

**Tiantai Calming-and-Insight Meditation**

**Lecture Series**

**Part One**

# **Tiantai Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation**

**(The Essentials of Buddhist Meditation)**

**Teachings by:**

**Venerable Master Jing-Lian**

## **Origination**

**Tiantai Calming-and-Insight Meditation has a huge system and profound theory. My thoughts are with enthusiastic novice practitioners who are at a loss when approaching it, thereby flinch from it. This is rather regrettable. Veteran practitioners are normally unable to grasp the crux, making it difficult for a breakthrough to improve their skills.**

**While it may appear that Tiantai Calming-and-Insight Meditation methods are simple, the profound teachings as a basis behind it is hardly realised. So, in order to accomplish Tiantai Calming-and-Insight Meditation, not only does one need to delve deeply into the teachings, one needs to have the concrete cultivation method.**

**In view of this, we hope that the lessons this time can incorporate both theory and cultivation; then we will live up to Tiantai Calming-and-Insight Meditation's reputation of 'Excellence in Both Theory and Cultivation'.**

**Lastly, let us dedicate the merits of these lessons to all sentient beings in the dharma-realm; and hope that all virtuous ones who have the causes to hear these lessons, have accomplishments in calming-and-insight meditation; be enlightened together and are generous in sharing their knowledge.**

**Jing-Lian**

**Spring 99<sup>th</sup> year of Republic of China**

**Written in Taipei Xindian Wuyunju**

## Preface

The benefits and merits of cultivating calming-and-insight are similar to the infinity of the emptiness of space. Whether it is a mundane desire for health and longevity, or supramundane desire of eliminating afflictions, attaining the ultimate truth; none of these is achievable without calming-and-insight meditation. However, there are so many methods of cultivation, from where should one get started? 'Tiantai Calming-and-Insight Meditation' is undoubtedly the best induction. This is because the four parts of Tiantai Calming-and-Insight Meditation not only incorporate all cultivation methods, they are sequentially strict and clear, with gradations of depth. Regardless of beginners or veterans, there is much to gain from the Tiantai Calming-and-Insight Meditation.

The four parts of Tiantai Calming-and-Insight Meditation are : Perfect and Sudden Calming-and-Insight Meditation (The Great Calming-and-Insight Meditation), Gradual and Sequential Calming-and-Insight Meditation (Explanation of the Sequence in The Perfection of Meditation), Unfixed Calming-and-Insight Meditation (The Six Gates to the Sublime) and Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation (The Essentials of Buddhist Meditation). Normally, as a sequence of cultivation, we start with 'Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation' as its contents are the most simplified, yet it clearly explains from the preliminary practice of fulfilment of the twenty-five prerequisite conditions, the actual cultivation of calming-and-insight, the manifestation of roots of goodness, recognition of the works of demons during cultivation, the treatment of disorders with calming-and-insight meditation, and finally realisation of the fruits.

If practitioners were to start cultivating calming-and-insight by merely following the book but without following the explanations and instructions of a teacher, not only do they need twice the effort to achieve just half the result, many phenomena can arise. As such, we have specially documented the contents of Master's four lessons on 'Tiantai Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation' conducted in Singapore in 2009; and after slight emendations, they have been printed into books. Through Master's detailed explanation, with concrete cultivation and experiential knowledge, and together with the MP3 recordings of the lessons, we hope that practitioners who have the intention to cultivate Tiantai Calming-and-Insight Meditation will make progress on the path.

Next, a series of books based primarily on documentation of Master's lessons will be released successively. These include 'The Six Gates to the Sublime', 'Explanation of the Sequence in The Perfection of Meditation', 'The Great Calming-and-Insight Meditation' etc. If you need the latest recordings of the lessons or the original version of transcripts, you can download, browse or consult Master's website. You can also send us an email if you have any questions regarding your cultivation and your queries will be relayed to Master.

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## Tiantai Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation

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**Tiantai Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation  
Lecture 1**

**Teachings by Venerable Master Jing-Lian**

**Venue: Singapore Tai Pei Buddhist Centre  
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**Lecture Contents**

- **Chapter 1 – Fulfilment of the Prerequisite Conditions**
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- **Chapter 5 – Utilising Skilful Means**

Namo Amitabha Buddha to everyone!

This time why do we start the lessons on 'Tiantai Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation'? This is because many fellow practitioners hope to learn the methods related to calming-and-insight meditation again. They have requested for too many times and it has been a few years since we last conducted lessons on this topic. Many fellow practitioners regretted not being able to attend the lessons then, and eventually have to rely on the CD; they hope to be able to attend the lessons personally. As such we are fulfilling the wishes of sentient beings in conducting the lessons on 'Tiantai Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation'.

Regardless of beginners or veterans, this method is extremely important as its scope is very wide. In a broad sense, it can be said that all methods that Buddha had taught us do not deviate from the scope of calming-and-insight meditation. Since the scope is so wide, how do we start our practice? Especially for beginners, there must be a very easy and simple method with a grasp of the key points, which is just like a guidebook.

If there is such a book that is so simple yet it contains all the key points, and it can lead to rapid attainment, then it is worth learning from it again. This book is known as 'Tiantai Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation'. This is the easiest and simplest of all calming-and-insight meditation methods. Though it is easy and simple, it contains all the key points. Very clearly and sequentially, it explains the initial fulfilment of the prerequisite conditions to the final realisation of the fruits; and they are also very easy to practise.

As to the final realisation of the fruits, is it the fruit of Arhat, Pratyekabuddha, Bodhisattva or Buddha? It depends on your intention and resolution for learning Tiantai Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation today and the contents of your daily cultivation of calming-and-insight. If you are cultivating for self-liberation or self-attainment then you can only attain the fruit of Arhat or Pratyekabuddha. If you feel that this is insufficient, you hope to benefit sentient beings; then you can attain the fruit of Mahayana Bodhisattva. However, it is not sufficient to just give rise to bodhicitta if you want to attain the ultimate fruit of Buddha; you need to have accomplishment in calming-and-insight meditation. We will explain clearly the detailed contents in these four nights.

Now we know the importance of Tiantai Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation. How did this book come about? Tiantai Great Master Zhizhe explained it in accordance with four main contents, and it was documented by his disciple Huibian. On what basis did Great Master Zhizhe explain Tiantai Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation? Firstly, it was done according to the original Buddhist meditation sutra known as Dharmatrata Meditation Sutra which was translated by the Indian tripitaka Master, Buddhahadra of Eastern Jin Dynasty. Anapanasati, which is mindfulness of breathing, is mentioned in the main contents of Dharmatrata Meditation Sutra; and it is the earliest record of cultivation of anapanasati. There is also Meditation on the Impurities of the Human Body, samadhi of the four immeasurables, twelve links of dependent origination, etc mentioned in this sutra. Great Master Zhizhe made reference to the contents of anapanasati in this sutra when he explained Tiantai Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation. Secondly, it was in accordance with the meditation section of the Shastra on Prajnaparamita Sutra. Thirdly, he referred to the meditation methods in India. Fourthly, it was in accordance with his own meditation experiences. The integration of these four is the source of Tiantai Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation.

Tiantai Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation was originally known as 'The Essentials of Buddhist Meditation'. It specifies the rules and vital path that are needed when cultivating sitting calming-and-insight. What is calming-and-insight meditation? It is known as 'dhyana' in Sanskrit; we translate it as cultivation of calming and meditative absorption; and cultivation of insight and wisdom. Calming-and-insight meditation guides us mainly in the cultivation of calming-and-insight, enabling us to attain all the aspects of meditative absorption and wisdom. The rules that you should observe during sitting calming-and-insight meditation form the vital path of cultivation; the path to transcending afflictions and, life and death; the path to enlightenment and nirvana.

Therefore, we know that cultivation of calming-and-insight does not simply entail sitting cross-legged to attain meditative absorption. Through such a practice we can attain both the power of meditative absorption and wisdom. What is the power of meditative absorption? It is the ability of the mind to stay unperturbed when you encounter any kind of phenomena. You do not have the power of meditative absorption if you react to any phenomena that arise, giving rise to discriminations and then afflictions. What is the power of wisdom? It is the ability to see through to the ultimate truth and let go of all attachments when you encounter any phenomena. On what basis can you do it? It is because you already have the wisdom of emptiness, you know that they are illusory; they arise from causes and conditions, are void of any inherent nature and are comparable to empty space. Hence if there are still situations wherein you are unable to see through to the ultimate truth and let go of the attachments, it shows that you do not have the wisdom of emptiness.

How does the wisdom of emptiness come about? It is through the cultivation of insight. How does the meditative absorption of the unperturbed mind come about? It is through the cultivation of calming. Therefore, we know that through the cultivation of calming-and-insight, one can realise the fruit of enlightenment and nirvana, and ultimately become Buddha. So do not belittle the cultivation of calming-and-insight.

'The Essentials of Buddhist Meditation' mainly focuses on how to start the cultivation. It explains extremely clearly the cultivation from the fulfilment of the prerequisite conditions to the final realisation of the fruits. As long as you are able to fulfil what is stated in the contents, there is not the slightest difficulty in realising the fruit of enlightenment and nirvana. As long as you have accomplishment in calming-and-insight meditation, you have perfected meditative absorption and wisdom, and with this you become Buddha.

Therefore, we look forward to the contents. It is definitely good for beginners to have the opportunity to learn; and it is also good for the veterans. Why? They can conduct a self-check, as to whether they have been able to fulfil what is stated in the contents. If you have not accomplished meditative absorption and wisdom even though you have cultivated calming-and-insight for a long time, you can check where the problem is. Go through the contents that are mentioned in the lessons and identify the area that you have not fulfilled. Once you have fulfilled the required condition, attaining the power of meditative absorption and wisdom should not be a problem; then realisation of the fruits is definitely not a problem too.

The contents of Tiantai Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation is divided into ten chapters.

Chapter 1 is 'Fulfilment of the Prerequisite Conditions' for the cultivation of calming-and-insight. What fundamental conditions that are needed to be fulfilled before you can start the cultivation of calming-

and-insight. If you have cultivated calming-and-insight for a long time without any result, perhaps you have not fulfilled the fundamental conditions.

### **Fulfilment of the Five Prerequisite Conditions**

‘Fulfilment of the Prerequisite Conditions’ – there is a total of five conditions to be fulfilled. If you are able to fulfil all the five conditions, you will be able to attain the wisdom of emptiness rapidly, regardless of the cultivation methods of calming-and-insight. Let us take a look at why you are unable to do so.

**Firstly, pure observance of the precepts.** Do you have pure observance of the precepts? Only through pure observance of the precepts can you give rise to all kinds of meditative absorption and ultimately the wisdom of liberation. There is no other way because the contents of all Buddha’s teachings do not deviate from the three disciplines – precepts, meditative absorption and wisdom.

For one who does not observe the precepts well, can he attain meditative absorption? What is the frame of mind of such a person? Such a person is often in a state of anxiety and remorse, so can he attain meditative absorption?

Is it possible for one who breaks the precepts to attain the wisdom of emptiness? Is it possible for an enlightened person to always break the precepts? We are referring to one who really breaks the precepts, not referring to a manifested Bodhisattva. We have mentioned that Mahayana Bodhisattvas sometimes seem to be breaking the precepts, but they are actually compassionately embracing and benefiting sentient beings; this is not what we are referring to. Why does one always break the precepts? It is because his mind is distracted, right? Perhaps he is often torpid-minded, restless, not mindful or does not have the right view. Can he have the wisdom of emptiness? It is not possible. Will someone who has right mindfulness and right view break the precepts? It is not possible, right? What is a person with wisdom of emptiness or one who is enlightened like? He views all things in the world as flowers in the emptiness of space; he will not attach to anything. He will not have greed, anger and ignorance, and then creating karma and break precepts.

What does this show? Regardless of whether you want to attain the power of meditative absorption or wisdom, it is impossible to do so without pure observance of precepts. Therefore precepts, meditative absorption and wisdom form the foundation of the three disciplines; only when the foundation is stable can a tree grow tall, big and, bear flowers and fruits. What will happen if the precepts are not observed well, the foundation is shaky; just like a tree, what will happen to the roots? If the roots are rotten, can the tree continue to grow or bear flowers and fruits? If it is fundamentally rotten, it is not possible to continue surviving. Without pure precepts, it is impossible to attain the power of meditative absorption and wisdom. So today we hope to attain the power of meditative absorption and wisdom through calming-and-insight meditation; we can attain meditative absorption power through the cultivation of calming, and wisdom through the cultivation of insight. We have just mentioned that precepts form the foundation of this. Therefore, in our cultivation of calming-and-insight today, we must first have pure observance of the precepts.

So now that you know the importance of pure observance of the precepts, you begin to observe purely the precepts pertaining to your body, speech and mind; you stop the ten non-virtuous deeds, and perform the ten virtuous deeds. Is this considered pure observance of the precepts? Raise your hands



if you agree. Now raise your hands if you do not agree. This cannot be considered pure observance of the precepts. Why? Have you purified the negative karma that you have created over infinite aeons? It is unavoidable for us to have committed some negative karma over many transmigrations; these are karma created by breaking the precepts in the past. So now that we want to start observing the precepts purely, we have to purify all the negative karma from infinite aeons; only then are we considered having pure observance of the precepts. Thus, observing the precepts purely does not only entail not creating karma from now; what happen to all the negative karma from infinite aeons? Now when you start to cultivate calming-and-insight, they will be manifested as karmic obstacles to hinder you from continuing your cultivation.

Later we will talk about how some practitioners are possessed by demons in the process of cultivation. Many are due to their past negative karma which have not been purified, and are manifested when they start cultivating calming-and-insight now. Chapter 9 is about the treatment of disorders; and Chapter 8 is about the ways to deal with possession by demons. In the process of our cultivation, our past disorders of the body can recur, latent disorders can also break out. Disorders are obstacles to our cultivation of calming-and-insight; they are related to your past deeds of body, speech and mind. Therefore, to have pure observance of precepts, not only do we have to start observing the precepts purely now, the negative karma accumulated over infinite aeons need to be purified simultaneously.

So how do we purify our negative karma from infinite aeons so that they do not hinder our cultivation of calming-and-insight? Everyone knows that it is through repentance! We can only purify through repentance. How do you all repent? You do the practice of Thirty-five Confession Buddhas or Eighty-eight Buddhas Great Repentance once a day? Or do you join in the liturgy of confession? Can you purify the karma from infinite aeons in this way? There is a method for repentance.

Firstly, karma that have been created over infinite aeons cannot be undone; they can only be purified through repentance. Confess the karma that have already been created. 'Confess' is a very important word. Do not just repent, you need to confess.

'Confess' has two layers of meaning: First, it shows that you sincerely admit your mistake. You bravely admit your mistake in public, recognising where and what the mistake is. It is impossible for you to change without admitting your own mistake first; only then are you willing to repent, right?

The second meaning of 'confess' is not hiding. When you confess your mistake in public, not only are you brave, it shows that you do not hide your mistake. When you make a mistake or break the precept, if you do not face it, you are hiding the mistake. Firstly, you are hiding it from yourself; secondly you are hiding it from others for fear of damaging your image, reputation, personal interest or respect from others. The result of hiding your mistake is the continuous increase of your sinful nature. As you do not face and admit your mistake, you do not repent but hide it, the habit will get stronger, your affliction will become more serious. Thus, if you do not repent after making a mistake, it will be perfumed back to the eighth consciousness to become future habitual seed. Your karmic seed of affliction will become stronger with each passing day because you have always been hiding rather than resolving it.

Therefore, many of our habits begin from an extremely small place or an extremely small issue but are slowly accumulated and developed into strong habits which we cannot control. So do not belittle a very small issue or a very small mistake for habits are formed through slow perfuming. Very often people say, "I don't want it to be like that too! But when my temper arises, there is nothing that I can

do about it!” Such an uncontrollable habit has been developed by yourself. How is such a strong and uncontrollable habit developed? This is because you always hide it; you do not face it, defeat it, and resolve it.

To repent, importantly we definitely have to confess first. This is to admit our mistake and not to hide it. When we make a mistake, how do we handle it? Firstly, look at the way we handle our mistake.

What if we continue to commit the mistake after confession and repentance? We cannot purify our negative karma in this way. So, we have to vow not to commit the mistake again so as to break the continuity of such thoughts, otherwise we are simply committing wrong and repenting, repeating this process continuously.

However, you say that you have done proper repentance and have decided not to create more negative karma. But you are unable to control yourself, you repeatedly create the negative karma again. Thus, we have to trace the cause for such an action.

Firstly, you have a mentality of taking chances, right? You think that you have always been lucky, so creating karma may not necessarily lead to retribution. Hence you will keep creating negative karma.

Secondly, you are not afraid of the manifestation of negative karma. You may not have experienced strong sufferings; or you may not have had great setbacks in your life as not everyone will encounter significant ups and downs. Perhaps everything in your life has been going smoothly since birth; you could have had some small illness but not great setbacks. This is because retribution from negative karma does not manifest right after creation of karma. Thus, if you are not afraid of the sufferings from the retribution, you will continue to create negative karma dauntlessly, right? However, in the secular world we have witnessed scenes of the three evil realms – hell, animal and hungry ghost. Constant disasters happening in the entire world, scenes in the hospitals and the situations in poor countries... they are all manifestations of the retribution of the three evil realms; warning us that if you continue to create negative karma, you will have such retribution.

Moreover, when we are undergoing retribution, we will always look for the reason externally. We may think that our luck is not good, or the fortune teller says that we clash with ‘Tai Sui’ (Taoist deity), or the fengshui has not been handled well, or the fault always lies with other people! However, regardless of anything favourable or unfavourable that happens today, it does not deviate from the scope of karmic force. Everything that happens favourably today is simply the ripening of your past positive karma. All unfavourable, adverse circumstances are the manifestation of your past negative karma. However, do we have such power of reflection? When anything happens, do we immediately realise that it is the manifestation of karma? Do we accept it willingly and happily? Or do we complain for a while and then make changes to the fengshui, go for fortune telling or look for ways to change our luck first; before we finally realise that it is the result of karma that we have created in the past. Is this not too slow?

Therefore, why do you continue to create negative karma even though you keep repenting, hoping to stop such an action? This is because you do not really believe in cause and effect. If you really believe in cause and effect you know that you have to face the consequences of your action; then you will not have the mentality of taking chances. As such you will be so fearful of creating negative karma that you will stop creating it. If you strongly believe in cause and effect, when negative karma ripens, you will feel ashamed, rather than blame everyone and everything but yourself; you will not look for the

answer externally. Now we know the reason for our inability to perfect our pure observance of the precepts. Perhaps we have to strengthen our belief of cause and effect.

In addition, do you resolve to protect the true Buddhist teachings (Dharma)? Do you always vow, hoping for the long existence of the true Dharma in the world? If you have always made such vow, you will be dedicated to make progress in the pure observance of the precepts. Why? On what basis can the Dharma exist in the world for a long time? Precepts! As long as the precepts exist, the Dharma will exist. The Dharma will cease to exist when the precepts are gone. Since you vow for the long existence of the Dharma in the world, should you not set a good example first? Only when the precepts are pure can the Dharma exist long in the world. It is even more excellent if you can give rise to bodhicitta! I am dedicated to make progress in the pure observance of the precepts in order to help and save sentient beings!

Therefore, if you are able to do all these – strongly believe in cause and effect, in addition, give rise to bodhicitta to benefit sentient beings then you will be dedicated to make progress in the pure observance of the precepts. In this way you should not be creating negative karma again. What about those negative karma that you have created in the past? Confess and repent, and vow not to create them again. This is phenomenal repentance.

There is the principle repentance which is also very important. Regardless of whether we are using the method of confession and repentance as mentioned above, or any other methods of repentance, we have to understand that karmic sins are void of any inherent nature, are comparable to empty space. This is principle repentance. We can think with the right thought, that is, sitting cross-legged and start to find the answer. Firstly, where do these karmic sins created over infinite aeons come from? They are not given to us by other people nor are they naturally occurring, though upon birth we bring along karma from the past.

Hence firstly we have to ask, “How are all karmic sins created?” They are created by the mind! When the mind is activated, thoughts are generated; we start to discriminate, giving rise to afflictions, and creating karma. Therefore, all karmas are created by our mind. Then we have to ask: Where is our mind? Does the mind really exist? Now we observe our thoughts again and realise that they arise and cease. So, does the mind really exist? We are referring to the illusive mind, one that arises and ceases. If the mind really exists, it should not disappear after arising, it should exist permanently. However, since the mind arises and ceases, showing that it is impermanent, it does not really exist. So, when we observe our mind, we realise that it does not really exist.

Since our mind does not exist, all kinds of karma created by the mind also do not exist. We are able to observe that ‘Sins are void of any inherent nature, are comparable to empty space’. This is also very important; it can help us to have a more rapid awakening and purification of our karmic obstacles. This is due to the fact that we are eliminating the karma at the root; rather than repeating the process of creating karma and repenting, feeling helpless for having such strong karmic obstacles. Therefore, it is very important that when we are repenting, we also understand that sins are empty in self-nature.

Phenomenal repentance together with principle repentance will enable us to purify our negative karma that are created over infinite aeons. This is possible as long as the method is correct.

Let us revise: How to repent? There are three important points. Firstly, confess all your past sins in front of the Triple Gems. Secondly, break the continuity of thoughts by vowing not to commit the sins

again in future. Thirdly, sit upright in the meditation posture and contemplate on the empty nature of sins. After you emerge from meditation, normally do you need to do any other practices? Yes, you need to continue accumulating merits by paying reverence, making offerings to the Triple Gems and, reading and reciting Mahayana sutras to deepen your understanding of emptiness. These are the four key points. Keep concentrating on repentance in this way till your karmic sins are eliminated.

How do you know if your karmic sins have been eliminated? You can check the state of your body and mind. If you are still filled with worries every day and are always temperamental; and you have relatively more bad dreams at night; you are afraid of receiving and upholding the precepts, and are unable to uphold them well; many bad thoughts arise, if not your thoughts are negative; you often say or do the wrong things. This shows that you find it difficult to uphold the precepts; difficult not to break the precepts pertaining to your body, speech and mind. When you decide to sit down for meditation, many situations arise, you simply cannot do so. When you are seated, your back starts to ache, somehow there is discomfort here and there; you feel irritable, cannot continue with the meditation. When you decide to read the sutra, you recognise the words but you simply cannot penetrate it. What about listening to the sutra? You cannot understand what you are listening to even after many repetitions. If these situations occur, what do you know about your negative karma? Your negative karma has not been purified!

We will use contrast for a better explanation. If your body and mind feel light, peaceful and blissful every day, and you have auspicious dreams at night; you do not find it difficult at all to observe the precepts as you are able to focus your mind; you are able to attain meditative absorption quickly when you cultivate; when you read or listen to the sutra, you are able to understand what you cannot understand in the past as your mind gets clearer; it shows that wisdom keeps developing, understand? Virtuous thoughts keep emerging as your mind becomes more virtuous; very often you experience the joy associated with the Dharma so you hardly have temperaments like worries, regrets and anger. If there are such phenomena, you know that the obstacles arising from breaking the precepts in the past are already decreasing slowly; the karmic sins are slowly being purified. As long as from now onwards, you are committed to not breaking the precepts, then you are able to have pure observance of the precepts. In addition, the non-virtuous deeds committed over infinite aeons have all been purified. This is achievable through true repentance and correct method.

This is the first prerequisite condition to be fulfilled – pure observance of the precepts. Ask yourself: Am I able to do this? As long as this is not perfected, you can never attain meditative absorption no matter how you cultivate, understand?

**Secondly, adequacy of clothing and food.** This means that you do not have to worry about your life. Now the unemployment rate is very high, you are afraid of retrenchment and not being able to sustain your life. With such worries, you will not be able to calm your mind down to cultivate calming-and-insight. Once you are seated with your legs crossed, you will think of all kinds of outstanding bills – water, electricity, mortgage loan, CPF, etc; and worry about how to find the money to settle the bills. You will not be able to cultivate calming-and-insight in peace. So not having to worry about your livelihood is a very important condition for the cultivation of calming-and-insight. Therefore, the second prerequisite condition of adequacy of clothing and food means that you do not have to worry about sustenance of life and having clothes to keep warm so as to cultivate calming-and-insight peacefully.

