

The Compassion Network

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On Human Origins

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Preface

The myriad teeming beings have an origin; the source of the countless myriad things can be traced. Nothing exists as branches only; everything has roots, even the most spiritual beings among the Three Powers. How then could people lack an origin? The wise understand other beings; those who see clearly know themselves. If I do not know where I came from despite having inherited this human body, how will I know my destinies in future lifetimes? How will I understand people and events around the world, both past and present?

Therefore, instead of learning from one master alone, during a period of several decades I made a survey of both Buddhist and non-Buddhist thought in search of our origins. A relentless search finally led me to the source of our origins.

Confucianism and Taoism know only this: that, at the superficial level, we inherit our bodies in the lineage of our fathers and grandfathers. At the fundamental level, a vague and chaotic energy is divided into the duality of *yin* and *yang*. These two produce the triad of heaven, earth, and human beings. From this triad all things come forth. At their origin, all things and humans are energy.

Those who study the Buddhadharmā, however, say that at the superficial level, we receive this body according to the karma we created in lives past. At the fundamental level, the origin of the

body is karma due to delusion, which evolves from the *ālaya* -consciousness. Claims to the source of origin at both levels are not ultimate.

Confucius, Laozi, and Shakyamuni Buddha, however, were sages. They always offered different teachings, according to what was suitable to the time and place, using both Buddhist and non-Buddhist resources to benefit all and encourage people to practice in countless ways, to understand that causes are beginnings that end in effects, and to investigate the myriad teachings. Although all elucidations of what is fundamental and what is the end of the cycle of birth are sacred, some are ultimate and some are provisional. Confucianism and Taoism are provisional only, while Buddhism embodies both the ultimate and the provisional.

These teachings inspire countless practices that suppress evil and encourage what is good, so that all beings may return to health. Thus all three of the teachings may be followed. An exhaustive and thorough process of reasoning concerning the myriad phenomena bring us to the conclusion that Buddhism is the one teaching that can lead us to a complete understanding of our inherent nature's origin. Even so, the scholars who insist nowadays on a particular school of Buddhism are confused about the truth. As a result, neither heaven nor earth nor beings have been able to gain an understanding of their origins.

In what follows I offer an analysis of the myriad phenomena based on Buddhist and non-Buddhist principles, moving from the simple to the profound. I hope that followers of the provisional teachings know that I disapprove of their attachments. I hope they will be freed from their stagnation and will be able to fully understand their origins. In the latter part of this essay, I will reveal the truth of the evolution and perpetuation of rebirth by integrating biased teachings with the perfect teaching so that those at the superficial level -- heaven, earth and beings -- may apply it.

There are four parts to this essay, which I have entitled *On Human Origins* or *An Essay on the Origin of Man*.

1. A Reprimand for Confucians and Taoists for their Attachments

Confucianism and Taoism talk about how humans, animals, and other creatures are all born and nurtured by the hollow, immaterial and empty great Tao. That is, the Tao is spontaneous and is born out of primal energy. This primal energy produces heaven and earth, and then heaven and earth produce the myriad things; therefore, it is Heaven's mandate whether one is intelligent or dull, noble or common, rich or poor, fortunate or unfortunate; it is merely a matter of fate. After death, all return to heaven and earth, back to that immaterial emptiness.

Non-Buddhist teachings are concerned with practices that rely upon this body rather than upon an understanding of the ultimate origin of this body. These teachings claim that every one of the multitudes of creatures originates in the great Tao, but they do not prepare their followers with the understanding that causes and conditions may be favorable or adverse, may develop and then cease, and may be pure or impure. Consequently they do not know that their teachings are provisional; they insist that their teachings lead to liberation.

Let me offer a simple example. It is said that the myriad creatures are born from the immaterial emptiness of the great Tao. The great Tao is said to be the source of the birth and death of both sages and fools; it is the foundation of both fortune and misfortune, of both accidents and blessings. But since this foundation exists eternally, accidents, chaos, misfortune, and stupidity cannot be made to disappear, and so blessings, good fortune, wisdom and goodness cannot grow. Then what use is there in the teachings of Laozi and Zhuangzi?

