eJOURNAL OF BUDDHIST RESEARCH STUDIES

VOLUME 12, 2025

Than Hsiang Buddhist Research Centre
Penang, Malaysia
http://research.thanhsiang.org/

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A Comparative Study of Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism

By Chan York Lan

Assoc. Professor Mattia Salvini (Supervisor)

Abstract

This is a comparative study of Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism; two of the most widely practiced branches of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan. There are many similarities and differences between Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism. This comparative study, however, will focus on the similarities and differences in their teachings and practices.

In similarities, the study found that both Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism recognize the Larger Sukhāvativyūha Śūtra, the Smaller Sukhāvativyūha Śūtra and the Amitāyurdhyāna Śūtra as the central Buddhist scriptures. Likewise, both are based on Primal Vow and are influenced by the idea of Mappō. In addition, both Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism view chanting the nembutsu as the highest of all religious practices; and they emphasize that nembutsu is not used to pray for good health, wealth, and things like that. Finally, both these branches of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism are against the traditional Shinto's practice of kami worshipping.

In differences, the study found that while Jōdo Shū teaches complete rebirth in the Pure Land at the end of physical life by practicing the nembutsu; Jōdo Shinshū teaches nembutsu as an act that expresses gratitude to Amitābha Buddha. In Jōdo Shū, the action of chanting itself is an expression of faith. Hence, voice chanting is encouraged, and counting the number of repetitions is important. In Jōdo Shinshū, however, repetitive chanting is not the core practice, and all it takes is just one recitation with absolute faith. In addition, while Jōdo Shū maintains a professional, monastic priesthood; Jōdo Shinshū follows a non-monastic tradition. In this manner, Jōdo Shinshū becomes a path of deep self-reflection and introspection through seeing and listening in daily laity life. Finally, while Guan Yin and Jizo (Ksitigarbha) are represented in Jōdo Shū; only Amitābha Buddha is recognized in Jōdo Shinshū.

Introduction

Japanese Buddhism

Since its arrival in Japan, Buddhism has diversified into several major schools. Some of the most influential include Zen, Pure Land, Nichiren and Shingon. Each of these schools has its unique practices.

For instance, Zen Buddhism emphasizes meditation practice, direct insight into one's own Buddha-nature, and the personal expression of this insight in daily life. Some Zen schools de-emphasize doctrinal study, favoring direct understanding through zazen and interaction with a master. However, most Zen schools still promote traditional Buddhist practices like chanting, precepts, and rituals.

The Pure Land tradition is primarily focused on achieving rebirth in Amitābha Buddha's Pure Land, a superior place to spiritually train for full Buddhahood. In this Pure Land, one can meet Amitābha Buddha and study under him without any distractions of our world. Since it is much easier to attain enlightenment in Amitābha Buddha's Pure Land, many Buddhists strive to be reborn there.

Nichiren Buddhism generally sources its basic doctrine from the Lotus Śūtra, claiming that all sentient beings possess an internal Buddha-nature capable of attaining full Buddhahood in this current life. There are three essential aspects to Nichiren Buddhism: (1) The faith in Nichiren's Gohonzon; (2) The chanting of Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo, and (3) The study of Nichiren's scriptural writings.

The Shingon school also stresses that one is able to attain Buddhahood in this very life through its practices, especially with the use of mudra, mantra and mandala. The school also introduces hongaku, an influential doctrine that all beings are originally enlightened.
These different schools reflect the rich diversity of Japanese Buddhism, which inspire and guide the spiritual lives of countless of its people, throughout history and into the present day.

Japanese Pure Land Buddhism

Pure Land Buddhism is a branch of Mahāyāna Buddhism that originated in China during the 4th century. This branch of Buddhism was introduced to Japan in the 8th century, during the Nara period, by the monk Gembō. He went to China with the mission led by Kibi no Makibi in 717. When he returned to Japan in 735, he brought with him some 5000 Buddhist texts and objects such as statues, paintings, and accessories.[1]

During the Kamakura period in the 12th century, Pure Land Buddhism experienced an increase in popularity. Hōnen, the most prominent Pure Land master of this time, advocated practice of the nembutsu, invoking or chanting the name of Amitābha Buddha. This practice became the cornerstone of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan. Although Hōnen's initiatives inspired an independent Pure Land movement, it also provoked a harsh reaction from established temples and monasteries, resulting in his banishment from Kyoto for four years.[2] The popularity of Pure Land Buddhism continued to grow during the Muromachi period in the 14th century. The True Pure Land tradition established itself in this period as the most widely based school of Japanese Buddhism. True Pure Land followers were united under the leadership of the powerful monk Shinran. His Pure Land teaching is an inclusive, humane faith. It is non-authoritarian, non-dogmatic, egalitarian, non-superstitious religious faith.[3]

During the Edo period in the 17th century, with the support of the Tokugawa Shogunate, Buddhist scholasticism continued to grow, and the major Buddhist schools established new systems of scholastic study in their schools' seminaries. Examples include the 18 Jōdo school danrin in Kantō, which were patronized by the Tokugawa family. The True Pure Land school established an extensive seminary system which constituted what eventually become Ryūkoku University.[4]

Throughout history, Pure Land Buddhism has undergone many changes and adaptations. From the early days of Hōnen and Shinran to the present day, the teachings have

[1] Louis Frédérick. *Japan Encyclopedia.* Translated by Käthe Roth. (Harvard University Press, 2002), 235.
[2] James C. Dobbins. Encyclopedia of Buddhism. "Kamakura Buddhism, Japan." Last modified 2019. https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/kamakura-buddhism-japan.
[3] *The Essential Shinran – A Buddhist Path of True Entrusting.* Compiled and edited by Alfred Bloom. Foreword by Ruben L. F. Habito. (World Wisdom, 2007), 7.
[4] William E. Deal, and Brian Ruppert. *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism.* (John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 199-201.

evolved to meet the needs of the people. Today, Pure Land Buddhism remains one of the most popular Buddhist branches in Japan. Its teachings continue to influence the Japanese people, who value the concept of rebirth in the Pure Land and the attainment of enlightenment through faith in Amitābha Buddha.

Jōdo Shū Buddhism and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism

Jōdo Shū Buddhism

Jōdo Shū is a branch of Pure Land Buddhism derived from the teachings of the prominent Japanese monk Hōnen. It was established in 1175, and today it is one of the most widely practiced branch of Buddhism in Japan, along with Jōdo Shinshū.

Hōnen (1133-1212) was born in Mimasaka, and at the age of 12 became a trainee monk at Mt. Hiei. During this time, he studied the Buddhist canon extensively and gained a reputation as an excellent scholar. According to biographers, one day he came across Genshin's *Ojoyoshu*, which aroused his interest in Pure Land Buddhism. As a result of this revelation, Hōnen left Mt. Hiei and moved to Hirodani in Nishiyama and later to Otani on Higashiyama mountain east of Kyoto. He spent the rest of his life there, except for a period between 1207 and 1211 when he was exiled to Shikoku. Hōnen had many disciples but the most influential was Shinran who inspired the formation of the separate Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism. Hōnen was said to recite the nembutsu thousands of times a day in his later years. In fact, he died whilst reciting the nembutsu.

Hōnen is strongly influenced by the idea of Mappō (Age of Dharma Decline). The concept of Mappō is that over time society becomes so disrupted that people can no longer effectively put the teachings of the Buddha into practice. Signs of Mappō include warfare, natural disasters and corruption of the sangha.

Japan, near the end of the Heian period, became heavily involved in political schemes, and some monks were seen flaunting wealth and power. Also, warfare broke out between competing samurai clans, while people suffered from earthquakes and series of famines. In this way, the teaching of Mappō became not just a theory but a reality. All these misfortunes caused the people to believe in the Buddhist prediction of Mappō stated in the śūtras. As such,

their main concern was how they could be liberated from such a devastated state. Hōnen's teaching provided the answer.[5]

Hōnen, through Jōdo Shū teachings, sought to provide people a simple Buddhist practice in a degenerate age, that anybody can use toward enlightenment – devotion to Amitābha Buddha as expressed in the repetition of the nembutsu. Through Amitābha Buddha's compassion, all sentient beings may be reborn in his Pure Land where they can pursue enlightenment more readily.

Hōnen believed that if a teaching is true, is should be the way for everyone to be liberated into the Buddha's state. When the teaching is only for the rich to attain enlightenment, it is not true Buddhism. When it is only for the able, it is not authentic either.[6]

In Jōdo Shū, repetition of the nembutsu, which derives from the Primal Vow of Amitābha Buddha, is the most fundamental practice. In addition to this, practitioners are encouraged to engage in auxiliary practices, such as observing the Five Precepts, meditation, the chanting of śūtras and other good conduct. There is no strict rule on this however, as Jōdo Shū stresses that the compassion of Amitābha Buddha is extended to all beings who recite the nembutsu, so how one observes auxiliary practices is left to the individual to decide.

In Hōnen own words[7]: *The Pure Land teaching is superior to other teachings; the practice of nembutsu is superior to other practices. Why? Because it is suitable for all people, whatever their moral or intellectual capacities. As for other kinds of practice – for instance the meditation on noumenon, the arousing of bodhichitta, the reading aloud of Mahāyāna śūtras, the recitation of mantra, the cultivation of tranquility and insight – all these are, to be sure, the genuine teachings of the Buddha, all are truly ways to liberate oneself from birth-and-death and realize nirvana. However, because the dharma is declining in our ear, none of us can actually cultivate these methods, for we lack the capacity to do so. As the age of the end of dharma draws near, human beings will have a lifespan of only ten years! Also, any of*

[5] Sho-on Hattori. *A Raft from the Other Shore – Hōnen and the Way of Pure Land Buddhism*. Revised and edited by Jonathan Watts and Yoshiharu Tomatsu. (Jodo Shu Press, 2000), 19.
[6] *A Raft from the Other Shore – Hōnen and the Way of Pure Land Buddhism*. Revised and edited by Jonathan Watts and Yoshiharu Tomatsu. (Jodo Shu Press, 2000), 21.
[7] Sho-on Hattori. *Sixty Selections from the Sayings and Writings of Hōnen Shonin.* Translated by Dwight R. Nakamura. Edited by Richard Kollmar. (Honolulu/San Francisco: Pure Land Institute, 1994). Chapter 45.

us might be carrying the stain of the ten misdeeds and the five deadly sins. For people in such a condition as these, nembutsu is the only possible way of salvation. Those who recite the name, whether man or woman, young or old, regardless of circumstances or capacity, all will be saved by the compassion of Amida Buddha's great vow of nembutsu. It is for this reason that I insist upon the superiority of nembutsu to all other dharmas. No other practice can bear comparison to it.

Again in Hōnen own words[8]: *The most important thing for cultivators of nembutsu to bear in mind, if they wish to be born into the Pure Land, is this: Let your thoughts dwell on life after death; arouse the fervent desire to be born in the Western Pure Land; and believe wholeheartedly that Amida Buddha, together with a host of beings, will come to welcome you at the moment of death. This understanding alone is important. For those who grasp the importance of life after death and single-mindedly recite the nembutsu, nothing else is necessary.*

The Larger Sukhāvativyūha Śūtra is the central Buddhist scripture for Jōdo Shū Buddhism, and the foundation of the belief in the Primal Vow of Amitābha Buddha. In addition to this, the Smaller Sukhāvativyūha Śūtra and the Amitāyurdhyāna Śūtra are important to the Jōdo-shū school.

Jōdo Shū, like other Buddhist schools, maintains a professional, monastic priesthood, which help to lead the congregation, and also maintain well-known temples such as Chion-in. The head of the Jōdo Shū school is called the Monshu in Japanese, and lives at the head temple of Chion-in, Kyoto, Japan.

Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism

Jōdo Shinshū, also known as True Pure Land Buddhism, is the most widely practiced branch of Buddhism in Japan. It was founded by the powerful Japanese monk Shinran. Shinran (1173-1262) was a student of Hōnen. He was born at the close of the Heian period, when political power was passing from the imperial court into the hands of warrior clans. It was during this era when the old order was crumbling. Confronting the religious dominance

[8] *Sixty Selections from the Sayings and Writings of Hōnen Shonin.* Translated by Dwight R. Nakamura. Edited by Richard Kollmar. (Honolulu/San Francisco: Pure Land Institute, 1994). Chapter 24.

of his time, Shinran re-interpreted Pure Land teaching as the supreme expression and representation of the truth of Buddhism.

