所謂我們看得見的光，紅內線光，和X 光都只是宇宙中無數光波中的一小部份而已。

這個年輕的男士在無數不同的波長下便有無數不同的形象。這也就是說，假如我們的眼睛不只是在可見的光波中能看東西，而是在所有的光波中都能看東西，那麼透過了各種光波，我們便如入了仙境的愛麗絲，看到彩色繽紛，目不暇給。這個年輕男士的形象，便時時在變，而且不斷的在變，沒有一種形象是永久不變的，也不可能說那一種形象是眞實的。

不僅這位年輕的男士，可以有這許多不同的形象，包括一般所謂「空」的無形形象，我們每一個人也都有這許多不同的形象，包括一般所謂「空」的無形形象。在這裏，請注意我們大家的無形形象都是相同的，假如這種說法是眞的話，那麼我們所謂的肉體豈不是只是本性所顯現無數形式中的一種而已，而我們却堅持執着這肉體的眞實存在，而形成自我觀念，又是多麼的愚蠢啊！

這三種分析會達到一個共同結論，就是人類肉眼在狹小光波中所見到的人類肉體的形相，是暫時的，而且是瞬息百變的。既然如此，我們又怎能稱它爲自我，爲一個獨立的個體呢？所以根本沒有自我，一切是空。

有一次我向朋友們介紹「無我畢竟空」的理論本。有一位朋友大叫道：「假如我失去了自己，變成了空，那我又如何能活着呢？」我的回答是：「佛陀在三十五歲悟道時，就證得『無我畢竟空』，他不但活到了八十歲，而且過得很快活自在。」所以，打破自我觀念，證得「空」的道理，並不意味着生命的結束，相反的，却正是幸福生活的開始，關於詳細的情形，留待下一次再和各位討論。

3.第三種方法我叫它透視分析法：

沒有一個人能否認我們任何人的身體是個實體，至少它看起來是實體。但如果深入的去考究，我們將發現所謂身體是實體這個概念，最初是由視覺器官——肉眼所造成的。不幸的是，我們的肉眼是個十分不完美的工具，它常給我們極大的錯覺。現在我和各位一同研究一下「五眼」這本小册子中的兩個圖表。請看其中下面的一個圖表（見插頁）：

在標誌(2)之下，你看到一位英俊的青年男子嗎？是的，這正是你日常生活中用肉眼所看到的。你知道他是男性，年輕而英俊。

在標誌(1)之下，你的眼睛是透過了紅內線看的，那位年輕男士實體的身體已經消失，而變成了一團由紅、黃、綠三種顏色所組成的類似人體的形象。你是否仍然認清他是男士、年輕、而英俊呢？恐怕未必然吧！

在標誌(3)下，你是透過了X光來看同是這一位年輕的男士，大概你不會喜歡看他了。我想：你也不會再認爲他是年輕英俊的男子了。

在標誌(4)下，仍是這位青年男子，不過這是藝術家想像在顯微鏡下觀察所得的形像，所以這個人體是由分子結構而成。也許看起來五顏六色很美麗，但你絕看不到一位年輕英俊的男士。

在標誌(5)下又是什麼呢？那是這青年的無形的形像，不是人類肉眼所能看到的，你可以稱它爲本性。

這裏有一點很重要，請大家注意：這五種形象，並非是不同的個體，而是在同時、同地的同一個人；只是在你的眼中顯得不同罷了。

接着，再看上面的圖表，你可以看到在「電磁光譜」下，

現在請各位跟着我幻想：我把左臂從我的身上拿下來，各位能稱它爲沈家楨嗎？當然不能，因爲那只是一隻手臂。我再把右臂從我身上拿下來，你們能稱它爲沈家楨嗎？當然也不能。我再把心拿出來，你們能叫它爲沈家楨嗎？顯然，這個答案也是否定的。這個心可以移植到別人身體裏去，但是移植了之後，那個人並不因之而成爲沈家楨。

接着，我再拿下我的頭，你們能稱它爲沈家楨嗎？當然不能。這不過是個頭。我可以取下我身上的任何部份，但沒有一個部份可以稱爲是沈家楨。最後，所有部份都拿掉了，請告訴我沈家楨又在那裏呢？由此可見人身只是各器官暫時的和合，並沒有永恆的本性，所以叫做「空」。「沈家楨」，或是「我」，只是爲了世俗境界中的方便而任意選擇的一個名詞而已。

