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# **The Concept and Role of *Anusaya* from Early Buddhism to Mahāyānā**

By Antonio L. Perasso

The focus of the philosophical and psychological investigation of the Buddha is the predicament of human suffering (*Dukkha*<sup>1</sup>) and Buddhist doctrine is concerned with the reasons and factors that create human dissatisfaction, tension, misery, anxiety and all types of afflictions in general and how we can put an end to the cause of suffering and to figure out the path to real happiness.

In the second Noble Truth<sup>2</sup>, the Buddha describes the cause of *Dukkha* with the Pali word “*Taṇhā*”, which means craving, or a constant “thirst” which lies at the bottom of all human motivations and desires either conscious or unconscious .

*And what is the origin of suffering? It is craving, which brings renewal of being, is accompanied by delight and lust, and delights in this and that; that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for being, and craving for non-being. This is called the origin of suffering. (Sammāditthi Sutta M I 46)*

*Taṇhā*, is depicted as conscious motive to further three unwholesome roots, also called the Noxious-trio (*akusala mūla*): “*lobha*” greed , lust which generates all kind of desires , “*dosa*” aversion, hatred , resentment , rejecting what we do not like or want , “*moha*” is creating confusion and delusion in the mind , also named ignorance or not understanding the reality as it is.

The unconscious motives are: the desire to perpetuate, to be, to exist again and again; the desire to avoid death; the desire for pleasures and the aversion to pain. These motives, though unconscious, play a pivotal role in human behaviors and determine our present and future experiences. The desire to exist again and again, clinging to any possible life, is the chief among these unconscious tendencies which base modus operandi is over a false concept of a self existing “I”.

Buddhism does not deny individuality, which is analyzed into five *Khandhas* (*P.*)<sup>3</sup>, but the Buddha posited that neither of these phenomena have inherent existence; they are constantly interacting together and none of them exist independently. This profound, although, quite simple statement, is elaborated by the Buddha in his formulation known as “Interdependent Origination” (*pratītyasamutpāda S. paṭiccasamuppāda P.*)

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<sup>1</sup> represent the mental and physical perceptions of: sorrow, suffering, pain, misery, tension, sadness, frustration, unhappiness, dissatisfaction and unrest which pervade the human being’s experiences

<sup>2</sup> the four Noble Truths are : Existence is *Dukkha* , Cause of *Dukkha* , Truth of Cessation and the True Path leading to Nirvana

<sup>3</sup>matter , sensations , perceptions , volitional formations and consciousness ; this is the psycho-physical composition of the person .

*When this is, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises. When this is not, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases (Extract from Assutava Sutta SN 12.61).*

As the famous *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya* Sutra says:  
“Form is empty. Emptiness is form. Emptiness is not other than form; form is also not other than emptiness. Shariputra, likewise, all phenomena are empty; without characteristic; unproduced, unceased; stainless, not without stain; not deficient, not fulfilled.” ( [www.fpmt.org](http://www.fpmt.org), translated by Gelang Thubten Tsultrim, 1999, Dharamsala)

This points out that all phenomena are conditioned and impermanent ; there is no unchanging, everlasting, absolute substance, like soul, self, I, secret entity, hidden power or any type of phenomena which arises without any cause and remain unchanged.

*“All phenomena are empty, empty of what? Empty of any inherent existence”*  
(Geshe Ngawang Sherap Dorje, *Lecture on Heart Sutra, Santiago de Chile 2004*)

This “Ego” that we think to be solid and independent, is just the result of interrelations of causes and effects. We think "we are this I", doing so we create the misunderstanding which brought up the sense of me, my, mine. Consequently we develop: I like, I want, I do not like it, I hate it; then different types of desires, craving, attachment, hatred; then this distorted vision of the reality brings up confusion, illusion generated by ignorance, which colored our actions and are the causes of our suffering.

The Buddha called our world *kāma loka* (P.)<sup>4</sup> or desire world, because the majority of the actions we performed are meant to pursue objects of desires that trigger pleasant feelings and reject unpleasant, protecting and feeding up our “Ego” needs of sensuous gratification and self-preservation.

The Buddha concentrates his attention on impulses with a strong psychological orientation and he makes a clear difference between needs and wants; when basic needs (normal sexual marital life e.g.) become obsessions “wants” (sexual infatuations searching new sensations, changing partners all the time and wanting more), these repeated patterns of behaviors, these drives , which spring out from the three poisons (desire, hatred and ignorance) are the source of all our misery and dissatisfaction .

These impulses arise due to stimuli in the sensory field, through the sense consciousnesses <sup>5</sup> which excites a person’s feelings (*Vedanā P.*); in reality feelings is what drives us not the object itself.

Pleasant feelings (*Sukhavedanā P.*) and painful feelings (*Dukkhavedanā P.*) are affective reactions to sensations.

*“While contact is merely a reaction to stimuli, the emergence of the hedonic tone only appears at the level of feelings with the emergence of craving and grasping we*

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<sup>4</sup> Tiloka or three worlds or spheres : Kama loka or desire world , Rupa loka world of form and Arupa loka or world of formlessness

<sup>5</sup> eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mental consciousnesses

*discern the transition from the state of a feeling into the experience of an emotion” ( An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology , page 73).*

Due to this excitation, an impression is produced through the correspondent organ impinged; pleasant feelings trigger the drives towards desirable objects for sensuous gratification, establishing desires of perpetuating oneself in the future and unpleasant feelings toward undesirable object with the rise of resentment, anger, rejection, aggression and annihilation.

When we look for enjoyment or pleasures, we think that it comes from getting what is pleasurable, so we try to get whatsoever we believe are the causes of our happiness. But we do not realize that our real pursuit is for the sensation (emotions) we get from obtaining the object of pleasure, not in the object itself.

If it wasn't so, what need do we have on buying and wanting new things, new situations, new friends, new partners all the time?

So these pleasurable and unpleasant sensations are responsible of our unending searching for happiness and stopping suffering.

The idea of unconscious character habits which extends not only one life span, but also continues through others, is very characteristic of Buddhist doctrine besides Hindu and Jain tradition<sup>6</sup>, and is almost uncommon to other philosophies, religions or psychology systems.

Our present reactions to oncoming contacts (*Sparsā S. Phassa P.*)<sup>7</sup> have been formed in the past and brought up to the present, life after life, rooted in a dynamic personality of unconscious traits, imprints, drives, like mental habit patterns which lead us to a particular direction.

In the Early Buddhist texts these unconscious habit patterns are defined as: *saṃskāra* and *anusaya*. The word *saṃskāra* means “put together”, more specifically: that which has been put together and that which puts together.

The first passive sense refers to all conditioned phenomena generally, but specifically to all mental “dispositions or mental imprints”, “determination, mental fabrications” or “volitional formations” because they are formed as a result of past volitions and because they are the causes of the arising of future intentional actions.

The second active sense refers to the form-creating *modus operandi* of mind; is the second link of Interdependent Origination and in this context is karmically active volition which generates rebirth and the cycle of old age and death, also called *karma* (*S.*)<sup>8</sup> imprints. *Saṃskāra* in this case is equivalent to *karma* including intentional actions of the body, speech and mind.

To better understand the *saṃskāra* functions, we can use the analogy of a river as Prof. Peter della Santina illustrates:

*“As rain falls on a hillside, that rain gathers into a rivulet, which gradually creates a channel for itself and grows into a stream. Eventually, as the channel of the*

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<sup>6</sup> concepts as *karma* , reincarnation and *saṃskāra* are also present in these traditions

<sup>7</sup> It is defined as the coming together of three factors : the sense object, the sense organ and the corresponding sense consciousness.

<sup>8</sup> means “action”: is the moral law of cause and effect which put emphasis on the intentionality or volition of the action itself.

*stream is deepened and widened by repeated flows of water, the stream becomes a river, with well-defined banks and a definite course.*

*In the same way, our actions become habitual. These habits become part of our personality, and we take these habits with us from life to life in the form of what we call volition, mental formation, or “habit energy.” (The Tree of Enlightenment, page 123).*

Our actions create habits , which in turn create tendencies ; the first cigarette , which might be unpleasant , leads to another and another and slowly the addiction is set up.

As Upul Nishanta Gamage<sup>9</sup> using his unconventional but clear and concise language says:

*“We are habits, prisoners of our own habits, we make up our Ego out of our habits. We use thoughts as raw materials to build up stories, which in turn build up walls, cells and finally we become prisoners of ourselves and our Ego is bossing us in a fake constructed reality which is the cause of our suffering” (Mindfulness retreat, 5-10 February 2018, Nilambe Buddhist Meditation Center , Sri Lanka).*

In other words, we are disposed to respond to certain kind of stimuli in certain habitual ways. That particular predisposition represent a potentiality for that affliction to arise in response to the specific kind of feeling with which it is associated.

These latent dispositions are defilements which “lay along with” (*anusenti P.*) the mental process to which they belong, rising to the surface as obsessions, whenever they meet with the suitable conditions.

The Buddha named these deep-rooted and dormant proclivities as “*Anusaya*”. *Anusaya* is a Pāli term, derived from the prefix “*anu*” meaning: following, persisting or subsequent and the root √*si*, to lie, to sleep. It is often translated into English as: obsession, inheritance, proclivities, bent, bias, the persistence of a dormant or latent disposition, predisposition, tendency.

The Buddha spoke about *anusaya* in different *Nikāyas*<sup>10</sup> of the Pali Canon:

*“Monks, what one intends, and what one plans, and whatever one has a tendency towards (anuseti): this becomes a basis for the maintenance of consciousness. When there is a basis, there is a support for the establishing of consciousness. When consciousness is established and has come to growth, there is a descent of name-and-form....Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering. ...*

*But, monks, when one does not intend, and one does not plan, and one does not have a tendency toward anything, no basis exists for the maintenance of consciousness.*

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<sup>9</sup> is the main teacher at the **Nilambe Buddhist Meditation Centre**, situated near Kandy in Sri Lanka. Besides teaching at Nilambe, he also frequently teaches meditation in hospitals, prisons, schools, monasteries and at the Buddhist Publication Society in Kandy and is regularly invited to teach and give talks in Hong Kong, Germany, Switzerland and Sweden.

<sup>10</sup> *Nikāya* is a Pāli word meaning “volume”. It is often used like the Sanskrit word *āgama* to mean “collection,” “assemblage,” “class” or “group” in both Pāli and Sanskrit. It is most commonly used in reference to the Buddhist texts of the Sutta Piṭaka .

*When there is no basis, there is no support for the establishing of consciousness. When consciousness is unestablished and does not come to growth, there is no descent of name-and-form. ... Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering. (Cetana Sutta ,extract SN 12.38)*

*“Monks, with the abandoning and destruction of the seven obsessions, the holy life is fulfilled. Which seven?*

- 1.- lust for sense pleasure ( kamarāgānusaya)*
- 2.- attachment to existence ( bhavarāgānusaya)*
- 3.- aversion ( pathinganusaya)*
- 4.- conceit ( mānānusaya)*
- 5.- doubt ( vivikicchānusaya)*
- 6.- wrong views ( diṭṭhianusaya )*
- 7.- ignorance ( avijjānusaya )*

*with the abandoning and destruction of these seven obsessions, the holy life is fulfilled. (Anusaya Sutta,extract: Obsessions (2) AN 7.12)*

Anusaya are basically dormant passions which become excited into activities by suitable stimuli; because of their strong pertinacity they provide the base for the emergence of greed, anger and pride. The term “latent dispositions” highlights the fact that the defilements are liable to arise so long as they have not been eradicated.

As is explained in the scheme of Interdependent Origination , the cognitive processes involving contact (*phassa*) and feeling (*vedanā*) give rise to craving (*taṇhā*) and grasping (*upādāna S.*), this is the way how *anusaya* establish the essential connection between the arising of sense consciousness, with its affective responses, and the new afflictive karmic activities that these latter provoke. This is why craving is considered the very important point of the twelve links chain , if we are able to stop it , automatically , becoming , birth and death are eliminated and freedom is reached.

All defilements are in a sense *anusaya*, comparable to dangerous microbes infesting the body, which though in a latent state, may become active at any moment when the suitable causes and conditions trigger them.

In the Early Buddhist texts, there is not an explicit reference to a concept of unconscious mind; all this changed with the describing in the Abhidharma of momentary realities, which shows us the full power of the soteriological and transcendental teachings of the Buddha.

In Theravāda Abhidhamma the mind processes are explained according to the theory of moments<sup>11</sup> and the conception of *Bhavaṅga* <sup>12</sup> consciousness, which is classified into active and passive mode. The first refers to the sense consciousness activities and the second to the process-free consciousness, also defined as the unconscious activity of the mind.

*The momentary mental events do not occur in the mind, rather, the momentary mental events themselves are the mind. (Theravāda Abhidhamma, Page 138).*

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<sup>11</sup> is the stream of succeeding of mind moments which provides a continuity of the mind in absence of a permanently abiding “self or atman ” , which Buddhism denies. It also establishes the casual relation among the past, present and future moments

<sup>12</sup> means "factor of existence" or "the necessary condition of existence" .



The *Bhavaṅga* passive mode, ensures the uninterrupted continuity of a person's mind, through the duration of any single life. Whenever the process-consciousness is interrupted as, in coma state or deep sleep e.g. , *Bhavaṅga* supervenes, preventing the possibility of any gap in the continuous flow of consciousness. Besides, it also acts as the last mind moment of present life or death-consciousness (*cuti-citta P.*) and as rebirth-linking consciousness (*patisandhi-citta P.*) of the first mind moment to occur at the moment of future rebirth.

A new being's first mind moment is conditioned by the last mind moment of the preceding life , hence this function provides the unconscious psychological continuity. This last conscious moment before death operates as a kind of summing up of that life ; whatever has been most significant in such life, it will tend to play the principal role in determining the nature of the subsequent rebirth , assuring karma efficacy.

In Sarvāstivāda<sup>13</sup> Abhidharma , the concepts like *kleśa* , *anusaya* , *prāpti* and *aprāpti* , play an important role in the contest of repetitive pattern of behaviors .

The word for defilements or impurities in Sanskrit is *Kleśa*, meaning 'disturbance' or 'molest' in the sense that they are disturbing emotions which do not allow the mind to stay balanced , at peace and equanimous , creating a kind of grey clouds , curtain or thick smoke , contaminating the mind's surface , impeding the rising of the mind's real nature.

Along with *kleśa* we have *anusaya* which indicates the subtlety and tenacity of the defilement ; is a force which adheres , attaches and grows along with the corresponding defilements , creating *anusayana* , which has the function of growing or intensifying the defilement connected to the corresponding object.

*Anusaya* have a subtle mode of existence , difficult to perceive . They adhere and nourish themselves (*anuserate*) in two ways : from the object and from the defilement along which they are associated and continually bound . The *anusaya* are the causes through which , the beings are attaching and clinging. They fix 'seat', they are thus called 'cankorous influences (*asravas*) ; cause beings to be attached , thus called yoga or yokes; they seize , thus they are called *upadana* or clinging .

*Anusaya* induces the *prāpti* of the defilements ; *prāpti* means “conjunction, obtainment or acquisition”, is the most important *viprayukta-samskara-dharma*<sup>14</sup> in the *Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma* and play a very important role in spiritual attainment .

*‘It is a force that links a dharma to a particular series, is comparable to a shadow that follows its object and Aprāpti 'disjunction' is another real entity whose functions and nature are just opposed to those of Prāpti ensuring that a given dharma is delinked from the individual series’ ( S A , page 379).*

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<sup>13</sup> Savāstivāda, ‘sarvam asti’ meaning essentially ‘everything exist ‘ or ‘all is’. In their view not only present dharmas exist but also past and future ones. In such way they explain how past karma affects the present and present the future. Past and future exist but in a non-active way. All dharmas have a specific "own-nature"(svabhāva) unique defining characteristic to it , for example a " person " is that of the cluster of dharmas that the conceptual label 'person' applies to. Own characteristics does not mean they have their own intrinsic nature or self-generated .

<sup>14</sup> Conditionings disjointed from thoughts ; dharma or phenomena neither material nor mental

For example: if someone has envy, it is because of the coming together of all necessary causes and conditions for inducing the arising of it . In the same time his corresponding *prāpti* arises and by consequence the envy is linked to that person. *Prāpti*'s envy will be present from moment to moment, even if the mind is engaged with a different virtuous thought, contaminating all other dharmas, till the time a counteragent or antidote is generated that will be able to delink it . At this moment the *prāpti* of cessation of envy arises together with the *aprāpti* which induce the delinking.

*Prāpti* plays the indispensable role to obtain liberation, more over, a practitioner can attain Nirvana only by virtue of *prāpti* that links the cessation to him . In this sense is considered an indispensable soteriological tool in the process of the mind complete purification state.

Although, *Sarvāstivāda* explains important elements of the unconscious mind process, it was unable to deliver a clear depiction of how these tendencies move from one life to another .

If there is no self or atman, who transmigrates? Who goes around in Samsara? Where memory and karma are stored ?

Others Abhidharmika schools called *Samkrantivada* , *Samītiya* and more precisely the *Sautrāntika* came out with a theory that karma does not rise from past karma in a temporal sequence but from karmic efficacy which is continuously passed down from karmic seeds<sup>15</sup> , as latent dispositions, that manifest themselves when proper causes and conditions arise .

As Vasubhandu says:

*The sleeping kleśa is the non-manifested kleśa, in the state of being a seed; the awakened kleśa is the manifested kleśa, the kleśa in action. And by "seed" one should understand a certain capacity to produce the kleśa, a power belonging to the person engendered by the previous kleśa . (ABK , page 770)*

These schools formulate similar stances which try to give an explanation about the preservation of the karmic efficacy, the transmigration of memory and meditational experiences, positing the existence of some kind of mind storage which transmigrate from one existence to another carrying on the karmic impressions, described as seeds ( *bija* ) along with their corresponding tendencies ( *anusaya* ) which in turn creates the pattern of behavior of the person.

This theory strongly influenced the *Ālayavijñāna*<sup>16</sup> doctrine of the Yogācārā philosophy, which sustain the eight consciousnesses thesis: the five sense consciousnesses, supplemented by the mental consciousness (*mano-vijñāna*), the seventh defiled mental consciousness (*kliṣṭa-manas*), and finally the fundamental storehouse consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*), which is the basis of the other seven. This eighth consciousness is said to store the latent *anusaya* and impressions (*vāsanā*) of previous experiences, which form the seeds (*bija*) of future karma in this life and in the next after

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<sup>15</sup> *bija*

<sup>16</sup> Its literal meaning is “all ground” which suggests a foundation or basis often translated as : substratum , store or storehouse

rebirth, keeping ongoing the tendencies which in turn creates the pattern of behavior of the person.

In Buddhism mind is not conceived as simple reservoir of informations, or just a brain mechanism, but to be the individual moment of knowing, which impact and sway over our actions and by consequence is shaping our present and future existences through the creation of *karma*. Understanding how mind works and its functions, is essential to comprehend Buddhism in both its theoretical and practical aspects .

*Pure in his essential nature, the mind is stained by adventitious defilements (ākasmika-mala S.) , the result of having misapprehended from beginning-less time the actual nature of phenomena (Mind in Tibetan Buddhism, page 11 ).*

The complete purification of the mind from all adventitious defilements is the aim of Buddhist praxis, it has a supremacy role because, inherently, it will free us from *Dukkha* and all its related boundaries that characterize the samsaric existence.

As *anusaya* are latent dispositions of non-manifested defilements (*kliśā*), the process of their purification is fundamental if we wish to remove the habitual patterns of behavior which, eventually, will pave the way to Enlightenment.

*“Bhikkhus, if wanderers of other sects ask you: thus: ‘For what purpose, holy life is lived under the Gautama?’ Then you should answer them for the uprooting of the anusayas. (The abandoning of the fetters, Etc , Extract, S N 42(2)-48(8), page 1542 ).*

In Tibetan, the word “Dharma” has been rendered into Chö གཞི་ which means transformation .

What Buddhism teaches has the power of transformation; from one side we have the passive role, the semantic of the word itself which means “transformation” and from the other side the active role when we put in practice the “Dharma”, it becomes a powerful tool in the path to liberation , providing us with the understanding of the mind’s processes and the techniques needed for its transformation and purification.

*Mind is an impermanent phenomena which nature is pure and luminous and has the object of knowing . If we expose it to afflictions , the mind retain the impure experience of suffering . By the contrary , if we expose it to positive experience the mind yield the pure experience of transformation .( Geshe Ngawang Sherap Dorjey , March 2006 , Kathmandu - Nepal )*

I hope this work could help the reader to better understand the *anusaya* and the psychological dynamics of the repetitive behavioral patterns, which this pivotal Buddhist concept clarifies.

At the same time, is my aspiration, that eventually, the knowledge drew from this reading, can be used by the practitioner as a practical device in his everyday life perspective, providing the necessary changes to transform his mind and live a peaceful existence.



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## *Hearing*

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Dhamma Kamala, Vipassana Center, Thailand, three 10 days Vipassana retreats, February 2014, February 2015, October 2015.

Namgyal Monastery, Tantric College, McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala-India, Monlam Teachings February 2005, 2006, by H.H. the Fourteenth Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso.

Nilambe Buddhist Meditation Center, Kandy, Sri Lanka Mindfulness retreat, 5-10 February 2018, lecturer Upul Nishanta Gamage.





# **Is Vegetarianism a Personal Choice for Buddhists?**

## **A Contrast Between Doctrine and Popular Opinion**

By Gregory H. Schmidt

### **Introduction**

The debate over whether Buddhists should be vegetarian traces back to the time of the historical Buddha. The Pali canon lists meat among the allowable foods for monks and nuns while several Mahayana sutras expressly prohibit consuming meat. The variance between these sources has formed the basis for an ongoing debate over whether Buddhists should or even can be vegetarian.

A further comparison between these sources and modern opinion reveals several points of divergence. Frequently, views of the connection between Buddhism and vegetarianism are based on a reliance on opinion rather than an appeal to doctrinal sources. Finally, those that do have a scriptural basis often fail to include sufficient context to fully assess their support either against or for vegetarianism as a necessary practice. As a result, the views of modern Buddhists are not consistently in alignment with or supported by scripture.

A recent survey of Buddhist practitioners that asked whether Buddhists should be vegetarian highlighted these points. Specifically, opinions both for and against vegetarianism as a recommended if not required Buddhist practice tended to align more with the individual's own food choices than with the tradition they follow. Variances between individuals' responses and the scriptures related to their traditions were also common. Survey respondents who provided

explanatory comments along with their responses generally included minimal doctrinal references at best. In fact, the most common response to the survey question, “Should Buddhists avoid consuming meat?” was that “it depends” because it is a matter of “personal choice.”

This paper seeks to assess the validity of this statement by examining a range of Pali and Mahayana sources, within the appropriate context. This overview will be compared to a recent article on Buddhism and vegetarianism, with the absence of this range of relevant sources and supporting context. This will allow for an examination of the impact of such a lack to the full understanding of various doctrinal positions on whether Buddhists should be vegetarian. This will also provide a baseline for comparison between the positions established in the scriptures and the responses of individual practitioners to the survey.

What will not be considered here are arguments for vegetarianism based on points of doctrine that, at least in the Pali canon, do not expressly address the issue of vegetarianism. These include the First Precept and Right Livelihood, along with compassion, loving kindness and the general aim of working for the benefit of all beings. The argument has been made that these points of Buddhist ethics imply, if not require, vegetarianism or even veganism.<sup>1</sup> However, the Pali sources do not explicitly provide such a requirement in conjunction with these points. As such, they are outside the scope of this paper.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See the Dharma Voices for Animal YouTube video, “Animals and the Buddha,” available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0MWAAykFuc>, for a number of these arguments made by well-known Buddhist figures such as Bhante G, Bhikkhu Bodhi, and Matthieu Ricard.

<sup>2</sup> The Mahayana sutras addressing vegetarianism do draw connections to some of these points of Buddhist ethics. For example, the Mahayana Mahaparinirvana Sutra, which should not be confused with the Mahaparinibbana Sutta of the Pali canon, discussed below, states, “One who eats meat kills the seed of great compassion,” and, “I would sooner swallow a ball of heated iron than take a meal offered by the faithful, my mouth breaking the precepts.” Yamamoto 1999–2000: 42 and 137.

Likewise, arguments against vegetarianism based interpretations of doctrine that do not contain explicit prohibitions will also not be considered. These include the doctrine of emptiness<sup>3</sup> and the notion of attachment to extreme views.<sup>4</sup> These arguments are made in a range of popular literature addressing this point, particularly from a Mahayana perspective. However, these teachings on these matters do not explicitly establish a position contrary to vegetarianism. As such, these concerns are also outside the scope of this paper.

As a final note, the ethical, environmental, and humanitarian issues connected with consuming meat will not be undertaken in this paper.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the comparison between the relative merits of veganism and vegetarianism will also not be undertaken.<sup>6</sup> All these issues are beyond the scope of assessing the specific doctrinal basis for the position that vegetarianism may be a matter of personal choice for Buddhists.

## Pali Sources

Primary among the Pali literature where the Buddha provided explicit permission for his followers to consume meat is the *Vibhanga Samghadisesa* (V). Here, In V-p 3:171, Devadatta attempts to create a schism within the sangha by requesting the Buddha to make mandatory five ascetic practices, including that the monks adopt vegetarianism.<sup>7</sup> The Buddha denied this request and, in doing so, rejected vegetarianism as being mandatory for the sangha. This provides a

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<sup>3</sup> To assess the position that there is no consumer, no consuming, and no being consumed see the Vajracchedika, particularly v.3 and v. 6, including commentary by Conze. Conze 2001: 15–16, and 26–27). For an example of treating vegetarianism as a form of attachment, see Kapleau 1981: 46.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed review of the Sixty-two views, which are primarily comprised of different levels of essentialism and nihilism, see Bhikkhu Analayo 2010.

<sup>5</sup> See Ricard 2014, especially 55–70 and 159–165, for an assessment of each of these points.

<sup>6</sup> Phelps defines vegan as, “Someone who does not eat, wear, or use animal products, including milk, eggs, honey, silk, and wool; something that does not include animal products” and vegetarian as, “Someone who eats no meat. Food that contains no meat. Vegetarians may consume dairy products and sometimes eggs. People who eat chicken or fish are not vegetarians.” Phelps 2004: 186.

<sup>7</sup> Ray 1994: 164.

foundation for the Theravada position that followers of the Buddha may consume meat. A reference to this event is included in a 2014 Tricycle article by Robert E. Buswell, Jr. and Donald S. Lopez, Jr. entitled, “Beggars Can’t Be Choosers,” that supports the position that Buddhists need not be vegetarian.

We know that the Buddha rejected strict vegetarianism as an imperative of monastic life from a dispute with his cousin Devadatta, an ambitious monk who had sought unsuccessfully to be named the Buddha’s successor. Devadatta practiced five severe types of austerities (dhutanga), including vegetarianism, and he specifically asked the Buddha to require all monks to be strict vegetarians. The Buddha refused this request, since such a requirement would limit what monks could accept from the laity, and thus restrict the amount of merit laypeople could generate.<sup>8</sup>

This passage is factually correct in its recounting of the Buddha’s rejection of “strict vegetarianism” as a requirement, however, it omits important context. If the reading of this passage is expanded to include V-p 3:172, it is evident that the Buddha allowed each the five ascetic practices, including vegetarianism, as optional for “whoever wishes.”<sup>9</sup> Taken together, these two passages establish that while vegetarianism is not required, it is permitted.

The frequent absence of this second point from discussions of the doctrinal basis for vegetarianism is perhaps unintentional. However, failing to include it presents a somewhat incomplete accounting of the position outlined here. As a result, it can lead to the erroneous view that Buddhists, particularly Theravada Buddhists, are not *allowed* to be vegetarian. This is based

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<sup>8</sup> Buswell, Jr. and Lopez, Jr. 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Davids and Oldenburg 1882: 164.

on taking references to only V-p 3:171 to indicate that the Buddha completely rejected vegetarianism.<sup>10</sup>

Elsewhere in the Pali canon, the Buddha gave additional explicit permissions for his followers to consume meat. These include another commonly cited source, the Jivaka Sutta. Here the Buddha presented what is known as the “threefold purity,” which are the three criteria that must be satisfied for a monk to accept and consume almsfood containing meat. The Buddha is quoted in this sutta as having said, in part,

Jivaka, I say there are three instances in which meat should not be eaten: when it is seen, heard or suspected [that the living being has been slaughtered for oneself].<sup>11</sup> I say that meat should not be eaten in these three instances. I say that there are three instances in which meat may be eaten: when it is not seen, not heard, and not suspected [that the living being has been slaughtered for oneself]. I say that meat may be eaten in these three instances.<sup>12</sup>

This point is also referenced by Buswell and Lopez.

The only exception to this rule recognized in the Vinaya is if a monk knows that an animal has been killed specifically to feed him, in which case he is not allowed to accept that meat. Monks were always free to choose what to eat from their bowls, but the vast majority probably ate offerings of meat.<sup>13</sup>

Again, the article is factually correct, yet missing important context from a related passage. In Mahavagga VI.23.9–15, the Buddha enumerated ten types of prohibited meat<sup>14</sup> and then

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<sup>10</sup> A representative but not unique example of this will be provided in the review of the survey results below.

<sup>11</sup> Note that the explanatory text in brackets here is provided by the translators and not this author.

<sup>12</sup> Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi 2015: 474.

<sup>13</sup> Buswell, Jr. and Lopez, Jr. 2014.

<sup>14</sup> These are the flesh of elephants, horses, dogs, snakes, lions, tigers, leopards, bear or humans. Thanissaro Bhikkhu 1994 (The Buddhist Monastic Code I): 308.

rebuked of the bhikkhus for not enquiring as to the type of meat that they had just been provided.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the Buddha declared in this passage that to *not* enquire as to the kind the meat provided is a dukkata offense.<sup>16</sup> This is a matter of some doctrinal significance, then, as the latter requirement is not dependent on whether the threefold purity has been satisfied or if the ten prohibited types are absent, but rather whether the type of meat offered has been confirmed.<sup>17</sup> While this context does not change the allowance for followers of the Buddha to consume meat at their own discretion, its absence omits an important qualification, above and beyond the threefold purity referenced by Buswell and Lopez.<sup>18</sup>

One final source that is frequently referenced as definitive proof that Buddhists can consume meat is the Maraparinibbana Sutta (Mpns (P)). Documented here, according to many translations, is the fact that the Buddha consumed meat offered to him by the lay person Cunda. This occurred in the account of his last meal where he was presented with a dish called *sukara-maddava*, which he consumed and then immediately fell ill.

Having eaten Cunda's meal (this I've heard),

He suffered a grave illness, painful, deathly;

From eating a meal of 'pig's delight'

Grave sickness assailed the teacher.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Davids and Oldenburg 1882: 84. The meat provided in this instance was human flesh.

<sup>16</sup> Sujato 2012. Needless to say, this rule is ignored throughout the Theravada.

<sup>17</sup> Thanissaro Bhikkhu 1994 (The Buddhist Monastic Code I): 308. The Commentary [to Mhvg VI.23.9–15] interprets this as meaning that if, on reflection, one recognizes what kind of meat it is, one needn't ask the donor about the identity of the meat.

<sup>18</sup> As a counterpoint, it should be noted that Vinaya also assigns a dukkhata to taking on ascetic practices, including vegetarianism if done for the benefit of being held in higher esteem. See Thanissaro Bhikkhu 1994 (The Buddhist Monastic Code II): 97.

<sup>19</sup> Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi 2015: 257.

In this translation, *sūkara-maddava* is rendered as “pig’s delight,” which is commonly taken as a form of pig’s flesh. Such a translation, then, can provide a basis for the position that all Buddhists, in following the example of the Buddha himself, can, without a doubt, consume meat.

The translation of *sukara-maddava* as “pig’s delight” and its interpretation as pig’s flesh, however, is not uncontested among commentators, translators, and scholars. Rather, it has been subject to multiple interpretations,<sup>20</sup> which include not only “pig flesh”<sup>21</sup> and “dried boar’s flesh”,<sup>22</sup> but also an elixir composed of “young bamboo shoots, trampled by pigs”,<sup>23</sup> “a dish... of a root, such as truffles...”.<sup>24</sup> and “tender flowers”.<sup>25</sup> Buswell and Lopez address this point of disagreement as follows,

There has been much debate in the traditional commentaries as to exactly what *sukaramaddava* was. The term literally means “tender boar,” which in Indian and Sinhalese commentaries is usually presumed to have been some sort of pork dish. In East Asia, where vegetarianism was more common, this term was translated as *chantanshu’er*, which means “sandalwood tree fungus,” suggesting that the meal may instead have been something eaten by pigs, such as truffles or mushrooms.<sup>26</sup>

Here, unlike the previous examples, the relevant context does not come from a broader examination of the text, but instead from a more inclusive review of its various translations.

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<sup>20</sup> What is included here is not an exhaustive list of all the interpretations and translations of *sukara-maddava*. It is, nonetheless, representative of the range of potential disagreement which cannot be fully resolved for, as T.W. Rhys Davids and Max Muller note, “this is the only passage where the word [*sukara-maddava*] is known to occur in Pali.” Muller 1882: 244. Nevertheless, given the previously cited textual evidence in the Pali canon, there remains sufficient support for the allowance for followers of the Buddha to consume meat, regardless of the translation of *sukara-maddava* in this sutta.

<sup>21</sup> Waley 1932: 346.

<sup>22</sup> Muller 1882: 244.

<sup>23</sup> Sister Vajra and Story 1998.

<sup>24</sup> Kapleau 1981: 24–25.

<sup>25</sup> Muller 1882: 244.

<sup>26</sup> Buswell, Jr. and Lopez, Jr. 2014.



Although Buswell and Lopez do acknowledge a variety of possible interpretations of this passage, their suggestion that translations which do not render *sukara-maddava* as “some sort of pork dish” are a result of cultural differences requires further examination.

A review of the sources which do not render *sukara-maddava* as pork include the translation of Nalanda scholar Dhammapala, who renders it as an elixir composed of “young bamboo shoots, trampled by pigs”.<sup>27</sup> This provides context for reevaluating the statement that Indian and Sinhalese commentaries generally translate it as “some sort of pork dish”. Likewise, Pali translator Mrs. Rhys Davids takes *sukara-maddava* to be “a dish... of a root, such as truffles...”<sup>28</sup> This, then, provides an example of an alternate translation which is not of “East Asian” origin.

Although there is a lack of agreement among commentators and scholars regarding the translation of *sukara-maddava*, this ambiguity should not be taken as calling into question the permissions outlined in the V-p 3:171 and the Jivaka Sutta.<sup>29</sup> Rather, acknowledging the validity of multiple yet conflicting translations of this passage avoids accepting it as irrefutable “evidence that early Buddhists ate meat”<sup>30</sup> and thus singularly sufficient to disallow any further examination of this issue.

## References in Mahāyāna Sources

Unlike the Pali suttas which require consideration of the appropriate context to draw out their meaning, Mahayana sutras which address the subject are explicit in their requirement of

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<sup>27</sup> Sister Vajra and Story 1998.

<sup>28</sup> Kapleau 1981: 25.

<sup>29</sup> The commentary to the Pacittiya also supports the Buddha’s permission for sangha members to consume meat. It provides a list of the allowed staple and non-staple foods, including the flesh of any animal living in the water and the flesh of any animal living on the land. Thanissaro Bhikkhu 1994 (The Buddhist Monastic Code I): 307–308.

<sup>30</sup> Buswell, Jr. and Lopez, Jr. 2014.

vegetarianism. Primary among these sutras are the Lankavatara and the Mahayana Mahaparinirvana Sutras (Mpns (S)). These scriptures replace the permissions given in the Pali canon with an express mandate for followers of the Buddha to observe strict vegetarianism.<sup>31</sup>

In the Lankavatara this apparent change in the Buddha's position is accounted for by explaining the progressive nature of the teachings. Here, the Buddha is quoted as having said,

In the canonical texts here and there the process of discipline is developed in orderly sequence like a ladder going up step by step.<sup>32</sup>

Both the Lankavatara and the Mpns (S) go on to contravene the threefold purity, characterizing it and other permissions in the Pali canon as skillful devices. In the Lankavatara, the Buddha explained,

It is not true, Mahamati, that meat is proper food and permissible for the Sravaka when [the victim] was not killed by himself, when he did not order others to kill it, when it was not specially meant for him.<sup>33</sup>

This passage is also accompanied by no fewer than thirty-seven statements to the effect that the Bodhisattva, if not all followers of the Buddha, should not consume meat.<sup>34</sup> Such emphasis on this position suggests no opportunity for the consideration of any nuance or need for contextual interpretation of this passage.

In the Mpns (S), the rejection of the threefold purity is more detailed than that of Lankavatara. Here, the Buddha was questioned by Kasyapa, who asked,

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<sup>31</sup> There are Mahayana sutras that provide some exceptions for consuming meat such as the Sutra of Manjusri's Questions, which allows the Bodhisattva to consume meat "which is already dying and rotting on its own," after repeating a prescribed mantra. Muller 2012: 326.

<sup>32</sup> Suzuki 2005: 135.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Note that while the Lankavatara is emphatic in its requirement of vegetarianism, all of these statements occur in Chapter 8, which D.T. Suzuki suggests is a later addition. Suzuki 2005: 132.

O World-Honored One! The bhikshus, bhikshunis, upasakas and upasikas may have to live depending on the people. At the time of the alms-round, one may be given food containing meat. How can one take it and yet be pure?<sup>35</sup>

The Buddha responded,

Use water, wash away the meat, and then eat it [the rest of the food].<sup>36</sup>

and,

If one sees that there is a lot of meat, one should not accept such a meal. One must never eat the meat itself. One who eats it infringes the rule.<sup>37</sup>

In the Mpns (S), the Buddha went beyond simply negating previous teachings allowing sangha members to consume meat. He also provided an explanation that any appearance that he, or any other Bodhisattva, had consumed meat was a skillful device. He is quoted here as stating,

...the Bodhisattva does not eat meat. In order to save beings, he shows [pretends] that he eats meat. Though he [seems to] eat meat, in actual fact he does not.<sup>38</sup>

Also of note, the story of Cunda in the Mpns (S) is absent of any details of the contents of his food offering, so there is no mention of the *sukara-maddava* found in the Mpns (P).<sup>39</sup>

While these passages may be of little relevance for practitioners of the Theravada, they do set a clear standard for followers of the Mahayana to practice vegetarianism. Nonetheless, the Mpns (S), along with the Brahma's Net Sutra,<sup>40</sup> not discussed here, receive only brief mention

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<sup>35</sup> Phelps 2004: 65.

<sup>36</sup> Yamamoto 1999 – 2000: 44.

<sup>37</sup> Yamamoto 1999–2000: 44.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid: 43.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid: 14–15.

<sup>40</sup> Muller 2012: 325. My disciples, you should not intentionally eat meat. The consumption of meat is entirely unacceptable, as doing so will cut you off from the seed-lineage of great compassion.

from Buswell and Lopez, with no reference made to the Lankavatara. They address these texts, stating,

In the centuries following the Buddha's death, strict vegetarianism began to be promoted in some Buddhist texts, such as the Mahayana recension of the *Mahaparinirvana Sutra*, and eventually was codified as one of the bodhisattva precepts in such indigenous Buddhist scriptures as the *Fanwang jing (Brahma's Net Sutra)* of China.<sup>41</sup>

While Buswell and Lopez undoubtedly have the benefit of scholarly research and analysis to support the above assumptions, these points may not resonate with the faith follower of the Mahayana. Furthermore, the exclusion of the Lankavatara again presents an incomplete view of the textual evidence. This type of omission is evident in a range of popular literature, where relevant sources are absent from discussions, particularly from a Mahayana perspective.<sup>42</sup> This, then, engenders the ignorance of these texts, if not their dismissal, by practitioners of Mahayana traditions who accept these within their canon.

As stated above, only the Lankavatara and the Mpns (S) are considered here in detail, though they are not the only sutras that present vegetarianism as an essential practice.<sup>43</sup> However, as they are foundational to the major schools of Tibetan and Eastern Mahayana thought, they are an appropriate starting point to clarify what is taught on this subject in the Mahayana sutras. Furthermore, these two are also the most comprehensive in overturning the permissions for eating meat found in the Pali canon, so they present an effective counterpoint to this position.

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<sup>41</sup> Buswell, Jr. and Lopez, Jr. 2014.

<sup>42</sup> See examples in Kapleau 1981: 46, Looi 1992, Tworkov 1992, Gelek Rinpoche 1994, and Phelps 2004: 130.

<sup>43</sup> The Lankavatara references the Hastikakshya, the Mahamegha, and the Angulimalika Sutras. See Suzuki 2005: 136–137. The Sutra of Majusri's Questions provides an exception for the Bodhisattva to consume meat "which is already dying and rotting on its own," after repeating a prescribed mantra or if one is "in a mental state of great compassion for the purpose of transforming all sentient beings." See Muller 2012: 326–7.

### Survey of Popular Opinion

The preceding presents a more detailed review of some the most relevant suttas, sutras, and commentaries than are typically included in articles and literature on this topic. While the article by Buswell and Lopez provides a convenient illustration of this point, it is presented here only as a representative sample. The scriptural overview provided above, taken together with this example, provides a baseline for comparison to popular opinions regarding whether Buddhists should be vegetarian. What follows is an assessment of these opinions.

A survey, entitled “Buddhism and Vegetarianism,” was conducted online during the period 1 September 2017 to 31 October 2017. Data was gathered electronically via social media through postings in various Buddhist Facebook and Google groups.<sup>44</sup> Answers to survey questions were gathered through Survey Monkey. Respondents were asked the following questions:

1. Should Buddhists avoid eating meat?
2. Are you Buddhist?
3. If you answered yes to the above, what tradition do you follow?
4. Are you vegan or vegetarian?
5. What do you think of veganism or vegetarianism in general?

Of the 501 respondents, 437 identified with at least one Buddhist tradition (Figure 1). Only this latter group of self-identified Buddhists, and not the balance of 64 individuals who did not identify as Buddhist, are included in the results presented below.

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<sup>44</sup> Note that of the 13 Buddhist social media groups surveyed, only one was specifically dedicated to veganism and none were dedicated to vegetarianism.

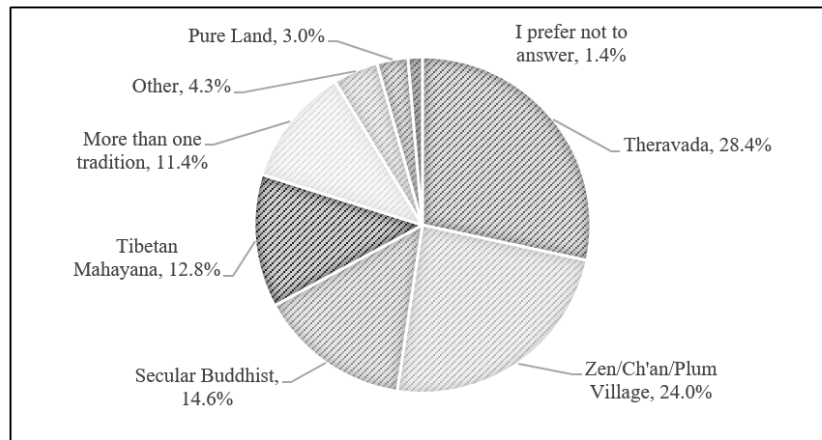


Figure 1: *Tradition of Survey Respondents*

As evidenced by the preceding graph, Buddhists following the Theravada, Zen, and Tibetan Mahayana traditions were well represented in this survey, along with a significant number of Secular Buddhists. Note that 1.4% of the Buddhists responded, “I prefer not to answer” to the question of “What tradition do you identify with?”