There is a very important concept in the adequacy of clothing and food, that is, subsistence. Do not emphasise on luxury in your life. Thus, we can understand why Buddha stipulated that his disciples could only have three regulated garments and one alms bowl, unless the place is very cold. He did not want his disciples to pay particular attention to clothing and food so as not to affect the truth-seeking mind. Similarly, for laymen like us, we should only seek adequacy of clothing and food; never increase your greed in clothing and food. Do not think that you certainly need to eat well, go to a particular restaurant or be particular about the standard. Or you certainly need to wear designer clothing, be particular about your clothes, dress beautifully or respectably. You do not need these, you just need adequacy of clothing and food; otherwise you will keep increasing the greed in clothing and food, and not have the peace for cultivation. Thus, the important point is to have contentment.

**Thirdly, having ease and a quiet dwelling place.** To cultivate calming-and-insight, you need to find a very quiet place and your mind is also at ease, you are not busy over many things. In the modern, busy world, it is very difficult for your mind to be at ease. In addition, you have to find a very quiet place for cultivation.

Why do you need ease and quietness? Very simply, if you are so busy with many things every day, your body and mind are so busy that you are unable to calm your mind down to cultivate calming-and-insight.

It is also very important to have a quiet place to cultivate calming-and-insight. If there is someone singing karaoke, or there is construction work either upstairs, downstairs or next door, you will find it difficult to calm down for meditation. Or if at your place of residence, there is a cinema upstairs, a café downstairs and there are also some other rowdy places, you will find it very difficult to cultivate calming-and-insight. Therefore, you need to be easeful and the place needs to be very quiet for you to cultivate calming-and-insight. So, we can understand why Buddha chose to bring his disciples to the following places to cultivate calming-and-insight – near water, in the forest and one-and-a-half kilometres away from village so that they would not hear the barking of dogs, crowing of roosters or the sounds from cattle in the pasture. This is the situation in the past. Now it is to be away from the city so that you do not hear the sounds from the cars, aeroplanes, etc. In the past, the distance from the village was also rather important because if they had stayed too far away from the village, by the time they returned from their alms round it would be dusk. They could leave for their alms round early in the morning and return at noon, exactly in time for their meal; as at that time they only took one meal a day.

Now we have a question in our mind: How can I find a place that is far away from the city, a place in the mountain that is secluded for me to cultivate calming-and-insight? It is impossible, so how can I find a quiet dwelling place and be at ease? There seems to be some difficulties, right? There is this simplest way, that is, you just need to close your room door and that is your hermitage. Leave the sounds from the telephone, television and children's cries outside the door, and you will be able to cultivate calming-and-insight peacefully. This is the only way now. So as long as you can cultivate calming-and-insight in a room without noise disturbance, it will be fine. I remember my teacher who wanted to concentrate on writing his books, was looking for a place for solitary retreat. After requesting many people to help in searching for a place, he still could not find a suitable place. Finally, he figured a way out; he rented a room in a small apartment within a noisy food market. He closed the door and went into solitary retreat to write his books. He finished writing his books very quickly in this way. This is the simplest; we can also adopt this method.

Therefore, it does not matter if we are unable to find a very quiet place now. As far as possible, we practise our meditation when our family members are resting, or they are out working or schooling. During this time, we can practise without disturbance. We should be able to find such a time or place to practise. If you really cannot find such a place at home, there are many Dharma centres with a worship hall or meditation hall for people to meditate; you can meditate there.

The key point is 'ease'. When you are cultivating calming-and-insight, it is important that your mind is at ease. Normally our mind is filled with many mundane affairs of the secular world, so the moment you sit down for meditation, everything will emerge. Or you may be sitting there planning for the next day – what to do, who to meet and what to discuss. Hence, you will not be able to cultivate calming-and-insight well. Actually, sitting there is not the important point; the important point is to empty your mind during that period of time, regardless of whether you are seated there for thirty or fifty minutes. This is what we can ask for in the secular world.

However, if you have the opportunity, you still need to find a really quiet place to cultivate well. Regardless of whether you have a solitary retreat, or you are focused in your cultivation for a short period of time, or you attend a one-day, three-day, seven-day or ten-day meditation retreat; during this period of time you can put everything down and focus on the cultivation of calming-and-insight. Veteran practitioners have relatively less problems as ultimately whether you are walking, standing, sitting or sleeping, you are in meditative absorption. However, beginners do not have the meditative absorption to do this, so they are easily affected by external factors. As such, they certainly have to look for a quiet place to cultivate calming-and-insight. Since they are easily affected by external factors, when the external environment is quiet, they are able to calm down more quickly. Based on this premise, having ease and a quiet dwelling place is very important. Therefore, it is also a prerequisite condition for the cultivation of calming-and-insight.

**The fourth condition is cessation of all kinds of worldly responsibilities.** Such worldly responsibilities will make it difficult for us to focus on cultivating calming-and-insight. Therefore, during the period of cultivation, stop these responsibilities temporarily as much as possible. What are these worldly responsibilities?

Firstly, cessation of livelihood. Regardless of the industry that you are in today, you need to toil for a living. You are so busy every day that your body and mind are so tired and overwrought. How can you have the vigour and energy to cultivate calming-and-insight? If you want to cultivate well, you have to put it aside temporarily.

Secondly, cessation of interpersonal responsibilities. In our worldly lives, it is inevitable for us to socialise and entertain relatives, friends and colleagues; we have to reciprocate in the same manner otherwise we are deemed to be rude. Having to handle such interactions is very exhausting! Everyone has the same feeling.

For instance, when the elderly pass on, do you not attend the memorial service? You certainly do. When your good friend is sick, do you not pay a visit? You certainly do. When your colleagues get married, give birth, get promoted or have increase in salary, do you not celebrate? You certainly do. There is spring feasting, year-end party and the three big festivals (Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival and Lunar New Year) whereby you have to exchange gifts. You feel that this is exhausting! Then you think of going for an overseas holiday, but can you be at ease? You cannot be at ease because you have to buy gifts back for relatives and friends, so you are unable to really relax and enjoy the

scenery. You will spend your time shopping, thinking and sourcing for suitable gifts for different people. So, this is very exhausting!

This is precisely the interpersonal responsibilities in this world. In order to be successful in life, you have to put a lot of thoughts into settling the needs from the old to the young. When you are cultivating calming-and-insight you will not be able to keep thinking of this. Or if you have to socialise and entertain, you have to engage in idle talk, so how do you cultivate calming-and-insight? For instance, after attending a feast tonight, when you reach home you will review everything that has been said; you not be able to cultivate well.

Thirdly, cessation of craft and skill related activities. This is especially referring to skill and art related personnel like artists, writers, numerologists and doctors because normally their minds are filled with knowledge related to their area of work or hobby. When a numerologist sits down to meditate, the natal chart will emerge; for a doctor, prescription will emerge; for a writer, when his inspiration arises, he will want to pen it down quickly lest he forgets, and in a more serious situation, he will wake up from his sleep to pen down the inspiration from his dream otherwise he will forget when he wakes up the next day. How to cultivate calming-and-insight in this way? It is very difficult, right?

Fourthly, cessation of study. This refers to worldly knowledge. As we know, worldly knowledge comes from the discrimination of the sixth consciousness. In the acquisition of knowledge, your sixth consciousness is busy with discriminating, it is unable to stop. Therefore, it is very difficult to go into meditative absorption. What is meditative absorption? It is direct perception without discrimination. However, your mind is filled with discrimination, so it is very difficult to go into the phenomenon of direct perception without discrimination. This becomes an obstacle in your cultivation of calming-and-insight.

Hence, in the cultivation of calming-and-insight, you need to cease these four worldly activities temporarily.

Then you say, "I will have difficulties. Firstly, I need to work every day, you cannot expect me to resign from my job to cultivate calming-and-insight, right? Secondly, I cannot avoid human interaction every day; I cannot simply hide myself and cut off all interaction with people. Thirdly, if I am a numerologist, doctor or writer, you cannot expect me to stop my work. You told me not to engage in all worldly knowledge, but in ancient times, it was said that if you do not study for three days, you will look detestable; if you do not read for three days you will lose your disposition and literary feel. You told me not to see, not to listen and not to think, I have to put down everything. I have difficulties to do so!"

Do not be so tensed, we have mentioned earlier that it is 'temporary'. When you feel like cultivating well, put down these responsibilities temporarily. For instance, after your work or when you are on leave, disconnect your telephone, switch off your mobile phone and do not be engaged in your work; put all worldly knowledge aside and focus on cultivating calming-and-insight wholeheartedly. In this way, you will not be obstructed in your cultivation as a result of too many responsibilities or having a chaotic mind. So, put down these four worldly responsibilities during the period of cultivation. This is the section on the fourth prerequisite condition of cessation of all kinds of worldly responsibilities.

**The fifth prerequisite condition is to be close to a spiritual friend**, one who can teach us calming-and-insight meditation. Since we want to cultivate calming-and-insight meditation, we have to rely on a

person who is proficient in it. We must not cultivate blindly; some people start cultivating after reading books or through information on the internet. This is simply too bold; they are not afraid of the situations that can arise. Especially for beginners, it is best to rely on an experienced teacher, as such a teacher can teach us the correct method and sequence. He can also advise us on what to take note of so we will not deviate or go astray; how to handle different phenomena and obstacles and; how to break through a bottleneck. Therefore, a good spiritual friend is the key to the progress of our calming-and-insight cultivation. So, being close to a spiritual friend is also very important.

When the five prerequisite conditions have been fulfilled, we can start our cultivation of calming-and-insight. What are they? They are pure observance of the precepts, adequacy of clothing and food, having ease and a quiet dwelling place, cessation of all kinds of worldly responsibilities, and be close to a spiritual friend.

### **Renunciation of the Five Desires**

After we have fulfilled the five prerequisite conditions, are we able to cultivate calming-and-insight smoothly? There are still the external phenomena, which when manifested can cause our desires to emerge if we do not have meditative absorption. When we are delighted upon the manifestation of the objects of the five senses – form, sound, smell, taste and touch, we give rise to the five desires.

After the five desires have arisen, we do not have the peace of mind to cultivate calming-and-insight. Thus, we have to 'renounce' the five desires. So secondly, in order to cultivate calming-and-insight, we need to renounce the five desires; do not be enticed by them.

Everyone likes nice things; this is precisely the five desires, greed of the objects of the five senses. For instance, we like nice looking things, this is known as desire of form; we like listening to nice sounds, known as desire of sound; we like nice smell, known as desire of smell; we like to eat nice food, known as desire of taste; we like nice, comfortable touch, known as desire of touch. These are the five desires which we do not deviate from every day; they are the centre of our lives.

As for desire of form, regardless of whether we are looking at people or things, we certainly want them to be aesthetically pleasing, right? We are delighted when we see any aesthetically pleasing thing, and thereafter we become insanely obsessed with it till we cannot stop ourselves from wanting to possess it. We will keep thinking about it and will not be at peace till we buy it home. This applies to our encounter with people, matters and things; as long as we react in such a way, it is desire of form. This is similarly for sound, smell, taste and touch.

Now that we want to cultivate calming-and-insight, we have to ask ourselves whether there is anything that is so captivating that we keep yearning for it? Whether there are any people, matters or things (these are the five desires, the desire of the objects of the five senses) that we crave for, attach to and cannot let go?

What is the result of this desire and attachment? This will lead to greed, and the inability to possess will lead to anger; it is the source of all afflictions. Therefore, desires are the source of all afflictions; and with afflictions, karma are created, and with that there are retributions and all kinds of sufferings; we will not be able to be liberated for lives. So, with desires, regardless of your cultivation for lives, you can never have attainment. This is the problem with the five desires.



We should have profound knowledge of the problem of desires and renounce them as they are the main culprit for our karma creation, transmigration and sufferings; our desires will result in our insatiable greed and intensified craving. Therefore, our craving for the five desires will result in our inability to cultivate calming-and-insight, right? This is because the moment you sit down for meditation, the desires will emerge and cause your mind to be unsettled for a long time. You will not be able to observe the precepts, cultivate meditative absorption and develop wisdom. This is a very great obstacle to our attainment as no matter how diligent and dedicated you are to making progress, there will not be any result. Hence, prior to our cultivation of calming-and-insight we certainly have to renounce the five desires, understand the problems that they can cause and not be misled by them.

Then how can we see through them? The most comprehensive method is to truly understand that they are illusory, do not really exist; just like flowers in the space, or moon in the water. They do not really exist for as long as they arise from causes and conditions, they arise and cease, are impermanent and are void of self-nature. No matter whatever manifested people, matters or things that cause you to be deluded, they arise and cease and are impermanent; they are void of any inherent nature and are comparable to empty space. They are illusory, so do not be deluded by them again. In the past we have been fooled, thinking that they really existed; we craved for them even at the expense of our lives, creating all sorts of bad karma, thinking that it was worth doing so. This is wrong! From now onwards, we must not commit such mistakes again! They do not really exist; they arise from causes and conditions temporarily; they seem to exist. When the causes and conditions cease, they are gone. Therefore, they are not real, do not be fooled by them.

Hence, renouncing the five desires is very important. We need to encounter form, sound, smell, taste and touch every day. It depends on whether you have the skill to perceive whatever phenomena that arise at that moment as empty, illusory and unreal; then you will not be deluded by them.

### **Elimination of the Five Hindrances**

Having settled the external phenomena, is your mind also at peace? Therefore, Chapter 3 is 'Elimination of the Hindrances'. When the objects of the five senses are manifested, we can be unaffected by these external phenomena, but when you are alone or when you want to do a sitting meditation, what if there still exist strong desires in your mind (this is not related to external phenomena)?

For instance, now you would like to start your meditation; when sitting cross-legged your greed keeps emerging, is it possible to attain meditative absorption? It is impossible. If you suddenly think of old grudges and new grievances, you are immediately overwhelmed with anger, resentment and vexation; you will not be able to meditate well. Or if you are torpid-minded, feeling sleepy the moment you start meditating as this is a very comfortable posture; moreover, if you are tired, you will fall asleep very quickly. Under normal circumstances you probably cannot fall asleep while seated, but once you start meditating you go into torpid-mindedness meditative absorption very quickly. Or you are thinking: I have done something wrong to this person, and feel remorseful. Feeling remorseful after having done something or say something wrongly will also make it difficult for you to cultivate calming-and-insight well. Or you lose confidence as you cultivate – doubtful about yourself, the teacher or the method of cultivation. These are the five hindrances – hindrance of greed, hindrance of anger, hindrance of sleep, hindrance of remorse, and hindrance of doubt. They are in fact greed, anger and ignorance. Hindrance

of greed is precisely greed; hindrance of anger is precisely anger; hindrance of sleep and hindrance of doubt are precisely ignorance; hindrance of remorse comprises all three – greed, anger and ignorance.

This shows that when your mind is filled heavily with greed, anger and ignorance, you are unable to cultivate calming-and-insight well. Therefore, before you start to cultivate calming-and-insight seriously, you need to eliminate the five hindrances because they cover your true nature. So, when your afflictions are heavy, your true nature is gone.

Hence, if these five hindrances are not harmonised, it is very difficult for us to attain meditative absorption. If we are unable to attain meditative absorption, wisdom cannot be developed; and if wisdom cannot be developed, our true nature is unable to be manifested. These are the five main hindrances obstructing the manifestation of our true nature. Therefore, in order to cultivate calming-and-insight, we need to eliminate the five hindrances so that our mind will not be afflicted.

### **Making Five Adjustments**

Now that we have settled the external five objects, and also temporarily eliminated the five hindrances, can we start our cultivation? Not yet, we have to make five adjustments. What are they? They are food, sleep, body, breath and mind. External adjustment includes food and sleep; internal adjustment includes body, breath and mind.

How do we adjust our food? Neither should we consume too much nor too little; just consume the right amount of food. When we consume too much, we are easily torpid-minded; when we consume too little, we are distracted. We need to focus during cultivation of calming-and-insight, and this requires energy; therefore, if we are very hungry, we are basically very distracted and do not have the energy to focus well.

How do we adjust our sleep? Neither should we sleep too much nor too little. If we sleep too much, that is whenever we are free, we have a sleep, we will neglect our cultivation; then it is difficult to attain the skill. Moreover, we will be dizzy for the entire day; the more we sleep the dizzier we become, right? It is difficult for the roots of goodness to be developed in this way. If we sleep too little, we will not be able to focus our mind. We are also unable to cultivate calming-and-insight in this way. Hence, we have to adjust our sleep till it is just right; that is, we are full of energy when we wake up and the mind is clear.

Adjusting the body, breath and mind has to be discussed separately – under normal situation and when we are cultivating.

Under normal circumstances, we have to be careful of our actions which should not be too rough, otherwise our breathing will be fast and our mind will be easily distracted. Hence, under normal circumstances we have to try to maintain slow and gentle actions. For instance, close the car door slowly rather than slamming it; some people sit down in a way like there is a volcanic eruption, and when they stand up, they either kick the table or chair; the action is too rough. We can tell if a person has meditative absorption through the way he walks and his normal actions. If he has meditative absorption upholding him, his actions are definitely gentle.

As for his breath, we definitely cannot hear him breathing. In the past when I was cultivating Taoism, our teacher would listen to the sound of our breathing when we were sleeping; and from that he could tell whether you would have a long life; and if you were practising your skill, he could estimate the time needed for attainment. What is subtle breath? If you put a very light feather, regardless of chicken, down or bird feather, beside your nose and your breath makes the feather move, the breath is considered coarse.

Once your action is gentle, your breath will naturally be subtle and consequently your thoughts will be calm. Hence, the calmness of your thoughts comes from the action of your body and your breath. The action of your body must definitely be gentle for your breath to be naturally subtle, then your mind will calm down easily. If we can maintain in this way under normal circumstances, once you start your meditation you can attain meditative absorption very easily because your mind is already very quiet. Therefore, we have to pay attention to our body, mind and breath under normal circumstances.

Once we start our meditation, we have to know how to adjust our body, breath and mind. We may not have the time to practise tonight, but tomorrow night we will officially start our practice; we will finish with the theory tonight. In the next two nights, we will practise the postures to start and end the meditation, and the calming-and-insight cultivation method.

Tonight, we will first explain the posture to adopt when you start meditation. Then we will explain clearly why we have to use the '**seven-point posture**', and how by simply using this seven-point posture you are able to subdue afflictions. This is not to mention once you start using the calming-and-insight method, you should be able to subdue the afflictions even more quickly.

Before we start our meditation, we must have a meditation mat with a cushion behind, just like what everyone here is sitting on. The height of the cushion is about two to three inches, normally it is the height of four fingers. Do not have it too high or too low, otherwise we can feel tensed sitting on it. So, the meditation mat is very important and the height of the cushion is also very important, neither should it be too hard nor too soft; use comfort as the guideline.

Prior to meditating, we have to remove all items on the body that we feel are restraining us. Tomorrow when we practise meditation, if you are wearing spectacles, remove them. When you are practising at home, remove your spectacles and watch. Loosen your belt so that there is nothing binding your stomach, otherwise you will feel energy blockage there. Anything that restrains you has to be loosened, like your bracelet or your clothes, otherwise your energy will be blocked at the tight spot.

After preparing the meditation mat, the **first point** is to sit in a cross-legged pose. You can be in a full lotus pose, half lotus pose, simply cross-legged pose or just sit upright. It is best to be in the full lotus pose because the effect is the best. Those who are in the full lotus pose will know that you will neither tilt to the left nor right. If you are in the half lotus pose, you will tend to feel your body tilted to a side. Though the effect of a full lotus pose is the best, you cannot force yourself if you cannot do so; you just sit in the half lotus pose.

We will teach some warm up exercises like moving your head up, down, left and right; or we will include some muscle stretching exercises. If you do these exercises often, your muscles and bones will be looser; you will be able to do a full lotus pose as you stretch the muscles slowly when you start your meditation. However, do not force yourself in the beginning, you can do a half lotus pose first though the effect may not be as good, but it can last longer. For those whose energy channels in the

legs are blocked, they will not be able to sit for too long in a full lotus pose. As for older or fatter people, they will not even be able to do a half lotus pose, so simply sit in a cross-legged pose, that is, one leg is in front of the other, but the effect is slower. As for the elderly and those whose body are weaker, they can sit upright on a chair. The effect of this pose is slower but it is natural, effortless and the body is very stable. They can remain in this pose for a long time without feeling tired; this is the advantage. Therefore, you can be in any of these poses. This is the first of the seven-point posture.

Why do we need to sit cross-legged? This is because our body is the most stable in this pose. As long as our body is stable, we will not be easily disturbed by external demons and spirits. Sitting cross-legged in this stable pose together with the customary meditation hand pose is even more reliable and safer; you will not encounter any disturbance. We have not heard of any Buddhist practitioners who have been possessed by demons during meditation; this is due to the cross-legged pose and the customary meditation hand pose.

In Vajrayana, this cross-legged pose will allow our downward-moving energy to enter the central channel; it can eliminate the affliction of doubt. Hence, the pose itself has the ability to subdue afflictions. Vajrayana practices enable the left, right and all the other channels in the body to enter the central channel. When the central channel is activated, the wisdom of emptiness will be developed easily. So, even the sitting pose is to allow the energy to enter the central channel. Later we will talk on how we can see our true nature when all the five energies enter the central channel.

The **second point** is to put our hands in the customary meditation hand pose; also known as samadhi hand gesture. In this pose, the back of the left-hand rests on the palm of the right hand in such a way that the tips of the thumbs lightly touch one another, and draw them in towards the body resting them on the legs right below the navel. Why must the thumbs touch one another lightly? This is because the left side of the human body is yang and the right side of the body is yin; by joining our fingers in this way, our energy and blood can flow across the two sides, enabling yin-yang balance.

In Vajrayana, this is to enable our balancing energy to enter the central channel, eliminating the affliction of anger.

After sitting in a cross-legged pose and putting our hands in the customary meditation hand pose, we have to rotate our body seven or eight times. This is to loosen our pelvis. Those who have cultivated Taoism will know that it is like moving the belt channel, which is a bigger movement; it can clear the blockage at the belt channel. Out of the eight extraordinary channels, blockage at the belt channel is the most difficult to clear. There are many other methods, one of which is moving in this way, so we know that it can loosen our pelvis.

After rotating our body, straighten our spine. Then check our body, ensure that it is not bent forward or backward; neither should it tilt to the left nor right.

After straightening our spine, level the shoulders, that is, the shoulders are neither inclined to the left nor the right.

So, the **third point** is to level the shoulders; this will allow the pervasive energy to enter the central channel easily, eradicating the affliction of ignorance.

The **fourth point** is to place our head correctly. Check if our nose and navel are aligned. Thus, placing the head correctly would entail that it is not tilted to the left or right and, neither is it bent downward nor upward.

Next is to tuck in the chin. Push the lower jaw downwards, pressing lightly on the carotid arteries. These are two major arteries on the neck, one on the left and one on the right. We use the action of tucking in the chin, pushing down the lower jaw to press lightly on the carotid arteries to slow down the flow of blood to the brain, so as to reduce the cranial nerves tension in the brain. When the tension in the cranial nerves is eased, our misleading thoughts will be reduced; as such it is easier to calm down, easier to attain meditative absorption. Hence, this pose is also very important. It can also regulate our blood pressure. If this pose is done well, high blood pressure can become low, and low blood pressure can be regulated to the optimum level.

Therefore, this pose will allow our upward-moving energy to enter the central channel easily, eradicating the affliction of greed.

The **fifth point** is to expel the turbid breath three times. Open our mouth a little and expel the turbid breath slowly. At the same time, visualise blockages in all channels of the body are cleared as we expel the turbid breath. After exhaling through the mouth, close our mouth, then inhale fresh air. Repeat this three times, inhale and exhale slowly.

After expelling the turbid breath, the **sixth point** is to hold our tongue up lightly against the palate, at the root of the teeth; this is the terminal point of the salivary glands where secretion takes place. If we hold our tongue correctly in this way for some time, we will feel a lot of saliva in your mouth; the saliva will keep flowing out.

The **seventh point** is to open our eyes a little, that is, to have our eyes one-third opened, and fix our eyes at a place in front of us, about seven to eight feet, or eleven to twelve feet, or even a little further. Why do we have our eyes one-third opened? This is mainly to avoid falling into torpid-mindedness and distraction because when our eyes are closed it is easy for this to happen. For those who have to use their eyes in the course of their work, for instance, those who work on the computer for a long time, they can have their eyes closed at this time, as long as they do not fall asleep or are torpid-minded.

Holding our tongue up against the palate and having our eyes one-third opened will allow our life-sustaining energy to enter the central channel, eliminating the affliction of pride.

