essence of the true mind returns to its immaterial state beyond time and space. The true mind is absolute and has no place for illusions. It is still and shinning in its nirvanic condition which is beyond the reach of our faculty of perception and understanding conditioned by time and space. There is much truth in the saying of the Six Patriarch "There are good and bad roots, but the Buddha nature (the true mind) is neither good nor bad, and is called the non-dual nature." (To be contiuned)

The Characteristics and merits of Buddhism

To put it more clearly, cognizance as a mental activity involves the interacting responses of both the subjective experiencer and the objective experienced. The former can not go without the latter and the latter can not exist independently of the former. Hence, the subjective experiencer and the objective experienced are two poles propping up the whole structure of the universein time and space.

Ultra-materialists hold that all things, animate or inanimate, are virtually the phenomenal manifestation of the perpetual coalescence and dispersion of the four elements. Whereas ultra-idealists assert that everything phenomenal or noumenal is the reflection of the intricate meshwork of interacting and interrelating mental activities of mankind. The Buddha dismisses both as falacies contrary to the true fact as it is.

The sequential co-existing relationship theory was developed by the Buddha seven days before his complete enlightenment achieved through intense meditation under the shade of a Bodhi tree. It is known as the Twelve

conjured up by a false idea ocurring to his true mind in the remotest unknown antiquity and, therefore, he enmeshes himself in the Six Ways which are the dream-like products of his true self (true mind) . Like a castle in the air, the illusory universe, composed of the Six ways ,come from no where and therefore has no place to go. Hence, the death and life of all species of life and the coalescence and dispersion of the universe do not affect his true mind in the least, because a wild dream does not add to or subtract anything from a man no matter whether he is awake or not. Therefore the Sutra of Complete Enlightenment says: "Life and death as well as nirvana are like an empty dream of yesterday" (生死涅槃猶如昨夢)

From the above it follows that the perception of our true mind lies in the realization of the futility of our empirical life and the immaterial phenomenal world. Like a flower in the sky seen by a man of faulty vision, everything phenomenal and noumenal under the universe is insubstantial and illusory. Good or bad Karma, the by-product cf our dream-like life also have no self-nature. To elucidate this point, we had better cite the following gathas:

The body is created out of nothing,
A dream-like product of illusion.
Since illusory mind and thought were unreal,
So devoid of nature are both weal and woe.
(By Vipasyin Buddha)

毗尸婆佛偈　身從無相中受生，猶如幻出諸形像。
幻人心識本來無，罪福皆空無所住。

Good Dharmas arise and evil Karmas too,
Yet both are but illusions.
The body is like foam, like wind the mind;
Illusion has no base and no reality.
(By Sikhin Buddha)

尸棄佛偈　起諸善法本是幻，造諸惡業亦是幻，身如聚沫心如風，幻出無根無實性。

When the discriminative mind ceases to function, the

"old" and "young", "large" and "small", "good" and "bad", "past", "present" and "future" are man-made terms only applicable to something existing in the realm of time and space. Since the true mind transcends time and space, no human language is adequate to qualify it. Fundamentally there is no "coming" and "going", and no "fall" and "rise" in the true mind. But unfortunately in the remotest unknown antiquity, the true mind became so active as to shine upon itself, thus setting up the relation between the subjective experiencer and the objective experienced. The relativity, thus established, gives rise to the existence of the illusory space of the phenomenal world and the empirical combination of all (primary and secondary causes) resulting in the birth of sentient beings because everything relative is subject to the change of time and space.

(性覺必明，妄爲明覺，覺非所明，因明立所，所妄既立，生汝妄能)

The true mind is the fountainhead of everything phenomenal and noumenal in the realm of time and space. It is behind the transformation of the four elements and the transmigration of life in the Six Ways. (六道) Then, how does the vast space of universe and all species of life, land, water etc., come into existence? In answer to this question, we may liken the true mind to a man. The stir of a single discriminative idea lulls himself into a wild dream in which he finds himself in a vast space illuminated with the sun, the moon, and studded with myiads of planets and stars and consequently the phenomenal world comes into existeence. (迷妄有虛空，依空立世界)The land, water, all species of life etc. appear to him as real and tangible as in actual existence. Misled by the hallucinatory mirage, he mistakes the false for the real and contents himself with an endless transmigration in Six Ways under the universe (in the realm of time and space). Deluded and puzzled, he is not aware that the illusory universe is a magic mirage

Shing County, Kiangsu Province, old teapots have been handed down from generation to generation as heirlooms because they can yield the flavor of good teas even if not a piece of tea leave is immersed in them. The reason for this lies in the fact that due to constant use, the interiors of these teapots were coated with a layer of residual essence of teas which, when soaked in water, can yield a mixed flavor of best teas of different varieties.