2.第二種方法我叫它做歸納分析法：

在這個房間裏有很多不同的個體，每個個體都以自己的身體爲自己。然而早在佛陀的時代，印度和希臘的哲學家們都已經說過人身只不過是由固體、液體、氣體、熱力四大原素的和合而已。佛陀以開悟的睿智更進一步認爲這四大原素能合成一個元素他稱之曰「空」。依照佛陀的說法，「空」是人所無法理解的，它沒有相對性，也沒有差別相，在時空上都是無窮的，但却並非沒有或無。今天廿世紀的科學家們也告訴我們固體、液體、氣體、和熱力都是「能」的種種顯現，我在第一講「生死的概念」中講過；這種「能」，却正像佛陀所謂的「空」。

由此可知，不僅坐在這裏的各位，還有其他人，不管形像，性別，膚色等如何不同，都能歸本於一，那就是「空」或「能」。在開悟的境界中，一切物體都相同。「自我」只是在世俗境界中的人爲了方便而創設的一個概念罷了。

記載着多少宗教的衞道者和革命家，他們甚至把理想、信仰、主義看得比自己的生命更重要。雖然在這種情形下，通常把作爲個體的小我歸併入羣體的大我。但我的觀念却更爲加强了。雖然如此，理想是可能改變的，而理想的改變，並沒有把這個人改變。觀念中的「我」仍然沒變。所以這可以證明理想仍然不是自我觀念的核心。

7.名位也是一種極有力的自我標誌。名位代表成就，使他在一般人中起鶴立雞羣之感，所以在人的心裏，名的觀念常常極深。據說有一個美國總統在夢中聽到人們喊他「總統先生」，這是不足爲奇的。自我這個名詞，正代表了一個人對名的强烈執着。驕傲與自大通常是它的副產品。但一個人的名位也像他的理想一樣可以在一夜之間改變。盛名可像彗星般的消失，可是並不卽是他自我的破除。所以名位這一根樹枝，也是不能持久的。

在上述這些枝葉都被砍掉之後，現在我們面臨這自我的樹根，那就是這個現實的肉身。

在二千多年前，中國有位大哲學家老子曾使：「吾所以有大患者，爲吾有身」（見老子十三章），佛陀亦强調身是一切痛苦的根源。好了，讓我們直搗問題的核心，究竟這個肉身是否可以說就是「我」呢？

現在讓我用佛陀的三種分析方法，來研究這個重要而根本的問題。每一種方法都得到一個共同的結論，就是人身是「空」的顯現，而「自我」只是人類爲了在世間的本身方便，所任意選擇的一個名詞而已。

下面，我們簡單的討論一下這三種方法：

1.第一種方法我叫它分解分析法：

以我們還需要第三條路。

第三條路——是由廣學深思爲第一第二兩條路建立一個理論的基礎。這次演講由於時間的關係，很抱歉不能對每條路作詳細的介紹。今天讓我們研究這第三條路，如何在理論上打破自我觀念，以達到明心見性，下一次再談第一第二兩條路，但也都只能提綱挈領而已。

現在讓我們首先檢討一下前面我們所提到的七種標誌，看看是否能夠先把「自我」的樹枝清除掉：

1.姓名也許是一個人最普通的標誌，但顯然也是最差的一種方法。不僅一個人可以改名換姓，而且還有很多人同名同姓。可見姓名不是人與人的眞正區別 ， 所以這一根樹枝不難砍掉。

2.容貌，包括軀體的形相，膚色，等等，也是普通用來識別一個人的。但容貌不但會因年齡而改變，也可以由外科手術而改變。所以容貌只有暫時性，而不足以眞正形成自我觀念。

3.科學實驗說明每個人都有不同的聲調。甚至有人設計了一種儀器可以使法庭根據聲調辨認一個人。但發音器官的損壞會使聲調改變，當然這種標誌更不適用於啞吧。所以聲音不能永遠用作和別人辨別的標誌，而使一個人藉以自稱爲「我」。