Shinran's thought was also strongly influenced by the doctrine of Mappō, which claims humanity's ability to listen and practice the Buddhist teachings deteriorates over time and loses effectiveness in bringing individual practitioners closer to Buddhahood. Shinran, like his mentor Hōnen, saw the age he was living in as being a degenerate one where beings cannot hope to be able to free themselves from the cycle of birth and death through their own power, or jiriki. For both Hōnen and Shinran, all conscious efforts towards achieving enlightenment and realizing the bodhisattva ideal were created in selfish ignorance. Humans of this age were so deeply rooted in karmic evil that they were incapable of developing a truly selfless compassion that was necessary to become a bodhisattva.

Due to his awareness of human limitations, Shinran supported reliance on tariki, or other power, the power of Amitābha Buddha which manifest in his Primal Vow in order to attain liberation. Jōdo Shinshū can therefore be understood as a practiceless practice for there are no specific acts to be performed such as there are in the path of sages. Hereby, Jōdo Shinshū is considered the "Easy Path" because one is not compelled to perform many difficult practices in order to attain higher mental states.

In Shinran own words[9]: *This, then, is the true teaching easy to practice for small, foolish beings; it is the straight way easy to traverse for the dull and ignorant. Among all teachings the Great Sage preached in his lifetime, none surpasses this ocean of virtues. Let the one who seeks to abandon the defiled and aspire for the pure; who is confused in practice and vacillating in faith; whose mind is dark and whose understanding deficient; whose evils are heavy and whose karmic obstructions manifold – let such persons embrace above all the Amida Buddha's exhortations, take refuge without fail in the most excellent direct path, devote themselves solely to this practice, and revere only this shinjin.*

[9] Sho-on Hattori. *The Collected Works of Shinran.* "The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way." Last modified 1997. https://shinranworks.com/.

Again in Shinran own words[1010]: *When the thought is awakened in your heart to say the nembutsu, believing that your rebirth in the Pure Land is attained through the inconceivable power of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow, you come to share in his grace which embraces all beings forsaking none. You should know that Amida Buddha's Vow makes no discrimination as regards the person, old or young, good or bad, only requiring that one has faith. The reason is that the original vow is for the salvation of all sentient beings heavily burdened with all sorts of sins and furiously burning with passions. Consequently, in believing this Primal Vow, deeds of morality are not required, because there are no deeds of morality that can surpass the nembutsu; nor should one be afraid of evils because there are no evils powerful enough to obstruct the way of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow.*

Jōdo Shinshū is not the first school of Buddhism to practice the nembutsu but it is interpreted in a new way according to Shinran. The nembutsu becomes understood as an act that expresses gratitude to Amitābha Buddha. Furthermore, it is evoked in the practitioner through the power of Amitābha Buddha's unobstructed compassion. Thus, the recitation of the Name has no merit attached to it. It is neither a good deed nor a practice as stated in the Tannishō.[1111] It is simply an affirmation of one's gratitude.

Indeed, given that the nembutsu is the Name, when one utters the Name, that is Amitābha Buddha calling to the devotee. This is the essence of the Name-that-calls.

This is in contrast to the related Jōdo Shū, which promotes a combination of repetition of the nembutsu and devotion to Amitābha Buddha as a means to be rebirth in his Pure Land. It also contrasts with other Buddhist schools in China and Japan, where nembutsu recitation is part of a more elaborate ritual.

In addition, Jōdo Shinshū follows a non-monastic tradition. Shinran was one of the first monks in the Japanese Buddhist tradition to marry and raise a family, and he called himself neither monk nor lay person. Shinran lived as a monk for 20 years until he left the monastic tradition to follow his teacher, Hōnen. Shinran married a woman named Eshinni,

[10] Sho-on Hattori. *The Tannisho – Tract on Deploring the Heterodoxies.* Translated by T. Imadate. (Eastern Buddhist Society, 1928), 2.
[11] Alfred Bloom, "Introduction to Jōdo Shinshū," Pacific World Journal, New Series Number 5: 38.

and together they raised six children. As Jōdo Shinshū became popular, all of Japanese Buddhism changed, and today many traditions of Buddhism have married followers.

When Jōdo Shinshū focuses on a lay-oriented, non-monastic approach to Buddhism; it is both easier and more difficult at the same time. Since there are no monastic precepts to follow, nor tedious meditational practices to do, practitioners everyday life becomes their practice center. They must struggle with work, relationships, child-rearing, caring for elderly parents, and the countless experiences and responsibilities of their lives.

In this manner, Jōdo Shinshū is a path of deep self-reflection and introspection through seeing and listening. By seeing and listening to the teachings in their everyday life, practitioners are led to a life of gratitude and appreciation for all that sustains their life, nurtures their life, and enhances their life. In short, the Jōdo Shinshū path is a life of seeing, listening, reciting, and coming to see Amitābha Buddha as a deep and profound truth, and not just a word or recitation. In this path, rather than striving to attain enlightenment, practitioners see and listen to find themselves within enlightenment, within the heart of Amitābha Buddha, which is wisdom and compassion.

In summary, there are three points which give the essence of Jōdo Shinshū's teaching[12][12]:

1. Shinjin shōin – The true cause of rebirth is faith.
2. Heizei gōjō – Faith and assurance are attained in this life.
3. Hōon kansha – The essence of life and faith are gratitude.

Today Jōdo Shinshū is considered the most widely practiced branch of Buddhism in Japan, whereby it insists on exclusive devotion to Amitābha Buddha, and the other Buddhist deities are not worshipped.

[12] Alfred Bloom. "*Introduction to Jōdo Shinshū*," Pacific World Journal, New Series Number 5: 39.

Comparative Study

Similarities Between Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism

There are many similarities between Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism. In this comparative study, however, we will focus on the similarities in their teachings and practices. Firstly, both Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism recognize the three śūtras as their central Buddhist scriptures; Larger Sukhāvativyūha Śūtra, Smaller Sukhāvativyūha Śūtra and the Amitāyurdhyāna Śūtra. These three śūtras contain mytho-poetic descriptions, in highly imagery language of the Indian mind, concerning the Amitābha Buddha, his 48 Vows, the Pure Land which he has established by fulfilling these, and his accompanying bodhisattvas, divine beings, and reborn humans.

Secondly, both Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism are based on the Primal Vow. In Chinese and Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, the Primal Vow is the 18th vow that is part of a series of 48 vows that Amitābha Buddha made in the Larger Sukhāvativyūha Śūtra. In this vow, Amitābha Buddha promises to deliver all sentient beings out of saṃsāra. He endows his gifts unconditionally. As long as beings believe in and accept his deliverance, and recite his name, they will receive the benefit of rebirth in his Pure Land.

Thirdly, both Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism are influenced by the idea of Mappō (Age of Dharma Decline). The Japanese term “Mappō” denotes the third and also the final period in the history of the Buddha's dharma as revealed in certain texts that have a significant impact on the evolution of East Asian Buddhism, particularly the Pure Land tradition. The three-stage periodization of which it is a part includes the period of the True Dharma (Shōbō); the period of the Counterfeit Dharma (Zōbō); and the period of Final Dharma (Mappō).

Fourthly, both Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism view chanting the nembutsu as the highest of all religious practices. In addition to nembutsu, practitioners are encouraged to engage in auxiliary practices, such as observing the Five Precepts, meditation, the chanting of śūtras and other good conduct. There is no strict rule on this however, as both Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism stress that the compassion of Amitābha Buddha is extended to all beings who recite the nembutsu, so how one observes auxiliary practices is left to the individual to decide.

Fifthly, both Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism emphasize that nembutsu is not used to pray for good health, wealth, and things like that. Petitionary prayers generally do not work, and if we encourage too much petitionary prayer, then it makes it more difficult for us to relate to the teachings as a vehicle of enlightenment and liberation. Such prayers encourage attachment, which leads to greater suffering.

Finally, both Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism are against the traditional Shinto's practice of kami worshipping. Shinto is a polytheistic and animistic religion that revolves around supernatural entitles called the kami. The kami are believed to inhabit all things, including forces of nature and prominent landscape locations.

Differences Between Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism

There are many differences between Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism. Again, in this comparative study, we will focus on the differences in their teachings and practices.
The main difference between Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism is their interpretation of the purpose of the nembutsu. In this matter, Jōdo Shū teaching emphasizes complete rebirth in the Pure Land at the end of physical life by practicing the nembutsu. In Jōdo Shinshū, however, the nembutsu is interpreted in a new way according to Shinran. The nembutsu becomes understood as an act that expresses gratitude to Amitābha Buddha. Thus, the recitation of the Name has no merit attached to it.

Also, Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism have different manner in the chanting of Amitābha Buddha's name. In Jōdo Shū, the action of chanting itself is an expression of faith. Hence, voice chanting is encouraged, and counting the number of repetitions is important. In Jōdo Shinshū, on the other hand, repetitive chanting is not the core practice, and all it takes is just one recitation with absolute faith.

Another important difference between Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism is that while Jōdo Shū, like other Buddhist schools, maintains a professional, monastic priesthood, who help to lead the congregation, and also maintain well-known temples such as Chion-in; Jōdo Shinshū follows a non-monastic tradition. In this manner, Jōdo Shinshū becomes a path of deep self-reflection and introspection through seeing and listening in everyday life. In

other words, practitioners see and listen to find themselves within enlightenment, within the heart of Amitābha Buddha, which is wisdom and compassion.

Finally, while Guan Yin and Jizo (Ksitigarbha) are represented in Jōdo Shū Buddhism; only Amitābha Buddha is recognized in Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the similarities and differences between Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism can be summarized and visualized as below:

Jōdo Shū		**Jōdo Shinshū**
• Jōdo Shū teaches complete rebirth in the Pure Land at the end of physical life by practicing the nembutsu. • In Jōdo Shū, the action of chanting itself is an expression of faith. Hence, voice chanting is encouraged, and counting the number of repetitions is important. • Jōdo Shū maintains a professional, monastic priesthood. • Guan Yin and Jizo (Ksitigarbha) are represented in Jōdo Shū.	• Both recognize the Larger Sukhāvativyūha Śūtra, the Smaller Sukhāvativyūha Śūtra and the Amitāyurdhyāna Śūtra as the central Buddhist scriptures. • Both are based on Primal Vow. • Both are influenced by the idea of Mappō. • Both view chanting the nembutsu as the highest of all religious practices. • Both emphasize that nembutsu is not used to pray for good health, wealth, and things like that. • Both are against the traditional Shinto's practice of kami worshipping.	• Jōdo Shinshū teaches nembutsu as an act that expresses gratitude to Amitābha Buddha. • In Jōdo Shinshū, repetitive chanting is not the core practice, and all it takes is just one recitation with absolute faith. • Jōdo Shinshū follows a non-monastic tradition. In this manner, Jōdo Shinshū becomes a path of deep self-reflection and introspection through seeing and listening in daily laity life. • Only Amitābha Buddha is recognized in Jōdo Shinshū.

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The Six Perfections in the Writings of Lama Zopa Rinpoche

By Hiew Boon Thong

Assoc. Prof. Mattia Salvini (Supervisor)

Chapter One

Introduction

i. Definition

The term *Pāramitā* (Sanskrit), commonly translated as " perfection, " literally means " having reached the other shore." In Buddhist philosophy, this refers to the journey from the shore of suffering to the shore of enlightenment, symbolizing the transcendence of suffering and the attainment of Buddhahood.[13] The six perfections are considered essential practices for bodhisattvas – enlightened beings who have transcended selfish desires and egoic attachments in their pursuit of universal compassion and the liberation of all sentient beings.[14] As religious studies scholar Dale S. Wright [15] observes, *Mahāyāna* Buddhist texts describe the *pāramitā*s as " bases of training " for individuals seeking enlightenment. He argues that the Buddhist *pāramitā*s represent a set of ideals that guide ethical and spiritual self-cultivation, illustrating the Buddhist conception of the ideal character. In the *Mahāyāna* tradition, these perfections are fundamental in training the mind and spirit, guiding practitioners beyond conventional ego-driven existence.