After we have finished presenting the seven-point posture, we know why we can subdue our afflictions with the cultivation of meditative absorption; we can have such effect simply with the seven-point posture. This is the posture for sitting meditation.

Beginners should not sit for too long, nor should we force ourselves to definitely sit for an hour the moment we start our meditation, and as a result we keep looking at the time and the entire body aches after the meditation. There is no need to torture ourselves. The time can be shorter but with more frequency; use this as a principle. We can start with fifteen to twenty minutes and when we have stabilised, extend the time slowly. The important point is to emerge from the meditation once you feel comfortable. Normally we will continue with the meditation when we feel comfortable, and emerge from the meditation only when we cannot sustain anymore. You will not be fond of meditation

in this way. If you emerge from meditation when you feel comfortable, you will be very fond of meditation.

In addition, do not consume too much or too little food before meditation. Consuming too much food will cause torpid-mindedness, too little will cause distraction; they are both unsuitable. Pay particular attention to the environment; the light must not be too bright or dim during meditation. If the light is too bright, we can be easily tensed; if it is too dim then we can be easily torpid-minded. We have to ensure that the air circulation is good but do not have the wind blowing directly onto the body. It is best to cover the knees and hindbrain because cold air or dampness enters the body through these places. Hence, we certainly have to keep the knees and hindbrain warm.

How many times a day do we meditate? If we have the time, it is good to meditate as many times as we can. However, if we are very busy in the day, try to meditate twice a day, in the morning and night. When we meditate in the morning, we will be filled with vigour for the entire day and our mind will be very clear; we will not commit any wrongdoing easily or have poor judgement. When we meditate at night, we can sleep better. Hence, try as much as possible to meditate twice a day, in the morning and night.

For those who are easily tensed, that is, they gnash their teeth and look ferocious during meditation, we would suggest that they put on a smile on their face during meditation. This is because when we smile, our entire body will relax.

In addition, it is very important to have our meditation at a fixed place. This is because an energy field is formed when a person remains at a place for a long period of time. If you meditate at the same spot every day, in future when you meditate at the same spot you will attain meditative absorption easily as your own energy field has been formed there. Therefore, it is very important to meditate at a fixed place. Do not base on the situation and meditate at the living room today, at the dining room tomorrow, and when the scenery outside is good you meditate at the balcony. It is the best to meditate at a fixed place.

Meditating at a fixed time every day is also very important. This is because we have a biological clock; that is why we have to take our three meals at mealtime as our biological clock for meals have been fixed. Hence, if we fix a time for meditation, we will want to meditate at that particular time and will easily enter that state of mind. Therefore, having a fixed place and time for meditation has the effect of enhancing our cultivation.

This is how we adjust our body when we start our meditation.

How do we adjust our breath during meditation? Majority of the people are unable to attain meditative absorption, or they experience discomfort during meditation because the breath has not been adjusted till it is harmonised. Earlier we have mentioned about 'subtle' breathing, that is, if we put a feather beside our nose, the feather does not move as our breath is extremely smooth and fine. It seems that the breath is still there, and it also seems to have disappeared, the breath is extremely subtle. Normally there are four types of breath. We have to adjust our breath to 'subtle' breathing. When our breath is adjusted to 'subtle' breathing, we certainly can attain meditative absorption easily.

Apart from subtle breathing, there are three more types of breath. If we abide by these types of breath in our cultivation of calming-and-insight, or when we are counting the breath or following the breath,

we will definitely encounter problems and are unable to attain meditative absorption easily; or we will be very tired after the meditation.

For instance, when we meditate with a blocked nose, we can hear ourselves breathing loudly. This is known as 'windy' breathing. If we abide by this breathing in our meditation, we will be easily distracted. By simply listening to this breathing sound, our mind will not be able to calm down.

If there is no sound in our breathing but it is not smooth, just like sometimes when we are counting the breath or following the breath, we do not finish inhaling before exhaling, or do not finish exhaling before inhaling, the breath is stagnated. This is known as 'uneven' breathing. It depends on where our breath is stagnated – if it is stagnated at our chest, we will feel tightness at our chest; if it is stagnated at our abdomen, we will feel bloated; if it is stagnated at our head, we will feel dizzy after the meditation. We will have different phenomena with the breath stagnated at different places. This is the result of abiding by 'windy' breathing during our calming-and-insight cultivation.

Next is 'ordinary' breathing. Though neither our breathing has sound nor is our breath stagnated, it is not subtle and smooth enough. Earlier on we mentioned that the breath has to be extremely smooth and fine; it is as if the breath is still there, and yet as if it has disappeared; but now the breath is coarser. If we cultivate calming-and-insight with a breath that is not smooth and subtle enough, we can feel tired easily.

Hence, 'windy' breathing, 'uneven' breathing and 'ordinary' breathing are non-harmonised signs. We have to adjust the breath till it is 'subtle' breathing; in this way we can gain meditative absorption easily. Hence, during our meditation if we realise that we have 'windy' breathing, 'uneven' breathing or 'ordinary' breathing, we have to adjust our breath first before we continue with our meditation, otherwise there are shortcomings that we have mentioned earlier.

How do we adjust our breath? Sometimes our thoughts are too tight so, relax our mind first; followed by relaxing our body. Then visualise the breath filling up the entire body; then every pore in the body inhaling and exhaling together. In this way, our thoughts will become faint and our breath will also become subtle; our breath is slowly being adjusted to extremely fine and smooth 'subtle' breathing. Thus, when we discover that our breath is not harmonised, quickly adjust it before continuing with our meditation so as not to have all kinds of shortcomings. This is adjusting our breath.

How do we adjust our mind? We know that the two hindrances to attaining meditative absorption is torpid-mindedness and distraction. When we are torpid-minded, put our thought at the space that is just outside the tip of our nose; this can counteract torpid-mindedness. Thus, when we drift into torpid-mindedness in our meditation, stop cultivating with that method; instead put our thought at the space that is just outside the tip of our nose till the torpid-mindedness disappears, then we can continue with our cultivation. If it is distraction, put our thought at the centre of our navel till the phenomenon of distraction is gone, then we can continue with our cultivation. This is how to counteract torpid-mindedness and distraction.

Some people set an objective of achieving a particular phenomenon or meditative absorption when they start the meditation, as such their thoughts become very tensed; energy will move upward resulting in chest pains. If we realise that our thoughts are too tight or tensed, relax our thoughts and visualise the entire body's energy flowing downward; as such the energy will be dispersed downward. Chest pains or the upward movement of energy will be eliminated in this way.

When we realise that our mind is too lax, that is, we are completely unable to focus and our body is sluggish, we have to straighten our body and invigorate it and then bring our mind back. Hence, when we realise that our mind is too lax, bring our body and mind back to focus, give rise to the right thought, do not let our mind wander.

This is how we adjust our body, breath and mind when we start our meditation.

Similarly, anytime during meditation, regardless of the duration of each sitting we have to observe whether our body, breath and mind are adjusted and make adjustment. We do not have to follow the earlier sequence of adjusting the body first, followed by the breath and then lastly the mind. If we realise that our body is tilted, adjust it back quickly; if our breath is not harmonised, adjust it back to 'subtle' breath; if the mind is distracted, torpid-minded, too lax or too tight, use the method mentioned earlier to counteract. We have to take note of adjusting the body, breath and mind at any time during meditation.

How do we adjust our body, breath and mind when we emerge from meditation? We will also practise this tomorrow.

Earlier on, our mind has been attached to a phenomenon, that is, our method of cultivation. Now we will leave that phenomenon by relaxing our thoughts first.

Open your mouth and expel the turbid breath three times just like what we have done when we start our meditation. Expel the turbid breath through the mouth and then inhale fresh air through the nose. Simultaneously, visualise the breath dispersing through the pores in the entire body. In this way you will not have any disorder related to meditation. This is our visualisation when we expel the turbid breath upon emerging from meditation.

Then, similarly rotate our body slowly seven to eight times. Then move our shoulders and move our hands, release our hands from the customary meditation hand pose. Next move our head and neck. Release our legs from the cross-legged posture to relax the muscles and joints in the entire body. Then rub the pores on the entire body once, from head to toes, with both hands because when we meditate perhaps all the pores in the entire body are opened. If we do not rub the pores in this way, wind can enter the body, resulting in rheumatism. Lastly, rub the palms together and put them over the eyelids; and then open our eyes.

First, adjust the mind by relaxing the thoughts. Then adjust the breath by expelling the turbid breath three times. Lastly, adjust the body from rotating the body all the way to opening the eyes. Thus, we adjust the mind, then breath and lastly the body; from fine to coarse.

Take note that if there is ache, bloating, numbness and pain in our body during meditation, we must massage till these phenomena disappear before we can stand up. Moreover, during meditation if the body is hot or there is perspiration, we have to wait till the condition has eased before going out because when you are outside you may catch a cold when the wind blows.

Therefore, after emerging from meditation we must massage so well that the ache, bloating, numbness and pain disappear so that the flow of energy and blood is smooth. Then stand up slowly; it is not suitable to stand up too fast or be in a rush for work or go out of the house. This is because during meditation energy will enter the channels, including the fine channels. However, when we



suddenly stand up, or we do not massage well, that is, we emerge from meditation too quickly or hurriedly, the energy that remains in the fine channels is not dispersed, resulting in headaches or stiff joints; it is like having wind disorder. This is so-called meditation related disorder. Hence, we must take note that when emerging from meditation, do not be too rushed or too quick. Once you have such disorder it is very problematic; in future the moment when you sit down for meditation you will feel agitated and restless. Why? This is because the energy in the fine channels is still in your body, it has not been dispersed. We have to pay special attention to this.

Therefore, when we emerge from meditation, we have to follow these steps – adjust the mind, then adjust the breath, and lastly adjust the body. This is how to adjust the body, breath and mind.

### **Utilising Five Skilful Means**

Lastly, we have to utilise five skilful means. We already possess the following – ‘Fulfilment of the Prerequisite Conditions’ as auxiliary conditions in our cultivation; then ‘Renunciation of Desires’ so external phenomena will not disturb our mind; then ‘Elimination of the Hindrances’ so our mind will not give rise to afflictions, then ‘Making Adjustments’ to food, sleep, body, breath and mind so our body and mind are in the right condition. However, if we do not have what we are going to talk about now – ‘Utilising Five Skilful Means’, we will not be able to have attainment.

The first skilful mean is zeal. So-called zeal is having a fondness for and taking pleasure in, that is, now that you are here to cultivate calming-and-insight, are you determined to work towards your aspiration of cultivating calming-and-insight? Have you made a resolution to cultivate calming-and-insight? Are you fond of and take pleasure in cultivating calming-and-insight? This is because once you are determined, you will work towards your goal. Once you make a resolution, you will not give up halfway. Once you are fond of and take pleasure in it, you will have the motivation. Therefore, the first skilful mean of zeal is very important.

The second skilful mean is vigour, which is also very important. You may have made the resolution but if you do not have the vigour, you will not be able to reach your goal. It is like kindling fire from boring wood; you cannot keep taking a rest when boring wood, otherwise the fire can never be kindled. Having vigour is comparable to kindling fire from boring wood; you can only take a rest when the flame emerges.

The third important skilful mean is mindfulness. Is the cultivation of calming-and-insight that can culminate in meditative absorption and wisdom more important, or are the five worldly desires more important? Are you clear about the differences between them? Do you have the clear knowledge that the five worldly desires can cause afflictions, create karma, transmigration and sufferings in us? On the other hand, the cultivation of calming-and-insight will allow us to attain meditative absorption, wisdom, supernatural power, power from following the right path, even attaining the fruits of Buddha, and thereafter can benefit sentient beings. So, very often we have to be mindful of the differences between these two.

The fourth skilful mean is discernment. Are you able to make a critical comparison between the happiness from the five worldly desires, and the happiness from supramundane meditative absorption and wisdom in terms of gains and losses, worthless and valuable? Certainly, happiness from the five

worldly desires is a loss and is worthless, whereas happiness from meditative absorption and wisdom is a gain and is valuable.

The last skilful mean is single-mindedness. Having the determination to cultivate calming-and-insight, and be firm like diamond. You are not easily defeated by Maras and heretics. Even if there is no achievement after a long period of cultivation, there is absolutely no regrets. You will not give up halfway. This is single-mindedness.

With these five skilful means – zeal, vigour, mindfulness, discernment and single-mindedness, regardless of the type of calming-and-insight that you cultivate, you will definitely have attainment. Therefore, these five skilful means are also very important.

Today we will cover these five chapters which explain the twenty-five prerequisite conditions for the cultivation of calming-and-insight meditation. We have come to the end of this section.

Tomorrow we will start to explain Chapter 6 – The Actual Cultivation. After that we will officially start our practice. Today we will stop our lesson here.

Dedication: May I dedicate this merit to all sentient beings; may all sentient beings and I attain the state of enlightenment.

**Tiantai Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation  
Lecture 2**

**Teachings by Venerable Master Jing-Lian**

**Venue: Singapore Tai Pei Buddhist Centre  
29 April 2009**

**Lecture Contents**

- **Chapter 6 – The Actual Cultivation**

Namo Amitabha Buddha to everyone!

Today we will lecture on Chapter 6 – The Actual Cultivation, which officially starts the cultivation of calming-and-insight.

Having fulfilled the earlier twenty-five prerequisite conditions, we can now officially start the cultivation of calming-and-insight. How to cultivate calming-and-insight? We will start with the cultivation of calming now.

Generally, in the cultivation of calming-and-insight, there are two parts. One is sitting cultivation, which is how cultivation is done when seated. The other is how to cultivate in our daily lives when phenomena arise in our daily lives after we have emerged from sitting meditation.

We will introduce sitting cultivation of calming-and-insight first.

### **Cultivating Calming During Sitting Meditation**

There are three methods in the cultivation of calming during sitting meditation.

**Firstly**, you can put your thought at a point on your body. Yesterday we mentioned the space that is just outside the tip of your nose or the navel. You can put your thought at the space that is just outside the tip of your nose to counteract torpid-mindedness. If you put your thought at the navel, you can counteract distraction. Since this can counteract different situations, if you feel rather torpid-minded during meditation, you can put your thought at the space that is just outside the tip of your nose. If you feel distracted during meditation, you can put your thought at the navel.

Why do we put our thought at a place? This is to allow our mind to focus more easily. When the mind is focused, it is easier to attain stabilisation. Hence, the first method is to focus our thought at the space that is just outside the tip of the nose, or at the navel. Our thought will not wander if we fix it at a spot, making it easier to attain calming.

**Secondly**, increase our alertness. Why? So as to look at our thoughts. Normally the activation of our mind and the arising of thoughts happen so rapidly that if we do not have alertness, we cannot notice the continuous arising of delusive thoughts. During our sitting meditation, increase our alertness and look at the thoughts; the moment a thought arises, cut off the thought, do not grasp it. If we continue to grasp our thoughts, like how we would give rise to delusive thoughts in the past, continuously grasping one thought after another, that is, we kept thinking; this can give rise to discrimination easily, and then attachment, thereafter afflictions. So, the method now is to stop the thought quickly once we notice that it has risen; do not continue to grasp.

**Thirdly**, regardless of any thought arising, at that moment understand that it arises from causes and conditions, its self-nature is empty. If there is no thought, just remain there. Since the thoughts are delusive, they are non-existent, they arise from causes and conditions, without any self-nature. As long as they arise from causes and conditions, they are definitely arising and ceasing, impermanent and void of self. That is why once the thoughts arise, they disappear. If the thoughts really exist, they will not disappear; they will forever be in existence. However, we realise that our thoughts arise and

disappear, showing that they arise from causes and conditions, there is no self-nature. Therefore, as long as a thought arises, contemplate on its inherent void nature that is comparable to empty space.

We can attain calming with all these three methods. Later we will practise these three methods after our lesson.

### **Cultivating Insight During Sitting Meditation**

There are two methods in cultivating insight during sitting meditation

**Firstly**, counteractive insight. During our cultivation of meditative absorption when we discover our strongest affliction, counteract it first. Continue with the cultivation of calming-and-insight only when this heavy affliction has been counteracted, otherwise it will emerge whenever you meditate; this is because its power is extremely strong. During sitting meditation, we can cultivate different counteractive insight for different afflictions.

The most fundamental and most important of Tiantai is the 'five types of calming meditation'. What are the 'five types of calming meditation'? If the distraction of our mind is stronger, cultivate Counting the Breath Meditation; if our greed is stronger, cultivate Meditation on the Impurities of the Human Body; if our anger is stronger, cultivate Loving-Kindness Meditation; if our ignorance is stronger, cultivate Meditation on Dependant Origination; if our karmic obstacles are stronger, cultivate Meditation on Recalling Buddha's Merits, this is unlike recitation of Amitabha Buddha's name. This is so-called the 'five types of calming meditation'. We will first cultivate counteraction for whichever habitual affliction that is stronger.

**Secondly**, right insight. This is observing the true nature of all things (dharma) during sitting meditation. What is the true nature of all things (dharma)? While we are in meditative absorption, observe the delusive mind; does the mind that gives rise to misleading thoughts really exist? In our gradual search, we will ultimately discover the true nature of all things (dharma). They arise from causes and conditions, are void of any inherent nature and are comparable to empty space.

What is the method of practice? When we are in sitting meditation, we will think in this way: Since the misleading thoughts keep arising and disappearing, we will contemplate on whether the mind that gives rise to misleading thoughts really exist. Why do misleading thoughts keep arising? Does the mind that gives rise to misleading thoughts really exist? If we say the mind that gives rise to misleading thoughts does not exist, then there is no difference between the mind and stone or wood, as the latter do not have mind. Hence, we cannot say that the mind that can give rise to misleading thoughts does not exist.

Then does the mind that gives rise to misleading thoughts really exist? If we say that it really exists, then does it belong to the past, present or future? If it belongs to the past, the past is already gone, how is there a mind? If it belongs to the future, the future is not here yet, so we cannot say that there is a mind, right? If it belongs to the present, we realise that misleading thoughts keep arising and disappearing; every thought arises and ceases.

Since the thoughts arise and disappear, can we say that the mind belongs to the present? We feel that continuous thoughts arise and disappear immediately at every present moment. Since the thoughts

arise at every moment, are they not in the present? Generally, we will not say we have given rise to a thought in the past and will give rise to a thought in the future. Every misleading thought arises in every present moment, right? So, we can say that though the mind does not belong to the present (because if it belongs to the present then it will not disappear, it will forever be a present mind) but it arises and disappears at every moment, it does not stop and remain. We may say that every thought that arises is in the present moment, just that it will disappear. So, let us assume that there is a present mind, just that it is unable to stop and remain; every moment when a thought arises, we cannot say that it does not exist.

So, assuming that there is a present mind we should be able to see it, only then can we say that it exists, right? We can see this towel, so it exists. We can see this microphone, so it exists. We said that the present mind exists, so we should be able to see it. May I ask what does it look like? Can you describe its form? We are able to describe whatever we can see; for instance, this is a square towel. So, is the so-called present mind square or round? This towel is square, it has four equal sides. So, is the present mind long, short, square or round? Are you able to describe? If the present mind exists, you should be able to describe its shape.

We can also describe the colour; like we are able to describe the colour of the various flowers in front. What is the colour of the present mind? Is it blue like the sky or green like the leaves? Or is it yellow, red or white? Can we describe its colour? We are unable to do so as nobody has seen its shape and colour.

Let us look for the location of the so-called present mind. Can we find where it is located in the body? Even after going through all the internal organs, we are unable to find its location. We also cannot find it when we look for it externally. Therefore, we cannot find it inside, outside or at the centre of our body.

If we are unable to describe the shape, colour and the location (neither inside, outside nor centre of the body), can we say that it really exists? We are unable to say that it really exists, right? If something really exists, we can see and touch it; we can describe its shape, colour and location, but now we cannot do so. It should also exist permanently; it will not disappear; but the present mind arises and disappears at every moment. Although every moment can be considered as the present, the present mind is not in real existence. This shows that it is not permanently in existence. Therefore, if we say that the present mind really exists, then we have fallen into the extreme view that all things (dharmas) are existent. So, we say that the present mind does not exist, but it obviously keeps emerging; thoughts arise and cease at every moment. Hence, we cannot say that the present mind actually does not really exist, otherwise we will fall into the extreme view that all things (dharmas) are non-existent. Both views are wrong!

Since the mind arises and ceases, does it mean that the arising and ceasing is the mind? The mind arises and ceases at every moment, so can we say that this is the mind? Since plants grow and wither (arise and cease), can we say that plants also have mind? Can we say that everything that arises and ceases is known as mind? We cannot say so. Thus, we cannot say that arising and ceasing is the mind. But the thoughts from the mind arise and cease at every moment; we cannot say that the arising and ceasing is not the mind. Although we cannot say that arising and ceasing is the mind, the continuous present moment arising and ceasing forms the mind. Therefore, neither can we say that arising and ceasing is precisely the mind, nor arising and ceasing is not the mind; but the mind is formed by the continuous present moment arising and ceasing.

Let us assume that the present mind does arise and cease. So, did the past mind cease before the present mind arises? Or, the past mind did not cease before the present mind arises? If the past mind has ceased before the present mind arises, where did the present mind arise from? Where did the thought that arises after the earlier thought has ceased come from? Can we find where it comes from? We cannot find where it arises from. If the past mind did not cease before the present mind arises, then there will be two minds, right? Having two minds is also not right. Hence, neither can we say that the past mind has ceased before the present mind arises, nor the past mind did not cease before the present mind arises. Since there is no ceasing and arising, and there is no non-ceasing and arising, it shows that there is no arising. If there is no arising, there is no ceasing. So, in fact there is no arising and ceasing, hence without arising and ceasing, how can the mind be formed? It is now proven that there is no actual arising and ceasing, then it cannot be said that the mind is formed by the continuous present moment arising and ceasing.

Through our earlier examination of arising and ceasing we have not been able to infer that the continuous present moment arising and ceasing forms the mind. Hence, we are not going to discuss the issue of arising and ceasing now as we have found that the mind cannot be found through arising and ceasing. Even if we cannot prove with arising and ceasing, there certainly exists a present mind. Earlier on we have also said that every moment of arising and ceasing is the present mind

Let us now discuss the concept of 'present'. (We have originally said that the continuous arising and ceasing in every moment forms the present mind) Since we are unable to prove the existence of the mind through arising and ceasing, can we still prove the existence of the present mind? Now we shall not be bothered with the arising and ceasing analysis. We can say that every moment of arising and ceasing is the present mind, just that it is unable to stop and remain.

We shall search further for the existence of the present mind. How does the present mind arise? Does the mind arise – by itself, from other people, from oneself and others together, or from empty space (arise without causes)? These are the only four ways that the mind can arise.

Let us search for it now. Firstly, if we say that the mind certainly exists, then does it arise by itself? If it arises by itself, then it will keep arising; it does not have to depend on the manifestation of any phenomena in order to arise. Normally, our delusive mind arises upon encountering phenomena, but now the arising of the mind is not related to any external phenomena. But is it like that? No. When our six senses encounter the six sense-objects, it gives rise to all kinds of delusive mind. Therefore, the mind arises by itself is not tenable because the mind arises from encountering phenomena, it will not keep arising by itself.

Secondly, does the mind arise from others? Does your present mind arise from the mind of other people? Other people give rise to their own mind, they are unable to help you to give rise to your mind. Therefore, our present mind cannot arise from others.

Does the mind arise from oneself and others together? It is also not like that, right? This is because everyone gives rise to his own mind individually. The present mind does not arise from oneself and others together.

Then does the mind somehow arise from empty space (without any causes)? It is not possible for the empty space to give rise to any mind. Therefore, from the above analysis, we can deduce that – the

present mind cannot be found because it cannot be proven that it arises by itself, from other people, from oneself and others together, or from empty space.

So, what is the conclusion? We have been so busy trying to find the conclusion, so what is the conclusion? The mind cannot be found! The Sixth Patriarch attained awakening when he realised that the mind cannot be found! So, it is through the method of analysis. This is right insight. During our meditation, think continuously in this way; rather than giving rise to continuous misleading thoughts, might as well search for the mind that gives rise to misleading thoughts to ascertain if it exists. If we say that it does not exist then there is no difference between it and plants. But if we say that it exists, what does it look like? Does it belong to the past, present or future? What is its shape and colour, and where is it located? If we cannot find out all these then its existence cannot be proven. Thus, we cannot say that the mind really exists. This is how we search for it, step-by-step.

We will practise this section tomorrow night when we meditate. We will repeat this before we search because this is very important. Tonight, we will practise the three methods of cultivating calming. Tomorrow we will cultivate right insight. In this way we will be able to practise both cultivation of calming and cultivation of insight.