4.指紋也是常被用來識別人的，它和聲音一樣，也不是絕對的，因爲即使我們砍去了雙手，却並沒因此而失去了自我。

5.痛苦、快樂、恐懼等感覺作用，的確可使人覺察到自我的存在。但這種感覺通常只是暫時的，而且也是先有了自我觀念之後，才會覺察到的。

6.理想是一個有力的自我標誌。事實上它是一個人的「意見」——構成自我觀念的兩個因素之一——的一部份。歷史上

4.以指紋爲標誌。

5.以感覺爲標誌。

6.以理想爲標誌。

7.以名位爲標誌。

仔細分析這些因素，便會發現一個有趣的事實，那就是，這些因素都和人的肉體有關。有了肉體，這些標誌方才逐漸形成。

這些標誌就像一株樹的枝和葉，而我們的肉體有如樹根。假如根被掘掉了，那末它的枝葉自然而然地都不能存在。

一位伐木專家朋友對我這個譬喻却不以爲然，他告訴我說：「你沒有砍大樹的經驗，所以不知道砍樹要先砍枝葉，然後砍斷樹幹，最後才掘掉樹根的」。當然，我沒法和他爭辯，我只是告訴他，根據佛學，有三條大路引導我們去掘掉自我觀念的根。這三條大路是：

第一條路——勇猛的修持。以打破今世和往世各種積習爲目標。所謂積習包括知識，信仰，愛和恨，以及一切人類的行爲。參禪，和西藏的覺者密勒日巴（MILERAPA）得道的例子，都是採取這條大路。這條路子正像一個人集中力量去掘根，而不先砍掉枝葉一樣。

第二條路——是依靠業的法則，那就是說，憑藉修持六度的累積功德，破除我執，顯現本性。所謂六度，就是布施、持戒、忍辱、精進、禪定、般若。這條路正像伐木的標準方法，先砍枝幹，最後掘根。

以上兩條路都是修持的方法，但是如果沒有一個健全的理論基礎，則在第一條路上，到達高深的階段時，可能會趨入邪途；在第二條路上，可能會在相當時期之後，失去了熱忱。所

根據佛法，「我」的觀念包括兩大部份，一是貪求永生不滅，一是執着我見，如人們常說我的意見。貪求永生不滅的欲望是在出生以前便已經有了的，而執着我見雖然大半受着過去的業所影響，却是在一生之中逐漸累積起來的。

「我」的觀念最先是由感覺器官形成的。即使在一個人剛生下來的時候，就已經由于這些感官而認定「我」是和外在世界分離開來的一個肉身。這種我的觀念，隨着他肉身的成長，而愈來愈强，愈來愈重。結果，他發現在軀體之內，已建立了一個和外在世界相對立的意識中心——「我」。

其次，由於每個人都建立了他或她自己的意識中心，這個世界是由許多獨立個體合成的觀念也就變得深刻了。由於每一個個體都力求滿足自己，於是發生利益衝突。當觀點不一致而每個個體都認爲自己的觀點最重要或最正確時，彼此隔離的感覺也就加倍强烈。這是自我觀念的一個簡單解釋。許許多多佛學經典都討論到這個問題。我剛才所說的只是大海中的一滴水而已。然而儘管海洋多麼廣大，歸根仍然只是水。所以，如果我們把這滴水研究得透徹，那麼對於海洋的進一步的研究便有了很好的基礎。

所以我們清楚的可以看出，一個人的肉體，正是形成自我觀念的核心。

由于日常生活上的遭遇處處都在標誌一個人在週遭他人之間的個別性和孤立性，使得他的自我觀念更爲加强。一般說來，人與人分別開來的最普通識別標誌有：

1.以姓名爲標誌。

2.以容貌爲標誌。

3.以聲音爲標誌。

；佛陀只好用一般人所能了解的語言文字，來解釋這個無法理解的境界。所以佛陀的教義便分爲兩個不同的層次：一是世俗境界，一是開悟境界。在世俗境界中，所謂自我就是指單獨的個人；而在開悟的境界中，所謂有別、無別，有我、無我，有相、無相，有名、無名，都只是一種文字上的戲論而已。在開悟境界中看來，所有的人（包括自己），就像夢裏或螢光幕中所見，是虛而不實的。連這個「空」也是多餘的，並沒有眞實的意義，但在世俗境界中，不得不借重這個「空」字來勉强作爲討論時方便表達的名詞。

