

The Three Studies  
From the Teaching of the Sixth Chinese  
Patriarch  
Hui Neng



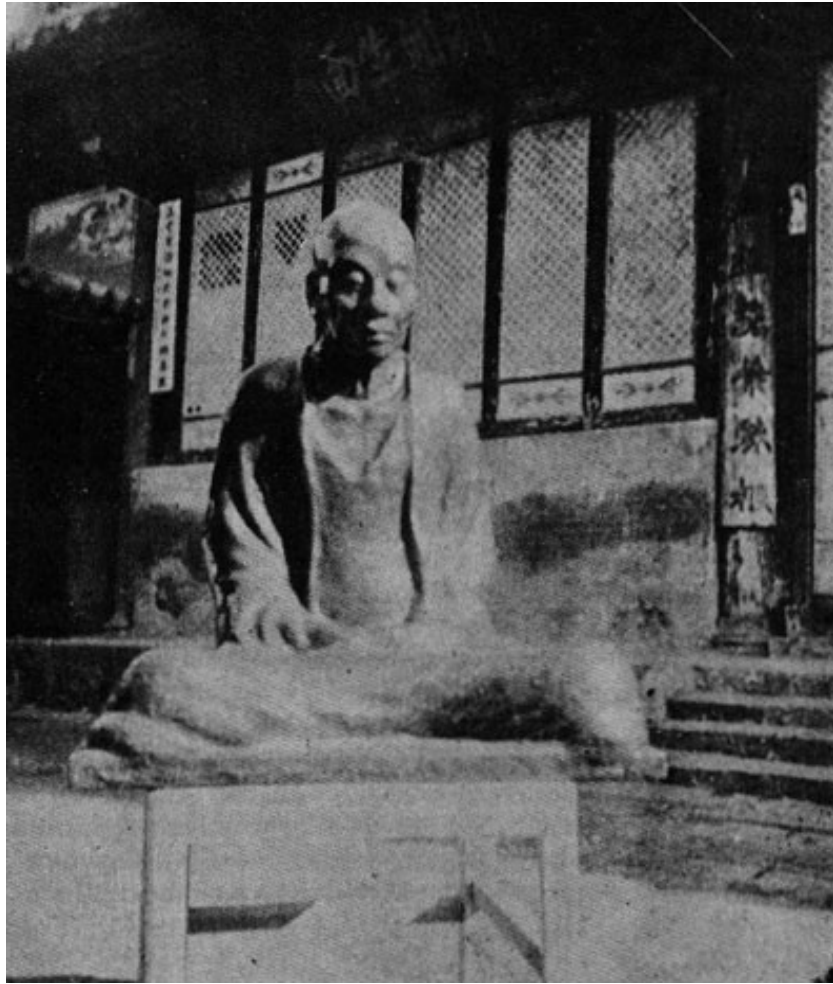
In order that prajna (wisdom) which is self-possessed can manifest itself, it is imperative that we make the 'three studies' which are essential for our self-cultivation for realizing our minds. They are: Sila (morality-discipline), Samadhi (mental imperturbability) and Prajna (wisdom) and we should know that Sila begets Samadhi and that Samadhi begets Prajna. They are like the legs of a tripod which cannot stand if one of them is lacking.

Repentance and reform are the pre-requisites of Sila, because without repentance and reform, we shall never be able to practice Sila, which alone enables us to put an end to our feelings and passions and to realize singleness of mind, that is a mind free from disturbances, or pure mind. This imperturbable state of mind is called Samadhi, which alone enables our self-natured Bodhi to manifest itself. Samadhi is the state of an enlightened mind and wisdom is its perfect function. The Patriarch compared Samadhi and Wisdom to a lamp and its light and to a body (substance) and its correct function.

When Samadhi and Wisdom are attained, the practiser is liberated from all worries, anxieties, distresses, troubles and whatever causes them, and will attain the state of Nirvana. For this end, the Patriarch taught us how to take the four Universal Vows that consist in saving the countless living beings of our minds, in putting an end to the boundless troubles (klesa) of our minds, in studying the endless Dharma doors to enlightenment which are immanent in our self-nature and in achieving the attainment of Buddhahood inherent in our self-nature.

We can be certain that if we are 'stubborn' in our practice and if we succeed in disentangling our minds from externals, we will make appreciable progress in the right direction, will at least enter 'the stream' and will set up a bridge-head for our fundamental thought for an instant and if we follow his teaching seriously and refuse to stray from this thought of our self-nature, we will achieve something that will surpass all our expectations.

One day, the Fifth Chinese Patriarch summoned all his disciples and said: "The question of birth and death is a great one. All day long, you look only for blessings and do not try to get out of the bitter ocean of birth and death. If your own nature is deluded, blessings will not save you. Now go away and look into your own wisdom; use the prajna-wisdom of your own minds and each compose a gatha for me to see. He who understands the great meaning, will inherit the robe and Dharma and will be the sixth patriarch. Go away quickly and don't linger over the gatha; thinking and reasoning will be of no use for he who can perceive his (own) nature, should do so at will. Such a person will perceive it even while brandishing a sword on the battlefield."



The Body of the Sixth Chinese Patriarch  
(died 713) in his monastery  
at Ts'ao Ch'i



## Bodhidharma

Twenty-eighth Indian Patriarch  
First Chinese Patriarch  
Chan Pil by Dr Seo, Kying Bo  
Seventy-sixth Patriarch

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