Pāramitā is interpreted as ' transcendental action ', highlighting the need for practitioners to act in a manner free from self-centeredness. The six perfections represent a concerted effort to move beyond the ego and develop the qualities that lead to the ultimate liberation from suffering. They are so fundamental to *Mahāyāna* practice that the " Vehicle of the Perfections " is synonymous with *Mahāyāna* Buddhism itself. These perfections are often collectively referred to as the " *Pāramitā*s *of Buddhism*. " [16]

[13] Bhikkhu Sheng Yen, *The Six Pāramitās: Perfections of the Bodhisattva Path* (New York: Dharma Drum Publications, 2001).
[14] Lama Zopa Rinpoche, *The Six Perfections: The Practice of The Bodhisattvas* (Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2020).
[15] Wright, Dale. S., *The Six Perfections: Buddhism and the Cultivation of Character* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 4 – 9.
[16] Rinpoche Traleg Kyabgon, *The Essence of Buddhism: An Introduction to Its Philosophy and Practice* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2001), pp. 50 – 68.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche further elaborates that the six perfections are the actions of bodhisattvas who, having renounced ego and self-interest, are motivated solely by the welfare of others and the bodhisattvas' practice of these six perfections is integral to their path toward full enlightenment.

In *The Six Perfections*, Geshe Sonam Rinchen[17] strongly stated that the six perfections are cultivated by bodhisattvas with the sole intention of attaining Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings. They are called perfections because they purify the mind from disturbing emotions and delusions, ultimately leading to the complete realization of the nature of all phenomena.

Professor Andrey Terentyev further emphasizes that the practices of the six perfections are interdependent and no single perfection can be practiced in isolation. For example, when practicing giving, one must have pure morality, be patient when one has to bear any hardships, joyous perseverance for actions, meditative stabilization when one dedicates the merit, and wisdom with which one perceives that the giver, gift and recipient are like a magician's illusion.[18]

ii. Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

a. To study the six perfections from the Indic Buddhist texts
b. To examine the six perfections from the major treatises of the Gelug tradition.
c. To analyse Lama Zopa Rinpoche's presentation of the six perfections.
d. To provide conclusion on the six perfections from the above research study.

[17] Geshe Sonam Rinchen, *The Six Perfections*. Trans. Ruth Sonam (Boulder: Shambhala Publications, 1998).
[18] Professor Terentyev Andrey, *Unit 7: Practice of the Six Pāramitā*s (Penang: Than Hsiang Buddhist Research Center). pp. 1 – 9.

iii. Literature Review

For this research, the primary reference will be *The Six Perfections: The Practice of the Bodhisattvas* by Lama Zopa Rinpoche. This book has gained widespread acclaim for its clear and accessible approach to the practice of the six perfections. Lama Zopa, an esteemed teacher, draws from his deep experience and wisdom to provide profound yet practical insights into the bodhisattva path, making this text an essential resource for students and practitioners alike[19].

Additionally, early seminal works by Arya Nāgārjuna on the six perfections and Śāntideva's *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* will serve as foundational texts in understanding the philosophical underpinnings of the *pāramitās*. Nāgārjuna's works on emptiness and Śāntideva's teachings on compassion are crucial for a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of the perfections and their role in the bodhisattva path.[20]

Books by other renowned masters, including the Dalai Lama, Geshe Sonam Rinchen, Bhikshu Dharmamitra, and Khenpo Konchog Gyaltsen Rinpoche, will also be utilized to broaden the scope of the research. These authors offer additional perspectives and commentaries on the six perfections and their application in daily practice.

In addition, scholarly articles, journals, and reliable online resources will be referenced to gather further insights into the practice and application of the six perfections in contemporary Buddhist practice.

iv. Methodology

This research will begin with an in-depth study of the six perfections as articulated in both Indic Buddhist texts and key treatises from the Gelug tradition. The central focus will be on Lama Zopa Rinpoche's presentation of the six perfections in *The Six Perfections: The Practice of the Bodhisattvas*, with an analysis of the text's structure, sources, and distinctive features. This will involve a close reading of the chapters and commentaries, identifying the practical applications of each perfection and how they can be integrated into daily life.

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[19] Zopa Rinpoche, Lama. *The Six Perfections: The Practice of the Bodhisattvas*. Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archieve, 2011, p. 39.

[20] Nāgārjuna, Arya. *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. Translated by Jay L. Garfield, Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 118; Śāntideva. *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, translated by Vesna A. Wallace, Widsom Publications, 2009, p. 77.

Furthermore, the research will include comparative analysis, drawing on texts by other influential Buddhist masters to explore different interpretations and applications of the six perfections. The aim is to understand the broader context of these teachings and their role in the journey towards liberation and Buddhahood.

The research will also incorporate published journals, articles, and academic papers available on reputable websites, which provide current perspectives on the six perfections in both traditional and contemporary contexts. These additional resources will support the analysis and enrich the overall understanding of the practice and significance of the six perfections in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism.

Chapter Two

The six perfections in Indic Buddhist texts

i. The bodhisattva's conduct: the *pāramitā*s

In the *Cariyā Piṭaka* Commentary, the *pāramitās* are defined as virtues cultivated through compassion, guided by wisdom, and practiced without selfish intention or pride. The bodhisattva's actions are entirely selfless, motivated solely by boundless compassion for all beings. The bodhisattva's compassion is so vast and profound that, throughout countless lifetimes, they continually strive to alleviate suffering, elevate the poor and lowly, and offer aid to the needy.[21]

Although different Buddhist schools interpret the Buddha's actions in his past lives as a bodhisattva in varying ways, all agree that these actions embody the *pāramitās*.[22] The deeds of the Buddha, originally recorded in the *Jātakas* and *Avadānas*, became the foundational practices for all future bodhisattvas. In this sense, the *pāramitās* represent the causes and methods - rather than the results - of spiritual attainment.[23] While their number varies (four, six, eight, or ten), the *pāramitās* are universally recognized as essential to the Bodhisattva path, guiding the practitioner toward Buddhahood.[24]

[21] Bhikkhu Narada, *The Buddha and His Teachings* (Kuala Lumpur: Buddhist Missionary Society, 1998), pp. 577 – 611.
[22] Ci, Yuan, *The Bodhisattva Ideal In Selected Buddhist Scriptures (Its Theoretical and Practical Evolution)*. Available at https://ibc-elibrary.thanhsiang.org/node/1023
[23] Yuan, p. 60.
[24] Yuan, p. 62.

ii. The six *pāramitā*s in the *Āgamas*

The six *pāramitās* - *dāna* (generosity), *śīla* (morality), *kṣānti* (patience), *vīrya* (pereverance), *dhyāna* (concentration), and *prajñā* (wisdom) - appear in various early Buddhist texts such as the *Āgamas* and *Vinaya.* These six are consistent with the *Mahāvastu*, the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*, and many other *Mahāyāna* works. However, it is important to note that in the *Āgamas*, the *pāramitās* are not specifically linked to the bodhisattva's path. Instead, they are taught to lay practitioners as guidelines for virtuous living, aimed at achieving a favorable rebirth or progressing toward higher states of existence.[25]

The connection between the six *pāramitās* and the bodhisattva's path is explicitly introduced in the *Ekottarāgamasūtra*. In this text, the *Tathāgata* teaches the six *pāramitās* to Bodhisattvas who have generated the wish for enlightenment (*Bodhicitta*). These practices are presented as the means by which a bodhisattva develops the wisdom necessary to perceive the true nature of all phenomena. Thus, the *pāramitās* are not merely ethical principles but pathways to ultimate wisdom, revealing the nature of reality.[26]

The Six *Pāramitās* in Detail

***Dānapāramitā* (Perfection of Generosity):**

The *Ekottarāgamasūtra* emphasizes that the perfection of generosity involves giving without attachment - whether one's body, wealth, or loved ones. It is an act of selfless giving, dedicated not just to personal merit but to the enlightenment of all beings. The bodhisattva practices generosity joyfully and without expectation of reward, dedicating the merit of their actions to the benefit of all sentient beings.[27]

***Śīlapāramitā* (Perfection of Morality)**:

The perfection of morality is depicted in the *Āgamas* as being like a diamond: indestructible and pure. The *Ṣaṭpāramitāsaṃgraha* underscores the need for the bodhisattva to observe moral discipline strictly, avoiding all evil and safeguarding virtue. This practice is not merely about adherence to external rules, but about cultivating an inner state of integrity, ensuring that every action aligns with the bodhisattva's compassionate and enlightened intent.[28]

[25] Yuan, p. 145.
[26] Yuan, p. 145 – 146.
[27] Yuan, p. 146.
[28] Yuan, p. 147.

***Kṣāntipāramitā* (Perfection of Patience):**

The perfection of patience is crucial for overcoming the afflictive emotions of anger and hatred. The *Ekottarāgamasūtra* describes patience as vast as the ocean, containing all without increase or decrease.[29] The bodhisattva must learn to endure hardship with equanimity and compassion, understanding that suffering arises from ignorance. The *Ṣaṭpāramitāsaṃgraha* further explains that by cultivating patience, the bodhisattva diminishes the suffering of others and contributes to their liberation.[30]

***Vīryapāramitā* (Perfection of Perseverance):**

Perseverance (*vīrya*) is the force that drives the bodhisattva's practice, requiring perseverance in all actions - physical, verbal, and mental. The *Ekottarāgamasūtra* warns that failure to maintain effort leads to spiritual stagnation. The bodhisattva must exert energy continually, directing it towards the attainment of wisdom and the relief of suffering in others. The *Ṣaṭpāramitāsaṃgraha* stresses that this energy should be employed in mastering the profound doctrines, with the bodhisattva remaining tireless in their effort to help others attain enlightenment.[31]

***Dhyānapāramitā* (Perfection of Concentration):**

Concentration (*dhyāna*) is the means by which the bodhisattva cultivates concentration and inner peace. The *Ekottarāgamasūtra* describes the perfection of concentration as requiring unwavering focus, even in the face of external disturbances. The bodhisattva must practice concentration with steadfast commitment, developing a mind that is free from distraction. The *Ṣaṭpāramitāsaṃgraha* emphasizes that this perfection involves the abandonment of sensual desires and the hindrances to meditation, enabling the bodhisattva to enter deeper states of concentration and insight.[32]

[29] Yuan, pp. 147 – 148.
[30] Yuan, p. 148.
[31] Yuan, pp. 148 – 149.
[32] Yuan, p. 149.

***Prajñāpāramitā* (Perfection of Wisdom):**

Wisdom (*prajñā*) is the foundation of all bodhisattva practice. The *Ekottarāgamasūtra* teaches that wisdom allows the bodhisattva to perceive the true nature of reality, including the emptiness (*śūnyatā*) of all phenomena. This wisdom is not merely intellectual but a profound experiential realization that all things are impermanent and interconnected. The perfection of wisdom involves seeing through the illusion of inherent existence and realizing the interdependent nature of all phenomena.[33]

iii. The Integration of the Six *Pāramitās*: A Unified Path

Although the six *pāramitās* are described in various texts, they form a unified path toward enlightenment in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. The practice of these perfections is not merely an accumulation of virtues, but an integrated approach to transforming oneself for the benefit of all sentient beings. The bodhisattva cultivates each perfection - generosity, morality, patience, perseverance, concentration, and wisdom - simultaneously, allowing them to gradually purify their mind and heart while gaining insight into the true nature of existence.

In sum, the six *pāramitās* are essential for the bodhisattva's spiritual journey. They are the means by which the Bodhisattva transcends self-centeredness and cultivates the wisdom and compassion necessary for the liberation of all beings. Through the practice of these six perfections, the bodhisattva not only progresses toward Buddhahood but also helps all sentient beings to achieve enlightenment.

Chapter Three

The six perfections in major treatises from the Gelug tradition

i. The Gelug tradition

The Gelug (also known as Geluk), which literally means "virtuous," is the most recent of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism.[34] Founded by Je Tsongkhapa (1357–1419), a renowned Tibetan philosopher, tantric yogi, and lama, it was further developed by his key disciples, including Khedrup Je, Gyaltsap Je, and Gendün Drubpa.[35]

[33] Yuan, p. 151.
[34] Schaik, Sam van., *Tibet: A History* (Yale University Press, 2011), p. 129.
[35] Kay, David N., *Tibetan and Zen Buddhism in Britain: Transplantation, Development and Adaptation* (Routledge, 2007), p. 39.

The Gelug school is sometimes referred to as the New Kadam (bKa'-gdams gsar-pa) to emphasize its roots in the Kadam tradition of *Atisha* (circa 11th century). It is also called the Ganden school after the Ganden Monastery, the first monastic institution founded by Tsongkhapa. The Ganden Tripa (Ganden Throne Holder) is the formal leader of the tradition, while the Dalai Lama ("Ocean Teacher") is the most prominent figure globally.