在世俗境界中的這個我，却是凡夫到達開悟的一大障碍。換言之，這個我的觀念不僅是錯誤的，而且是危險的，一個人若不能首先確實的認清這一點，他便不能開悟，不能和本性契合。因爲有了「我」的觀念便產生了「這是我的」（我有）的觀念，這種「我」和「我有」的執着深深地種入心底，於是便永遠無法與本性合一，到達開悟，擺脫輪廻，脫離生死的苦海。這就是痛苦的根源。

今天，我首先要解釋這種「我」的觀念是如何形成，如何變得牢固難破。其次，再用幾個不同的方法來說明，如何才能破除這「我」的觀念。唯有把「我」的觀念破除了，「空」的概念才能產生。不過，「空」的概念也是一種執着，所以最後，還要破除「空」的概念，才能使本性自現。

這種「我」的觀念在我們心中，深根蒂固得如此之久，想要大家在聽畢演講離開這間房間時，便能把它從心中消除掉，實在是辦不到的。因此我只希望各位在聽了這次演講之後，「我」的觀念不再加强，這次演講所提供的意見能使各位在將來修持佛法方面有所幫助。

美國紐約華美協進會主辦
中華學術講座

在我們日常生活中的佛教

第三講：我（空）的概念

沈家楨主講

周胡安素
陳　　綱由英譯中

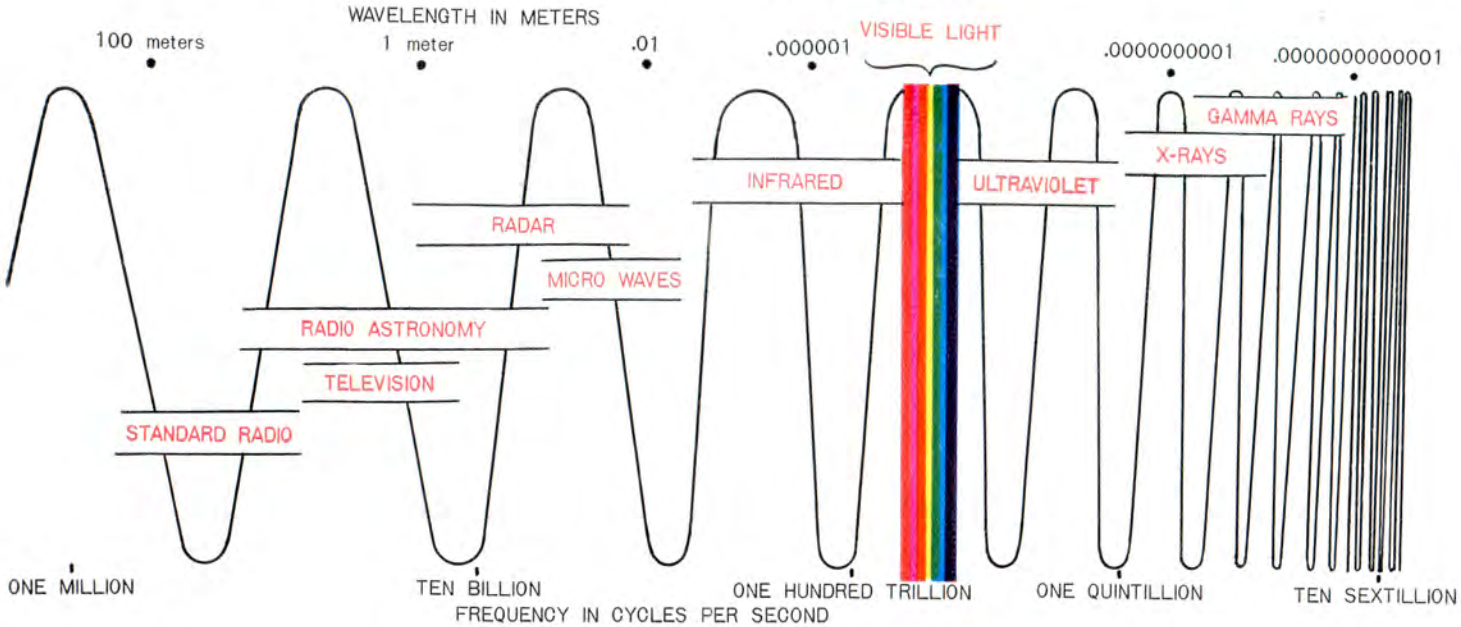
于一九七六年十一月十五日

有人問我這次的講題中，爲什麼要在「我」後面的括號內，用了一個「空」字呢？依據佛理來說，這個回答就是：「我卽是空，空卽是我」。不過，像這樣的回答是太簡單了，使人無法理解；因此，請讓我在談到正題之前，先作兩點說明：