Why is the right insight important? Regardless of the method of analysis, we are unable to find the mind in our search. Although thoughts arise and cease at every moment, we are still unable to find the real existence of the mind. We cannot prove that the present mind really exists. What does this show? It shows that all things (dharmas) originate from thoughts arising from the mind. Where do all things (dharmas) come from? They come from thoughts arising from our mind. Since we have proven that the mind cannot be found, can all things (dharmas) that arise from the mind be found? All things (dharmas) originate from thoughts arising from our mind; since the present mind cannot be found, all things (dharmas) that arise from our mind cannot be found too! What does this prove? All things (dharmas) also do not really exist! This is very important! If all things (dharmas) do not really exist, would our mind be attached to them? They are not real, they are illusory! Therefore, as long as we can prove that all things (dharmas) do not really exist, we will not be attached to anything.

We give rise to afflictions now because we treat all things (dharmas) as really in existence. Whatever people, matters or things that we are deeply attached to or obsessed with, or are unable to see through and let go of the attachment, that is precisely what we treat as really in existence. However, we have reached a conclusion that all things (dharmas) are not really in existence because they originate from thoughts arising from our mind; the mind cannot be found, so likewise for all things (dharmas). When we understand the truth, we will not attach to all things (dharmas), our misleading thoughts are naturally extinguished. We keep giving rise to misleading thoughts now because we are attached to some things. Regardless of what you are thinking of, it is within the scope of all things (dharmas), that is why your mind will attach to it. Now that we have proven that all things (dharmas) do not really exist, our mind will not attach to them. Since there is no attachment, all misleading thoughts will naturally be extinguished and with this we will attain right meditative absorption and develop the wisdom of emptiness, and be awakened and enlightened.

Hence, right insight is very important. Having the right insight is the most crucial factor in determining our awakening. So, during our meditative absorption, we have to use the right insight method to think of what we have learned today. Keep practising it and you will develop the wisdom of emptiness very quickly. That is why we say that right insight is extremely important.



When we begin our cultivation, these are the three methods of cultivating calming and two methods of cultivating insight.

### **Calming-and-Insight Cultivation Counteracting Mental ‘Sinking’ or ‘Floating’**

During sitting meditation, it is inevitable to have the phenomena of torpid-mindedness and distraction. Do we cultivate calming or insight when these phenomena arise? Normally if there is torpid-mindedness during meditation, counteract with cultivating insight. We can cultivate either counteractive insight (‘five types of calming meditation’) or right insight, both have been taught earlier. When we find that we are drowsy, the mind is not clear, we have to cultivate insight to counteract this torpid-mindedness. When our mind is very distracted, filled with misleading thoughts, we have to cultivate calming with any of the three methods as counteraction.

### **Calming-and-Insight Cultivation in Accordance with Whatever is Appropriate**

However, sometimes unfortunately it is ineffective. Although we cultivate insight when we are torpid-minded, we continue to be torpid-minded; conversely, try to cultivate calming. If we find that the torpid-mindedness disappears slowly, then we have to use the method of cultivating calming instead. Thus, we have to cultivate calming-and-insight in accordance with whatever is appropriate, adjusting at any time. Similarly, when we are distracted, we should cultivate calming as counteraction. But if we find that we are still distracted after doing so, we can try cultivating insight at this point of time. If we find that we are able to focus well, are not so distracted, then we should cultivate insight instead. Therefore, make adjustment at any time, find a method that suits oneself. This skilful mean is also very important.

### **Calming-and-Insight Cultivation Counteracting Subtle Mind States in Meditative Absorption**

When torpid-mindedness and distraction have been counteracted, we will gradually feel that we are attaining meditative absorption. At this stage, all kinds of phenomena can happen. Some people will see light; some will see Buddha and Bodhisattva; some feel that they are empty; or their body and mind are filled with bliss, or they can see what is going to happen next week. Then I should warn them, “You must be careful about what is going to happen next week!” It is extremely dangerous at this point of time. It is at this point of time that many people encounter situations during meditation. Without having a clear understanding of the situations, what will happen to them? They think that they have really seen Buddha and Bodhisattva; they have attained supernatural power; they have attained the four dhyanas and eight meditative absorptions, or some great samadhi. This is the time when one is possessed by demons (obsessed), that is, this happens as long as one attaches to a particular phenomenon. Thus, at this point of time it is also very important to know how we should cultivate calming-and-insight. Normally this happens during subtle restlessness because if you are really in meditative absorption, there is no phenomena. In whatever samadhi or meditative absorption that we enter, we do not see light or anything. So, if we have such phenomena, it shows that we are not really in meditative absorption, we have entered subtle torpid-mindedness or subtle restlessness. However, many people think that they have attained meditative absorption; as a result, they go mad, thinking that they have developed supernatural power. Therefore, have to be extra careful at this point of time.

How to cultivate calming-and-insight at this point of time? Regardless of what we see or hear in our meditative absorption, ignore everything; understand that they are manifestations of our own mind consciousness, they do not arise externally. Why does the mind consciousness manifest all kinds of phenomena now? This is because we already do not have any more misleading thoughts now. Normally when we do not have such phenomena, it is because there are continuous misleading thoughts, our mind is either distracted or torpid-minded. However, now that our distraction and torpid-mindedness have gradually been counteracted, we seem to be able to attain meditative absorption; what will happen now? The seeds that are stored in our eighth consciousness in the past may break out. Normally when we are too busy the seeds will not emerge; they emerge when we cultivate calming till no thought arises.

Why do we say that it is a kind of subtle restlessness? The seeds in our eighth consciousness are actually in a state of turmoil; they will emerge now that we have no more thoughts. It shows that we have not really reached meditative absorption because if we have, the seeds in our eighth consciousness will be subdued, they will not emerge. We can be aware of coarser restlessness, however, for more subtle restlessness, it is calm on the surface but the seeds in the eighth consciousness are in turmoil, emerging continuously. When the seeds of habitual forces, karmic forces and afflictions from the past emerge, they are transformed into different kinds of phenomena. Hence, we say all phenomena have never departed from the consciousness of the mind, they are manifested from the consciousness of the mind. Seeds of habitual forces, karmic forces and afflictions from the alaya consciousness break out, manifesting all kinds of phenomena.

For instance, you did Buddha-recitation in the past, always longing to meet Buddha; this seed has been planted in the eighth consciousness. Now this seed is manifested by the consciousness into the Buddha form when it emerges; so, you think that you see Buddha. Since you think of Amitabha Buddha every day, the seed is planted into your eighth consciousness, Amitabha Buddha will naturally appear; this is very normal. This is manifested by your own consciousness. All phenomena do not depart from your own consciousness. Every seed has been perfumed back to your eighth consciousness by yourself; and now that there is no thought, it breaks out. It is simply like this.

Hence, at this point of time we must know that all phenomena are manifested by our own mind; do not be affected, our mind should be unperturbed. Regardless of whether you see light, Buddha or seemingly semblance supernatural power, ignore it, do not be affected. When the mind is unperturbed, it is cultivation of 'calming'. At that moment, be clearly aware that all these phenomena are simply the emergence of the seeds of our habitual forces from the eighth alaya consciousness. Since all kinds of phenomena arise from subtle restlessness, reflect on whether the mind that gives rise to this subtle thought really exists. Just like our analysis in the right insight, every subtle thought arises and ceases; therefore, the mind that gives rise to the subtle thought does not exist. Since the mind does not really exist, do the phenomena that arise from this mind really exist? They do not really exist; they are just the mischiefs of your own mind. This is cultivation of 'insight', contemplate with wisdom. One way is not to be affected by the phenomena, remain unperturbed; this is cultivation of calming. The other way is to contemplate with wisdom, using the right insight method. It is to reflect on this – the mind that gives rise to the subtle thought does not really exist; hence, all kinds of phenomena that arise from this subtle thought also do not really exist. As such, we will not attach to these phenomena and be possessed by demons (obsessed).

Those who have read the Shurangama Sutra will know that it says if you do not attach to all phenomena, then they are good phenomena. However, if you attach to them then they are demonic

phenomena. From the time we start cultivating calming-and-insight till attainment, definitely many phenomena will arise. Sometimes the arising of these phenomena is good as long as you do not attach to them. Like we will lecture on the manifestation of the roots of goodness tomorrow; some are good phenomena as long as we do not attach to them. Once we are attached to them, the phenomena become demonic. Hence, whether they are good phenomena or demonic phenomena will depend on whether you are attached to them. At this point of time as long as you use the calming-and-insight method, you will not be attached to them. Understand the reasoning and not be affected by it, this is cultivation of calming. Understand that all phenomena do not really exist, this is cultivation of right insight. In this way, all phenomena are good phenomena, then you will not be attached to demonic phenomena. This is very important.

### **Calming-and-Insight Cultivation to Achieve Balance in Meditative Absorption and Wisdom**

Lastly, we want to emphasise that in the cultivation of calming-and-insight, we must strike a balance in cultivating calming and cultivating insight. If we just cultivate calming without cultivating insight, we will just have high meditative absorption power, but will not be able to be awakened and gain enlightenment. Yesterday we have mentioned that one attains meditative absorption power through the cultivation of calming, and wisdom through the cultivation of insight. Therefore, if we simply cultivate calming, our meditative absorption power will be high, but we will not have awakening.

On the contrary, if we simply cultivate insight without cultivating calming, we will also not be able to be awakened, why? We will use an analogy. It is like a lighted candle flickering unsteadily in the wind; as a result, the surrounding scenery cannot be seen clearly. The candle light is an analogy of insight cultivation. There is wisdom but it flickers unsteadily as there is no meditative absorption power. Like the scenery that cannot be seen clearly with a flickering candle, the ultimate reality of all things (dharma) cannot be seen clearly. Therefore, if our mind is continuously in turmoil, we cannot have real wisdom. Perhaps we have some seemingly skilful wisdom, but this is not our true nature, the wisdom of emptiness. Similarly, we also cannot be awakened and attain the fruits. Therefore, we hope that the cultivation of calming and cultivation of insight can progress simultaneously; sometimes we cultivate calming, and sometimes we cultivate insight. 'Calming and insight must be practised together, meditative absorption and wisdom must be balanced'; then we will not be inclined to any side and are unable to attain the fruits. This will be a pity.

Let us revise the five important points that we have covered so far. The first important point is, when we start our cultivation, how to cultivate calming? There are three methods. How to cultivate insight? There are two methods. The second point is, when we are torpid-minded, counteract with insight cultivation. When we are distracted, counteract with calming cultivation. The third important point is, if the effect is not good, conversely cultivate in accordance with whatever is appropriate. The fourth important point is, quickly cultivate calming-and-insight whenever any phenomena are manifested during meditative absorption. When we are not affected by any phenomena that are manifested, this is calming cultivation. When we know that these phenomena are illusory, not real, this is insight cultivation. The fifth important point is, we must cultivate both calming and insight together so that we not inclined to any side. This is how sitting meditation is done.

## **Calming-and-Insight Cultivation under Objective Conditions**

What about after we emerge from meditation? After all our meditation time is relatively short. After emerging from meditation, how do we cultivate calming-and-insight in our daily lives when confronted with different phenomena? There is so-called calming-and-insight cultivation under objective conditions and in relation to objective spheres of the six senses. Normally there are six objective conditions related to our daily affairs, these include walking, standing, sitting, lying down, speaking, and engaging in actions.

For instance, how do we cultivate calming-and-insight when we are walking? Everyone here should know how to do this very well as we have already taught the Four Foundations of Mindfulness which covers how to cultivate when we are walking. Left leg, right leg, left leg, right leg, lift up, push forward, put down, do you remember? This is cultivation of calming. So, when you are walking, you can focus your thoughts on left leg, right leg, left leg, right leg; or lift up, push forward, put down. This is cultivation of calming. Also contemplate impermanence, impermanence; when we lift up our leg, that is, the start of every movement is arising, when the action is stopped it is ceasing. Then we continue with the next movement which is arising, and finish the movement with ceasing. We can also contemplate in this way – left leg, right leg, left leg, right leg; when the left leg is lifted, it is arising and ceasing, and when the right leg is lifted, it is arising and ceasing. Those who have practised in the past should understand what I am saying. Hence, we can contemplate arising and ceasing, or impermanence, or non-self. This is cultivation of insight. When we focus our mind on left leg, right leg, left leg, right leg; this is cultivation of calming.

Hence, if you have ever cultivated the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, you will know how to cultivate calming and insight when you are walking, standing, sitting and lying down. When your mind is focused at a place, that is cultivation of calming. Regardless of whether you are walking, standing, sitting or lying down, when you contemplate arising and ceasing, impermanence or non-self, it belongs to cultivation of insight. In this way, we will know how to cultivate calming and cultivate insight in these six objective conditions related to our daily affairs.

There are two types of insight; they are counteractive insight and right insight. Like those who have cultivated Visualisation of the Skeleton, if you feel that your greed is strong, you can cultivate counteractive insight at this point of time. You can visualise yourself as a skeleton walking on the street; and all sentient beings as skeletons too, the entire street is filled with skeletons. Will you then have any more greed? There is no more greed towards yourself and others. This is applied to walking, standing, sitting and lying down. You are a skeleton sitting here; and at night a skeleton is sleeping. Therefore, regardless of whatever methods that you have cultivated, you can use them because they are all within the scope of cultivation of calming and cultivation of insight. So, this is regarding calming-and-insight cultivation under six objective conditions related to our daily affairs.

## **Calming-and-Insight Cultivation in Relation to Objective Spheres of the Six Senses**

For calming-and-insight cultivation under objective conditions and in relation to objective spheres of the six senses, the six objective conditions are related to our daily affairs – walking, standing, sitting, lying down, speaking, and engaging in actions. As for the objective spheres of the six senses, they are phenomena of the six sense-objects – sight, sound, smell, taste, touch and thought. How do we cultivate calming and insight when our six sense-organs come into contact with the six sense-objects

every day? What should we do the moment we see something? Do not give rise to discrimination and misleading thoughts; this is cultivation of calming. At the moment when you look at it, understand that it arises from causes and conditions, is void of self-nature, it does not really exist. Whatever phenomena that you see arise from causes and conditions, are void of self-nature, they are like flowers in the space, are illusory, they do not really exist. This is cultivation of insight. By all means, see, hear and eat tasty food; it does not matter, but our mind must be settled, do not give rise to discrimination and misleading thoughts. This is cultivation of calming. At the moment when we are enjoying the tasty food, understand that they do not really exist. This is cultivation of insight. This is how we cultivate calming and insight when we come into contact with the phenomena of the six sense-objects.

It is even better if you are always practising right insight. What is the conclusion of our analysis of right insight earlier? All things (dharmas) originate from thoughts arising from the mind, right? Since the mind does not exist, all things (dharmas) arising from the mind do not exist too. So, do the six objective conditions related to our daily affairs and the phenomena of the six sense-objects belong to all things (dharmas)? Yes. Since all things (dharmas) do not exist, regardless of walking, standing, sitting, lying down, speaking, and engaging in actions (the six objective conditions related to our daily affairs) or sight, sound, smell, taste, touch and thought (phenomena of the six sense-objects) also do not exist. Thus, at this point of time, we do not give rise to a single misleading thought; this is cultivation of calming. At that moment, every thought of ours correspond to emptiness and non-self; this is cultivation of insight.

This is calming-and-insight cultivation under objective conditions and in relation to objective spheres of the six senses. Keep practising in this way in our daily lives; we can be awakened very quickly and accomplish calming-and-insight, and attain meditative absorption and wisdom.

### **Practise Calming-and-Insight Cultivation**

We have finished our lesson for today. We are starting our practice on the three types of calming cultivation.

Let us invite our two fellow practitioners from Taiwan up here to demonstrate for us.

Please stand up everybody. Yesterday we spoke about loosening our muscles and bones before meditation, so there will be some warm up movements.

Open up our legs to the width of our shoulders. We will move our head first; move it up and down. Repeat every movement three times. Next, turn it to the left and then right; also repeat three times. Next, try to touch your head as close as possible to your shoulders. We will start from the left first and then right, also repeat it three times. After this, rotate our head; we will rotate from the clockwise first, do it slowly. We can break it up into four movements – lower our head first, then move it to the right, then down, and left, and return to the front. Repeat this three times. After this, reverse the direction – front, left, back and right. Also repeat this three times.

After this we will move our shoulders. First, move them backward three times, and then forward three times. Next, stretch our hand out to the same level and rotate our wrist clockwise three times, and then anti-clockwise three times. Then fling the hands.

Next, we will loosen our waist. Rotate clockwise first; bend down, move front and turn to the right, back and then left. Repeat three times. Then move in the reversed direction; front, left, back and right. Repeat three times.

Next is the knees. Put our legs together and start to rotate the knees. Turn clockwise three times first, then anti-clockwise three times.

Next is the ankles. When we sit cross-legged during meditation, very often our heels seem to feel sprained; so now we will loosen our heels. With our toes of one foot on the floor, rotate the heel. Start with clockwise three times, and then anti-clockwise three times. After that, kick three times with the heel. Then change side.

We have finished our warm up exercises. We will add on the muscle stretching exercises the next time when we lecture on The Six Gates to the Sublime, otherwise there is too much to remember. Once the muscles are stretched, we will be able to sit crossed-legged better. Our original easy cross-legged sitting posture can become the half lotus sitting posture; the half lotus sitting posture can become the full lotus sitting posture.

Once this is done, please sit down. We will begin our practice with pointers on our pose when we start our sitting meditation.

Yesterday we have mentioned that firstly, remove our spectacles, watch and belt. If the belt is too tight, loosen it so that we do not feel anything binding the body. Loosen whatever we can, remove whatever we can and put them in front of our seat.

### **Beginning Meditation**

Firstly, we will sit cross-legged. We can sit in any one of these four postures – full lotus, half lotus, easy cross-legged or just sitting upright.

After sitting cross-legged, form the customary meditation hand pose – open our hands and lay the open left hand on top of the right hand so that they fit together, and tips of the thumb touching one another lightly, do not exert any pressure; draw them in towards the body and position them below the navel, on top of the crossed legs.

Next, rotate the body slowly in the clockwise direction, seven to eight times.

Next, straighten the spine but do not exert any force; then relax the spine.

Then level the shoulders, they are not slanted to the left or right.

Then check if our head is straight, that is, the nose and navel are in a straight line; not inclined to the left, right, or lowered forward or lifted backward.

Next, tuck in the chin and the lower jaw, press onto the two carotid arteries. We have explained yesterday that there are two carotid arteries here.

Next, expel the turbid breath three times. Inhale slowly through the nose, the slower the better. When we have inhaled fully, open the mouth and exhale slowly through the mouth; at the same time visualise all blockages in the energy channels in the entire body opening up and the turbid breath is expelled from the body. Repeat this three times.

Next, hold the tongue up lightly with the tip against the palate, near the teeth. After this, open the eyes moderately, that is, enough to block off the light from outside.

Now we will practise the first method of cultivating calming. Focus our mind at the space that is just beyond the tip of our nose, or at our navel. Let our mind focus at a place.

Now we will practise the second method. If there is no misleading thought, settle the mind and maintain a state of alertness. Once a thought arises, stop it, do not allow it to continue grasping. If there is no thought, just remain settled.

We will practise the third method. If there is no thought, settle the mind; as long as any thoughts arise, at that moment understand that they arise from causes and conditions, are void of any inherent nature and are comparable to empty space.

### **Emerging from Meditation**

We are preparing to emerge from meditation now. First, relax our thoughts, leave our conditioned phenomenon; do not look at or observe our thoughts anymore.

Next, open our mouth and expel the turbid breath three times; inhale slowly through the nose and exhale the turbid breath slowly through the mouth. At the same time, visualise the breath dispersing from the numerous energy channels, that is, the entire body's breath dispersing. Then inhale through the nose again, and exhale through the mouth. Visualise the entire body's breath dispersing so that it will not remain in any parts of the body, and cause discomfort at any particular part after the meditation.

Slowly rotate the body seven to eight times in the clockwise direction. Then move our shoulders; our shoulders may be a little aching or stiff after the meditation. Loosen our hands, move our head and also loosen our neck; and then release our legs. Then massage the entire body's pores with our hands. We can start from the head; this is equivalent to massaging the entire body. The pores are opened during meditation, so with a full body massage, there will not be signs of rheumatism after emerging from meditation.

Try our best to release any aches, bloating, numbness and pains through the massage. For instance, if your knees are particularly aching, then massage them a few more times. We must massage till the aches, bloating, numbness and pains disappear before we emerge from the meditation. In this way, we will not have such conditions arising so rapidly the next time when we do our practice. Therefore, massaging is also very important. It is precisely trying to massage till the blood and energy flows are smooth, so that there is no blockage at any parts of the body.

Then we rub our hands together and place them over the eyelids before opening our eyes. Just now our eyes were closed when we were performing all the actions. Now when we rub our hands together

and put them over the eyelids, we finally open our eyes. This is how we complete the actions before emerging from our meditation.

Let us thank our two fellow practitioners for the demonstration.

Due to the time constraint today, we practised all the three types of calming cultivation in one sitting. The main point is to let everyone here experience these three types of calming cultivation. When you are back home, you can cultivate them separately. You can try all three methods and feel which one allows you to attain calming most quickly. Then use that particular method often to do your practice. You can practise the three methods for a period of time and choose the one that is more effective for you. Our main purpose is to attain meditative absorption, however, everyone has different faculties, so we correspond to different methods. You can choose a particular method and cultivate with that method for a long period of time.

With regard to the cultivation of insight, we will practise the cultivation of right insight tomorrow. The lesson for today will end here.

Dedication: May I dedicate this merit to all sentient beings; may all sentient beings and I attain the state of enlightenment.



**Tiantai Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation  
Lecture 3**

**Teachings by Venerable Master Jing-Lian**

**Venue: Singapore Tai Pei Buddhist Centre  
30 April 2009**

**Lecture Contents**

- **Chapter 7 – Manifestation of Roots of Goodness**
- **Chapter 8 – Recognising the Work of Demons**

Namo Amitabha Buddha to everyone!

Today we will lecture on Chapter 7 – Manifestation of Roots of Goodness

As long as we follow the earlier methods to cultivate calming-and-insight, roots of goodness will start to be generated, we call this manifestation of roots of goodness. Why will such situations happen? After our body and mind have calmed down, seeds of goodness that are stored in our eighth consciousness over infinite aeons will break out, generating phenomena of all kinds of roots of goodness. It is best that we are able to differentiate these phenomena clearly so that we do not stray to the heterodox way, or lose faith in the Buddhist teachings. If we know the reasons for whatever situations that happen suddenly, we will not be frightened or worried and think that some situations have befallen us. Hence, we have to explain these situations clearly.

Generally, there are two different types of manifestation of roots of goodness. They are known as outward manifestation of roots of goodness and inward manifestation of roots of goodness.

### **Outward Manifestation of Roots of Goodness**

Why is it known as outward manifestation of roots of goodness? ‘Outward’ refers to outward matters, that is, the manifestation of roots of goodness belonging to outward matters.

For instance, during your cultivation of calming-and-insight, there is a sudden big transformation. Perhaps you are originally stingy and petty, but suddenly you become very generous; you will take the initiative to give away things that you originally are reluctant to part with. Why is this so? This is because through the cultivation of calming-and-insight, the roots of goodness of your past lives cultivation of generosity have emerged, resulting in the sudden generosity. This is a type of manifestation of roots of goodness of generosity.

Sometimes it is the observance of precepts. Originally you are slack in observing the precepts, and also do not really like to partake in the observance of precepts, but after cultivating calming-and-insight, suddenly you become serious about observing the precepts; you feel that it is not difficult to observe the precepts. This is because the roots of goodness of observance of precepts of your past lives have emerged, resulting in this transformation.

For instance, disobedient children who always cause parents to be upset, can suddenly be transformed into obedient children after they cultivate calming-and-insight. They no longer retort and give lots of excuses to explain for their behaviour. This is because the roots of goodness of filial piety of their past lives have emerged. They become very filial, are no more disobedient.

There are those who are arrogant; regardless of whether they are arrogant on the surface or deep down, they have no respect for the elderly; and if they are Buddhist practitioners, they have no respect for all their masters. They think that they are the greatest in the world. However, after cultivating calming-and-insight, suddenly they become respectful. This transformation in attitude is because their roots of goodness of respect for teachers from their past lives have emerged.