Since the 16th century, the Gelug school has become the dominant school of Tibetan Buddhism, particularly after forming alliances with the Mongol Khans. This also led to its political prominence in Tibet and Mongolia. The Gelug school is also known as the Yellow Hat sect, due to the distinctive yellow hats worn by its practitioners.[36]

ii. Major Treatises of Gelug tradition

The Five Great Treatises form the backbone of Gelugpa education. They serve as the foundation for Buddhist philosophical studies and are integral to the practice of the six perfections, particularly in the areas of morality and wisdom.[37] The key philosophical texts within the Gelug tradition are collectively referred to as the Five Major Treatises:

- ***Prajñāpāramitā*** (Perfection of Wisdom): This central body of *Mahāyāna* scriptures discusses emptiness, the illusory nature of things, and the *Madhyamaka* school's understanding of reality.
- ***Madhyamikāvatāra***: Chandrakīrti's commentary on Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka philosophy, emphasizing the view of emptiness.[38]
- ***Pramāṇavartika***: Dharmakīrti's treatise on valid cognition, epistemology, and logic, offering the framework for understanding wisdom in the *Mahāyāna* context.
- ***Abhidharmakośa***: A text by Vasubandhu that outlines the phenomenological view of the world.
- ***Vinaya***: The monastic code that governs ethical discipline, particularly in the context of monastic ordination.

Each of these treatises deepens the practitioner's understanding of the six perfections and provides the intellectual foundation needed for their application in daily life. These

[36] Alexander Berzin, "The Origin of the Yellow Hat." studybuddhism.com/en/advanced-studies/history-culture/Buddhism-in-tibet/the-origin-of-the-yellow-hat

[37] "The Five Great Treatise, the Classic Texts of Buddhist Study." *Kopan Monastery*, kopanmonastery.com/about-kopan/monastic-education/the-five-great-treatises

[38] *Madhyamaka*, November 6, 2010, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, plato.stanford.edu/entries/madhyamaka/

treatises are studied in depth using the dialectical method, which is a central approach in Gelug pedagogy.[39]

In addition to these treatises, students also engage with Tsongkhapa's *Lamrim Chenmo* (The Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path), a key text that guides practitioners through the progressive stages from initial engagement with Buddhist practice to the highest levels of *Vajrayāna* realization.[40]

Lam Rim Chen Mo

The *Lam Rim Chen Mo* is one of the most revered texts in Tibetan Buddhism. Completed by Tsongkhapa in 1402, it is designed to lead practitioners through the stages of the path, from self-centeredness to the expansive altruism of a bodhisattva through the practice of the Six Perfections as follows:

i. **Generosity (*Dāna*)**: One must relinquish attachment to personal possessions and develop a mindset conducive to giving freely to others. This practice helps overcome possessiveness and generates merit.[41]

ii. **Ethical Discipline (*Śīla*)**: Ethical discipline entails refraining from actions that harm others and promoting their well-being. Practitioners cultivate this discipline by aligning their actions with ethical standards, avoiding harm, and following the Buddhist precepts.[42]

iii. **Patience (*Kṣānti*)**: Patience involves overcoming anger, a destructive emotion that hinders spiritual growth. Through patience, one learns to endure harm without retaliation, recognizing that suffering is often the result of past karma.[43]

iv. **Perseverance (*Vīrya*)**: Perseverance is the unflagging enthusiasm to engage in virtuous actions and maintain a steady effort on the path to enlightenment, both for oneself and others.[44]

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[39] "The Gelug School: Extensive Study Tradition." The Official Website of the 17th Karmapa, p. 3/11, kagyuoffice.org/buddhism/buddhism-in-tibet/the-gelug-school/

[40] "The Gelug School: Extensive Study Tradition." The Official Website of the 17th Karmapa, p. 4/11, kagyuoffice.org/buddhism/buddhism-in-tibet/the-gelug-school/

[41] Kenneth Chu, "Reflections on "The Great Treatise on the Stages of The Path to Enlightenment" (*Lamrim Chenmo*) by Tsong Khapa." PDF, p. 9, www.naturestoryhk.com

[42] Kenneth Chu, "Reflections on "The Great Treatise on the Stages of The Path to Enlightenment" (*Lamrim Chenmo*) by Tsong Khapa." PDF, p. 9, www.naturestoryhk.com

[43] Kenneth Chu, "Reflections on "The Great Treatise on the Stages of The Path to Enlightenment" (*Lamrim Chenmo*) by Tsong Khapa." PDF, p. 10, www.naturestoryhk.com

[44] Kenneth Chu, "Reflections on "The Great Treatise on the Stages of The Path to Enlightenment" (*Lamrim Chenmo*) by Tsong Khapa." PDF, p. 10, www.naturestoryhk.com

v. **Meditative Concentration (*Dhyāna*)**: This refers to developing mental concentration and stability, enabling one to engage deeply with meditation. Through meditative stabilization, the practitioner gains insight into the nature of reality, including the impermanence and emptiness of all phenomena.[45]

vi. **Wisdom (*Prajñā*)**: Wisdom involves a thorough understanding of the nature of reality, distinguishing right from wrong, and overcoming ignorance—the root cause of suffering. Cultivating wisdom is key to eradicating the mental afflictions that obscure the true nature of existence.[46]

These practices, when cultivated together, form the foundation for *bodhicitta* - the altruistic intention to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra

The *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* by Shantideva outlines the bodhisattva path, emphasizing bodhicitta (the mind of enlightenment) and the six perfections:

i) Bodhicitta's benefits
ii) Purification of negative actions
iii) Adopting the spirit of enlightenment
iv) Cultivating mindfulness
v) Guarding awareness
vi) Practicing patience
vii) Perseverance
viii) Meditative concentration
ix) Wisdom (emptiness)
x) Dedication of merit

This text remains a fundamental guide for those aspiring to become bodhisattvas, illustrating how each of the six perfections contributes to the development of an enlightened mind.

[45] Kenneth Chu, "Reflections on "The Great Treatise on the Stages of The Path to Enlightenment" (*Lamrim Chenmo*) by Tsong Khapa." PDF, p. 10, www.naturestoryhk.com

[46] Geshe Sopa Lhundup, Patt, David, Newman, Beth., *Steps on the Path to Enlightenment; A Commentary on Tsongkhapa's Lamrim Chenmo* Volume 1 5. (Boston: Wisdom Publication, 2004-2009): pp. 5 – 7, Vol 4

A lamp for the Path to Enlightenment

A Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment by Atiśa outlines the three levels of spiritual aspiration (lesser, middling, and superior) and serves as the foundation for the Lamrim teachings. In his commentary, the 14th Dalai Lama expands on the practice of the six perfections:

i. **Generosity**: Letting go of attachment and possessiveness to benefit others.[47]
ii. **Ethical Discipline**: Not only refraining from harm but cultivating compassion.[48]
iii. **Patience**: Accepting suffering without anger or resentment.[49]
iv. **Perseverance**: Perseverance sustains a practitioner's commitment to the path.[50]
v. **Meditative Concentration**: Developing deeper insight into reality.[51]
vi. **Wisdom**: Attaining liberation through the understanding of reality.[52]

The Three Principles of the Path

In *The Three Principles of the Path*, Tsongkhapa describes three essential elements of the path:

1. **Renunciation**: A definite decision to leave cyclic existence (*samsara*).
2. ***Bodhicitta***: The aspiration to attain Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings.
3. **Correct View**: Understanding emptiness (*sunyata*), the true nature of all phenomena.

These three principles form the foundation for the successful practice of the six perfections,[53] as they help practitioners to develop the right motivation and understanding.[54]

The Doctrinal Significance of the Six Perfections

The six perfections are central to the bodhisattva path. While these practices are most closely associated with bodhisattvas and buddhas, they are also essential for all paths of liberation. Through the diligent practice of these perfections, one not only works toward the realization of Buddhahood but also ensures the survival and flourishing of the Dharma

[47] Tenzin Gyatso, *Illuminating The Path To Enlightenment* (Boston: Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive, 2002), p. 127.
[48] Gyatso, p. 128.
[49] Gyatso, pp. 128 – 129.
[50] Gyatso, p. 129.
[51] Gyatso, p. 130.
[52] Gyatso, p. 139.
[53] John Powers, *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism* (Snow Lion Publications, 2007), p. 482.
[54] John, p. 482.

throughout countless eons.[55] The six perfections, therefore, represent the heart of *Mahāyāna* practice and the path to the liberation of all sentient beings, making the way to the ultimate goal of full enlightenment.

Chapter Four

Lama Zopa Rinpoche's presentation of the six perfections: Context, Sources and Unique Features

i. Context

In *The Six Perfections: The Practice of the Bodhisattvas*, Lama Zopa Rinpoche offers practical guidance on the six perfections, key practices of bodhisattvas. These perfections- generosity, morality, patience, perseverance, concentration, and wisdom - are not only the ideal practices of bodhisattvas but also essential for all practitioners. A bodhisattva, driven by bodhicitta (the wish to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all beings), continuously generates merit, even in sleep or unconsciousness.[56]

In *Bodhicitta: Practice for a Meaningful Life*, Lama Zopa Rinpoche reminds us that even if we attain personal liberation, the journey is incomplete without the aspiration to free all sentient beings. Bodhicitta motivates the practice of the six perfections, creating an unbroken flow of merit.[57] In *Patience: A Guide to Shantideva's Six Chapters*, Lama Zopa Rinpoche emphasizes that compassion is indispensable for enlightenment, particularly the resolve to free all beings from suffering, including those we consider enemies.[58]

The six perfections:

1. **The Perfection of Charity (*Dāna*):** True generosity is giving with a mind free from selfishness. It encompasses giving material objects, fearlessness, and the Dharma.[59] Training in selfless giving, even to the extent of offering one's own body, embodies the spirit of compassion, as seen in the story of Buddha offering his body to hungry tigers.[60]

[55] Arya Nāgārjuna, Trans. Bhikshu Dharmamitra. *Nagarjuna on The Six Perfections* (Seattle: Kalavinka Press, 2008), pp. 14 – 15.
[56] Lama Zopa Rinpoche, *The Six Perfections: The Practice of the Bodhisattvas* (Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2020), p. 1.
[57] Lama Zopa Rinpoche, *Bodhichitta: Practice for A Meaningful Life* (Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2019), pp. 105 – 106.
[58] Lama Zopa Rinpoche, *Patience: A Guide to Shantideva's Sixth Chapter* (Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2020), pp. 105 – 108.
[59] Zopa, *Six Perfections*, p. 1.
[60] Zopa, *Six Perfections*, p. 15.

2. **The Perfection of Morality (*Śīla*):** Morality involves abstaining from harmful actions, cultivating virtuous deeds, and working for the welfare of others. It is the foundation for a perfect rebirth and liberation.[61] Practicing morality in line with bodhicitta protects others from harm and helps develop wisdom.[62]
3. **The Perfection of Patience (*Kṣānti*):):** Patience means maintaining a virtuous mind in the face of harm. There are three forms: not retaliating, accepting suffering, and having unwavering confidence in the Dharma.[63] Patience ensures progress toward enlightenment, protecting accumulated merit and preventing anger, which can destroy virtue.[64] Without patience, enlightenment is impossible. As Śāntideva warns, "One second of anger can destroy all the virtue accumulated over a thousand eons."
4. **The Perfection of Perseverance (*Vīrya*):** Perseverance involves the energy to perform virtuous actions joyfully, such as reciting mantras or meditating. Three types exist: guarding the mind, gathering virtue, and working for others. Perseverance is key to accumulating merit and attaining Buddhahood.[65] The Buddha said: "The lazy person is far from enlightenment; they do not practice the six perfections nor work for others."[66]
5. **The Perfection of Concentration (*Dhyāna*):** Concentration refers to meditative focus, which allows for deeper understanding and practice. Through calm-abiding meditation and single-pointed concentration, one can achieve clarity in understanding and embody the teachings of the Buddha.[67]
6. **The Perfection of Wisdom (*Prajñā*):** Wisdom encompasses both conventional truths (impermanence, cause and effect) and ultimate truth (emptiness).[68] Realizing emptiness is the antidote to ignorance, leading to liberation. Wisdom is the culmination of the other perfections and the essential path to full enlightenment.[69]

As Lama Zopa Rinpoche points out in *The Four Noble Truths*, the first five perfections accumulate merit through skillful methods, while the sixth perfection, wisdom, accumulates the merit of insight. Both are essential for attaining full enlightenment. Practicing the perfections involves integrating them into all actions, ensuring that our path is

[61] Zopa, *Six Perfections,* pp. 1 – 2.
[62] Zopa, *Six Perfections*, pp. 29 – 53.
[63] Zopa, *Six Perfections*, p. 2.
[64] Zopa, *Six Perfections*, pp. 55 – 60.
[65] Zopa, *Six Perfections*, p. 2.
[66] Zopa, *Six Perfections*, pp. 86 – 97.
[67] Zopa, *Six Perfections*, p. 2.
[68] Zopa, *Six Perfections*, p. 2.
[69] Zopa, *Six Perfections*, p. 123.

holistic and complete.[70] If we want to liberate sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering, we need to be enlightened.[71] But we can only achieve enlightenment when we have fully achieved each of the six perfections as it is the infallible route followed by all the buddhas.

ii. Sources

Lama Zopa Rinpoche, a highly respected Gelugpa lineage holder, has studied extensively under some of the most revered Tibetan Buddhist masters. His root guru, H.H. Trijang Rinpoche, and his long-time teacher, the 14th Dalai Lama, have profoundly influenced his teachings. As a spiritual director and co-founder of the Foundation for the Preservation of the *Mahāyāna* Tradition (FPMT), Lama Zopa Rinpoche has made significant contributions to Buddhist teachings worldwide, including establishing monasteries, meditation centers, and various charitable projects.[72]

Lama Zopa Rinpoche 's books on the six perfections include:

1. *The Four Noble Truths: A Guide to Everyday Life* (2018)
2. *Bodhicitta: Practice for a Meaningful Life* (2019)
3. *Patience: A Guide to Shantideva's Sixth Chapter* (2020)
4. *The Six Perfections: The Practice of the Bodhisattvas* (2020)
5. *Perseverance: The Determination of the Bodhisattva* (2024)

iii. Unique Features

i. **Simple Practical Approach:** Lama Zopa Rinpoche's teachings speak to us and offering simple actionable advices for integrating these profound practices into our everyday lives.