1.在佛法中，「空」並不就是「無」，像「人去樓空」那樣。實際上，「空」是指萬物自性是空，卽使這個房間內擠滿了人，仍然應該說是「空」的。因爲人類語言文字的有限，無法作精確的表達。最早接觸到佛學的西方學者認爲「Emptiness」「空」這個字看來還是最爲接近，便加以選用。雖然這個字會令人混淆，但在英文字彙中，找不到比它更爲適合的了。

2.由於佛陀悟道時所發現的眞理，是一般人所無法理解的

ELECTRO-MAGNETIC SPECTRUM



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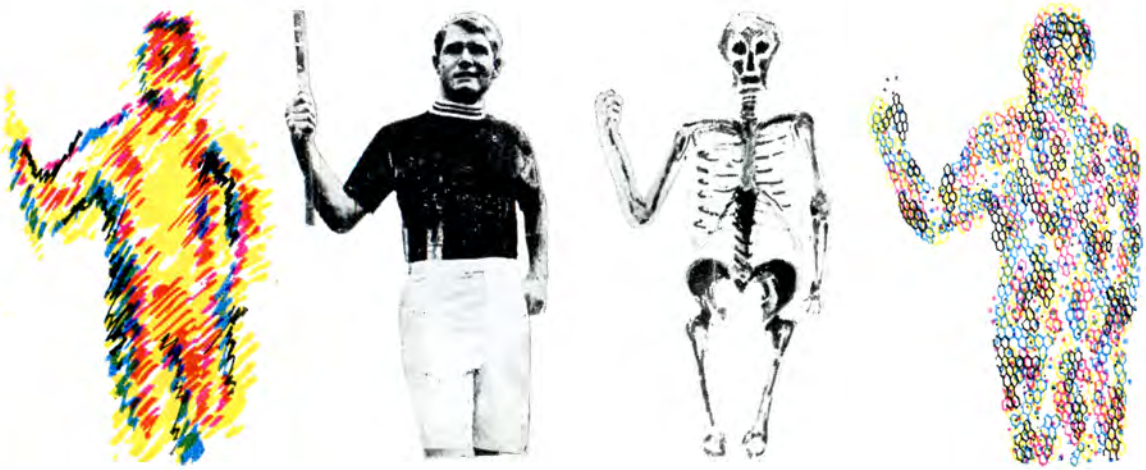

are the same. Now, if the truth is such, is it not foolish that we adhere so much to the physical body, which is just one of the infinite forms manifested by Original Nature and which is used to create this concept of self?

These three analytical methods lead to the conclusion that the physical human body is impermanent and is a momentarily changeable form seen by human eyes in a very narrow range of wave lengths. Since this is the reality of a human body, how is it justifiable to call it a self, an individual entity? Therefore, there is no self, only emptiness.

Once, I introduced this doctrine of "no self, only emptiness" to some of my friends. One friend cried, "If I lose myself and become emptiness, how can I still be alive?" To this question I answered, "The Buddha achieved this realization that there is no self, only emptiness, upon his enlightenment at the age of 35 and he lived a happy life until he was 80 years old." Therefore, the destruction of the concept of "self," and the realization of emptiness, do not mean the end of life; on the contrary, this stage is the beginning of the happy life. I will discuss this more fully in the next talk.

They are the same man in the same spot and at the same instant, but to your eyes they appear to be very different.

Now, visible light, infrared light, and X-ray vision are only a few wave lengths among the infinite number of wave lengths in the universe represented by the electromagnetic spectrum shown on the upper chart.

This young man can, therefore, appear in an infinite number of different forms at different wave lengths. That is to say, if we assume that your eyes are capable of seeing things at any wave length, and not only at the wave length called visible light, then, as you scan the spectrum, you are really becoming Alice in Wonderland. The form of this young man changes momentarily and continuously; there is no one form that is permanent, nor can any form be considered as real.