These are just some examples; in any case they are great transformations for the better. Why are there such transformations? We had perfumed these roots of goodness in our past lives, just that they

have been obscured temporarily in this life. Perhaps our karmic obstacles, afflictions or habits are too strong, the roots of goodness that have been perfumed into the eighth consciousness are unable to develop. Now our body and mind have become tranquil after the cultivation of calming-and-insight, so the seeds of the roots of goodness in the eighth consciousness have the opportunity to emerge. Therefore, as we begin cultivating calming-and-insight, there will be great transformation. This is due to the emergence of the roots of goodness that were perfumed in our past lives. This is known as outward manifestation of roots of goodness.

### **Inward Manifestation of Roots of Goodness**

Why is it known as inward manifestation of roots of goodness? They belong to internal roots of goodness resulting from the cultivation of meditative absorption. We call this inward manifestation of roots of goodness. This is related to the methods of cultivation in our past lives. Whatever methods we have cultivated in our past lives will emerge as phenomena related to the methods.

Majority of them emerge during preliminary ground meditative absorption. In the past we have spoken on the four dhyanas and eight meditative absorptions – how we progress from coarse abiding, subtle abiding till we enter the realm of desire meditative absorption, and then enter preliminary ground meditative absorption, then first dhyana, second dhyana, third dhyana, fourth dhyana; and then the state of boundless space, state of boundless consciousness, state of nothingness, and state of neither perception nor non-perception. We have introduced them in detail before, but in order to avoid any regrets, the next time when we are back in Singapore, we will repeat the lessons on ‘The Six Gates to the Sublime’ and ‘The Sixteen Superior Phenomena’. In ‘The Sixteen Superior Phenomena’, there are detailed explanations on how to attain the four dhyanas and eight meditative absorptions, and also their respective characteristics. For instance, there are five characteristics in the first dhyana – investigation, analysis, joy, bliss and one-pointedness. Hence, when we cultivate meditative absorption, how do we know which level of dhyana we are at now? Are we very clear? First, we have to know the contents of the meditative absorption before we can progress steadily and rapidly. We will also not spend a long time cultivating in a muddled way, and not knowing whether what we have attained is right meditative absorption or heterodox meditative absorption. So, we will explain in detail in our next round as it will take a long time to explain. We will have to spend four nights explaining clearly in detail, so we will not go into the details now.

We want to emphasise that the so-called inward manifestation of roots of goodness only occur during preliminary ground meditative absorption. These will not be manifested if we have not attained preliminary ground meditative absorption. Before we attain first dhyana, from the realm of desire meditative absorption to preliminary ground meditative absorption, there will be many situations, including the inward manifestation of roots of goodness which are related to the cultivation methods in our past lives. Different methods will result in different phenomena. Now since we are learning Tiantai Calming-and-Insight Meditation, the most fundamental of which are the five types of calming meditation; the examples that are given will be based on the inward manifestation of roots of goodness of the five types of calming meditation. If you are cultivating other methods, the manifestation of roots of goodness will be different. You can inform your master or teacher to let him evaluate if your situation is really the manifestation of meditative absorption, or it is heterodox meditative absorption and heterodox wisdom. (If the attainment is not the right meditative absorption, then it is heterodox meditative absorption. What is developed is not really the wisdom of emptiness, it is known as heterodox wisdom. Supernatural power that is not developed through meditative

absorption is known as heterodox supernatural power. Perhaps it is the supernatural power of spirits, ghosts, or supernatural power acquired in your past lives, but they are not real supernatural power.) Therefore, you have to clarify with your master as to whether these manifestation of roots of goodness are in accordance with the method that you are cultivating. You have to clarify whether they are right or heterodox; whether the phenomena are real or unreal.

Now we will explain the signs of manifestation of roots of goodness of the five types of calming meditation.

### **Signs Related to Pathways of the Breath**

For instance, you have cultivated counting the breath in your past lives; just like in The Six Gates to the Sublime, the first is counting the breath, second is following the breath, then stabilisation, contemplation, turning and purification. There are six in total. When you are at preliminary ground meditative absorption, eight physical sensations will be generated. This is due to the adjustment of the four elements – earth, water, fire and wind. Generally, they are – heavy, astringent (belong to earth element); cold, smooth (belong to water element); warm, itchy (belong to fire element); light, pain (belong to wind element). We will explain the details next time when we conduct the lessons on The Six Gates to the Sublime. These eight sensations being manifestation of roots of goodness, will be generated when you cultivate the method of counting the breath. Generally, after the generation of the eight sensations, you will really enter first dhyana. Hence, after you enter first dhyana these eight sensations will not be there anymore. Generally, they are generated during the preliminary ground meditative absorption. When you cultivate other methods, the eight sensations are relatively less obvious. Therefore, if the eight sensations are generated, it shows that you have cultivated the method of counting the breath in the past. Generally, after these eight sensations are generated, the mind will be extremely tranquil. There is almost no misleading thought, and the body and mind will feel light, peaceful and blissful. If this happens, we know that it is the roots of goodness of counting the breath. These are some of the phenomena as you enter dhyana one. In dhyana one, there is lightness, peace and bliss.

If you have cultivated following the breath in the past (The Sixteen Superior Phenomena is the part on following the breath in The Six Gates to the Sublime, which explains in detail the contents of the four dhyanas and eight meditative absorptions), during preliminary ground meditative absorption you will suddenly feel that the breath is gone. Breathing through the mouth and nose has become so faint till you almost cannot feel it; it has become breathing through the entire body's pores. At this point of time, suddenly you will see your internal organs. You see your heart pumping, your liver, your stomach digesting food and your kidneys with urine inside. You do not see them through your eyes but through your mental vision, that is, the image will emerge and suddenly you can see the body structures very clearly. After the occurrence of these phenomena, your body and mind will become very calm and blissful as these are situations that will occur before you enter first dhyana. After the manifestation of these roots of goodness, you become different. Misleading thoughts will become very few, and the body and mind will remain in a state of lightness, peace and bliss for a long period of time. This is very close to the first dhyana.

Generally, after the inward manifestation of roots of goodness, entering meditative absorption is particularly fast. For instance, when such situations occur during sitting meditation, once you emerge from the meditation, you will feel that your body and mind are entirely changed. In the past if you

used to throw temper, now it does not happen anymore. Therefore, your body and mind, or your personality and habits will be greatly inclined towards the positive. It will be especially fast for you to enter meditative absorption in future. Unlike in the past your body was unable to be harmonised, you have to bear with the discomfort during meditation, or you have aches, bloating, numbness and pains in your entire body. Now this will not happen, you will not want to emerge from the meditation once you start. You do not have any thoughts, and are able to get into the situation easily. Therefore, these manifestation of roots of goodness are good as long as they can help you in attaining meditative absorption. There are bad ones too, we will talk about this later. If after the manifestation of roots of goodness, it is followed by some bad phenomena, then that is wrong. This is not real manifestation of meditative absorption; we have to be clear about this. Hence, as long as your body and mind feel tranquil, joyous, bright and pure after manifestation of roots of goodness, and thereafter your virtuous mind keeps developing; this is good. We will talk about this later.

### **Signs Related to Meditation on the Impurities of the Human Body**

In your past lives if you have cultivated Meditation on the Impurities of the Human Body, you will see all kinds of impure phenomena during preliminary ground meditative absorption. Perhaps during the cultivation of meditative absorption, a corpse will surface in front of you. Perhaps it is a decomposed corpse, from the stage of death to decomposition till it is transformed to a pile of bones. Perhaps in the process it is a picture of pus-filled decomposition, or greenish black extravasated blood. It means that you have cultivated The Nine Reflections in the past. We have practised this in the past. The Nine Reflections is the visualisation of the process after death. After death, the body will swell first, then it starts to shrink, fester and the skin and flesh start to crack. After this the internal organs will start to flow out; the colour changes gradually from multicolour to very dark; the internal organs that flow out have extremely foul smell. After decomposing for a period of time, maggots start to grow in the corpse because there are many maggot eggs in the air. The maggots will move in and out of the decomposed flesh, the nostrils, eyes, nose and mouth, feeding on the entire decomposed body. The entire body is filled with maggots. Therefore, you may have a fright when a maggot filled decomposed body suddenly emerges in front of you. This is because you have cultivated The Nine Reflections in the past, wherein there is visualisation of worms (maggots) eating your decomposed flesh. These worms will chew up your body, leaving behind a set of skeletons. Then the tendons holding the bones together will decompose slowly and break. Every part of the skeleton will then drop down onto a place with all broken into parts. Therefore, if a pile of bones suddenly appears in front of you during meditation, this is the manifestation of roots of goodness of The Nine Reflections. It also indicates that you have cultivated this method in the past.

During preliminary ground meditative absorption, you may also see yourself filled with impurities. In the past we have conducted lessons on Meditation on the Impurities of the Human Body, and have practised this together – hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin... the thirty-two impurities that make up our body. Hence, any of the impurities that you have visualised before can appear during meditative absorption. This is also a type of manifestation of roots of goodness. It shows that you have cultivated Meditation on the Impurities of the Human Body in the past. This is regardless of whether you see yourself filled with impurities, or other people's bodies are filled with impurities, or the earth is filled with impurities. There are many different methods of cultivation of Meditation on the Impurities of the Human Body, so what is manifested is whatever impurities you have cultivated in the past. We know that Meditation on the Impurities of the Human Body is to counteract greed, so after the manifestation of roots of goodness related to this cultivation, the greed towards yourself, others,

or all external greed will suddenly become very light. Hence, these manifestation of roots of goodness will help to subdue your greed. So, after manifestation of these roots of goodness, if your greed has been subdued well, then it shows that they are manifestation of real meditative absorption, and not heterodox ones.

### **Signs Related to Loving-Kindness Meditation**

If you have cultivated Loving-Kindness Meditation in the past, you will suddenly develop an affectionate and loving mind towards sentient beings during preliminary ground meditative absorption. This is because you have cultivated Loving-Kindness Meditation in your past lives. Now when you are in meditative absorption, your mind is filled with loving-kindness. Before this, your loving-kindness only arises occasionally, but you do not have the feeling of having the entire mind filled with loving-kindness. However, now you start to have this feeling, and when you emerge from meditation, you continue to be filled with loving-kindness. Similarly, you will also treat sentient beings in the same way, your expressions are gentle and benevolent. This is the manifestation of roots of goodness of loving-kindness.

### **Signs Related to Meditation on Dependant Origination**

If you have cultivated Meditation on Dependant Origination in your past lives, in the midst of preliminary ground meditative absorption you will suddenly realise the principle of impermanence. You will understand the twelve links of dependant origination – volitional formation is conditioned by ignorance, consciousness is conditioned by volitional formation, name and form is conditioned by consciousness, the six sense-organs.....as we know this is tantamount to three lifetimes, that is, past, present and future. It is simply a transmigration chain of interlocking causes and conditions. You will realise that you are unable to find a real 'self' in the midst of it. When you think that there is a 'self', this is ignorance, which is the first link in the twelve links of dependant origination, then volitional formation is conditioned by ignorance, consciousness is conditioned by volitional formation; you understand that the three lifetimes are interlocked, it is simply the continuation of arising and ceasing of causes and conditions. You will realise the principle of non 'self'. This is because you have cultivated Meditation on Dependant Origination in your past lives.

### **Signs Related to Meditation on Recalling Buddha's Merits**

If you have cultivated recalling Buddha's merits in the past, you will suddenly recall Buddha's merits and excellent forms during meditation. Regardless of Buddha's – ten powers, or the four fearlessness, the eighteen exclusive qualities, all kinds of samadhis, like Shurangama samadhi, and all kinds of supernatural powers and transformations, or unimpeded eloquence in sharing the Dharma to benefit sentient beings; you will suddenly recall Buddha's inconceivable merits. After the meditative absorption, you will have the feeling that you are filled with Buddha's merits. This is the manifestation of roots of goodness of Meditation on Recalling Buddha's Merits.

## Signs of Manifestation of False Meditative Absorption

If you have all the above manifestation of roots of goodness, we have to ascertain whether they are real or false, whether they are real or heterodox. Which phenomena are false and heterodox? We have mentioned that these inward manifestation of roots of goodness happen during sitting meditation, right? It is also during sitting meditation that you enter preliminary ground meditative absorption. Do you notice that some people will start having some movements after sitting for a while? All kinds of pose can be generated while they are seated. There are some who do shadowboxing, some perform hand gestures; these are false and heterodox, not manifestation of real meditative absorption. Some feel their body getting heavier as they sit, as if something heavy is pressing on them; this is also wrong. Or if the body feels very light, you feel as if it is floating; this is false and heterodox, not manifestation of real meditative absorption. Or if the body feels like it is being tied up, cannot move; this is also wrong. Or you suddenly feel extremely tired, the entire body is lack of energy; this is also wrong. Or you suddenly feel extremely cold or extremely hot, this is not the usual cold or hot; if it is hot, perhaps it is like being grilled on a fire; so, it is unusually hot or unusually cold. Or while seated, suddenly your mind is not clear, you are unable to judge or decide, it is like being obscured by something. You also have to take note of this. Or you suddenly give rise to a very evil thought. Or suddenly think of some strange matters; or see some weird phenomena. Or you suddenly feel very excited, feel like laughing loudly or crying loudly. Or you suddenly become very sad and burst into tears. Or you suddenly feel very restless or agitated, and cannot continue with the meditation. Or you suddenly become very terrified. Or you suddenly laugh for no particular reason.

There are some people who, after a period of meditation, will laugh foolishly with whoever they meet. As there is bliss in meditative absorption, some misconstrued people will think that these people have attained meditative absorption, thinking that they have cultivated well as they do not throw temper, they simply laugh in a foolish way. This is also a wrong phenomenon. Someone who has real bliss looks tranquil and peaceful; he is filled with bliss within himself. When someone suddenly feels like laughing, crying or feels sad, that is, he cannot control emotions; it shows that he does not have meditative absorption. A person with meditative absorption does not have any particular emotions, and he is able to control such emotions.

We have just quoted a few examples; there are certainly many more situations. As everyone has different seeds stored in their eighth consciousness, when these seeds emerge there can be all kinds of strange phenomena. We have to be able to distinguish the right from the heterodox; otherwise like what we have mentioned earlier, we may misconstrue, thinking that we have attained meditative absorption, and developed wisdom; or have attained supernatural power. There is a great difference between right and heterodox meditative absorption, because only with the right meditative absorption would one be able to develop right wisdom; heterodox meditative absorption will lead to the development of heterodox wisdom.

What is heterodox wisdom? We often see someone who does not talk much suddenly composes poems, or would suddenly catch hold of you and chat for two hours. We will realise that his train of thought is not very clear and he keeps repeating the same topic. Then we know that his mind is already not very normal. However, sometimes he seems to be talking about the Dharma which seems to make sense. Like when some spirit mediums are possessed, they can compose poem verses seemingly advising people to be virtuous. We are not wrong to say that it is the Dharma or a virtuous action that they are sharing, but this is not really wisdom developed from meditative absorption; it is heterodox wisdom. Or suddenly they are able to know what is going to happen in the future; we think that they

have supernatural power and would ask them for advice on any matters. But this supernatural power is not developed by them personally, right? Perhaps they are possessed by spirits and ghosts which help them, whispering into their ears, informing them..... Hence, this is probably supernatural power of spirits and ghosts; not real supernatural power. Therefore, we have to really ascertain whether they are manifestation of real meditative absorption.

If there is any development of heterodox meditative absorption, heterodox wisdom or heterodox supernatural power, and practitioners are unable to differentiate between real and false or, right and heterodox, then it will be tragic. These practitioners may think that they have attained some meditative absorption phenomena and then go about helping others as they can foresee the future. We have seen some who have supernatural power of spirits helping to cure people of their illnesses, making prescriptions, claiming that the prescriptions originate from Guanyin Bodhisattva or the Buddhist monk Jigong. They play the role of someone who has cultivated very well and then performing deeds that benefit sentient beings. It seems that they are performing virtuous deeds. We can see many such folk beliefs wherein these practitioners are actually helping the ghosts and spirits to perform the deeds; they are not performed through their own abilities. However, ordinary people who cannot differentiate tend to look for these practitioners for help as long as they are efficacious. Hence, practitioners who are unable to distinguish and are attached to this phenomenon will become part of the family of ghosts and spirits. Where will they go after death? To the realm of ghosts and spirits! This is because they are part of their family in life, so they will also be part of their family in death. If there are still evil karma that have not been retributed, then they go directly to hell. So, forget about attaining meditative absorption and then developing the wisdom of emptiness, transmigration, eliminating afflictions, liberating from life and death. These are not possible. It is because they are not going to any good places in future; they are either entering the realm of ghosts and spirits, or the realm of hell.

Therefore, we definitely have to be able to differentiate, and do not attach to any phenomena that are generated. As long as we do not attach, ignore all phenomena that are manifested; this is cultivation of calming. When we have insight into the truth, this is cultivation of insight. How to have insight into the truth? The mind does not exist, so all things (dharma) that arise from the mind also do not exist. In this way, you will not attach to the phenomena and have any problems. Otherwise, if it is more serious, we can turn hysterical or have mental illness. Or if it is even more serious, we will eventually die, be incurable, be possessed by evil or demons. Many eventually die.

Therefore, we can use the methods of cultivation of calming and cultivation of insight. As long as we do not attach to the phenomena, have insight into the truth, knowing that they are just the manifestation of our consciousness, they do not arise externally. Perhaps we have also perfumed some bad seeds, habits or afflictions into our eighth consciousness, and they have emerged now. Hence, they have not departed from the function of our mind; some are the manifestation of our karmic force. We just need to understand that they are void of self-nature.

### **Signs of True Meditative Absorption**

So, what are the signs of true meditative absorption? Earlier on we have said that inward manifestation of roots of goodness are generated during meditation. If they are manifested during meditation, you will feel that your body and mind are very calm. This is correct. Then you will feel very



ethereal but it will not make you think that you have already attained emptiness. If you are not clear, you may think that you have attained emptiness. Not yet, this is not the phenomenon of emptiness.

Moreover, it is bright and pure during meditative absorption. Having brightness in meditative absorption does not mean that you will see all kinds of light. This is wrong. In the past we have mentioned that during meditative absorption if you see all kinds of light, like the sun and moon; it is wrong. This is not the brightness that we are referring to. Generally, brightness is categorised into – one that is related to the energy channels in our physical body, and the other is related to our true nature. So, you have to distinguish the brightness that you see. However, the brightness at this point of time is the manifestation of true meditative absorption, and not all kinds of light that you see, because this kind of brightness can develop the wisdom that is within yourself. Whether you see all kinds of light, or the stars, sun and moon, these can cause you to be attached to them; so they are not good. They are unable to develop your inner wisdom. Thus, this situation is not the same.

In addition, we have mentioned that you will experience inner joy, but this is not the over excitement which will disturb your meditative mind. At this point of time, the inner joy and happiness arise from your inner self. In the sutras, it is described as ‘entire body is smiling’. How does the entire body smile? You will understand this when you attain meditative absorption. All the cells in the body are smiling. This is true happiness; it will not cause you to be obsessed with it. This is unlike the external happiness from the five desires arising from the five sense-objects which will cause cravings in us.

Moreover, it seems that your wisdom is suddenly being developed. Suddenly you understand a lot of Buddhist principles in the midst of meditative absorption. What you have heard and pondered over in the past will now emerge from your eighth consciousness. Suddenly you have deep realisation of many verses in the sutras that you have recited in the past.

In addition, your virtuous mind will be developed; faith and respect keep increasing. In the past when you did not have any experience of meditative absorption, you did not have much faith in yourself, the cultivation methods, or the teacher, but now suddenly your faith has increased a lot. This is because the root of your doubtfulness has been subdued. When your respectful mind increases, it shows that your arrogance has been subdued. These are good signs.

In addition, you will also have the wisdom to distinguish many matters. In the past you would be stuck there, not knowing which is better as you did not have the wisdom to distinguish. Now you are very clear, you are not troubled and do not have to rack your brains to decide on what to do. Naturally you know what to do and your judgement will not be wrong.

Moreover, your body and mind will be gentle. And at this point of time, you will naturally give rise to dislike for the secular world, which is renunciation of the secular world. For matters that you would attach to in the past, you seem to be able to see through to the ultimate truth and let go. This shows that your renunciation mind is developing gradually. You also do not have very strong desires, and will become indifferent to fame, fortune, deference and the like.

We have given some examples and there are many more. We will not be able to finish giving these examples in these two nights. As long as they are good ones, they can help us in observing the precepts better. This is because when you attain meditative absorption, your body and mind will be tranquil so you will not break the precepts easily. When your mind is clear, you will also not break the precepts. It is when you are lax, have lost your mindfulness or do not have the right understanding that you

break the precepts. Hence, now it is easy for you to observe the precepts purely. It is also easy for you to enter meditative absorption because those that we have mentioned are very similar to the ten merits of first dhyana. Do you still remember? With the attainment of true meditative absorption, it is certainly easy to develop wisdom, and it can also give rise to the wisdom of liberation easily. So, this is the manifestation of true meditative absorption.

Now we have a clear understanding of outward manifestation of roots of goodness and inward manifestation of roots of goodness. As such, we will not make the mistake of treating the right as heterodox and vice versa; and treating the false as real and vice versa.

### **Recognising the Works of Demons**

Now we will lecture on Chapter 8 – Recognising the Works of Demons. Beginners can be rest assured that they will not be possessed by demons as they are held in contempt by them for their poor skills. When will demons come to them? They will come to them when their skills are good. Therefore, we have to be careful when our calming-and-insight cultivation skills get better and better. This is because the demons will be worried. What are they worried about? These are demon kings which manage the sentient beings in the realm of desire. Since we are sentient beings in this realm, when we cultivate calming-and-insight they are afraid of losing us as we are originally their family members. Yesterday we have mentioned that with the cultivation of calming-and-insight, especially with right insight, we can be liberated from life and death, be free from the three realms and be out of transmigration. Hence, they are now very anxious, especially when you are about to have attainment. They will look for trouble with you; they will put you to the test. Therefore, recognising the works of demons is also rather important. Especially practitioners whose skills are good and are going to have attainment, be extra careful, do not be subjected to their interference.

We will first give a definition to ‘demons’; what are ‘demons’? Demons are killers. What do they kill? They specifically kill practitioners’ merit wealth, Dharma body and wisdom life. The definition is very broad, but as long as they obstruct our attainment, they are demons. Demons specifically destroy sentient beings’ roots of goodness so that they cannot attain merits, wisdom, and enter nirvana. They hope that sentient beings will forever be in transmigration and forever be their family members. Hence, in a broad sense, there are extremely many demons and its contents is extremely wide.

Now we will specifically talk about three types of demons. In a broad definition, ghosts are a class of demons, and spirits are also one, or many of the classes of demons too. Therefore, ghosts and spirits belong to demons. However, we will talk about them separately now; we will introduce two types of ghosts and one type of demon.

The first type is **sprites, goblins, and creatures of the twelve horary time periods**. There are twelve horary time periods – Zi (11pm-1am), Chou (1am-3am), Yin (3am-5am), Mao (5am-7am), Chen (7am-9am), Si (9am-11am), Wu (11am-1pm), Wei (1pm-3pm), Shen (3pm-5pm), You (5pm-7pm), Shu (7pm-9pm), Hai (9pm-11pm). Every horary time period is represented by an animal, just like the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac. The first animal is rat, Zi (11pm-1am), the second is ox, Chou (1am-3am) and so forth. The twelve horary time periods correspond to the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac. So, these twelve animals representing the twelve horary time periods will disrupt practitioners at the respective horary time period.

For instance, when you meditate at the horary time period of Zi (11pm-1am), what will appear? The rat spirit will appear to create trouble. So, depending on the time of your meditation, the corresponding animal will create trouble for you. How does it disrupt you? There are many ways. If you like to look at handsome men, it will transform into a handsome man. If you like to look at beautiful women, it will transform into a beautiful woman. If you miss any elderly member of your family, it will transform into an old man or woman. Perhaps you are afraid of lions and tigers, it will transform into a lion or tiger to frighten you. It can transform into a lovely form, or a terrifying form to frighten you. What should you do at that point of time? You take a look at the time and then start to scold it. These sprites, goblins, and creatures of the twelve horary time periods are most afraid of being recognised. Now immediately you say, "I know you are the rat spirit who is creating trouble! I am not afraid of you!" It will be so frightened that it will run away quickly because you have recognised it. Hence, depending on the time, scold it accordingly. It will be terrified and run away immediately and not disrupt you again. Therefore, the moment you realise that something is wrong, that is, you realise that you keep having all kinds of illusions during meditation, or feel that there is something beside you that is disrupting you, start to scold, "I know you are whatever spirit that is creating trouble! I am not afraid of you!" It will then run away. This is very efficacious. This is the first type of demons.