The number of individuals who responded “Yes” to the question “Are you vegan or vegetarian?” comprised the largest group represented in the survey. Note that this survey, in alignment with the thesis which it supported, did not distinguish between veganism and vegetarianism as separate practices. Rather these two were grouped together to compare opinions regarding consuming meat in general to the textual evidence. Furthermore, as veganism is a modern movement, there is no direct canonical reference to it.<sup>45</sup> For these reasons, veganism and vegetarianism are grouped together into the question “Are you vegan or vegetarian?”

As shown in the table below (Table 1), 39.1% of respondents identified as either vegan or vegetarian. Note that among respondents identifying with the Theravada, answers were fairly evenly divided among “Yes”, “No”, and, “Sometimes”, which is in alignment with the Pali

<sup>45</sup> The Lankavatara lists “clarified butter” and “honey” as foods that are permitted. Suzuki 2005: 135. The Mpns (S) lists animal product such as honey, milk, and cream as allowable foods. Yamamoto 1999–2000: 43.

permission for consuming meat, but the option to observe vegetarianism. Correspondingly, among the respondents identifying with Tibetan Mahayana and Zen, responses of “Yes” were substantially higher, which is supported by the prohibitions against consuming meat in the Mahayana sources. Nonetheless, roughly half of both Tibetan Mahayana and Zen practitioners indicated they observed a meatless diet “Sometimes”, if at all in conflict with the canonical sources reviewed above.

Table 1: *Table of Dietary Habits by Buddhist Tradition*

<i>Buddhist Tradition</i>	<i>Vegan or Vegetarian</i>	<i>Meat Eater</i>	<i>Sometimes observing a meat-free diet</i>	<i>Prefer Not to Answer</i>
Tibetan Mahayana (56)	51.8%	19.6%	28.6%	0.0%
Zen/Ch'an/Plum Village (105)	47.6%	25.7%	25.7%	1.0%
Other (19)	47.4%	26.3%	26.3%	0.0%
Secular Buddhist (64)	39.1%	32.8%	28.1%	0.0%
Pure Land (13)	38.5%	53.8%	7.7%	0.0%
Theravada (124)	35.5%	34.7%	29.0%	0.8%
I prefer not to answer (6)	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%
More than one tradition (50)	14.0%	4.0%	36.0%	46.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>39.1%</b>	<b>27.0%</b>	<b>28.1%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

Moving from individual practice to opinions as to whether Buddhists in general should be vegan or vegetarian, available responses to the question “Should Buddhists avoid eating meat?” were “Yes”, “No”, “It depends”, and “I don't know” (Table 2). Perhaps most interesting here is that the response “It depends” was the most common overall, including for Theravadins as well as practitioners of Tibetan Mahayana, Zen, and those observing more than one tradition.

Table 2: *Table of Opinions by Buddhist Tradition*

<i>Buddhist Tradition</i>	<i>Buddhists should be vegan or vegetarian</i>	<i>Buddhists need not be vegan or vegetarian</i>	<i>It Depends</i>	<i>I Don't Know</i>
Tibetan Mahayana (56)	39.3%	12.5%	48.2%	0.0%
More than one tradition (50)	40.0%	12.0%	48.0%	0.0%
Zen/Ch'an/Plum Village (105)	37.1%	13.3%	41.9%	7.6%
Theravada (124)	35.5%	22.6%	37.1%	4.8%
Other (19)	47.4%	15.8%	36.8%	0.0%
Secular Buddhist (64)	35.9%	14.1%	35.9%	14.1%
Pure Land (13)	53.8%	15.4%	30.8%	0.0%
I prefer not to answer (6)	50.0%	33.3%	16.7%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>38.2%</b>	<b>16.2%</b>	<b>40.3%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>

Again, as a point of reference to Pali sources reviewed above, the high percentage of “It depends” responses by practitioners of the Theravada corresponds with, or at least does not conflict with, the allowances for consuming meat and the allowance for vegetarianism as an optional practice. Again, at the same time, similar ranges of responses for practitioners of Tibetan Mahayana and Zen run contrary to the canonical prohibitions of sutras like the Lankavatara and the Mpns (S).

One of the largest motivating factors behind the response “It depends” to the question of whether Buddhists should avoid consuming meat is evident in the comments to the final question, “What do you think of veganism and vegetarianism in general?” These comments were unprompted and were provided in free text responses to the final question. A review of these comments revealed ten commonly reoccurring themes, shown below (Figure 2). The second most common of these, “a personal choice”, appeared in 15.7% of all responses and in 67.1% of the responses by those who responded, “It depends” to the question of whether Buddhists should avoid consuming meat.



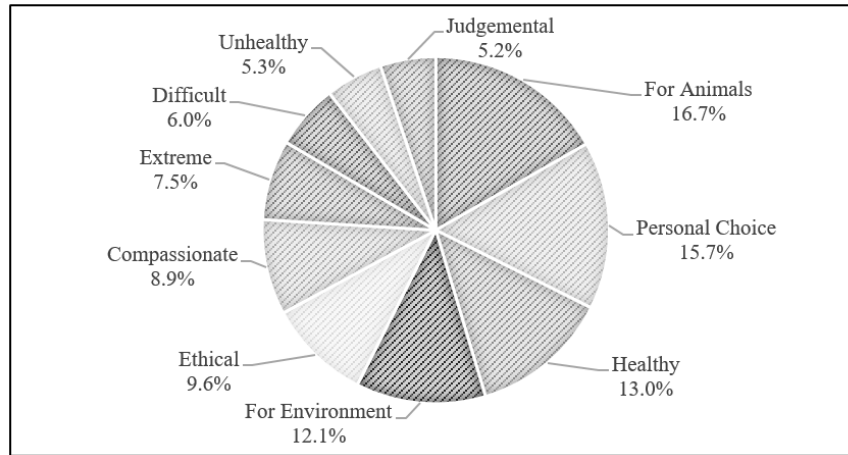


Figure 2: *What do you think of veganism & vegetarianism?*

Note that themes related to matters of Buddhist doctrine, such as “Ethical” and “Compassionate” appeared less than 10% of the time. A case could be made the “For the Animals” is supported by Mahayana sources, though no such reference was provided in the comments. As further indication of the gap between scripture and practice, the responses of “Healthy” and “For Environment”<sup>46</sup> were more frequently occurring than “Ethical” and “Compassionate”. It would also appear that, based on the response to the question, “Are you vegan or vegetarian?” (Table 3), the greatest correlation between a belief that a Buddhist should or should not avoid consuming meat is one’s own dietary choices rather than one’s chosen tradition.

Table 3: *Table of Opinions by Buddhist Dietary Practice*

	<i>Buddhists should be vegan or vegetarian</i>	<i>Buddhists need not be vegan or vegetarian</i>	<i>It Depends</i>	<i>I Don't Know</i>
<i>Are you vegan or vegetarian?</i>				
Yes	64.3%	2.9%	27.5%	5.3%
No	11.9%	33.1%	47.5%	7.6%
Sometimes	29.3%	18.7%	48.0%	4.1%
I prefer not to answer	28.0%	16.0%	56.0%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>38.2%</b>	<b>16.2%</b>	<b>40.3%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>

<sup>46</sup> Environmental concerns are a component of the motivation of some Engaged Buddhists, such as Bhikkhu Bodhi (See Valdez 2016), few mentions of Buddhist principles were made alongside mentions of the environment.

In the preceding table, it is evident that a majority of those who responded “Yes” to the question “Are you vegan or vegetarian?” also hold that Buddhists should avoid consuming meat, while those who responded “No” largely reject this position. These correlations are notably stronger than those between individual dietary choice and Buddhist tradition (Table 2). This, then, provides support for a preliminary assumption that responses to the survey did not take scriptural sources as their primary basis.

### **The Question of Personal Choice**

Fewer than 10% of survey respondents made any reference to a scripture or doctrine in the commentary outlined above (Figure 6). Furthermore, half of those who did make such a reference did so indirectly. These would include comments such as, it “is not an absolute in Buddhism.” This is a true statement for followers of the Theravada, as the Pali texts support a response of “personal choice”, even if specific doctrinal support was generally not included in the comments provided. For followers of the Tibetan Mahayana and Zen, who made up nearly a third of those who cited “personal choice”, this response is clearly at variance with the Mahayana sutras reviewed above.

The simple fact that a majority of the comments to the effect that consuming meat is a “personal choice” were unaccompanied by any textual reference, is, itself, not evidence of a lack of awareness or understanding of Buddhist scriptures. However, the fact that many of the comments made were at odds with Buddhist teachings does suggest such a lack. This applies to several positions expressed, such as statements to the effect that veganism and vegetarianism are “dogma [which] is expressly forbidden in the dhamma”, as one follower of the Theravada indicated, or “I find vegetarianism to be something generally good but not really a part of the

Buddhist faith”, as expressed by a follower of Tibetan Mahayana. Considering the textual evidence presented above, both are in direct conflict with teachings accepted by the respective traditions of these respondents.

## **Conclusion**

As is evident in the above research, the question of whether Buddhists should be vegetarian is treated by many practitioners as more a matter of individual conscience than one based on scripture. The survey results demonstrate that it may not be uncommon for individuals to have a position that is not primarily based on a doctrinal position and even in conflict with such established positions. The intent of this paper then, is to draw out these discrepancies between scripture and opinion, and to clarify the textual basis to answer the question of whether Buddhists should be vegetarian.

The presentation here of relevant sources should begin to provide a basis for examination of the notion that vegetarianism is simply a personal choice for Buddhists. As has been demonstrated by multiple references in the Pali canon, vegetarianism is a personal choice in that it is allowed, yet explicitly not required. As has been demonstrated by multiple references to Mahayana sutras, vegetarianism is not a personal choice, but rather an explicit requirement.

The inclusion of excerpts from Buswell and Lopez’s article in *Tricycle* should provide an example of how excluding applicable content and relevant context for the texts that specifically address vegetarianism can support misunderstandings and potentially doctrinally unsound positions. The results of the survey should provide an example of the types of unsound conclusions that result from this lack of awareness of content and context to support a position on whether Buddhists should be vegetarian.

The research included here indicates the extent to which many Buddhists are incompletely if not incorrectly informed on this matter. To fully assess the extent to which vegetarianism is a personal choice for Buddhists requires a greater understanding of all the relevant teachings, their context, and supporting commentaries. This paper only begins to address this opportunity. However, even such a cursory review of the material as presented here can begin to support more informed and doctrinally sound conclusions. More research and balanced textual analysis of this matter will be required to improve the alignment between the textual evidence and popular opinion.

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## **“The Buddhist Path and New World Order” A critical Overview.**

By Peng Sary

The concepts of new world order or world order are very controversial on how the world should be designed. The world order, in short, is the concept that world must have the order. Almost by their natures, the concepts of world order are very self-centered that sometimes turn the world into brutalities. The main questions are what the just and acceptable principles are. The combination of different concepts of world order, regional order, and the Buddhist perspectives, are the most remarkable in shaping and creating the harmony, prosperity, sharing future, and mutual respect and interest in the new era of global awakening.

The concepts of World Order are very controversial. Almost by its nature, world orders seem to be focused on absolute power and force to impose one's own system on others. It has been conceptualized and developed periodically in different forms. The concept of World Order is a greatest aspiration of mankind history, but also provoked numerous tragedies staged behind many events in the world. However, the world order has not even existed in its full visionary in the world yet. The attempt of restructuring of the global institutions with international laws and principles to sustain peace, order, harmony, and prosperity by checking the rule of conducting are the reflection of world conscience. The two main questions are challenges: the legitimacy and equilibrium that determine the acceptability and sustainability.

The theory of the state of nature which is one of the prominent concepts views the state of the world as anarchy, chaos, conflicts, wars, and destruction. As mentioned by Thomas Hobbes, human nature is selfish, brutal, ambitious and greedy. With this nature, man creates the series of calamity and fearfulness. To prevent all undesirable things, they joined together and established the specific contract for serving mutual benefits that is called “Social Contract”. The world is in a flux, the concept has been developing. The limitless desires of human, attempt



at conquering and putting the rest of the world under one's influence by forces created hard conditions for lives. Then, social contract would be developed to the global contract. The United Nations was established in 1945 after the Second World War as the global contract of inter-governments to promote the international cooperation and to create and maintain international order. It acts as the global organization in promoting peace and security, promoting human rights, fostering social and economic development, and coordinating armed conflict within different branches and scenarios in which it called for the members to give up some of their unlimited freedom to obey the international laws. The UN has six organs: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Secretariat, the International Court of Justice, and the UN Trusteeship Council. Before the New World Order comes to exist the various concepts of World Order were formed through different regions.

In the six century, a semi-religious and secular ideology of the Middle East holds its strong concept of world order in which it regards its prescriptions as the ultimate and universal peaceful system. The war-torn and disorder region views, historically, the world into two realms, the realm of war (*dar al-harb*) and the realm of peace. The outside world of Islam is the realm of war, and the inside world of Islam is the realm of peace. The peace and order will prevail wherever the “*dar al-Islam*” will be reached. There two are pillars of Islamic order are: Faith in God and Unity of Man. The Islamist believes that the true and the universal God is only one, and Muhammad was the last and the ultimate prophet. The God is almighty. He is the creator of the world and man. The region also has the sense of mission of bringing its system to unify and bring peace and prosperity to the world with its universal application principles under “the house of Islam”, “*dar al-Islam*”. The Islamic world order opposes strongly to any attempt of spreading the American system into the region by considering it as the attempt to corrupt and spoil its traditional moral values, order, and the cause of problems in the region. The region itself is under the sects conflicting and struggling.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a kind of world order was introduced in the west in response to the protracted of political upheaval and wars. The leaders gathered to resolve the problems by creating the concept of political diversities for a peaceful co-existence. In the situations of no superpower was able to win and impose its will on others, they created the principles of sovereignty of the state, legal equality, and non-intervention of others' affairs. Its weaknesses were no collective security for checking any aggressive state's conduct and non-intervention. Non-intervention probably meant that to ignore what is happening around and could not care less whether the conduct of other states was acceptable to their people. It would bring about the social disharmony and disorder that would affect other neighboring states.

The oldest form of world order was originated in China. China calls herself Zhongou which means "Middle Kingdom". Since its first unification in 221 B.C, China has shown no intention to conquer and unify the world into a single polity. China concept of world order was to regard itself as the Middle Kingdom, Superior to others, in which others were the barbarian states or tributary states. The emperors of China were the mandates of heaven who were sent to bring harmony to "All Under Heaven" but not by conquering. It did not spread its magnificence of cultural and social harmony, but let others come to seek them from it. China concept of world order also derived from Confucius's ideas which focus on the social harmony through each of its members committed to serving its duties. The great harmony of China can be attained whether the emperor is a good example in doing virtuous conducts, the ministers are honest in their duties to the emperor, and the people obey the leaders. He also emphasized the interactions in what he called five relationships for social harmony, peace, and prosperity. However, the Middle Kingdom was defeated by the western and its neighboring countries. In 1949 China became the Communist country. China then started to focus on reform and opening up for economic growth and adopting itself to the new world order environment. The current

model of the Chinese government is founded on the belief that as long as the economy keeps growing and standard of living rising better, the stability can be maintained, and the people will tolerate among other things. Since its huge economic growth, China is being seen leading the new global order in the economic field and shaping the world in the multipolar system. The Chinese model of the political and economic system is often a challenge to the Americans. However, both countries recognize that they need each other in different fields and the Sino-US relationship are crucial for world peace, stability, prosperity, and world order.

From 16<sup>th</sup> to the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century, the rising of powerful countries in and Europe led to the political, economic, cultural ambition and geopolitical expansions. The scientific and intellectual development colored the world. It was the time of struggling to dominate the third world among the powerful states such as France, Britain, and Spain etc. in what was called Colonialism. These powerful countries were the segments of former Roman Empire which controlled the largest part of the world. These powerful countries divided and controlled the world. The competition and fighting for independence situated the world with chaos and two world wars. Another form of attempting for World Order were the political systems based on political ideologies and principles between communism and democracy. The economic, social, and political philosophies are different. In the eyes of the communists, they wanted to see the society that all are equal, no social classes, no religions, no private properties and all are state-controlled. In contrast, democrats wanted to have a free market, political, and religious freedom. As the result, they divided the world into different blocs until at the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially, at the end of Second World War and during the Cold War, whereby communism is led by USSR and democracy by US. The confrontations and situations were undesirable and disastrous.

The Newest World Order as mentioned in the “Global Contract” was created in early 20<sup>th</sup> century by the US as one can see in every American one dollar banknote that there are the

great seals of Pyramid, the Eagle etc. and Latin phrases “ANNUIT COEPTIS” means “The God has Favored Our Undertaking” “NOVUS ORDO SECLORUM” which means “New World Order”, “the Eye” means “the All-seeing eye” and Pyramid represented “Strength and Duration”. The main phrase is “New World Order” which covers global politics and aims to bring all sovereign states under one global political system. The collapse of Soviet Union and by the end of cold war in the 1990s, America was thought to be the superpower with military, economic, political and geopolitical advancement. They are looking for what they called the World Order after the cold war or Postwar Order. America wants the world to live in the American way of life as George Bush, said "diverse nations are drawn together in a common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind: peace and security, freedom and the rule of law". The Old World Order was self-interest which led the world into disorder and conflicts. The American leaders started from Woodrow Wilson wished to replace the old international systems and created the new international system that it calls “New World Order”.

American leaders wanted to be the superpower, which means control the resources and energy, control the land, oceans and space, control the man and lead the world global system (New World Order), which was made clear in the time of President Theodore Roosevelt. It was him that engaged and trapped America in international affairs.

The Old System based on the balance of power and self-interest could not guarantee the peace, order and prosperity. Security could be guaranteed only when the nation has enough power to counterattack or join with other nations to fight against the bigger power or aggressor to prevent it from becoming the dominant nation. The diplomacy was conducted secretly and formed military alliances with other nations to prevent it from invading. The European could not maintain peace and order with the system. And very often that the war broke out between the major European powerful countries, Britain declared war against France and others, France during the Napoleonic revolutions declared war and tried to unite Europe, and when Germany

reunited it waged war against and controlled a vast part of Europe. Besides declaring the wars against one other and competing for the power in their home lands, war also broke out in the colonized lands. European countries dominated the world by colonizing other countries, benefited themselves and disadvantaged the colonized countries. The European major powers drawn the world into the several wars and two world wars but were not able to end the wars.

During the European major power competing and declaring war against one other, US had on one hand developed its power and perfecting democracy and the other hand boosting its values against the Europeans. There were two contradictory concepts about US foreign policy - Isolationism and Globalism. For the Isolationist, America should not engage in international affairs. It should try to perfect itself and act as the model to the world. The Globalist in contrast argued that America has to go international and bring its value to the rest of the world. America could not stay as neutrality if it wishes to become the superpower, and the American interest is lying in the international arena. US now was the major power, and as the major power it must have obligations to deal with international issues. As Theodore Roosevelt argued:

“To us as a people it has been granted to lay the foundations of our national life in a new continent ... Much has been given us, and much will rightfully be expected from us. We have duties to others and duties to ourselves; and we can shirk neither. We have become a great nation, forced by the fact of its greatness into relations with the other nations of the earth, and we must behave as beseems a people with such responsibilities”.

America entered into the world with the glorious victory over all old systems and powers. That was Woodrow Wilson that envisioned the US policy as the conscience of the world. He criticized the old systems and the balance of power that drawn the world war and set up the American principles as the universal morality, acting for the good of mankind, for the good of liberty, peace and order. It was he that planned for the new world order. To him American

systems and principles were the best and if the world wants peace they had to abandon their old traditions and adopt American way of life. The old system were more self-interested rather than high-principled, competing rather than cooperating. He planned for the international organization that principles were just and acceptable for not only the leader but the people also. The world, according to him, must not be based on the balance of power, but on the ethic of self-determination, not on alliance, but on collective security, diplomacy have to do openly and agreements not by expert. He envisioned the League of Nations as the first step to reach the new world order which its major principles were “collective security,” or in other words, an attack on one, would be considered an attack on all. The League would also help in the arbitration of international disputes, the reduction of armaments, and the development of open diplomacy. To him America sought no self-interest but for the mankind. American soldiers never fight for self-interest but for liberty, for peace and order. American soldiers will come to wherever the peace was disturbed and bring it back to order. America will not tolerate any aggressor.

“We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind. These are American principles, American policies. We could stand for no others. And they are also the principles and policies of forward looking men and women everywhere, of every modern nation, of every enlightened community”

His predecessor, Franklin Roosevelt, even went on and beyond his principles about the New World Order. He had a strong believe in American principles that they can win the world and create the new world order. He very often echoed the Wilsonian principles and more emphasized the US obligations and rightness of its ideals. America will act as the friend of all nations not as the foe. But America never forgive the aggressors. He met with British Prime

Minister Winston Churchill and expressed their common ambition for the new world order. They wished to establish the permanent system of international peace. Their common principles were “the right of the people to choose their leaders, the freedom from fear and want, the end of territorial encroachment, the abandon of using force, and establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security. They both were the very well-known of the ambitious new world order. To Roosevelt, the international order has to build on the basis of personal trust. “The kind of world order which we the peace-loving Nations must achieve, must depend essentially on friendly human relations, on acquaintance, on tolerance, on unassailable sincerity and good will and good faith”. The United Nations was given the birth during his terms as the president for the purpose of the New World Order.

The American policy then reflected the American ambition for the new world order. America will use the international law and its rightness to dominate the world and against any opponent. It will destroy its enemies and help them back to grow up and cultivate its value. For America, they fight only for freedom, fight against only aggressor and help the weak, fight for dignity of mankind. They will fight in the name of humanity, democracy, and international law.

The commitment to achieve the New World Order and the commitment to challenge its making the regional disorder and global crises. The superpowers compete for natural resources to gain its means to become the most powerful in all aspects such as military, economy, diplomacy by using their political proclamations. In the resources-rich region such as the Middle East, inevitably it has become the chessboard of superpowers since the past and until present day. Logically, it is the strategic place for the superpowers to weaken others and empower themselves for bringing political values to the region. The region itself also gives more opportunity for the superpower to take action in its internal affairs. In Asia, even though the conflict is less than the Middle East, but America’s role is more important because of the

population and economic growth that is attracting the superpowers' attention. The competition continues to take place in central Asia, Africa and South America. The most powerful European Union whose order is better than the other regions is also affected from the consequences while it also plays a very important role in shaping the international systems.

The twentieth century was a period of great international violence. In World War I (1914-18), roughly nine million people died on European battlefields. About fifty million people were killed during World War II (1939-45), well over half of them civilians. The Cold war divided the world into different blocs and wars. The US, Soviet Union and China engaged in the war indirectly. The two World Wars and Cold war were ended and the trading and cooperation flourished. But there is nothing to guarantee that the disastrous will never happen again. This cycle of violence will continue far into the new millennium. The competition between the superpowers still existed and being extended and updated in many areas. They do it in a way that is very hard to understand, more sublime and wiser. There is no trust among the superpowers. The alliances, military bases, geopolitics, and geo-economics, modernization in military equipment, nuclear proliferation, and armed trading are being conducted. The wars for resources and energy support playing the very dominant roles among the superpowers create the regional and international tensions. That is the concept of new world order that draw the world into crisis. The world as if in the stage of organizing the order, in the stage of transformation. The well-known strategic thinkers such as Henry Kissinger believes in the order for a better future and for world peace and prosperity to last long, some sacrifices and hardship must be done. Another globalist, David Rockefeller, who wishes and plans to put the American system to the global world even when the world face more dangers. To him, if the new world order can be created after the major crisis it is better to have the crisis. In the transformational stage, it is usual that hardship and sacrifice are there. The crisis is always inevitable in human history, but we need the right crisis to make a better world, to make the



world free and beautiful under the one world government. He even prefers to be the culprit to achieve the plan.

“We are on the verge of a global transformation. All we need is the right major crisis and the nations will accept the new world order”.

Arthur Schlesinger preceded boldly in 1995:

“We are not going to achieve a new world order without paying for it in blood as well as in words and money”

In contrast, Russia and China view it as the threat to their survival. They never wish to have a global government and the one world dominant. Naturally, there are not any strong men in this world who want to live under the will of others. They try every mean possible to protect their national interest and to make sure that their values are being flourished. As political philosophy says “it is foolish if you do not protect your national interest and hope that other nations do it for you”. The world most influential leader and the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, who try his best to make sure that his country and people are secure and safe, escape the threat from the US-NATO who expanding its members and geopolitics closer to Russian boundary, can never trust in American foreign policy. To Russia, America was an old enemy during the Cold War, a present controversial that has tried to seize, lie, steal Russian secrecy, uses the international law to serve its interest and suppresses others, and the creator of global and regional tensions. President Putin said:

“In a situation where you had domination by one country and its allies, or its satellites rather, the search for global solutions often turned into an attempt to impose their own universal recipes. This group’s ambitions grew so big that they started presenting the policies they put together in their corridors of power as the view of the entire international community. ”

Meanwhile, America views Russia as the aggressor who wants to restore the empire, as an enemy threat to it and its alliances. As mentioned by President Barack Obama “Russia is the second and biggest enemy to US after terrorist, the most threat to US security”. And Henry Kissinger regards Russian activities as enmity who acts against US everywhere, “Russia acts as the enemy against America anywhere in the rest of the world”.

In the philosophy-rich Buddhism, there are several teachings that revealed by the Buddha that should be considered contributing to building the New World Order. Buddha himself left his royal throne to become the monk because he was tired of world affairs that were full of problems. However, it did not mean that he did not care about the world affairs but to find the New Way for all. The situations of the world as mentioned above, conflicts, chaos, disorder, power hunger, competitions, the strong exploits the weak, the Buddha knew these things since he was a young boy. “Seeing the lizard eating the ants, the lizard was eaten by a snake, the snake was eaten by an eagle, and the eagle was eaten by human” he realized that these has been the political conditions of the world. The world led by greed (ambition), hatred and illusions are full of problems. However, Buddhist believes that human nature are reasonable and tameable. The potentialities of human are highly-able which is better than anything else. So, when he found the New Way he taught to his disciples and set up the rules and order to lead the ideal community of monks and lay Buddhists.

The Buddha experienced both the secular and religious leadership. He saw the corrupting and spoiling of the world system by viewing that “the bigger eating the smaller”, “the division of caste system”, and “the overwhelming cultural influences” and so on, in the political leadership. Then, he left the throne to evaluate and to find the way in the forest alone for six years. In the religious leadership, he went into the deep nature that lies inside man and found greediness, anger, hatred, illusion, fear, distrust, self-centeredness, etc. that trouble the personal, communal, and the world order. Then, he laid out the teachings that is centered on

Sila (rules and discipline), Samadhi (sacrifice and obligations) and Panna (wisdom) as the main principles of building a greater world order.

To the Buddha, in order to build an ordered country, state, group, the rule is required. Without the rule and its implementation, the organization is not valuable and dignified. The rule which in Buddhist Vinaya means the law for taming bodily and verbal actions. We must have the lines, the rules, and the codes of conduct of what should be spoken, what should not, what should be acted and what should not. The value and dignity of groups or nations is determined by the order and the way of life of the members. Without order, it is disorder. Here, the Vinaya is referred to “the rule of law of a country that is fairly applied to all” and “the disciplinary of the conduct of the people”. In short, an institution needs the rule and law, the people need discipline. A better law creates a better environment.

However, in Buddhism, the Vinaya is not enough. If the members of the society do not do something wrong because they are afraid of punishment, that is not a dignified and valuable country yet. The second principle is required. That is the ideal of the members in devoting themselves for the welfare of the other people (Samadhi). That is the good heart, the sense of meeting the obligations and responsibilities as a good example. There are two points: they are do not do the wrong things not because of fear of punishment but a sense of fearing evil deed, and the sense of dignity of loving good deed. The Sila or Vinaya and Samadhi are compulsory. The rule and good heart, however, need Panna. The Panna (wisdom) there are two points: the ability to protect and find happiness for oneself, and the ability to protect and create happiness for the others. It is not the ability to gain one’s interest by harming others. The Buddha also laid out the three real characteristics of the world which under the laws of impermanence, suffering (hardship), and insubstantiality. Going deeper beyond these factors, the Buddha explained the laws of reason and result, the co-arising, or interdependence. Everything is interconnected, “if this exists, that exists, if this cease to exist, that also cease to exist”.

The world order is a big question. The world, whether at its best or worse times, seeks for the restructuring of a world system that can lift the world out of the anarchy state. Yet, the world situation sometimes turns into brutalities, chaos, and conflicts. It is very important that one has to understand the danger of the situations and try to take the opportunity to develop the country, building peace, order, prosperity, and harmony within its internal affairs carefully, and prevent the negative results caused by external power from harming the country. The three main concepts of Buddhism, Sila, Samadhi, and Panna would be able to help solve the problems and build the New World Order of peace, harmony, prosperity, and order.

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# Social Problems — Buddhist Way of Solution

By Ven. Rin Phyrun

## Introduction

Living in a modern society, it is very difficult for us to stay away from the social problems which are arising in our lives every day. We normally face several problems because of our different opinions, knowledge, castes, cultures, languages, etc. If we look at the world around us, we will be able to see many problems. After the Buddha had attained enlightenment, in his first sermon, *Dharmachakrapravartana Sūtra—the Setting in Motion of the Wheel of the Dharma*, he showed us that the reality of our life is suffering (dukkha). The Buddha prioritizes the suffering as the first Noble Truth because he thinks it is the main problem in our everyday life. In order to escape the suffering, we have to comprehend it first.

There are various aspects of suffering existing in our daily life; however, it can be summed up into two primary forms: physical suffering and mental suffering. Physical suffering can be found in our painful body, i.e., pain, aches, birth, old age, sickness and death. Mental suffering can be found in our unpleasant feeling, i.e. anxiety, distress, frustration, unease, unsatisfactoriness, etc. Besides the above two forms of suffering, natural disasters, i.e. flood, famine, earthquake which can cause us to experience suffering in our life as well. In addition, social injustice, economic, war, politics, etc. is currently known as the main problem in the society that we are living in.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jingying W. Y. Ho. *Buddhism key stage II* (London: Buddhist Education Foundation, 2002) P. 30-31.

The Buddha had discovered the solution of these problems since he attained enlightenment under the Bodhi-tree over two thousand years ago. To handle these problems, the Buddha points out that we have to firstly recognize the reality of life which is full of suffering. To end the suffering, the Buddha further emphasizes that craving and ignorance must be removed. When the craving and ignorance are completely removed, there is no more suffering. Our mind will be in the state of perfect peace. The Dhammapada illustrates, "*Mano pubam gamā Dhammā*" human mind is responsible for all good and bad things that exist in this world. If there is no mind, there is no good and bad things in this world. So, the teachings of the Buddha always encourage us to focus more on our mind through the development of morality, concentration and wisdom. Buddhism aims at achieving not only spiritual progress and happiness but also social responsibilities as well as supramundane teaching.<sup>2</sup>

### **Society and Principles of Buddhist Economy**

People all over the world want to live happy lives and need social requirement to support their lives for living properly in society. Buddhism thought that all mankind need four requirements for living. "For the individual, the objective of livelihood is to acquire the four necessities or requisites of human existence: food, clothing, shelter, and medicine."<sup>3</sup> Buddhism considers these requirements are most important to all living beings. The Buddha said, "When people are overwhelmed, and in pain through suffering, they are incapable of understanding Dhamma."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Venerable Pyinnyathiha. *The Way to Social Harmony* (London: Subang Jaya Buddhist Association, 1990) P. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, P. 63.

<sup>4</sup> P. A. Payutto. *Buddhist Economics*. Translated by Ja. B. Dhammavijaya. (Bangkok: The World Buddhist University 2009) P. 4.



Depending on this concept, all people cannot live without these requirements because of their wants and needs. Some people misunderstand. They want to make more money, so they do business in the wrong way for their own benefit and harmful to others. There are many kinds of doing wrong trade in the society. According to Buddhism, there are five wrong ways of trade making creating social problems and harm to other people in the society even nowadays. These five kinds of trades are:

- (1) Satta Vanijja selling of human beings; (2) Sattha Vanijja—dealing in armaments; (3) Visa Vanijja— dealing in poison; (4) Mamsa Vanijja— dealing in flesh; and (5) Majja Vanijja— dealing in liquor or intoxicants.<sup>5</sup>

Some lay people have wrong livelihood because of the mentality of human beings that have desire and ignorance, they are looking at demand or wants that are unlimited or endless. As the Buddha said, “natthi tanhāsamā nadi— there is no river like craving.”<sup>6</sup> The Buddha compared the river and craving of mankind. Sometimes, rivers can fill their banks but the craving of human beings never come to an end. Even if money were to fall from the sky like the rain, human beings’ desire would not be fulfilled.

In the teaching of the Buddhist concept about economy, the Buddha advised lay Buddhists to earn money by their own effort and morality without harming others. The good characteristic of Buddhist economic principle which lay people can apply in their daily life is the right to earn their living in society. It is a ‘middle-way’ it might be called a middle-way Buddhist economic. The Buddhist way of life is referred to as a path and each of the eight factors of the path is called *sammā*, which means right or correct, i.e., *sammā ajiva*: right livelihood. Each factor is *sammā* because it gives rise to optimum benefits in its

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<sup>5</sup> Bokanoruwe Devananda. *Social Aspects of Early Buddhism*. (Singapore: Sri Lankaramaya Theravada Buddhist Temple, 1999) P. 82.

<sup>6</sup> P. A. Payutto. *Buddhist Economics*. Translated by Ja. B. Dhammavijaya. (Bangkok: The World Buddhist University, 2009) P. 19.

respective sphere. The path is the middle-way between too much and too little which the Buddha followed. It is also for all human beings to practice right livelihood in the social life.<sup>7</sup>

Right livelihood (*sammā ajiva*) of Noble Eightfold Path which the Buddha mentioned for lay people in making money means not to live on work that brings harm to living beings. Buddhists are discouraged from engaging in the following five kinds of livelihood: trade in human beings, trade in weapons, trade in flesh (animals for slaughter), trade in spirits (intoxicating drinks and drug) and trade in poison. The Buddha said, “Do not earn your living by causing harm to others. Do not seek happiness by making others unhappy.”<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Schumacher is one of the Western economists who understood this fact and hence he writes: “Right livelihood is one of the requirements of the Buddha’s Noble Eightfold Path. It is clear, therefore, that there must be such a thing as Buddhist Economics”<sup>9</sup> He also mentioned that the existence of Right Livelihood as one of the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path necessitates a Buddhist economics that has a number of implications. “Firstly, it indicates the importance given to Right Livelihood (or economics) in Buddhism. Secondly, and conversely, it means that economics is taken to be merely one amongst a number of factors (traditionally eight) that comprise a right way of life, that is, one capable of solving the problems of life.”<sup>10</sup>

Anyway, the Buddhist economic idea for householders related to economic activity. They must collect property by using their own effort without destroying any living beings for

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<sup>7</sup> P. A. Payutto. *Buddhist Economics*. Translated by Ja. B. Dhammavijaya. (Bangkok: The World Buddhist University, 2009) P. 33.

<sup>8</sup> Jingying W. Y. Ho. *Buddhism key stage II*. (London: Buddhist Education Foundation, 2002) P. 34.

<sup>9</sup> Dr. Dharmasena Hettiarachchi. *Buddhist Economic Philosophy as Reflected in Early Buddhism*. (Kandy: Educational Publications Department, 1991) P. 151.

<sup>10</sup> P. A. Payutto. *Buddhist Economics a Middle Way for the Market Place*. (Bangkok: Buddhaddhamma Foundation, 1998) P. 18.

their own benefit. There are four conditions that contribute to happiness in the present and future life: “(1) Achievement in alertness (utthāna sampadā) (2) Achievement in conservation (Ārakkha sampadā) (3) Good company (kalyāna mittatā) (4) Balanced life (samajvivikatā)”<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, the Buddha’s advice in his discourse on various type of happiness in relation to wealth as according to the story of the Brahmin Ujjiya, he went to visit the Buddha to ask his advice on how to gain prosperity through right livelihood. The Buddha answered by explaining the four duties of worldly life which would lead to happiness in the present and in the future life. He gave four practical classifications on happiness of wealth:

- (1) Atthi sokkha— Happiness in the procession of wealth through righteous and legitimate means;
- (2) Bhoga sokkha— Happiness through the proper and correct usage of accumulated wealth;
- (3) Anaṇa sokkha— Happiness in being free from indebtedness to anyone; and
- (4) Anavojja sokkha— Happiness in the knowledge that no illicit or illegitimate means had been employed in the course of accumulating wealth and that no one had been harmed or injured in so doing.<sup>12</sup>

To sum up the aim of Buddhist economic principle is to remove disparities among production, distribution and consumption to regulate various influence of the economy on the people’s lives to save the individual from getting enslaved to economy. By following the Buddhist concept as Right livelihood, it will be applied in daily life and bring about the

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<sup>11</sup>Pategama Gnanarama. *Essentials of Buddhism*. (Singapore: Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc, 2000) P. 200.

<sup>12</sup> K. Sri. Dhammnanda. *Human Life and Problems*. (Kuala Lumpur: Buddhist Missionary Society Buddhist Maha Vihara, 1997) P. 23.

welfare and prosperity of the individual, the family and associates getting happiness in the present and the future life in the society.

### **Buddhist Perspective on Environmental Education**

The environment is very important for living beings. They cannot live without the natural phenomena, so scientists, scholars and the great thinkers' advise people to take care of the environment because our lives have connection with the global environment. In the same way, Buddhism also contributes to the discussion on the relationship between Buddhist thought and the environment, not only from the viewpoint of natural phenomena, the environment and the perspective of time which are basic ideas in Buddhism, but also from the perspective of values, ethics and lifestyle in modern society.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, Buddhism discussed the connection between the Buddhist way and environmental problems, and describe how Buddhist principles could contribute to the education of the current global issues in society.

Nowadays, human desire of material things is a necessary condition for the maintenance and the development of the socioeconomic system in society. Some people who want to be rich do their business without caring for nature. Thus, they create environmental problems that are not only an appearance of negative or evil passions and desires, but also a causation and manifestation of amplifying negative passions, destroying environmental resources which make climate change day by day in the modern world that causes a lot of sufferings through natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods or famine, water pollution, air pollution, soil pollution, etc.

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<sup>13</sup> Yamamoto S. *Contribution of Buddhism to Environmental Thoughts*, (The Journal of Oriental Studies, vol. 8, 1998) p. 144.

The aim of Buddhist thought is to protect and make environmental cleanliness. How can Buddhism help to solve environmental problems? To deal with environmental problems, we start with the education of a person and the human revolution will take responsibility and protection towards the environmental surrounding. In order for the individual people to begin acceptance of environmental problems as their own personal concern, so as not to destroy the relationship between each living entity and destroy the potential for being born again in the future, education becomes vital. Only education on ethics can provide the driving force for such a renewal of awareness where environmental problems become personal problems. The wisdom and ethics of Buddhism should also augment the ethical norm. This is what is meant by keeping the precepts. The attitude of Buddhism that does not cause harm towards living things as animals and plants can be understood from the first and second precept of Five Precepts (*Panca Sīla*) of Buddhism.

The first precept is ‘not killing’ Buddhism does not allow to harm or injure any living beings. Buddhist monks, nuns and lay Buddhists have to abstain from killing. There is a reference in the Vinaya Pitaka<sup>14</sup> where the Buddha made a rule when the monks were travelling during the rainy season and lay people complained that it is possible to cause injury to worms and insects that come to the surface in the wet weather, and also destroyed the growing crops and grasses of the farmers. The purpose of this rule for virtuous behavior is often stated in its prohibitory form and applies to environmental conflicts around food production, land use, pesticides and pollution. In the Mahavagga<sup>15</sup> of the Vinaya Pitaka, the Buddha asks monks not to intentionally destroy life of any living being down to worms or ants and any kind of small animals.

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<sup>14</sup> Vinaya I. 137.

<sup>15</sup> Mahavagga, I.78.4

According to Lily de Silva, “Rules about keeping the grass clean were prompted by ethical and aesthetic considerations as well as the fact that it is food for many animals. Water, whether in a river, pond or well was for public use and each individual had to use it with proper care so that others who followed could use it with the same degree of cleanliness”.<sup>16</sup> The second precept, ‘not stealing,’ engages global trade ethics and corporate exploitation of resources. Stealing natural resources and habitats from ecosystems or by exploitation from developing countries is also an offense against the precept of not stealing. “He should not intentionally steal any valuables or possessions and even those belonging to a needle or a blade of grass.”<sup>17</sup>

It is important to recognize environmental problems and the realities not only from the stand point of research results from natural and social sciences. Moreover, the actions for solving our problems, i.e. to respect and love the environment, taking personal responsibility and empowering other people, is one way to apply in our lives and live peacefully in the modern society.

### **Society and Buddhist Political Teachings**

Buddhism considered political development as very important in the society. There are many activities that need the government to lead and provide to the people such as security of the people—to protect all people living in happiness and freedom, economic principle—to develop equal economy for all people and guide them to make money in the way without being harmful to the others, education system—to provide education for all people having ability and skill to work, health service—to provide social welfare for all people to take

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<sup>16</sup> Martine Batchelor and Kerry, Brown edit. *Buddhism and Ecology*. (Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1994) P. 25.

<sup>17</sup> Kokuyaku-Issai-kyo, Daito Shuppan-sha. “*The Second Major Precept on Stealing*” of the Brahma-net Sutra. *Bonmo-kyo* (Brahma-net Sutra), *Ritsubu* vol. 12, P. 336.

care of health, employment—to create jobs and provide opportunity to all people depending on their capacity to work, and law and order—to prevent criminal activity and provide social justice. All these activities should be done by the government to protect the society.<sup>18</sup>

The Buddhist perspective of the king is like parents to the society of citizens. So the king or government makes the rules to provide the maximum security to all people. As the Wheel turning monarch (*cakkavatti-vatta*) mentioned, “The cakkavattin provides the right watch, ward and protection for his own people, for the army, for the nobles, for subordinates, for Brahmins, for householders, for own dwellers, for country, for the religious (*samanabrahamesu*), and for birds and animals.”<sup>19</sup> All these categories of people must be protected by the cakkavattin’s government based on equal rights.

Anyway, the normative king, *dhammiko dhammararāja* who is described as protector of his people and provides for the basic social requirements to the people and the creation of just social order.<sup>20</sup> The Buddha also gave advice on the ten virtues or duties of a king (*rajādhamma*):

(1) Generosity (2) Morality (3) Altruism (4) Honesty (5) Kindness (6) Self-control (7) Non-anger (8) Nonviolence (9) Forbearance (10) Uprightness.

The Buddha advised that these ten virtues of the king or leader be applied in the political system to guide the social development. The people will live happily by supporting the social requirements such as freedom, economic development, good education, welfare and social justice.

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<sup>18</sup> Prof. Kapila Abhayawansa. *Society and Buddhist political teaching*. His lecture 9 at IBC, on February, 22, 2018.

<sup>19</sup> Thich Nhat Tu. *Engaged Buddhism, Social Change and World Peace*. (Hanoi: Vietnam Buddhist University Publications, 2015) P. 25

<sup>20</sup> Chakravarti Uma. *The Social Dimensions of Early Buddhism*. (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1996) P. 164.