Also, the Tao nurtures tigers and wolves, gives birth to such rulers as Jie and Zhou, makes Yan Hui and Ran Gen die young, and permits catastrophes to befall Bo Yi and Shu Qi. How then could it be worthy of veneration? Furthermore, if all things came into being on their own rather than because of causes and conditions, then causes and conditions should be absent from the creation and development of things. Therefore rocks should be able to produce grass, grass to produce humans, humans to produce animals, and so forth. In addition, sequence would not exist in birth orders, day and night would not rule sleeping and waking. Immortals would have no need of elixirs; sages and good people would not be requisite for world peace, teaching and learning would not be needed for the development of humaneness and justice. Why, then, did Laozi, Zhuangzi, the Duke of Zhou and Confucius establish teachings as guidelines?

Moreover, Confucianist and Taoist teachings claim that everything is born and is brought to pass due to the primal energy. In that case however, our spontaneously developed psyche never learned how to think, so why can newborns already love and hate, be arrogant and indolent? If our psyche develops on its own and never learned how to think, how is it that as soon as they are born, people already have the capacity to love and to hate, to be arrogant and indolent? If one argues that love, hate, and everything else arise spontaneously, then we should be born with an understanding of the Five Virtues and the Six Arts. What need would there be for instruction before we can become accomplished in them?

Moreover, if we come into existence because of energy, and if at death our energy disperses, what then is our ghost or spirit?

Moreover, there are witness accounts of past lives. Therefore, we know that reincarnation occurs and that existence is not self-generated and not based on energy. In addition, there are verifications that ghosts and spirits continue to maintain an awareness, and so we know that their energy does not dissipate and naturally become nothing after death. That is the reason for the liturgies of prayer and sacrifice on behalf of people who are deceased. Finally, throughout history and still today, people who return to life after a near-death experience give reports of the afterlife, including their encounters with spouses and children, the vengeance they wreaked upon enemies, and the rewards they bestowed upon benefactors.

Non-Buddhists will object that if humans became ghosts after death, then the streets should be crowded with the ghosts of humans who have lived since ancient times. We ought to be able to see them, but do not. But when humans die, they may enter any one of the six realms, not necessarily the ghost-realm. Not only do people not necessarily become ghosts; ghosts themselves become humans and other beings. They have not actually been accumulating since ancient times.

Moreover, the energy of the universe is not itself self-aware. Could humans come into existence of their own accord and be self-aware, if they originated from an energy that is not self-aware? Grass and plants are also based on energy; why then are they not self-aware? If, as non-

Buddhists claim, poverty and wealth, nobility and commoners, wisdom and folly, good and evil, blessings and misfortune, disasters and blessings are all simply a matter of fate, why would the mandate of heaven be that the poor are many and the affluent are few, that the base are many and the noble-minded are few, that accidents are many and blessings are few? Why would heaven be so unfair in deciding which of each of these to dispense?

Besides, some people enjoy high status despite their immoral conduct, while well-behaved people may well be of the lowest status. Some who have no virtue are nevertheless wealthy, while others who are virtuous are poor; some trouble-makers enjoy good fortune, while misfortune falls upon the righteous. Some who are humane die young, while the violent live long lives. Even sages who have the Tao may die suddenly; others prosper though they do not have the Tao. If everything were decided by Heaven, would not Heaven strengthen the Tao rather than weaken it? Would it not reward the blessed, the good, the helpful, and the humble, and would it not punish the criminal, the immoral, the harmful, and the proud? Are accidents, chaos, revolts and rebellions all based on fate?

Finally, if all were decided by heaven, then the sages would not have taught that people and not heaven are to blame. They would not have faulted the living instead of faulting life. *The Book of Odes* criticizes chaos in government, the *Book of History* praises emperors who rule by the Tao, the *Book of Propriety* calls for peace everywhere, and the *Book of Music* changes social trends—none of these involve devotion to a God or compliance with a Creator. We can conclude that those who hold this teaching in high esteem have not understood human origins.

2. A Reprimand for the Prejudice and Shallowness of Buddhists Who Misunderstand the Teachings

There are in general five levels of Buddhist teachings that range from the simple to the profound. The first is the teaching for humans and gods, the second is the Theravadan teachings, the third is the Mahayana teaching of the Attributes of Phenomena, the fourth is the Mahayana teaching of seeing through marks (this fourth teaching includes the three previous), and the fifth is the teaching of the One Vehicle that reveals that which is true (this fifth teaching includes the third).