The second type is known as **duiti ghosts**. Sometimes during meditation, you will hear sounds resembling wood borers gnawing wood. Have you heard them before? Or you hear sounds of people talking although there is no one sitting beside you. Or sometimes during meditation, you will feel something boring or piercing in and out of your head or face; or you feel that something is hugging you. At this point of time, duiti ghosts are here.

What exactly are duiti ghosts like? According to legend, there is a background. During the earliest time of Konagamana Buddha, there was a Buddhist monk who was fond of eating but averse to work. Monks were not allowed to eat at certain timing, but he was so fond of eating that he would eat on the quiet at the prohibited timing. Moreover, he was extremely lazy and would lie and claim that he had been ordained for many years so that he did not have to be in servitude and perform miscellaneous chores. For instance, when he put up at a temple for a short stay, he would lie that he had been ordained for many years. This can only be verified through his certification of ordination. Why did he lie? It was because he was lazy, he did not want to do any work. If he had said that he had just been ordained the year before, he would be asked to help perform chores in the meditation hall and kitchen. Those who had just been ordained for a short period of time had to respect those who had been ordained for a long period of time; the former would have to perform all kinds of chores.

Would he not be exposed after some time? Yes, he was. Once he was exposed, he was driven out of the community of monks. Out of rage, he made an evil vow to disrupt people who are doing sitting meditation, especially those who like to break the precepts as he himself was considered to have broken the precepts and was driven out.

Therefore, if we break the precepts now, he will like to look for us. However, if we do not break the precepts, we do not have to be afraid of the duiti ghosts appearing because they only like to look for people who break the precepts. When we observe the precepts, the gods of precepts are around to block them; they will not be able to come near us. We have mentioned that when we observe the five precepts, for every precept that we observe there are five guardian gods, so with the observance of five precepts there are twenty-five guardian gods. So, can the duiti ghosts come near you? There is no way. Therefore, when we have pure observance of the precepts, we do not have to be afraid of them. This is how the ancestor of duiti ghosts come about. As for the duiti ghost that appears now, is it the

original one? It may not be the original one. Thereafter, those we were fond of eating and averse to work would fall into this class of ghosts after death. They will also appear and disrupt practitioners now.

What should we do? How do we deal with them? Focus our mind, then with our eyes closed, scold him, "I recognise you now. You are a *krtya* demon from Jambudvipa, one who feasts on fire and foul-smelling smoke and one who seeks to plunder ordination career. I am one who upholds the precepts and am one who will never fear you!" (*Krtya* is the name of a class of ghosts which break the precepts. They like to tell lies, claiming that they have been ordained for a long time. They also specifically like the delicious smell of food and will go to where the smell is to steal the food. They also feast on fire because we cook food with fire. They are a class of ghosts from Jambudvipa which due to heterodox views, they especially like people who break precepts.) Once the *duiti* ghost has been recognised, it will crawl away slowly.

What should we do if we do not have pure observance of the precepts? If one is a monastic, he should recite the precept texts quickly. For a layman, take out the precept text quickly and recite the three refuge and five precepts, or eight precepts. Why? This is because all ghosts and spirits are afraid of precepts. Therefore, be rest assured, one who observes the precepts purely will not be disrupted by ghosts and spirits. If you feel any disruption, recite the precept text; then they will leave.

The third type is known as **Maras**. Earlier on we have mentioned this – what are demons? They are killers. They specifically kill practitioners' merit wealth, Dharma body and wisdom life. Maras, for the most part, will transform into all kinds of phenomena to destroy practitioners' virtuous mind.

We will categorise all phenomena into three types – all lovely phenomena, terrifying phenomena, and general phenomena. Sometimes they will transform into all kinds of lovely phenomena of the five sense-objects causing practitioners to give rise to attachment. They will transform into whatever practitioners like so as to cause attachment, and the practitioners' meditative absorption will be destroyed with this attachment. Then Maras will attain their objectives. Thus, they may transform into the partner whom you are most attached to, or your parents and siblings. Or if you have always wanted to see Buddha, they will transform into the form of Buddha. If you like handsome men or beautiful women, they will transform into handsome men and beautiful women to cause attachment in you. This is with regard to sight. They can transform into any of the five sense-objects – sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, to cause attachment in you. Therefore, they can transform into any joyful phenomena of the five sense-objects to cause you to attach to them.

They can also transform into all kinds of frightening phenomena of the five sense-objects, giving rise to fear in practitioners. For instance, if you are afraid of tigers, they will transform into tigers; if you are afraid of lions, they will transform into lions. If you are afraid of men devouring demons like *Rakshasa* and *Yaksha*, they will transform into all kinds of frightening forms to terrify you. This is with regard to the sense-object of sight. They can also transform into phenomena of evil sounds, or foul smell, or evil taste, or sufferings. They can transform into all kinds of phenomena of the five sense-objects to cause turmoil in the practitioners' mind, resulting in the loss of meditative absorption. They try all means to destroy our path so that we are unable to attain merit wealth, Dharma body and wisdom life.

Actually, the scope of Maras is very wide. What we have mentioned earlier about the ghosts and spirits also belong to one of the classes of Maras. Hence, as long as they transform into all kinds of

phenomena of the five sense-objects to disrupt practitioners, causing them to lose the virtuous deeds and give rise to afflictions, they are known as demons. So, there are so many types of demons; not only do they destroy our Dharma, they also cause practitioners to give rise to all kinds of afflictions, worries, desires and, thirst and hunger. Sleep is also an obstacle; or terror, doubt and regret, anger, fortune, fame, arrogance.....etc. As long as they will cause you to give rise to afflictions, they are considered demons.

These are the three types of demons. We already know what we should do when we encounter the two earlier types of demons. For the third type of demons, what should we do to make them retreat? We can cultivate calming and also cultivate insight.

We just need to know that all demonic phenomena are illusory, they do not really exist. Regardless of any demonic phenomena that arise, do not be frightened and terrified; do not attach to them and discriminate them. In this way, they cannot do anything with us. When all kinds of demonic phenomena are manifested, our mind remains unperturbed; this is cultivation of calming. How can our mind remain unperturbed? Do not be worried, terrified or frightened, and then also do not discriminate and be attached to the phenomena. Once you attach to the phenomena, they will appear again and again. The more you are afraid of them, the more they will appear because they have achieved their objectives. Therefore, we must not be affected by them. This is cultivation of calming.

For the cultivation of insight, have insight into the truth, know that they do not really exist. How do all demonic phenomena arise? They are manifested by our consciousness; the ten Dharma-realms are manifested from our thoughts. As such, demonic phenomena also do not depart from the mind that gives rise to the present thought. Contemplate on the mind that can see all demonic phenomena. Does it really exist? Yesterday in our lesson on right insight, we could not find the existence of the mind after a long search. This shows that the mind does not really exist. Since the mind that can perceive all demonic phenomena does not exist, how can there be the phenomena that you perceive? Only with a perceiving mind will there be the perceived phenomena. Since we cannot find the perceiving mind now, are there the perceived phenomena? No, we cannot find! If there is no perceiving mind, how can there be the perceived phenomena? Since there are no perceived demonic phenomena, so who has been disrupted? Hence, there are no demonic phenomena and also nobody has been disrupted. In this way, the demonic phenomena will disappear very quickly. This is the method of cultivation of insight.

What should we do if the demons still do not go away after we have cultivated calming-and-insight? Let our mind abide in the right thought, do not give rise to the slightest fear and then analyse why we are frightened. We are afraid of being harmed! But what is our 'self'? It is the unreal combination of the four elements, the five aggregates. The four elements are inherently empty, the five aggregates are actually not 'self'; so, what are we afraid of? Originally, we were afraid of our 'self' being harmed, but after our long analysis, we cannot find the existence of 'self'. We could only see the causes and conditions combining to form the four elements and five aggregates. They are arising and ceasing, and are impermanent, and are void of 'self'. Since the four elements and five aggregates are not our 'self', 'self' does not exist. So, who is frightened? In fact, it is just some inner fear of our 'self' being harmed, but through our insight, we realise that 'self' does not exist, so we will not cherish and be attached to our lives. In this way, we will not be frightened.

Do demonic phenomena really exist? No, their self-nature is empty. Are Buddha phenomena really in existence? Sorry, their self-nature is also empty. Since the demonic phenomena and the Buddha

phenomena are both empty in self-nature, within the sphere of emptiness, is there any difference between the two? There is no difference! All things (dharmas) are equal in their self-nature, there is no duality. Now we are using Buddha to counteract demons; there is duality in our mind, we have not seen emptiness. All things (dharmas) are empty in self-nature, so now regardless of whether there are demonic or Buddha phenomena, their self-nature is empty. Hence, within emptiness, Buddha and demons are one and equal.

If there are no demons, do we have to be so frightened as to make them retreat? Or do we like Buddha so much that we attach to Buddha? Should we grasp Buddha and reject demons? Both the self-nature of Buddha and demons are empty and equal, so there is no Buddha to grasp and demons to reject. Therefore, we just need to settle our mind in this emptiness, the demonic phenomena will naturally be eliminated. This is complete elimination. As we do not grasp the good and reject the bad, there is no duality; the self-nature of good and bad is empty, they are equal and one in the emptiness. Therefore, when we see demonic phenomena, there is no need to be worried. When the demonic phenomena disappear, do we have to be joyous? There is nothing to be joyous about because its self-nature is empty. Hence, regardless of whether there are demonic phenomena, there is nothing to be worried or joyous about. As long as we really understand the principle that all demonic phenomena are empty in self-nature, we will not be worried and when they disappear, we will not be joyous as they are originally empty.

Thus, in actual fact there is no real 'self' who is meditating as we have analysed that 'self' does not really exist. So, if we really understand this principle, there is no 'self' who is meditating. Are there demons who are here to disrupt us? Demons do not really exist too. Are there all kinds of illusory demonic phenomena transformed by the demons? They are also non-existent, just like flowers in the empty space. There is no real 'self', demon and the demonic phenomena. In this way, regardless of any phenomena, they will be completely eliminated.

Very often we are asked, "So and so is already mentally abnormal, someone is possessed by demons, someone has gone mad. What can be done?" We will now talk about what can be done for someone who is unable to think now. Earlier we have said that demonic phenomena are not really in existence and their self-nature is empty, but he is unable to make judgement as he is mentally deranged. Basically, there is no way for him to focus his mind because he is experiencing serious disruption.

We will give some advice. If all kinds of demonic phenomena have been disturbing the practitioner for months and years, that means he has been mentally deranged for a long time, what can be done?

If your mind is still very clear, what can you do with your mind? Have the right mind and right thought; with this the demons naturally will not be able to disrupt you. Have the right frame of mind so as to have strong right thought. Earlier on we have analysed non-self of the four elements and five aggregates, so you will not cherish your life, or be worried and terrified. Build this frame of mind first. Then what should you do? Chant Mahayana sutras – Shurangama Sutra, Vimalakirti-Nirdesha Sutra, Heart Sutra (Prajnaparamita-Hridaya Sutra), Diamond Sutra (Vajrachhedika- Prajnaparamita Sutra). You can chant any sutra. Therefore, the first method is to chant the Mahayana sutras.

The second method is to recite mantras. You can recite Shurangama mantra, Great Compassion mantra, or any mantra that you know. Certainly, the mantras of wrathful deities will perhaps be more powerful. If you are disrupted during meditation (regardless of which method of cultivation), stop the practice temporarily and recite the mantra immediately. If you are still worried, continue to recite the

mantra after the meditation. So, the first method is to chant the sutras, the second method is to recite the mantras.

The third method is repentance. Why do you have these phenomena? Other people have a smooth path, they seem to enter meditative absorption very quickly and then develop wisdom. They seem to have less obstacles. You must have created bad karma in the past, so is there a need to repent? As you believe in retribution, if you have not created bad karma in the past, you will not have so many obstacles now. Why do demons like to look for you? Perhaps you had a bad relationship with them in the past, otherwise why do they look for you? So, at this point of time, it is best to feel remorseful and repent. Earlier on we have also mentioned that demons will also look for you if your skills are good. However, if your skills are not so good yet they look for you, then most probably it has to do with karmic force.

Moreover, we have mentioned that all ghosts and spirits are afraid of precepts. Thus, you can chant all kinds of precepts (this is the fourth method). Depending on the type of precepts that you have observed before, you can take out the precept text and chant the precepts. Similarly, they will also leave very quickly.

Therefore, we can use these four methods – chant the sutras, recite the mantras, repentance, and chant the precept texts. If you are still worried, you can use all the four methods; the effect will be double. Cultivate in this way for a period of time, and all demonic phenomena will naturally be eliminated. You will see the effect with just one method, not to mention the combined effect of the four methods.

Therefore, there is an important statement with regard to the demonic phenomena – ‘Apart from the ultimate truth of all things (dharma), all others are demonic phenomena.’ This is because they are the main cause of our delusion, affliction, karma and transmigration. In a broad sense, all these are demonic phenomena.

Lastly, we want to emphasise the importance of faith. This is regardless of faith towards the Triple Gems, all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, or your master. This faith is extremely important. Someone asked me, “I am a beginner, on what basis do the demons not look for me? I am a beginner, I do not have the power that comes from the right path, and I have not perfected the three disciplines of precepts, meditative absorption and wisdom. Who is protecting me from all these disruptions? It is the protection of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. We have the protection of the Triple Gems, all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Guardian Deities and Dragons, and our master. We should be very safe. We are just afraid that you do not have enough faith. If you do not have faith, it is like having a protection mask with many holes. Those ghosts, spirits and demons can enter through the holes. It is because your net of faith is broken, so the ghosts, spirits and demons can enter your mind conveniently to disrupt you. Actually, faith is the best layer of protection. When you have faith in the Triple Gems, all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the protection mask is very tight; it is impermeable. You can simply rely on your faith to be safe and have attainment in calming-and-insight meditation. That is why we emphasise on the importance of faith.

We have finished the lesson for today. Tomorrow we will lecture on ‘Treatment of Disorders’. What are the kinds of disorders that you can have in the process of calming-and-insight cultivation; and how to treat the disorders by yourself. You may be doing a solitary retreat deep in the mountain and you cannot find a doctor there, or you may be so absorbed in your cultivation that it is also not convenient.

If you know how to harmonise the disorders of the four elements and five core organs, or what we have just mentioned, the disruptions of ghosts, spirits and demons, then it will be very convenient. You can treat your own disorders. Firstly, we have to know the contents of the disorders, and then how to use calming-and-insight cultivation to treat the disorders. Tomorrow our lesson will be on this and also the final 'Realisation of the Fruits'.

Now we still have some time. Yesterday we said that we will practise right insight. So, let us invite our two fellow practitioners up onto the stage here and we will practise again. Perhaps there are beginners here, they may not remember completely what was practised yesterday on how to begin meditation and then the movements when we emerge from meditation. Hence, today we will practise once again. Tomorrow we will not practise this, we will practise a type of 'Treatment of Disorders with Six Energies'; we will also invite our two fellow practitioners up onto the stage to demonstrate. Tomorrow we will not meditate, so today will be our last practice.

Firstly, we will do some warm up exercises. Please stand up everybody. Open up our legs to the width of our shoulders. We will do some head exercises first. Move our head up and down three times. Repeat every movement three times. Next, move our head to our left shoulder and then right shoulder. Repeat three times. Rotate front, right, back, left and return to the front. Then reverse the direction, front, left, back, right and back to the centre. Next will be our shoulders. First, move them backward three times, and then forward three times. Next, stretch our hands out to the same level and rotate our wrists clockwise three times, and then anti-clockwise three times. Then fling the hands. Next, we will rotate our waist. Bend forward, move to the right, back, and left. Rotate three times. Then reverse the direction, front, left, back and right. Rotate three times. Next, put our legs together and put our hands on the knees and rotate the knees. Clockwise three times and anti-clockwise three times. Next, with the toes upright, rotate the right heel clockwise three times and anti-clockwise three times. End off with kicking the leg three times. Then change to the left leg and rotate the left heel clockwise three times and anti-clockwise three times, then kick the leg three times. Now we can sit down.

Firstly, we will sit cross-legged, you can be in the full lotus, half lotus, easy cross-legged or just sitting upright posture. Next, form the customary meditation hand pose. Open our hands and lay the open left hand on top of the right hand and the tips of the thumbs touching one another lightly; and draw them in towards the body and put them on top of the legs. Then straighten the spine and level the shoulders, straighten the head and tuck in the chin. Expel the turbid breath three times. Inhale through the nose, open the mouth and exhale through the mouth; visualise all blockages in the energy channels in the entire body opening up and the turbid breath is expelled from the body. Repeat this three times. Then hold the tongue up lightly with the tip against the palate, near the teeth and then open the eyes moderately.

### **Practise Cultivation of Insight**

We will start our cultivation of right insight.

Since there are continuous misleading thoughts, we will now observe whether this mind that can give rise to misleading thoughts exist or does it not exist? If it does not exist, it will be like wood and stone which are without the mind, therefore we cannot say that the mind that can give rise to misleading thoughts does not exist.



If we say that the mind does exist, does it belong to the past, future or present? If it belongs to the past, the past is gone; how can there be a mind? If it belongs to the future, the future is not here yet; how can there be a mind? If it belongs to the present, now we will observe that every thought arises and ceases, it does not stop; how can there be a mind? As we cannot find our mind in the past, future and present, we cannot say that it belongs to the past, future or present.

However, we observe that there is continuous arising and ceasing of misleading thoughts. It shows that there is arising and ceasing in every moment. We can say that every moment is in the present although the thought disappears immediately after arising. The arising in every moment can be said to be the present mind because it arises continuously.

If there is a present mind, how do we see it? What is its form; is it long or short, square or round? We cannot find its shape. Is it green, yellow, red or white in colour? We are also unable to describe its colour. Is the present mind inside the body or is it outside the body? Or is it located in between the inside and outside of the body? We cannot find it anywhere. Since we cannot describe its form, it cannot be proven to exist.

However, we observe that there is clearly momentary arising and ceasing. So, the momentary arising and ceasing, arising and ceasing is the present mind.

If the momentary arising and ceasing is the present mind, then is arising and ceasing the feature of your mind? If arising and ceasing is your mind, there is also arising and ceasing in plants; can it be that plants are your mind? Is everything that has arising and ceasing your mind? It cannot be true, right? So, arising and ceasing is not your mind? But every thought does arise and cease at every moment, so this arising and ceasing is the mind. Regardless of whether arising and ceasing is your mind, you cannot find where your mind is. Therefore, it cannot be proven that the mind exists.

However, if you insist that arising and ceasing is your mind, then has the past mind ceased before the present mind arises? Or the past mind has not ceased before the present mind arises. If the past mind has ceased before the present mind arises, from where does the mind arise from? You cannot find where it arises from. If the past mind has not ceased before the present mind arises, then there will be two minds. This is also not right. Therefore, regardless of whether there is ceasing and arising, or there is no ceasing and arising, that is, regardless of whether the past mind has ceased before the present mind arises; or the past mind has not ceased before the present mind arises; you cannot find where it arises from. Hence, whether there is ceasing and arising, or there is no ceasing and arising; you cannot find where the mind arises from. If there is no arising, there is no ceasing; so how can arising and ceasing be the feature of the mind. Hence, it cannot be proven that the momentary arising and ceasing of thoughts is your mind.

Now we will disregard the issue of arising and ceasing, and assume that the present mind does really exist. Where does the present mind arise from? Does it arise by itself, or arise from others, or arise from oneself and others together, or arise from empty space (arise without causes)? If the present mind arises by itself, it will keep arising; it does not have to depend on the manifestation of phenomena in order to arise. But the mind will not arise if it does not encounter phenomena. This proves that it does not arise by itself. Can the mind arise from others? Other people give rise to their own mind; how do their mind become one's mind? If we say that the mind arises from oneself and others together, everyone gives rise to his own mind individually, there is no need to wait for others to give rise to one's mind. Hence, the present mind does not arise from oneself and others together.

Can the mind arise from empty space (arise without causes)? It is not possible for the empty space to give rise to the present mind. Since the present mind does not arise by itself, or arise from others, or arise from oneself and others together, or arise from empty space (arise without causes); the present mind cannot be proven to exist. We are unable to find where the present arises from.

After searching for a long time, we have come to a conclusion: The mind that we observe cannot be found. Regardless of the methods that we use to analyse, ultimately, we cannot prove the existence of the mind. The past is gone, we shall not talk about it. The future is not here yet, we shall not talk about it too. However, we are unable to prove that the present mind really exists, we cannot find the mind. Hence, the mind does not really exist. Since the mind does not really exist, all things (dharmas) that arise from the mind also do not exist. As all things (dharmas) do not really exist, we will not attach to anything. We understand the truth that they do not really exist. Since we do not attach to anything, we will not give rise to any thought. At this point of time, misleading thoughts are extinguished. When this happens, we can attain right meditative absorption and then develop wisdom. With the development of wisdom, we can be cut off from life and death forever, attaining nirvana.

Hence, keep practising in this way during our meditation. When we cultivate right insight, we will understand the truth of all things. What is the truth of all things? It is the principle of **empty yet not empty**. All things (dharmas) arise from causes and conditions, are void of any inherent nature and are comparable to empty space. This is 'empty'. Though they are void of any inherent nature, they will manifest according to causes and conditions. This is 'not empty'. Therefore, we will not fall onto the non-existence side, thinking that all things (dharmas) are ultimately empty. This is falling into the view that death ends life. We will also not fall onto the existence side, thinking that all things (dharmas) really exist; and they are permanently in existence. This is falling onto the eternity side. Distance ourselves from the two extreme sides of existence and non-existence, then we will be able to penetrate the middle way which is the ultimate truth of all things (dharmas), and this is the principle of 'empty yet not empty'. We will then have attainment of the ultimate truth of all things (dharmas).

Now we will prepare to emerge from our meditation. First, relax our thought; relax what we have been thinking and analysing earlier on.

Open your mouth and expel the turbid breath three times. Inhale slowly through the nose, open your mouth and expel the breath, visualising the breath dispersing randomly from numerous energy channels; then inhale slowly through your nose and open your mouth to expel the breath, visualise the entire body's breath dispersing; then inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth, visualise the entire body's breath dispersing.

Slowly rotate your body seven or eight times. Move your shoulders, release your hands, move your head and neck, and release your legs. Massage the pores on your entire body with your hands from head to toes. Finally, rub the two hands together till they are warm, and put them over your eyelids. Then open your eyes. After this you can emerge from your meditation.

Let us thank our two fellow practitioners for the demonstration. We will end our lesson here today.

Dedication: May I dedicate this merit to all sentient beings; may all sentient beings and I attain the state of enlightenment.

**Tiantai Smaller Calming-and-Insight Meditation  
Lecture 4**

**Teachings by Venerable Master Jing-Lian**

**Venue: Singapore Tai Pei Buddhist Centre  
1 May 2009**

**Lecture Contents**

- **Chapter 9 – Treatment of Disorders**
- **Chapter 10 – Realisation of the Fruits**

Namo Amitabha Buddha to everyone!

Today we will lecture on Chapter 9 – Treatment of Disorders.

Perhaps originally there are some existing disorders of the body, and they will emerge as we cultivate calming-and-insight. Or due to the fact that we are beginners, we are still not good in harmonising our body, breath and mind, this can lead to disorders of the body. Therefore, we should know the reasons for the disorders and the ways to treat the disorders through calming-and-insight cultivation. In this way we will not have obstructions due to the disorders, or lose our lives if they are more serious.

There are three types of disorders – the first type are disorders related to the four elements and five core organs; the second are disorders brought on through the actions of ghosts and spirits; the third type are disorders brought on as a result of karmic retribution. We will explain each in detail.

**The first type of disorders is the result of disharmony of the four elements and five core organs.** This is because our body is the composition of the four elements of earth, water, fire and wind and the vital organs of the body. Hence, the disorders of the body do not depart from the four elements and five core organs. So, we have to understand the reasons for the disorders.

Are the reasons external or internal? External reasons will be exogenous cold or damp-heat just like the oppressive summer heat now. If we do not take precaution to avoid the heat, we can get heatstroke easily, and we will need to have treatments like scraping, etc. Or if the dampness is stronger, or if there is cold-dampness. Like the six exogenous pathogens in the Traditional Chinese Medicine – wind, summer-heat, dampness, dryness, cold and fire, they will cause disorders to arise in our body. These are external reasons. Or indigestion will also cause disorders in the four elements and five core organs.