- Generosity: Offering a smile, kind words, or even just your time to someone.
- Morality: Avoiding gossip at work, being honest in daily interactions, or choosing not to harm insects.
- Patience: When someone irritates you - pause, breathe, and try to see them with compassion.
- Perseverance: Getting up early to meditate or read Dharma even when you are tired.

[70] Lama Zopa Rinpoche, *The Four Noble Truths: A Guide to Everyday Life* (Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2018), pp. 225 – 242.
[71] Zopa, *Six Perfections*, pp. 3 – 4.
[72] Zopa, *Six Perfections*, p. 211.

- Concentration: Staying focused while washing dishes or doing your job - bringing mindfulness to simple actions.
- Wisdom: Reflecting during the day: "Is this self I am protecting truly real?" or "Where is this anger coming from?"

Through his guidance, we learn to become more generous, moral, patient, and joyful. [73]

ii. **Comprehensive Explanation:** Lama Zopa Rinpoche offers a thorough exploration of the six perfections, explaining each in depth, showing how they interrelate, and providing concrete examples and practices. He makes his teachings relevant and actionable in our busy and modern world.[74]

iii. **Embodying *Bodhichitta* and Wisdom:** Lama Zopa Rinpoche embodies the essence of *bodhichitta* and wisdom, making these profound teachings accessible to everyone. His clear, insightful guidance is infused with the compassion and wisdom that characterize the true bodhisattva path.[75]

iv. **The Importance of the Six Perfections*:*** As Lama Zopa Rinpoche emphasizes, the six perfections are not just the actions of bodhisattvas; they are qualities we can develop right now. He does not teach abstract concepts; he provides actionable advice that anyone can implement. By practising them, we align ourselves with the bodhisattva ideal and move closer to achieving the ultimate goal of enlightenment.[76]

v. **Clear Guidance for Everyday Life:** Lama Zopa Rinpoche's practical advice makes it possible for anyone, regardless of their spiritual status, to begin applying the six perfections in their daily lives. His teachings inspire and empower us to act with more compassion and wisdom, leading to greater happiness and spiritual progress.[77]

vi. **Inspirational and Accessible Teaching:** As Joshua W.C. Cutler remarks, Lama Zopa Rinpoche has brought the bodhisattva's path to life with clarity and depth, making it relevant to contemporary practitioners.[78] Similarly, Kathleen McDonald describes the

[73] McDougall Gordon, (Editor) *The Six Perfections: The Practice of the Bodhisattvas* (Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications, 2020.
[74] Lama Zopa Rinpoche, "*The Six Perfections: The Practice of the Bodhisattvas*." WisdomExperience.org, wisdomexperience.org/product/the-six-perfections/
[75] Lama Zopa Rinpoche, "Product Information." *The Six Perfections: The Practice of the Bodhisattvas*, www.ebay.com/itm/383491549335
[76] Lama Zopa Rinpoche, "*The Six Perfections: The Practice of the Bodhisattvas*." WisdomExperience.org, wisdomexperience.org/product/the-six-perfections/
[77] Lama Zopa Rinpoche, "*The Six Perfections: The Practice of the Bodhisattvas*." WisdomExperience.org, wisdomexperience.org/product/the-six-perfections/
[78] Joshua W. C. Cutler, (Editor) *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (Colorado: Shambhala Publications, 2004).

book as "a jewel," offering invaluable practical advice for anyone wishing to cultivate these precious practices, regardless of their stage on the spiritual path.[79]

Through the practice of the six perfections, one gradually transforms into a bodhisattva, cherishing others above oneself. Lama Zopa Rinpoche 's teachings guide practitioners to develop each perfection, eventually leading to enlightenment, the ultimate goal of freeing all sentient beings from suffering.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

This research examines the six perfections (*pāramitās*) in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, which originated from the *Jātakas* and *Avadānas*, the Buddha's actions in past lives. Over time, these practices became central to bodhisattvas across all Buddhist traditions, especially in *Mahāyāna* schools. The six perfections are outlined in key texts like the *Āgamas*, *Vinaya*, *Mahāvastu*, and *Prajñāpāramitā* sutras.

The teachings of *Nāgārjuna* and later Buddhist scholars spread the practice of the six perfections worldwide, including in Tibet. *Tsongkhapa's Lamrim Chenmo* and *Shantideva's Way of the Bodhisattva* further promoted these practices. In modern times, Lama Zopa Rinpoche has made the teachings of the six perfections accessible to everyone through works like *The Six Perfections: The Practice of the Bodhisattvas*, presenting them in a simplified and practical way for contemporary readers.

i. Benefits of practising the six perfections

Lama Zopa Rinpoche teaches that practicing the six perfections brings immediate and long-term benefits.

- Generosity ensures material abundance.
- Morality leads to a good rebirth.
- Patience promotes emotional resilience.
- Perseverance enables successful completion of tasks.
- Concentration strengthens the mind's focus.
- Wisdom enhances discernment and decision-making.

[79] Sangye Khadro (Kathleen McDonald), *How to Meditate: A Practical Guide.* Wisdom Publications (2005)

These practices not only accumulate merit but also cultivate qualities necessary for helping others and achieving enlightenment

ii. Implication

While this study provides valuable insights, true understanding of the six perfections can only be attained through direct practice. *Bodhicitta* and the bodhisattva vows are essential, and the six perfections must be integrated into one's life through consistent practice. Becoming a true bodhisattva is a transformative journey, requiring dedication and experience.

iii. Limitation and Recommendation

Limitations

Mastering the six perfections requires years of study and practice, especially considering the vast amount of Buddhist scriptures across *Theravāda*, *Mahāyāna*, and *Vajrayāna* traditions. This research can only touch on the surface of such profound teachings. Guidance from enlightened teachers like Lama Zopa Rinpoche is crucial for a deeper understanding and practice.

Recommendations

To truly understand and embody the six perfections, one must practice them in daily life. Participating in retreats and online teachings, taking the Bodhisattva vows, patience practice in real-life scenarios, daily mindfulness practice, journaling and self-reflection, study of authentic texts, engaging in community service and volunteer work, and daily offerings and ritual practice are essential steps in the process. A dedicated approach, with the right resources and guidance, will help integrate these virtues and gradually progress along the path of the bodhisattva.

iv. Conclusion

Lama Zopa Rinpoche's teachings on the six perfections offer a clear, practical roadmap for anyone seeking to walk the path of the bodhisattva. Throughout his works, he emphasizes that the practice of the six perfections is indispensable for any bodhisattva who wishes to attain full enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. His insightful explanations reveal not only the profound meaning of each perfection but also provide concrete, actionable steps for incorporating them into everyday life. Lama Zopa Rinpoche 's approach is both accessible and profound, offering simple yet powerful guidance on how to

cultivate generosity, patience, and wisdom, among other virtues. By following Lama Zopa Rinpoche's guidance, we can begin to live these perfections in every moment, gradually progressing along the path to becoming true bodhisattvas and benefiting all sentient beings.

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A Study of the Four Truth of the Noble Ones from the perspective of the Kṣitigarbha Sūtra

By Chuah Sai Jo

Dr Krishna Ghosh (Supervisor)

Abbreviation

KS *Kṣitigarbhasūtra (The Sūtra of Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha's Fundamental Vows*).
Translated by Tripitaka Sramana Siksananda from Sanskrit into Chinese and translated from Chinese into English by Upasaka Tao-tsi Shih. Taiwan: Reprinted by The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 2012.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Kṣitigarbha[80], translated as "Earth Store", is one of the four principal Bodhisattvas[81] in Mahāyāna Buddhism. He is popularly portrayed as a monk with a nimbus, holding a staff with six jingling rings[82] in his right hand, which can force open the gates of hell, and a glowing jewel in his left hand, which can light up darkness. Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva is known for his profound vow to delay his enlightenment until there is no one soul undergoing torments in hell.[83]

The *Kṣitigarbha Sūtra*[84] (KS), also known as *The Sūtra of Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha's Fundamental Vows*, centers around Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva. The Sūtra is commonly chanted during the rituals of deceased people as the Bodhisattva holds out great compassion to purify the karma of the deceased and guide them towards better destinations. Because of such close

[80] Chinese: 地藏. *ksiti* means "earth" or "abiding" and *garbha* means "embryo" or "store".

[81] The four principal Bodhisattvas are Kṣitigarbha, Samantabhadra (Chinese: 普贤), Mañjuśrī (Chinese: 文殊) and Avalokiteśvara (Chinese: 观音)

[82] The six rings symbolize his mastery of the six realms, namely, hells, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, demi-gods and devas.

[83] In the distant past aeons, Kṣitigarbha was a Brahman maiden named "Sacred Girl", who elevated her mother from Avīci Hell (Chinese: 無間地獄) through pious offerings. Saddened by great tortures in hell, she pledged to liberate beings of their sufferings and thereafter became an accomplished Bodhisattva.

[84] Tao-tsi Shih, tr. *The Sūtra of Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha's Fundamental Vows*, Translated by Tripitaka Sramana Siksananda from Sanskrit into Chinese (地藏菩萨本愿经) (Taiwan: Reprinted by The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 2012).

association with the realm of the dead, Kṣitigarbha is often regarded differently from other major Bodhisattvas.[85]

There are thirteen chapters in the KS. It begins with the notion of filial piety, then it expounds the concept of karmic causality, enumerates the scenes of hells and demonstrates care for those who are close to death. Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva not only responds to cries for help, but also encourages proactive spiritual practice. Teachings that can aid practitioners to break-free from rebirth cycle are woven throughout the KS. Consequently, this becomes the interest and motivation for my study.

Although the KS does not explicitly outline the Fourth Noble Truths in the same manner as the *Dharmacakrapravartana Sūtra,*[86] the principles of the Four Noble Truths can be understood through the lens of KS. The composition of my paper is as follows:
Part A on interpreting and discussing the Four Noble Truths. For each Noble Truth, I shall begin with conventional interpretation and then incorporate perspectives from the KS.

1) The First Noble Truth: I relate the descriptions of punishments in the hell realm sketched in Chapter Three, as the truth of suffering in the context of KS. To prompt a deeper reflection on the nature of suffering, I draw on Chapter Five, which exposes the various kinds of hell, each named after the punishment it administers.
2) The Second Noble Truth: I uncover the truth of the origin of suffering through the concept of karmic retributions in Chapters Three and Four. These chapters reveal the unembellished truth about the consequences of each moral failing and the causes of suffering in Avīci Hell. By illustrating the direct link between these actions and their consequences, practitioners are left with no excuse to claim ignorance.
3) The Third Noble Truth: Chapter Six is a good representation of Third Noble Truth as it gives assurance that all issues can be resolved and there is a way to end. In this section, I will share how the chapter provides clear guidance on overcoming the various forms of suffering we encounter in this lifetime. However, the examples quoted from Chapter Six temporarily fix mundane pain, only good for a mundane world that secures better rebirth and hence, not true liberation from the wheel of rebirth. My aim here is to convey the

[85] In temples, Kṣitigarbha is usually enshrined in isolation, away from the main shrine hall, mostly within memorial halls or mausoleums. It is also rare to see the Bodhisattva being venerated at household altars. Reciting the Kṣitigarbha Sūtra at home is also feared due to belief that it might attract ghosts.
[86] The first discourse expounded by Śākyamuni Buddha at Sarnath. It is a primary text where the Four Noble Truths are detailed.

confidence that the KS instills in us – that all problems can be solved if we focus on the root causes of suffering. To learn the steps to achieve liberation, we should refer to the Fourth Noble Truth.