Furthermore, the king should have the four sublime states (*Brahma-vihara*) as found in the *Tevijja sutta*: (1) *Mettā*—loving-kindness which seeks to overcome the human vice of anger in the mind; (2) *Karunā*—compassion which seeks to overcome the vice of cruelty in the mind; (3) *Muditā*—appreciative joy which seeks to overcome the vice of jealousy in the mind and (4) *Upekkhā*—equanimity which seeks to overcome the vice of restlessness. And he should avoid the four kind of partialities (*Agati*): partiality of a loved one, partiality of a hatred one, partiality of ignorance and partiality of fear of the power of someone. Then the society will be peaceful and harmonious.

Buddhism considers the political aspect as very important where the leader has to provide the social requirements for all citizens. When the country has a leader who cultivates the ten virtues, the four sublime states and avoid the four kinds of partialities, the people will live in freedom, enjoying equal opportunities, good education and welfare services and so on.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper is written the theoretical knowledge of Buddhism and society. Therefore, I highlighted the Buddhist way of life showing how to earn money through economic principles without harming others, to take care environment and political teachings for living a peaceful life. The main important point on how to deal with the social problems is to understand the main teaching of the Four Noble Truth and the Noble Eightfold Path reflecting on: What are the problems in the society, the causes of the problems in society, to end these problems and how to deal with these problems. These principles will enable one to understand the social life, economic principle, intellectual and spiritual development and can be applied to the social and other aspects of development of human society. Then there will be harmony, peace, freedom, and happiness in the society and the whole world.



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# **Cambodian Buddhists' Response to the French Protectorate**

By San Pisith

## **Introduction**

Under the French colonialism of nearly one hundred years (1854-1953), Buddhism in Cambodia was dramatically changed. The French protectorate transformed several administrative systems in Cambodia, affecting the daily life of Khmer Buddhists both negatively and positively. The conservative groups viewed the French reforms at the time were too dangerous to their ancient civilizations. Nevertheless, the modernist factions viewed the policy of the French Protectorate had the potential to bring prosperous development to Cambodia.

## **The Modernization of the Monastic Education**

Since the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, Buddhism had received a remarkable attention from the western world. In the eyes of the western scholars, the authenticity of Buddhism had been weakened due to a mixture of Buddhist teachings and local traditions, i.e., superstitious beliefs, folk religion and miraculous elements. To modernize Buddhist studies in Cambodia, the protectorate official organized an administration of French-patronized Buddhist education in Cambodia. The primary purpose of the administration was to reduce mythology which was popularly practiced in Khmer Buddhist community and to translate the authentic texts into local language in order to express Buddhism in scientific terms and to emphasize the origin of Buddhism in the Indian cultural context. In addition, the French protectorate also wanted to stop the cultural influence of Thailand over Khmer Buddhism through their successful reformed movement of monastic education.

Three western scholars who worked for the French School of the Far East or the École Française d'Extrême-Orient (Henceforth EFEO)<sup>1</sup> were seen to work closely with Khmer modernist group and they played major roles in this modernizing work. They were Louis Finot (1864-1935), George Coedes (1886-1969), and Suzanne Karpeles (c. 1890-1969).<sup>2</sup> These Three EFEO scholars impressed Khmer Buddhist scholars a lot with their marvelous knowledge of Buddhism as well as Southeast Asian cultures, languages, and history.<sup>3</sup>

As a matter of fact, before the French protectorate, the movement of Buddhist reformation has already taken place since the beginning of the reign of King Ang Duong. As a Buddhist king, Ang Duong had a moral responsibility to uphold and purify the *Sāsana* or religion by re-collecting the texts which had been lost or destroyed during the war with Siam and Vietnam.<sup>4</sup> It was his duty to show his concerning behavior towards the monastic education of the Saṅgha and to save the declining Dhamma texts. Having seen the obscure and feeble situation of Buddhism in Cambodia, King Ang Duong is said to have written to King Mongkut (Rāma IV), a successful pioneer and reformer of Siamese education system, requesting a copy of the Tipiṭaka because at that time the Pāli canonical texts in Cambodia was incomplete.

Because of facing the war crisis for many years, the Buddhist library collections of King Ang Duong was still not enough to meet the needs of the Khmer monks who wanted to re-establish Buddhist learning. Most Khmer monks travelled to Thailand to collect the religious texts and to

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<sup>1</sup> The EFEO was founded in 1900 to initiate a comprehensive program of research concerning the history of religion, archaeology, philology and political system in Asian countries.

<sup>2</sup> Anne Hansen. *How to Behave: Buddhism and Modernity*. 125.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Anne Hansen. "Modernist Reform in Khmer Buddhist History." *Sikhsacakr: The Journal of the Center for Khmer Studies*. 154–174.

advance their further education there for years. Several Buddhist monks went to continue their higher education and returned to Cambodia carrying with them numeral religious texts, commentaries (*Maṅgaladīpanī*, *Sāratthasaṅgaha*), several *Jātakas* and a number of manuals on meditation practice.<sup>5</sup> The tradition of acquiring religious texts and pursuing higher education in Siam continued from the reign of King Ang Duong to the early twentieth century.

Having seen the difficulty of Khmer Buddhist monks in looking for higher education in their neighboring country, in 1909, the first director of the EFEO Louis Finot helped Saṅghareach Tieng (the Supreme Patriarch of the Saṅgha) to establish the *Écoles Supérieures de Théologie Bouddhique* (Henceforth ESTB), the Advanced School of Buddhist Theology in Siam Reap, the old capital city of the Angkor empire. The ESTB has played a major part in standardizing the higher monastic education in a more academic way than in the past and stemming the Siamese influences over Khmer monks who went to Siam at the time.<sup>6</sup> A few years later, Khmer monks had been prohibited from going to study in foreign countries especially in Siam.

The new establishment of the ESTB tells us about the highest interest of western scholars and Khmer modernist group in purifying and modernizing Buddhist education by developing the knowledge of ancient sacred language, Pāli and Sanskrit in order to trace back to the authenticity of Early Buddhism. The ESTB, however, faced serious problems due to some constraints, i.e., lack of financial support, poor recruitment, and geographical inaccessibility, causing students and teachers who felt reluctant to isolate themselves from the city.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the ESTB survived only two years in its former glorious Angkor land. In 1911, it was finally shifted to Phnom Penh and

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

changed its name to the Advanced Pāli School or the École Supérieure de Pāli (Henceforth ESP).<sup>8</sup> Under the leadership of Ven. Mahā Vimaladhamma Thong, the first director of the ESP and a leading monastic reformer, the higher Buddhist learning center was more successful after moving to Phnom Penh. Saṅghareach Tieng and Ven. Mahā Vimaladhamma Thong put their efforts in promoting a reformed Buddhist education in Cambodia. As a leading reformist monk, Ven. Mahā Vimaladhamma Thong “advocated pedagogical methods”<sup>9</sup> such as the grammatical study of Pāli texts and translation of *Tipitaka* texts. The ESP had produced significant nationalists and scholars such as Ven. Chuon Nath and Ven. Huot Tath, who were regarded as the most outstanding figures in the modern Dhamma movement.

To assist the study of Cambodian people, in 1912, EFEO scholar George Coedes together with Khmer intellectual group is said to have a discussion concerning the possibility of the establishment of the Khmer national library. The report of George Coedes commented that “the inventory of pagodas that I have made during my recent visit to Cambodia has convinced me that this country possesses as much richness as its neighbors and it would require only a minor effort to constitute a library capable of rivaling the Bernard Free Library of Rangoon or the Vajirañāṇa [Library] of Bangkok.”<sup>10</sup> In 1921, the National Library was established, and it has been renamed the Royal Library (Henceforth RL) in 1925 and was officially inaugurated by King Sisowath, a son of King Ang Duong and a half-brother of King Norodom. Suzanne Karpelès was chosen as the first curator of the RL.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Harris. *Cambodian Buddhism: History and Practice*. 128.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Hansen. “Modernist Reform in Khmer Buddhist History.” *Siksacakra*. 33-4. Print.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Khing Hoc Dy. “Suzanne Karpeles and the Buddhist Institute.” *Siksacakra: The Journal of the Center for Khmer Studies*. 55.

The establishment of the RL was very beneficial for the process of the educational reform movement at that time since the main purpose of the RL was to conserve manuscripts, collect printed books, publish the texts in Khmer and French related to the history, religion, literature, art, politic.<sup>12</sup> In order to expand the scope of the its new publications, two popular Buddhist journals viz *Kambujasuriyā* and *Gandhamālā* was introduced in 1926 and 1927.<sup>13</sup> These two journals had slightly different missions, i.e. the *Gandhamālā* primarily intended to promote the new critical writings of students and professors at the ESP while the *Kambujasuriyā* generally focused on the publishing works of religious works, classical literatures, folktales, and novels. *Kambujasuriyā* was considered as a forum of serious scholarship in Cambodia as well.<sup>14</sup> The habit of reading and writing of well-educated Buddhists was tremendously changed since these journals were introduced in Cambodian society.

As a curator of the RL, Suzanne Karpelès suggested a register at the library to ask the monks and other visitors leave a record of their names and the titles of any books, scriptures, texts that they wished to read.<sup>15</sup> The increasing demand of readers encouraged new publications of printed books and translations of the Pāli texts into Khmer language. The number of readers was increased from year to year. In 1926, the library had a total of 3,382 readers; in 1927 there were 4,371 readers; in 1930, there 5,437 readers, “who borrowed 334 manuscripts and 1,1118 printed books and reviews.”<sup>16</sup> Book selling also increased in Cambodia. In 1926, several thousand volumes of the

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<sup>12</sup> Hansen. *How to Behave: Buddhism and Modernity*. 144. Print

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> David A. Smyth. “Khmer Literature.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 30 Nov. 2014. Web. 01 Mar. 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Hansen. *How to Behave: Buddhism and Modernity*. 144.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 144-5.

*Gihipaṭipatti*, a book written by Chuon Nath on lay Buddhists' conduct and the other printed books on similar themes had been sold.<sup>17</sup>

More importantly, the presence of the RL was regarded as a contributing factor in the establishment of the Buddhist Institute in 1930. Suzanne Karpelès visited a number of Khmer Buddhist communities and temples while she was on a mission to Cochinchina in 1929. Her visit to Cochinchina may have caused her to make a proposal to the colonial authority to establish the Buddhist Institute to respond to the needs of the ESP, museums, libraries as well as to promote and study Theravāda Buddhism.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the founding of the Buddhist Institute was to reduce the influence of Thai Buddhism (Dhammayutika Nikāya) on Cambodian monks at that time as well. The institute has gained great popularity among Khmer Buddhists through its important works, such as overseeing the work of editing, translating, and organizing the “Tipiṭaka Commission” to translate the entire Pāli canonical text into Khmer language.<sup>19</sup> The “Tipiṭaka Commission” was led by prominent modernist monks viz., Lvī-Em, Uṃ-Sūr, Chuon Nath, and Huot Tath.<sup>20</sup> The project of producing and printing the entire Pāli-Khmer Tipiṭaka took more than forty years to complete.<sup>21</sup> The establishment of advanced learning centers and mission of translating the Pāli canonical text into Khmer language was a tremendous step for Khmer Buddhism to move from its traditional way to a modern, rationalistic, and authentic form of Buddhism.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Hoc Dy. “Suzanne Karpelès and the Buddhist Institute.” *Siksacakr...*55.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Hansen. *How to Behave: Buddhism and Modernity*. 145.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



## The Involvement of Cambodian Saṅgha in the Nationalist Movement

Although the main purpose of the Buddhist monks is to dedicate their lives to the spiritual practice in order to attain the highest fruit of *Nibbāna* and to liberate themselves from the cycle of existence, it is very difficult for them to completely cut off their relationship from the worldly society. Their daily lives are more or less involved in the social environment, political revolution or nationalist movement. Since the early nineteenth to twentieth century, we have witnessed the nationalist sentiment emerging in the community of the Saṅgha in Cambodia against the invasion and colonialism of foreign countries especially Annam and the French authority. As a matter of fact, during the colonialism, there were different forms of nationalist movements arising from both religious and secular sectors, but only the Buddhist-based nationalist movement will be explained here.

When the nation fell into any crisis, besides preaching religious sermons and performing ritual acts, Buddhist monks were also viewed as custodians of Khmer tradition, literature and identity. They actively challenged any foreign ideologies which attempted to eliminate the Khmer culture. For instance, in 1820, a monk named Kai led a nationalist movement against the Vietnamese authorities who tried to eliminate Khmer cultures by forcing the Khmer kings, ministers and people to follow Vietnamese customs. Kai was popularly believed to have magical powers to free the Khmer nation from the influence of Vietnam. To persuade people to join his movement, Kai who also practiced the Buddhist rituals proclaimed himself as a *Neak Sel* (a person possessing magical powers) and followed *Vethamon* (the traditional Mon-Khmer occult practice). He had *Yantra* tattooing (mystic diagram) on his body and wore a *Katha* (a protective amulet) in

order to achieve strength, invulnerability, and invincibility.<sup>22</sup> The tradition of ritual *Katha* and *Yantra* had a long history in Cambodia. It originated from an ancient culture of the people of the Khmer Empire. Evidently, a mystic diagram of *Yantra* engraved on the foundation stone of the Bat Chum temple dates from the middle of the tenth century. Another evidence was found in the late thirteenth century account of the Chinese diplomat Zhou Daguan who visited Cambodia and described the Khmer king as wearing a magical *Katha* (a protective amulet) to protect himself from arrows, swords, and other weapons.<sup>23</sup> This culture is not only popular in Khmer society, but it also spreads to neighboring countries such as Thailand, Laos and Myanmar. The *Katha* and *Yantra* is designed by a sage, ritual practitioner, and Buddhist monk who is believed to have magical powers. The Khmer script is regarded as a sacred language for writing on the *Katha* and tattooing a mystical *Yantra* on the skin.

Another renown nationalist movement was led by a former monk named Po Kambo against the oppressive taxation policy of King Norodom and his French protector in 1865-1867.<sup>24</sup> Po Kambo led the people to rebel against King Norodom, accusing him of being an *Adhammikaṛājā* (an unrighteous King), because he was incapable of leading his own country, and he brought France to colonize the Khmer. Considering Khmer society was in social catastrophe, Po Kambo used the millenarianism method to draw people to join his movement to oppose the king and the French authority. The Khmer millenarianism basically depended on the Buddhist cosmological idea relating to the degeneration and regeneration of the Dhamma, and emphasized the importance

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<sup>22</sup> Harris. *Cambodian Buddhism: History and Practice*. 133.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 60.

<sup>24</sup> Hansen. *How to Behave: Buddhism and Modernity*. 59.

of the individual purification and, in particular, the king who did not follow the *Dasavidha-rājadhamma*.<sup>25</sup>

The movement coincided with the rise of *Buddha-daṃṇāy* (a prophecy of the Buddha) in the mid-to late nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup> The *Buddha-daṃṇāy* was originally introduced by an anonymous nineteenth century sage who prophesized that a man with magical powers (*Dhammikarāja*) will come to rescue the people of Cambodia from the political turmoil and moral disorder. Some Cambodians even accepted it as the prediction of the Buddha and it was spread by that sage.<sup>27</sup> The movement and the prophesy inspired people to believe in the arrival of the Metteya (the future Buddha) or *Dhammikarājā* (a righteous King) as savior-ruler figure after a period of social chaos “in which only a few people would be saved because of their good actions, but many more would be lost because of their immorality.”<sup>28</sup> Gradually, the followers of Po Kambo regarded him as *Neak Mean Puṇya* (a person possessing merit) and *Dhammikarāja* who came to restore Cambodia from chaotic situation. Even though the movement was entirely unsuccessful and Po Kambo was finally arrested and executed, it provided a breeding ground for the other Khmer nationalists who were dissatisfied with the policy of the French colonialism.

Another historic movement of the Khmer nationalist group against the policy of the French colonialism was known as the “Umbrella War,” a demonstration led by several thousand monks and lay people in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia to protest against the misbehavior of the

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<sup>25</sup> *Dasavidha-rājadhamma* (tenfold virtue of the ruler): 1. *Dāna* (charity), 2. *Sīla* (morality) 3. *Pariccāga* (munificence), 4. *Ājjava* (straightforwardness), 5. *Maddava* (gentleness), 6. *Tapa* (restraint), 7. *Akkodha* (non-anger), 8. *Avihimsa* (non-violence), 9. *Khanti* (forbearance), and 10. *Avirodhana* (uprightness). [Khud., Jātaka V, 378]

<sup>26</sup> Hansen. *How to Behave: Buddhism and Modernity*. 60.

<sup>27</sup> Carol A. Mortland. *Cambodian Buddhism in the United States*. 23-4.

<sup>28</sup> Hansen. *How to Behave: Buddhism and Modernity*. 59.

French authorities towards Buddhist monks and to call for the release of Venerable Hem Chieu (1898 – 1943).<sup>29</sup> Venerable Hem Chieu was a professor at the ESP and an outstanding nationalist figure during the French colonial period. He worked closely with other renowned nationalist activists, viz., Son Ngoc Thanh (1908 – 1977), and Pach Chheoun (1896 – 1971) etc., to raise the awareness of the value of Khmer nationalism. Venerable Hem Chieu was known as one of the most prominent activists who strongly opposed the French colonial policy which attempted to Romanize the Khmer writing system. He viewed the replacing of the Khmer traditional writing with the Romanized system as “an attack on both traditional learning and the status of traditional monastic educators.”<sup>30</sup>

To inspire the nationalist movement in Khmer society, Venerable Hem Chieu widely travelled to deliver anti-French colonial sermon to the people of Cambodia. On July 18, 1942 Venerable Hem Chieu and a number of other monks were arrested, defrocked and imprisoned for their anti-colonial sentiment.<sup>31</sup> Having seen the misbehavior of the French authorities who forcibly defrock the Buddhist monks, several thousand Buddhists monks and lay followers organized a peaceful demonstration to demand the release of Venerable Hem Chieu and his colleagues. The protest was generally known as the “Umbrella War” because the demonstrators especially Buddhist monks carried umbrellas. Nonetheless, the demonstration was unsuccessful and severely suppressed by the authorities. Many demonstrators and authorities were injured in the event and some were arrested. Finally, Venerable Hem Chieu was transferred to the Koh Tralach<sup>32</sup> or Poulo

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<sup>29</sup> Penny Edwards. *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation, 1860-1945*. 6.

<sup>30</sup> Harris. *Cambodian Buddhism: History and Practice*. 139.

<sup>31</sup> John A. Tully. *A Short History of Cambodia: From Empire to Survival*. 108.

<sup>32</sup> Koh Tralach was a former island of the Khmer Empire. It was settle by Vietnamese in the seventeenth century and changed its name to Côn Đảo Island. During the French colonial era, the island was known as

Condor island—a high security prison of the French colonial authorities. The prison was infamous for its penal facilities and the notorious tiger cages. Several Cambodian and Vietnamese nationalist activists were put in there to serve their sentences for the anti-colonial movement. Venerable Hem Chieu was severely tortured and finally died there in 1943.<sup>33</sup> His ashes were brought back to Cambodia in July 1972, the thirtieth anniversary of his arrest, by order of Lon Nol, the Commander-in-Chief of the Khmer National Armed Forces and the president of Cambodia. Although the revolutionary struggle of Venerable Hem Chieu was entirely unsuccessful, it provided a breeding ground and modern form of movement for the other nationalists who sought for the full independence of the Khmer nation. His heroic effort is usually taken to remind the Khmer people about the primary responsibility of citizens for their nation and to promote the sentimental value of nationalism.

### **The Controversy between the Traditionalists and the Reformists**

The community of Saṅgha in Cambodia is mainly separated into two groups (Nikāya), viz., Dhammayuttika Nikāya (adhere to the Dhamma) and Mahānikāya (Larger Group). There is slight differences between these two groups in terms of doctrine, and interpretation of some elements of the monastic disciplines, i.e., how to wear robes, how to wear sandals, how to carry alms-bowl, and how to pronounce the Pāli terms and to recite Suttas.<sup>34</sup>

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Poulo-Condore. Many Cambodian and Vietnamese nationalists were sent there to serve their sentences for raising the awareness of anti-colonial sentiment.

<sup>33</sup> Charles F. Keyes. "Communist Revolution and the Buddhist Past in Cambodia." Ed. Laurel Kendall, Helen Hardacre, and Charles F. Keyes. *Asian Visions of Authority: Religion and the Modern States of East and Southeast Asia* 54.2 (1994): 50-1.

<sup>34</sup> Ian Charles Harris. "Buddhist Saṅgha Groupings in Cambodia." Ed. Russell Webb, Bhikkhu Pāsādika, and Sara Boin Webb. *Buddhist Studies Review* 18.1 (2010): 84.

Dhammayuttika Nikāya was firstly introduced into Cambodia in 1855 by King Norodom through the agency of Venerable Mahā Pan (1824–1894).<sup>35</sup> Before ascending the throne, King Norodom spent a length of time in Thailand as a hostage.<sup>36</sup> It is stated that while he was spending his time in Thailand, he had previously been a monk at Wat Bowonnivet, the headquarter of Dhammayuttika Nikāya in Bangkok. Therefore, it is no doubt that the influence of Thai Dhammayuttika Nikāya flourished in Cambodia under the patronage of the King and the collaborative effort of some learned monks especially Mahā Pan who had spent so many years in Thailand studying newly reformed Buddhism of King Mongkut. Pan was a native of Battambang, a north western province of Cambodia. He left home to take the monastic life in Bangkok at the age of twelve. He seems to have been ordained in 1849, first in the Mahānikāya Wat Saket but a little later at the Thommayut Wat Bowonnivet. Pan returned home with a delegation of eight monks representing the Dhammayuttika of King Mongkut bringing bundles of some eighty sacred writings. A Cambodian branch of the Thommayuttika was firstly established at Wat Neak Tā Soeng<sup>37</sup> under royal patronage, probably around 1855. Mahā Pan became its first leader. King Norodom latter erected Wat Bodum Vaddey specifically for Dhammayuttika orders and then he appointed Mahā Pan as the first Saṅghareach, the Supreme Patriarch of Dhammayuttitka orders. Based on some scholars, the impartation of the new form of Dhammyuttika Nikāya in Cambodia signified the extent of the religious domination as well as the political ascendancy of Siam at the time.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 83.

<sup>36</sup> Harris. *Cambodian Buddhism: History and Practice*. 105.

<sup>37</sup> Neak Tā Soeng temple may have been subsequently re-named Wat Sugndh Mean Bon in honor of Mahā Pan.

<sup>38</sup> Thompson. "Buddhism in Cambodia: The Rupture and the Continuity." *Buddhism in World Cultures: Comparative Perspectives*. Ed. Stephen C. Berkwitz. 135.

Even though Dhammayuttika monks had a close relationship with the monarchy and enjoyed considerable advantages from them, they still received little popularity from the common people because their religious activities were often less engaged in the real situation of Cambodian society compared to the existing Mahānikāya orders, who represented the majority of the monastic Saṅgha at that time. On the other hand, most of Cambodian Buddhists viewed that Dhammayuttika Nikāya had strong allegiance to the Thai court.<sup>39</sup>

Under the leadership of Mahā Pan, the Supreme Patriarch of Dhammayuttika Nikāya, a number of sacred writings were brought from Thailand to Cambodia. Apart from sacred writings, the Visākha Būjā (Pūjā), the triple celebration of the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha was also introduced to Cambodia by Mahā Pan in 1855. The Visākha Būjā firstly instituted in Thailand around 1817 under King Rāma II.<sup>40</sup> The reform of Dhammayuttika faction also had some visible influences on some young members of the Mahānikāya groups as well. Some Mahānikāya monks started to adopt the manners and customs of the Dhammayuttika particularly the pronunciation of Pāli and the style of wearing monastic robes.<sup>41</sup>

The cultural influences of Thai Buddhism on Cambodia raised a serious concern over the unity of the Khmer national religion. Some members of the conservative Mahānikāya regarded the new introduction of Thai Buddhist traditions by the newly established Dhammayuttika order as a damaging factor, which could cause the internal conflict in the Khmer national as well as the monastic community. The conservative group did whatever they possibly could to prevent the import of Thai Buddhist cultures.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Harris. *Cambodian Buddhism: History and Practice*. 107.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

The controversy did not just arise between the newly formed Dhammyuttika and the existing Mahānikāya, but also it happened between the traditional and modernist Mahānikāya as well. Since the early twentieth century, the modernizing and rationalizing movement was arisen within the monastic members of the Mahānikāya. The movement was known as Dhammakāya or “New Mahānikāya.” Ven. Mahā Vimaladhamma Thong (1862–1927), the director of the ESP, was generally regarded as the founder of this newly modernist movement.<sup>42</sup> Several prominent scholar monks such Ven. Chuon Nath (1883–1969; Saṅghareach 1948–1969) and Ven. Huot Tath (1891–1975; Saṅghareach 1969–1975) were included in this movement. Ven. Chuon Nath and Ven. Huot Tath had studied critical scholarship in Saigon<sup>43</sup> (1922–3), the capital of the French colony of Cochinchina under Louis Finot, Director of the École Française d’Extrême-Orient (EFEO), and Victor Goloubew.<sup>44</sup>

Ven. Chuon Nath and Ven. Huot Tath had played a very significant role in modernizing and rationalizing the monastic education in Cambodia. Nevertheless, their works were not warmly welcomed by the traditionalist side. For instance, in 1916, Ven. Chuon Nath, Ven. Huot Tatha, and Ven. Ūṃ Sūr<sup>45</sup> were selected, to deliver a sermon to the royal family, by Rev. Ker Ouk,<sup>46</sup> the Acting Patriarch of the Mahānikāya faction. Their preaching particularly stressed on the

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 115.

<sup>43</sup> Saigon was a former name of Ho Chi Minh City. It is also known as Prey Nokor, "Forest City" or Preah Reach Nokor which according to Khmer chronicle meant "Royal City." Prey Nokor was former city of Cambodia, but it was annexed by Vietnam in the seventeenth century.

<sup>44</sup> Harris. “Buddhist Saṅgha Groupings in Cambodia.” 78. Print.

<sup>45</sup> Ūṃ Sūr (1880-1939) had been considered as one of the prominent scholar monks at that period.

<sup>46</sup> After the death of Saṅghareach Tieng, the Supreme Patriarch of Mahānikāya group in 1914, eventually King Sisowath appointed Dhammalikhit Ker Ouk as the head of Mahānikāya order; however, the official title Saṅghareach was never awarded to Ker Ouk because he was regarded as an ill-educated monk by the modernist side. Ker Ouk was included in the conservative order, who strongly opposed to any reformed movement in the monastic Saṅgha. Finally, Ker Ouk died in 1936 without receiving the official title Saṅghareach.



misinterpretation of the monastic discipline by some traditionalists. In addition, they also argued that many traditional texts had been corrupted by later monks that could not be regarded as the real words of the Buddha.<sup>47</sup> As a result of doing this, stones were thrown at Ven. Chuon Nath and Ven. Huot Tath by their rival group.<sup>48</sup>

In response to the misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the traditionalist monks, Ven. Chuon Nath composed a number of works on the monastic discipline and modern idea of rationalism in order to discourage the recitation of mantras, practice of magic, water sprinkling, and healing. In his work, *My Spiritual Friend (Kalyāṇa Mitta Robos Khñum)*, Huoth Tath described how the older, higher-ranking order forbidding young monks from coming to listen or study the monastic discipline with his group. The conservative monks criticized the teaching of monastic discipline of young scholar monks as a deviation from the traditional practice of Buddhism.<sup>49</sup> To promote the demythologized and rationalized Buddhism, Chuon Nath, Huot Tath, and Ūṃ Sūr organized a group to edit and translate new version of the monastic disciplines and secretly circulated them. Huot Tath wrote:

The three of us [Chuon Nath, Huot Tath, and Ūṃ Sūr] united together to lead all the other Bhikkhus, urging them to try and make the effort to read the Buddhist scriptures, commentaries and manuals on conduct [*Gambhīr-ṭīkā-kpuon-cpāp*] and to extract the exact meanings, which before this time, monks often did not understand, or if they did, only in a superficial or faltering way...

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<sup>47</sup> Harris. *Cambodian Buddhism: History and Practice*. 117. Print.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Huot Tath. *Kalyāṇa Mitta Robos Khñum [My Spiritual Friend]* (Phnom Penh: Buddhist Institute, 1993) 9.

We carried out this work at night, from 8:00 to midnight, in Brah Grū Saṅghastthā Chuon Nath's *Kuṭi*, along with Brah Grū Vimalapaññā Ūṃ-Sūr, who met with us to help with this work...

At that time, nearly all of the monks and novices at Vatt Uṇṇālom had experienced awakening. They wanted to know right and wrong, and we could not remain quiet and unresponsive any longer. Even some monks and novices associated with monasteries where all of the [other] monks belonged to the faction that remained hard-hearted toward the *Dharm-vināy* studied secretly, to gain competence in *Dharm-vināy* in order to gain knowledge along with all the rest of us.<sup>50</sup>

It appeared to be very difficult for them to publish their works because any work relating to Buddhism was required the permission from both Supreme Patriarchs: Dhammayuttika and Mahānikāya. On the other hand, the works of Ven. Chuon Nath seemed consequently affected the majority of the traditionalist Mahānikāya as well as Dhammayuttika camp. Furthermore, the traditionalist monks opposed to the modern printing works “on the grounds that they undermined the magico-religious character embodied in palm-leaf texts.”<sup>51</sup> Sooner or later, the group of high-ranking monks from traditionalist camp lobbied King Sisovath to issue an ordinance specifically referring to the split between modernists and traditionalists forbidding teaching reforms or spreading among the faithful modern ideas which cause conflict with traditional religion.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Hansen. “Modernist Reform in Khmer Buddhist History.” *Siksacakra: The Journal of the Center for Khmer Studies*, Edited by Michel Rethy Antelme. 37.

<sup>51</sup> Harris. *Cambodian Buddhism: History and Practice*. 118.

<sup>52</sup> Harris. “Buddhist Saṅgha Groupings in Cambodia.” 78.

Therefore, Ven. Chuon Nath apparently encountered many obstacles to obtain an authorization from the both Supreme Patriarchs to publish his works.

Notwithstanding the opposition from the conservative members of Saṅgha, his works particularly *Samaṇeravinaya*, a critical article “of some of the noncanonical accretions that had grown up in the life of the order”<sup>53</sup> was broadly circularized in the form of underground press. The author of the book was summoned by the Minister of Cults and Religious Affairs for several times on the account of the publication without authorization. Nonetheless, his unauthorized publication had received remarkable admiration from both monastic proponent and aristocratic families. Finally, Oknya Khet gained a permission from the *résident supérieur* to have five hundred copies of the book printed in order to dedicate the meritorious deed to his recently deceased parents.

When the book was finally released in 1920, the name of Huot Tath and Ūṃ Sūr were also put alongside with its actual author Ven. Chuon Nath on the cover of the book as an act of solidarity. The Mahānikāya Supreme Patriarch tried to impose his authority by arguing that the whole work was a violation of the Royal Ordinance No. 71. Therefore, he sought the permission from the King to expel all the three young monks from Wat Uṇṇālom, the headquarters of the Mahānikāya order.<sup>54</sup> The intervention from the Supreme Patriarch was entirely unsuccessful since the critical works of the young monks quite impressed King Sisowath and his son Sisowath Monivong, the future king. After having his work published, Ven. Chuon Nath was publicly known

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<sup>53</sup> Harris. *Cambodian Buddhism: History and Practice*. 118.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

as a rising star of the modernizing group. His reformist movement had a great influence on many young monks during the early twentieth century.<sup>55</sup>

To preserve Khmer language and identity, King Sisowath founded the Kingdom's Royal Committee in September 1915. Eleven senior monks such as Ven. Ker Ouk, Ven. Thong, Achar Ind and several others were appointed by the King to work on a definitive Cambodian dictionary; however, the progress was quite slow because of the dispute that broke out between some members of the commission and the Council of Ministers. Having seen the work of the committee was not progressive, King Sisowath reactivated the commission again in July 1926. Some new members were added to the new commission, and Ven. Chuon Nath was amongst them. Gradually, Chuon Nath took all the responsibility to prepare the first Khmer Modern Dictionary (*Vacanānukram* Khmer). His first edition of the Khmer dictionary finally appeared in two volumes and published by the Buddhist Institute in 1938 and 1943.<sup>56</sup> Through his considerable effort to compile the Khmer Dictionary, Ven. Chuon Nath is regarded as the Father of the Khmer Language and the Khmer Dictionary is generally known as *Vacanānukram Samdech Chuon Nath* or 'Chuon Nath's Dictionary.'

Another major accomplishment of the modernist monks was the translations of the Buddhist texts. Under the presidency of Suzanne Karpelès, the Buddhist Institute had played a very significant role in promoting the works of the modernist group. Numerous Buddhist texts mostly concerning with conduct and behavior had been translated by the reformist monks, i.e., *Pātimokkha* (Disciplinary Code of the Monastic Saṅgha), *Kaṭṭhinakhandhaka* (Chapter Concerning

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<sup>55</sup> Stuart Alan Becker. "Chuon Nath: Guardian of Cambodian Culture." *Phnom Penh Post*. Post Media Co Ltd 888 Building H, 8th Floor Phnom Penh Center Corner Sothearos & Sihanouk Blvd Sangkat Tonle Bassac 120101 Phnom Penh Cambodia, 08 Apr. 2011. Web. 20 Mar. 2018.

<sup>56</sup> Harris. *Cambodian Buddhism: History and Practice*. 19.

the Making of Robes), *Gahipaṭṭipatti* (Conduct for Lay People), *Gahivinaya* (Vinaya for Lay People) etc.<sup>57</sup> The remarkable achievement of the modernist group was the translation of the whole Pāli Tipiṭaka. In order to purify, rationalize and to trace back to the authentic Buddhism, the Cambodian Tipiṭaka Commission was established in 1929 and the first volume of *Vinaya Piṭaka* was published by the Buddhist Institute in 1931.<sup>58</sup> After the publishing of the edition of *Vinaya Piṭaka* that had caused a controversy from the conservative group, they argued that the publication of the Tipiṭaka in Pāli-Khmer version could deteriorate the original teachings of the Buddha. Traditionally, the conservative group considered the Pāli text as a holy script or even as magical *mantra* which contains a miraculous power within it. Besides such criticism from the traditionalists, the Tipiṭaka Commission successfully completed their entire Pāli Canon translation in 1968, and 110 volumes of the Tipiṭaka in Pāli-Khmer version was finally published by the Buddhist Institute at the end of that year.<sup>59</sup> Until April 1st, 1969, the official inauguration of the Tipiṭaka in Pāli-Khmer version was held in all monasteries throughout the Kingdom of Cambodia.

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With the support of the Royal Library, Buddhist Institute, the Ecole Supérieure de Pāli, the reformist movement of the modernist monks seemed to reach their highest achievement in rationalizing and purifying the traditional form of Buddhism in Cambodia. In addition, the presence of great scholar monks such as Ven. Chuon Nath, Ven. Huot That, Ven. Ūṇ Sūr and

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<sup>57</sup> Hansen. "Modernist Reform in Khmer Buddhist History." *Sikṣacakra: The Journal of the Center for Khmer Studies*, Edited by Michel Rethy Antelme. 37-8.

<sup>58</sup> Khing Hoc Dy. "Suzanne Karpeles and the Buddhist Institute." *Sikṣacakra: The Journal of the Center for Khmer Studies*. 56.

<sup>59</sup> Chhat Sreang, Yin Sambor, Seng Hoc Meng, and Soum Surasey. *Pravatti Saṅkhep Buddhasāsanapaṇḍitya [A Short History of the Buddhist Institute]*. Ed. Penny Edwards (Phnom Penh: Buddhist Institute, 2005) 39-40.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

others provided the conservative group as well as the newly established Dhammayuttika Nikāya a difficult situation to compete with the reformist movement.

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## Representations of Maitreya in Chinese *Āgama*-s

By Teo Chuan Ann

### Introduction

Maitreya is one of the most popular figures amongst the pantheon of Buddhist personages. He is the only bodhisattva other than Gautama to be venerated by adherents from Theravāda, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna and depicted in all the Buddhist canons. His early representations are found in both the Pāli *Nikāya*-s and Chinese *Āgama*-s, extant *sūtra* corpus of Śrāvakayāna.<sup>1</sup> The *Āgama*-s, compared to *Nikāya*-s, contain more references to Maitreya as a bodhisattva. This is attested by Elsa Legittimo's calculation that the bodhisattva occurs more than 34 times in the *Āgama*-s compared to the single occurrence in the *Nikāya*-s.<sup>2</sup>

Such a conspicuous disparity should inevitably attract scholarly interest in the Chinese representations of Maitreya. Surprisingly, it does not. Many scholars published works on Maitreya without reference to his depictions in the *Āgama*-s. A case in point is Lewis Lancaster, an eminent American scholar in Buddhist Studies. His entry on Maitreya in the *Encyclopedia of Religions* is an outstanding piece of scholarship.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, he treated Maitreya's presence in the *Āgama* corpus with only silence.

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<sup>1</sup> Śrāvakayāna is a generic term referring to the different early Buddhist schools to which both *Nikāya*-s and *Āgama*-s belonged.

<sup>2</sup> Elsa I. Legittimo, "Reopening the Maitreya-files: Two Almost Identical Early *Sūtra* Translations in the Chinese Canon," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 31, no. 1-2 (2010): 263.

<sup>3</sup> Lewis Lancaster, "Maitreya," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, Mircea Eliade, and Charles J. Adams, vol. 8, (New York: Macmillian Reference, 2005), 5618-23.

Even if scholars do acknowledge the occurrence of Maitreya in the *Āgama*-s, we are nowhere nearer in gaining clarity about his representations in these Chinese collections. Decades earlier, the great Belgian scholar Étienne Lamotte surveyed the textual depictions of Maitreya in his *History of Indian Buddhism*.<sup>4</sup> Although he drew upon the *Āgama*-s in discussing about the Buddha-to-be, Lamotte's masterpiece does not attempt to systematically investigate the portrayal of Maitreya in the *Āgama*-s. Hence, there is room for a systematic exploration on how he is represented. In this paper, I specifically draw upon the *Āgama*-s to enumerate the various representations of Maitreya, and provide a portrait of his career.

My paper is based primarily upon the *Āgama* collections in the *Taishō Tripiṭaka*. The texts consulted are the *Dīrgha Āgama* (*DĀ*) from Dharmaguptaka 法藏部, *Samyukta Āgama* (*SĀ*) from Sarvāstivāda 說一切有部 and the incomplete recension from Kāśyapīya 飲光部, *Madhyama Āgama* (*MĀ*) from Sarvāstivāda, and *Ekottara Āgama* (*EĀ*) of disputed sectarian affiliation. Besides these, the *\*Puṇya Vibhaṅga* (*\*PV*), extant Chinese commentary to the *EĀ*, was also consulted. I found that all the *Āgama*-s, except the two recensions of the *SĀ*, contain discourses that mention the bodhisattva, and these were classified together into two groups. The first concerns Maitreya's relation to Gautama, other Buddha-s, Kāśyapa and the Buddhist doctrines. The second focuses on Maitreya's career.

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<sup>4</sup> Étienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism: From the Origins to the Śāka*, trans. Sara Webb-Boin (Loivain-Paris: Peeters Press, 1988).

## Representations of Maitreya

The *raison d'être* of Maitreya is found in both the *DĀ* 06 and *Digha Nikāya* 26 (*DN* 26). In these two texts, he is represented to be the successor to Gautama. Depicted as a silent and an unobtrusive character mentioned in passing by the Blessed One, Maitreya will be the next Buddha to arise in the indeterminate future to set in motion the Wheel of Dharma. Lancaster opined that this role conceived for Maitreya is the earliest and most important.<sup>5</sup> We find his opinion on its antiquity compelling based on the prevailing view of contemporary scholarship. According to Rupert Gethin, common material in both the *Āgama* and *Nikāya* collections emerged prior to the dawn of sectarianism and thus belong to the early stratum of Buddhist literature.<sup>6</sup> It is, therefore, logical to consider the depiction in both the *DĀ* 06 and *DN* 26 as the most archaic.

In seeking to understand how Maitreya is represented alongside Gautama, we must bear in mind that the Fully Enlightened One is the Buddhist saint par excellence. Therefore, Maitreya plays a supporting cast to him. According to Nattier, one function for such a cast is to provide Gautama with an opportunity to expound a doctrine by posing a question to him.<sup>7</sup> Maitreya assumes this role in the *EĀ* 27.5 by enquiring about the practice of *dāna* in the six *pāramitā*-s to which Gautama responds with an

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<sup>5</sup> Lancaster, "Maitreya," 5618.

<sup>6</sup> Rupert Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 42-5.

<sup>7</sup> Jan Nattier, "The Meanings of the Maitreya Myth: A Typological Analysis," in *Maitreya, The Future Buddha*, ed. Alan Sponberg, and Helen Hardacre (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 25.

exposition on the topic. There are occasions when Gautama is placed on an exalted position at the expense of Maitreya. According to the \*PV, the Blessed One is known to be foremost in the practice of diligence. This virtue is highlighted in both the *EĀ* 20.6 and *EĀ* 42.6 that ostensibly extol the virtue of diligence and warn against indolence in spiritual pursuits. Gautama is portrayed as the embodiment of diligence who managed to displace Maitreya to become the Buddha of our present age. Maitreya was relegated to be the next Buddha instead. Such a representation impresses upon us that both discourses allude that the Buddha-to-be is indolent and inferior to Gautama. Maitreya continues to be associated with Gautama even after being portrayed to have attained Buddhahood. The *EĀ* 48.3 states that bhikṣu-s attaining arhatship under him are none other than Gautama's unenlightened disciples. Such a depiction gives the impression that Maitreya is a sidekick of Gautama rather than a Buddha in his own right.

While the above discourses portray Maitreya as playing second fiddle to Gautama, he comes to occupy a more important place in other discourses. An example is the *MĀ* 66 that provides the background on how Maitreya becomes a bodhisattva. Known as Bhikṣu Maitreya, he is a member of Gautama's Saṃgha. After listening to Gautama's prophesy on the future arising of a cakravartī rāja and Buddha Maitreya, he proclaims his aspiration in becoming that Buddha in the presence of the Blessed One while a fellow bhikṣu named Ajita aspires to be the cakravartī rāja. In response, Gautama predicts that their aspirations will be realised.

The discussion of these two personalities brings us to an important point. In some Buddhist sources, both Maitreya and Ajita actually refer to the same person who is represented as Ajita-Maitreya.<sup>8</sup> Yet as we have seen from the *MĀ* 66, there is no evidential support of such a representation. Instead, what we see is that Ajita and Maitreya are two separate individuals. Besides the *MĀ* 66, the *Sutta Nipāta* of *Khuddaka Nikāya* (*KN*) also depict both in different terms although neither was associated with Buddhahood nor kingship. Other than the *KN*, scriptures such as the Chinese *Dharmapada* 出曜經 (T4, no. 212) also distinguishes Ajita and Maitreya as different individuals.<sup>9</sup> These illuminate that the representation of Ajita-Maitreya was originally two different personalities who were fused into a single individual in subsequent textual development.