Not only can this young man appear in so many different forms, including the formless form which is emptiness in the ordinary sense, but every one of us can also appear in all those forms, including the formless form, or emptiness. At this point, you should note that all the formless forms of all of us

find that he is a male, young, and handsome.

In the space marked (1) your eyes are exposed to the view perceived by infrared rays. Here the young man loses his shape as a solid body and becomes instead a mixture of red, yellow, and green colors in the approximate shape of a human body. Whether you can still recognize him as male, young, and handsome is now subject to question.

In the space marked (3) you are seeing the same young man through X-ray vision. Most likely you do not like looking at him. I certainly do not expect you to still have the impression that he is young and handsome.

In the space marked (4) is artist's concept of the same young man examined microscopically, so that the body is in the form of a molecular structure. It may look beautiful, but you certainly do not see a handsome, young man.

What is in the space marked (5)? Space (5) represents this young man in formless form, which is invisible to the human eyes. You may call this form Original Nature.

May I now call your attention to this important fact: these five forms are not different entities.

energy, which, bv my definition, as I suggested during my first talk on the concept of birth and death, is quite the same as śūnyatā (emptiness) as taught by Buddha.

Therefore, not only those who sit here, but also other human beings, no matter how different they are in form, sex, color, etc., can all be integrated into one, that is, śūnyatā or energy. All individuals are the same at this enlightened level. "Self" is therefore simply a concept arbitrarily created for the convenience of people at the mundane level.

3) The third analytical method is by penetration. No one will deny that the physical body of any one of us is solid, or at least appears to be solid; but if we examine it penetratively we find that this concept of a solid physical body is primarily established through our visual organ—the eyes. Unfortunately, our eyes are such poor instruments that they mislead us terribly. At this point I wish to study with you the two charts from the booklet entitled "The Five Eyes." Please refer to the lower chart. (see inserted page).

In the space marked (2) do you see a handsome, young man? Yes. This is precisely the information your naked eyes give you in your daily life. You

the parts can be called C.T. Shen. Finally, after every part is removed, please tell me where C.T. Shen is. This human body is simply a temporary assemblage of many parts. It is an aggregate without permanent nature. It is, therefore, called emptiness (śūnyatā). C.T. Shen, or "self", is simply a name arbitrarily chosen for the convenience of those at the mundane level.

2) The second analytical method is by integration. Here in this room we have many different individuals. Each one will say that this physical body is himself or herself; but way back, even in Buddha's time, philosophers in India and Greece stated that a human body is no more than a combination of four basic elements, namely, solid, liquid, gas, and heat. Buddha, using the insights of his enlightenment, went further to declare that these four elements can be integrated into one element, which he called śūnyatā. According to his description, śūnyatā is something that is incomprehensible to the human mind and that is without duality and without discrimination, and limitless both in time and space, yet is not nothingness. Now, in the twentieth century, scientists also tell us that solid, liquid, gas, and heat are all different manifestations of

problem is that I have a body." Buddha also emphasized that the body is the source of all human suffering. So, we go to the core of the problem. Can the human body justifiably be called a "self"?

To study this important and fundamental question, let me employ three analytical methods taught by Buddha. Each method leads to the conclusion that the physical human body is a manifestation of "emptiness" (ṣūnyatā) and that the term "self" is just a name arbitrarily chosen by human beings for the convenience of the living in this world.

1) The first analytical method is by disintegration.

Now please follow my imagination. I am now taking my left arm off my body. Would you call that left arm C.T. Shen? No. It is simply an arm. I am now taking my right arm off of my body. Would you call that right arm C.T. Shen? Again, no. I am now taking my heart out. Would you call that heart C.T. Shen? Again, the answer is no. It is a heart which can be transplanted into another person and that transplantation of my heart does not make the other person C.T. Shen.

Now, I am taking off my head. Would you call that head C.T. Shen? No. It is simply a head. I can take every part of my body apart and none of

those cases the concept of self as an individual is usually surrendered to the concept of self as a group, the concept of self is, nevertheless, strengthened. But ideology can be changed, and a change in one's ideology does not mean a change in the individual. The concept of self remains. Thus it is proven that ideology is still not the core of the concept of self.