4) The Fourth Noble Truth: The path to the cessation of suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path. The earlier sections focused on the misdeeds that lead us to lower realms. From this point onwards, particularly in Part B, I will describe how the Sūtra emphasizes the importance of right action and moral conduct.

Part B is dedicated to all the eight noble practices: Right Understanding, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. For each aspect of the practice, I shall elaborate how Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva and the Sūtra reinforce and expand these fundamental principles.

Part A. Four Noble Truths

First Noble Truth

The First Noble Truth is *duḥkha*, translated as suffering, pain, sorrow or misery.[87] Essentially, the First Noble Truth says that life is inherently unsatisfactory. The KS acknowledges the existence of suffering, particularly in the hell realm.

In Chapter Three of KS, titled "*Contemplation on the Karmic Connection Between Sentient Beings*", the Buddha's mother, queen Mahā Māyā [88] asked what offenses Jambudvīpa [89] beings committed that resulted in their retribution to the evil destiny. Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva explained that those who have committed grave offenses, such as intentionally killed one's parents, killed an enlightened being, or caused a schism within the Buddhist community, are reborn into Avīci Hell,[90] the lowest and most severe of hells in Buddhist cosmology. It is also referred to as "Hell of Unrelenting Pain" because it is a place of intense and ceaseless suffering. Those cast into the Avīci Hell are being roasted on iron gates, pierced in the mouths and noses, stabbed in their bellies and backs, molten metal is

[87] Rahula Walpola, *What the Buddha Taught* (London and Bedford: The Gordon Fraser Gallery Ltd, 2006), p.17.

[88] Chinese: 摩耶夫人. The queen of Śākya and the birth-mother of Śākyamuni Buddha. She died seven days after the birth of Buddha. The KS was spoken in the Trāyastriṃśa Heaven to repay her kindness and to aid her to the other shore.

[89] Chinese: 閻浮提. In Buddhism, Jambudvīpa is the southernmost island of the four continents that surround Mount Meru. It is the region where humans live and is the place where Buddhas attain enlightenment.

[90] Chinese: 无间地狱, 阿鼻地狱.

being poured into their mouths, bodies are being completely burnt by the flames and internal organs are being gorged out, sliced and minced.[91] All of these torments are inherent suffering. The torments are relentless and are said to last for innumerable *kalpas* with no means of escape until all bad karma is exhausted:

Very aptly, this hell-torture must last millions of kalpas without a date for acquittal or release. When this hell-realm of the world is annihilated, these miserable sinners will transmigrate to live and suffer in another realm. When that other realm is annihilated also, they will, in turn, transmigrate to yet another realm. However, when all these transmigratory realms are finally annihilated, they must continue to transmigrate yet again until they return to this realm, which will take form once again. Such is the retribution for sin should one fall into Avīci Hell.[92]

In Chapter Five "*The Names of the Various Hells*", Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva Samantabhadra[93] requested Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva to describe the various hells where beings suffer retributions for their evil deeds. Some of the hells mentioned include Fire-Arrows Hell where fiery arrows cause immense pain, Piercing-Spears Hell where spears pierce through the bodies of sinners, Iron-Carts Hell where prisoners are run over by iron carts, Embrace-Pillar Hell where sinners are forced to embrace burning red-hot pillars that sear them to death, Flowing-Fire Hell where fire flows continuously burning the bodies of beings, Scorch-Feet Hell, Peck-Eyes Hell, Iron-Shots Hell and many more.[94] Simply reading the names of these hells causes us to feel pain. Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva explained that within these primary hells, there are numerous smaller hells, each with its own unique form of punishment. Listing the name of hells serves an important purpose. It instills a sense of seriousness and caution in beings, acts as stern warnings about suffering that awaits those who engage in harmful actions.

The KS continues to elaborate that everyone is responsible for their own actions and the consequences. No one can bear the punishment for another's deeds, including close relationships like that of a father and son:

[91] Tao-tsi Shih, pp.18-19.
[92] Tao-tsi Shih, p.19.
[93] Chinese: 普賢菩薩
[94] Tao-tsi Shih, p.34.

Karma is tremendously powerful. It is capable of covering Mount Sumeru, … Therefore, sentient beings should not neglect lesser evils as being not sinful, … Even beings as closely related as father and sons will part their respective ways, and one will not take the punishment of the other even if they chance to cross paths.[95]

KS says that even in the highest of the six realms, the *devas* are not exempted from the wheel of rebirth. Chapter Twelve discloses that as soon as their accumulated good karma is exhausted, they could also descend into lower realms at the end of their lifespan.[96] There are five kinds of decaying signs that mark their imminent fall. They include the wilting of the gods' ever-fresh flower headdresses, soil staining their clean clothes, perspiration under their arms, their bodies beginning to stink and their restlessness as they are not able to sit still and composed as before.[97] Also for this reason, the Buddha expounded KS for his mother, hoping she would attain the saintly fruit after hearing it. Even though she was enjoying a good life in the Trāyastriṃśa Heaven,[98] she could fall into the hell realm once her good karma depletes one day. Only after becoming an Arahant, could his mother stop the endless cycle of rebirth.

Second Noble Truth

The Second Noble Truth seeks to determine the cause of suffering, the origin of *duḥkha*. According to this truth, the primary cause of suffering is 'thirst' or craving. It comes in several forms, such as craving for sense-pleasure, craving for existence and craving for non-existence. However, Walpola reminded us that although 'thirst' gives rise to all forms of suffering, it should not be taken as the first cause.[99] The question that we should ponder upon is, how does 'thirst' produce re-becoming? Death, in Walpola's words, is the total non-functioning of the physical body. Even after death, he explained, the energies will continue to exist. It does not cease together with the non-functioning of the body.[100] It continues to re-exist in another form called rebirth. Essentially, the continuing desire to exist leads to actions that create karma, which in turn leads to the continuation of the cycle of rebirth.

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[95] Ibid.
[96] Tao-tsi Shih, p.75.
[97] Heng Ching, *Sūtra of the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva: The Collected Lectures of Tripitaka Master Hsuan Hua* (New York: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 1974), p.209.
[98] Chinese: 忉利天. Also known as Heaven of the Thirty-Three. It is the second of the six heavens in the Kāmadhātu (the realm of desire) and is situated on the summit of Mount Meru. The heaven is led by Śakra, whereby the inhabitants have a life span of 1,000 years, with each day in this heaven being equivalent to 100 human years.
[99] Walpola, p.29.
[100] Walpola, p.33.

In KS, karma is a central theme. It explains how unwholesome actions, speech and thoughts created in the past can lead to unfavorable rebirths, thus perpetuating the cycle of suffering. Chapter Four of KS, "*Karmic Retributions of Beings in Jambudvīpa*", lists examples of sufferings associated with karmic retributions caused by ignorance and harmful actions in previous lives.

If one indulges in sexual misconduct, he will be reborn in the bird realm and having been reborn in the animal realm means he is subjected to suffering through fear and depredation. Sexual misconduct includes extramarital affairs and any form of sexual abuse. Venerable Master Hsuan Hua advised that even married couples should reduce sexual activities because it leads to dullness. By engaging in fewer sexual matters, one can experience greater light and manifest wisdom. Pigeons are known for their prolific breeding habits, and therefore bear the reputation for being the most lustful among birds. As for the mandarin ducks, they are known for their strong and inseparable emotional attachment to their mates. Therefore, for those who commit sexual misconduct, the retribution of the bird realm is very likely. Although birds symbolize freedom, being reborn in the bird realm is certainly not a desirable state, Master Hua added.[101]

For those who have stolen in their past lives, they will endure poverty in future lives. Those who slander the Triple Jewel[102] will be reborn with speech difficulty such as being a mute or a stutterer. One who is always in anger and full of hatred will be ugly and disabled. Hunters who find joy in chasing and killing animals will bear the retribution of living in fear and untimely deaths such as unexpected and violent deaths. People who enjoy trapping animals, especially young ones, will have to go through separation from family. These are innumerable habitual sins done physically, verbally and mentally that can land us in woeful realms.[103]

Let us dive into the offences that cause one to fall into Avīci Hell. It is always beneficial to be aware of these evil deeds and their consequences to safeguard a positive spiritual path. By understanding the gravity of such actions, we dispel ignorance and can make more conscious choices before acting. Chapter Three identifies five types of sins.

[101] Heng Ching, p.134.
[102] The Triple Jewel refers to the Buddha (the enlightened one), the Dharma (the teachings) and the Sangha (the community). These three elements are the foundation of Buddhist faith and commitment.
[103] Tao-tsi Shih, pp.30-31.

The first type of wrongdoing is being unfilial to one's parents, which includes harming or even killing them. Master Hua defined filial piety as complying with one's parents' fundamental intent. Human beings should not take for granted their possession of the Five Virtues, e.g. humaneness, propriety, etiquette, knowledge, and trust. He asserted that even young crows bring food back to their old mother who can no longer fly, and that a baby lamb kowtows to its mother when drinking her milk. Hence, filial piety is the most important thing for any human being.[104]

The second wrongdoing is mentioned as follows:

If someone should shed the blood of a Buddha, ridicule the Triple Jewel or fail to respect the sūtras, he, also, will fall into Avīci Hell.[105]

One may ask, how is it possible to harm the Buddha, who has great spiritual powers? Master Hua explained that when Buddha is in the world, it means shedding his blood. After His *nirvāṇa*, it means destroying the image of the Buddha. He remarked that however, there are exceptions. Karmic offenses are less severe for people with mental illness who burn paper pictures of Buddha and later confess their sins when they regain mental clarity. Otherwise, the consequence of such actions is to enter Avīci Hell. Speaking evil of the Buddha, Dharma and the Sangha is slandering the Triple Jewel. Master Hua elaborated that ordinary people's views tend to be wrong as they cannot comprehend the saints' realms. For example, Bodhisattvas of the First Level do not know the state of those of Second Level and so forth. Bodhisattvas on the Tenth Level do not know the state of The Buddha's Enlightenment. Therefore, before one attains true wisdom, one should simply ignore what is being said.[106]

The third evil deed is destroying the Permanently Abiding's property, committing adultery within monastic, or killing or harming in temples. The Permanently Abiding refers to places where the Sangha dwells. It is a pure and holy place; hence immoral acts are strictly forbidden.

Coming to the fourth wrongdoing, it relates to beings who seem to be a śramaṇa[107] in appearance but not in their minds. They claim to be śramaṇas, but they do not cultivate

[104] Heng Ching, p.104.
[105] Tao-tsi Shih, p.17.
[106] Heng Ching, pp.105-106.
[107] Master Hua listed four kinds of *śramaṇas*. They are (1) *śramaṇa* of the Way of Wisdom, referring to the Buddha and great Bodhisattvas, (2) *śramaṇa* who speaks of the Way, those who preach Dharma, particularly greatly virtuous monks and Arhats, (3) *śramaṇa* who lives the Way, who cultivates the Way as his very life, and (4) *śramaṇa* who defiles the way, referring those discussed in the passage cited here.

morality, concentration and wisdom. They do not practice Six Perfections and lack compassion. As such, they are said to have misused the items belonging to the Triple Jewel and deceived the faith of lay practitioners. They, too, will enter the Avīci Hell.
The fifth evil deed would be those who steal goods from the temples, such as rice, clothes and other items. This type of deed is the most immoral among the five, which cannot be pardoned even after confession.

The Third Noble Truth

Now, what does the KS say about ending suffering? Does Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva provide confidence to end suffering in the six realms? Let us examine Chapter Six, entitled "*Tathagata's Praise*". After the harrowing descriptions of various hells and the intense sufferings detailed in the earlier five chapters, this chapter offers a sense of hope and redemption.

The passage below shares that if a person, upon hearing the name of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva, responds with respect such as joining palms or praising, a person can be freed from karmic impurities amassed over an incredibly long period of time in Buddhist cosmology. It emphasizes the immense purification that can be achieved through respect and devotion to Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva.