What are the internal reasons? Perhaps during the cultivation of calming-and-insight we are not skilful at using our mind, thus causing disharmony. Or the method is wrong, or do not know how to handle when meditative absorption is developed. All these are internal reasons for causing disorders.

How do we check on ourselves the kind of disorders that we have? How do we know out of the four elements and five core organs, which element or which core organ has disorder? We can know from some of the phenomena that are developed during meditation, or the kinds of dreams that we have.

If we feel itch on our face, skin or body during meditation, and the itch is not exclusive to a particular part of the body, it moves to different parts of the body; it shows that there is wind moving around the entire body, and it moves between the muscles. Or if we feel any pain in our body, or normally if we do not have any appetite, or feel that whatever food that we eat is not tasty, at this point of time, there are disorders in the spleen and stomach. As the spleen governs the muscles, the muscles will be painful, or there is itch that moves from spot to spot in the body. This is different from the itch of mosquito or insect bite which is restricted to the spot of the bite, the itch will not move around the body. The itch from the disorders of the spleen and stomach moves around the entire body, and is not just on the surface or below the skin; it goes deep down even to the muscle layer. This is the disorders of the spleen and stomach, as the spleen and stomach are interlinked.

Six Types of Breath	Vital Organs of the Body	Five Sense-Organs	Verses	Meditation Counteraction
he	heart, small intestine	tongue	the heart belongs to 'he'	eliminate agitation, energy flows downward
chui	kidneys, bladder	ears	the kidneys to 'chui'	eliminate cold
hu	spleen, stomach	mouth	spleen to 'hu'	eliminate heat
si	lungs, large intestine	nose	and the lungs to 'si' - the sages all know this	restore from fatigue
xu	liver, gall bladder	eyes	when the liver heats up, the 'xu' word comes forth	dispel phlegm, eliminate bloating
xi	triple warmer	triple warmer	wherever the triple warmer is blocked, one needs only intone 'xi'	eliminate pain, dispel wind

Take a look at the chart on the screen. Look at the heading of Vital Organs of the Body, it shows the interlink between the organs. Like the heart and the small intestine are interlinked; kidneys and bladder are interlinked; spleen and stomach are interlinked; lungs and big intestine are interlinked; liver and gall bladder are interlinked.

The vital organs of the body have their respective openings in the five sense-organs. For instance, the heart opens into the tongue; the kidneys open into the ears; the spleen opens into the mouth; the lungs open into the nose; the liver opens into the eyes. We need to have this knowledge first before we explain the phenomena later. With this, we will know which vital organ the disorder is related to.

The spleen governs the muscles. So, during meditation if we have phenomena of muscle pain or itch, then we know that it is the problem of the spleen and stomach.

With regard to dreams, if the energy of our spleen is too exuberant, we will dream of singing. As we have just mentioned that the spleen opens into the mouth; if there is singing, as this is done with the mouth, we know that there is problem with our spleen. Or in our dream, if we feel that our body is so heavy that we are unable to lift up our hands and legs, it shows that there is problem with our spleen and stomach as the spleen governs the muscles, and the spleen and stomach are interlinked.

If there is any pathogen invading the spleen (wind, summer-heat, dampness, dryness, cold and fire belong to the six exogenous pathogens), that is, there is pathogen in the spleen, we will dream of hillocks. Why do we dream of hillocks? This is because the spleen and stomach belong to the earth element, so we know that there is disorder in the spleen and stomach; and at the same time there is disorder in the earth element. Or we will dream of wind and rain, and we are taking shelter in a dilapidated house, perhaps the house is leaking inside. Why do we have such a dream? It is because the dampness in the spleen is stronger.

If there is pathogen invading the stomach, we will dream of ourselves eating food, or we are invited to a meal and we are having a feast. This shows that there is problem with the stomach.

This belongs to the earth element which belongs to the spleen and stomach. It mainly governs the muscles and transportation of food. Hence, we will not have any appetite when there is any problem with the spleen and stomach.

Secondly, if we feel that the throat seems to be blocked during meditation, perhaps it is stuck with phlegm or the throat does not feel very smooth; or the stomach feels bloated or there is ringing in the ears, we know that there is disorder in the kidneys. Kidneys and bladder are interlinked. Why do we feel bloated in the stomach? Perhaps there is water in the stomach. Kidneys control our saliva and body fluid. In addition, they filter, absorb and drain the water. Hence, if the stomach is bloated, we know that there is problem with the kidneys.

If the energy in the kidneys is too exuberant, we will dream that our waist and back seem to be broken into two. As the kidneys govern the bones, any problem with the bones is due to disorder of the kidneys. Since in our dream we have problem with our spine, then it has to do with the bones. Moreover, the spine is located very near the kidneys, so if there is any discomfort at that area, there is disorder of the kidneys.

If there is any pathogen invading the kidneys, we will dream of standing near the water, or soaked in water. Why is there such a dream? This is because both kidneys and bladder belong to the water element.

If there is any pathogen invading the bladder, we will dream of having a field trip or are on a tour. We will dream of travelling on a ship or in a car; there is this feeling that we are on a tour.

Thirdly, during meditation if we feel heat over the entire body, or we have a headache, dry mouth and tongue; conversely, if we feel cold over the entire body, or the legs are especially cold, then it shows that there is problem with the heart. The heart is interlinked with the small intestine. The heart governs the blood vessels, it specialises in the control of blood circulation and the absorption of nutrients. Hence, if our blood circulation is not good, our body will be afraid of cold, and the legs will be icy-cold too. This shows that the blood is unable to flow to the end of the body as the legs are the furthest from the heart. So, if there is excess heat in the heart, we will have heat in the entire body, or headache, or dry mouth and tongue.

Have you ever had the experience of laughing in your dream till you wake up? If we dream of ourselves laughing in our dream, it means that there is problem with our heart. This is due to the exuberant energy in the heart.

If there is any pathogen invading the heart, we will dream of smoke and fire. If there is inflammation in our eyes or any internal organs of the body, we will dream of fire. This is because the heart belongs to the fire element, that is why you will dream of smoke and fire.

If there is any pathogen invading the small intestine, we will dream of city, village or street. The heart and small intestine are interlinked.

Fourthly, if we feel tightness in our chest and shortness of breath during meditation, like we are gasping for breath, or the nose is blocked; it means that there is disorder in the lungs. The lungs and big intestine are interlinked. Or if our skin is generally not good, like there are acnes or scabies, this shows that there is problem with our lungs. This is because the lungs govern the skin and hair on the body. Why is there blocked nose? It is because the lungs open into the nose, so all problems with the nose are related to the lungs.

If the energy in the lungs is exuberant, we will have extremely frightening dreams at night. Or if we dream of ourselves crying, or feeling aggrieved and cry till we wake up with a wet pillow.

If there is any pathogen invading the lungs, we will dream of ourselves flying, or we will see anything that is made of metal. This is because the lungs belong to the metal element. So, if we dream of anything related to metals, or any bizarre things that are made of metal, it means that there is pathogen invading the lungs.

If there is any pathogen invading the large intestine, there will be dreams of open land.

In addition, if we dream of close relatives like our parents, siblings or spouse, this is also the disorder of the lungs. Or if we dream of handsome men and beautiful women embracing passionately, and we feel happy; this is also the disorder of the lungs.

Fifthly, during meditation if we feel depressed or angry and the anger keeps arising inexplicably; or we feel dizzy and pain in the eyes, or we shed tears; or we have sudden cramps in our sleep at night and wake up; these are signs of liver disorder. The liver and gall bladder are interlinked. Anger harms the liver. Hence, we will be worried, unhappy and normally will also be depressed. The liver opens into the eyes, so the eyes will be painful or you will shed tears; these are related to the liver. Why do we have cramps? This is because the liver governs the tendons, so when there is cramp, there is disorder of the liver.

If the energy in the liver is exuberant, we will have more terrifying dreams, like dream of people dressed in green holding a green knife or wooden stick, or a piece of green wood, chasing after us, wanting to kill us. We will be so frightened that we break out in cold sweat and wake up. Or we will dream of poisonous snakes and ferocious beasts, lions or tigers, and be so frightened that we wake up.

If there is any pathogen invading the liver, we will dream of mountain forest and trees because liver belongs to the wood element; we will then dream of trees and forest. If there is any pathogen invading the gall bladder, you will dream of fights or lawsuits.

Regardless of whether these phenomena appear during our meditation or in our dreams, we can have an idea as to where the disorder is – whether it is from any of the four elements of earth, water, fire or wind; or the vital organs of the body.

After we know the reasons for the disorders, what counteractive method should we use? Since we are at Tiantai Calming-and-Insight Meditation, we will certainly counteract with either cultivation of calming or cultivation of insight.

### **Treatment through Calming**

What should you do if you discover disorders in the four elements or the vital organs? There are five methods of treatment through cultivation of calming which you can try. You can do this:

In the **first method**, focus your thought at where the disorder is, do not let your mind scatter outwardly. You will recover from the disorder in this way. In 'The Great Calming-and-Insight

Meditation' volume 8, it is mentioned that as long as you put your thought at the place of disorder, you will recover in no more than three days. Why is the effect so fast? It gave an analogy – when you put your thought at the place of disorder, it is like, once you open the door, the wind will be blown in, but as long as you close the door, it will naturally be calm, the wind will naturally stop. Do you have to use any method to stop the wind? There is no need, you just have to close the door. The same principle applies here now. When you focus your mind at the place of disorder, it is like you closing the door. Normally, your mind is scattered outwardly, but now you do not allow it to scatter outwardly by focusing at the place of disorder. This is like closing the door, you will naturally recover from the disorder. The principle is very simple; as long as the mind is not scattered outwardly, focus it at the place of disorder. Just like if you have a headache, focus your thought at your head, relax and the entire pain will be dispersed, and you will recover slowly. After a while if it starts to ache, put your thought at your head again, relax the entire head, and the pain will be dispersed. It is just so simple. This is the first method.

In the **second method**, put your thought at the navel. Not only can it treat the disorder in this way, it can also develop meditative absorption, right? As we have mentioned earlier, what is the effect of putting the thought at the navel? It can counteract distraction. So now we can achieve two results with one action. By putting our thought at the navel, not only can it treat the disorder, it can also counteract distraction and allow us to attain meditative absorption.

In the **third method**, put your thought at the cinnabar fields (dantian) located two inches below the navel. As the cinnabar fields is the sea of energy (it is the point where energy is generated and from where it flows) so when you put your thought there, the breath will naturally be harmonised. When the breath is harmonised, your disorder is treated. This is the reason for putting your thought at the cinnabar fields.

In the **fourth method**, put your thought at the sole of your feet, at the acupuncture point of 'yongquan'. Regardless of whether you are walking, standing, sitting or lying down, keep holding your thought there. It can also treat many disorders in this way. Why is this so? Majority of the disorders are due to the fact that the four elements are not harmonised, and this is further caused by the upward movement of your thoughts. So, as long as you bring your thought down and put it at the sole of your feet, the disorders will naturally be treated. Hence, as long as you put your thought at the acupuncture point of 'yongquan', all disorders of the four elements and five core organs can be treated.

In the **fifth method**, understand that all things (dharmas) arise from causes and conditions, are void of any inherent nature and are comparable to empty space. Do not be attached to the disorders and they will be treated. Just like whenever we do not feel well, we will always put our thought at the place of discomfort, and the discomfort increases as you keep thinking about it. Regardless of any disorder, whether your heart, kidneys or liver are not well, do not keep thinking about it and telling yourself that you are not feeling well. Why? Since all things (dharmas) arise from causes and conditions and are void of self-nature, the signs of disorder are also void of self-nature. The signs of disorder originally do not really exist, they simply arise from the combination of causes and conditions, temporarily manifesting the suffering and discomfort. They are void of any self-nature, and are arising and ceasing. If we think in this way, the disorder will be treated easily.

Why do we have disorders? It is because we tend to let our imagination run wild. We have fluttering thoughts every day and this will incite the four elements of earth, water, fire and wind, resulting in disorders. Now we stop our thoughts because all things (dharmas) do not really exist, the signs of



disorders also do not exist; then we will not attach to the disorders. In this way, our misleading thoughts will naturally be extinguished and our disorders will be treated. This is also a method of cultivating calming.

This is just like in the 'Vimalakirti-Nirdesha Sutra' wherein there was a question, "What is the origin of the disorder?" The answer was, "Grasping! It is because your mind likes to grasp, that is why there is disorder. This is the root cause of the disorder. Then it was asked, "How can grasping be eliminated?" The answer was, "There is nothing to seek. As long as your mind does not seek, you will not grasp, your disorder will be treated." This meaning is similar to what we are talking about now. If you know that all things (dharmas) arise from causes and conditions, are void of any inherent nature and are comparable to empty space, your mind will not grasp all things (dharmas), or grasp the signs of the disorders. If your mind does not seek, all disorders will naturally be fully treated. There is no need for medication, consultation of doctor, injection... no need for everything. Therefore, be skilful in using your virtuous thought and the disorders will be treated.

You can try using these five methods of using cultivation of calming to treat disorders.

### **Treatment Through Insight**

We can also use the cultivation of insight to treat disorders. There are four methods:

The **first method** is **Treatment of Disorders with the Six Breaths**. We are referring to this chart wherein we use visualisation to treat disorders with the six breaths. Let us look at the verses.

**The heart belongs to 'he', the kidneys to 'chui'; spleen to 'hu', and the lungs to 'si'- the sages all know this; when the liver heats up, the 'xu' word comes forth; wherever the triple warmer is blocked, one needs only intone 'xi'.**

The six breaths are 'he', 'chui', 'hu', 'si', 'xu' and 'xi'. Coordinate these six breaths with movements to treat disorders. We will first finish our lecture before inviting our two fellow practitioners to demonstrate for us and then we can all practise together. This method of treating disorder with the six breaths is extremely good. Regardless of your disorders, you can simply use the six breaths conveniently to treat them. You can practise one round after you wake up in the morning before you start your meditation. You will realise that the effect is extremely good. Why? This is because it has already harmonised the energy in the four elements and vital organs. Hence, when you meditate after practising it, there will not be those phenomena of the disorders of the vital organs that we have mentioned earlier. Therefore, this treatment of disorders with the six breaths is extremely effective, moreover, it can treat all disorders of the four elements and five core organs, not just the light disorders, it can even treat the serious ones.

Therefore, regardless of Buddhists or Taoists, this is a very popular health maintenance method. This is also found in Taoism, with different schools having poses that are not very similar. Hence, if you see other people using the Treatment of Disorders with the Six Breaths with poses that are different from yours, they are not wrong; just that they are from a different school. There are differences between the Buddhist and Taoist methods. Since we are talking about the Buddhist teachings, we will use the Buddhist method here.

How do you do 'he', 'chui', 'hu', 'si', 'xu' and 'xi'? Visualise the breath, as you sound 'he', do it silently; just shape your mouth accordingly and expel the breath. Although it is silent, your ears must be able to distinguish the sound clearly, and the breath that you expel is extremely subtle, faint and undefined. Like now we will first sound 'he', the heart belongs to 'he', (sound 'he'); this is with sound. But later when we practise, it is silent, but your ears can hear the 'he' sound; is this clear? Practise in this way, seven times each, that is, 'he' seven times. It is to expel the breath slowly and sound 'he' silently, but your ears can hear the 'he' sound. Visualise the breath from the heart being expelled as you sound 'he'. This is because 'the heart belongs to 'he''. Therefore, disorders of the heart or small intestine can be counteracted with 'he'.

What is the effect of this? It can eliminate agitation and bring the energy flow downward. There is disorder of the heart so energy tends to flow upward instead. So, when you 'he', the energy will flow downward, and the disorder will be treated. When your heart is not well, you will be moody and agitated, so when you 'he' seven times, your moodiness and agitation will be gone, your energy will flow downward, and the energy in your heart will be harmonised.

Sometimes there is heat or cold in the body. When you 'he', if the heat in the heart is very exuberant, open your mouth bigger; if the heat in the heart is not so exuberant, open the mouth smaller. The greater the heat, the bigger the mouth should be opened. This is the first, later we will practise 'he' with the movements.

The second is 'the kidneys belong to 'chui''. If there is disorder in your kidneys or bladder, you can use the breath 'chui' to treat. Visualise expelling the energy in the kidneys when you 'chui'. It can expel the cold in the kidneys. How do you know if your kidneys are cold? If you always feel cold in your waist, stomach and cinnabar fields (dantian), that is, they feel icy cold whenever you touch them; then you know that there is insufficient 'yang' energy in your kidneys. At this point of time, use 'chui' to expel the cold energy in your kidneys. Now I will sound 'chui' first (sound 'chui'). When you practise later, it is silent, but your ears must be able to distinguish the 'chui' sound clearly, and you have to shape your mouth according to 'chui'. In the beginning, it is like blowing at a pile of ashes in front of you with 'chui', and the ashes fly away. This is the right way.

Next is 'spleen to 'hu''. The spleen and stomach are interlinked. Visualise expelling the energy from the spleen with 'hu'; it can eliminate damp-heat from the spleen. The spleen belongs to the earth element. As it is located in the middle, as long as there is a little heat, the entire spleen and stomach energy will not be harmonised. There will be stomach bloating or abdominal bloating. When you use 'hu', the damp-heat in the spleen and stomach can be eliminated, the bloating phenomena will disappear.

'Si', 'and the lungs to 'si'- the sages all know this'. If there is disorder in the lungs or large intestine, you can use 'si' to treat the disorder. 'Si' is to restore from fatigue, it can eliminate exhaustion. When you feel very tired, you just use 'si' and visualise the energy in the lungs being expelled.

Next is 'xu'. When there is disorder in the liver and gallbladder, you can use 'xu'. 'When the liver heats up, the 'xu' word comes forth'. Visualise expelling the energy from the liver with 'xu'. It can dispel phlegm and eliminate bloating. If there is phlegm in your mouth when you 'xu', visualise expelling the phlegm with 'xu'; the phlegm will be dispelled. You can also eliminate bloating with 'xu'.

Lastly, 'wherever the triple warmer is blocked, one needs only intone 'xi''. What is the triple warmer? Generally, there is the upper warmer, middle warmer and lower warmer; it is roughly the area of the mouth, stomach and bladder respectively. So, when there is blockage or disorder at these three

areas, use 'xi' and visualise the energy expelling from the triple warmer. This can eliminate pain and treat wind, that is, it can eliminate any joint pain in the entire body.

Hence, these are the six breaths.

If you are so busy every day, which would you choose? Simply practise one of these six and it is able to treat all kinds of disorder. Which is it? Each of the six breaths is able to counteract the respective disorders of the vital organs of the body, however, all disorders in the five core organs and the triple warmer, regardless of whether they are cold or heat disorders, or burnout, wind pathogen or disharmony; all can be counteracted with the first breath 'he'. If you are very busy, you just need to 'he' seven times each day. This is because the heart is connected to the five core organs. When you harmonise the heart with 'he', the five core organs are harmonised at the same time. Therefore, 'he' can treat all disorders. We look forward to practising this, so we shall speed up the lecture.

Next, disorders can be counteracted during meditation. If you feel that your body is very cold during meditation, at this point of time you should use 'chui' seven times. If you feel heat in your body during meditation, use 'hu' seven times, and the heat will be dispersed. For treatment of disorders, like what we have mentioned earlier, 'chui' can eliminate cold, 'hu' can eliminate heat.

'Xi' can eliminate pain and wind. If you have any joint pain, can use 'xi'.

'He' can eliminate agitation, and bring downward the energy that flows upward.

'Xu' can dispel phlegm and eliminate bloating. We have mentioned earlier that you can also visualise the phlegm dispelling from your mouth when you use 'xu'.

'Si' is to restore from fatigue. When you are extremely tired and exhausted, you can use 'si'.

This is for treatment of disorders. There is also another usage. I am having phlegm now! Which one should I use? Use 'xu', right? 'Xu' can dispel phlegm. Visualise the phlegm being expelled from your mouth. Wait for me for a while, let me practise first.

There is another type, we have said that the six breaths can treat the five core organs, but any of the five organs can be treated with the six breaths. For instance, which organ do you like – liver, heart, spleen, lungs or kidneys? Let us assume it is spleen and stomach. If the spleen and stomach are cold, you can use 'chui'; and if there is heat there, then we use 'hu'. If there is pain in the spleen and stomach, you can use 'xi'. If there is stomach upset or bloating in your stomach, you use 'he'. When there is dampness in the spleen, you can have phlegm easily, you can use 'xu'. If you feel very tired and your spleen and stomach are not well, you do not have appetite, use 'si'. Hence, you can also use the six breaths to treat one organ; use different breaths for different situations. This is on the treatment of disorders.

Let us continue. 'Hu' and 'chui' can treat disorders of the heart. Just now we said that there are two types of disorder for the heart. One is that your body will feel cold, and the other is that your body will feel hot. If you feel that your body is cold, use 'hu'; if you feel that your body is hot, use 'chui'.

Next, just like what we have mentioned earlier, use 'xu' for all liver problems.

Then, 'he' can also treat the lungs. This is the principle of mutual generation and restriction of the five core organs. Just like earlier, we mentioned that 'hu' and 'chui' can treat disorders of the heart; one is fire element generates earth element, the other is water element restricts fire element. It does not matter if you do not understand; this is not important. Originally, 'he' is used for the heart; the heart belongs to fire element, the lungs belong to metal element; now 'he' can treat the lungs

because fire element restricts metal element. Hence, your lungs can be treated. It is because of the principle of mutual generation and restriction.

‘Xi’ can be used to treat the spleen.

‘Si’ can be used to treat the kidneys. Originally, ‘si’ is used to treat the lungs; the lungs belong to metal element, the kidneys belong to water element, so now it is mutual generation – metal element generates water element. Hence, the kidneys can be treated.

This is for the treatment of disorders. It is the first method of treatment of disorders through insight – Treatment of Disorders with the Six Breaths

The **second method** is the Treatment of Disorders with the Twelve Types of Respiration. Very few people are using this method now. Why? This is because you have to judge your situation first. If practised with the wrong judgement, the disorder can become more serious instead. As such, we do not encourage you to practise. Now this method is practised by very few people and is not a popular method for treatment of disorders. We will just read through once quickly. This is found in the ‘Tiantai Calming-and-Insight Meditation’ book. If you are curious, you can take a look there.

Ascending respiration counteracts sinking and heaviness. It can treat disorders related to the earth element. Descending respiration counteracts feeling of emptiness and suspension. It can treat disorders related to the wind element.

Full respiration counteracts emaciation. Burning respiration counteracts distention.

Extended respiration counteracts injury through wasting away. You can use this when your body is extremely bad. Just like there is a non-Buddhist method of absorbing energy which is the practice of the path to celestial immortals. These practitioners will practise in the deep forested mountains, especially where there are pine trees. Pine trees are plants found in the highland; these trees give off the highest spiritual influence energy. So, these practitioners will feed on the wind and dew, that is, absorbing the energy. This is the Taoist method of absorbing energy; there is a specific way of practice. These people can live for a long time through this practice. Like the earthly immortals who can live up to a few hundred years. This belongs to the extended respiration.

Demolishing respiration counteracts increasing fullness. This is used when there are some bad things in your body.

Warming respiration counteracts coldness. Cooling respiration counteracts heat.

Forceful respiration counteracts blockage. There are some respiration methods that can also clear blockage.

Retaining respiration counteracts shaking. You can use this when you are restless. You hold the breath after inhaling, just like the cultivation of kumbaka in Vajrayana. That is why you can attain meditative absorption and counteract restlessness. So, when you have fluttering misleading thoughts, counteract with this method. Hold the breath and your misleading thoughts will be eliminated.

Harmonising respiration counteracts deterioration of the four elements.

Restoring respiration fortifies the deterioration of the four elements. Can use this when the four elements of earth, water, fire and wind are weak.

So, this is the Treatment of Disorders with the Twelve Types of Respiration. This is done purely through visualisation and then giving rise to the different types of respiration. If they are used correctly, they can counteract disorders. On the contrary, if the wrong method is used, the condition of the disorder can be worsened. That is why we do not encourage the usage of these twelve breaths. If we use the method of Treatment of Disorders with the Six Breaths, it can treat all kinds of serious disorders. This is already more than sufficient.