7) Fame is also a strong identification of self. Fame represents accomplishments, which distinguish one from other persons. Fame can be very deeply planted in one's mind. It is not surprising to learn that one of the presidents of the United States heard people call him "Mr. President" in his dreams. Ego is a term which represents the strong attachment of a person to such identification by fame. Pride and arrogance are usually the by-products. Just like ideology, fame can change overnight. However, destruction of one's reputation does not, unfortunately, mean the destruction of the concept of self. This branch, fame, therefore does not last.

With all branches cut off we are now facing the root of the tree of "self", that is, the reality of the human body.

More than 2,000 years ago a famous Chinese philosopher, Lao-Tze, remarked, "My biggest

3) Scientific experiments demonstrate that each person has a different voice pattern. An instrument has even been devised by which a court may identify a person according to a vocal pattern. But physical damage to the vocal apparatus could change that pattern, and certainly this means of identification is not applicable to mutes. Voice, therefore, also cannot permanently separate one person from another so that each person could be justified in being called a "self".

4) Fingerprints are commonly used to identify a person but, like the voice, are not perfect. One does not lose one's concept of self even by cutting off both one's hands.

5) It is true that sensation, such as pain, delight, and the apprehension of danger, does alert one to the existence of a self, but such alertness is usually temporary and simply affirms the concept of self which one has already in the first place.

6) Ideology is a strong identification of self. It is, in fact, part of the premise of one's so-called view, which is one of the two components that form "self." Historians have recorded that many religious defenders and revolutionaries even put their ideas, faith, or principles above their lives. Although in

will be able to introduce to you only very little from each path. Today let us follow Path 3 to see how the concept of self can be theoretically destroyed so that Original Nature can be revealed. The next talk will be devoted to Paths 1 and 2, but also very briefly and on a very selective basis.

Now let us first examine the seven means of identification that I mentioned before, to see whether these branches of the tree of "self" can be removed first.

1) A name is probably the most common identification of a person, but it is obvious that a name is a poor means of identification. Not only can a name be changed, but many people can have the same name, so that branch can easily be cut off. A name cannot really separate one person from the other.

2) Appearance, including the form of the body, complexion, color, etc., is also commonly used to identify a person. But not only does apperance change with age, it can also be changed by surgery. It may serve a temporary purpose, but it cannot really be used to establish the concept of self.

the concept of self can be gradually eliminated and Original Nature revealed through an accumulation of merit gained by practicing the six perfections (pāramitās), namely, perfection of giving (dāna pāramitā), perfection of moral discipline (śīla pāramitā), perfection of patience (kṣānti pāramitā), perfection of energetic perseverence (vīrya pāramitā), perfection of meditation (dhyāna pāramitā), and perfection of wisdom (prajñā pāramitā). This path is analogous to the standard method in forestry of first cutting off the branches and trunk and finally removing the root.

Paths 1 and 2 are methods of cultivation, but without a sound theoretical foundation, people can go astray upon reaching an advanced stage, as in Path 1, and may lose enthusiasm after a certain period of time, as in Path 2. We therefore need Path 3.

Path 3- Establishment of a theoretical foundation for Paths 1 and 2 through ample learning and penetrative reasoning. In this lecture, however, I regret to say that I

The above statement has, nevertheless, been challenged by a friend of mine who is a forester. He said to me, "Since you have not had the experience of taking down a big tree, you do not know that the branches should be cut off first, then the trunk cut down, and then the root dug out or pulverized." I certainly could not argue with him; however, I told him that according to Buddhism there are three major paths that lead human beings to dig out the root of the concept of self. These three paths are:

Path 1- Vigorous practice; having the goal of destroying all kinds of habits one has accumulated, not only during this life since birth, but also during past lives. The habits referred to include knowledge, faith, love and hatred, and all kinds of human activities. Ch'an (pronounced Zen in Japanese) and the example set by the Tibetan enlightened one, Milerapa, belong to this path. This path is analogous with the idea of concentrating one's efforts on digging out the root without cutting off the branches first.

Path 2- Reliance upon the law of karma, whereby

a good foundation can be built for more advanced study of the ocean.

We see, therefore, that the physical body of a person is the core in which the concept of self originates.