For people who are new to Buddhism, the Buddha first spoke about the karmic retributions of the three periods of time and the cause and effect of good and evil. People who commit the ten evil acts to the most egregious degree will plummet into the hells upon death; those whose acts are evil to a more moderate degree will be reborn as hungry ghosts, and those whose evil acts are the least serious will be reborn as animals. Therefore, for people's sakes the Buddha modeled the teachings of the Five Precepts into the Five Virtues so that people would keep them. (Secular Indian teachings and rites, despite their differences, are also concerned with punishing evil and encouraging good. They are also included in the teachings of the Five Virtues (of humaneness, justice, etc.) For instance, people raise their hands and put their palms together in this country, while Turks drop their arms by the side; both are gestures of courtesy.

Because he wanted people to avoid the three evil destinies and to be reborn as humans, the Buddha, too, wanted them to keep the Five Precepts (not to kill is to be humane; not to steal is to be just; not to commit sexual misconduct is to accord with propriety; not to lie is to be trustworthy; and not to take intoxicants or eat meat cleanses our energy, and that helps to foster wisdom). The Buddha wanted people to practice the Ten Good Deeds at the highest level – to practice giving, to keep the precepts, and so forth, in order to be reborn in the Six Desire Heavens. He wanted them to cultivate the Four *Dhyānas* and the Eight *Samādhis* in order to be in the Heavens of Form Realm and the Heavens Beyond Form. (The title of this essay suggests that the discussion will be confined to human origins, and that it will not discuss gods, ghosts and beings in the hells. This is because normally we do not see or hear them or their realms. Ordinary people are not even aware of the superficial; even less to investigate what is fundamental. Therefore, for secular learning, only the origin of humanity is indicated. However, now that I am describing the principles in Buddhist sutras, it is best that all the destinies are listed.) In short, karma is a teaching for humans and gods. (There are three kinds of karma: evil karma, good karma, and neutral karma, and there are three kinds of retribution: immediate retribution, retribution in this life, and retribution in later lives.).

According to this teaching, karma is the origin of the body. I now conclude that, due to our karma, we receive a body in one of the five destinies, among the five paths due to karma. No one is acting as judge to see who is creating karma and who is undergoing retribution. Now, we

cannot say that the eyes, ears, hands and feet can create karma, since the newly deceased still have their eyes, ears, hands and feet intact, but we don't see them create anything. We may say that the mind creates karma, but what is this mind? We may say it is the physical heart, but how could the heart reach the eyes and ears so quickly as to differentiate between right and wrong? If it does not know about right and wrong, how could it choose? In addition, the heart, the eyes, the ears, the hands and the feet are separate material objects; how could they move at the same time and cooperate to create karma and the conditions leading to such karma? You may claim that joy and anger, love and hatred drive the body and the mouth to create karma, but joy, anger, and other emotions come and go suddenly and are themselves immaterial; how could they be the creators of karma?

If you hypothesize that this claim is incorrect and analyze each one, you will find that it is the body and mind that create karma. Who undergoes the retribution of pain and joy after death? If you claim there is another body after death, would that mean offenses created by and blessings cultivated by the present body and mind become pain and joy for some future body and mind? According to this line of thinking, those who cultivate blessings seem wronged while those who create offenses are too fortunate. How could universal principles be so unreasonable? It is therefore clear that the adherents of such a teaching may believe in the conditions of karma, but they have not discerned the origin of the body.