Found in both the *Āgama*-s and *Nikāya*-s, the model of seven Buddha-s was appropriated by early Buddhists from other contemporaneous religious systems. Gombrich postulated that Buddhists used this model to formulate a mythical genealogy of six former Buddha-s to authenticate the message of Gautama.<sup>10</sup> The model can be found in the *EĀ* 48.4 and the Buddha-s are listed chronologically as (1) Vipasyin 毘婆尸佛, (2) Śikhin 尸棄佛, (3) Viśvabhu 毘舍婆佛, (4) Krakucchanda 拘樓孫佛, (5) Kanakamuni 拘那含佛, (6) Kāśyapa 迦葉佛, and (7) Śākyamuni 釋迦

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<sup>8</sup> Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 705.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Gombrich, “The Significance of Former Buddhas in the Theravādin Tradition,” in *Buddhist Studies in Honour of Walpola Ruhula*, ed. Editorial Committee (London: Gordon Fraser, 1980), 64-5.

牟尼佛. In the very same discourse, we found a list of Buddha-s who will arise in the indeterminate future posterior to Maitreya. They are (1) Maitreya, (2) Lion Roar 師子應佛, (3) Bearer of Gentleness 承柔順佛, (4) Bright Flame 光焰佛, and (5) Taintless 無垢佛, and (6) Brilliant Gem 寶光佛. Without a shadow of doubt, Maitreya's list mirrors the genealogy of Gautama. The significance of such an arrangement is that Maitreya becomes an indispensable figure in the genealogy of Buddha-s from Vipāśyin to Brilliant Gem.

Amongst the senior disciples of Gautama, Maitreya is depicted to interact with both Ānanda and Kāśyapa.<sup>11</sup> Our focus here is Maitreya's interactions with Kāśyapa because it is organised around the notion of spiritual continuity from the present Buddha to his successor. In the *EĀ* 41.5, Gautama is represented as instructing Kāśyapa to remain in the world and attain parinirvāṇa only after the advent of Maitreya. A slightly different version appears in the *EĀ* 48.3 where Gautama orders his four great hearers to remain in the world after his demise to ensure the continuity of the Dharma, and specifically deputises Kāśyapa to await the arrival of Maitreya. Kāśyapa will pass on his robe to Maitreya upon their encounter and the arhat's physical form will dissolve into the air. As a mark of respect, the future Buddha will make an offering of flowers in honour of him. Although unspecified in the discourse, the robe mentioned is most likely to be that which Kāśyapa received from Gautama.

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<sup>11</sup> Maitreya's interactions with Ānanda is presented in the *EĀ* 1.1

This encounter between Kāśyapa and Maitreya was analysed by Jonathan Silk. We would like to highlight two pertinent points from his analysis. First is that Kāśyapa plays the role of the agent of connection between Gautama and Maitreya.<sup>12</sup> Second is that the robe functions as the medium of connection between the two Buddha-s, symbolizing the legitimacy and authenticity of all the doctrines to be delivered by Maitreya.<sup>13</sup> Besides the robe, Gautama's prophecy on Maitreya's future Buddhahood also forges a direct link between the two Buddha-s. These three points, together with the list of former and future Buddha-s mentioned earlier, collectively point to the emphasis that the *Āgama*-s place on the genealogical connection between Gautama and Maitreya. We propose that the intent behind these is to affirm Maitreya's status as the next Buddha through the depiction that he is one of the many enlightened ones to arise in the world, and has received endorsement from the "highest level of spiritual authority" i.e the Buddha of the present age.

Early Buddhism differentiates its body of doctrine on soteriology into three vehicles or spiritual vocations. These are Śrāvakayāna, Pratyekabuddhayāna, and Bodhisattvayāna. Maitreya is alluded as a teacher and preserver of these doctrines in the *EĀ*. For example, the *EĀ* 48.3 speaks of him preaching the doctrines of all three vehicles. In the *EĀ* 1.1, Maitreya is also represented to have preserved Śrāvaka canonical teachings by instructing various beings such as garuda-s, mahoraga-s, and kiṃnara-s to encourage both male and female lay followers to recite the *EĀ* and offer

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12 Jonathan A. Silk, "Dressed for Success: The Monk Kāśyapa and Strategies of Legitimation in Earlier Mahāyāna Buddhist Scriptures," *Journal Asiatique* 291, no. 1-2 (2003): 203-06.

13 Silk, "Dressed for Success," 181-203.

protection to them should they do so. Besides Śrāvaka teachings, Maitreya plays a crucial role in ensuring the continuity of Mahāyāna doctrines to posterity. Specifically, he recites the six pāramitā-s during the first saṅgīti that eventuates in this body of doctrine being codified into a separate piṭaka which the \*PV identifies as the *Bodhisattva Piṭaka*.

### Career of Maitreya

Nattier described the period in which Maitreya arises as the “deferred golden age”.<sup>14</sup> It will be an earthly utopia with paradise-like conditions. The discourses are at variance about the geographical features of this time because such descriptions lend itself easily to the human imagination. For instance, both the *EĀ* 38.7 and *EĀ* 50.10 describe the presence of mountains during Maitreya’s dispensation which is contradicted by the picture painted by both the *DĀ* 06 and *EĀ* 48.3.<sup>15</sup> The *DĀ* 06 speaks of the landmass being flat with neither clay stone, pit, ditch nor mound. Lapis lazuli are formed from sand and pebbles. Bramble is unheard of and creatures such as mosquitoes, gadflies, vipers and snakes, and venomous creepy-crawlies are non-existent. The vision in the *EĀ* 48.3 is different. Mountains and cliffs within ten thousand yojana-s of Jambudvīpa will vanish and each of the four great oceans will occupy one side of the continent. Landmass will be flat and smooth as the surface of mirror. Edible sweet-smelling hull-less millets will grow. Precious and rare gems will

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14 Nattier, “The Meanings of the Maitreya Myth,” 26.

15 The *EĀ* 48.3 is found, almost character for character, in the *Maitreyavyākaraṇa* 彌勒下生經 (T15, no.453). Legittimo argued that both the *EĀ* 48.3 and T15, no.453 were authored by Buddhasmṛti (竺佛念). See Elsa I. Legittimo, “Reopening the Maitreya-files: Two Almost Identical Early Sūtra Translations in the Chinese Canon,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 31, no. 1-2 (2010): 258.



carpet the land, but arouses interest in none of the humans.

Both the *DĀ* 06 and *MĀ* 66 state that the longevity of humans will reach eight thousand years at this time with maidens' marriageable age at five hundred. There is disagreement on whether humans are still gripped by diseases. The two discourses declare that humans will suffer from a variety of ailments, while the *EĀ* 48.3 states they will be disease-free. All, however, converge on proclaiming that the human race will flourish, price of food low and harvest in abundance. Eight-thousand cities will be established, each in close proximity to its neighbouring cities. So close are these that the crowing of roasters in one city can be heard by dwellers in adjacent cities.

The above depicts the world that Maitreya will be reborn into. Like Gautama, he resides in Tuṣita before descending to earth. In the *EĀ* 48.3, the Buddha-to-be is destined to take birth in the Roaster-Head City when the cakravartī rāja named Saṅka reigns. Hence, the birth of Maitreya differs from Gautama who was born at a time when there was no such ruler. His mother will be called Brahmāvatī and father Subraman who served as a minister under the cakravartī rāja. Maitreya will also emerged through his mother's right side like Gautama and be endowed with the 32 major and 80 minor marks of a great man. He will eventually renounce the household life to embrace homelessness. Maitreya is supposed to renounce at night, and in the very same night attain enlightenment under the dragon-flower tree. Compared to Gautama, Maitreya's bodhisattva career is extremely brief.

Another difference between Gautama and Maitreya is that the latter does not require an invitation from Brahmā to proclaim the Dharma. Maitreya first preaches to deva-s before delivering the Dharma to humans. The *EĀ* 43.2 speaks of three assemblies that will be attended by bhikṣu-s in the magnitude of billions with all of them attaining arhatship. Maitreya's disciples will be known as "sons of the Loving-Kindness One" just as those of Śākyamuni are called "sons of the Śākyan". An important event is his encounter with Kāśyapa, which we discussed earlier. According to the *EĀ* 48.3, Maitreya's lifespan will stretch over 84,000 years and his Saṃgha will maintain purity for more than a thousand years. Monastic rules will be enacted upon committal of the first offence. The Śāsana established by Maitreya will endure another 84,000 years after his demise.

### **Rebirth during Maitreya's Dispensation**

Karmic causes leading to rebirth during Maitreya's dispensation are enumerated in the *EĀ* 48.3. Besides having visited vihāra-s of Gautama or Maitreya, those who will be reborn with Maitreya have also performed the following deeds. I have translated these as having

- a. abided by brahma-caryā in the past
- b. upheld the Dharma
- c. made offerings to the triple gems
- d. nourished their wholesome roots without hesitation
- e. practised the four equalities
- f. upheld the five precepts and took the threefold refuge

- g. built vihāra-s
- h. restored run-down vihāra-s
- i. observed the eight precepts
- j. offered fragrant flowers
- k. wept with joy when listening to the Dharma
- l. focused their mind when listening to the Dharma
- m. devoted one's entire life to the practice of brahma-caryā
- n. learned and recited the Dharma
- o. attended and made offerings to their religious teachers.

The deed stated in point (i), observance of the eight precepts, is a topic that receives further treatment in the *EĀ* 43.2. Below is my translation of the relevant portion that mentions rebirth with Maitreya:

Again, upholding the eight precepts and treading the path of the Buddha, [or] Pratyekabuddha, [or] arhat are to be practised by those wishing to establish themselves in the Good Dharma. One will be liberated [from Saṃsāra] during the [Dharma] assemblies by Buddha Maitreya, the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the Samyaksambuddha, who will arise in the world. When Maitreya arises in the world, there will be three [Dharma] assemblies for Śrāvaka-s. The first assembly will have 96 billions of bhikṣu-s in attendance, 94 billions of bhikṣu-s in the second, and 92 billions of bhikṣu-s in the third, and all of them [will attain] arhatship.

Although devotees of Maitreya advocate the idea of a Maitreyan Pure Land in Tuṣita, we found no evidence to suggest that this is taught in the *Āgama*-s. The closest we get is the *EĀ* 37.10 that speaks of a srota-āpanna taking rebirth in Trāyastriṃśa to meet Maitreya. Evidently, the doctrine of rebirth in Tuṣita is not conceived in the *Āgama*-

s. Instead, the *Āgama*-s are unequivocal in advocating rebirth into the world when Maitreya re-establishes the Śāsana. This teaching, however, is not universal in its appeal. Guang Xing noted that its critics argued against seeking rebirth into the world because human birth is not guaranteed.<sup>16</sup> From this angle, one risks the opportunity of encountering Maitreya and attaining enlightenment. They proposed the alternative of seeking rebirth in Tuṣita instead in the belief that this assures them of a place in the Dharma assemblies. This doctrine marks the beginning of the idea of a Maitreyan Pure Land.

## Conclusion

The *Āgama*-s present us with a vantage to view the various representations of Maitreya. These include being supporting cast to Gautama, protector of Dharma, saviour of Gautama's disciples, a bodhisattva associated with indolence and most importantly the successor to Gautama. He will arise, according to Buddhist mythology, to re-establish the Śāsana in the distant future when paradise-like conditions prevail over the earth. In the *Āgama*-s, the goal is to seek rebirth during his Śāsana to listen to his preaching to attain arahantship rather than rebirth in a Maitreyan Pureland in Tuṣita.

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<sup>16</sup> Guang Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha: Its Evolution from Early Buddhism to the Trikāya Theory*. (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 169.

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## **The *Bodhicitta* of Vajrayāna Tradition**

**By Ven Lian Ru**

The final goal of Mahāyāna practice is the attainment of Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings and this goal is achieved through the development of *bodhicitta*. The development of *bodhicitta* is an important cultivation process for Vajrayāna tradition. The cultivation of *bodhicitta* is the fundamental practice of the Vajrayāna outer *sngon 'gro* (preliminary practice) because commonly the practitioners begin this realization before other practice. Anyen pointed out that the reason is their practice is missing the most essential element if they fail to cultivate Bodhicitta.<sup>1</sup>

From the doctrinal approach, in the Vajrayāna discourses on *bodhicitta*, one of the important text used is the *Madhyamakāvatāra* (Entry into the Middle Way), which is the supplement to the commentary of Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, composed by Chandrakīrti (AD 600-650). The *Madhyamakāvatāra* has ten chapters exploring in depth details of *bodhicitta*, the ten *bhūmis*, six perfections, and the qualities of bodhisattvas, emptiness and the wisdom to reality. Another study text is the *Bodhisattvacharyāvatāra* (A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life) composed by Śāntideva, an Indian Buddhist monk and scholar at Nālandā of the eighth century. *Bodhisattvacharyāvatāra* consists of ten chapters and explore thoroughly on the development of *bodhicitta*, the practice of six perfections (*pāramitās*) and the perfection of wisdom which is the primary exposition of Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamaka which accords with the writings of Chandrakīrti.

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<sup>1</sup> Anyen, Rinpoche. *The Union of Dzogs chen and Bodhicitta*. New York: Snow Lion Publications, 2006, p57.

In the Vajrayāna tradition, there are a few methods to cultivate *bodhicitta* such as the ‘Seven Causes and Effects’ taught by Atiśaya, ‘Exchanging Self and Others’ taught by Śāntideva, the *tonglen* (Tib. *gtong len*) which means taking suffering from others and sending loving-kindness to others and the *lojong* (Tib. *blo sbyong*) which means the mind training practice. The intention of these practices is to develop great compassion to liberate sentient beings from suffering yet without attachment. This is done by realising *śūnyatā* (emptiness). The *bodhicitta* has been classified into two forms of *bodhicitta*, namely Relative *bodhicitta* and Ultimate *bodhicitta*.

What is *bodhicitta*? *Bodhicitta* is developed by a series of consciousnesses. When consciousness arises, it enables mental factors to arise because mental factors depend only on the consciousness to be aroused. In Tibetan Buddhism, the definition of ‘*bodhi*’ refers to ‘awake’ and ‘*citta*’ refers to ‘cognitive mind’ or ‘consciousness’, therefore the term *bodhicitta* refers to the mind of awakening.<sup>2</sup> What is one to be awakened from? Trungpa stated that one is to be awakened from the three poisons of passion, aggression and ignorance, although these three poisons are not considered as deep-rooted problems, these three poisons are simply phases which occupy the time and space, preventing one from being in a state of awakening.<sup>3</sup>

From the *Abhidharma* approach, Yogācāra masters Asaṅga and Vasubandhu considered this special attitude of *bodhicitta* as a mental factor (*cetasikā*) while Mādhyamika masters Vimuktasena and Haribhadra see it as the consciousness.<sup>4</sup> If it is a consciousness, it requires a minimum of five universal mental factors listed in the Mahāyāna *Abhidharma* to

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<sup>2</sup> Trungpa, Chögyam. *The Bodhisattva Path of Wisdom and Compassion Volume 2*. Vol. 2. Boston: Shambala Publications Inc, 2013, p.4.

<sup>3</sup> Trungpa, Chögyam, 2013, p.4.

<sup>4</sup> Kunzang, Pelden. *The Nectar of Manjushri's Speech: A Detailed Commentary on Śāntideva's Way of the Bodhisattva*. Boston: Shambala Publications, Inc, 2007, p.52



arouse this consciousness.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the dGe lugs school defines *bodhicitta* as the ‘special main mental consciousness which is the entrance to the Mahāyāna path, and which for the sake of others look to complete enlightenment and shares the similarities with the wish which is its associate’<sup>6</sup> This ‘special main mental consciousness’ is coexistent and dependent on the mental factors (*cetasikā*), and its main function is to apprehend its object. It is mental consciousness because it is cultivated in dependence on meditation. Therefore, the definition of *bodhicitta* is: the principal state of awareness required to attain enlightenment and it is concomitant with its intense wish (*cetasikā*) that focuses on complete enlightenment for the benefit of others.<sup>7</sup>

As for the defining characteristics of *bodhicitta*, the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra* (Ornament of the Mahāyāna Sūtras) says, ‘It is a mental state endowed with two aims, the cultivation of *bodhicitta* is the wish to attain perfect Buddhahood for the sake of others.’ Kunzang pointed out that there are two aims from this quote, ‘through compassion, it focuses on the welfare of others; through wisdom, it focuses on perfect enlightenment.’<sup>8</sup>

There are two types of commitments for *bodhicitta* mentioned by Atiśaya in chapter one verse 15 of *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (A Guide to the *Bodhisattva* Way of Life). He taught that this Spirit of Awakening (*bodhicitta*) is known to be of two kinds: The spirit of aspiring for Awakening (aspirational *bodhicitta*), and the spirit of venturing toward Awakening (engaging

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<sup>5</sup> Kunzang, Pelden, 2007, p.52.

<sup>6</sup> Lobsang, Ven Gyatso. *Bodhicitta: Cultivating the Compassionate Mind of Enlightenment*. New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1997, p.11.

<sup>7</sup> Wangmo, Kelsang. *Institute for Buddhist Dialectical Studies: English classes in Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy*. 6 May 2011. 18 Jan 2017. <<http://ibdbuddhism.org/Abhi/pdf/2011-HC/2011H06-0418.pdf>>.

<sup>8</sup> Kunzang, Pelden, 2007, p.53.

*bodhicitta*).’ According to Kunzang, Atiśaya explains that the aspirational *bodhicitta* is the practice committed to achieve the result, which is the Buddhahood while the engaging *bodhicitta* is the practice committed to the cause, which is the path.<sup>9</sup>

There are various ways to present the explanation for the two commitments. In verse 16 of *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, it says, ‘Just as one perceives the difference between a person who yearns to travel and a traveler, so do the learned recognize the corresponding difference between those two.’ Kunzang pointed out that from this verse, the distinction between the two commitments for *bodhicittas* is that: after endowing with the aim to liberate all sentient beings from suffering and placing them in the state of Buddhahood, aspirational *bodhicitta* will progress as engaging *bodhicitta* when one undertakes the six perfections (*pāramitās*) as the cause and cultivate according to the Bodhisattva’s vows (*praṇidhāna*). Similarly, from this verse, Wangmo explains that the aspirational *bodhicitta* is the strong wish to relieve all from the aspect of measureless suffering that exists but do not have the Bodhisattva vow and/or the practice of any of the six perfections is not present.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, Wangmo refers to engaging *bodhicitta* as the *bodhicitta* in the continuum of those who have the Bodhisattva vow and the practice of any of the six perfections is present. After one has committed to engaging *bodhicitta*, the cultivation path as a Bodhisattva begins. Thrungpa pointed out that ‘taking the *Bodhisattva* vow comes from the inspiration that *tathāgatagarbha* (Buddha nature) is already in you’, and this is the reason that one is able to make such commitment.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Kunzang, Pelden, 2007, p.54.

<sup>10</sup> Wangmo, Kelsang. 2011

<sup>11</sup> Trungpa, Chögyam. 2013, p.115.

As mentioned, progressing from aspirational *bodhicitta* to engaging *bodhicitta*, one vows to commit the cultivation of the six perfections (*pāramitās*) and the *Bodhisattva*'s vows, which is committed for lifetime. The six perfections are listed in the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras* sequentially as generosity (*dāna*), discipline (*śīla*), endurance (*kṣānti*), diligence (*vīrya*), concentration (*dhyāna*) and wisdom (*prajñā*). The Bodhisattva path is cultivated by developing the six perfections and progresses along the ten stages of the Bodhisattva path (ten *Bodhisattva bhūmis*).

The *Avataṃsaka sūtra* refers to the following ten Bodhisattva *bhūmis* stages<sup>12</sup> :

The first *bhūmi*, the Very Joyous. (Skt. *pramuditā*), in which one rejoices at realizing a partial aspect of the truth;

The second *bhūmi*, the Stainless. (Skt. *vimalā*), in which one is free from all defilements;

The third *bhūmi*, the Light-Maker. (Skt. *prabhākarī*), in which one radiates the light of wisdom;

The fourth *bhūmi*, the Radiant Intellect. (Skt. *arciṣmatī*), in which the radiant flame of wisdom burns away earthly desires;

The fifth *bhūmi*, the Difficult to defeat by the māra (Skt. *sudurjayā*), in which one surmounts the illusions of darkness, or ignorance as the Middle Way;

The sixth *bhūmi*, the Manifest. (Skt. *abhimukhī*) in which supreme wisdom begins to manifest;

The seventh *bhūmi*, the Gone Afar. (Skt. *dūraṃgamā*), in which one rises above the states of the Two vehicles;

The eighth *bhūmi*, the Immovable. (Skt. *acalā*), in which one dwells firmly in the truth of the Middle Way and cannot be perturbed by anything;

The ninth *bhūmi*, the Good Intelligence. (Skt. *sādhumatī*), in which one preaches the Law freely and without restriction;

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<sup>12</sup> Wikipedia Citation: Sutra Translation Committee of the United States and Canada (1998). The Seeker's Glossary of Buddhism, Taipei: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation/Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc., 2nd ed. pp.759-760, Source URL: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhūmi\\_\(Buddhism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhūmi_(Buddhism))

The tenth *bhūmi*, the Cloud of Doctrine. (Skt. *dharmameghā*), in which one benefits all sentient beings with the Law (Dharma), just as a cloud sends down rain impartially on all things.

When one has taken the Bodhisattva vow, which consists of forty-six vows, one has committed the determination to undertake the training of a Bodhisattva. In Tibetan Buddhism there are two lineages of the bodhisattva vow. The first is associated with the *Cittamatra* movement of Indian Buddhism and is said to have originated with the Bodhisattva Maitreya, and to have been propagated by Asaṅga. The second is associated with the Mādhyamaka movement and is said to have originated with the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and to have been propagated by Nāgārjuna, and later by Śāntideva. The main difference between these two lineages of the bodhisattva vow is that in the *Cittamatrā* lineage the vow cannot be received by one who has not previously received the *Prātimokṣa* vows.<sup>13 14</sup>

Sopa (Tib. *bZod pa*) mentioned that there are three types of ethical conduct for a *Bodhisattva*.<sup>15</sup> The first type requires one to restrain from all negative actions by performing the morality of body, speech and mind protected by the *Prātimokṣa* vow (Buddhist rules for both monastic and lay). The second type is to perform all forms of immeasurable virtuous, meritorious activity to benefit others. The third type is to promise to benefit sentient beings and not for your own selfish purposes. Trungpa mentioned that taking the path as a Bodhisattva, one becomes a potential helper without discrimination and cooperate willingly with the

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<sup>13</sup> Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bodhisattva\\_vow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bodhisattva_vow), citation: Lama Jampa Thaye, Rain of Clarity: The Stages of the Path in the Sakya Tradition. London: Ganesha, 2006

<sup>14</sup> The *Prātimokṣa* (Sanskrit *prātimokṣa*) is a list of rules (contained within the *vinaya*) governing the behaviour of Buddhist monastics (monks or *bhikṣus* and nuns or *bhikṣuṇīs*). *Prāti* means "towards" and *mokṣa* means "liberation" from cyclic existence (*samsāra*). It became customary to recite these rules once a fortnight at a meeting of the sangha during which confession would traditionally take place. A number of *prātimokṣa* codes are extant, including those contained in the Theravāda, Mahāsāṃghika, Mahīśāsaka, Dharmaguptaka, Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda *vinayas*. [1] *Prātimokṣa* texts may also circulate in separate *prātimokṣa sūtras*, which are extracts from their respective *vinayas*. (source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pr%C4%81timok%E1%B9%A3a>)

<sup>15</sup> Sopa, Geshe Lhundub, 2004, p.51.

phenomenal world. When all kinds of problems appearing limitlessly, one should regard them as great news because one could readily get trained on cutting off egoism and accommodate them all.<sup>16</sup> Candrakīrti explains that *bodhicitta* arises naturally only after one has cultivated with effort for a long time, through the force of strong familiarity and remains constant. Therefore, by taking the bodhisattva vow, it reminds one to remain determined and committed. The greatest benefit given to the sentient beings is to teach them how to attain liberation from suffering, therefore a Bodhisattva has to be familiar and trained in all these methods.<sup>17</sup>

A vow (*sdom-pa*) is a subtle invisible form on a mental continuum, which shapes behavior. Specifically, it is a restraint from an "unspeakable action" (*kha-na ma-tho-ba*), either one that is naturally destructive common law (*rang-bzhin-gyi kha-na ma-tho-ba*) or one that the Buddha prohibited for His disciple monks, nuns and pious lay people, constitution (*bcas-pa'i kha-na ma-tho-ba*) for specific individuals who are training to reach specific goals.<sup>18</sup> Of the two stages of developing *bodhicitta*, aspiring (*smon-pa'i sems-bskyed*) and engaged (*'jug-pa'i sems-bskyed*), only with the latter do we take the *bodhisattva* vows. Taking bodhisattva vows (*byang-sems sdom-pa*) entails promising to restrain from two sets of negative acts that the Buddha prohibited for those training as bodhisattvas to reach enlightenment and to be of as much benefit to others as is possible:

1. Eighteen actions that, if committed, constitute a root downfall (Skt. *Mūlāpatti*, Tib. *byang-sems-kyi rtsa-ltung*)
2. Forty-six types of faulty behavior (Skt. *Duskṛta*, Tib. *nyes-byas*).

A *root downfall* means a loss of the entire set of bodhisattva vows. It is a "downfall" in the sense that it leads to a decline in spiritual development and hinders the growth of positive

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<sup>16</sup> Trungpa, Chögyam, 2013, p.27.

<sup>17</sup> Kelsang, Geshe Gyatso. *Ocean of Nectar: Wisdom and Compassion in Mahayana Buddhism*. Delhi: Shri Jainendra Press, 2000, p.18.

<sup>18</sup> Berzin, Alexander. "Taking the Kalachakra Initiation." Ithaca, Snow Lion, 1997. Reprint: "Introduction to the Kalachakra Initiation." Ithaca, Snow Lion, 2010.

qualities. The word *root* signifies it is a root to be eliminated. For ease of expression, these two sets are usually called *root and secondary bodhisattva vows*. They offer excellent guidelines for the types of behavior to avoid if we wish to benefit others in as pure and full a way as is possible.

The late 10th-century Indian master Atiśaya received this particular version of the bodhisattva vows from his Sumatran teacher Dharmakīrti (*Dharmapala*) of Suvarṇadvīpa, which he later transmitted to Tibet. This version derives from the *Sūtra of Ākāśagarbha* (Skt. *Ākāśagarbhasūtra*, Tib. *Nam-mkha'i snying-po mdo*), as cited in the *Compendium of Trainings* (Skt. *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, Tib. *bSlabs-btus*), compiled in India by Śāntideva in the 8th century. All Tibetan traditions currently follow this, while the Buddhist traditions deriving from China observe variant versions of the bodhisattva vows.

The promise to keep bodhisattva vows applies not only to this life, but also to each subsequent lifetime until enlightenment. Thus, as subtle forms, these vows continue on our mental continuum into future lives. If we have taken the vows in a previous lifetime, we do not lose them by unknowingly committing a full transgression now, unless we have taken them freshly during our current life. Retaking the vows for the first time in this life strengthens the momentum of our efforts toward enlightenment that has been growing ever since our first taking of them. Therefore, Mahāyāna masters emphasize the importance of dying with the bodhisattva vows intact and strong. Their abiding presence on our mental continuum continues building up positive force (merit) in future lives, even before we revitalize them by taking them again.

Following the dGe lugs founder, Tsongkhapa's 15th-century commentary on the bodhisattva vows, *An Explanation of Bodhisattvas' Ethical Discipline: The Main Path to Enlightenment* (Tib. *Byang-chub sems-dpa'i tshul-khrims-kyi rnam-bshad byang-chub gzhung-*

lam), there are eighteen negative actions that constitute a root downfall, with each having several stipulations:<sup>19</sup>

- (1) *Praising ourselves and/or belittling others*
- (2) *Not sharing Dharma teachings or wealth*
- (3) *Not listening to others' apologies or striking others*
- (4) *Discarding the Mahāyāna teachings and propounding made-up ones*
- (5) *Taking offerings intended for the Triple Gem*
- (6) *Forsaking the holy Dharma*
- (7) *Disrobing monastics or committing such acts as stealing their robes*
- (8) *Committing any of the five heinous crimes*<sup>20</sup>
- (9) *Holding a distorted, antagonistic outlook*<sup>21</sup>
- (10) *Destroying places such as towns*
- (11) *Teaching voidness to those whose minds are untrained*<sup>22</sup>
- (12) *Turning others away from full enlightenment*
- (13) *Turning others away from their pratimoksha vows*
- (14) *Belittling the Śrāvaka vehicle*
- (15) *Proclaiming a false realization of voidness*
- (16) *Accepting what has been stolen from the Triple Gem*
- (17) *Establishing unfair policies*

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<sup>19</sup> Source: <http://www.bodhicitta.net/BODHISATTVAVOWS.htm>

<sup>20</sup> The five heinous crimes (*mtshams-med lnga*) are (a) killing our fathers, (b) mothers, or (c) an *arhat* (a liberated being), (d) with bad intentions drawing blood from a Buddha, or (e) causing a split in the monastic community.

<sup>21</sup> This means to deny what is true and of value – such as the laws of behavioral cause and effect, a safe and positive direction in life, rebirth, and liberation from it – and to be antagonistic toward such ideas and those who hold them.

<sup>22</sup> The primary objects of this downfall are persons with the bodhicitta motivation who are not yet ready to understand voidness. Such persons are confused or frightened by this teaching and consequently abandon the bodhisattva path for the path of personal liberation. This happens due to the thought that if all phenomena are devoid of inherent, findable existence, then no one exists, so why bother working to benefit anyone. This action includes teaching voidness to anyone who would misunderstand it and therefore forsake the Dharma completely. Therefore, it is important to lead others to these teachings through explanations of graduated levels of complexity, and periodically to check their understanding.

(18) *Giving up bodhicitta*<sup>23</sup>

When one committed the number ninth and eighteenth Bodhisattva vows, which are ‘*Holding a distorted, antagonistic outlook*’ and ‘*giving up bodhicitta*’ respectively, one will be considered to have lost the Bodhisattva vow. However, according to Wangmo, all the four binding factors must be present in order to constitute a root downfall. They are:

1. Not giving up the desire to act in a particular way and still wanting to do it
2. Taking joy and delight in it
3. Lacking shame and embarrassment
4. Not regarding the action as faulty

When one has embarked onto the path of as a Bodhisattva, Sonam said that it is similar to the role of the sun and moon that dispel darkness without considering it burdensome and the earth willingness to nurture everything on it. A Bodhisattva is one who has willingly accepted the responsibility of alleviating the suffering of all beings and bringing them happiness.<sup>24</sup>

Why is *bodhicitta* so important? According to Patrul (Tib. dPa’ sprul), the eighty-four thousand dharma taught by the Buddha are all skilful means to cause *bodhicitta* to arise. He explains that without *bodhicitta*, teachings on even the most profound view and meditation, will be irrelevant for attaining perfect Buddhahood.<sup>25</sup> In *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life), Śāntideva has listed the benefits of developing *bodhicitta* through practicing the method of ‘Exchanging oneself and others’, which will be discussed in the next section. Patrul describes this practice as ‘the ultimate and unfailing quintessential meditation’

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<sup>23</sup> This is abandoning the wish to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all. Of the two levels of bodhicitta, aspiring and involved, this refers specifically to discarding the former. In doing so, we give up the latter as well.

<sup>24</sup> Sonam, Geshe Rinchen, *How Karma Works: The Twelve Links of Dependent Arising*. New York: Snow Lion Publications, 2006, p50-52.

<sup>25</sup> Patrul, Rinpoche. *Words of My Perfect Teacher*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011, p.256.



because it brings the benefits of purification of previously accumulated negative karma, rebirth in higher realms, immense accumulation of merit and wisdom.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, Sopa pointed out that with *bodhicitta*, simple wish to benefit others such as offering them with food and shelters, is more virtuous than worshipping the Buddha.<sup>27</sup> He also mentioned that such *bodhicitta* can burn up enormous amounts of negative karma in an instant because it is a powerful purification opposing the harmful action. One example which Sopa quoted is the story of a man named Dzawai Pumo, who stepped onto his mother's head in order to make his escape from her and this is considered highly disrespectful. Along his journey, he entered a house filled with people who had wheels of blades spinning and slicing their brains and spurting out blood. A god appeared and told Dzawai that they were suffering their karmic fruit for stepping disrespectfully on their mothers' head. Upon hearing this, Dzawai was horrified and suddenly a wheel of blades appeared on his head. Immediately he generated the compassionate aspiration, 'May all the suffering resulting from this type of karmic fruit ripen on me alone, so they may be free from such suffering!' Suddenly, the entire vision of suffering disappeared, and no one was left imprisoned there as if they were all liberated.<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, Patrul strongly advises not to undervalue the refuge and *bodhicitta* practices, assuming they are inferior or just for beginners.<sup>29</sup> He pointed out that 'anyone who possesses true *bodhicitta*, even without having other qualities, will benefit whoever comes into contact' while those who does not possess sincere *bodhicitta*, even though they are monks, the rituals which they performed, will not be of the slightest benefit to the sentient beings. Patrul also

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<sup>26</sup> Patrul, Rinpoche, 2011, p.224.

<sup>27</sup> Sopa, Geshe Lhundub. *Steps on the Path to Enlightenment: A Commentary on Tsongkhapa's Lamrim Chenmo Vol 3: The Way of the Bodhisattva*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2008, p.28-29.

<sup>28</sup> Sopa, Geshe Lhundub, 2008, p.31.

<sup>29</sup> Patrul, Rinpoche, 2011, p.257.

warned that no one knows where there might be bodhisattvas because using their skilful methods, bodhisattvas are to be found even among the slaughterers of animals and prostitutes. Therefore, it is difficult to tell whether someone has *bodhicitta* or not, as the Buddha said, ‘Apart from myself or yourself, no one can judge another person.’<sup>30</sup>

There are two types of *bodhicitta*, conventional *bodhicitta* and ultimate *bodhicitta*. Conventional *bodhicitta* involves two types of commitments, aspirational and engaging commitments which has been explored prior to this section. Trungpa mentioned that conventional *bodhicitta* is the common practice of involving yourself in the world with benevolence, fearlessness, and kindness. It is the manifestation of your friendliness and deliberate training, and it is helped a great deal by the experience of *vipaśyanā* or awareness, which brings reminders of all kinds.<sup>31</sup>

Ultimate *bodhicitta* refers to the wisdom of having non-dualistic mind, seeing beyond the extremes of existence and non-existence and the ultimate nature of all phenomena as emptiness. Wangmo refers to it as the mental main mind within the continuum of a Mahāyāna *Ārya* being that has realized emptiness directly and has reached any of the Mahāyāna *Ārya* paths, the path of seeing, the path of meditation or the path of no-more-learning.<sup>32</sup> According to her, after one has generated Bodhicitta, there are five Mahāyāna spiritual attainments. The first two, the path of accumulation and the path of preparation, are mundane paths. The latter three, the path of seeing, the path of meditation and the path of no-more-learning, are the *Ārya* paths. Kunzang quoted the verse from *Sūtrālaṃkāra* by Maitreya, saying:

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<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Trungpa, Chögyam, 2013, p.5.

<sup>32</sup> Wangmo, Kelsang. 2011.

When the perfect Buddha have been pleased,  
When the gatherings of wisdom and of merit have been made,  
Then nonconceptual wisdom with regard to all phenomena  
Is born, and it is known as ultimate.<sup>33</sup>

In short, Kunzang explains that this verse defines that ultimate *bodhicitta* is born from ‘gatherings of wisdom and of merit’, that is, the strength of meditation. Moreover, the reason Wangmo has mentioned that ultimate *bodhicitta* is still a mental consciousness is because it arises in dependence on meditation. However, even though it is dependent on the mental factors it is concomitant with (such as wisdom), it is nevertheless a main mind whose principal function is to apprehend its object. Therefore, according to Wangmo, ultimate *bodhicitta* is not considered as actual *bodhicitta* whereas conventional *bodhicitta* and *bodhicitta* are equivalent.

Even though it is not *bodhicitta*, Wangmo explained that it is still called 'Ultimate *bodhicitta*' because it realizes the ultimate truth of emptiness and conjoined with *bodhicitta* it is the entryway to the Mahayana Arya paths. Due to being conjoined with *bodhicitta*, she stated that it serves as the antidote to cognitive obstructions (the obstructions to omniscience), as it eliminates the obstructions and leads to complete enlightenment. Trungpa stated that ultimate *bodhicitta* is based on an enlarged sense of egolessness, a total non-existence of personality and a conceptualized notion sense of non-existence (emptiness/*śūnyatā*) that develops from the vipaśyanā experience.<sup>34</sup> The connection between compassion and egolessness goes both ways, that is, when one let go of the self, one is more inspired to work with others; and when one is generous to others, one begins to lose ego fixation.<sup>35</sup>

In the context of Vajrayāna tradition, Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche mentioned that

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<sup>33</sup> Kunzang, Pelden. 2007, p.53

<sup>34</sup> Trungpa, Chögyam, 2013, p.5.

<sup>35</sup> Trungpa, Chögyam, 2013, p.14.

although the Mādhyamika school expounded that all external things or phenomena are actually emptiness, however it is not easy to meditate on the emptiness of phenomena.<sup>36</sup> Thus Thrangu Rinpoche explains that ‘rather than meditating on the nature of external phenomena, Vajrayāna tradition meditate on mind itself’ (2004, p4). The core teaching for all Vajrayāna schools is to meditate on the true nature of mind and comprehend that all phenomena of external appearances such as images and internal objects such as emotional feelings are produced by various experiences of mind and body, which come back to the mind itself.<sup>37</sup> Parting from the attachment to one’s body and mind is important as it will qualify one to become a genuine spiritual practitioner mentioned by Trichen.<sup>38</sup> He added that if one is attached to the purposes of this life, then whatever practices of morality, study or meditation one may attempt, these practices will become contaminated by this attachment which will fail one’s practices and disqualified one from being a genuine spiritual practitioner.

Rigtsal indicated that illness and suffering that are caused by the surrounding environment afflict us only to a limited extend.<sup>39</sup> The main cause comes from the minds of sentient beings who could not tolerate minimal external negative conditions and therefore contributed to unbearable suffering which might even result in suicide.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, he suggested that if one practices *bodhicitta* and implies in such situation, one will remain detached from taking external happiness and suffering to be real, even when facing calamity

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<sup>36</sup> Thrangu, Khenchen, 2004, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> Thrangu, Khenchen, 2004, p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> Trichen, Rinpoche Chogye. *Parting from the Four Attachments*. New York: Snow Lion Publication, 2003, p. 82.

<sup>39</sup> Rigtsal, Tulku Pema, 2012, p. 12.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*.

such as earthquake, one remains abide peacefully, naturally and at ease.<sup>41</sup>

In the snow land of Tibet, there are several Vajrayāna traditions and all have their origin from India, which is the teaching from Lord Buddha. Deshung has pointed out that the differences among the traditions are mainly in their lineages from gurus transmitting the teachings and the methods of meditation. He emphasised that all the basic practices of all the traditions are the same, all begin with cultivating bodhicitta and their goal of attaining Buddhahood. If you are saying that they are not the same, you would be implying that one is better than another and that is not the case; they are all equally good. That Dharma which one practises is the result of one's previous karma and one's particular tendencies.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Deshung, Rinpoche, 2003, p.313.

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# Buddhism and Philosophy of Upaniṣads: The Problems of Interpretations

By Bodhirathana Tanchangya

## Introduction

The identity of Buddhism and Philosophy of Upaniṣads is a matter of lengthy discussion that has kept busy many scholars for a long period of time. So far there is no conclusive consensus. Buddhism was founded in Northern India by Siddhartha Gautama in the sixth century BCE. There is no accord on the date of his birth. According to Wilhelm Geiger, “the Buddha had been born in 563 B. C. E.”<sup>1</sup>. Most of the Theravāda Buddhist countries accept that the Buddha preached the *Dhamma*, which was authentic and incomparable with contemporary philosophy and religions. “Buddhism was founded by one of the greatest, noblest and purest person mankind has ever produced”.<sup>2</sup> The knowledge realized by the Buddha is entirely pragmatic.

Generally both Upaniṣads and Buddhism are considered as philosophy. S. Kamiloni mentioned in his book *My Emergent God: The Urgent Need for a Science Manifesto* “Buddhism goes beyond religion and for some; it is more a philosophy or a way of life”. We cannot consider Buddhism as a religion because here we cannot find the body of persons adhering to a particular set of beliefs and practices. It has been proclaimed by Professor Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan that Buddhism is a carbon copy of Upaniṣads. This misunderstanding and intermingling was strongly criticized by the Buddhist scholars in the West as well in the East.

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<sup>1</sup> Akira, Hirakawa. *A History of Early Buddhism from Śākyamuni to Early Mahāyāna*. Ed. P. Groner. (Delhi: Motilal Benarsidass, 1993), P.8.

<sup>2</sup> B. R. Kishore, *Lord Buddha* (Delhi: Diamond Pocket Book, 2000), P. 33.

In this paper I will try to explain that, Buddhism is not a restatement of Upaniṣadic philosophy and it has its own identity. It is not a pouring old wine into a new bottle. Some statements run this way: “Early Buddhism is not an absolutely original doctrine. It is no freak in the evolution of Indian thought.”<sup>3</sup> Again he said that, “Early Buddhism, we venture to hazard a conjecture, is only a restatement of the thought of the Upaniṣads from a new standpoint”.<sup>4</sup> The Indian scholars on the basis of these statements declared that the Buddha was born as a Hindu; led his life as a Hindu and died as a Hindu. His statement demonstrates that Buddhism is nothing but an offshoot of Hinduism.

Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan appreciated Buddhism as a branch of Hinduism. Thus he has not done fair justification to Buddhism. Although he has enough knowledge of Buddhism, but his views of Buddhism as part of Upaniṣads was a complete misrepresentation. To clarify his statements, first we should know how Upanishads was developed and was there any doctrinal similarities with Buddhism or not.

The Upaniṣadic thought is an extension of the Vedic teachings. In the Vedic traditions, there were four paths (*mārga*), such as: *karma mārga*, *bhakti mārga*, *dhyāna mārga* and *jñāna mārga*. The Upaniṣads belongs to the last *mārga* identified as knowledge which is equivalent to philosophy. “The Upanishads form the foundations of Hindu philosophical thought and the central theme of the Upanishads is the identity of *Ātman* and *Brahman*”.<sup>5</sup> Cristian Violatti says, “The sacred scriptures of the most Hindu traditions were written in India probably between c. 800 BCE

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<sup>3</sup> Radhakrishnan, Sarvapalli. *Indian Philosophy Volume I 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed*, (Paperback ,2008), p. 360.

<sup>4</sup> Sarvapalli, p. 361

<sup>5</sup> Explore Encyclopedia Britannica. “Hinduism” *Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.*,  
<[www.britannica.com/](http://www.britannica.com/)> 20 Jan 2018.



and c. 500 BCE”.<sup>6</sup> According to him, “they represent a class of Vedic treatises dealing with broad philosophical problems”.<sup>7</sup> Upaniṣads was considered as the concluding portions of the *Vedas* which is called *Vedānta*. The phonetic rendering of ‘*Vedānta*’ is conjunction of two words ‘*veda*’ and ‘*anta*’. *Veda* means, the *Brāhmaṇic* canon of authorized religious teaching. The word ‘*anta*’ means ‘end’ according to these meanings run as follows *Vedānta* means the physical end of the *Vedas*. It is clear that physically appearing at the end of the *Vedas* makes Upaniṣads as *Vedānta*. “The thought which buds in the *Vedas* has bloomed in the Upanishads.”<sup>8</sup> The terminological meaning of the Upaniṣads is “the sitting down of the disciple near his teacher in devoted manner to receive instruction about the highest reality”.<sup>9</sup>

As regards this research paper, our intention is to identify the authenticity of Buddhism and find out how far it is accurate the viewpoints put forth by S. Radhakrishnan. Our objective is not to criticize but to repudiate and to examine them with fair consideration. The discussions will run through four main arguments, such as The Atheistic Argument, The Argument on the Theory of Soul, Sheaths and Aggregates, and Combination and Epistemological Interpretation.

