



The

GREAT

MATTER

1. It is no small thing for a person to become a Bhikku or Bhikkuni. A person does not become a Sunim to eat and dress well. Rather, they want to be free from life and death by accomplishing Buddhahood.

2. To accomplish Buddhahood, one has to discover one's own Mind, which is already within one's own body.

3. To discover Mind, one should understand that one's body is no more than a dead corpse and that this world is, for good or bad, nothing but a dream. One's death is like popping out in the evening of the same day that you have popped in during the morning. After death, sometimes one may be born in one of the hells, sometimes in the realm of animals and sometimes in the realm of ghosts. Then one must endure incalculable pains and sufferings.

4. Since this is true, do not concern yourself with the worldly life. Just examine and carefully observe your mind at all times. What does this which is now seeing, hearing and thinking look like? Does this have any form or not? Is this big or small? Is this yellow or green? Is this bright or dark?

5. Examine and observe this matter carefully. Let your examination and observation become like a mouse-catching cat; or like a hen sitting on her eggs; or like a desperately hungry, old, crafty mouse gnawing a hole in a rice bag. Let your examination and observation be focused at one point and do not forget it. Keep it before you by raising doubt and by questioning yourself. Do not let this doubt go away while you are doing chores or the like. Do not let your question (doubt) escape from you even while you are not doing anything special. By eagerly and sincerely practicing in this manner, finally, there will be the moment of awakening to your own Mind.

6. Study hard by raising your faith. Raising your faith is sincerely re-examining the matter just mentioned.

7. To be born a human being is most difficult. It is even more difficult to be born into favorable circumstances—harder still to become a Bhikku or Bhikkuni. It is the most difficult thing of all to find correct and righteous Dharma teaching. We should reflect on this matter deeply.

8. Shakyamuni Buddha once said, One who is already a human being is like a speck of dirt clinging to a fingernail, while the one who has become an animal by losing his human form is as common as the dirt of the ground. If one loses the human form this time, then one will have to wait countless aeons to recover it. When someone is in one of the many hells, he is unaware of it, as if playing games in a flower garden. Becoming a hungry ghost, asura, or animal, he acts like he is dwelling in his own home.

9. However, if one is awakened and has accomplished Buddhahood, he does not have to live or die. That is, he does not have to endure any kind of suffering again. These words should be carefully considered one by one.

10. Once, Zen Master Kwon, a Bhikku, began meditating from morning to night. As soon as the sun would set, he would beat his fists against the ground in frustration and cry out, "I have lost another day without realizing my Mind." He continued this way every day until he was fully awakened. Since there are many who have exhibited the determination of Master Kwon, it is impossible for me here to cite everyone who has had the determination to meditate until enlightened.

11. None of them were worried about living or dying, nor about eating, dressing well, nor sleeping. In our study, we should practice the same way. Consider this carefully!

of

LIFE

and

DEATH