This concept of self is further strengthened by all kinds of identifications one encounters in daily life that increase the separation and isolation of one from others in the outside world. Some of the most common phenomena by which one identifies oneself or people distinguish one person from another are:

1) identification by name
2) identification by appearance
3) identification by voice
4) identification by fingerprint
5) identification by sensation
6) identification by ideology
7) identification by fame

By examining these factors closely, we discover one interesting fact: that is, they are all related to the physical human body.

These identifications are like the branches and leaves of a tree with the physical human body as its root. If the root is dug out, then all the leaves and branches will automatically pass out of existence.

own view is gradually built up during one's lifetime, although such views are largely influenced by one's past karma.

This concept of self is first conceived through one's sensory organs. Through them one establishes oneself, even at birth, as a physical body which is separate from the so-called outside world. This concept of self becomes stronger and more and more important as one grows up. As a result, one finds that one has established within one's physical body a center of awareness, the self, with respect to the outside world.

Secondly, because everyone establishes his or her own center of activity, the perception that the world is composed of different entities becomes sharpened. Because each entity seeks its own satisfaction, conflicts of interest develop. This feeling of separation is further compounded when views differ and each entity asserts the importance or "rightness" of its own view. This is a brief explanation of the concept of self. Voluminous Buddhist commentaries have been written on this subject. What I've just said here is comparable to a drop of water in the vast ocean. However, the ocean, as vast as it is, is basically water. So, if we study this drop of water thoroughly,

and be rid of saṁsāra, or recurring birth and death, which is the source of suffering.

In today's talk, I will first explain how the concept of self is formed and strengthened. Next, I shall try to explain, using several different approaches, how this concept of self is invalid. by destruction of the concept of self, the concept of emptiness will be formed. The concept of emptiness is also an attachment. Finally, we should destroy the concept of emptiness to enable Original Nature to be revealed.

This concept of self has been so deeply rooted in our minds for so long that it is unrealistic to expect that it can be eliminated by the time we walk out of this room. It is my hope that after listening to this lecture your concept of self will not be strengthened further, and that this lecture will provide you with some leads that you may find useful in your future cultivation of Buddhism.

According to Buddhism, the concept of self has two major components: one is the desire for unending life or continuous existence, and the other is the attachment to one's own view, usually expressed as "my view." The desire for continuous existence is present even before birth. The attachment to one's

mundane level and the enlightened level. At the mundane level, the concept of self means there is an individual. At the enlightened level, however, individual or no individual, self or no self, phenomenon or no phenomenon, name or no name, are all merely sophisms. At the enlightened level, one envisions all people, including oneself, as those "seen" in a dream or who appear on a television screen. Such visions are therefore emptiness. Even the term "emptiness" is unnecessary and carries no real meaning. "Emptiness" is just a term arbitraily chosen for the convenience of discussion among people at the mundane level.

The concept of self at the mundane level, nevertheless, is the biggest hindrance to ordinary people in achieving enlightenment, or, to put it another way, one cannot achieve enlightenment and identify with Original Nature without first achieving the realization that the concept of self is not only an invalid concept, but also a dangerous concept, because with the concept of self the concept of "that is mine" is established, and then the attachment of both self and "that is mine" becomes firmly planted in one's mind; in this way one can never be in harmony with Original Nature, one can never achieve enlightenment

Someone asked me why in the title of this talk I used the word "emptiness" in parenthesis after the word "self." According to Buddhism the answer is that "self is emptiness and emptiness is self." This answer, however, is too simple to comprehend. So before I explain the subject matter of this title, let me make two remarks:

1) Emptiness or void, as used in Buddhism, does not mean nothingness, as in "the room was empty after all the people left." It means, actually, that the Original Nature of everything is emptiness, so even if the room is packed with people, it should still be envisioned as empty. Because human language is not adequate to convey such precise expression, the word "emptiness," which appeared to be closest in meaning, was chosen by the English-speaking scholars who first came into contact with Buddhism. The word does create confusion, but there is no other suitable term in the English vocabulary.

2) Because the truth discovered by the Buddha upon his enlightenment was incomprehensible by ordinary human minds, he had to rely on the language understandable to the people to explain what is incomprehensible. Buddha's teaching was therefore delivered at two different levels: the

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LECTURE 3:

THE TRUTH OF SELF (EMPTINESS)

By Dr. C. T. Shen

President

The Institute for Advanced Studies

of World Religions

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