Secondly, the Lesser Vehicle teaches that, since time immemorial, the physical form and the thinking mind come and go continually from instant to instant due to the power of causes and conditions. Like trickling water or a burning lamp, the body and mind are false unions that appear to be one and permanent. Ordinary people are too foolish to notice this, and they are attached to the self. Since they treasure this self, they generate the three poisons of greed (greed for fame and fortune in order to glorify the self), anger (in response to unexpected hateful circumstances that they fear will harm the self), and delusion (irrational ideas and comparisons). These three poisons motivate the body and the mind to create all kinds of karma. Since they are unable to escape the karma they have created, they become bodies that experience pain, joy and other emotions in any of the Five Destinies -- this is a result of individual karma -- and they lead their lives in the superior, inferior, or middling locations of the Three Realms, which is a result

of collective karma. In that body that one receives, one is still attached to what one considers to be the self, indulging in greed, anger, and delusion, creating karma and receiving retributions. The body is born, ages, becomes sick, and dies. It is born again after death. The worlds, too, are formed, abide, deteriorate, and become void, then once again are formed after becoming void.

Here is a verse on how a new world is created after a *Kalpa* of Emptiness. It says:

In the realm of emptiness a great wind blew,
Reaching an area uncountable in size.
As thick as sixteen *laksas*,
It could not be destroyed by *vajra*;
So named is this Wind that Holds Up Worlds.
Sounds of light in golden treasury clouds
Spread about the three thousand great thousand worlds,
While raindrops like cart axes fell.
The wind curtailed the water flow
That ran eleven *laksas* deep.
First created here is the *vajra* realm,
Then come the golden treasury clouds
Pouring rain to fill up this realm.
Created first was the Brahma King's bounds
Then on and up to the Heaven of *Suyama*.
Winds flapped to create water that is clear;
The seven gems and other metals surfaced in Mt. *Sumeru*;
Muddy sediments turned into mountains and landmasses,
The four continents and farming soil,
Until all was surrounded by the salty sea.
Thus is formed the dependent retribution realm.
This creation lasted one eon of increase then decrease
Until the blessed beings of Second *Dhyāna*
Descended onto the human realm.

These beings first ate harvests from the earth and tree vines. Later, they began to urinate and defecate because they could not digest the grains. As differences between males and females formed, people began to divide up land, establish leaders, and seek out ministers and aides. A host of differences existed. This lasted 19 cycles of increasing eons and decreasing eons. In addition to the first cycle, a total of twenty cycles of increasing eons and decreasing eons make up what is called the *Kalpa* of Formation.

One may argue: “The *Kalpa* of Emptiness for the world is the Taoists’ hollow and illusory Tao.” However, the substance of the Tao shines quietly and connects with the spiritual; it is not hollow and void. Taoists may be confused or provide a provisional theory to eliminate people’s desire. Therefore they refer to the realm of emptiness as the Tao and the huge wind in the emptiness realm that as hazy chaotic energy. This is why they say, “The Tao produces the One” and the clouds of golden treasury are the beginnings of energy per se, which is *taiji*.

The uninterrupted rain is the congealed *yin* energy. When *yin* and *yang* combine, production occurs. The Brahma King’s realm and on up to Mt. *Sumeru* are the heavens while the muddy sediments are earth. This is why they say, “The One produces the Two.” Beings in the Second *Dhyāna* used up their blessings and descended to become born as human beings. This is where, “The Two produces the Triad”; hence the three elements that make an universe were replete.

From “harvests from the earth” and on down refer to how “the myriad things are born from the Triad.” This should be the time prior to the three emperors, when people lived in caves and ate in the wilds. There was no fire and so forth yet. Since there was no language to record these things, future generations misunderstood and circulated the wrong information. Thus various schools authored different theories. Furthermore, Buddhism’s clarifications are on the three thousand worlds and are not limited to China; therefore, Buddhist and non-Buddhist texts and terms are not exactly the same.

The *Kalpa* of Dwelling also goes through 20 cycles of an increasing eons and a decreasing eons. The *Kalpa* of Deterioration goes through 20 cycles too. During the first 19 cycles of increase and

decrease, sentient beings deteriorate while in the last cycle of increase and decrease, the realm of the external environment deteriorates. The three disasters of fire, water and wind are destroyed too. The *Kalpa* of Emptiness also lasts 20 cycles of increase and decrease. The worlds and all sentient beings are emptied.

The cycle of transmigration continues in *kalpa* after *kalpa* and life after life. Like the water wheel that fetches water, it has no beginning and no end. (Taoists only know that before this world was formed, it was once void, and called it that hollow chaos, the primal beginning. They do not know that the realm of emptiness starts again after billions and billions of repeated cycles of formation, dwelling, deterioration and emptiness. Therefore know that the shallowest teachings in Theravadan Buddhism already far surpass the most profound theories of the non-Buddhists.) This is all a result of not understanding that this body is essentially not “me”, which means that this body is actually a mark of union between form and mind.