If a good man or a good woman in the future should, on hearing the name of Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Kṣitigarbha, join his palms, give praise and pay obeisance or give admiration to him – such a person will be exonerated from all his sins committed and karmic blemishes contracted during thirty kalpas.[108]

The KS also offers advice on how to relieve those suffering from chronic pain. This is not for ordinary illnesses but for those enduring excruciating pain that they may wish for death, yet cannot find relief, nor can they find a cure. The Sūtra shows the way to help the sick – prayers and offerings can be made on their behalf, followed by the transference of merit. The patient will then be freed from all past sufferings after they pass away.

[108] Tao-tsi Shih, p.38.

"… in future worlds some men or women will be totally disabled and bedridden for a long time, neither their prayers for recovery nor their prayers for death being answered…To help such people it is necessary to recite this Sūtra aloud only once in front of the images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Then take something which the patient cherishes…and recite aloud to the patient as follows: 'I, so and so, on behalf of this patient, am donating these articles…From that time forward, that patient will be exonerated, once and for all after his death, from all his previous miseries and serious iniquities as well from any of the five hundred unpardoned sins he may have committed…"[109]

In the rest of the chapter, the text gives guidance and practical solutions for people facing various difficult situations. The focus is on understanding and overcoming the root cause of suffering. However, the solutions mentioned above only provide temporary relief from current pain or offer advice about what can be done for better rebirth. They do not provide the ultimate means to arrive at the other shore. My intention of referring Chapter Six is to correspond to the Third Noble Truth, which teaches that suffering can be ended, regardless of past actions. Through these passages, the KS reveals that cessation of suffering is possible through sincere repentance, faith, devotion and the transformative power of merit in Buddhism. These elements provide a path for beings to follow, offering assurance that suffering can truly be overcome. To uncover what it takes to break free from the chain of rebirth, let's proceed to the Fourth Noble Truth.

The Fourth Noble Truth

The Fourth Noble Truth is about the path that leads to the end of suffering, known as the Noble Eightfold Path. This path offers practical steps for ethical and mental growth, aiming to liberate individuals from attachments and delusions, ultimately guiding them towards enlightenment. The eight categories of path are Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. They can be developed simultaneously rather than in any specific order, as they are interconnected, and each supports the cultivation of the others. While KS does not elaborate the Noble Eightfold Path, the Sūtra encourages virtuous actions, merit-making and devotion to the Bodhisattva as a means to accumulate merit and advance towards enlightenment. It shares with us what one should and should not do.

[109] Ibid., p.42.

Conclusion

The KS is sometimes feared due to misconceptions about its content and purpose. The Sūtra is often associated with the underworld. It contains accounts of the torments in hell, which makes readers uneasy. There is also a misunderstanding that it is only chanted for the deceased during funeral rites. The KS is much more than just a Sūtra for the deceased. Through careful examination of the Sūtra's contents and commentaries, I find that it not only brings blessings and eliminates negative karma, it also contains insightful lessons that are applicable for living practitioners. In the KS, reflections of the Four Noble Truths are evident. I find that Four Noble Truths are deeply ingrained into the KS, much like a hidden treasure waiting to be discovered. In summary:

The First Noble Truth of Suffering is depicted in the initial chapters of KS, which narrate the pervasive nature of suffering through its portrayal of the hell realm. Its emphasis on the reality of suffering aligns with the First Noble Truth. The Second Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering is elucidated when the Sūtra goes on explaining the reasons why some people's lives are filled with misery and gives ample examples concerning karmic retributions. It also warns how one's deeds can cause them to fall into the hell realms. By highlighting the causes of sufferings in both the human and the hell realm, it resonates with the Second Noble Truth. The Third Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering offers possibilities to the end of suffering. Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva is renowned for his mighty vow not to attain Buddhahood until all beings are liberated. The KS mentions that one can mitigate the outcomes of their evil deeds through even a momentary refuge and faith in Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva. Thus, it reveals the potential to end suffering. The Fourth Noble Truth of the Path to the Cessation of Suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path – the way to end suffering. The Sūtra outlines various practices and actions of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva that illuminate the concepts of Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.

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A Critical Analysis of D. T. Suzuki's *Essays in Zen Buddhism* and Its Influence on Western Understanding of Zen

By Ng Paik Leng

Assoc. Professor Mattia Salvini (Supervisor)

Introduction

Zen Buddhism today is a globally influential spiritual tradition that continues to inspire people across diverse cultures and backgrounds. Originating in East Asia, Zen has transcended its historical roots to become a universal practice emphasizing mindfulness, meditation, and direct experience. Zen's core practices, such as *zazen* (seated meditation) and *koan* study, are embraced by both traditional adherents and modern seekers exploring spirituality outside of formal religious institutions.

In the West, Zen has been integrated into mindfulness-based practices, psychotherapy, and self-help movements, resonating with individuals seeking simplicity, balance, and inner peace amidst the complexities of modern life. Its influence extends beyond meditation, shaping arts, design, and philosophy with its principles of simplicity, impermanence, and harmony. Its enduring focus on present-moment awareness and direct insight ensures its relevance in addressing the spiritual and psychological needs of the contemporary world.

Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki or well-known as D.T. Suzuki played an important role in introducing and popularizing Zen Buddhism in the West during the 20th century, bridging the gap between Eastern philosophy and Western thought. Through his extensive writings, lectures, and translations, Suzuki presented Zen as a practical, experiential philosophy that transcended religious boundaries, appealing to intellectuals, artists, and spiritual seekers alike. By articulating Zen's universal principles in a way that resonated with Western audiences, Suzuki helped lay the foundation for Zen's integration into global spiritual and cultural movements.

This article is focus on the three volumes of D. T. Suzuki's *Essays in Zen Buddhism* where the English-language writings offer an in-depth exploration of Zen's philosophical foundations, including its concepts of enlightenment, sitting meditation, and direct experience.

The essays provided Western readers with an opportunity to study Buddhism, which had been largely confined to Eastern countries in earlier times.

Overview of Zen

Zen Buddhism is a prominent school of Mahayana Buddhism that originated in China as Chan Buddhism before spreading to Japan in the 6th century CE. The term *Zen* is derived from the Japanese pronunciation (*kana*: ぜん) of the Middle Chinese word 禅 (*Chán*), which, in turn, stems from the Sanskrit word *dhyāna* (ध्यान)[110]. This Sanskrit term can be approximately translated as "contemplation," "absorption," or "meditative state." Zen emphasizes attaining Buddhahood by realizing enlightenment through direct insight into one's own mind.

Core principles of Zen:

- **Meditation (*Zazen*)**: The central practice of Zen, involving seated meditation. It serves as a path to enlightenment, cultivating mindfulness, deep introspection, and insight while letting go of dualistic thinking.
- **Direct Experience**: Zen emphasizes direct, personal experience over theoretical knowledge, aiming to understand reality through lived experience rather than intellectual analysis.
- **Koan**: Paradoxical statements or enigmatic questions designed to challenge conventional reasoning, break habitual thought patterns, and inspire deeper realization. It is used to guide and push practitioners towards sudden insight or *satori* (enlightenment).
- **Simplicity and Mindfulness**: Zen focuses on simplicity in daily life and mindfulness in every activity. It teaches that enlightenment can be realized in the present moment and through ordinary activities.
- **Emphasis on "No-Mind" (*Mushin*)**: The concept of *no-mind* in Zen refers to a state free from attachments, enabling spontaneous, fluid responses to life in harmony with Zen principles.
- **Non-Duality**: This is a core realization in Zen practice, referring to the nature of reality as unified and indivisible. It is the recognition of the fundamental oneness and interconnectedness of all existence, transcending the perceived separation between self

[110] Wikipedia contributors. (2024c, November 22). *Zen*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zen

and other, subject and object, or any dualistic concepts such as good and bad, life and death.

Zen today remains an influential cultural and spiritual force, though its role has evolved with modern society in Japan and worldwide. Zen principles of simplicity, mindfulness, and interconnectedness resonate in contemporary wellness movements and global spiritual practices, attracting practitioners both in Japan and worldwide.

Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki

Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki (1870–1966) was a Japanese scholar of Buddhism known for his extensive writings in Japanese and English. He gained fame for translating Zen and Pure Land Buddhist texts and played a key role in introducing Zen Buddhism to the West, bridging Eastern and Western thought in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Suzuki became a prominent intellectual in the 1950s and 1960s, presenting Zen as a profound spiritual philosophy. His works on Zen Buddhism is renowned as a symbol of the great contributions to the knowledge of Zen Buddhism in the world and he is known as the first person that bringing Zen closer to the Western understanding.

Suzuki was born into a samurai[111] family in Kanazawa, Japan, he grew up during the decline of Japanese feudalism where the community facing challenges from rapid modernization and social change. Suzuki excelled academically, studying Western literature and philosophy at the University of Tokyo, where he also learned Chinese, Pali, Sanskrit, and European languages. During his university time, Suzuki was trained under Zen Master Soen Shaku at Engaku-ji Temple, a Rinzai Zen monastery. He was deeply influenced by Soen Shaku[112], who gave him the name "Daisetsu" which means Great Humility. Suzuki practiced strict Zen discipline and adopted a simple monk-like lifestyle, though he was never ordained. This training shaped his spiritual and intellectual approach to Zen, laying the foundation for his lifelong work.

[111] The samurai (or bushi) were the warriors of premodern Japan. They later made up the ruling military class which eventually became the highest-ranking social caste of the Edo Period (1603-1867). Japan-Guide.com, "The Capital of Japan," accessed [15-Oct-2024], https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2127.html.

[112] Soen Shaku or Soyen Shaku (釈 宗演, 1860 –1919) was the first Zen Buddhist master to teach in the United States. He was a roshi of the Rinzai school and was abbot of both Kencho-ji and Engaku-ji temples in Kamakura, Japan. He was a disciple of Imakita Kosen. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright, eds., *Zen Masters* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 183-184.

An unexpected opportunity arose when Suzuki accompanied Soen Shaku to the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. Soen Shaku recommended Suzuki to Paul Carus[113], who was seeking assistance in preparing Eastern spiritual literature for publication. Suzuki's proficiency in multiple languages enabled him to take up this work, marking the beginning of his journey of translation in the United States.

In 1897, Suzuki moved to the United States to work with Paul Carus at Open Court Publishing in Illinois, where he translated texts like the *Dao De Jing* and *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana.* He also translated his master's essays as *Sermons of a Buddhist Abbot* and wrote his first book, *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism* (1907). After leaving Open Court, Suzuki went to London to study Emanuel Swedenborg's philosophy.

Suzuki married Beatrice Erskine Lane in 1906, and in 1921 they returned to Japan, where he continued his scholarly work. In 1936, he served as an exchange professor at the University of London. As Suzuki's writings gained popularity, he returned to the U.S. and taught at several universities, holding a position at Columbia University from 1952 to 1957. Suzuki's influence reached beyond academia, mentoring figures like Carl Jung, Thomas Merton, and John Cage, who were inspired by his teachings on Zen.

Suzuki continued to write and lecture until his death on 12 July 1966, at the age of 95. His works helped bridge the gap between East and West by explaining Zen concepts in a way that Western audiences could grasp, without losing the essence of the tradition. His essays offer an in-depth exploration of Zen's philosophical foundations, including its concepts of enlightenment, seated meditation, and direct experience.

Overview of "*Essays in Zen Buddhism*"

Suzuki's *Essays in Zen Buddhism* consist of three series that are among his most famous works. These collections explore the philosophy, practice, and history of Zen Buddhism and were instrumental in introducing Zen to the Western world. Each volume contains multiple essays that cover various aspects of Zen, including its origins, philosophy,

[113] Paul Carus (German: [paʊl ˈkaːʁʊs]; 1852 –1919) was a German-American author, editor, a student of comparative religion and philosopher who was interested in Buddhism. Parliament of the World's Religions, "Paul Carus: The Religion of Science, the Science of Religion," accessed [1-Sept-2024], https://parliamentofreligions.org/1893-chicago/paul-carus-the-religion-of-science-the-science-of-religion/.

and practical application in daily life. The essays are structured with an introduction followed by detailed explanations of Zen's historical, philosophical, and practical dimensions.

Content of the Three Series of *Essays in Zen Buddhism*

1. *Essays in Zen Buddhism: First Series*

The first series introduces the basic principles and practices of Zen Buddhism, covering its history, core teachings, and meditation methods. Suzuki explores key topics like enlightenment, the use of koan, and the importance of direct experience in Zen training, providing a foundational understanding of Zen.