The **third method** is the Treatment of Disorder with Visualisation Insight. The earlier methods of treatment of disorders with the six breaths and the twelve types of respiration are related to our breath and energy, but this method is not. This method of treatment originates from Agama Sutra, which discusses seventy-two methods of visualisation. To reap the effect of this method, your mind has to be already extremely focused in order to visualise. If you have not attained calming before you start to visualise, it will be less effective. If your mind is already very stable, whatever you visualise can be manifested immediately, then this visualisation as a treatment for the disorder will be very effective. So, it depends on whether you are able to visualise well.

Just like in the past there was a man who had a lump in his stomach. He consulted a Zen master, "What should I do?" The Zen master taught him this visualisation, he said, "You visualise a golden needle piercing into your stomach, puncturing the lump."

He visualised accordingly and the lump really disappeared. However, he developed pain in the stomach instead. He consulted the Zen master again, "The lump is gone but I am having stomach pain now." The Zen master said, "Oh, you forgot to pull out the needle! You go back and visualise that the needle has already been pulled out slowly from your stomach." He really went back and visualised and the stomach pain was gone. He had actually forgotten to pull out the needle.

Another person asked, "I work so hard, I am so exhausted from work that my limbs are weak all day long. What should I do?" He replied, "You visualise liquid cheese, which is the essence of milk, dripping onto the top of your head and then dripping into your head, and slowly entering your internal organs, and eventually your entire body is filled with the essence of milk. Visualise in this way and your entire body will be filled with energy." This is visualisation insight; it can make all exhaustion disappear.

There are many methods, it depends on whether you are able to visualise well. If you are able to do so, it can also be rather effective. For instance, if you are going to Tibet with a sub-zero temperature and if you have the ability and skill to visualise your entire body is filled with fire, then you do not need to bring any winter clothing. You will not feel cold even in a temperature of negative thirty or forty degrees.

In the **fourth method**, we can use analysis. We know that our body is the unreal combination of the four elements, so we analyse the four elements. The earth element belongs to the spleen and stomach, so if your spleen and stomach are sick, it means that the earth element is sick. Can the earth element be sick? If the earth element is sick, the mountains, rivers and the earth are also sick. If your kidneys and bladder are no good, it means that the water element is sick. Can the water element really be sick? If the water element is sick, the sea surrounding Singapore is sick, all lakes and rivers are sick. Actually, the four elements of earth, water, fire and wind are not sick. This is a method of analysing the four elements. You will realise that the disorder of the four elements do not really exist. Why? Through our earlier analysis, we realise that the external earth, water, fire and wind are not sick! Therefore, the disorder of your four elements also do not exist. So, who is sick? Your mind is sick. Then you look for your mind. You will realise that the mind cannot be found!

There is no real 'self' who is sick, and no real signs of disorder. Your disorder will then be treated. This is rather useful.

The above are the four methods of treatment through insight. We recommend using the first method of 'Treatment of Disorders with the Six Breaths' because you do not need a very high level of meditative absorption skill in order to do it. This is because everyone needs to breathe, so everyone is able to do it very well. In addition, it can also treat all kinds of disorders. It is not necessary to use all four methods; you just need to know one or two.

So, you can start with the first method of 'Treatment of Disorders with the Six Breaths' to harmonise your vital organs so that you are able to attain meditative absorption easily. After having meditative absorption, you can choose to use visualisation insight or the earlier methods of treatment with calming. You can now use methods of treatment that require skill.

Therefore, regardless of using calming or insight methods, as long as you use it right, all disorders can be treated. If you are unable to treat the disorder after a long time, please consult the doctor and take medicine or injection; this may be faster. Hence, Great Master Zhizhe did not object to consulting the doctor and taking medicine. It is fine to eat medicine if you really have disorder.

This is the first type – disorders of the four elements and five core organs and how we should treat the disorders with the cultivation of calming and cultivation of insight.

**The second type of disorder are the disorders caused by ghosts.** These are the acts of ghosts and spirits, resulting in the disorders. We have spoken on this yesterday. You just need a strong mind and the help of the power of mantras to treat this type of disorder. You can recite any mantras that you know, like the Great Compassion mantra, Shurangama mantra, etc.

In Taoism, disorders caused by ghosts and spirits are categorised as disorders of the energy. Why do you have such disorders? It is because your state of mind is too weak. Your energy level is too low, that is, your body is very weak. That is why the energy of ghosts can enter your vital organs and cause disorders. However, the five core organs are not the ghosts, and neither are the ghosts your five core organs, but they can enter your five organs and cause disorders. That is why it belongs to the disorder of the energy. They enter your five core organs because your energy, body and state of mind are very weak; most importantly is your weak state of mind.

But ghosts do not cause disorders in people so easily. Apart from your weak body and state of mind, there is one more – there is evil thoughts in your mind. This is an opportunity for them to take advantage of to penetrate your vital organs to cause disorders. Therefore, it is due to all kinds of evil thoughts in your mind that draw the ghosts to your five core organs, resulting in disorders caused by ghosts.

So, why do we have disorders caused by ghosts and spirits? Firstly, perhaps your body is very weak. Secondly, you are mentally very weak. Thirdly, you often have evil thoughts in your mind. Now we know how this type of disorders come about.

Yesterday we spoke about Maras. What is the difference between the disorders caused by ghosts and Maras? Which is more serious? Serious disorders caused by ghosts can be fatal, but disorders caused by Maras not only can be fatal, they can also destroy practitioners' merit wealth, Dharma body and wisdom life, destroying to the limit. This will result in the practitioners' inability to cultivate in their next life. Therefore, disorders caused by Maras are more serious.

In the 'Great Calming-and-Insight Meditation', disorders caused by Maras are categorised as disorders of the mind, known as demons of the mind. In fact, everything originates from thoughts arising from the mind, hence the disorders caused by Maras also originates from thoughts arising from the mind. In Taoism, disorders caused by ghosts are categorised as disorders of the energy. So, one is disorders of the mind, the other is disorders of the energy.

**The third type of disorder is disorders brought on by karmic retribution.** What to do with such disorders? Cultivate merits and repentance and they will be eliminated.

Currently, which is the most serious disorder? Apart from cancer, it is mental disorders like depression and bipolar disorder, which are on the rise. What is the karmic cause of mental disorder? Why will a person go mad or hysterical? What has he done in the past? He disrupted other people's meditation and even destroyed the meditation room or meditation hall. Or he had casted spell on others, harming them. Or he had very strong anger, liked to get into tussles, or sue others, having endless lawsuits. Or he had very strong greed, always giving rise to bad thoughts, like engaging in intimate relationship with the opposite sex. As a result of these karma, his current life's greed, anger and afflictions are especially strong. As his afflictions are so strong, his body and mind are not able to endure, thus he goes mad or hysterical. So, for disorders brought on by karmic retribution, there is a karmic cause for every disorder.

It is discussed in the 'Great Calming-and-Insight Meditation' about the kinds of disorders arising from breaking the five precepts. Breaking the five precepts will result in the disorders of the five sense-organs and five core organs. The reasons for disorders brought on by karmic retribution are discussed in the 'Great Calming-and-Insight Meditation'. Some of the disorders are due to the karma created in past lives; some are due to breaking the precepts in this life, triggering the ripening of karma of the past lives. What are they? With regard to the five precepts, they are:

Killing – will have disorders of the liver and eyes. The liver opens into the eyes.

Stealing – disorders of the lungs and nose. The lungs open into the nose.

Sexual misconduct – will have disorders of the kidneys and ears. The kidneys open into the ears.

False speech – will have disorders of the spleen, stomach, and mouth. The spleen opens into the mouth.

Intoxication – disorders of the heart and tongue. The heart opens into the tongue.

If you have disorders of the five core organs and the five sense-organs in this life, it is because of breaking the five precepts in your past lives. When will you recover from the disorders? When the karmic retribution is over, you will naturally recover from the disorders.

When you observe the precepts in this life, it can also trigger the karma in your past lives, resulting in disorders. Earlier we spoke about the first possibility of triggering past lives' karma through breaking precepts in this life, resulting in the disorders of the five core organs and the five sense-organs. Now when you observe the precepts properly, it can trigger the ripening of past lives karma of breaking the precepts, but the situation is different. This is because the merits of observing the precepts now can lighten the heavy karma, so for karma that originally will result in falling into the hell realm, the retribution now is just having a headache. Hence, the situation is different; heavy retribution can be lightened, and long retribution can be shortened. So, it is very good to observe the precepts, right? It can treat the disorders and also lighten the retribution.

We have finished Chapter 9 – ‘Treatment of Disorders’. But many people have doubts about its effectiveness. If you do not believe in it, then it is guaranteed to be ineffective. If you only practise occasionally, then it is also not effective. Perhaps you practise for a while and give up when you do not see the effectiveness, then definitely it cannot treat your disorders. If you are sluggish in your practice, or you are not focused, then it is definitely not effective. If you judge the disorders of the vital organs and the four elements wrongly, resulting in using the wrong method, it is definitely not effective. In addition, for those who like to show off, they flaunt it when they feel the effect, then it is not effective. There are those who do not find it effective after practising, they start to have doubts and slander, then it is definitely not effective. Hence, these situations are guaranteed not effective.

The converse situations will be effective. What is it like conversely? Firstly, you have faith. Secondly, you practise often. Even though it is not effective in the beginning, you have the patience to keep practising, resolute to practise till the disorder is treated. This will definitely be effective. Thirdly, you must be very focused when practising, then it will be effective. Fourthly, you must be skilful in distinguishing the causes of the disorder so that you will use the right method for it to be effective. Fifthly, when it is effective, rejoice covertly, do not show off to others. When it is ineffective, do not give rise to doubt and slander. There is not a single doubt that the methods of calming-and-insight cultivation can treat all disorders.

With the twenty-five prerequisite conditions mentioned earlier (Chapter 1-5) which is the auxiliary cultivation, together with the actual cultivation (Chapter 6-9), finally will be the realisation of the fruits. If you are able to do all the above, there is no doubt that you can realise the fruits. Let us check and reflect on ourselves to see if we already possess the conditions for the cultivation of calming-and-insight.

Chapter 1 is ‘Fulfilment of the Prerequisite Conditions’. Firstly, do you have pure observance of the precepts? Take out a piece of paper now and help yourself with the scoring. See if you have more circles or crosses, later there will be rewards if you have more circles. Do you have pure observance of the precepts? Secondly, can you cultivate in peace without having to worry about your livelihood? This is ‘adequacy of clothing and food’. Thirdly, do you have a place where you can practise diligently without any disruption? This is ‘having ease and a quiet dwelling place’. Fourthly, are you able to find a time to cease all kinds of worldly responsibilities to focus on calming-and-insight meditation? This is ‘cessation of all kinds of worldly responsibility’. Fifthly, do you have a spiritual friend who can teach and guide you in calming-and-insight meditation? This is ‘to be close to a spiritual friend’. If you are able to do all these, it shows that you already possess the conditions for the cultivation of calming-and-insight. This is Chapter 1 ‘Fulfilment of the Prerequisite Conditions’.

Chapter 2 is ‘Renunciation of Desires’. You have to check yourself to see if you are engaged in renunciation of desires every day. Or are you still busy with enjoyment every day? If you still insist on a certain standard in what you see, hear and eat, then you have not renounced your desires. You are still particular about enjoyment in life. Then ask yourself if you still have any people, matters or things that you desire, are attached to and are unable to let go? This is within the scope of the five desires, so do a check. Now when you are faced with things that you would indulge in and were obsessed with in the past, are you able to understand clearly that they are illusory, that they arise from causes and conditions, are void of any inherent nature and are comparable to empty space? Are you able to see through to the ultimate truth and not be fascinated and obsessed again? If you are able to do this, then you are able to renounce the five desires.



Chapter 3 is 'Elimination of the Hindrances'. Check if you are diligently eliminating the five hindrances every day – greed, anger, sleep, remorse and doubt. Do you try your best not to give rise to afflictions every day? Have your afflictions been reduced every day? If they have, then you have been working on eliminating the hindrances.

Chapter 4 is 'Making Adjustments'. Check if you have made adjustments to your food and sleep? Do you still eat and drink more than is needed? Do you eat more when the food is tasty and eat less when it is not tasty? Do you adjust your sleep? Do you go to sleep and wake up from your sleep as and when you like? We have to check whether we have adjusted our food and sleep so that we will be in the best state to cultivate calming-and-insight meditation. If you do not adjust your food and sleep, you will not be able to cultivate calming-and-insight well, as they will be the main cause of your torpid-mindedness and distraction. In addition, do you know how to adjust your body, breath and mind? This is 'Making Five Adjustments'. Are you skilful in adjusting your body, breath and mind during meditation? Do you know the method? When you have adjusted well, then you can attain meditative absorption easily and develop wisdom. Hence, the method is very important.

Chapter 5 is 'Utilising Skilful Means'. Check if you are resolute in cultivating calming-and-insight. Did you make a vow to cultivate calming-and-insight? Do you take pleasure in the cultivation of calming-and-insight? Are you determined to dedicate yourself to make regular progress in calming-and-insight meditation every day? Do you often recall the difference between the five desires and the supramundane meditative absorption and wisdom? Do you recognise clearly their relative importance? Are you clear that one will cause you to give rise to afflictions, create karma and transmigrating; and the other will allow you to attain meditative absorption, wisdom, supernatural power, and the power from following the right path, and even attain Buddhahood? Are you able to distinguish them clearly? Do you often recall? Are you steadfast in the cultivation of calming-and-insight? Being steadfast means that regardless of whatever situation, you will persist to the end. You will definitely not give up easily, you will not regret even though there is no result. Only with such a steadfast mind would you be able to have attainment in calming-and-insight cultivation.

If you are able to do all these, it shows that you have already possessed the twenty-five prerequisite conditions. Now you can start to cultivate calming-and-insight properly, and your attainment of calming and insight is not far off.

The actual cultivation of calming-and-insight is contained in Chapter 6 'The Actual Cultivation'. The actual cultivation is differentiated into sitting cultivation, and how to cultivate in our daily lives when phenomena arise.

Do you cultivate sitting calming-and-insight meditation regularly every day? Regularly cultivate calming? There are three calming cultivation methods and two insight cultivation methods. Do you practise every day?

When you are torpid-minded and distracted, do you cultivate counteraction or do you simply let the torpid-mindedness and distraction continue without any counteraction? Are you able to adjust anytime according to your situation, that is, do you know when you should cultivate calming and when you should cultivate insight?

Do you know how to cultivate calming-and-insight upon manifestation of any phenomena during meditative absorption? Remain unperturbed and not affected; this is cultivation of calming. Realising that it is illusory, unreal, see through it; this is cultivation of insight.

In addition, do you cultivate calming and cultivate insight together? Or are you inclined to any side? How do you check this? If the more you cultivate the more you do not have much response, it means that you have cultivated more calming. If anyone talks to you, you simply respond, "Oh....", or you seem to respond slowly to anything, then it shows that you keep cultivating meditative absorption till it seems that you do not have any response. You are inclined to a side. Not having response does not mean you are having strong meditative absorption wherein there is no discrimination. It means that you are inclined to a side, so now you have to cultivate insight to counteract. If you know all the theory, but are unable to actualise it, you are also inclined to a side. You do not have the meditative absorption skill. You like wisdom but do not like to cultivate meditative absorption, hence, it is foolish wisdom or heterodox wisdom that you have as it is not supported by meditative absorption. Likewise, you will not be able to be awakened and see your true nature. At this point of time, you have to enhance your meditative absorption skill. This is sitting calming-and-insight meditation.

Normally when you are not meditating, you can also cultivate calming-and-insight in your daily life when phenomena arise. Are you cultivating calming-and-insight when you are engaged in the six daily affairs – walking, standing, sitting, lying down, speaking, and engaging in actions? At the present moment if you do not give rise to indulgent or misleading thought, this is cultivation of calming. When every thought corresponds to emptiness and non-self, this is cultivation of insight. Do you cultivate calming and also cultivate insight when you encounter the phenomena of the six sense-objects every day? You see so many things and hear so many sounds every day, do you cultivate calming and also cultivate insight? If you simply see and hear without giving rise to discrimination and misleading thoughts; this is cultivation of calming. If at that present moment, you understand that they do not really exist; this is cultivation of insight. At the moment when you encounter the phenomena of the six sense-objects, do you understand clearly that they arise from causes and conditions and are void of any self-nature? If you do, then you are cultivating insight; you will not be tempted, and then give rise to afflictions and create karma.

Chapter 7 is 'Manifestation of Roots of Goodness'. In the process of cultivating calming-and-insight, there will be some phenomena of roots of goodness. Are you able to recognise them? Do you know whether they belong to the outward or inward manifestation of roots of goodness? Are they real or false? Are they right or heterodox? Are you able to differentiate? Do you know what the real manifestation of meditative absorption is like? After the manifestation of our roots of goodness, we feel that our body and mind are calm, ethereal, bright, pure, joyous and happy; there is arising of the virtuous mind, faith, increasing respectfulness, the mind is soft, you loathe the secular world, and become free of desires. This is the manifestation of real meditative absorption. Apart from these, the rest are not real, they are heterodox and false signs. So, this is the standard for distinguishing. Once you are clear, you will not take the wrong path.

Chapter 8 is 'Recognising the Work of Demons'. Do you know what to do when demonic phenomena are manifested? Regardless of whatever manifestation of demonic phenomena, understand that all demonic phenomena are illusory, unreal; do not be bothered by them, do not cast them away. This is cultivation of calming. Recognise that there is not a real you who is cultivating insight and neither is there a real demon obstructing your cultivation. All kinds of demonic phenomena transformed by the demons also do not exist; all phenomena are manifested by your own consciousness. This is cultivation of insight. So, there is no 'self', no demon and no demonic phenomena; all these three do not really exist. Of course, you can also chant the sutras, recite mantras, repent and chant the precepts. All demonic phenomena will then be eliminated. Most importantly, be close to a spiritual friend who can identify the work of demons, so that you

will not eventually be hysterical or possessed by demons, or even losing your life. There will not be such shortcomings.

Chapter 9 is 'Treatment of Disorders'. During the cultivation of calming-and-insight, perhaps there is a recurrence of your old disorders, or you are not skilful in the cultivation, resulting in all kinds of disorders related to meditation. Therefore, you must be skilful in identifying and knowing how to use the calming-and-insight cultivation method to treat the disorders. If there are disorders of the four elements and five core organs, you can treat with 'cultivation of calming' – Firstly, put your thought at the place of disorder. Secondly, put your thought at the navel. Thirdly, put your thought at the cinnabar fields (dantian). Fourthly, put your thought at the sole of your feet. You can also treat the disorders with 'cultivation of insight' – Firstly, is the Treatment of Disorders with the Six Breaths. Secondly, is the Treatment of Disorders with the Twelve Types of Respiration. Thirdly, is the Treatment of Disorders with Visualisation Insight. Fourthly, is the analysis of the four elements of the body, and realise that they do not really exist and ascertain that the signs of the disorders also do not really exist. The disorders will naturally be treated in this way. This is the first type of disorders, which is the disorders of the four elements and five core organs. The second type of disorders is disorders caused by ghosts. You can treat the disorders with a strong mind and the power of mantras. The third type is the disorders brought on by karmic retribution. You can use cultivation of merits and repentance to treat such disorders.

As you have subdued the demons and treated the disorders, you are about to realise the fruits. What kind of fruits will you attain? It depends on your intention and resolution. Ask yourself why you are here to learn calming-and-insight meditation. Are you cultivating for self-liberation, or for benefiting sentient beings after attainment, or you are resolute to become Buddha? Different intention and resolution will result in different fruits. Apart from this, it also depends on your calming-and-insight cultivation skill to determine the fruits that you can attain.

If you are cultivating calming-and-insight for self-liberation, you will realise that all things (dharma) arise from causes and conditions, are void of any inherent nature, and are comparable to empty space. You will attach to the emptiness, and what will you attain? You will attain the fruits of Arhat of the Shravaka Vehicle and Pratyekabuddha of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. If you are cultivating calming-and-insight to benefit sentient beings, though you know that all things (dharma) arise from causes and conditions and are void of self-nature, you will not attach to the emptiness. Within this emptiness, you will give rise to infinite ingenious ways to benefit sentient beings. You will attain the fruit of Bodhisattva.

This is still not enough for the attainment of the fruit of Buddha. As we know, Arhat and Pratyekabuddha are able to be liberated from life and death, they are able to leave the three realms. That is why they have emptiness of life and death. Bodhisattvas have made vows to save and benefit sentient beings, they are reluctant to enter nirvana, but return to the Saha World (World of Suffering) to save and benefit sentient beings. Hence, they have emptiness of nirvana. So, one has emptiness of life and death, and the other has emptiness of nirvana. When you attain the fruit of Buddha, you are not attached to either side. Neither do you attach yourself to the emptiness of life and death, nor attach to the emptiness of nirvana. Both life and death, and nirvana are empty in self-nature, there is no difference between the two. Hence, you move freely in and out of life and death, and nirvana. You have entered the middle way.

However, there are two types of middle way. One is known as the exclusive middle, and the other is known as the perfect middle. If you enter the middle way that is relative to the two sides – life and death, and nirvana; this is known as the exclusive middle. 'Exclusive' refers to just one. This is

the attainment of the fruit of Buddha in the Distinctive Teaching, which is still not complete. You have to go further and understand that all things (dharma) do not really exist. So, even the middle way does not really exist. Then you can enter the perfect middle. Perfect middle means that the middle exists at any point in the emptiness of space which is infinite and boundless. Which point in the emptiness of space is the middle point? You cannot find the middle point as it is infinite and boundless, so any point can be the middle point. This is the perfect middle; there is not just one middle. Only then can you have attainment of the fruit of Buddha in the Perfect Teaching.

Therefore, apart from your intention and resolution, it also depends on your calming-and-insight cultivation skill, whether you cultivate insight of everything as empty, insight of everything as temporal or unreal, or insight of the mean (everything as empty and also temporal, this is a balance of the earlier two). Have you attained emptiness? Or have you attained emptiness and from there give rise to infinite ingenious ways to benefit sentient beings? Or you neither attach to existence nor non-existence? The fruits will differ; from Hinayana all the way to Mahayana, and the fruit of Buddha in the Distinctive Teaching and the Perfect Teaching.

We have completed our lessons for this time and shall end our lessons here. Lastly, we certainly hope that everyone will have early attainment in the cultivation of calming-and-insight, so as to benefit more sentient beings.

Earlier we said that we will practise Treatment of Disorders with the Six Breaths. So, let us invite our two fellow practitioners from Taiwan up here to demonstrate for us. Can everyone please stand up, loosen your legs and we shall start our practice.

Open up your legs naturally, look in front of you.

Firstly, 'the heart belongs to 'he''. Stretch your hands straight out to your side at the level of your shoulders, with your palms facing upward. Inhale slowly through your nose first, exhale slowly through your mouth with the 'he' breath. Your mouth does not produce any sound, but your mind must be clear of the 'he' sound. Do this seven times. Practise seven times. After you have finished, put down your hands.

Secondly, 'the kidneys to 'chui''. Put your hands on the hips with your thumbs at the position of your kidneys. Then your mouth moves according to 'chui'.

Thirdly, 'spleen to 'hu''. Lift up your hands and clench your fists, with the fists facing each other, two fingers apart; centre of the palms facing inward. Then put them in front of your chest. As you sound 'hu', visualise the breath expelling, do not make any sound, but your ears can distinguish it clearly. Slowly exhale the fine breath subtly.

Fourthly, 'the lungs to 'si''. Clench your fists and put them behind your body at the waist level, with the fists touching each other. Then stretch out the thumbs with the thumbs touching each other in this way. As you sound 'si', visualise the breath expelling from the lungs; do not make any sound but your ears can distinguish it clearly. Exhale the fine breath subtly.

As for the liver, use 'xu'. Stretch your hands straight up with the palms facing upward and the fingers facing each other, but not touching. As you sound 'xu', visualise the breath expelling from the liver.

Lastly, for the triple warmer, use 'xi'. You also clench your fists, with the fists facing each other, two fingers apart with the centre of the palms facing inward. Put them outside the navel, on both sides. Visualise the breath expelling from the triple warmer as you 'xi'.

Let us thank our two fellow practitioners for the demonstration. Please sit down. It is very simple, right? Hope that everyone here will be healthy and have long lives for the sake of the Dharma, cultivation, and the benefit of sentient beings.

Our lessons this time will end here.

Dedication: May I dedicate this merit to all sentient beings; may all sentient beings and I attain the state of enlightenment.