Let me now analyze this. The forms are the four elements of earth, water, fire, and wind. The mind has the four skandhas of feeling (feeling and accepting good and evil), cognition (seizing imagery), formation (creating a stream of consciousness), and consciousness (making distinctions). If they are all “me”, then there are eight of me. Not to mention there are so many things on this body, many of which are of the element earth, for instance. Let us say each being has 360 segments of bones; if each segment is distinct, so skin, hair, ligaments, flesh, liver, heart, spleen, and kidneys are not the same. Their various consciousnesses of the mind are all distinct too. Seeing is not hearing; joy is not anger. Apply this in turn to the 84,000 onerous objects. Given the multitude of things in one body, how would you decipher which is *me*? If they are all me, then I am in hundreds and thousands of different pieces. The body is in chaos with so many bosses. There are no other dharmas outside of this.

Search for that self and it cannot be found. One then realizes that this body is the coming together of a multitude of conditions and that originally there is no self or others. For whom are you greedy and angry? For whom do you kill, steal, give, and keep the precepts (the truth of knowing suffering)? After thinking about all this, one will not allow one’s mind to stagnate in the good and bad of the Triple Realm that contain outflow (the truth of eliminating

accumulation). Instead, cultivate the wisdom that contemplates no-self (the truth of the Way) to sever greed and other poisons, cease all karma, and certify to the True Thusness that is devoid of a self (the truth of extinction). One only ends all suffering when one acquires the fruition of arhatship, when one's body is considered ash and the intellect is extinguished.

According to this school, the two dharmas of form and mind, as well as greed, hatred and delusion are the fundamentals to the senses, the body and the material realm that is our retribution. There is no other fundamental dharma in the past or future. I raise this issue: "Those who go through lives of physical bodies must still have an inherent substance that continues without interruption. Now, the five consciousnesses do not occur without conditions (senses, states and others are the conditions), and the mind consciousness sometimes does not act (due to suffocation, sleep, being in the *Samādhi* of complete extinction, being in the *Samādhi* of no thought, abiding in the No Thought Heaven, and abiding in the Heavens of the Formless Realm). Besides, the Heavens of the Formless Realm do not have these four elements; how can we keep the same body life after life?" Thus we know those who focus on such a teaching have not reached the origin of the body.

Thirdly, the teachings of the Dharma Mark of the Great Vehicle say, "All sentient beings since time immemorial have eight types of consciousness. Among them, the *ālaya* consciousness is the root. It suddenly changes and becomes the sense faculties, the body, and the material realm. Then the seeds in this consciousness turn into the seventh consciousness. It alters and manifests what we condition." Hence no dharma is real; how does it change?

They say, "By the power of being permeated with the discriminations of the self, when all the consciousnesses come into being, they change into a likeness of the dharma of self. Being covered over by ignorance, the sixth and seventh consciousnesses are attached to a real self and real dharmas. For instance, people who experience hallucinations (people seriously sick are muddled and will see strange forms and characters) and dreams (dreams that are seen and remembered) seem to experience in their minds the marks of various external states. They mistake them to be real in their dreams. They only realize that all this is a dream when they wake up. Our bodies are the same way, manifesting due to our consciousness only. Confused, we are

attached to the existence of a self and all the states, which lead to delusion and karma, endless cycles of birth and death (as explained earlier). Only by knowing this principle, will we know that our body manifests because of consciousness only. Consciousness is the origin of the body” (the unclear parts will be refuted later).