In Buddhism, we cannot find a central creator god, whereas in the *Vedic* literature a creator god is often found. Therefore, Buddhism and Upanishad philosophy has a massive difference. Atheistic means discriminating theism, it means that someone who believes there is no god at all or repudiation of god. “Some Asian religions like Buddhism and Jainism completely reject the notion of God”.<sup>10</sup> In the *Vedas* it has a pantheon of gods at the first stage. In the second stage, there

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<sup>6</sup> Violatti, Cristian. “Upanishads.” *Ancient History Encyclopedia*. 4<sup>th</sup> May 2014.  
<<https://www.ancient.eu/Upanishads/>> 20 Jan 2018.

<sup>7</sup> *Merriam Webster Dictionary*

<sup>8</sup> “Philosophy of the Upanishad” <[http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/27664/5/05\\_chapter2.pdf](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/27664/5/05_chapter2.pdf)>  
web, 10 Dec 2016, p. 26.

<sup>9</sup> Sharma, Chandradhar. *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987), P. 17.

<sup>10</sup> Gunasekara, Victor, A. “*Humanism and Budddhism*”. Web. 21 Jan 2018.  
<<http://www.vgweb.org/manussa/humbud.htm>>

believed that god the creator is one thing, the creation is another, and at the last stage; they decided that there is no difference between the creator and the creation. However, the Upaniṣads is against this development of theism in the Vedas. The Upaniṣads thinkers declared that there is an old pervading concept known as atman and Brahman. Brahman, is always given in the neuter gender. The brahman in the Upaniṣads became brahma the creator god. The Upaniṣads philosophy contributed to the concept of a creator which Buddhism very much opposed.

The most fundamental teaching in Upaniṣads is the acceptance of soul whereas Buddhism denies the existence of soul. Buddhism is *anāttavāda* and Upaniṣads philosophy is *ātmavāda*, there is no similar thinking, so one is a copy of the other can be ruled out. Five Aggregates either totally or individually cannot be regarded as an everlasting eternal soul. The Buddha never used the term to indicate oneself or to an individual everlasting soul. In the Upaniṣads, individual is a composition of Five Sheaths. The only similarity that exists between the Five Aggregates and Five Sheaths is numerical. To clear this fact the term will be discussed briefly in the Sheaths and Aggregates chapter.

There are some similarities and dissimilarities between Buddhism and Upaniṣads; the Upaniṣadic philosophy emerged in the Indus Valley and Buddhism emerged in Gangatic valley. Eventually the knowledge of the Upanishads was brought to the Gangatic valley when the *Aryans* migrated from the North-west to the east of India.

### **Theistic and Atheistic Arguments**

The Theistic religion is god centered while in the non-theistic religion there is no god. Buddhism and Jainism fall into atheistic religion. Teachings of theistic religion is based on reason,

nature and revelation. In revelation theology, god reveals himself to his worshippers; rational theology is based on knowledge, reason and ordinary everyday experiences of nature.

In the religious history of India, the scholars of Upaniṣads criticized Upaniṣads as well as Buddhism theistic approach of the Vedas. The school pioneered by Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan declared that Buddha followed Upaniṣads to formulate his philosophy. Therefore, as far as the anti-theistic approach is concerned, Buddhism and Upaniṣads do not have any differences. The field ‘philosophy’ is an immense area which includes many parts of discussions; one cannot grasp everything at the same time. In order to make progress, one must obey the traditional approach one by one. God, heaven, hell, soul, spirit destiny and *brahmā* are the metaphysical aspects of philosophy. Due to divergences of philosophy, the atheistic argument falls into metaphysical section where cause and principle are discussed. Later Upaniṣads present theistic notions. Swami Nikhilananda in *The Principal Upaniṣads* states, it is apparent that the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* contains a strong theistic strain. Eric Lott observes, “Hindu tradition has become increasingly theistic”,<sup>11</sup> because Hindu religion developed through Upaniṣads. Atheistic means discriminating theism; it means that someone who believes there is no god at all. “Some Asian religions like Buddhism and Jainism completely reject the notion of God”.<sup>12</sup> Buddhism does not have any place for God in its soteriology. Of course, Buddhism never denies the notion of God, but God does not occupy the central place that is assigned to him in monotheistic religion. Thus, Buddhism does not fall strictly into the theistic category of world religions. On the other hand, it is not atheistic taking consideration rationalism, secularism, humanism and so on. In that sense, Buddhism could be regarded as atheistic.

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<sup>11</sup> Lott, Eric. *Vedantic Approaches to God*. (London: Mamillan Press, 1980).

<sup>12</sup> Gunasekara, Victor, A. “*Humanism and Buddhism*”. Web.21 Jan 2018.

<<http://www.vgweb.org/manussa/humbud.htm>>

It is well-known that the Vedas has its pantheon of gods. Among them the powerful gods are *Indra*, *Varuṇa*, *Agni* and *Prajāpati*. At three different stages, the Vedas developed opinions towards the gods. At first, there were many gods. At the second stage, they decided that there is no difference between the creator and the creation. Later on, they concluded that they were omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient gods to whom various names were given.

In the Vedas, there are four ways to reach the reality of ultimate happiness. They are: *karma mārga*, *bhakti mārga*, *jñāna mārga* and *dhyāna mārga*. Of these, *karma mārga* and *bhakti mārga* are teachings of *yoga*; which is called religion. The *jñāna mārga* and *dhyāna mārga* give the instructions of how to develop human knowledge that is based on philosophy.

Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan who misunderstood several *Pāṇi* doctrinal terminologies: *attā*, *khaṇḍha*, *paññā*, *deva*, *kamma*, *nibbāṇa* and so on from the early Buddhist teachings and was unable to obliterate the authenticity of Buddhism. The general question is why he came to the conclusion that Upaniṣads and Buddhism are both exponents of atheism. It is unclear when and how *brahman* in the Upanishads became *brahmā* the creator god. It is mentioned in *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, “in later Hindu practice the name *Prajāpati* can also be used to refer to the god *Brahmā*, as fashioner of the universe”<sup>13</sup> Buddhism does not accept the concept of a creator god. But *Indra*, *Varuṇa*, *Agni*, *Prajāpati* and *Viṣṇu* are mentioned at various stages in the *Pāṇi* discourses. In this sense, one cannot say both Buddhism and Upaniṣads are atheistic on the same ground.

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<sup>13</sup> Vol. II, p. 19.

## Five Sheaths and Five Aggregates

The combination of the Five Aggregates (*rūpa, vedanā, saññā, sankhāra and viññāna*)<sup>14</sup> is one of the most prominent teachings in early Buddhism. S. Radhakrishnan upholds that the Buddha was influenced by the teachings of the Five Sheaths (*pañcakoṣa*), 1. *annamaya koṣa*, 2. *prāṇamaya koṣa* 3. *manomaya koṣa* 4. *vijnānamaya koṣa* and 5. *ānandamaya koṣa* of the Upaniṣads. According to the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, the individual is a composition of Five Sheaths which reside within the three bodies of human beings. J. Jagadeesan has mentioned “Human being have three basic ‘bodies’ the first *ānandamaya kosa* is the bliss sheath.”<sup>15</sup>

Gradually, “an individual enters the *ānnamaya koṣa* first and finally goes to where the realization of the final liberation.<sup>16</sup> In Hindu thinking, the powers derived from the aforesaid *koṣas* make *buddhi*. the instrument of salvation because they endow individuals with a capacity to discern between real (*sat*) and unreal (*asat*), and between the transcendental self (*ātman*) and the non-self (*anātman*). But, according to Pāli term “*cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānaṃ*”<sup>17</sup> meaning depending on the eye and forms arises eye consciousness, here only refers to the function between the sense organ and the corresponding sense object.

According to the Five Aggregates (*pañcakkhandhā*)<sup>18</sup> there has been not mentioned about an everlasting soul,<sup>19</sup> whereas in the Upaniṣads an everlasting permanent soul can be found. The only similarity that exists between the teachings of Five Aggregates and Five Sheaths is numerical.

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<sup>14</sup> AN. IV. (vol. 2, p. 171)

<sup>15</sup> *The Fourth Dimension*. (P, 13).

<sup>16</sup> Roeser, R. W. “An Introduction to Hindu India’s Contemplative Psychological Perspectives on Motivation, Self, and Development”. (p, 15). Web. 3 Jan. 2018.  
< <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/74e4/178aadfee58786c79689ea629fa8c959e550.pdf>>

<sup>17</sup> SN. Part IV. *Salayatana-Vagga*.

<sup>18</sup> *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, sankhārā and viññāna*

<sup>19</sup> *Rupa bhikkhave anicca*

There is an apparent similarity between *Manomaya koṣa* and *viññānakkhandha*. However, the definition and explanation of the term *viññānakkhandha* given in Buddhism differs from the term *manomaya koṣa* of Upaniṣads. The objective of the teachings of the Five Aggregates is to show that there is no everlasting entity within the human personality. In contrast, the teachings of the Five Sheaths have fixed objective of confirming the existence of such an entity. Therefore, it is unjustifiable to think that the Buddha formulated the teachings of Five Aggregates on the basis of the teachings of Five Sheaths in the Upaniṣads. It is well known that the teachings of Five Aggregates are prominently discussed in the early discourses of the Pāli Canon whereas such a prominence is not given to the teachings of Five Sheaths in the Upaniṣads; it is mentioned only in one or two Upaniṣads <sup>20</sup>. A teaching which was hidden in such a way in Upaniṣads, would not have compelled Buddha to go into the numerous interpretations of the Five Aggregates in the early discourses of the Pāli Canon.

### **Arguments on the Soul Theory**

In Buddhism, there is no unchanging, permanent soul or living beings. According to *Saṅṇā Sutta* of AN, impermanence is one of the seven beneficial perception (*saṅṇā*) and it is useful for us to understand *tilakkhaṇa*, that is three characteristics, namely impermanence (*aniccā*), suffering (*dukkha*) and not-self (*anattā*). R. Gombrich in his book *Theravada Buddhism* said, *aniccā* gives the meaning of suffering and lack of soul.<sup>21</sup> According to *Encyclopædia Britannica*, *anattā* is synonymous with *anātman* (*skt*). Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan referred, “the soul is an eternal entity

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<sup>20</sup> *Tai. Upa. and Man. Upa.*

<sup>21</sup> Gombrich, F., Richard. *Theravāda Buddhism A social history from ancient Benares to modern Colombo*. (New York: 1988), p. 47.

which is from time to time connected with a body suitable to its desert.”<sup>22</sup> “When our desert is completely exhausted, our soul is freed from *samsāra* and rebirth and attains release of emancipation (*mokṣa*). The liberated soul attains is compared to the state of deep dreamless sleep”<sup>23</sup>. Prof. Kapila Abhayawansa elucidates, “eternal soul goes to cosmic soul that is the liberation. The union of personal soul and cosmic soul is called *mokṣa*. Buddhism does not accept an eternal soul as a being; there is only the bundle of five aggregates”.<sup>24</sup> “The Buddhist schools reject any *ātman* we have already observed; this is the basic and ineradicable distinction between Hinduism and Buddhism. There is no substantial soul to be known.”<sup>25</sup> Swami Brahmeshananda in his book *The Secret of Happiness* in the chapter six declares that “the Buddha refused to discuss impractical and unanswerable questions concerning the soul, god, etc. Instead he based his philosophy on the practical everyday problems of sorrow, its cause and remedy. Buddhism denied the existence of soul whereas the most fundamental teachings in Upaniṣads is the acceptance of a soul. “Soul it considers a word used by the ignorant to express a false idea. If everything is subject to change, then man is included, and every material part of him must change. That which is subject to change is not permanent; so there can be no immortal survival of a changing thing.”<sup>26</sup> In the *Vajira Sutta* of the *Bhikkuni-Samyutta* mentioned, "What do you believe in a being? This is an evil view of yours. This is only a 'bundle of perceptions'. There is no being here.”<sup>27</sup>

In Buddhism *anāttavāda* and in Upaniṣads *ātmavāda* is taught. One can easily see the two opposite terminologies are used in Buddhism and Upaniṣads respectively. So, how can one say

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<sup>22</sup> Radhakrishnan, Sarvapalli. *Indian Philosophy: Vol: II. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.* (Delhi: Oxford Paperbacks, 2008), P. 132-132.

<sup>23</sup> Sarvapalli, p, 134.

<sup>24</sup> Prof. Kapila Abhayawansa. *LN. Sadao. IBC.* 2018.

<sup>25</sup> *Global History of Philosophy: The Axial Age, Vol, 1.* P. 63.

<sup>26</sup> Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna. *Key to Theosophy: Being a Clear Exposition, in the Form of Question and Answer, of the Ethics.* 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (London: The Country Press. 1905), P. 53.

<sup>27</sup> Ratnapala, Nandasena. *Buddhist Sociology.* (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publication, 1993), p, 14.

that one thinking is a copy of the other? The school pioneered by Radhakrishnan identifies *anāttavādi* of Buddhism and *ātmavādi* of Upaniṣads as same is totally misleading.

According to their views, if Buddhism is *anātmavādi*, Upaniṣads is also *anātmavādi*; if Upaniṣadic philosophy is *ātmavādi*, then Buddhism also is *ātmavādi*. Their arguments go as follows: the Buddha uses the word mostly in the contexts of five aggregates. Five Aggregates either totally or individually cannot be regarded as soul. They are perfectly insubstantial; they do not exist by themselves. They do appear and immediately after having appeared, they do vanish. Even though the Buddha taught Five Aggregates, He never said that there is an enduring everlasting soul. In other words, the threefold *ātmā* is denied in Buddhism, however, the third is accepted. The three aspects of *ātmā* recognized in the Upaniṣadic philosophy are *dehātmā*, *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā*. According to the *Bhagavat Gītā*, *paramātmā* means the supreme self. “The *ātman*, even though an everlasting part of myself, becomes bound in the cycle of transmigration.”<sup>28</sup> In the teachings of the Five Aggregates, the first and the second are negated, but there is no denial of the third one the concept of *paramātmā* (absolute soul).

According to S. Radhakrishnan, the discourses referred in their argument to show that the Buddha has accepted the absolute soul. Some references that are given below:

a) *Attha dīpa viharatha bhikkhave, atta saranā na aññāṣaranā, attahi attano natho*<sup>29</sup>,

c) *atthanam geveseyyātha*

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<sup>28</sup> Rāmānuja, U. Ve. *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā with Gītā Bhāṣya of Bhagavad Rāmānujācārya*. P. 173. <[http://www.srimatham.com/uploads/5/5/4/9/5549439/ramanuja\\_gita\\_bhashya.pdf](http://www.srimatham.com/uploads/5/5/4/9/5549439/ramanuja_gita_bhashya.pdf)>. 2013. Web, 13 Feb. 2018.

<sup>29</sup>DN 16 PTS: D ii 137



d) *iti ajjhataṃ vā kāye kāyānupassi viharati. bahiddhā vā kāye kāyānupassi viharati.*<sup>30</sup>

e) *Poṭṭhapāda sutta* of the *Digha Nikāya*, speaks of threefold soul as *Olārika atta paṭilābho*, *manomaya atta paṭilābho* and *arūpi atta paṭilābho*.<sup>31</sup>

These three terms are taken as the counterparts of *dehātmā*, *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā*. It is quite obvious that those terms are misunderstood by the scholars who maintain that Buddhism does not have its own identity. The meaning of soul is never attributed to the word *ātmā* found in the sentences. Buddha used the term ‘*atta*’ to indicate oneself. An individual everlasting soul is never meant by this term. The *Poṭṭhapāda Sutta* uses the *atta paṭilābho* and *arūpi* as general convention - the people talk about thing as experience. In this *Sutta* the Buddha says, I also use the term for general convention and for the practical purposes, otherwise there is no way of communication between the Buddha and the society. In the *Poṭṭhapāda Sutta* the Buddha never says that the soul comes into existence within these three folds. Therefore, the Pāli term *atta* has been taken out of context in this argument.

There are two realities as empirical and metaphysical. In all religions except Buddhism, these two realities are accepted. Empirical reality is the knowledge that we acquire through our senses. That knowledge can be experienced by any individual. Metaphysical experience goes beyond the sense experience; it exists beyond physical world, and that is why it is called metaphysical. Buddhism is the only religion, which emphasizes that only one reality that is empirical.

Metaphysical reality is considered as primary and the empirical reality is secondary in the other reality system. Accordingly, empirical reality is something that emanate from the

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<sup>30</sup> DN 22 PTS: D ii 290

<sup>31</sup> DN 9. PTS: D i 178

metaphysical reality. There are many names in various religious systems for the metaphysical reality. Some of them are: creator god, *ātman*, *puruṣa* as the first cause. Buddhism rejected the existence of a primary cause from which everything else come into existence. Therefore, the only reality accepted in Buddhism is empirical. This is beautifully explained in the *Sabba Sutta* of the *SN*, the word *sabba* (*sarvaṃ*) meaning is a technical term in the Indian religious system. In Buddhism, the early definition of this term is found in the *Sabba Sutta*, where the Buddha says that “all is nothing but the six faculties and their objects.”

The Buddha further states that there is no one to be found other than the *all* (six senses) in this context. Accordingly, the only reality that exists is what we experience through our sense faculties. In the *Sabba Sutta* the Buddha emphasized the fact of arising, its cessation and path leading to cessation that are found in the entire body. Therefore, there is no reality, which exists beyond the sense experience of man.

In the history of Buddhism various schools of thoughts emerged from time to time. It is said that the eighteen branches of schools arose in India before Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka. These schools come forward with various interpretations of the teachings in early Buddhism. No schools of Buddhism took up the position of the theory of soul even in a subtle form. Therefore, it is illogical to surmise that the *ātmavāda* was hidden in Buddhism until it was discovered by Radhakrishnan in twentieth century.

## Epistemological Interpretations

In Buddhism, there are two folds of perceptions such as sensory and extraordinary. The Upaniṣads speaks of two sciences as *parāvidyā* and *aparāvidyā* [<sup>32</sup>], [<sup>33</sup>]. It is suggested that the Buddha formulated the theory of perception on the basis of these two sciences which are found in the *Muṇḍaka* Upaniṣad. The sensory perception in Buddhism deals with the knowledge that we acquired through the sense faculties. However, knowledge beyond the sensory experiences reaches the level identified as *trividyā/tevijjā*; three *vidyās* or the three sciences: clairvoyance, divine ear and divine eye. In the Pāḷi Texts there are six super knowledges (*chaḷabhiññā*) which are known as *abhiññā* (psychic powers).

Toshiichi Endo gave us a clear idea in his book *Buddha in the Theravāda Buddhism*, “There are six *abhiññanas*- which are *chaḷabhiññā* such as *iddhi-vidhā*, *dibba-sota*, *cetopariya-ñāna*, *pubbenivāsānussati-ñāna*, *dibba cakkhu* and *āsavakkhaya*. The last three *abhiññās* (i.e. 4, 5, & 6) are designated as *tevijjā*.”<sup>34</sup> However, three sciences (*tevijjā*) and super knowledges have the senses as base. For example, *divya cakkhu* (clairvoyance) cannot be achieved by a blind, similarly *divya sota* (divine ear) can be experienced only by those who can hear well through his ears, on the other hand a deaf cannot experience *divya sota*. The other knowledges are achieved only when the mind is directed to the particular area of perception after the fourth-material absorption.<sup>35</sup> Accordingly, extra sensory perception is nothing but the utmost sharpening of the senses. In other words, extra sensory perception is impossible without having the adequate functions of the

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<sup>32</sup> *A Conceptual-analytic Study of Classical Indian Philosophy of Morals* (p, 47)

<sup>33</sup> Deutsch, Eliot. *A Vāda a Philosophical Reconstruction*. (P, 81)

<sup>34</sup> *Buddha in the Theravāda Buddhism*. (p, 17)

<sup>35</sup> “The four *jhānas* as natural process of psycho-somatic transformation, allowing sentences to be suffused or distributed back to its somatic roots.” <<https://ocbs.org/early-buddhist-meditation-a-philosophical-investigation/>>

faculties. But, in the Upaniṣads *trividyā* (*tevijjā*) identified as the knowledge of three Vedas: *Ṛg*, *Yajur* and *Sāma*.<sup>36</sup> Charles Rockwell Lanman, also affirms the three Vedas as three sciences or *trividyā*.<sup>37</sup>

*Parāvidyā* in Upaniṣads is similar to the sensory perceptions in Buddhism, because it is define as the knowledge that we acquire through the senses. All skillful knowledges: of languages, religion, philosophy and arts fall in to the category of sensory perceptions. Swami Paramananda said that, “or higher knowledge is that which cannot be perceived by the senses or by our ordinary faculties.”<sup>38</sup> The *aparāvidyā* is defined as “the knowledge through which one understands the unity between *ātman* and *brahman*.”<sup>39</sup> *Ātma* is not separated from *brahman*; both are the same. The *aparāvidyā* in the Upaniṣads has nothing to do with the extra sensory perception in Buddhism.

According to Buddhism, super knowledge is achieved when one understands that there is no soul and no creator god. One is responsible for one’s own salvation (*tumhehi kiccaṃ ātappaṃ akkhātaro tathāgatā*)<sup>40</sup> that means, “You yourselves should put forth the necessary effort, and work out your deliverance; the Buddhas only show the way.”<sup>41</sup> Therefore, epistemologically there is no similarity between early Buddhism and the Upaniṣads philosophy as Radhakrishnan and his school believes.

In the *Sangārava Sutta*<sup>42</sup> Buddha identified three religious systems which were contemporary and prior to the time of the Buddha.<sup>43</sup> They are suggested by Prof. K. N. Jayatillake

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<sup>36</sup> Williams, Monier. *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. London. Oxford Univesity Press. 1872. (p. 394).

<sup>37</sup> *A Sanskrit Reader: With Vocabulary and Notes*. (p, 166)

<sup>38</sup> The Upanishad. Vol-1. Third Ed. ( p, 126 )

<sup>39</sup> Prof. Oliver, Abenayake. *LN*. Colombo: 20 May 2012.

<sup>40</sup> *Dhp. Magga Vagga*. (4<sup>th</sup> stanza)

<sup>41</sup> *Collected Wheel Publications: Volume XII Numbers 167 to 18*. (p, 337).

<sup>42</sup> *AN 3.60 PTS: A i 168*.

<sup>43</sup> 1) *anussāvika*, 2) *Takki vimaṃsi* and 3) *ananussutesu dhammesu*. See also footnote: Harold Netland, keith yandell. *BUDDHISM: A Christian Exploration and Appraisal*. Illinois: Inter Varsity press. 2009. (p, 8).

as; the traditionalist, the rationalist, and the experimentalist for the three systems mentioned in the aforesaid *Sutta*. The Buddha specially says that He is one among those who belongs to the third category. It is based on a personal understanding derived from their extra-sensory power of perception. In other words, according to the Upaniṣadic thinkers, the Buddha followed the path of wisdom. However, the outcome of the path followed by the Buddha was quite different from those of the Upaniṣadic thinkers. In one of the discourses, the Buddha reveals that he followed or discovered an ancient path (*purāṇam aṅgasā*).<sup>44</sup> However, these similarities are not sufficient to conclude that Buddhism is a carbon copy of the Upaniṣadic philosophy.

## Conclusion

The Theory of Relativity was the most significant involvement to Indian thought, which is distinctive in the religious history of Indian philosophy. The contributions made by the Buddha to Indian thought should be carefully kept in mind. There is no doubt that the Buddha's marvelous sense of humbleness can be deduced by his modest declaration that he was not an original thinker. The investigation of the relationship between Upaniṣadic philosophy and Buddhism is not so simple as to make a generalized statement that Buddhism is another version of the Upaniṣads.

The issues involved here are so complicated that one need to go deeper into details; it is excessive to discuss in terms of the essence behind the Upaniṣads and its general influences. There are sufficient evidences that the most standard opinions on the theme are not agreeable. A number of important facts discussed in this paper confirmed the legitimate place of Buddhism in Indian thought. It is worthy to mention that, there is a need to re-examine the available facts to study the

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<sup>44</sup> AN 7.63 PTS: A iv 106.

pre-*Āryan* and other contemporary effects on Indian thought. Both Buddhism and Upaniṣads condemned and rejected sacrifice as a means to achieve liberation and they have theistic tendency in their history. The path of wisdom (P: *paññā magga*, S: *jñānā mārga*) is common as both arose against the path of ritualism (*karmamārga*) of the Vedas. The diversities between Buddhism and Upaniṣads are Upaniṣads were meant to impart secret knowledge, and thus it called Upaniṣads. The knowledge was for the upper classes, whereas Buddhism is meant for all individuals. The Buddha has not hidden anything in his fist.<sup>45</sup> The soul (*ātma*) accepted by Upaniṣads is as the reality within the individual and there is an external reality, known as *brahman* whereas Buddha rejected both realities. Seeing, hearing and knowing are the means of knowledge in Upanishads, but Buddhism does not accept *hearing* as a means of knowledge.<sup>46</sup> There is no doubt that Buddhism has its own identity. The philosophers who have repeatedly criticized Buddhism as nothing but a reinterpretation of Upaniṣadic philosophy, are responsible for their assertions which are baseless and do not have enough evidences to prove their theories.

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<sup>45</sup> *na hi tathagatassa dhammesu acariyamutthi atthiti. DN 16 (D ii 137)*

<sup>46</sup> *AN 3.65 PTS: A i 188.*

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# **The Buddha as a Historical Person**

**By Ven Wajira**

## **Introduction**

There is a paucity of information and evidences in the Pali Canon and the texts of other Buddhist schools that present the Buddha as a historical person. Only a little information can be found in the Pali Canon, but we have to examine those *Suttas* and look for information rigorously because those *Suttas* describe the Buddha both in a realistic and unrealistic way. We can detect some authentic information and evidences that represent the Buddha as a historical person other than a supernatural being.

In the early sources, the Buddha was presented as a teacher and a human being par excellence. He also was considered to be a sage just like other sages who were contemporary with him. People who listened to his teachings followed him as a great example of accomplishment of the virtuous life through the austerities. He was not the leader of all monks who entered into the Buddhist order. After the establishment of the Buddhist monastic order, the community began to increase, then the monks were led by certain teachers chosen by them. But later his disciples have attributed lots of supernatural qualities to him to eulogize the founder of the Buddhist order as superior to his disciples and other religious leaders who lived in India over the course of the development of Buddhism.

## **What was the Buddha like?**

There are no archeological evidences to verify the appearance of the Buddha. We have only references made in the Buddhist literature. Buddhist literature does not give a clear and precise impression on the physical appearance of the Buddha but gives only an abstract impression of the Buddha. For instance, the *Lakkhaṇasutta* in the *Dīgha Nikāya*<sup>1</sup> and the *Brahmāyusutta* in the *Majjhima Nikāya*<sup>2</sup> state that the Buddha possessed thirty-two marks that depict the Buddha as superhuman but we can find some other evidences which describe him as a human being.

According to the *Ariyapariyesana Sutta*, the Buddha is six feet tall with coal black hair and golden-brown complexion. When he was still a layman he grew his hair and beard long, but on renouncing the world, he shaved them just like other monks.<sup>3</sup>

In the *Soṇadanda Sutta*, the Buddha is presented as an extraordinary handsome person. *Soṇadanda* expressed the beauty of the Buddha in front of the other Brahmins. The passage he uttered regarding the Buddha is good enough to recognize him as a very handsome and beautiful person. *Gotama Samana* is handsome, good looking, pleasing of the most beautiful complexion, in form and countenance, he is like god, he was a very attractive person by all means.<sup>4</sup>

Once, the Buddha arrived in the city of *Venāgarapura*, the Brahmin householders of *Venāgarapura*, having heard that the Buddha had come to their village, went to where the Buddha was present. At that moment, one Brahmin called *Vacchagotta* described the appearance of the Buddha. He said that “It is astounding and amazing, Master *Gotama*, how Master *Gotama*’s faculties are tranquil and the color of his skin is pure and bright. Just as a yellow jujube fruit in the autumn is pure and bright, so Master *Gotama*’s faculties are tranquil and the color of his skin is

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<sup>1</sup> D. III. 143-4.

<sup>2</sup> M. II. 136-7.

<sup>3</sup> M. I. 163.

<sup>4</sup> D. I. 115.

pure and bright. Just as a palm fruit that has just been removed from its stalk is pure and bright, so Master *Gotama*'s faculties are tranquil and the color of his skin is pure and bright, just as an ornament of finest gold..."<sup>5</sup>

The *Brahmāyusutta* in the Majjhima Nikāya sheds probably the most comprehensive description of the Buddha's demeanor and manner in conducting himself in daily routines. He walks setting out with his right foot first. He walks neither too quickly nor too slowly. He walks without his knees knocking together. He walks without his ankles knocking together. He walks without raising or lowering his thighs or bringing them together or keeping them apart. When he walks only the lower part of his body oscillates and he does not walk with bodily effort. When he turns to look, he does with his whole body. He does not look straight up and he does not look straight down. He does not walk looking about. He looks a plough-yoke's length before him. When seated indoor, he does not fidget with his hands. He does not fidget with his feet. He does not sit with his knees crossed. He does not sit with his ankles crossed. He does not sit with his hand holding his chin. When seated indoors he is not afraid, he does not shiver and tremble, he is not nervous.<sup>6</sup> The Sutta goes on describing his conduct with regard to receiving of water, handling of alms bowl, acceptance of meals, his robes, manner of preaching to the audience.

In the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, the Buddha describes to Venerable *Ānanda* the nature of his body at the age of eighty.

"Just as an old cast is made to go by being held together with straps, so the Tathagata's body is kept going strapped up. It is only when the Tathagata withdrawn his attention

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<sup>5</sup> A. I. 181.

<sup>6</sup> M. II. 137-138.

from outward sings, and by the cessation of certain feelings enter into the singles concentration of mind, that his body knows comfort.”<sup>7</sup>

Of course, the body of the Buddha too was subjected impermanence as he got old, just like other human beings. In the Saṃyutta Nikāya, the chief attendant of the Buddha, Venerable Ānanda, put a realistic description on the appearance of the Buddha at his old age as following.

“It is strange, Lord, it is a wonder how the Exalted One’s skin is no longer clear and radiant, how all his limbs are slack and wrinkled, how stooped his body is and how a change is to be seen in eye, ear, nose, tongue and body”<sup>8</sup>

The *Sandhaka Sutta* in the Majjhima Nikāya gives a good example to indicate that the Buddha was undoubtedly a human being. It gives a clear impression about what kind of a person he was.

“Whether I am walking or standing or sleeping or awake, knowledge and vision are continuously and uninterruptedly present in me. He enters an empty house. He gets no alms food, a dog bites him, he meets with a wild elephant, wild horse, a wild bull, he asks the name of a woman or man, he asks the name of a village or town and the way to go to these.”<sup>9</sup>

The Buddha went for begging at a place where he did not receive any alms food, or else took a road which led him to be attacked by a wild animal, or else needed to inquire after the name of a particular village and the way to reach it, evidently not knowing the way himself.

## **Sufferings and Problems encountered by the Buddha**

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<sup>7</sup> D. II. 100.

<sup>8</sup> S. V. 217.

<sup>9</sup> M. I. 520.

Once the Buddha was on his way to Kusinara with his main attendant Venerable Ānanda. The Buddha was so exhausted that he was unable to move even one step forward without water. At that moment the Buddha asked Venerable Ānanda for some water to quench his thirst. The water on the ground was churned-up. Then Venerable Ānanda replied to the Buddha that the place he went to get some water was churned-up by five hundred carts. But the Buddha was unable to bear his thirst any more. The Buddha asked thrice Ānanda for water. Eventually Ananda had to serve the dirty and churned-up water to the Buddha even though he requested the Buddha to hold on for a few minutes until they reached the river called Kakuttha.

“Ananda bring me some water. I am thirsty and want to drink”<sup>10</sup>

Another discourse which is called the Sekhasutta in the Majjhima Nikāya demonstrates the human aspect of the Buddha. The Buddha suffered from backache which troubled him from time to time. That backache arose out of his vigorous ascetic practices endured for six years in the quest for enlightenment, therefore at times the Buddha left off preaching the Dhamma and handed onto his disciples to continue.

“*Ānanda* speak to the *Sakyans* of *Kapilavattu* about the discipline in higher training who have entered upon the way. My back is uncomfortable. I will rest it.”<sup>11</sup>

The Buddha was completely rid of all snares, both celestial and human. His actions also were devoid of lust, hatred and delusion which meant no accumulation of actions which led to any reactions, and he was not subject to be born again in the cycle of birth and death but nevertheless he too was subjected to physical diseases that is common for all beings.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> D. II. 129.

<sup>11</sup> M. I. 354.

<sup>12</sup> S. IV. 183.



To attain enlightenment, the Buddha had to engage in a battle with Mara which means the enlightenment is a result of eradicating all desires and defilements. Mara is the personification of lust, hatred, and delusion in Buddhist literature. Mara not only appeared in advance of his enlightenment, after the enlightenment he appeared in front of the Buddha by representing that even the Buddha was not able to escape from food, sleep, pains, illness and death. The Buddha however never succumbed to the temptations of *Māra*.

“You have forsaken the ascetic path. By means of which men purify themselves, you are not pure, you fancy you are pure. The path of purity is far from you”<sup>13</sup>

Some discourses provide references to incidents such as not getting food by the Buddha while he went on alms-round. Even though the Buddha went to a village for alms, the villagers did not give him any food. Once, the Buddha went for his alms-round but did not receive any food.<sup>14</sup>

During the life time of the Buddha, he had to confront many problems while he was interacting with society. It is a common thing when people are wrapped in the society, they have to face many problems caused by the society. The accounts of the Vinaya are the best examples illustrating the problems faced by the Buddha as a result of the growth of the Buddhist monastic order. Regardless that the Buddha was such a great man and par excellence supernatural being as described in Buddhist literature, he was not able to solve every problem that fell to him.

At the time of the Buddha, a dispute came up regarding discipline (Vinaya) and doctrine (Dhamma). This was such a huge dispute that the Buddha was unable to settle it. Eventually he decided to move into the jungle leaving Kosāmbi.

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<sup>13</sup> S. I. 103.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 114

“Enough Bhikkhus, let there be no quarrelling, brawling, wrangle or dispute. For a third time that Bhikkhus said to the Blessed One, wait Venerable Sir..... we are the ones who will be responsible for this quarrelling, brawling, wrangling and dispute.”<sup>15</sup>

Devadatta who was a cousin of the Buddha always acted as an opponent of the Buddha throughout Buddhist history, even though he went forth under the Buddha. He challenged even the authority of the Buddha.<sup>16</sup> He did not stop after the Buddha rejected his claim to leadership of the Buddhist order, then he split a group of monks away from the main Buddhist order by putting forward five rules to be made compulsory.

The group of monks that split away from the main Buddhist order, consisting of both monks and nuns, was as active as the disciples of the Buddha. They became active during the life time of the Buddha under special names, but the Buddha was unable to keep Devadatta under control and could not deal with him.<sup>17</sup>

The first ever schism of Buddhism came up during the life time of the Buddha. Devadatta proposed the five rules which contributed to the first schism in the history of Buddhism. As a consequence of rejection of his proposal by the Buddha, Devadatta managed to split a group of monks away.

A group of six monks called *Chabbaggiya* gave much trouble to the Buddha, especially in respect to discipline, because their misconduct always brought about people’s criticism and disapproval.<sup>18</sup> These monks were reputed to be notorious for misconduct and caused the Buddha

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<sup>15</sup> M. III. 153.

<sup>16</sup> V. I. 188.

<sup>17</sup> V. IV. 65.

<sup>18</sup> V. I. 138.

to lay down many rules and regulations.<sup>19</sup> There were also nuns among their followers who likewise violated the Vinaya rules in various ways.<sup>20</sup>

When the Buddha was in his old age, once he asked Venerable Mahākassapa to instruct the Bhikkhus, Venerable Mahākassapa complained to the Buddha that it was difficult to speak to the monks who were intractable and heedless of instructions.<sup>21</sup>

When the order of Saṅgha reached an intensive level, the Buddha also lost control of his disciples, then he had to lay down many rules and regulations even though the Buddha did not like to do it. One day Venerable Mahākassapa asked the Buddha as to why formerly there were fewer training rules but more bhikkhus were established in final knowledge. While now there are more training rules but fewer bhikkhus are established in final knowledge. The Buddha replied to Venerable Mahakassapa, that more rules manifested showed the deterioration of the order of Saṅgha, but the Dhamma will not disappear so long as a counterfeit of the true Dhamma not arose.<sup>22</sup>

Some persons who entered into the Buddhist order after being delighted with the teaching of the Buddha subsequently were discontented with the teaching of the Buddha and left the Buddha. One monk called Phagguṇa was dissatisfied when the Buddha admonished him for misconduct. On another occasion, he asked a series of questions, but the Buddha rejected them as they were wrongly formulated. Even though the Buddha explained that these questions were not related to final liberation, he was not satisfied with the explanation of the Buddha.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 104. 106. 113. 114. 160. 170. 185. 189. 192. 194.

<sup>20</sup> V. II. 262. 266. 269. 271. 276.

<sup>21</sup> S. III. 208.

<sup>22</sup> S. II. 224.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 13.

One day a discussion took place between a Brahmin called Dona and the Buddha. He carefully looked at the Buddha, his peaceful faculties and peaceful mind, then he wanted to know what kind of person he was because the Buddha's appearance manifested qualities that he had never seen before from anyone. The Buddha replied that I had eliminated every afflictions and taints therefore I was known as Buddha. However he was not delighted with his answer and went away.<sup>24</sup>

Every disciple of the Buddha was not able to comprehend the teaching of the Buddha. Sometimes what the Buddha guided they misunderstood. For example, a group of monks who misunderstood the instructions on mindfulness centered on the body given by the Buddha committed suicide while the Buddha was in a solitary retreat.<sup>25</sup>

One of disciples of the Buddha was called *Suṇakkhatta* strongly disagreed with his teaching and he criticized the Buddha and his teaching before his devotees. "The recluse *Gotama* does not have any super human states, any distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble one..."<sup>26</sup>

The Buddha had to face severe condemnation and insult when he met the people and sometimes he was sternly scolded and blamed by them saying that the Buddha came to disturb them. Once, the Buddha went to meet a Brahmin called *Aggika-bhāradvāja* out of compassion for him. At that time, he was performing a sacrifice for the fire-god. When he saw the Buddha who was coming in the distance, he thought if the Buddha comes to the place of sacrifice then it would be corrupted. Therefore he rushed towards the gate and did not allow the Buddha to enter his premises, and abused the Buddha.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> A. I. 37-39.

<sup>25</sup> S. V. 320-22.

<sup>26</sup> M. I. 66.

<sup>27</sup> S. I. 166.

When we come to the Brahmana Saṃyutta in the Saṃyutta Nikāya, it illustrates that the Buddha was the embodiment of patience and peace and capable of working in face of any problems and difficulties caused by any person and those who would attack him. It apparently shows the reactions of the Buddha to persons who strongly take him apart and disdain him. The Buddha was such a skillful person that those who came to the Buddha with angry and hostile mind at the end of the discussion were delighted with his teaching and with him.<sup>28</sup>

### **The Buddha as a Religious Teacher who appreciates Silence**

The Buddha was reputed for silence within other ascetic group. One day the Buddha was wandering somewhere. An ascetic group who were shouting and screaming there saw the Buddha and fell into silence.

“Sirs, be quite, Sirs make no noise. Here comes the recluse Gotama. This venerable one likes quiet and commends quiet. Perhaps if he finds our assembly a quiet one, he will think to join us.”<sup>29</sup>

The Buddha loved silence in such a way that he did not allow monks to make loud noise wherever he stayed. Once, five hundred monks with *Sāriputta* and *Moggallāna* arrived to see the Buddha when he was at *Cātuma*. When the monks who came with *Sāriputta* and *Moggallāna* started to exchange greetings with the resident monks, it rendered a loud noise which interrupted the meditation of the Buddha. Hearing this loud noise, the Buddha summoned those monks and sent them away saying:

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<sup>28</sup> S. I. 160-169.

<sup>29</sup> M. II. 02.

“Do not you, monks, think that the loud noise, the great noise is like that of fisher folk when hauling in a catch? Go away, monks, I dismiss you, you should not stay near me.”<sup>30</sup>

However, this love of solitude led to denunciation of the Buddha within other ascetic groups. One of the ascetic leader who was called *Nigrodha* denounced the Buddha as a person who was obsessed with happiness of solitude in front of the Buddha’s lay follower who was called Sandhana.

“Well now, householder, do you know whom the ascetic *Gotama* talks to? Whom does he converse with? From whom does he get his lucidity of wisdom? The ascetic *Gotama*’s wisdom is destroyed by the solitary life, he is unused to assemblies, he is not good at conversation, he is right out of touch. Just as a bison circling around keep to the fringes, so it is with the ascetic *Gotama*. In fact, householder, if the ascetic *Gotama* were to come to this assembly, we would baffle him with a single question, we would knock him over like an empty pot.”<sup>31</sup>

It is true that the Buddha was fond of quietude. But, it is quite evident from the discourses that he did not escape from anyone who urgently desired his spiritual guidance. Even though when he was staying in seclusion in his chamber, visitors were allowed to enter and visit him. *Ambaṭṭha-sutta* reveals to us that when the young *Brahmin Ambaṭṭha* went to see the Buddha, the Buddha was in seclusion inside his dwelling. *Ambaṭṭha* informed the monks that he came to meet the Buddha, the monks said to him:

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<sup>30</sup> M. I. 457.

<sup>31</sup> D. III. 39.

“That is his dwelling, with the door closed. Go quietly up to it; go on to the verandah without haste, cough, and knock on the bolt. The lord will open the door for you”. When *Ambattha* followed what was instructed by the monks, the Buddha opened the door and gave him the opportunity to talk to the Buddha.”<sup>32</sup>

The visitors were able to meet the Buddha freely even though he was staying in seclusion. *Madhupiṇḍikasutta* tells us that once, while the Buddha was walking in Kapilavattu for alms, he approached the forest called *Mahāvana* for the day-sojourn after meal. He sat down for the day-sojourn at the root of a young *Vilva* tree. Then a *Sākyan* named *Daṇḍapāṇi* having seen the Buddha at the root of the tree approached him and talked to him. The Buddha did not send him away saying that he was engaged in seclusion, but accepted him and provided the answer to the question raised by him.<sup>33</sup>

## **1.5 The Emotions of the Buddha.**

The Buddha is known as the embodiment of patience and sympathy. There are some occasions which describe that the Buddha feels uneasy and rebukes his disciples when they misunderstand and wrongly interpret his teaching. The Buddha thoroughly condemns misinterpretation regarding the teaching which he discovered because he always put in the effort to help the people onto the right path which led to final liberation through his teaching. If someone wrongly illustrates his teaching it could convey wrong ideas to the next generation and for this reason, the Buddha was serious about misinterpretation on his teaching.