Karma, the cumulative end result of the physical and mental activities of sentient beings, has the same after-effect upon the development of life as is exemplified in the residual essence of teas indicated above. The discriminative mind is always at work so long as the body and mind are held together. In the wink of an eye, thousands upon thousands of ideas, desires, or other mental activities come crowding across our minds in rapid succession. The sense impressions left behind the trooping ideas, desires etc. are grist for the mill of our Karma, intrumental in shaping the course of our future existences. In other words, under the law of cause and effect, one is bound to take the consequence of one's own deeds.

The mind and body of a living being are no more than the amalgamation of the four elements, (namely earth, water, fire and wind,) interwoven into the intricate meshwork of the interrelated six sense organs and six sense data (impressions), and therefore they are immaterial in nature, subject to the change of time and space. Karma as a by-product of our immaterial mind and body also has no substantial existence and self-nature. In this connection we must note that the true mind is all-pervading and all-inclusive. It is as intangible and invisible as the void itself and therefore it is not subject to the limitation of time and space. Like a shaft of light, it is always shinning and, at the same time, still. It goes byond the horizon of our experienced world characterized by contraries, relativities and distinctions, since "short" and "long",

Karma will never die out of itself as long as the discriminative mind of a living being is in continued operation. However, Karma may change its course of development if the mental activities of the living being is switched from one track to another. For instance, should a man lead a moral life in his previous reincarnation he would inevitably enjoy prosperity and fame in his present lot because of his good karmaic retribution. The contrary will be the case with a man of loose morals.

The decomposition of the body does not put a stop to the karmaic retribution, because the karmaic effect is something insubstantial and spiritual which can survive the death of the body for future rebirth. The same is also true of a fruit seed which, when buried underground and well watered and sunned, can yield a new fruit tree, capable of putting forth new leaves and bearing new fruits for future survival because the karmaic effect imbedded in the fruit seed does not die out after the fruit tree is out of season or cut down for fuel.

As life is an intricate mechanism composed of both physical and spiritual elements, the decomposition of the body does not result in the extinction of the spiritual side of life, least of all, of the karmaic force imbedded therein since time without beginning. Like an embryo in a seed, Karma is the moving spirit back of the development of life in the realm of time and space. Hence, it is also known as the Wheel of Karma.

How does Karma take effect on the current of life? In answer to this question, we may compare Karma to the residual after-effect of tea in an antique teapot. In this connection, it is important to note that in China people set a high price on age-old teapot not only for its historical value but also for utilitarian reasons. Chinese tea, if immersed in an old teapot usually tastes better because the residual essence of teas collected on the interior of the pot tends to give more flavor to the tea immersed therein. In I

Buddha Nature And Karma

H.T.Lee

Life, as is generally believed, is an arduous journey to death. Nobody knows thence it comes and whither it goes. This view on life is represented in Buddhist scriptures as "Causeless Existence". Some people compare life to a candle light which will die out automatically after the oil of life is burnt out. Hence, there is nothing left behind a man when he dies of old age or sickness. This view on life is known in Buddhism as "One-sided view on life". The Buddha dismisses both as falacies which are not well founded on facts. Instead, he develops the theory of 'Karmaic Retribution" on the basis of his objective observation of the mystery of life and universe. In this instance,he resorts to his illustrous wisdom for solving the riddle of life.

Karma, in a modern sense, is the end result of the thoughts and actions of a living being cumulated since time without beginning. The generating power behind a man's thoughts and actions is his mental activities such as desires or clingings etc., which will never come to a stop until he breathes his last. It is a moral action which causes future retribution. It is also that moral kernel in which a living being survives death for future rebirth or metamorphosis. The relation between Karma and life is similar to that between cause and effect. Hence, it is also known as Karmaic reward or the retribution of Karma.