Fourth, the Great Vehicle teaching of Seeing Through the Marks refutes the Great Vehicle and the Small Vehicle’s aforementioned attachment to the Mark of Dharmas and henceforth secretly reveals the principle on the inherent nature being empty and quiescent. (The discussion on Seeing Through Marks is not limited only to the *prajñās*, but applies to the Great Vehicle sutras. The first three teachings above refuted the Marks in order. This teaching refutes attachments as soon as they exist, without a designated time. This is why Nagarjuna established the two *prajñās*: 1. common, 2. unique. Those of the Two Vehicles believe and understand common *prajñā* as soon as they hear it. Here, the Theravada’s attachment to the Dharma is shattered. Only Bodhisattvas understand the unique *prajñā* because the Buddha nature is revealed in secret. This is why the two Indian shastra masters, Jie Xian and Zhi Guang both established teachings for the three periods of time, which is this teaching on emptiness. Their delineations may have occurred before or after the thoughts on Consciousness-Only and Dharma Marks-- I believe it came later.)

Before refuting this theory, first let me raise this issue: “Since the manifested states are false, how could the consciousness that creates the manifestations be real? If you say one exists and the other is void (this will be refuted later with an analogy), then your dream should be different from the objects you see in your dream. If they are different, then the dreams are not the things in your dreams, the things in your dreams are not the dreams. When you wake up and the dream ends, the things in the dreams should still be present. On the other hand, if the things in the dreams are not the dreams, they should be real things. If dreams are not those things, what are the traits of dreams? Therefore, one should know that the dream and the objects in the dream are as different as that which sees and that which is seen. They are equally illusory and false, non-existent according to this principle. All the consciousnesses are this way; they are all false as they depend on the multitude of conditions and have no nature of a self.”

Hence the *Shastra on the Middle Contemplation* states: “None of the dharmas fails to come from

causes and conditions; thus all dharmas are empty without exception.” It further states, “I say the dharmas that come into being because of causes and conditions are just emptiness.” *Faith in the Mahayana Shastra* says: “All dharmas are only different because of false thoughts. If they were apart from thought, there would be no mark to all of the states.” The sutras say: “All marks are illusory and false. Part with all marks and that is to be the Buddhas.” (lines of this sort pervade the Mahayana canon). Therefore, know that the mind and its states are all empty— this is a true Mahayana principle. With regard to the origin of the body, the body was originally empty; emptiness is the origin.

Now let me again cross-examine this teaching: “If the mind and its states are all empty, who is it that knows they are empty? In addition, if no dharma is real, upon what does all the manifested illusory falseness depend? Furthermore, all the illusory and false objects we now see in the world, without exception, develop by not relying on the true Dharma. For instance, if water has no quality of wetness to it, how could there be waves with illusory and false traits? If there are no pure, clear, and unchanging states, how could there be various shadows for illusory falseness?”

In addition, as aforementioned, “Dreams and states in the dreams are both illusory and false” indeed. However, these illusory and false dreams must be based upon the individual who is sleeping. Now this teaching explains that both the mind and its states are empty, but it has not evaluated the basis upon which the false manifest. Therefore, one ought to know that this teaching only shatters emotional attachment, but has not yet made explicit the true spiritual nature. Therefore, the *Sutra on the Dharma Drum* states, “The *Sutra of Everything Being Empty* is incomplete (incomplete in the sense that the meanings therein will not lead to liberation completely).” The *Great Prajñā Sutra* states, “Emptiness is a beginning step in the Great Vehicle.”

The above four teachings connect and support one another. The earlier ones are more simple, while the latter ones are more profound. If you study it for the time being, you should know that it is not about complete liberation; hence it is simple. If you were attached to liberation, that would be an extreme. Those who study this teaching may be extreme and shallow.

3. A Direct Revelation on the True Source, the Buddha's True Teachings on Liberation

Fifth, the teachings of the nature manifested according to the One Vehicle say, “All sentient beings have the true mind that is fundamentally enlightened, dwelling constantly in purity since time immemorial. It is bright and never obscured; it is clear and always knows. It is also called the Buddha nature and the Treasury of the *Tathāgata*.” From the bounds of beginningless time, false marks have occluded us without us realizing it. When we can only identify with ordinary material, we indulge in creating karma and face the suffering of birth and death. The Greatly Enlightened One sympathizes with us and tells us that everything is empty. He then instructs us on how the spiritually awakened True Mind is pure like that of all Buddhas.

