. If this worldly person who has his eyes closed and can't see  
anything should pass his hand over the body of someone near him, he will know the person's head as a head when he runs his hands over it, and when he follows the shape of the person's feet, he will realize they are feet. This knowledge and awareness are the same way. Awareness and knowing still function. When your six organs have been is extinguished, the capacity to know and be aware is not in the least depleted. The illustration here confirms that even with your eyes closed, your awareness and knowing do not disappear. They remain the same.  
 **Sutra:  
  
If light is the condition requisite for seeing, then darkness brings the absence of seeing. But to perceive without light means that no dark manifestation can obscure the seeing.  
  
Commentary:**  
  
If light is the condition requisite for seeing, if the reason we see is because of light, then darkness brings the absence of seeing. When it gets dark, you cannot see. But to perceive without light means that no dark manifestation can obscure the seeing.   
  
If you don't need to rely on external light, but put forth light from your self-nature, then there is no kind of darkness that can obscure your seeing. It can't obstruct you and prevent you from seeing. If you are genuinely enlightened, if you have been certified as having obtained the fruit of arhatship, then day and night are the same. Light and darkness are the same. You can see equally well in either. An ordinary person cannot see in a dark room, but an arhat can. So it is said:  
  
Enlightenment is like a lamp in the night,  
or a sudden light in a windowless room.  
  
However, that is just an analogy. Don't get attached to it being exactly like that. What is expressed in words is not necessarily true. That which cannot be expressed is truth. What we are talking about here is just a certain state. You may see the room as dark, while someone else may perceive light in it. This is due to the differences in people's karmic responses. If you are enlightened, then night is the same as day; sleeping and dreams are the same as your waking state. You won't even be confused or upside down in your dreams. In fact, when you are enlightened you very rarely dream at all. Why is it necessary to cultivate? Because you don't have control of yourself. Perhaps you are in control and clear-headed when you are awake, but you lose control when you get confused. When you are healthy you are in control, but when you get sick you lose control. You are ineffectual. Perhaps you can remain in control when you are sick and not get confused or do upside-down things, but you are still not in control when you are asleep. You may say you can remain in control when you are asleep, but when you have dreams you lose control. You become upside-down. If you can remain in control when you are dreaming, you may lose control when you are about to die. At that time the four elements separate, and though you might like to say, "I'd rather not die right now," no politeness is extended to you. You're certainly not going to get out of it.  
  
We people cultivate the Way in order to be able to remain in control when we are healthy, when we are awake and clear-headed, when we are sick, when we are asleep, when we are dreaming, even more when we die. We want to be such that we can die if we want to, and such that if we don't want to die, we can go on living without it being any problem. We want to be free of those restrictions. Then we can be said to be free of birth and death. If we want to live, we can; and if we want to die, we can do that, too. For instance, if you want to live, you can live for several thousand years, like Patriarch Mahakashyapa. If you want to die, you can do so standing up, sitting down, or lying down. You can do it any way you want.  
 **Sutra:  
  
Once the organs and objects are eradicated, how can the enlightened brightness not become perfect and wonderful?  
  
Commentary:**  
  
Ananda, once the organs and objects are eradicated, once the six sense-organs and six sense-objects are done away with, then "no dark manifestation can obscure the seeing." When the darkness obscures them, the organs cannot exhibit their strength and function. How can the enlightened brightness not become perfect and wonderful? How can you say that the fundamental enlightened brightness will not become perfect and wonderful? How can you say that it will not return to the source and become perfect and wonderful once again?