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<sup>32</sup> D. 1. 91.

<sup>33</sup> M. 1. 108.

The monk named *Sāti* had been misinterpreting the teaching of the Buddha by saying that it was the same consciousness that passed through the circle of birth and death. The Buddha rebuked him by using the term “*Moghapurisa*”<sup>34</sup> Another monk called *Ariṭṭha* reproached by the Buddha for his misinterpretation of the Dhamma. The Buddha condemned him as a foolish and misguided man.<sup>35</sup>

The term “*Moghapurisa*” the Buddha did not only use every time when someone misinterpreted his teaching but also used on someone who was incurable and got complete misunderstanding. The *Pāṭika Sutta* referred to the occasion on which the Buddha used the term “*Moghapurisa*” to admonish a monk called *Sunakkatta*. *Sunakkatta* came to the Buddha and said “Lord, I am leaving the Blessed Lord, I am no longer under the Lord’s rule. At that moment the Buddha advised him, “You foolish man, who are you and what are you giving up? Consider, foolish man, how far the fault is yours.”<sup>36</sup>

Someone can perhaps argue that the Buddha never get angry. But when we looked into the criticisms and reprimands the Buddha made on *Devadatta*, it at the very least meant that the Buddha got angry with the misconduct of *Devadatta*. But it does not mean to harm and hurt *Devadatta* but the Buddha took him apart in front of others by declaring his misconduct. “I do not see even one other person, *Ananda*, about whom I have made a declaration after giving him such full consideration as *Devadatta*. As long as I saw even a mere fraction of a hair’s strip of a bright quality in *Devadatta*”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 258.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 132.

<sup>36</sup> D. III. 3.

<sup>37</sup> A. III 403.



In *Abhayarājakumārasutta*, the prince *Abhayarāja* asked the Buddha why he discredited *Devadatta* by despising such, “*Devadatta* is destined for the state of deprivation, *Devadatta* is destined for hell, *Devadatta* will remain for the aeon, *Devadatta* is incorrigible? The Buddha replied to him, I discredited him because of compassion for *Devadatta*.”<sup>38</sup>

Just as a human being, the Buddha enjoyed and praised the beauty of nature. On one occasion the Buddha appreciates the beauty of the vicinity of *Cāpāla* Cetiya. “*Ānanda*, Vesali is delightful, the Udena Shrine is delightful, the *Gotamaka* shrine is delightful, the *Sattambaka* shrine is delightful, the *Bahuputtaka* shrine is delightful, the *Cāpala* shrine is delightful.”<sup>39</sup>

After the enlightenment of the Buddha, he became worried because he did not see any person to pay his homage in the world when he looked into himself. That feeling made the Buddha uneasy and the Buddha gave shape to his feeling of uneasiness as following.

“It is painful to dwell without reverence and deference. Now what ascetic or Brahmins can I honor, respect and dwell in dependence on?”<sup>40</sup>

## Conclusion

As we discussed above, we can find paucity of evidence which shows that the Buddha was a completely human being other than supernatural being and the way he lived manifested great outstanding human qualities. Even though he attained enlightenment he was unable to escape from ageing, illness and death which are the nature of the world. During his lifetime he got sick

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<sup>38</sup> M. I. 395.

<sup>39</sup> D. II. 116.

<sup>40</sup> A. II. 20.

sometimes and he was unable to bear the suffering of illness and he was insulted and troubled by lots of people including his disciples, too. At the ripe old age, he suffered from the sufferings of old age and he finally passed away just like any human being under the tree.

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# 智者大师往生处之探讨

陈日隆

智者大师乃是中国佛教的一代宗师。大师开创了天台宗，一生讲经说法、著书造论、建寺度众、慈悲放生，信解行证俱足，功德无可计数。自然地，描述和传颂大师生平的传记也很多。然而，诸传记中，有关大师往生处的说法却有不同，主要有往生极乐净土说和往生弥勒净土说。这给后人留下了疑点：究竟智者大师是往生极乐净土抑或弥勒净土？本文尝试从这个疑点下手研究。本文采用的研究方法即是从智者大师之著作和思想、教理和行持、后人的传记与文献等，尝试一探智者大师的究竟往生处，并尝试提出本文的想法。

## 一、智者大师往生处之异说

一位修行人究竟往生哪个有缘的净土是和那人平时的修持、信愿以及临终时所呈现的因缘有密切的关系。例如，一个修行人若平时常亲近与弥勒菩萨有关经典，系念和礼拜弥勒菩萨，发愿往生弥勒净土，临终时也没有其他违缘的业力干扰，那么此行人最终得以往生弥勒净土是自然的、理所当然的和不难理解的。若反而说此人往生极乐净土，那倒会引起疑问。本文就基于这个逻辑来推测，探索智者大师的生平修持、信愿和有关大师临终前的一些记载，来探索智者大师和哪个净土有缘而往生彼处。

首先，我们先来讨论智者大师往生处之各种异说。不同的祖师和经典对于大师的往生有不同的描写。有者说智者大师往生极乐净土，有者则认为智者大师应是往生弥勒净土。本章且尝试从这个疑点起手探索。

### 1. 往生极乐净土说

灌顶大师为其师父所著的《隋天台智者大师别传》（此简称《别传》）中记载，智者大师圆寂前，曾听门人唱诵《无量寿》。听完后，赞叹道：“四十八愿，庄严净土。华池宝树，易往无人。火车相现，能改悔者，尚复往生，况戒慧熏修，行道力故，实不唐捐。梵音声相，实不诳人。”<sup>1</sup> 随后，智者大师的弟子智朗法师曾请示说：“伏愿慈留，赐释余疑。不审何位？歿此何生？”大师答说：“……吾不领众，必净六根。为他损己，只是五品位耳。汝问何生者，吾诸师友，侍从观音，皆来迎我。”<sup>2</sup>

莲池大师在他著的《往生集》中，赞曰：“大师道德崇重一家教观，万代宗仰，而舍寿之际，惟西方是归。”<sup>3</sup> 以上说法，智者大师圆寂后，应是往生西方净土。

### 2. 往生弥勒净土说

然而，在《续高僧传》中有记载道，智晞大师临圆寂时，其弟子问：“未审和上当生何所？答云：如吾见梦，报在兜率，宫殿青色，居天西北。见智者大师，左右有诸天人皆坐宝座……。”<sup>4</sup> 相同的记载也可在其他典籍中见到，如《佛祖统纪》<sup>5</sup>、《法华传记》

<sup>1</sup> 灌顶，《隋天台智者大师别传》，第1卷，（CBETA, T50, no. 2050, p. 191a24）。

<sup>2</sup> 同上。

<sup>3</sup> 株宏，《往生集》，第1卷，（CBETA, T51, no. 2072, P. 129b29）。

<sup>4</sup> 道宣，《续高僧传》，第19卷，（CBETA, T50, no. 2060, P. 582a24）。

6、《兜率龟镜集》<sup>7</sup>等。除了引智晞大师临终时的描述，另外也有记载智者大师生平和往生兜率内院的文献，如《法华传记》之〈隋国师智者天台国清寺释智顗八〉篇中有记述说：“后于石城寺弥勒像，发愿而终属。灭后，灌顶梦，师在兜率内院矣。”<sup>8</sup>若依这些记载，智者大师倒是生往兜率内院的弥勒净土。

那么，智者大师究竟往生何方？本文将在下个章节，尝试从不同的角度切入和探索，例如：智者大师之著作、思想、教理、行持，以及后人的传记与文献等。

## 二、智者大师的著作、思想、教理和行持

若要了解一位佛教人物，最佳入手处即是尽可能直接地探索他一生的教理和行持。当然智者大师离世已久，我们惟有采取第二佳的选择，即是采用最贴近大师的第一手资料。因此，本文将采用大师的著作以及可信度高的生平记载当作探索材料。

大师自幼便已显现出它与佛教——特别是观音菩萨——有着甚深缘份。七岁到寺院，学念《普门品》，一遍便能上口。十八岁依法绪法师出家，授以十戒。后来跟慧旷律师学律，二十岁受具足戒。二十三岁拜慧思禅师为师，修习法华，读至《药王品》，豁然开悟。三十岁，入金陵瓦官寺说法，名声大振。后来，叹听法人多，得法人少，对弘法不利，遂入天台山，潜修、度众。智者大师一生著作甚丰，有禅修、净名、观音、极乐净土等经典。

首先，我们以智者大师的著作入手，来探索一些主要的因缘。天台宗的主要经典是《法华经》。智者大师开悟的因缘，也在《法华经》之〈药王品〉。因此，好一些著作都是和《法华经》有关联。众所周知，其中重要的著作有“天台三大部”，（即《法华经玄义》、《法华经文句》和《摩诃止观》）与“天台五小部”（即《观音玄义》、《观音义疏》、《金光明经玄义》、《金光明经文句》和《观无量寿佛经疏》）。当然，还有其他的著作如：与禅修有关的《释摩诃般若波罗蜜经觉意三昧》、《释禅波罗蜜次第法门》、《六妙法门》、《修习止观坐禅法要》；与《维摩经》相关的《维摩经玄疏》、《维摩经疏》；与极乐净土和西方三圣有关的《请观音经疏》、《观无量寿佛经疏》（简称《观经疏》）、《五方便念佛门》、《净土十疑论》（简称《十疑论》）等等。<sup>9</sup>通过著作和说法，智者大师除了弘扬天台师祖的一心三观之外，也创立了影响深远的天台学说和思想，如五时八教、五重玄义、七番共解、化法四教、化仪四教、一念三千、性具思想以及被视为是天台最重要学说的性恶论。除了天台学说，莲池大师也赞叹智者大师推崇极乐净土信仰：

大师道德崇重一家教观。万代宗仰。而舍寿之际。惟西方是归。乃至疏观经。着十疑论。恒于此谆谆焉。意可知矣。或曰。疏称心观为宗。净土其非实欤。噫大师谓。约心观佛。不谓无佛。如其无佛。心观何施。正报既然。依报亦尔。学台教者审之。<sup>10</sup>

文中，莲池大师虽不赞成智者大师在《观经疏》中说净土非实有的说法，但是赞许智者大师著《观经疏》和《十疑论》，弘扬往生净土思想。其实，智者大师与观音有很

<sup>5</sup> 志磐，《佛祖统纪》，第9卷，（CBETA, T49, no. 2035, P. 198a08）：“或问生处。曰据吾梦验当在兜率。宫殿青色居天西北见吾先师侍左右者皆坐宝座。”

<sup>6</sup> 僧祥《法华传记》，第3卷，（CBETA, T51, no. 2068, P. 60a19）：“未审和上当生何所。答云。如吾见梦。报左兜率。宫殿青色。居天西北。见智者大师。左右有诸天人。皆坐宝座。”

<sup>7</sup> 弘赞，《兜率龟镜集》，第3卷，（CBETA, X88, no. 1643, p. 66a24）：“未审和尚当生何所。答云。报在兜率。宫殿青色。居天西北见智者大师。左右有诸天人。皆坐宝座。”

<sup>8</sup> 僧祥《法华传记》，第2卷，（CBETA, T51, no. 2068, p. 56c15）。

<sup>9</sup> 见 <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/person/?fromInner=A001301>。

<sup>10</sup> 株宏，《往生集》，第1卷，（CBETA, T51, no. 2072, p. 129b29）。

深的宿缘。七岁时，到寺院听僧众口诵《普门品》，只听一遍便记得了。<sup>11</sup>若无宿缘，一个七岁孩童那来如此能耐？后来，依《普门品》著有《观音玄义》、《观音义疏》。再后来更出有《请观音经疏》、《观经疏》、《十疑论》等缘牵西方净土的著作。可见，大师与极乐净土已有深缘。

除了讲经、著疏度众之外，智者大师一生的慈悲行持也感人至深。在智者大师《别传》里，有几个感人公案，值得记述：

初瓦官四十人共坐，二十人得法。次年百余人共坐，二十人得法。次年二百人共坐，减十人得法。其后徒众转多，得法转少。妨我自行，化道可知。

<sup>12</sup>

之前已说过，智者大师三十岁时，入金陵瓦官寺说法，名声大振，禅法大盛。此段即是记述后来的状况：听法的人每年增加，但是得法的人，却不增反减。敢情来听法者，多数为了智者大师的名声，而少数是来真正求法的。这状况对弘法不利。为令正法能真正得到弘传，智者大师毅然向陈宣帝请辞，离开了繁华的金陵，而结茅舍于天台山，潜心修行，更广度众生。可看出大师不为名闻利养，但为真正弘法。

但天台基压巨海，黎民渔捕为业。为梁者断溪，为簔者藩海。秋水一涨，巨细填梁。昼夜二潮，嗽炭满簔。颅骨成岳，蝇蛆若雷。非但水陆可悲，亦痛舟人滥殒。先师为此而运普悲乘，舍身衣，并诸劝助，赎簔一所，永为放生之池。于时计谿临郡，请讲《金光明经》。济物无偏，宝冥出窟。以慈修身，见者欢喜。以慈修口，闻声发心。善诱殷勤，导达因果。合境渔人，改恶从善，好生去杀。湍潮绵亘三百余里，江溪簔梁合六十三所，同时永舍，俱成法池。一日所济，巨亿万数，何止十千而已哉！<sup>13</sup>

天台山靠近大海。附近人民多以捕鱼为生。有渔民用梁断水捕鱼，也有些结竹簔大量捕鱼。捕杀过多，尸骸蝇蛆堆积成山，恶臭不已。大师变卖衣物，劝人帮忙，赎得簔一所，作为放生池。之后，承蒙当时临郡计谿之请，常为渔民讲《金光明经》里放生的善行，渐渐感化了当地的渔民，纷纷舍掉江溪簔梁，改恶从善，好生不杀。结果，那一带反而成了放生的法池。所救的生命过亿万数。此处可见智者大师的悲心菩提，对一切生命，一视同仁，同样救护。

吾不领众，必净六根。为他损己，只是五品位耳。<sup>14</sup>

大师圆寂前，有弟子问大师修道果位。大师答说，若不领众的话，必得六根清净位。但是，为了大众利益，利他损己，只得五品位。此处，再次看出大师的菩提心切，把大众利益放在首位，摒弃我执、我爱执。这不是菩萨行为，是什么？

大师所造有为功德：造寺三十六所、大藏经十五藏、亲手度僧一万四千人、造栴檀金铜素画像八十万躯、传弟子三十二人，得法自行不可称数。

<sup>15</sup>

大师一生解行并重，精进弘扬佛法，作诸功德，广度众生。除了创立了有天台特色的学说，大师亦修建寺院三十六所、造大藏经十五藏、亲手度过的僧众达一万四千人、造栴檀金铜素画像八十万躯、嫡传弟子三十二人，其他得法的人，不计其数，可谓硕果丰盛。年六十，大师圆寂于天台山，僧腊四十。若参照于极乐净土往生条件：修诸善业、精进三学、发菩提心之菩萨，信愿若俱足的话，必然“上品上生”。

<sup>11</sup> 灌顶，《隋天台智者大师别传》，第1卷，（CBETA, T50, no. 2050, p. 191a24）：“至年七岁喜往伽蓝。诸僧口授普门品。初启一遍即得。”

<sup>12</sup> 同上。

<sup>13</sup> 同上。

<sup>14</sup> 同上。

<sup>15</sup> 同上，（p. 197c26）。

### 三、有关大师往生之记录的相关性

有关智者大师往生处的异说，总括起来，主要源自二处：（一）智者大师弟子灌顶大师所书写的《别传》一往生极乐净土说；（二）《续高僧传》记载智者大师弟子智晞大师临圆寂时梦中所见一往生弥勒净土说。

《别传》作者灌顶大师，乃智者大师嫡传兼直接传承智者大师衣钵者。智者大师很多的著作都是智者大师口述和灌顶大师抄录而成。可知，灌顶大师是最贴近和最熟悉智者大师思想的人。因此，《别传》是智者大师生平最佳的写实，可信度最高和最无容争议的。《别传》记述智者大师圆寂前，尝试赴晋王杨广之约，行至天台石城，病重不复前行，吩咐把“衣钵道具分满两分：一分奉弥勒，一分充羯磨。语已，右胁西向而卧，专称弥陀般若观音”。<sup>16</sup>而后，嘱咐门人“唱二部经为最后闻思”<sup>17</sup>即《法华经》与《无量寿经》。如在第一节所说，听完《无量寿经》后，智者大师赞叹道：“四十八愿，庄严净土。华池宝树，易往无人。火车相现，能改悔者，尚复往生，况戒慧熏修，行道力故，实不唐捐。梵音声相，实不诳人。”<sup>18</sup>赞阿弥陀佛之愿力与极乐净土之庄严；然而，也叹息如此容易前往的国土，当代却如此少人成就往生。大师还劝勉说，即使火车地狱<sup>19</sup>相现前，只要诚心悔过，尚得往生，更何况是常修习戒律、定慧之人，道行之力，是不会白费的；何况这是佛陀的言教，更不会欺诳他人。大师不止劝勉，为了众生之最终福祉，还亲身示范。即，当有一弟子问起“歿此何生”时，大师答说：“吾诸师友，侍从观音，皆来迎我。”<sup>20</sup>观音乃是极乐净土辅佐阿弥陀佛的补处菩萨。临终前，大师既见西方极乐净土大圣来迎，显然大师与观音菩萨法缘匪浅，终究归命极乐净土，亦为后世众生作出身教的示范。

除了灌顶大师的记述，观音接引的事迹，后来也被另一位来自朱方天香寺的沙门慧延所认同。《别传》中记述了慧延法师梦里所见到的瑞相：

朱方天香寺沙门慧延，彼土名达，昔游光宅，早沾法润，忽闻迁化，感咽弥辰。奉慕尊灵，为生何处，因写法华经，以期冥示。潜思累旬，梦见观音，高七层塔，光焰赫奕，过经所称。智者身从观音，从西来至。延梦里作礼。乃谓延曰：“疑心遣否？”延密怀此相，口未曾言。后见灌顶，始知临终观音引导。事验悬契，欣嗟无已。<sup>21</sup>

听闻智者大师往生后，这位曾经受教于大师的慧延法师十分难过。为了得知大师往生之处，殷勤抄写《法华经》，期望得到冥示。过了数十天，终于在梦中见到智者大师，随观音而来，释其疑心。慧延法师一直未对任何人说起梦中所见瑞相。后来见到灌顶大师后，才得知智者大师临终前观音接引之事，恰巧验证了自己梦中所见，欣叹不已！

佛教注重师承，弟子恭敬、钦佩和效仿师父的行为是可以理解的。在较亲近和连贯的师承中，思想和教理的上下传递和影响屡见不鲜。智者大师前后的传承，也可见到如此的影响。天台之宗经是《法华经》，弥勒菩萨是《法华经》重要的当机众，因此与天台之深缘自不在话下。除了弥勒菩萨，天台祖师与阿弥陀佛也有着甚深之缘。慧思禅师是智者大师的师父，也是东土天台宗之二祖。慧思禅师在梦中听到弥勒菩萨和阿弥陀佛

<sup>16</sup> 灌顶，《隋天台智者大师别传》，第1卷，（CBETA, T50, no. 2050, p. 191a24）。

<sup>17</sup> 同上。

<sup>18</sup> 同上。

<sup>19</sup> 见《佛光大辞典》，页1495。或见，佛陀跋陀罗译，《佛说观佛三昧海经》，第5卷（CBETA, T15, no. 643, p. 668b19）。

<sup>20</sup> 灌顶，《隋天台智者大师别传》，第1卷，（CBETA, T50, no. 2050, p. 191a24）。

<sup>21</sup> 同上，（p. 196c21）。

说法而开悟，并因此造了二尊圣像，一同供养。<sup>22</sup> 智者大师对此事应该也是知道的，而且也受到影响。从智者大师的著作也可看出，除了法华与弥勒信仰外，大师对观音和极乐净土法门也同等弘扬。乃至，在命终前，以一份衣钵供养于弥勒像前<sup>23</sup>，但最终选择往生极乐。这种情操，也无形中影响了他的门生。智者大师往生后，灌顶大师接位为四祖，并且也一贯地承接了师祖们的弥勒和弥陀信仰。临终前，《续高僧传》有如此记载：

临终命弟子曰：“弥勒经说，佛入城日香烟若云。汝多烧香，吾将去矣。”因伸遗诫，词理妙切，门人众侣，瞻仰涕零。忽自起，合掌如有所敬，发口三称“阿弥陀佛”，低身就卧，累手当心，色貌欢愉，奄然而逝。举体柔软，顶暖经日。<sup>24</sup>

灌顶大师临终前，似有效仿师父的举止，即弥留时，命弟子烧香恭敬弥勒菩萨，但在最终一刻却系念阿弥陀佛。

既然智者大师是往生极乐净土，那么，智晞大师临终前见智者大师于弥勒净土处难道是误判？其实，也未必是智晞大师的误判。当知，弥勒菩萨本身与极乐净土也有甚深之缘。以下，且摘取《无量寿经》中数段经文，来表述之：

佛告弥勒菩萨、诸天、人等：“无量寿国声闻、菩萨功德智慧不可称说，又其国土微妙安乐清净若此，何不力为善，念道之自然，着于无上下，洞达无边际？宜各勤精进，努力自求之，必得超绝去，往生安养国。…”<sup>25</sup> 佛告弥勒菩萨、诸天人等：“…曼佛在世当勤精进，其有至愿生安乐国者，可得智慧明达、功德殊胜。…”<sup>26</sup>

弥勒菩萨长跪白言：“…今得值佛，复闻无量寿声，靡不欢喜，心得开明。”<sup>27</sup>

佛告弥勒：“汝今亦可自厌生、死、老、病、…。端身正行，益作诸善；…；人能自度，转相拯济…。虽一世勤苦须臾之间，后生无量寿佛国快乐无极，长与道德合明，永拔生死根本，无复贪恚、愚痴、苦恼之患。…汝等宜各精进求心所愿，无得疑惑中悔自为过咎，生彼边地七宝宫殿，五百岁中受诸厄也。”弥勒白佛：“受佛重诲，专精修学，如教奉行，不敢有疑。”<sup>28</sup>

从上述经文可理解到弥勒菩萨也是《无量寿经》中的重要当机众之一。弥勒菩萨也得到佛陀有关无量寿佛（即阿弥陀佛）和安乐国（即极乐净土）的教授，并感到无比欢喜，愿如教奉行。除此之外，药师法门亦有提到弥勒菩萨等八大菩萨，协助信愿西方净土的众生往生极乐净土之说：

若闻世尊药师琉璃光如来名号，临命终时，有八大菩萨，其名曰：文殊师利菩萨、观世音菩萨、得大势菩萨、无尽意菩萨、宝檀华菩萨、药王菩萨、上菩萨、弥勒菩萨，是八大菩萨，乘空而来，示其道路，即于彼界，种种杂色，众宝华中，自然化生。<sup>29</sup>

<sup>22</sup> 道宣撰，《续高僧传》，第17卷，（CBETA, T50, no. 2060, p. 562c22）。

<sup>23</sup> 灌顶，《隋天台智者大师别传》，第1卷，（CBETA, T50, no. 2050, p. 191a24）。

<sup>24</sup> 道宣撰，《续高僧传》，第19卷，（CBETA, T50, no. 2060, pp. 585a02-a07）。

<sup>25</sup> 康僧铠译，《佛说无量寿经》，第2卷，（CBETA, T12, no. 360, p. 274b18）。

<sup>26</sup> 同上，（p. 275b02）。

<sup>27</sup> 同上，（p. 275b09）。

<sup>28</sup> 同上，（pp. 0275c05-c15）。

<sup>29</sup> 灵耀撰，《药师琉璃光如来本愿功德经直解》[http://tripitaka.cbeta.org/mobile/index.php?index=X21n0381\\_001](http://tripitaka.cbeta.org/mobile/index.php?index=X21n0381_001)。有关药师法门中的“八大菩萨”，亦可参考其他资料，如：《佛光大辞典》，页273：“…（二）药师经所说：文殊师利、观世音、得大势、无尽意、宝坛华、药王、药上、弥勒。…”；CBETA论坛有



可见，弥勒菩萨与西方净土有着很深的法缘。因此，若智者大师在往生极乐净土后，得知自己的弟子即将圆寂并信愿往生弥勒净土，身为师父的，自然也当示现于弥勒净土中，给弟子勉励。智者大师能示现于弥勒净土，第一原因：因为智者大师和极乐净土本来就与弥勒菩萨有深缘。第二原因：往生极乐净土的菩萨，可乘承弥陀第二十三大愿之愿力，一食之顷，遍至无量无数亿那由他诸佛国。<sup>30</sup> 因此，智晞大师临终前见智者大师出现于弥勒净土，并非是不可以理解的。而《法华传记》中，灌顶梦师在兜率内院，亦可同解。

## 四、结论

对于智者大师的往生处，本文总结如下。大师一生弘扬法华、止观、观音等经典，是故大师与此二净土皆有殊胜因缘，尤其是与观音之深缘。幼时，学《普门品》一遍上口，证明与观音宿缘甚深。后来，又为《普门品》和极乐净土等经典著疏；临终前，“右胁西向而卧，专称弥陀般若观音”，又特别嘱咐门人诵唱《法华经》和《无量寿经》作为最后闻思，并在听后对阿弥陀佛、极乐净土和易行法门赞叹，看得出智者大师的最后用心。根据最亲近大师的弟子灌顶大师在《别传》中的记载，智者大师在临终前，回应弟子有关“殁此何生”的疑问时说，“吾诸师友，侍从观音，皆来迎我”。综合以上记录，本文相信，这已明显，智者大师是往生极乐净土的。

极乐净土和弥勒净土是两个和我们娑婆众生有缘的净土。两个净土都是殊胜非凡，值得我们向往。上根之人，如智者大师者，坚守律仪，修诸善业，定慧等持，发菩提心，要发愿往生那一个净土皆资粮俱足。钝根凡夫，造诸恶业，若能在恶业当中修得观慧，亦能转恶向善，修诸资粮，而终究得以成为圣者。诚如智者大师于《摩诃止观》中所说：

凡夫若纵恶蔽。摧折俯坠永无出期。当于恶中而修观慧。如佛世时在家之人。带妻挟子。官方俗务皆能得道。央掘摩罗弥杀弥慈。只陀末利唯酒唯戒。和须蜜多淫而梵行。提婆达多邪见即正。若诸恶中一向是恶。不得修道者。如此诸人永作凡夫。以恶中有道故。虽行众蔽而得成圣。故知恶不妨道。<sup>31</sup>

大师于文中举出几个转凡成圣的公案，如央掘摩罗、提婆达多等，来鼓励我们凡夫，知错能改，悔恶向善，凡夫也能修行成为圣者。然而，修行法门众多，凡夫根钝，人寿有限，若贪之多门，反而无益。修行又分难行、易行道。难行道，靠自力求解脱，故谓难行；易行道，除自力外，尚有他力可借，是故易行。佛陀慈悲，开示阿弥陀佛大悲愿力成就之极乐净土法门。五逆犯者，若能痛改前非，尚能承佛愿力，信愿念佛往生，更何况条件比他更好的其他众生。然而，易行法门难在众生难信。祖师大德，怜悯心切，很多都为我们亲身示范极乐净土法门的殊胜成就。自知凡夫者，应当欣喜庆幸有此法门为我而设，而当择之、修之。此法门，诚如智者大师所赞叹：

四十八愿，庄严净土。华池宝树，易往无人。火车相现，能改悔者，尚复往生，况戒慧熏修，行道力故，实不唐捐。梵音声相，实不诳人。<sup>32</sup>

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关《药师琉璃光如来本愿功德经似乎有缺八大菩萨名》，<http://forum.cbeta.org/index.php?topic=504.0>，等。

<sup>30</sup> 康僧铠译，《佛说无量寿经》，第1卷，（CBETA, T12, no. 0360, p. 268b15）：“设我得佛，国中菩萨承佛神力供养诸佛，一食之顷不能遍至无量无数亿那由他诸佛国者，不取正觉。”

<sup>31</sup> 智者大师说，灌顶记《摩诃止观》，第2卷，（CBETA, T46, no. 1911, p. 17b16）

<sup>32</sup> 灌顶，《隋天台智者大师别传》，第1卷，（CBETA, T50, no. 2050, p. 191a24）。

此段话，实为对极乐净土法门之精彩简述、赞叹和规劝。大师临终前说出这段话，显然已为往生处表明心迹，亦慈悲为后世众生作出示范。这段文，除了是极乐净土和法门最精简的阐述，亦堪为本文对探索智者大师往生处之最佳总结。皆与大家共勉之。

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# “《坛经》传宗”观念史探微 ——从胡适相关研究说起

刘勇

## 摘 要

作为文本的《坛经》，近现代学者大都认为它是一个不断演变的历史过程。在《坛经》诸多版本的演变中，最重要的就是“《坛经》传宗”本（胡适所认定的最原始的版本，即敦煌本《坛经》）的出现，这是近代禅宗研究一个重要议题。胡适所提出“《坛经》的主要部分是神会所作”的观点，主要是从“《坛经》传宗”的含义和其所谓的历史学“内证”方法来加以展开的。尽管他的许多证据和结论是很难站得住脚的，但仍有一些学者被胡适的“证据”和结论说服了。如吕澄在《中国佛学源流略讲》中，提到胡适所主张的神会门下作《坛经》时，认为此说法“也有一些根据”；在《禅宗：唐代佛家六宗学说略述之三》一文中，讲到《坛经》时，又说该经“显然编撰于神会门徒之手”。

本文是基于对胡适《坛经》为神会所造的一项基础性论据的再探讨，并重新检查其对“《坛经》传宗”概念性误解，透过“《坛经》传宗”的含义界定和观念背景探寻，希望在以往碎片化的禅学语境中寻找胡适对于“传宗”一词误读的深层次原因，也就是禅法“传宗”内容是怎样历经由模糊到明确化、“传宗”形式由神秘到具体化的这样一个过程。

关键词：《坛经》、胡适、印顺、《坛经》传宗

## 一、前言

胡适所提出“《坛经》的主要部分是神会所作”的观点，是从“《坛经》传宗”的含义和其所谓的历史学“内证”方法来加以展开的。尽管他的许多证据和结论是很难站得住脚的，但正如有学者批评西方的东方学：“人们关注的是风格、修辞、置景、叙述技巧、社会历史背景，而不是表达的正确性，也不是其逼真性”，仍有不少学者被胡适的“证据”和结论说服了。

如吕澄在《中国佛学源流略讲》中，提到胡适所主张的神会门下作《坛经》时，认为此说法“也有一些根据”；在《禅宗：唐代佛家六宗学说略述之三》一文中，讲到《坛经》时，又说该经“显然编撰于神会门徒之手”。再如冯友兰，他在《中国哲学史》下卷述及禅学部分时，就达摩与印度传法系统，认为其“不必即为真正的历史”；他以为南禅的顿悟，就是道生的顿悟说，而且他把《坛经》和《神会语录》简单地“并合述之”，这显然有用到胡适的禅史研究结论。又如杨鸿飞，他针对钱穆之《〈坛经〉之真伪问题》，提出钱穆所说的慧能，是后世所谓南禅之人格化的慧能，而不是“当时历史上一位真实的慧能”；他说，“《六祖坛经》一书，或书中所现慧能，是离开了真实慧能去世后二十余年，才被神会假托他的权威，编造出来的”。杨的思路和结论，明显受到胡适批判禅学的影响。

然而，在反思胡适禅学的阵营中，不少学者和教界人士，从多个视角进行了回应。如钱穆与印顺对胡适这“《坛经》传宗”作为“更无可疑的证据”分别给了训诂学和史料上充分的质问。如印顺提出，《坛经》的主体部分，仍然为慧能南宗的顿禅思想，而附编部分（包括弟子机缘和临终嘱咐），才有可能夹杂了神会一系《坛经》付法“传宗”的创造。又如葛兆光，在《中国禅思想史》“导言”中指出，胡适的“思路和操作似乎都没有问题”，而问题在于：胡适“说神会是禅宗史上的关键人物，乃是由于他对灯录系统的不信任；他对灯录系统的不信任，乃是由于他先入为主就有一个重建禅宗新史系统的构想”；当胡适读到神会资料时，“便兴高采烈地把敦煌卷子中的记载，看作绝对可靠的材料，来判断其他一切史料：合则是，不合则非；以神会打倒北宗为禅史的中心，来观察其他所有的史实：长则截，短则续”，因而断定《坛经》为神会伪作。基于这一点，中山大学教授龚隽认为，胡适“显然并不关心禅的观念的内在意义”，他只要“复制科学家那种统一化、标准化的时间概念，就可以给每个时期的思想、组织和运动等安排出直线型的顺序和贴上发展阶段的标签”，从而使得他大胆地“以一个全知叙事者的姿态，把知性的方法推广到一切解释的层面”。

胡适引用《续高僧传》和《楞伽师资记》的资料，分析了达摩禅的思想，并且以“神会与楞伽宗对抗，并建立了南宗在禅门中的正统地位”这一结论，作为贯串其一生的禅史叙事的主要线索<sup>1</sup>；他认为，楞伽宗是达摩往神秀发展出北宗一系的法流，并说“神秀还是达摩《楞伽经》的渐学”；然后，胡适凭借菏泽门下的《神会语录》，来说明神会以《金刚经》替代了《楞伽经》，而对道信及其之前的禅门思想演变，却未作细致的交代。而印顺法师，一边承认“楞伽师（胡适称‘楞伽宗’）”的存在，一边又表示：弘忍之前的达摩禅，从江淮弘传到北方，与般若法门“原有风格上的共同”；到了道信，游学南方，深受南方般若学影响而提倡“念摩诃般若”，并且将《楞伽经》的“诸佛心第一”，与《文殊说般若经》的“一行三昧”融合起来，制为《入道安心要方便门》；而慧能的禅法，“取‘念摩诃般若’，而不取‘念佛’，不但经有明文，而还是‘东山法门’”。

<sup>1</sup> 龚隽，〈现代性与禅宗研究史：禅史叙事与方法论的典范论争〉，《中华佛学研究》第14期，199-235页

旧有的‘不念佛’、‘不看心’的一流”<sup>2</sup>。所以，他曾批评胡适有意制造出了“达摩与慧能对立”的看法，说神会革了楞伽宗的命是“不免夸大失实”<sup>3</sup>。

尽管胡适涉及有关《坛经》的许多论断仍然亟待商榷，但其禅学问题意识的提出和部分研究成果依旧具有开创性。正如柳田圣山（1922-）对胡适禅史研究的总结：“在意义深长的热情和武断的结论里，曙光出现，恰与肩负现代史苦恼的伟大硕学影像相映着。”<sup>4</sup>而这一佛学研究曙光的持续绽放，历经了上个世纪60年代末发生在台湾的那一场围绕“《坛经》是否六祖所说”的激烈笔战，最终催生了1971年印顺法师（1906-2005年）的《中国禅宗史》，意外地促成了对“旧有的中国禅宗史”进行的“根本而全面的更新”<sup>5</sup>。

钱穆虽从训诂学的角度，指出“传宗”一词为“《坛经》嗣法”，与“受衣绍祖，开辟正宗”的含义一致<sup>6</sup>，但他并没具体深入到禅史文献中，去探究“传宗”这一观念含义的多样性。而印顺的《中国禅宗史》，就“传宗”一词不同时代文本的不同内涵曾大量引述，但缺乏详尽而系统的探讨。所以，本文试图追溯“《坛经》传宗”形成的观念史演变过程，将5世纪初至9世纪“传宗”的观念演变历史分为四个不同时期：僧肇之前的禅法“传宗”，道信、弘忍的禅法“传宗”，神会时期的袈裟“传宗”和神会门下的“《坛经》传宗”。

透过“传宗”这一观念不同时期、不同内涵的梳理，我们一方面可以从隐约摸索到贯穿印顺禅史叙述的一条线索，也能够厘清胡适对禅宗“传宗”这一思想特性及其语境的误会；同时，“传宗”的观念史叙述，可以跳出其所涉及的禅宗史料中，那些来自禅师语录或宗派争论事件中有关的价值评判束缚。不管这些史料是否为信徒编造或误传，它们并非胡适所说的“毫无价值”——相反，作为“思想史的资料”，它们是“以传说的方式表达了故事编造者的价值观”<sup>7</sup>。可以说，胡适对“《坛经》传宗”的误解，除了来自于胡适自身治学的一种实用主义观念且非客观的学术偏见；另一方面，源自于“《坛经》传宗”中“传宗”这一观念本身所具备的模糊性、神秘性，对其的解读自然就有充分的诠释空间和多样性解读。

## 二、胡适“《坛经》传宗”研究及其甄别

上世纪三十年代肇始的，一场有关“《坛经》作者”的大辩论，有好几位著名的中日学者，提出了挑战常人信仰的考据和结论。这一议题主要的症结，是《唐书》中韦处厚（死于828年）所作的《兴福寺内供奉大德大义禅师碑铭》中，所载有关“《坛经》传宗”的史实考究。如碑文载：

秦者曰秀，以方便显。洛者曰会，得总持之印，独曜莹珠。习徒迷真，橘枳变体，竟成坛经传宗，优劣详矣。<sup>8</sup>

首先，我们需要肯定的是，作者说神会“得总持之印，独曜莹珠”，显然是没有贬低神会的含义；而针对这句话，胡适的论断为：

<sup>2</sup> 印顺，《中国禅宗史》，新竹：正闻出版社，1989年10月，第六版，167页

<sup>3</sup> 同上，55页

<sup>4</sup> 柳田圣山，《胡适禅学案》，台北：正中书局，1975年，5页

<sup>5</sup> 江灿腾，〈战后台湾禅宗史研究的争辩与发展：从胡适博士到印顺导师〉，《中国禅学》第2卷，274页

<sup>6</sup> 张曼涛，〈《坛经》之真伪问题》读后〉，《六祖坛经研究论集》，82页

<sup>7</sup> 邢东风，〈中国禅宗的地方性：从胡适的禅宗史研究说起〉，《普门学报》第31期，2006年1月，2页

<sup>8</sup> 《全唐文》，卷715，北京：中华书局，1983年，436页

“韦处厚明说《坛经》是神会门下的“习徒”所作（“传宗”不知是否为《显宗记》？）。可见，此书出于神会一派，是当时大家知道的事实。但究竟《坛经》是否神会本人所作呢？”

我说，是的。至少《坛经》的重要部分是神会作的。如要不是神会作的，便是神会的弟子采取他的语录里的材料作成的。”<sup>9</sup>

以上，是胡适认定“《坛经》为神会所作”的“更无可疑的证据”。然而，他的这一证据如果放到《坛经》具体的文本中来理解，是很难令人信服其所谓“考据学的内证”。如《坛经》说：

1、敦煌本：刺史遂令门人僧法海集记，流行后代，与学道者，承此宗旨，递相传授，有所依约，以为禀承，说此《坛经》。……若论宗旨，传授坛经，以此为依约。若不得坛经，即无禀受。

2、惠昕本：刺史韦璩，令门人法海抄录流行，传示后代，若承此宗旨，学道之者，递相传授（授），有所依凭耳……若论宗旨，传授《坛经》者，即有禀承所付，须知去处、年月、时代、姓名，递相付嘱。若无《坛经》禀承者，即非南宗弟子。……师教十僧已，报言：于后传法，递相教授《坛经》，即不失宗旨。汝今已得了，递代流行。后人得遇《坛经》，如亲见吾。教示十僧：汝等抄取，代代流行。若看《坛经》，必当见性。

显然，“若论宗旨，传授《坛经》”，应该是“《坛经》传宗”的本义，就是以《坛经》的禀承与传授，作为南宗弟子付法的信物，而不是胡适所说的“《坛经》是神会门下的‘习徒’所作，是当时大家说到的事实”。而且，敦煌本还记载慧能“亲口”对十大门徒说，“已（以）后传法，递相传授一卷《坛经》，不失本宗”<sup>10</sup>。

## （一）过分解读的“悬记”

应该说，胡适证明《坛经》为神会所造的最具说服力的证据，是明藏本是“七十年悬记”和敦煌本的“二十年悬记”。但胡适在两篇文章中的论述并非缜密且前后一致。如在《神会与六祖坛经》一文中，胡适依据称这一“很明显的证据”，其直接得出“《坛经》是神会的杰作”的结论；而在《坛经考一》一文中，他说：

试即举慧能临终时的“七十年悬记”<sup>11</sup>为例，敦煌写本即无此文，而另有一种悬记，其文如下：

上座法海向前言，“大师，大师去后，衣法当付何人？”大师言，“法即付了，汝不须问。吾灭后二十徐（疑“余”之讹写）年，邪法缭乱，惑我宗旨，有人出来，不惜身命，第（疑“定”之讹写）佛教是非，竖立宗旨，即是吾正法。衣不合转（疑“传”之讹写）”。<sup>12</sup>

胡适由此得出的结论为：

结论一：“此悬记甚明白，所指即是神会在滑台大云寺及洛阳菏泽寺定南宗宗旨的事。神会滑台之会在开元二十年（七三二），正是慧能死后二十年。”

结论二：“此条悬记，可证敦煌本《坛经》为最古本。”

<sup>9</sup> 胡适，《禅学指归》，北京：金城出版社，2013年6月第1版，126页

<sup>10</sup> 《坛经》，《大正藏》，48册，343页

<sup>11</sup> 明藏本《坛经》：吾去后七十年，有二菩萨从东方来，一出家，一在家，同时兴化，建立吾宗，缔结伽蓝，昌隆法嗣。

<sup>12</sup> 《坛经》，《大正藏》，48册，348页

由第二条，得出结论三：“（敦煌本《坛经》）出于神会或神会一系之手，其著作年代在开元二十年以后。神会建立南宗，其功绩最伟大。”不过，严格地讲，这结论三只能作为结论二的延伸，而非此悬记的直接结论。

确切的说，结论一中，神会在滑台定宗旨是在732年，而在洛阳菏泽寺定宗旨则是在745年。而结论二中，胡适将敦煌本说为“最古本”，其实应改为“相较于明藏本的现行最古本”，因为他前面刚刚引用和论述了明藏本的“七十年悬记”。不然，胡适在没有新增任何考据的前提下，怎么突然说到了“最古本”呢？也就是说，敦煌本虽可谓古本，不一定是《坛经》最原始的古本；胡适以结论二为根据而间接得出的结论三，是其对结论二的过度解读罢了。所以，严格讲，结论二与结论三都是难以成立的。

况且，神会在《南宗定是非论》中明文说到，六代以来传禅的方式，必须“外传袈裟以定宗旨”，他所说的“余物相传者即是谬言”，难道这“余物”就不包括出于自己之手的“杰作”——《坛经》？！可以说，在没有更多证据证明原本《坛经》为敦煌本的情况下，胡适这里所谓的“很明显的证据”，显然已经受到前一“《坛经》传宗”所得错误论断的干扰。

## （二）其他“证据”的附会

因为过于信赖前面的“更无可疑的证据”、“很明显的证据”，胡适得出了“《坛经》为神会所造的结论”。而按照胡适的理路，他要想进一步确立他这一“新的创见”，必然需要把《坛经》与神会思想有关的文本内容，进行更为细致的参照研究。所以，胡适才说：“我信《坛经》的主要部分是神会所作，我的根据完全是考据学所谓‘内证’”。于是，他发现了《坛经》中有许多部分和新发现的《神会语录》“完全相同”。这里他列举的“最重要的证据”，如下：