Therefore, the *Avatamsaka Sutra* states, “Disciples of the Buddha, there is not one being who is devoid of the wisdom of the Thus Come One; it is only because of false thinking and attachments that one does not certify to it. Part with false thoughts and All Wisdom; natural wisdom and unobstructed wisdom all manifest.” The Sutra then names the metaphor of “one dust mote containing all rolls of sutras in a universe.” Dust motes are analogous to living beings; the sutras are analogous to the Buddhas' wisdom.

It later states, “At that time, the Thus Come One universally contemplates all beings in the Dharma Realm and said, ‘Strange indeed, strange indeed, why is it that all these beings have the *Tathāgata's* wisdom but are deluded and blind to it? I shall teach them the holy path so that they forever abandon false thoughts, and therefore will see that they have the Thus Come Ones' vast wisdom, similar to the Buddha.’”

One commentary states, “We did not meet the true school of teachings in many *kalpas*. We did not know enough to return to our origin. Instead, we were simply attached to illusory and false marks, willingly submitted to being ordinary or below average, to being animals or humans. Now that the teaching on reaching our origin has been explained, we finally realize that we were originally Buddhas. Therefore we should conduct ourselves the way Buddhas do and let our minds correspond with the Buddhas' minds. Return to the source of origin and eliminate all

usual habits, reducing them until they become unconditioned and natural, wielding as many functions as grains of sand in the Ganges. That is a Buddha. We ought to know that confusion and enlightenment are of the same true mind. Great is this wonderful gate.” The discussion on the origin of man ends here.

(Actually, the Five Teachings that the Buddha explained are both gradual and sudden. Those of average or below average faculties can be taught them in time, from the simplest to the profound. The Buddha provided an initial teaching so that living beings may leave behind evil and abide in goodness. Next, he offered the second and third set of teachings so that we may leave behind defilement and abide in purity. Lastly, he explained the fourth and fifth teachings to shatter attachments to outer marks and reveal the inherent nature, comprehending with the provisional but returning to the real. Cultivate according to the Real Teachings until Buddhahood is accomplished. Those with the most superior faculties then start at the end of the list, then move back up. Begin with the fifth, which instantaneously points to the substance of the one true mind. Since the mind substance is revealed, one will realize that all are illusory and false, empty and quiescent. However, since confusion occurs on the basis of actuality, one must achieve the wisdom of actuality so as to end evil and cultivate goodness, quell falseness and return to the truth. When falseness is completely gone and there is true perfection, that is the Dharma body of the Buddha.)

4. A Conclusion Connecting the Roots and the Branches, Being that the Source of Our Origin and the Teachings Reproved of Earlier are the Same and All are Proper Understanding

Although the true nature is the origin of the body, there are reasons why birth occurs. The physical body does not come into being for no reason. However, the teachings discussed earlier are incomplete, and therefore rebuked at every turn. Now we will connect the core to the tip of the branch, including Confucianism and Taoism (we begin with the fifth set of teachings on the inherent nature and work back up. Beyond that, each level points to different teachings. There are commentaries that explain each level separately.).

At the beginning there was only the one true spiritual nature that does not come into being or

cease, does not increase or decrease, does not change or alter. It is only because of living beings' confusion and sleeping state since time immemorial that they do not realize it. Since the spiritual nature is hidden, we call it the hidden Treasury of the Thus Come One. Marks of the mind come into being and cease because of the Treasury of the Thus Come One (what follows is the fourth teaching, of which all marks of coming into being and ceasing are refuted altogether.).

As it is said, the true mind that does not come into being or cease comes together with false thoughts that come into being and cease; they are neither one nor different. This is the *ālaya* consciousness. This consciousness contains two aspects, that which is aware and that which is unaware (what follows is similar to the third set of teachings on the marks of Dharma). The very first stirring of thought dependent upon that which is unaware is a mark of karma.

Furthermore, the *ālaya* consciousness is not aware that this thought is fundamentally empty, turning the thought into the seeing consciousness. When the marks of states that we view manifest, the *ālaya* consciousness is not aware that these states manifest falsely from the inherent mind and becomes attached to the certainty of these states' existence, which is an attachment to the Dharma (what follows is similar to the second set of teaching of the Theravadans.). Being attached in this way, we then see the difference between self and others, being attached to the self.