### （例一）定慧等

《坛经》敦煌本：善知识，我此法门以定慧为本。第一勿迷言慧定别。定慧体一不二。即定是慧体，即慧是定用。即慧之时定在慧，即定之时慧在定。善知识，此义即是定慧等。

《神会语录》：即定之时是慧体，即慧之时是定用。即定之时不异慧，即慧之时不异定。即定之时即是慧，即慧之时即是定。何以故？性自如故？即是定慧等学。（第一卷）

### （例二）坐禅

《坛经》敦煌本：此法门中，何名坐禅？此法门中，一切无碍，外于一切境界上念不去（起），为坐。见本性不乱，为禅。

《神会语录》：今言坐者，念不起为坐。今言禅者，见本性为禅（第三卷）

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无可否认，依上两例的历史，胡适是以“敦煌本为最古的《坛经》”这一假设为前提；其次，另一隐含的前提则是，胡适认定“《坛经》的主要部分是神会所作”，是假定为慧能（638-713）弟子的神会（684-758）<sup>14</sup>，是不存在师徒的禅法和思想传承的，

<sup>13</sup> 胡适，《禅学指归》，北京：金城出版社，2013年6月，127-128页

<sup>14</sup> 关于神会的生卒考证，因文记众多而显得异常混乱。一般禅宗史依据《坛经》、《漕溪大师别传》等，认为神会十三岁就参谒慧能了，石井的《神会语录》也说“在幼稚科”“谒漕溪尊者”。然而，1983年，在新发现的洛阳唐代宝应寺神会墓的塔铭序文中，有载“享年七十又五，僧腊五十四夏，于开元元年（758）五月十三日荆府开元寺奄然坐化”（《神会塔铭》所记神会的卒年和享年与《圆觉经大疏钞》的记载一致）。今案《楞伽师资记》载，神会于701年从神秀处南下投奔漕溪，然后又一度到长安受戒，于景龙（707-710）年间回到漕溪，一直到慧能去世了才离开。



而神会仅仅只是个“利用慧能”作宣传旗帜的“政治和尚”；也就是说，代表慧能思想（有可能参杂其他人思想）的《坛经》只可能直接取材自神会的《语录》（其实是由弟子们结集、编纂而成的）中的文句，而不可能是：因为神会是其弟子，继承了慧能《坛经》中部分思想，而使得《语录》中有与《坛经》类似甚至雷同的文句。相比胡适的推测，神会临摹了慧能的禅法语录，这不能说不是一种更合乎情理的推测<sup>15</sup>。

以上胡适所作的推论，都需要有一个前提预设，就是敦煌本《坛经》为最古的《坛经》；只不过，这一结论胡适断定得未免过于匆忙。当然，还是有不少的学者，通过对不同《坛经》的文本及其他文献的参照分析，已经有了一项共识：“《坛经》在历史上不是一成不变的，它有一个形成演变的过程”<sup>16</sup>；而现存的《坛经》文本，“带着很浓厚的派别色彩”<sup>17</sup>。比如，有关《坛经》的版本问题，早在慧能过世（713年）四十年左右，慧忠国师（682-769年）<sup>18</sup>在与“南方禅客”的问答中所提及《坛经》已被人有“改换”，如《景德传灯录》卷二十八说：

“南阳慧忠国师问禅客：从何方来？对曰：南方来。师曰：南方有何知识？曰：知识颇多。……身是无常，其性常也。南方所说，大约如此。师曰：彼云：我此身中有一神性，此性能知痛痒。身坏之时，神则出去，如舍被烧，舍主出去。舍即无常，舍主常矣。审如此者，邪正莫辨，孰为是乎？吾比游方，多见此色，近尤盛矣！聚却三五百众，目视云汉，云是南方宗旨。把他《坛经》改换，添糅鄙谭，削除圣意，惑乱后徒，岂成言教？苦哉！吾宗丧矣！若以见闻觉知是佛性者，《净名经》不应云：法离见闻觉知，若行见闻觉知，是则见闻觉知，非求法也。”<sup>19</sup>

此中说到，慧忠国师在游学南方时（761年之前），已经见到过更为原始的《坛经》，所以才对南方禅客所说的“身是无常，其性常也”<sup>20</sup>提出呵责，说他所见的“南方宗旨”，是对《坛经》有“添糅鄙谭，削除圣意”的嫌疑。相比前文韦处厚（卒于828年）说到的“橘枳变体，竟成坛经传宗”的改增，这应该是《坛经》演变的最早记录。基于这一点上，日本佛教学者宇井伯寿明确提出，“《坛经》至少有两次的汇集”<sup>21</sup>。

### （三）胡适禅学视域下的《坛经》研究之甄别

由上可知，胡适有关《坛经》研究的许多论据是亟待商榷的，其论断是受到他整个

王维《六祖碑铭》所说神会“遇师于晚景，闻（开）道于中（疑为“冲”）年”，应该就是有依据神会的口授。

<sup>15</sup> 邢东风，〈中国禅宗的地方性：从胡适的禅宗史研究说起〉，《普门学报》第31期，4页

<sup>16</sup> 杨曾文、方广钊，《佛教与历史文化》，北京：宗教文化出版社，2001年，179页

<sup>17</sup> 同上

<sup>18</sup> 据《宋高僧传》卷十九载：慧忠是神龙元年（705），二十三岁出家的，配住南阳（唐初为升州）庄严寺。参牛头山智威后，行头陀于南阳白崖山，达四十余年。到天宝初年（742），应请出山，再住庄严寺。761年，奉敕赴上都。大历四年（769）去世，年八十七岁。所以推测《景德传灯录》中，慧忠遇南方禅客的时间为742-761年。

<sup>19</sup> 《景德传灯录》，《大正藏》，51册，卷28，437页

<sup>20</sup> 我们可以看到现存敦煌本《坛经》中，保存有类似南方禅客所说的“南方宗旨”，如：“无住者，为人本性念念不住，前念今念后念，念念相续，无有断绝。若一念断绝，法身即是离色身。……莫百物不思，念尽除却。一念断即死，别处受生；色身是舍宅，不可言归。向者三身，在自法性，世人尽有，为迷不见，外觅三如来，不见自色身中三身佛。……皮肉是色身，是舍宅，不在皈依也；性在身心存，性去身坏。”（《坛经》，《大正藏》，51册，卷28，338-341页）

<sup>21</sup> 邱敏捷，〈坛经的作者与版本：印顺与胡适即日本学者相关研究观点之比较〉，《〈印顺导师与人菩萨行〉海峡两岸学术会议论文集》，<http://enlight.lib.ntu.edu.tw/FULLTEXT/JR-NX012/nx012133999.pdf>

印顺认为，“坛经传宗”的添改，为（神会去世后）洛阳神会门下。“色身无常，而性是常”（南方宗旨）的添改，应比“坛经传宗”的添改为早，因为敦煌本——“坛经传宗”本，是在“南方宗旨”本上，增补一些传承依约而成的。（印顺，《中国禅宗史》，268-269页）

佛教禅学研究思想的全面影响的。要了解其禅学研究思想，就不得不了解其治学方法，也就不得不去关注到他的早期禅学著作或讲话的一些思想初衷。如他在《中国哲学史大纲》一书中，提出他的治学方法几乎全是“审定史料之作”。他指出，“中国人作史，最不讲究史料。神话官书，都可以作为史料，全不问这些材料是否可靠。”然而，这种纯粹史料的审定与价值判别是否适合禅学研究，这是一个值得深究的问题；而龚隽声称，胡适“审定史料”所谓的评判标准“是来自思想外部，而不是思想内部”，其所谓“思想的好坏”是从思想判别本身“所达成的社会‘效果’来进行‘评判’”的。<sup>22</sup>

也就是说，胡适的许多论断和评判，是受到了他的这种“非历史”、“非中国”的考据学影响，他说“他对禅门内部的资料一概地不予信任”<sup>23</sup>，以至于他对禅宗内部很多包括唐、宋两代的史料，采取的是极为简化和粗暴的处理手段。在禅宗史研究方面，胡适曾对当时中日禅宗研究中那些带有“信仰”的“新的宗教态度”研究者，感到颇为不满；他表示，禅宗历史上“百分之九十以上”的史料，都是“胡说、伪造、诈骗和装腔作势”。他认为，自己几乎把一部禅宗史从头改写，还要把整个佛教东传的时代“看成中国的‘印度化时代’”，认为佛教的“入侵”是“中国文化发展上的”大不幸<sup>24</sup>！由此可知，他这种研究佛教的基本立场，是很难想象不会造成许多客观史实的扭曲。这一点，凡翻阅过胡适许多的禅史论书和他的书信的人，无不随处可见其浮夸式和粗鄙化的言辞。如他在对外的一封公开书信中声称，他对禅宗的严厉批评，是基于“把这种中国文化里面的垃圾耙出来罢了”。<sup>25</sup>

### 三、慧能以前禅宗中“传宗”一语的观念史论述

所谓“传宗”的观念史，主要是针对慧能以前，随着禅门宗派发展和禅法传播区域的不断扩大，古代的禅史书写者对禅法师资传授的形式和实质，进行知识概念上的差异性描述。透过“传宗”这一观念不同内涵的梳理，我们一方面可以从隐约摸索到贯穿印顺禅史叙述的一条线索，也能够厘清胡适对禅宗“传宗”这一思想特性及其语境理解的误会；同时，“传宗”的观念史叙述，可以跳出其所涉及的禅宗史料中，那些来自禅师语录或宗派争论事件中有关的价值评判束缚。

很显然，胡适对“《坛经》传宗”的误解，除了来自于胡适自身治学的一种实用主义观念火非客观的学术偏见；另一方面，源自于“《坛经》传宗”中“传宗”这一观念本身所具备的模糊性、神秘性，对其的解读自然就有充分的诠释空间和多样性解读。这就像中国历来的文人雅士一样，对“道可道，非常道”中“道”的解读，其神秘性有多高，其解读的意欲就有多强，解读视角的可能性就会越多。Richard John Lynn 形容《易经》的一段话几乎同样可以用在“传宗”这一文本观念上：我们益发认识到，有多少《易经》的注本，就有多少《易经》的版本，因为《易经》的版本是如此的艰深晦涩，以致

<sup>22</sup> 关于这个问题，我们不妨看一位学者对他的治学评述：“实际上，他的哲学史，经常把中国思想史料中那些最可以作为哲学材料的问题都轻率地打发掉，他的哲学史和思想史研究，都很少真正地切到哲学的问题本身，而保留住的、可以称作是‘哲学’或是‘思想’写作的部分，就只是他所谓的‘贯通’一义了。……更进一层来看，胡适对哲学思想史的研究还要作出一种价值的评论，他说，论述思想史变迁及其原因，还没有完成哲学史的任务，还必须对‘各家学说的价值’作一番‘客观的评判’。具体说，就是一种思想的好坏，都是从其所达成的社会‘效果’来进行‘评判’。显然，这里所谓的评判标准是来自思想外部，而不是思想内部。甚至可以说，其‘效果’的判准，是现代的而非历史的；是西方的而非中国的。”龚隽、陈继东，《中国禅学研究入门》，上海：复旦大学出版社，2009年10月，23-24页

<sup>23</sup> 同上，25页

<sup>24</sup> 胡适，《禅学指归》，北京：金城出版社，2013年6月，235页

<sup>25</sup> 同上，234-235页

于它到底是什么意思只能取决于注本是如何阐释它的。<sup>26</sup>

钱穆虽从训诂的角度，指出“传宗”一词为“《坛经》嗣法”，与“受衣绍祖，开辟正宗”的含义一致<sup>27</sup>，但他并没具体深入到禅史文献中，去探究“传宗”这一观念含义的多样性。本节的内容，试图追溯“《坛经》传宗”形成的观念史演变过程，将慧能以前“传宗”的观念演变历史分为几个不同时期：僧肇之前的禅法“传宗”，道信、弘忍的禅法“传宗”，神会时期的袈裟“传宗”和神会门下的“《坛经》传宗”。

### （一）僧肇之前的禅法“传宗”：以此慧灯，次第传授

东晋时，沙门智严求法罽宾，目睹那里“法众清胜”后，感叹“我诸同辈，斯有道志，而不遇真匠，发悟莫由！”于是咨问到“族姓相承世尊道学”的佛陀跋陀罗（359年—429年），遂以“宣授禅法者”的身份来到中国，其传译有最早的禅门传法，其所译《达摩多罗禅经》卷上说：佛灭度后，尊者大迦叶，尊者阿难，尊者末田地，尊者舍那婆斯，尊者优波崛，尊者婆须密，尊者僧伽罗叉，尊者达摩多罗，乃至尊者不若密多罗：诸持法者，以此慧灯，次第传授。<sup>28</sup>

此中，只是简要地记录禅师传授的先后谱系，并没有详细书写传法方式及其内容。这和《大乘入楞伽经》中记载师资间递相授受的语言一样简约<sup>29</sup>。

佛经中的“授记”，不仅有预记弟子为佛菩萨的含义，还有师徒间对未来事预言<sup>30</sup>的意思。这里可知，《达摩多罗禅经》的师资传授是为了保持佛法的长久延续，而《大乘入楞伽经》却说法传到弥佉梨后就灭了。可见，流传于印度的佛法“传宗”制度，其内容和方式并不如后来禅史书写得那样明确，仅仅只是一些简单的人物承续而已。

然而，当佛法进入传译时代下的东晋，根据学问僧慧远（334—416）的观察，我们已经能够见到当时出现两种禅法传付的不同内容，如他在《达摩多罗禅经》“序”中说：

达摩多罗与佛大先，其人西域之俊，禅训之宗……达摩多罗阖众篇于同道，开一色为恒沙。其为观也，明起不以生，灭不以尽，虽往复无际，而未始出于如。故曰：色不离如，如不离色；色则是如，如则是色。佛大先以为：澄源引流，固宜有渐。是以，始自二道，开甘露门。<sup>31</sup>

据传，佛陀跋陀罗（408—429年在中国）就是从学的佛大先，又在佛大先的举荐下，才为智严请至汉地传禅。刚开始，他与鸠摩罗什（344年—413年）多次讨论佛法教义，后因坚持“开一色为恒沙”而不许“破析一微”的观点，与罗什“佛法中都无极微之名”之缘起性空学明显相对而产生隔阂。不久，佛陀跋陀罗禅法在长安受帝王众学的亲赖，习禅之风一时弥漫朝野，然“染学有浅深，得法有浓淡”，以至于有弟子“狂惑”，自称已得道果，致使师徒受长安教界所排挤。<sup>32</sup>综上，由于资料的匮乏，我们只能大概了解：

<sup>26</sup> 转引自熊逸，《中国思想地图》，太原：山西人民出版社，2010年5月，27页

<sup>27</sup> 张曼涛，《〈坛经之真伪问题〉读后》，《六祖坛经研究论集》，82页

<sup>28</sup> 《达摩多罗禅经》，《大正藏》，15册，301页

<sup>29</sup> 《大乘入楞伽经》：我名离尘佛，姓迦多衍那，父名世间主，母号为具财。我生瞻婆国，我之先祖父，从于月种生，故号为月藏。出家修苦行，演说千法门，与大慧授记，然后当灭度。大慧付达摩，次付弥佉梨，弥佉梨恶时，劫尽法当灭。（《大正藏》，16册，638页）

<sup>30</sup> 预言，一般可以被进行神圣性的阐发或被解读，预测具体事件的发生。这种预测的知识基础有两个：第一，七传递的信息植根于被广为信奉的神圣体。这种信仰体可能是具体的“人”，也可能是某种超自然力量，也或者可能是一个被神圣化的知识体系。第二，这些预言能够在现有的知识体系和知识逻辑中，得到解释。（孙英刚，《神文时代：中古知识、信仰与政治世界之关联性》，《史学经纬》，140页）

<sup>31</sup> 《达摩多罗禅经》，《大正藏》，15册，301页

<sup>32</sup> 《高僧传》，《大正藏》，50册，334-335页

初期“禅训之宗”的传承，其内容大概是一些教义法数的辨别，而且不会跳出佛典教义的基本范畴，在禅法修学具体的训练上只是略微加以明示。

到唐初，“专以楞伽命家”的法冲（587?~665年），为同时期的道宣（596—667年）所熟悉；道宣在《续高僧传》中专门为其所作传，其中有详细说到慧可门下的法系

33。

据道宣所作的《慧可传》，其笔下的慧可，曾是一位“外览坟索，内通藏典”的有名学者；后来，他却从学于一位崇尚“泯心虚寄”的苦行僧达摩，所以“一时令望，咸共非之”，“口说玄理”的他又与达摩一样，曾被称“存见之流”佛教保守派们斥为“魔语”。于是，曾受授达摩四卷《楞伽经》的慧可就“从容顺俗”了，一改过往“诵语难穷”的传法风格，而以吟谣和略写法要的形式传法。不过，最后道宣说慧可“卒无荣嗣”，与《楞伽经》所说的一样出现了传承内容和形式的断层。

综上，据现有的资料，达摩授受慧可四卷《楞伽经》的当时情况和意义，仅凭后来越来越详细的故事化叙述，仍旧无法做出判断。但可以确定的是，达摩前后的禅法，其内容和形式的传承并没有像后来中国禅勃兴时期的那样，重要到可以衡量佛法正宗的是非评判上来；不过，可以肯定的是，在初期禅史的叙事构建中，禅法的“传宗”内容，是由模糊而逐渐开始变得明确起来的。这种知识上的模糊性，常常是以对杰出禅者间轻描淡写的“师资”关系凸显出来；透过这些“师资”传承的知名度和重要性，不仅扩大了禅法在佛教界内的合法性基础，也提升了禅法对佛教信徒的影响力。尽管禅法师资间“传宗”的具体细节及其来源，我们至今难以回答；但随着禅法越来越为佛教界所认知，弘扬者越来越多，其“传宗”的意义是越来越被学人所重视。也就是说，禅法在这一时期是作为佛法中一盏具备神圣性的“慧灯”，其“灯灯相续”的承传价值要超过传法知识体系中的具体细节。这一点，我们可以在宋代僧人契嵩对世人质疑禅宗传承系谱作出的回应中，略见一斑：

“大凡欲为书，序人世数前后，必以其祖祢父子亲相承袭为之効。又其人姓族州土，与其事之所以然，皆不失端倪，使后世取信，乃谓之史传。今其书，则谓之：传其事，则不详。若其序弥遮迦多、佛陀难提、比罗长老，至于婆修槃陀、摩拏罗、鹤勒那、夜奢（耶舍）与师子罗、汉者七祖师，皆无其师弟子亲相付受之义，而佛陀难提、鹤勒那与师子三祖，最阙前传，既不见所授，而后之传，但曰次付、次有、复有某比丘云云，付受果不，分明详备，又何足为之传而示信于后世耶？”<sup>34</sup>

契嵩明确提出：一、禅史所述的师资传授，是为了达到“后世取信”的效用，而模仿世间史书的“序人世数”；二、古人所谓禅法“传宗”中只有人名而无详细承传事迹的描述，或有中间传承有阙。

第一项的描述，确实说明了佛法流传中国遭遇到某种现实困境：一是佛法面临的身份危机，这一点周武灭佛后的昙耀等人，体会尤为深刻，这是他与吉迦夜编写《付法藏因缘传》为佛教正名而特别引用《达摩多罗禅经》传法系谱的原因；另一个是佛法融入

<sup>33</sup> 道宣在《续高僧传》说：达摩禅师后，有慧可、慧育二人。育师受道心行，口未曾说。可禅师后，粲禅师，慧禅师，盛禅师，那老师，端禅师，长藏师，真法师，玉法师——已上并口说玄理，不出文记。……可师后，善师（出抄四卷），丰禅师（出疏五卷），明禅师（出疏五卷），胡明师（出疏五卷）。……远承可师后，大聪师（出疏五卷），道荫师（抄四卷），冲法师（疏五卷），岸法师（疏五卷），宠法师（疏八卷），大明师（疏十卷）。……那老师后，实禅师，慧禅师，旷法师，弘智师（名住京师西明寺，身亡法绝）。明禅师后，伽法师，宝瑜师，宝迎师，道莹师——并次第传灯，于今扬化。

<sup>34</sup> 《传法正宗论》，《大正藏》，51册，773页

中国世俗文化的程度问题，这涉及宗谱传承观念背后所凸显的本土文化因素以及佛法本身的适应能力，这不是本文探讨范围。第二项的描述，契嵩所说的“分明详备”显得很善巧，但他并没有从正面触及早期禅法“传宗”事实不详的问题本身。

可以说，这种“宗教信仰”语境<sup>35</sup>下的禅史叙事，其书写并不需要涉及禅法“传宗”事件背后的具体细节；在这种特定语境下，僧肇以前的禅史书写者们，自然只能将“传宗”的内容浓缩为简单“师资”谱系的书写，以表明禅法“传宗”被赋予的信仰价值要超过禅法“传宗”书写内容与形式的事实价值。

## （二）道信、弘忍的禅法“传宗”：意传妙道

菩提达摩，一向是被尊为中国禅宗初祖，“如何是祖师西来意”也就被后来禅门引为主要话头之一。达摩禅的核心，主要是围绕以“壁观”来“安心”展开的。尽管有些学者称达摩的“二入四行”与《楞伽经》的关系并不是那么密切，甚至对达摩所说《楞伽》传宗的真实性也不乏质疑，但是后代有关达摩禅的文记至少反映了当时禅法的一种趋势：禅法的弘扬，不再是那么虚无缥缈和不着边际，它逐渐关联到“藉教悟宗”，透过“凝住壁观”，最终实现“与道冥府”的悟境。针对这一点，印顺法师提出，达摩禅与宋译《楞伽》见地相近，虽然本质上体现的都是“如来藏”法门，但两者都有“莫着言说”、“自证真性”的倾向。然而，到了道宣时代，达摩禅的宗风逐渐趋于表面化、名相化，其宗趣最终还是走向了《楞伽》唯心的立场。<sup>36</sup>

依前文所说，慧可门下禅法的分化为两大系：一脉是“口说玄理，不出文记”为楞禅师所传，一脉是为远法师所传、著书立文的经师，也就是楞伽师。随着禅法的进一步普及，学习达摩禅的人多了，许多道士、儒生和闲僧泛参禅理，执着“泯绝无寄”的幽玄名相，如慧可的再传慧满禅师曾强调：“诸佛说心，令知心相是虚妄法，今乃重加心相，深违佛意。又增议论，殊乖大理”<sup>37</sup>。这一点，在道宣所处的时代，他已经有所见闻：僧稠所教的四念处法“清范可崇”，生活中的戒律持犯明了可见，而其所见达摩禅“徒有扬举之名，终亏直心之实”！他说：

“世有定学，妄传风教。同缠俗染，混轻仪迹。即色明空，既谈之于心口；体乱为静，固形之于有累。神用没于词令，定相腐于唇吻。排小舍大，独建一家。摄济住持，居然乖僻。……顷世定士，多削义门，随闻道听，即而依学。未曾思择，扈背了经。每缘极旨，多亏时望。……复有相迷同好，聚结山门。持犯蒙然，动挂形网。运斤运刃，无避种生。炊爨饮噉，宁惭宿触。或有立性刚猛，志尚下流，善友莫寻，正经罕读，瞥闻一句，即谓司南。昌言：五住久

<sup>35</sup> 许多宗教信仰和文明都有救世主的观念，他们认为当下的世界是黑暗的、糟糕的、必须改变的，但是依靠平常人的力量又无法改变，必须借助神圣力量的干预。在多数宗教里，这种神圣干预通过特定的、挑选出来的人来实现。在救世主来到世间拯救人类之后，将建立一个崭新的世界、崭新的神会社会，而这些信仰者作为新社会的优秀分子，将在心的秩序里处于优势地位；中古时代，中国王权的一个重要层面，是将其统治合法性的基础，建立在革故鼎新、领导百姓奔向理想时代的目标之上。不论道家、儒家还是佛教，都无不带有此种思想元素。（孙英刚，〈神文时代：中古知识、信仰与政治世界之关联性〉，《史学经纬》，145、147页）

<sup>36</sup> 印顺认为，《楞伽》说唯心，而着重于超越唯心，宋译是特重于此，这应是达摩禅的重视宋译《楞伽》的理由吧！他说，《楞伽经》，意趣是内向的；唯心所现，为观察的方便，而着重于导入超越唯心的自觉自证。所以唯心所现，不是法门的宗极。说得最明显的，如说：“采集业说心，开悟诸凡夫”。（印顺，《中国禅宗史》，171-172页）也就是说，唯心的立场，并非是《楞伽经》的宗旨；但是，后来的达摩禅通过结合“佛性”、“自性”，崇尚“遣荡”经教和律行，逐渐走向了唯心的立场。

<sup>37</sup> 《续高僧传》，《大正藏》，50册，552页

倾，十地已满，法性早见，佛智已明。”<sup>38</sup>

此中，道宣对时下“定学”的批评十分严苛：禅者大多不重律仪轨范，不重经教诵读，喜欢道听途说，不加“思择”，也不寻善知识；禅的传播很容易流于形式，偏好谈玄说妙，但却“志尚下流”。不仅如此，就连自称自己顿悟“法性”的人都有。所以，道宣很是感叹：“相命禅宗，未闲禅字，如斯般辈，其量甚多。”这就是道信（580年—651年）前后所处时代的禅门实况了。印顺曾对此评论道：“道宣是以印度佛法为根本的，重经、重律，自然不满于这种禅风，但禅宗却在这种倾向下发展起来。”<sup>39</sup>

## 四、神会时期的“传宗”：外传袈裟，以定宗旨

一般所知的禅宗灯史，是以弘忍付法予慧能，同时以衣为凭证。732年，神会在滑台召开定宗旨大会，在会上神会宣告：“外传袈裟，以定宗旨”，“其袈裟今现在韶州”。他还声称，“西国为多是得圣果者，心无矫诈，唯传心契。汉地多是凡夫，苟求名利，是非相难，所以传衣定其宗旨。”<sup>40</sup>神会的说法，我们虽无法从其他文本作确切的考究，但从传衣的历史源流来看，传衣作为佛教师资付嘱的一种仪式并非空穴来风。如《杂阿含经》卷四十一记载，世尊涅槃后不久，迦叶与阿难发生争论，当迦叶说及自己出家因缘时，自称：

“尔时，世尊知我至心，处处下道。……我时白言：如是。世尊，此衣轻细，此衣柔软，唯愿世尊受我此衣。佛告迦叶：汝当受我粪扫衣，我当受汝僧伽梨。佛即自手授我粪扫纳衣，我即奉佛僧伽梨。如是渐渐教授，我八日之中，以学法受于乞食。至第九日，起于无学。阿难，若有正问：谁是世尊法子，从佛口生、从法化生，付以法财、诸禅、解脱、三昧、正受，应答我是。是则正说。”<sup>41</sup>

大迦叶受佛的粪扫衣，佛也受迦叶的柔软衣，这表示了佛陀对迦叶受法程度的认可。禅门的付衣传法，显然与此一典故有关。中国禅宗“付衣”之说，最早的文记是出自于净觉《注般若波罗蜜多心经》的“略序”，如说：“其（玄）曠大师所持摩纳袈裟、瓶、钵、锡杖等，并留付嘱净觉禅师”。净觉是弘忍的再传，他受“衣钵”于玄曠，这明显早于神会的“付衣传法”说。胡适所说慧能受弘忍“法衣”，是神会为争得“传宗”的正统而刻意“造出”来的，显然于此不符。另据《全唐文》“召曹溪慧能入京御札”说，神龙二年（705年），“朕请安、秀二师，宫中供养。万几之暇，每究一乘。二师并推让云：南方有能禅师，密受忍大师衣法，可就彼问。今遣内侍薛简，驰诏迎请。愿师慈悲，速赴上京”<sup>42</sup>。当时，慧能是以托病拒绝进京的，而其理由在王维《六祖能禅师碑》说得很具体：“九重延想，万里驰诚。思布发以奉迎，愿叉手而作礼。则天太后、孝和皇并敕书劝谕，征赴京城。禅师子牟之心，敢忘凤阙；远公之足，不过虎溪。固以此辞，竟不奉诏。遂送百衲袈裟及钱帛等供养”（《唐文粹》，卷六十三，《碑》十五）。另据鉴真750年到广州所见“则天为慧能禅师造寺”<sup>43</sup>的事实，与《曹溪大师别传》所说707年皇室召修“法泉寺”的说法相符合。可见，慧能去世前的705年，“付法传衣”的说

<sup>38</sup> 同上，296、579页

<sup>39</sup> 印顺，《中国禅宗史》，新竹：正闻出版社，1989年10月，第六版，37页

<sup>40</sup> 杨曾文，《神会和尚禅话录》，北京：中华书局，2011年11月，34页

<sup>41</sup> 《杂阿含经》，《大正藏》，2册，303页

<sup>42</sup> 《全唐文》，卷十七，北京：中华书局，1983年，246页

<sup>43</sup> 《唐大和上东征传》，《大正藏》，51册，991页

法，已为北方所知；此外，碑文中也提到了来自皇室供养的“百衲袈裟”。

## 五、神会门下的“《坛经》传宗”

### （一）从袈裟“传宗”到《坛经》“传宗”

敦煌本《坛经》说：上座法海向前言，“大师，大师去后，衣法当付何人？”大师言，“法即付了，汝不须问。吾灭后二十徐（疑为“余”之讹写）年，邪法缭乱，惑我宗旨，有人出来，不惜身命，第（疑为“定”之讹写）佛教是非，竖立宗旨，即是吾正法。衣不合转（疑为“传”之讹写）”。

这一悬记，表示了三内容：一、南禅已有衣法的传人；二、慧能去世二十年后，有人出来为南宗树立正法的宗旨；三、衣不再作为传法的信物了。

显然，第一项和第三项内容，前后矛盾。又考神会《顿悟无生般若颂》所说“衣为法信，法为衣宗；衣法相传，更无别付”，可知“衣不再作为传法的信物”是神会门下后期的传说。接着，敦煌本《坛经》又说：“衣不合传。汝不信，吾与诵先代五祖传衣付法颂。若据第一祖达摩颂意，即不合传衣……颂曰：吾来大唐国，传教救迷情，一花开五叶，结果自然成。”

神会当初责难北宗，证明慧能为六祖的最有力证据就是传衣，如《南宗定是非论》说：

“经今六代，内传衣法以印证心，外传袈裟以定宗旨。从上相传，一一皆与达摩袈裟为信。其袈裟今见在韶州，更不与人。余物相传者，即是谬言。……纵有千万学徒，亦只许一人承后。”<sup>44</sup>

由上可知：从达摩到慧能，已经过去五代了，而且每一代传人只许一人，且以“传衣”为凭证。神会以慧能受弘忍传衣，证明慧能为禅门第六代正宗；而袈裟作为“信衣”，是可以用来楷定禅门“宗旨”的。不过，从“吾来大唐国”的偈颂，可大概推测此段和祖师临终偈颂的创作时间。

然在敦煌本末后的慧能付嘱中，却表示另外一种禅法“传宗”的情形，如《坛经》说“大师遂唤门人法海，志诚……神会。大师言：汝等拾弟子近前！汝等不同余人，吾灭度后，汝各为一方头。吾教汝说法不失本宗”。这“汝各为一方头”，与前文“一代一人”的付嘱制度相矛盾，与《楞伽师资记》所说“后传吾道者，只可十耳。……此并堪为人师，但一方人物”相合；而前文单人“传衣”的付嘱制，与神会反复强调的“从上已来六代，一代只许一人”相符合，但这曾受到了其他宗派的质疑之声，如《南宗定是非论》说：“远法师问：能禅师以后，有传授否？（神会）答：有。又问：传授者是谁？和上答：已后应自知。……纵有一人得付嘱者，至今未说。”<sup>45</sup>

由于神会没能说出受能禅师付嘱的传承人，这一问题被净众宗和保唐宗门下察觉到了。如《历代法宝记》说：

“开元中，滑台寺为天下学道者定其宗旨。会和上云：更有一人说，会终不敢说。为会和上不得信袈裟。……远法师问：禅师上代袈裟传否？会答，传。若不传时，法有断绝。又问：禅师得不？答，不在会处。……有西国人迦叶贤者安

<sup>44</sup> 杨曾文，《神会和尚禅话录》，北京：中华书局，2011年11月，27页

<sup>45</sup> 同上，28页、30页

树提等二十余人，向和上说法处问：上代信袈裟和上得否？答，不在会处。”<sup>46</sup>

假定《南宗定是非论》和《历代法宝记》两处问答为值得信赖的文记的话，胡适满口否认征召慧能的“入京御札”也就不攻自破了；而作为慧能“密受忍大师衣法”的“传宗”事实，也就具备一定的依据。<sup>47</sup>

## （二）“《坛经》传宗”的意义

按照一般的说法，《坛经》是代表了慧能天竺南宗的顿禅。上文说到韦处厚提到的“道一门下责难菏泽门下的问题”，及其所引申出来禅法“传宗”的问题，对两者的考察显然需要一个范畴的界定：作为集文学文本与历史叙事于一身的《坛经》，其创作的背后，往往承载着“作为僧传身份的宗教使命”，这不仅需要着实了解南禅和慧能本人思想，及其门下对其慧能形象塑造的认知；《坛经》的叙事者，“观看传主（慧能）的角度、叙事方式、介入故事的程度，及其与读者的关系位置等”<sup>48</sup>，都会影响到南宗门下各个支流思想演化，对《坛经》这一圣典的思想与形象会进行不同地塑造。正是在这一种文本观念与历史语境的关联中，我们才能了解菏泽门下提出“《坛经》传宗”的历史背景及其影响。

首先，道一门下对菏泽门徒将袈裟“传宗”改换为《坛经》“传宗”只是简单作了道德上“优劣”的评价，所以从文句中是很难判别其说法正确与否，胡适的疏忽也是在此。但是，若从《坛经》的文本演变历史来看，或许可以找到一个更大的历史背景来判断韦处厚说法的合理程度。不少学者早已确认《坛经》是慧能及其后代弟子一次次扩编而成；不过，我们不能执着与事实与捏造的概念辨析，而重要的是经过怎样一个过程被创作、流传、编改或修订。对此，印顺法师曾作过相当的资料收集和研究，提出敦煌本《坛经》历经的三个编撰阶段：

“一、法海所记集的《坛经》原本，流传于曹溪，可称之为“曹溪原本”。

二、悟真（得自法海）所传，敦煌本的底本，是修改过的“南方宗旨”本。

由于南方宗旨的增润，引起慧忠国师的慨叹——“添糅鄙谭，消除圣意”。

三、神会门下，为了适应当前的需要，维护神会以来的正统，所以补充悟真所传的“南方宗旨”本，成为现存的敦煌本。”<sup>49</sup>

另外，我们可以从敦煌本《坛经》具体内容了解到：菏泽门下对《坛经》中顿禅宗旨的理解，以及这种理解背后所隐含的未来禅法“传宗”的某种走向。如敦煌本《坛经》说：

1、大师遂唤门人法海、志诚、法达、智常、智通、志彻、志道、法珍、法如、神会。大师言：汝等十弟子近前。汝等不同余人。吾灭度后，汝各为一方师。吾教汝说法，不失本宗。

<sup>46</sup> 《历代法宝记》，《大正藏》，51册，185页

<sup>47</sup> 印顺法师分析：“神会在动乱中成功（天宝战乱以前，神会还没有开法），没几年又在动乱中去世。到了神会门下，没有信袈裟，那与北宗禅师们有什么差别？而四川的保唐门下，正传说衣在无住处，证明慧能的法统在四川，这应该是神会门下最感困扰的事了！在这种情形下，发生了‘坛经传宗’的事实。当时，《坛经》是手写秘本。在传法付嘱时，附传‘一卷坛经’，‘以此为依约’。对外宣称：慧能说：衣不再传了，以后传授一卷坛经以定宗旨。《坛经》代替了信袈裟，负起‘得有禀承’，‘定其宗旨’的作用。这就是‘《坛经》传宗’的意义，也就是道一门下责难菏泽门下的问题所在。”

<sup>48</sup> 黄敬家，〈佛教传记文学研究方法的建构：从叙事的角度解读高僧传记〉，《世界宗教学刊》第10期，2007年12月，99页

<sup>49</sup> 印顺，《中国禅宗史》，台北：正闻出版社，1989年10月，第六版，268-269页



2、大师言：十弟子，已后传法，递相教授一卷坛经，不失本宗。不禀受坛经，非我宗旨。如今得了，递代流行。得遇坛经者，如见吾亲授。十僧得教授已，写为坛经，递代流行。得者必当见性。

按照印顺的说法，“汝各为一方师”是“漕溪原本”中法海的意见，这是否认神会所谓“一代只许一人”说法的。而且，这也与敦煌本《坛经》末后“二十年悬记”<sup>50</sup>以及后文神会机缘记载的内容相抵触，二者显然是在暗示神会修行境界的超胜<sup>51</sup>。

那么，神会门徒是如何将《坛经》与南宗宗旨联系起来的呢？按神会语录中的说法，南宗的宗旨当然是以袈裟作为信衣来表示师资间禅法“传宗”的一种合法性，而其宗旨的内容则主要是通过对北宗“看心、看净”的否定而表示出来的。到敦煌本《坛经》成书时，菏泽门下虽然受到朝廷将神会敕为“七祖”的鼓舞，但面对外部宗派的质疑仍然有些不知所措；正好，那时来自南方的《坛经》秘传本从漕溪不断传出，于是他们提出：“若论宗旨，传授《坛经》，以此为依约。”他们还楷定了《坛经》的传授形式：“若不得《坛经》，即无禀受。须知法处、年月日、姓名，递相付嘱。无《坛经》禀承，非南宗弟子也。”最后明确提出，“未得禀承者，虽说顿教法，未知根本，终不免诤”<sup>52</sup>，很显然，这是针对南宗内部的其他“说顿教法”宗派而提出来的。

也就是说，如同“不提被归为北宗的渐悟教义，则无法解释属于南宗的顿悟教义”<sup>53</sup>一样，倘若不提“传授《坛经》，即无禀受”，则无法解释菏泽神会为“独曜莹珠”的南宗正宗，也就无法弥合神会所谓“衣不合传”和“一代只许一人”的说法，以及《坛经》中“二十年悬记”设定的正法“宗旨”。

## 五、结语

近代著名思想家福柯（Michel Foucault）曾试图否定任何形而上“溯源”的历史文化观，认为“决定思想的并非能思想的思想者”，而是思想者身后历史事件或思想史中难以系统化的“话语运作”。这种“话语运作”的运用，往往具有语言的“行事”功能，也就是说：禅公案或言说的思想价值并不在于其言说的意义指示是否明确得当，而在于其是否能完成某种教化的行动。对此，百丈怀海禅师就曾明确指出：“一切言教，祇是治病。为病不同，药亦不同。所以有时说有佛，有时说无佛，实语治病。病若得瘥，个个是实语。治病若不瘥，个个是虚妄语”。

本文是基于对胡适《坛经》为神会所造的一项最基础性论据的再探讨，并甄别其对“《坛经》传宗”概念性误解；然后，透过“《坛经》传宗”的含义界定和观念背景探讨，希望在以往碎片化的禅学语境中寻找胡适对于“传宗”一词误读的深层次原因，也就是禅法“传宗”内容是怎样历经由模糊到明确化、“传宗”形式由神秘到具体化的这样一个过程。正如印顺法师所强调的：“佛法的思想、制度，流行在世间，就不能不受着无常演变法则所支配，若把它看成一成不变的东西，或以为佛世可以变异，后人唯有老

<sup>50</sup> 敦煌本《坛经》：上座法海向前言：大师，大师去后，衣法当付何人？大师言：法即付了，汝不须问。吾灭后二十余年，邪法缭乱，惑我宗旨。有人出来，不惜身命，定佛教是非，竖立宗旨，即是吾正法。衣不合传。汝不信，吾与诵先代五祖传衣付法颂。若据第一祖达磨颂意，即不合传衣。（《坛经》，《大正藏》，51册，卷28，344页）

<sup>51</sup> 敦煌本《坛经》说：“（大师言：）吾若去后，无人教汝。法海等众僧闻已，涕泪悲泣，惟有神会不动，亦不悲泣。六祖言：神会小僧，却得善等，毁誉不动。余者不得，数年山中，更修何道！汝今悲泣，更忧阿谁？忧吾不知去处在？若不知去处，终不别汝。汝等悲泣，即不知吾去处；若知去处，即不悲泣。”这是明显赞扬神会的话，神会的“不动，已补悲泣”比起其他诸弟子是“得善”的，暗示了神会境界的超胜。（《坛经》，《大正藏》，51册，卷28，343页）

<sup>52</sup> 《坛经》，《大正藏》，51册，卷28，342页

<sup>53</sup> 马克瑞，〈审视传承：阐述禅宗的另一种方式〉，《中华佛学学报》第13期，2001年，291页

实的遵守，说什么‘放之四海而皆准，推之百世而可行’；或以为祖师才能酌量取舍，我们只有照着做：这就是违反了佛法——诸行无常法则的佛法。”也就是说，无论一本书、一个学说的作者为谁，其表达的内容为何，最重要的是作者书写时所处的历史语境为何，及其背后隐含的人物关系运作情况如何。

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# 《大智度论》中的念佛三昧

欧嘉慧

## 一、介绍

在早期佛教经典中的《阿含经》已出现六念法门的修行，也就是念佛、念法、念僧、念戒、念施和念天。六念法门是属易行道和能使我们保持善念，如《大智度论》卷 87，更明显指出“六念等，柔软易行，不生邪见”。<sup>1</sup>六念的修持当中，念佛是最普遍的法门，对于信行者可离怖畏得到心理的平静。<sup>2</sup>

初学的修定者，在《修行道地经》中，有五种对治门，也就是不净观、慈悲观、因缘观、数息观和界分别观。<sup>3</sup>然鸠摩罗什于四世纪编的《坐禅三昧经》的五门禅法，以念佛观代替了界分别观。<sup>4</sup>因此，念佛成为了修习禅的必经之门，如《思惟略要法》中云“佛为法王，能令人得种种善法，是故习禅之人，先当念佛！”<sup>5</sup>

平时的念佛并非随便念或散心念而已，而是要修得念佛三昧的成就。<sup>6</sup>本文以《大智度论》为主，探讨透过念佛而得定和慧或称为念佛三昧的修习。

## 二、何谓念佛三昧

念佛是通于三乘的修行，如《大智度论》卷 7 云：“念佛三昧有二种：一者、声闻法中，于一佛身，心眼见满十方；二者、菩萨道于无量佛土中，念三世十方诸佛。”<sup>7</sup>声闻乘是以释迦佛为所缘境，依此而念佛的十号，心得欢喜、妙乐、身心轻安等而有三昧定，心中无贪瞋痴等烦恼乃得涅槃解脱。<sup>8</sup>菩萨乘更进而念十方佛，从一方佛至十方诸佛，恒持意念乃一心不乱，也就是念佛三昧的成就了。

## 三、念佛三昧之特胜

菩萨已有修种种的三昧了，为何还要修念佛三昧呢？《大智度论》卷 7 中明确的解释念佛三昧之特胜，归结为以下五点：

1.念佛能种下善的因缘，善根成就后乃得入佛道中。这如同《法华经》说：“若人散乱心，入于塔庙中，一称南无佛，皆已成佛道。”<sup>9</sup>

2.念佛三昧得以灭除种种的烦恼及过去的罪业。依据鸠摩罗什的《坐禅三昧经》的五门禅法中，各有对治不同的烦恼，如淫欲多的人，习不净观等，而念佛则是治等分，也就是可治贪、瞋、痴、散乱等烦恼，是其他法门所不及。<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 《大智度论》卷 87 (大正 25, 页 670 中)。

<sup>2</sup> (1)《杂阿含经》卷 33 (大正 2, 页 237 中一下)。

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<sup>4</sup> 印顺《华雨集第二册》 页 243-244。

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<sup>9</sup> 《妙法莲华经》卷 1 (大正 9, 页 9 上)。

<sup>10</sup> 《坐禅三昧经》卷 1 (大正 15, 页 271 下-277 中)。

3.念佛三昧有大福德，能度众生、能除重罪、济诸苦厄。论中更以《贤愚经》<sup>11</sup>的故事叙述念佛能脱离苦厄，如五百商人入海取宝，遇到摩伽罗鱼王开口，其中有一位佛弟子劝导诸位一同称念南无佛，而众人也得以救活。此鱼王的过去世是佛的破戒弟子，因此闻佛名号时有所悔悟，鱼王就合口了而众人也得以解脱苦厄。

4.佛为法王，菩萨为法将，佛世尊贪嗔痴等烦恼以及习气已除<sup>12</sup>，因此是众生所尊重，是故应常念佛。

5.念佛能得种种功德利益，如《解脱道论》卷6中提到念佛能得十八功德如信增长、念增长等。<sup>13</sup>菩萨的种种功德和无量智慧皆从佛得。因此菩萨知恩重故常念佛。<sup>14</sup>

另外，念佛三昧成就故能见佛而得生阿弥陀佛国土。<sup>15</sup>

从以上所述，念佛不但能离种种的怖畏，同时也能让心得以平息种种烦恼，念佛三昧成就更能见佛而往生净土。

## 四、念佛三昧的方法

《大智度论》中念佛三昧的修持是依于《般舟三昧》为依据。<sup>16</sup>依印顺在《初期大乘佛教之起源与开展》中，把念佛法门分为称名念佛、观相念佛、唯心念佛和实相念佛—四门来叙述。<sup>17</sup>

### （一）称名念佛

所谓的称名念佛就是念佛的名号，在早期佛教经典中已有念佛的十名号，<sup>18</sup>在《大智度论》卷21不仅提到念佛的十名号，更阐释十名号中的每一项佛名号的功德。<sup>19</sup>在称名念佛中，不但只是口念而已，更要以意念才可入定，因念佛得定，所以称之为念佛三昧。

### （二）观相念佛

观相念佛可分为两种：

1. 念佛的色身相好也就念佛的三十二相、八十随行好。在《大智度论》卷21中提到阿私陀仙人生具有三十二相便告诉净饭王，悉达多太子若是在家可做转轮圣王，若出家可成佛。<sup>20</sup>印顺在《成佛之道》的偈颂中提到“念佛由意念，真佛非像佛；观相而持心，善识于方便。”<sup>21</sup>念佛必须以意念摄受于佛的形像中，持之以恒令住于意念中，此方法是达到三昧的一种方便。

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<sup>11</sup> 《贤愚经》卷6(大正4，页394中)。

<sup>12</sup> 《阿毘达磨大毘婆沙论》卷173：“佛一切烦恼并习气皆永断故。”(大正27，页871下)。

<sup>13</sup> 《解脱道论》卷6(大正32，页426下)。

<sup>14</sup> 《大智度论》卷7(大正25，页108下-109中)。

<sup>15</sup> 《大智度论》卷29(大正25，页276上)。

<sup>16</sup> 印顺《华雨集第二册》页266-267。

<sup>17</sup> 印顺《初期大乘佛教之起源与开展》页854-872。

<sup>18</sup> 《杂阿含经》卷33(大正2，页237下)。

<sup>19</sup> 《大智度论》卷21(大正25，页219中-下)。

<sup>20</sup> (1)《大智度论》卷21(大正25，页219下-220上)。

(2)《大智度论》卷4(大正25，页90上-91上)。

(3)《中阿含经》卷11(大正1，页493上-494中)。

<sup>21</sup> 印顺，《成佛之道》页323-324

2. 念佛的法身相也就是念佛的五分法身、十力、四无所畏等功德。同样，在《大智度论》卷 21 中提到念佛的五分法身如下：

1) 念佛戒众具足：自心清静、不恼众生，世世持戒。<sup>22</sup>

2) 念佛定众具足：佛有大智慧具足，当知禅定必定具足。佛的禅定非常的甚深如佛入定后不知道牛被雷电击中、舍利弗和目犍连也不知佛所入的定是何名、佛入日出三昧，佛身遍满十方世界，而教化众生等。<sup>23</sup>

3) 念佛慧众具足：佛从初发心，于世世不惜身命勤求智慧；佛的大悲心欲度众生而求智慧；佛能降伏外道如舍利弗、长爪等，故知佛慧具足。<sup>24</sup>

4) 念佛解脱众具足：佛断尽烦恼习气故，成就八解脱；佛破魔军、离诸烦恼、离诸禅定障，得解脱具足。<sup>25</sup>

5) 念佛解脱知见具足：确认自己已得解脱乃自知不受后有，名无生智解脱知见；佛能知众生的根机是以空门或无相门或无作门得以解脱。<sup>26</sup>

论中也提到念佛的一切智、大慈、大悲乃至十八不共法功德等。<sup>27</sup>因此，必须从念佛的色身相好或念佛的功德法身而引发念佛三昧。

### （三）唯心念佛

依于称名念佛或观相念佛至达到一心不乱，而得念佛三昧乃得以见佛<sup>28</sup>，进一步了知此佛是唯心所现，这过程称之为唯心念佛。

念佛、见佛在《大智度论》提到从定中是可见佛，可与佛问问题和对答等：

从三昧起，作是念言：“佛从何所来？我身亦不去。”实时便知：“诸佛无所从来，我亦无所去。”复作是念：“三界所有，皆心所作。”何以故？随心所念，悉皆得见。

<sup>29</sup>

这与《般舟三昧经》中的经文类似相同，念佛三昧成就后，见到了佛现在前，在问答的过程，闻经欢喜，但不应执着于佛的色身，应作如是观“我所见到的佛，佛是从何而来，我为何会到佛这里呢？”这时知道，三界是唯心所造的，由于自己的心念佛而得以见佛。<sup>30</sup>

在唯心念佛的次第过程中，只知道所现的一切、所观的佛非真实性，因此了知万法所现皆是空性，但是还有能够观的心未达到空性，因此未到达究竟解脱。

<sup>22</sup> 《大智度论》卷 21 (大正 25, 页 220 上)。

<sup>23</sup> 《大智度论》卷 21 (大正 25, 页 220 上-中)。

<sup>24</sup> 《大智度论》卷 21 (大正 25, 页 220 中-下)。

<sup>25</sup> 《大智度论》卷 21 (大正 25, 页 220 下-221 上)。

<sup>26</sup> 《大智度论》卷 21 (大正 25, 页 221 上-中)。

<sup>27</sup> (1) 《大智度论》卷 21 (大正 25, 页 221 中)。

(2) 《大智度论》卷 24 (大正 25, 页 236 上-下)。

(3) 《增壹阿含经》卷 2 (大正 2, 页 554 上-中)。

<sup>28</sup> 《大智度论》卷 37 (大正 25, 页 333 中)。

<sup>29</sup> 《大智度论》卷 29 (大正 25, 页 276 中)。

<sup>30</sup> (1) 《般舟三昧经》卷 1 (大正 13, 页 899 中-下)。

(2) 印顺，《初期大乘佛教之起源与开展》页 844-846。

(3) 印顺，《净土与禅》页 107-108。

#### （四）实相念佛

从唯心念佛的所观的佛是空，进一步观察到能够观的心也不可得，能观的心与所观的境皆空，即是进入了实相念佛。唯心念佛说境界不可得，也就是不执着于所观的所缘--佛，这里说能观的心亦不执着，心无所取著即是智慧。定慧具足便能随意所愿，不离一切佛。

以上是以次第渐修而最后达到了实相念佛，但也可以直入实相念佛，如《摩诃般若波罗蜜经》卷 23 中说：“无忆故，是为念佛。”<sup>31</sup>经中以一切法无自性为念佛，分为佛的五蕴身；三十二相、金色身、八十随形好的佛生身；佛的功德法身如五分法身、十力等；念十二因缘等。因此，般若法门的修持是从佛的种种身乃缘起等一切，自性无所有，无法可得可念，这是无忆念的念佛故名为实相念佛。

因此，无论是次第渐修或是直入实相念佛，这都必须要以空慧相应才可达成诸法实相，也就是胜义谛中的缘起空相。

#### 四、结论

《大智度论》的念佛方法中，唯心念佛与实相念佛的前提是必须要有念佛三昧为准则，而念佛三昧可从称名念佛和观相念佛达到一心不乱而成就。

从《大智度论》的念佛三昧，可知念佛不仅适应信行人所修而已，若从实相念佛的角度来看，念佛而达到了三昧，进一步依般若观空乃可证的诸法实相，因此也属于法行人的修持。从《大智度论》的特胜，念佛三昧也可属于悲行人，因为菩萨未成佛，未具佛的功德法身，所度化的众生是有限有量，所以为度众生故而念佛。

从中可知，念佛是适应很多根机的众生，念佛三昧成就，声闻行者可达到解脱涅槃，大乘行者更可以坚固菩萨道的修行直到成佛。

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<sup>31</sup> (1)《摩诃般若波罗蜜经》卷 23 (大正 8，页 385 中-下)。

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# 《探究“人生佛教”与“人间佛教”之异同处》

杨丽英

## 摘要

人间佛教是现代佛教一个重要的概念。清末民初，佛教面对种种挑战，一些有远见的人士，认为佛教若是没有作出改革，将会灭亡。其中一个提出如何改革佛教的佼佼者，便是太虚。

太虚认为，佛教之所以面临灭亡，是因为当时的佛教为“死”和“鬼”服务，不是为“人”服务。这样的佛教，和人的距离太远了，也就渐渐为人抛弃。于是，太虚提出“人生佛教”的理念，说佛教应该为生人服务，以期拉近佛教和现实社会、现实人生的距离。

印顺是太虚的学生。印顺对太虚的“人生佛教”思想是钦佩的。而且印顺认为，他的“人间佛教”思想，是继承了太虚的思想而有的。但是，印顺认为，单是把“死”和“鬼”从佛教里去除是不足的，还需要把“神”的概念也去除掉，因为佛教是为人而设的，佛是为人而说法的。所以印顺提出“人间佛教”理念，纠正太虚“人生佛教”思想里的不足。再者，印顺也认为，现代佛教面临的是思想的问题，所以他提出他认为的“真正的佛教”，即是以人为本的佛教，以纠正这思想的错误。太虚对于印顺的思想不全盘接受。太虚认为，印顺以历史事件作为他“人间佛教”思想的基础，太过重人本。

其实，太虚和印顺的思想，有相同的地方，也有不同的地方。但是不管他们思想是否一样，他们都为佛教努力，都是在面对时代的问题，为佛教提出一些改革，以期佛教能继续流传下来。

关键词：印顺 太虚 人间佛教 人生佛教 佛教改革

## 一：绪论

“人间佛教”是一个复杂的概念。综合来说，它是大乘佛教菩萨精神的进一步发展，是佛教适应社会发展而进行的理论和实践的探讨。它不止反映了历史对宗教的影响，也是佛教从古代走向现代的产物。

清末民初，佛教渐渐衰落，沦为为死人超度的“鬼教”。当时一些有远见的佛教人士，提出了佛教的改革，阐扬佛教和现实人生的关系，图让现代人对佛教有新的理解和认同，以自保和实现佛教现代化转型<sup>1</sup>。倡导佛教改革的人士当中，集大成者就是太虚法师（以下简称：太虚）。

一九一三年，太虚公开提出“教理革命、教制革命、教产革命”三大口号<sup>2</sup>。在一九二八年，又在《对于中国佛教革命僧的训词》<sup>3</sup>一文中提到其佛教改革的宗旨<sup>4</sup>。

太虚的学生印顺法师（以下简称：印顺）进一步反省了太虚的思想，提出了“人间佛教”的理念<sup>5</sup>。

“人间佛教”的思想体系不是出自一人一手，而是现代中国佛教思想家依据佛法的基本原理，对转型社会和现代生活提出的佛陀当年，不可能遇到的众多问题的长期创造性思考的积累<sup>6</sup>。在有关佛教改革的思想里，太虚的“人生佛教”是第一个引人注意的。

值得一提的是，在太虚的思想体系里，“人生佛教”和“人间佛教”这两个概念是没有分别的，太虚也用“人间佛教”一词。如在《怎样来建设人间佛教》一文中，太虚就直接谈到他对“人间佛教”的看法<sup>7</sup>。依学者的比对研究，太虚共有七处，联用“人生佛教”和“人间佛教”这两个名词，如下：

- 一、《论时事新报所谓经咒救国》（1932年）<sup>8</sup>：这是太虚著述中，最早出现“人间佛教”一词的文章。文中批评密宗的“经咒救国”，认为藏传佛教流行的“密咒”，可以对“人间佛教”起辅助作用。
- 二、《怎样来建设人间佛教》（1933年）<sup>9</sup>：此文阐明了“人间佛教”的建设，其目的是适应现代社会，以救国救世为宗旨，破除传统佛教腐朽迷信的坏印象。
- 三、《药师琉璃光如来本愿功德经讲记》（1934年）<sup>10</sup>：此文中，太虚注意到了药师净土观念与人间佛教理念的一致性。

<sup>1</sup> 唐忠毛，〈人间佛教发展中的世俗化问题辨析〉，《华东师范大学学报》，第6期，2013年，第110页。

<sup>2</sup> 印顺，《太虚法师年谱》，第57-58页。

<sup>3</sup> 太虚，《对于中国佛教革命僧的训词》，《太虚大师全书》第三十四册，第176页。

<sup>4</sup> 太虚提出的三大宗旨为：一、革除佛教里，愚民的陋习和中国传统家族制度所养成的僧产私的佛教制度。二、改革佛教僧人遁世和佛教只注重脱死问题和服务鬼神的态度；把佛教改正为服务人群，及兼顾资生问题的宗教。三、以三民主义为根基，连接以大乘十信位的菩萨行，建设由人而菩萨而佛的人生佛教。

<sup>5</sup> 印顺在《游心法海六十年》一文中说：“虚大师所提倡的佛教改革运动，我原则上是赞成的，但觉得不容易成功。出家以来，多少感觉到，现实佛教界的问题，根本是思想问题。我不像虚大师那样，提出“教理革命”；却愿意多多理解教理，对佛教思想起一点澄清作用。”印顺，《游心法海六十年》，《华雨集》第五册，第7-8页。

<sup>6</sup> “人间佛教”的论题自民国以来就常被提起，1933年夏天，《海潮音》月刊征文拟出版人间佛教专号，刊登了太虚大师10月1日应汉口律师公会，佛教正信会，红十字会邀请，于汉口市总商会做的题为《怎样来建设人间佛教》的演讲。在演讲中太虚大师对自己的人间佛教思想做了系统的阐述。指出“人间佛教”的立场是，佛教并非教人离开人类去做神做鬼，或出家到寺院山林里去做和尚，而是以佛教的道理来改良社会。妙生，《惟贤长老谈太虚大师人间佛教的传承》。<http://zhunti.shixiu.net/thread-24770-1-1.html>

<sup>7</sup> 太虚，《怎样来建设人间佛教》，《太虚大师全书》第四十七册，第122-129页。

<sup>8</sup> 太虚，《论时事新报所谓经咒救国》，《太虚大师全书》第三十册，第811-814页。

<sup>9</sup> 太虚，《怎样来建设人间佛教》，《太虚大师全书》第四十七册，第122-129页。

<sup>10</sup> 太虚，《药师琉璃光本愿功德经讲记》《太虚大师全书》第二十八册，第631-681页。

- 四、〈佛学会与实现佛化〉（1935年）<sup>11</sup>：文中说明中国佛学会的宗旨，应该是研究探讨真理，适应潮流，树立佛学，实现人间佛教，建立人间净土基础的运动。文中“人生佛教”和“人间佛教”是并用的。
- 五、〈即人成佛的真现实论〉<sup>12</sup>（1938年）：此文指出禅宗思想和人间佛教的关系。
- 六、〈与法尊书〉（1941年）<sup>13</sup>：信中，太虚对印顺的人间佛教思想，显然是非常认可和赏识的。
- 七、〈再议印度之佛教〉（1943年）<sup>14</sup>：文中，太虚指出佛法应在一切众生中特重人生，是和他本人提出的观念，如人生佛教、人间佛教、建设人间净土、人乘直接大乘，由人生发达向上渐进以至圆满即为成佛等相呼应的。

黄夏年认为，真正把“人生佛教”和“人间佛教”划分开来的是印顺<sup>15</sup>。太虚的“人生佛教”思想无疑启发了印顺的“人间佛教”思想，至于印顺是否继承了太虚的思想，则有代考查。印顺说，众人应该以“人生佛教”的真义，来发扬人间佛教<sup>16</sup>。至于印顺所提倡的“真义”，是不是与太虚的思想相似，就是他们的思想分别的重心所在。

就太虚对印顺的《印度之佛教》的批评，太虚对印顺过于强调“人本”的人间佛教思想并没有完全的接受<sup>17</sup>。

本文既是想对太虚和印顺的思想有更深入的了解，并希望通过比较两者思想的异同，了解他们思想分歧的原因，对“人间佛教”这个思想体系有更深入的认识。

## 二：“人生佛教”和“人间佛教”的理念

### 一、太虚“人生佛教”的基本理念

太虚在一九二八年四月的〈对于中国佛教革命僧的训词〉一文，“中国佛教革命的宗旨”第三部分“要建设的方面”明确指出他的“人生佛教”的主张，就是要“连接以大乘十信位的菩萨行，而建设由人而菩萨而佛的人生佛教”<sup>18</sup>。

命题提出后，太虚在“上海俭德储蓄会”就此命题作了专题说明，详细说明了“人生佛学之大旨”：

“论人生的佛学，所以冀培养现代之人生，发展现代之人生，至于超人，至于微妙，至于无穷。夫佛本所觉悟众生者也，动植万有无不有生，然其精义可取归之人；而能谭佛说，能听佛说者唯人，故虽专为人说亦无不可也。

<sup>11</sup> 太虚，〈佛学会与现实佛化〉，《太虚大师全书》第三十五册，第74-76页。

<sup>12</sup> 太虚，〈即人成佛的真现实论〉，《太虚大师全书》第四十七册，第129-131页。

<sup>13</sup> 太虚，〈与法尊书〉，《太虚大师全书》第五十一册，第27-35页。

<sup>14</sup> 太虚，〈再议〈印度之佛教〉〉，《太虚大师全书》第四十九册，第17-22页。

<sup>15</sup> 同上。

<sup>16</sup> 印顺，〈人间佛教绪言〉，《佛在人间》，第23页。

<sup>17</sup> 太虚在〈再议〈印度之佛教〉〉一文中指出，“原著以阿含‘佛皆出人间，终不在天上成佛也’片言，有将佛法割离余有情界，孤取人间为本之趋向，则落人本之狭隘。但求现实人间乐者，将谓佛法不如儒道之切要——梁漱溟、熊子真、马一浮、冯友兰等；但求未来天上乐者，将谓佛法不如耶、回之简捷；而佛法恰须被弃于人间矣。”太虚，《太虚大师全书》第四十九册，第18页。

<sup>18</sup> 太虚，〈对于中国佛教革命僧的训词〉，《太虚大师全书》第三十四册，第176页。

按佛说，穷全人生之生存，故既及吾人之生存，亦及吾人之物故；而言佛者不能及自己个人之物故，则于大生存之中取吾个人有始有终之一段生活为发端，即以是推论全人之生存。故现代人生，可以推全人生存；人之生存，可以推之万物生存。佛教以现代人生为起点，此合于今世之潮流者一也。

发展人生至于正遍觉，至于超超人，为大乘之本而契时机必经之途。佛非为消灭人生而为发展人生，盖为积极非消极者也。小乘欲解脱个人，大乘欲超度众生，故大乘为‘群众的’，此合于今世之潮流者二也。

佛教教人修行，最先达到完全之人格，然后发展至于超人，至于超超人，至于微妙，至于无穷境：故人而上有菩萨焉，有诸多菩萨焉而后成佛。夫以步骤的发展，合于科学之有次序性也。修行一步即成果一步，步步成绩，显着可观，此合于科学之有真确性也。是人生的佛学，亦为‘科学的’，此合于今世之潮流者三也<sup>19</sup>。”

在佛教改革方面，太虚认为，中国佛教需要革除佛教中迷信和中国家族制度所养成遗传制度<sup>20</sup>。

## 二、印顺 “人间佛教” 的基本理念

一九四一年，印顺写了〈佛在人间〉、〈佛教是无神论的宗教〉和〈法海探珍〉三篇文章，提倡佛的人间性，反对天神化了的佛教<sup>21</sup>。印顺提出“人间佛教”主要是印顺认为现实佛教界和他早期认识的佛法有太大的出入<sup>22</sup>，当时的中国佛教以诵经，礼忏等形式存在，学佛的人又以求往生净土的人多。这些现实的原因，促成佛教的衰落，也让印顺思考佛教的未来<sup>23</sup>。

印顺“人间佛教”的内涵就是从人而学习菩萨行，由菩萨行修学圆满而成佛的“人菩萨行”。从人而发心学菩萨行，由学菩萨行而成佛。佛是我们所趋向的目标；学佛，要从学菩萨行开始<sup>24</sup>。这“人间佛教”的三大理念就是：佛在人间、人菩萨和人间净土。

<sup>19</sup> 太虚，〈人生佛学的说明〉，《太虚大师全书》第五册，第 59-60 页。

<sup>20</sup> 太虚，〈对于中国佛教革命僧的训词〉，《太虚大师全书》第三十四册，第 176 页。

<sup>21</sup> 印顺说：“真正的佛教是人间的，唯有人间的佛教，才能表现出佛法的真义。”印顺，〈人间佛教绪言〉，《佛在人间》，第 22 页。

<sup>22</sup> 印顺说：“理解到的佛法，与现实佛教界差距太大，这是我学佛以来，引起严重关切的问题。这到底是佛法传来中国，年代久远，受中国文化的影响而变质？还是在印度就是这样 - 高深的法义，与通俗的迷妄行为相结合呢！……为了佛法的信仰，真理的探求，我愿意出家，到外地去修学。将来修学好了，宣扬纯正的佛法。当时意解到的纯正佛法，当然就是三论与唯识。”印顺，〈游心法海六十年〉，《华雨集》第五册，第 6 页。

<sup>23</sup> 印顺说：“我初学佛法三论与唯识，就感到与现实佛教界的距离。存在于内心的问题，经虚大师思想的启发，终于在‘佛出人间，终不在天上成佛也’，而得到新的启发。我不是宗派徒裔，不是讲经论的法师，也不是为考证而考证，为研究而研究的学者。我只是本着从教典得来的一项信念，‘为佛法而学’，‘为佛教而学’，希望整理出不违佛法本义，又能适应现代人心的正道，为佛法的久住世间而尽一分佛弟子的责任。”印顺，〈契理契机之人间佛教〉，《华雨集》第四册，第 47 页。

<sup>24</sup> 印顺，〈佛在人间〉，第 99-100 页。

印顺在〈契理契机之人间佛教〉<sup>25</sup>一文中，说明“人间佛教”的“理论原则”就是：“法与律合一”、“缘起与空性的统一”、以及“自利与利他的统一”；<sup>26</sup>

- 1、 法与律的合一：“法”指的是佛的教法，“律”是佛所制定的戒律。印顺提倡人生正行修菩萨道，要把握法律并重，以恢复佛教这一固有的精神。
- 2、 缘起与空的统一：印顺认为，学佛者中，有人偏重于事，于空平等性不信不解，所以不能和出世的佛法相应；也有人执着本性，空理，而不重法相，不重视佛法在人间的应有正行，于是就执理废事。这两种思想都是不足取的。只有依据性空，建立“二谛无碍”的中观，才能符合佛法的正宗。
- 3、 自利与利他的合一：印顺认为，声闻乘人过分着重自心的调伏，而忽略了积极的利他。大乘人不仅重视身心的调治（自利），着重利他，自利行在利他行的进程中完成，达到自利利他的统一。这是菩萨的精神，也是大乘才是人间佛教的精义。

在实践修持方面，印顺说，“人间佛教”是以信、智、悲为心要的：

- 1、 信：愿、精进，是学佛法的第一要著，没有信，一切佛法的功德不生。
- 2、 智：定、方便，是解脱生死的根本。
- 3、 悲：施、戒、忍。

印顺认为，小乘重信和智，大乘重慈悲。因为菩萨行以利他为先，如悲心不够，就不能成就大乘功德。信、智和悲三者是有关联的，但是根本是信心。智慧，可以摄定，依定修慧，定是慧的基础。了智慧，一切善巧方便，就逐渐成就了。悲，是利他的动力。依人乘行而学菩萨道，启发信心，引生智慧，长养慈悲，是大乘道的根本法门。

菩萨的救度有情，主要在激发人向上的善心，循正道而向乐果。如有人天善根的，就以人天法来化导他。如有二乘善根的，以二乘法来度脱他。有佛种性的，就以大乘法来摄化，使他学菩萨行，趋向佛果。这都是菩萨悲心悲行所成就。菩萨道的三大事，就是从起信心、生正智、长大悲的三德中来。所以，由人菩萨而发心的大乘，就得把握这三者为修持心要，要紧是平衡的发展。真正的菩萨道，信、智、悲三德是不可偏废的<sup>27</sup>。

### 三：太虚“人生佛教”和印顺“人间佛教”的共同点

印顺说，太虚的“人生佛教”对我有重大的启发性<sup>28</sup>。对太虚所从事的佛教革新事业，“我原则上是赞成的。”<sup>29</sup>但是，印顺说：“我们应继承‘人生佛教’的真义，来发扬人间的佛教。”<sup>30</sup>印顺“人间佛教”的真义，是不是太虚“人生佛教”的原义，就是他们思想分别的重点。但是，既然印顺是继承了太虚的思想，们的思想还是有共同点的。

太虚和印顺的思想有以下四个契合点：同样直仰佛陀，“不属于宗派徒裔”：太虚和印顺都认同佛陀是佛教徒最好的榜样，佛教之所以有宗派之分，是因为佛法为适应不同人的根性，而作出不同的解释，所以宗派的分别是不重要的。<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup> 印顺，〈契理契机之人间佛教〉，《华雨集》第四册，第3页。

<sup>26</sup> 印顺，〈人间佛教要略〉，《佛在人间》，第104-112页。

<sup>27</sup> 印顺，〈人间佛教要略〉，《佛在人间》，第122-127页。

<sup>28</sup> 印顺，〈游心法海六十年〉，《华雨集》第五册，第6页。

<sup>29</sup> 印顺，〈游心法海六十年〉，《华雨集》第五册，第7页。

<sup>30</sup> 印顺，〈人间佛教绪言〉，《人间佛教》，第22页。

<sup>31</sup> 太虚，〈佛教之新认识〉，《太虚大师全书》第五十六册，第138页。

一、菩萨道是佛法正道，菩萨行是人间正行：菩萨道精神是人生佛教和人间佛教共有的理念。要成佛，就得从学菩萨开始，渐进的学习。

二、净化社会，建设人间净土的目标：人生佛教和人间佛教理念的目的，是人间的净化，创造人间净土。

三、佛教应适应现代社会，关怀社会，进而提升社会：太虚和印顺都认为，中国佛教要生存，就得改革，佛教是可以改革的，因为佛教的教义是“契理契机”的<sup>32</sup>。从契理契机的原则出发，佛教可以适应时代性的思想文化，洗除不合时代性的色彩，进一步和时代相适应，发挥其救世度人的作用，符合佛教慈悲救世的大乘菩萨精神。

## 四：太虚“人生佛教”和印顺“人间佛教”的相异点

太虚和印顺思想有别的地方，直接和他们如何理解佛法教义和精神有关，间接和他们各自生长的年代和背景有关。

（一）印顺在〈契理契机的人间佛教〉<sup>33</sup>一文中说，他宣扬“人间佛教”，是受了太虚的影响，但是他们的思想有些不同：

- 1、太虚是“依着人乘正行，先修成完善的人格……乃可进趣大乘”。对于印顺来说，这样的原则，在没有经说的依据支持下，不易为一般信徒所接受。反而让人以为称名念佛，是末法时期的唯一法门。所以印顺决定从佛教思想的演化中，探求人间佛教的依据。
- 2、大虚的思想，核心还是中国佛教传统的。中国大乘佛教的思想，依印度佛教思想史来看，是属于“后期大乘”的。这一思想的特色就是：
  - 1、“理论的特色是至圆”；
  - 2、“方法的特色是至简”；
  - 3、“修证的特色是至顿”。

对于印顺来说，大乘佛教的圆融的特色是它的致命殇。因为太虚“人生佛教”的思想圆融的特质，导致其真正的思想被人忽略了。实行“人生佛教”思想的人，有的并不了解“人生佛教”思想的理念，印顺要把人菩萨行发挥出来，让人知道，人菩萨行是佛法不共世间的特性。

从以上我们可以看出，印顺提出“人间佛教”是因为，他想把太虚所说的，说的清楚一点，以避免太虚的思想受人误会。

（二）在〈〈台湾当代净土思想的新动向〉读后〉<sup>34</sup>一文，印顺认为，他的“人间佛教”思想和太虚的“人生佛教”思想有几个不同点：

- 1、太虚的伟大是峰峦万状，而印顺自己只能是孤峰独拔；
- 2、太虚长于融贯，对有些问题“点到为止”，不要说得太清楚，而印顺却偏于辨异，总觉得还是说得明白些好（见上一段的解释）。

<sup>32</sup> 印顺，〈人间佛教绪言〉，《佛在人间》第18页。

<sup>33</sup> 印顺，〈契理契机的人间佛教〉，《华雨集》第四册，第44页。

<sup>34</sup> 印顺，〈〈台湾当代净土思想的新动向〉读后〉，《华雨集》第五册，第101页。

- 3、太虚说“人生佛教”，一般专重死与鬼，特提示人生佛教以为对治，而印顺说“人间佛教”，佛法以人为本，也不应天化，神化，不是鬼教，不是（天）神教，非鬼化非神化的人间佛教，才能阐明佛法的真意义；关于这一点，印顺解释说，他自认是属于“智增上”行人<sup>35</sup>。而对印顺来说，佛法主张信智合一。“佛法中的信仰是透过考察和分别，了解到信仰的对象，具有真确（实）性，功（德）性和功用（能）性，才不是迷信。佛法中的信仰以理智为基础；从理智出发而加强信心，从智慧体认而陶冶的信仰，理解愈深切则信心愈坚强”<sup>36</sup>，这样才是正确的信仰。

至于如何考察和分别，印顺说他受到日本学者的启发，从历史的角度去考察佛教的起源和流传，从而得出佛教的本意是以人为本的。佛教里有关神，菩萨等的故事，是佛教为了教育信众而做出的方便，纯正的佛教是不提倡有关死，鬼和神的<sup>37</sup>。太虚和印顺都认同菩萨道是佛法正道，菩萨行是人间正行；菩萨道精神是人生佛教和人间佛教共有的理念。要成佛，就得从学菩萨开始，渐进的学习。

（三） 治学方法的不同也造成太虚和印顺思想上另一个差别。印顺意识到他的三系说和太虚的三宗说是不同的。在〈无诤之辨〉一文中，印顺提出他和太虚思想的分歧点有两点就是空常孰先和空常孰优两点。

太虚认为“马鸣，龙树，无著之佛陀倾向同，一、随和小而潜奠大本，二、破小有而明空契中，三、对有，空而唯识显中。虽分三流，相成而不相破。龙树，世亲同释华严十地，安慧释龙树中论，护法亦释提婆百论，此原议所谓一贯大乘，亦即印度传入中华之精粹；而冀不以“独尊龙树”，乃前没马鸣而后摈无著，揉成支离破碎也。”<sup>38</sup>

印顺则是通过佛教的传播史，得出的结果是，太虚合空常为一期，而又先真常而后性空的说法，和印度多种三时教说，显然不合<sup>39</sup>。

#### （四） 印顺思想有别于太虚思想之我见

在〈〈台湾当代净土思想的新动向〉读后〉一文中，印顺总结最后一个和太虚思想不一样的原因是：“我与大师间的不同，除个性不同外，也许我生长的年代迟些；遵循大师的研究方针，世界性（佛教）的倾向更多一些。我虽‘不为民族情感所拘蔽’，而对流行于印度或中国的‘怪力乱神’，‘索隐行怪’的佛教，与大师同样的不会尊重他们，也许我还是个真正的中国人。”<sup>40</sup>

太虚提出“人生佛教”的其中一个原因，是回应梁漱溟对佛教的批评。太虚在〈论梁漱溟东西文化及其哲学〉一文，批评梁漱溟的思想。太虚认为近代学佛的人，对佛法

<sup>35</sup> 印顺在〈平凡的一生〉一文，自我剖析：“感性弱而智性强，记忆性弱而悟性强；执行力弱而理解力强，依佛法来说，我是‘智增上’”。印顺，《平凡的一生（重订本）》，第227页。

<sup>36</sup> 印顺，《佛学的两大特色》，《佛法是救世之光》，第158页。

<sup>37</sup> 印顺说：“二十六年上学期，住在武昌佛学院。读到了日本高楠顺次郎与木村泰贤合编的《印度哲学宗教史》；木村泰贤著的《原始佛教思想论》；还有墨禅所译的，结城令闻所著的，关于心意识的唯识思想史（书名已记不清，译本也因战乱而没有出版）。这几部书，使我探求佛法的方法，有了新的启发。对于历史，地理，考证，我没有下过功夫，却有兴趣阅读。从现实世间的一定时空中，去理解佛法的本源与流变，渐成为我探求佛法的方针”。印顺，《游心法海六十年》，《华雨集》第五册，第9页。

<sup>38</sup> 太虚，〈再议〈印度之佛教〉〉，《太虚大师全书》第四十九册，第20页。

<sup>39</sup> 印顺，〈敬答〈议印度佛教史〉〉，《无诤之辨》，第119-123页。

<sup>40</sup> 印顺，〈〈台湾当代净土思想的新动向〉读后〉，《华雨集》第五册，第102页。



的认识不正确，有的迷信，有的厌世。但是这样的现实情况下，却是最宜宣扬佛法的时代。

在太虚的了解里，中国佛教本来就有“此时、此地、此人”的人间关怀，只是在实践上没有明显的表现出来。所以太虚说，中国的佛教徒“说大乘教，修小乘行”<sup>41</sup>。于是太虚说，我们只要实践中国大乘佛教里“菩萨道”思想，拚弃其中有关“鬼”和“死亡”的内容，大乘佛教和现代生活就接轨了。太虚在《怎样来建设人间佛教》一文中明确指出：“人间佛教，是表明并非教人离开人类去做神做鬼，或皆出家到寺院山林里去做和尚的佛教，乃是以佛教的道理来改良社会，使人类进步，把世界改善的佛教。”<sup>42</sup>

印顺对梁漱溟的批评的反应和太虚的不一样。梁漱溟对佛教的批评是印顺的当头棒喝。印顺认同梁漱溟的看法，他承认佛教要生存，就必须和现实人生有关。但是，印顺不可能在中国大乘佛教里寻找可以证明佛教有“此时、此地、此人”的人间关怀这一点的论据。为依他的看法，中国传统佛教已经是受到“神”，鬼”和“死”的影响，不是纯正的佛教。于是印顺在印度经典里找到有关佛教关怀世间的证据。

一九四零年，印顺在写《唯识学探源》时，读到《增一阿含经》中的一句话：“诸佛皆出人间，终不在天上成佛也”，顿时领悟到：佛陀不是天神，天使，是在人间修行成佛的；也只有生在人间，才能受持佛法，体悟真理，而得正觉的自在解脱。<sup>43</sup>“佛出人间”，佛的教化，是现实人间自觉觉他的大道，所以佛法是“人间佛教”，而不应该趋于鬼神化。在印顺看来，《增一阿含经》里的这一句话，完全消解梁漱溟对佛教的质疑。印顺把《阿含经》里这句话，解读成因为佛是即人而成的，所以佛教是重视人间的，佛教的目的就是将人间建设成佛国净土，这就是佛教和度脱众生苦难的基点关系。

有了这个概念，印顺就开始了他“人间佛教”思想的理论架构，并从《阿含经》等原始经典，提出的证据，证明“以人为本”是佛教的“根本立场”。如：佛是在人间成佛的<sup>44</sup>。所谓的“本位”，有好几种解释，即“枝末”或“根本”的意思<sup>45</sup>，或佛法的根本立场<sup>46</sup>，以佛教是人类为中心的<sup>47</sup>，佛陀说法的对象是人类<sup>48</sup>等等。

太虚对于印顺提出的“证据”不是很认同，所以，太虚批评印顺的《印度之佛教》是说，诸佛皆出人间，终不在天上成佛，是取《阿含经》的片言，有将佛法割离于有情界，孤取人间为本之趋向，则落人本之狭隘<sup>49</sup>。太虚认为印顺的“人间佛教”理论，有两个问题：

- 1、 太过强调人本是近代人面对问题的病根，不唯神，宗教信仰不高超；不唯物，自然科学不发达<sup>50</sup>。

<sup>41</sup> 太虚，〈从巴利语系佛教说到今菩萨行〉，《太虚大师全书》第三十五册，第10页。

<sup>42</sup> 太虚，〈怎样来建设人间佛教〉，《太虚大师全书》第四十七册，第122页。

<sup>43</sup> 印顺，《印度之佛教—自序》，第2页。

<sup>44</sup> 印顺，《华雨香云》，第332页：“佛是在人间成佛，施設教化，实以人类为本位的。”

<sup>45</sup> 印顺，《摄大乘论讲记》，第533页：“但摄末归本，从佛的本位上说，这一切都是法身的大用”。

<sup>46</sup> 印顺，《佛法概论》，第191页：“这是彻底的自我革命，洗尽私欲倒见，才能从自我——我，我家，我族，我国等本位中解放出来，转移为人类——有情，法界本位的。从有漏到无漏，从世间到出世，从凡情到圣觉。”又说“所以佛法的探究，可说是对生命之流的一种观察与体验，故佛法是宗教，也可说是彻底的生命哲学。假使忽略了有情本位的立场，便是破坏佛法的根本立场。”印顺，《性空学探源》，第28页。

<sup>47</sup> 印顺，《佛在人间》，第95页：“人类的德行，还着重于人类——从前是家庭本位的，国家本位的，近来倾向于人类本位的。”

<sup>48</sup> 印顺，《药师经讲记》，第35-36页：“佛法是以人为中心的，天龙鬼神仅处于旁听和护法的地位，不能反宾为主，专门着重敬奉天龙鬼神，倒把人本的佛法忽视了。”

<sup>49</sup> 太虚，〈再议〈印度之佛教〉〉，《太虚大师全书》第四十九册，第18页。

<sup>50</sup> 同上。

- 2、 太过注重人本，会让但求现实人间乐得人认为佛法不如儒道之切要，如：梁漱溟，熊子真，马一浮，冯有兰等；但求未来天上乐得人就会认为佛法不如基督教，回教简捷；最后佛法就会被淘汰<sup>51</sup>。

这里可以看出太虚和印顺思想上不同的重点是，太虚不认同印顺太重人本的看法。

太虚早年受丛林教育，并生活在西方革命思想在中国活跃的时代<sup>52</sup>，接受了西方革命思想的影响，所以认为在当时，最流行的世界文化是：现实的人生化，证据的科学化和组织的群众化<sup>53</sup>。“现实的人生化”就是他的“人生佛教”的思想来源。太虚认为大乘佛教本来就是重人本的。当时社会注重的是“科学化”的思想，或叫“证据的科学化”。在太虚看来，只要把迷信的部分除去，佛教就符合社会“科学化”的要求。若是太过重人本，反而使佛教的发展受到限制，甚至会导致佛教的灭亡。

印顺对佛教的认识，是从自我摸索开始的。再加上印顺的时代，日本对佛教的研究传入中国，启发了印顺。所以，在印顺在佛教的抉择方面和太虚的不太一样。

印顺虽然出生的年代较太虚迟些，但是基本上，他们都生活在动乱的时代。他们两者对当时的社会都有人文的关怀，所以都希望通过佛教的宣传发展对社会有所贡献。至于太虚的确思想比较圆融，也许是因为他们两者的出发点不一样吧。太虚希望结合当时中国的佛教界的力量，恢复中国佛教的生机，而印顺则希望通过佛教教义的传播，发展真正的佛教。

## 五：结论

太虚是第一个系统化地提出“佛教需要与时俱进”这个概念的人，对中国佛教的现代化的贡献是有目共睹的。他的佛教革命虽然没有成功，却启发了新一代的思想，其影响是深远的。印顺在受到太虚的革命思想启发后，发挥自己的见解，对于佛教的教理，给予他个人的见解。

太虚在阐述他的“人生佛教”理念时，没有提到中国传统佛教思想是否在文献上正统的问题。对于太虚来说，中国大乘佛教是佛教，是不容质疑的事实。他只是把中国传统佛教继续发展下去。

相比之下，印顺在立论的时候，则对纯粹文献上是否正统这个问题比较执着。他一方面认为，在全释佛教教义时，对佛陀思想的“原意”，应当有比较宽容的理解，只要是没有偏离佛教的根本大义，就是佛教。在另一方面，却又认为，唯识宗等中国传统大乘佛教不可以作为“人间佛教”理念的根本，因为这些中国传统佛教是已经“变化”了的佛教。“人间佛教”理念的基础应该建立在原始佛教和初期大乘佛教里去寻找。

太虚提出“人生佛教”理念的其中一个原因，就是要回应儒家对佛教的批评。所以，当太虚发现印顺的“人间佛教”思想是单一人本为的，太虚就认为印顺的“人间佛教”思想把中国佛教狭隘化，而且太过强调人本思想，而会令佛教被淘汰<sup>54</sup>。其实，佛教“以人为本”的倾向是早有存在的。早在佛教从印度传入中国以后，为了适应中国的社会需要，佛教就已经做出了调整。佛教受到中国以儒家为代表的传统思想影响，重入

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<sup>51</sup> 同上。

<sup>52</sup> 当时活跃的革命家，而又对太虚有影响的有“维新派”人物，如康有为、谭嗣同、梁启超等人，国民革命党人，如孙中山、章太炎、吴稚晖、张继等人，苏俄社会改革者，如克鲁泡特金、托尔斯泰等人。

<sup>53</sup> 太虚，〈人生佛学的说明〉，《太虚大师全书》第五册，第57页。

<sup>54</sup> 太虚，〈再议〈印度之佛教〉〉，《太虚大师全书》第四十九册，第20页。

世精神，关注现实的品格，突出了“人”的问题，是佛教自身在中国社会条件下的新发展，并不是因为“人间佛教”佛教的提出。

总的来说，人生佛教和人间佛教都是当时佛教界的思想前卫的人，对于当时国家面对的危机，社会对佛教的压力，外来文化的冲击等等不利于佛教发展的条件，反省后提出的理念。人生佛教和人间佛教的理念未必完全是佛陀当时所提出的理念，但是在原则上是契合佛教的精神的。太虚和印顺的思想不完全一样是因为，他们对佛教有各自的抉择，此中没有对或错的看法。有的是他们对人间的关怀和佛教期望。

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