Attached to the self, greedy love, agreeable sentiments and all such states nourish us; whereas hateful detest, disagreeable sentiments and all such states unfortunately harm and distress us as delusions multiply and grow (what follows is similar to the first set of teachings on humans and gods). Spirits with the intent to kill or steal will ride on such evil karma and cause us to be reborn in the hells, the realm of ghosts, the realm of animals or others.

Furthermore, those who are afraid of such suffering, those who are kind by nature, and those who practice giving, precepts and other beneficial behavior, will in their minds ride on such good karma, carrying the karma into the mid-skandha body, then into their mother's womb (what follows is similar to Confucianism and Taoism as aforementioned). We acquire our material existence from inherited energy and essence (connecting with their explanation that energy is the

origin). Energy suddenly acquires the four elements, which gradually develop into various sense faculties. The mind suddenly acquires the four skandhas, which gradually develop into various consciousnesses. After a full ten months in the womb, we are born as human beings, with our present body and mind. Therefore we know that the body and the mind each have its own origin; the two combine to create one individual. Gods, asuras and others are approximately the same.

Not only did past karma lead us to this body, it also makes karma happen. We therefore experience nobility or baseness, poverty or affluence, longevity or early death, poor health or health, prosperity or decline, suffering or happiness. As it is said, the causes of respect and conceit in previous lives attract the outcomes of nobility and baseness now. It is similarly so for humaneness and longevity, violence and early death, giving and wealth, miserliness and poverty—I cannot list all the various retributions comprehensively.

Whether this body experiences accidents without having committed any apparent evil, experiences blessings without having created any apparent goodness, lives a long life though inhumane, dies young though refrains from killing etc., is due to the fulfillment of designated karma from past lives. So even if you act differently in this life than in lives past, karma naturally turns you into who you are now. Non-Buddhist scholars defer to the status quo without knowledge of past lives, hence insisting that our lives are spontaneous occurrences (connecting with their explanation that spontaneity is the origin).

Furthermore, there are those who cultivated good deeds while young and committed evil during old age or vice versa; therefore they are affluent and happy while young and lowly and in pain when older and vice versa. Non-Buddhist scholars do not understand this but are only attached to the timing of misfortunes and fortunes (connecting with their explanation that all is based on fate).

Actually, analyze logically the source of this energy we inherit, and it is the one primary energy. Investigate exhaustively the mind that arises, and it is the one true spiritual mind. The truth is that there is no other dharma to speak truthfully about outside of the mind. The primary energy follows changes of the mind. The primary energy is a state that the aforementioned turning

consciousness manifests, which is gathered in by the marks of the *ālaya* consciousness.

From that very first thought, the marks of karma divide into the duality of thoughts and states. Thoughts go from the refined to the crude, deliberating falsely in turn and even creating karma (as described in the earlier list). States also move from the subtle to the attached, changing at every turn. Such states include the formation of heaven and earth (“The start of which begins with the five stages of evolution from *taiyi* (before energy) to *taiji* (chaotic energy). *Taiji* produces duality”, they say. They call this the natural Tao. They describe the true nature in this way. Actually they are but one thought that can transform into seeing. They say “The primal energy is just this way. An initial movement of thought is actually a mark of states.”) Since karma is ripe, we inherit the two energies from our parents and come together with karma and consciousness to realize the human body.

According to this, the states manifested by the mind’s consciousness then become two. One comes together with the mind’s consciousness and causes us to become humans. The other does not come together with the mind’s consciousness and instead becomes heaven and earth, mountains and rivers, countries and towns. Among the three key elements that form the universe, humans are most superior because they come together with the spirits of the mind. When the Buddha said that the internal four elements are different from the external four elements, he was referring to this precisely.

How unfortunate the unlearned are! They are attached to a profusion of different thoughts. I encourage those who wish to learn the Way, “ If you wish to become Buddhas, examine these teachings thoroughly, from the most crude to the most refined, from the roots to the branches, so that you will abandon the superficialities and return to the origin, as well as reflect upon the source of the mind.” Once that which is coarse and that which is refined are eliminated, then the spiritual nature manifests. Understanding all dharmas without exception, one accesses what is called the Dharma retribution body. Appearing to respond to infinite situations, one becomes what is called a transformation body.

The end of *An Essay on the Origin of Man*.