There are 8 essays in this volume:

Introduction to Zen Buddhism – A comprehensive overview of Zen Buddhism, explaining its core principles, practices, and its emphasis on personal experience and enlightenment. Suzuki presents Zen as a distinct form of Buddhism that transcends intellectualism and dogma, focusing instead on a direct, intuitive understanding of reality.

Zen as Chinese Interpretation of Doctrine of Enlightenment – Discuss how Zen developed in China as a unique interpretation of the Buddhist doctrine of enlightenment, emphasizing direct experience over theoretical knowledge, and blending traditional Buddhist teachings with Chinese cultural and philosophical influences.

Enlightenment and Ignorance – Explores the nature of enlightenment and its contrast with ignorance in Zen, detailing how these seemingly opposite concepts are intertwined and how Zen views the process of awakening as transcending dualistic thinking.

History of Zen in China – Traces the history of Zen from Bodhidharma to the Sixth Patriarch, Hui-Neng, highlighting key figures, philosophical influences, and the transformation of Buddhist thought as it adapted to Chinese culture. Suzuki provides a historical overview of how Zen emerged as a unique school of Mahayana Buddhism, emphasizing direct experience and non-dualism.

Satori – Explores the concept of satori, or sudden enlightenment, which is central to Zen. Suzuki describes satori as a sudden and transformative experience of awakening, in which

one gains direct insight into the true nature of reality. He delves into its characteristics, significance, and the methods through which it can be achieved in Zen practice.

Practical Methods of Zen Instruction – Describes various methods used in Zen practice to guide students toward satori. He explains how Zen masters employ unconventional and direct techniques to break through conceptual thinking and lead practitioners to a state of awakening. There is example that the Zen master practiced nonsensical actions like shouting, striking, or cryptic responses to a student's questions. Such method is aims to jolt the student out of conventional thinking and bring about sudden enlightenment. Suzuki also elaborates on the practice of zazen as the foundational of Zen training.

The Meditation Hall and the Ideals of Zen Life – Provides a glimpse into the daily life and discipline of Zen monks, outlining the significance of the meditation hall (zendo) in Zen practice and how it reflects Zen ideals. He describes the meditation hall as more than just a physical space, it embodies the discipline, simplicity, and spiritual focus essential to Zen life. Suzuki also explains how life in the zendo fosters the development of mindfulness, non-attachment, and inner tranquillity.

The Ten Cow - Herding Pictures – Offers commentary on these illustrations, which depict the stages of spiritual progress. Explores the symbolic meaning of a classic Zen Buddhist teaching tool: the ten pictures of a person herding an ox (often a metaphor for the mind or the self). These illustrations represent the stages of a practitioner’s spiritual journey toward enlightenment, with each picture highlighting a specific phase, from seeking truth to ultimate realization and returning to the world with wisdom and compassion.

2. *Essays in Zen Buddhism: Second Series*

The second series build on the first, exploring Zen's philosophy, its connections to other Buddhist traditions, and its impact on Japanese culture. Suzuki examines key Zen texts and concepts, offering deeper insights into the methods and practices of Zen masters.

There are 4 essays in this volume:

Koan Exercise – Koan (Chinese: 公案) a succinct paradoxical statement or question used as a meditation discipline for novices, particularly in the Rinzai sect in Zen Buddhism. The

effort to "solve" a koan is intended to exhaust the analytic intellect and the egoistic will, readying the mind to entertain an appropriate response on the intuitive level. Each such exercise constitutes both a communication of some aspect of Zen experience and a test of the novice's competence[114]. Through the guidance of a Zen master and deep meditation, the practitioner confronts the limitations of intellect and opens to non-conceptual wisdom. Suzuki stresses that the koan is not just a mental puzzle but a powerful tool for attaining enlightenment, with its insights needing to be applied to daily life for true spiritual transformation. An example of koan: Two hands clap and there is a sound, what is the sound of one hand?

The Secret Message of Bodhidharma – An exploration of the legendary figure Bodhidharma, considered the founder of Zen in China. This section highlights Bodhidharma's revolutionary impact on Zen by focusing on personal experience and meditation as the primary paths to spiritual awakening. It underscores Zen's distinctive rejection of reliance on texts and intellectual reasoning, emphasizing intuitive insight into one's own Buddha-nature.

Two Zen Text Books – An analysis of two important Zen texts: *The Gateless Gate* (Mumonkan, 无门关) and *The Blue Cliff Record* (Hekiganroku, 碧岩录). These collections of Zen koan and commentary are central to understanding the Zen approach to enlightenment and teaching. Suzuki explains that these texts challenge readers to move beyond rational thought and experience reality directly. He clarifies that these works are not intellectual treatises but practical tools for spiritual awakening, designed to transform the way students perceive and engage with the world.

Passivity In the Buddhist Life – In this essay, Suzuki discusses the concept and role of passivity in Zen practice, particularly how it relates to mindfulness, acceptance, and the cultivation of inner peace, including practices such as prayer and Nembutsu. He explains that passivity does not imply inactivity or weakness, but rather involves a deep awareness and harmonious engagement with life, essential for acceptance and non-attachment. Suzuki uses

[114] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (1998, July 20). *Koan | Riddles, Parables, Parables & Koans*. Encyclopedia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/topic/koan

the Doctrine of Karma to illustrate his points and emphasizes the need to harmonize passive and active states, portraying passivity as a vital aspect of a fulfilling and enlightened life.

Essays in Zen Buddhism: Third Series

The third series explore deeper into Zen philosophy and practice, exploring advanced topics and Zen teachings. It also examines the interaction between Zen and Western thought, along with Zen's influence on Japanese culture and arts.

There are 8 essays in this volume, they are:

From Zen to the *Gaṇḍavyūha* – This essay explores the relationship between Zen and the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra*, highlighting key teachings of both traditions and their points of convergence. Both focus on direct experience, non-duality, and the realization of enlightenment. Suzuki examines Sudhana's journey as a metaphor for the Mahayana view of reality, where everything is interconnected, and the ultimate truth is beyond conceptual understanding.

The *Gaṇḍavyūha*, The Bodhisattva-Ideal and the Buddha – Suzuki explores the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* in relation to the Bodhisattva ideal and the concept of Buddhahood in Mahayana Buddhism. He emphasizes the selfless pursuit of enlightenment for the benefit of all beings and draws connections between this ideal and Zen's emphasis on direct experience. While Zen's path is more immediate, the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* offers a grand, cosmic vision of the Bodhisattva's gradual journey toward realizing the oneness of all existence.

The Boddhisattva Abode – A detailed study of the concept of the "Bodhisattva abode" (Bodhisattvavihāra), which refers to the mental and spiritual state of a Bodhisattva. Suzuki focuses on the qualities and ideals that define the Bodhisattva's path toward enlightenment, underscoring the non-dual relationship between compassion and wisdom. He also highlights the Bodhisattva's use of skillful means to guide beings toward enlightenment, finding joy, patience, and fulfilment along the journey to Buddhahood.

The Desire for Enlightenment – Suzuki explores the concept of *bodhicitta*—the aspiration to attain enlightenment for the sake of liberating all sentient beings. This desire is unique because it is selfless, driven by compassion, and aimed at the enlightenment of all beings.

Suzuki underscores the non-dual nature of this desire, where the pursuit of enlightenment is intertwined with wisdom and the realization of emptiness. Through *bodhicitta*, the Bodhisattva finds both the strength to face challenges and the joy that comes from serving others on the path to liberation.

The Significance of the *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdayasūṭra* in Zen Buddhism – An overview of the role of the *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdayasūṭra* (Heart Sutra) in Zen practice, including its teachings on emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and their profound significance for Zen's approach to enlightenment. Suzuki explains that the sutra's insights into the nature of reality, particularly the idea that "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form," are central to Zen's approach. Through meditation and the cultivation of *prajñā* (wisdom), Zen practitioners directly experience these truths, transcending dualistic thinking and achieving awakening. The *Heart Sutra*, according to Suzuki, is not just a text but a living guide to the realization of ultimate reality in Zen.

The Philosophy and Religion of the *Prajñāpāramitā* – An exploration of the philosophical and religious dimensions of the *Prajñāpāramitā* (Perfection of Wisdom) teachings. Suzuki delves into the nature of *prajñā* (wisdom), emptiness (*śūnyatā*), and how these concepts shape Buddhist understanding of reality, practice, and enlightenment. The realization of emptiness is central to both the philosophical and religious aspects of Buddhism, guiding the Bodhisattva's path of compassion and selfless service. By transcending dualistic thinking, the practitioner attains a direct understanding of reality, embodying both wisdom and compassion in the pursuit of enlightenment for the benefit of all beings.

Buddhist, Especially Zen, Contributions to Japanese Culture – Suzuki discusses how Zen has profoundly influenced various aspects of Japanese culture, art, and thought. From aesthetics and art to ethics and social practices, Zen's principles of simplicity, mindfulness, non-attachment, and direct experience have left an indelible mark on Japanese society. Suzuki emphasizes that Zen's influence extends beyond religious practice, becoming a key element in how the Japanese engage with the world, cultivate beauty, and approach both life and death with serenity and wisdom.

The Zen Life in Pictures – This section uses visual imagery to explore and illustrate the essence of Zen life. Suzuki emphasizes that Zen is not just a philosophy but a way of life,

manifesting through simplicity, spontaneity, and mindfulness in everyday activities. He connects Zen's core principles with visual representations that convey its teachings. Through images of meditation, art, nature, and daily activities, Suzuki demonstrates that Zen is not merely a philosophy but a way of being, encouraging individuals to live fully in the present moment, in harmony with nature, and free from the constraints of dualistic thinking.

Misrepresentation of Non-Japanese Buddhism

However, some of Suzuki's essays have been criticized for oversimplifying or misinterpreting aspects of Buddhism, especially Zen, to make the teachings more accessible to Western audiences. He is often accused of portraying Japanese Zen as the purest form of Buddhism, which can downplay or misrepresent other Buddhist traditions.
Here are some key points where these misrepresentations occur:

1. Emphasis on Japanese Zen Superiority

Centralization of Japanese Zen: Suzuki tends to portray Japanese Zen, particularly the Rinzai School as the culmination or pinnacle of Buddhist practice. He often suggests that Zen in Japan represents the most refined and authentic expression of Buddhist teachings, marginalizing other forms of Buddhism, such as Tibetan Buddhism, Theravada Buddhism, or even Chinese Chan (the predecessor of Japanese Zen), by implying they are less direct, pure, or effective in leading to enlightenment. Suzuki emphasizes that Zen is the most practical and efficient for the Oriental mind.[115]

Zen as universal path to spiritual awakening: Suzuki explains that Zen represents the ultimate reality underlying all philosophy and religion, asserting that every intellectual effort must either culminate in it or, more accurately, begin from it. He further adds that Zen is not solely the foundation of Buddhist thought and life; it is also deeply present in Christianity, Islam, Taoism, and Confucianism. Suzuki believed that Zen's emphasis on direct experience, non-duality, and the transcendence of conceptual thought made it compatible with and enriching for various religious traditions. In doing so, he positioned Zen not as a competing religion, but as a method for deepening spiritual insight and realizing the ultimate truth across all faiths.[116]

[115] Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism (Third Series)* (Rider & Company, 1953), 317 – 320.
[116] Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism (First Series)* (Rider & Company, 1958), 268 – 270.

2. Oversimplification of Early Indian and Chinese Buddhism

Reduction of Early Indian Buddhism: Suzuki often described early Indian Buddhism as overly focused on study and philosophy, emphasizing scripture and analysis. In contrast, he saw Zen as a break from this, rooted in direct experience that goes beyond words and concepts. For Suzuki, Zen is about intuitive realization, while early Buddhism is more focused on intellectual understanding. While he acknowledged the Buddha's ethical teachings, Suzuki emphasized that personal experience is key to reaching Enlightenment. The Buddha's teachings, like the Four Noble Truths, analysis of dependent origination require intellectual understanding of suffering, impermanence, and non-self. However, Suzuki argued that true insight into these teachings comes through personal experience, not just intellectual knowledge, and practices like *dhyāna* (meditation) are essential for understanding the deeper aspects of Enlightenment.[117]

Individual Enlightenment: In Suzuki's portrayal of Zen, he often emphasizes personal enlightenment and the direct realization of one's true nature. While traditional Mahayana Buddhism also values enlightenment, it places strong emphasis on the Bodhisattva path, where practitioners seek Buddhahood not solely for themselves but to liberate all sentient beings. This altruistic commitment to compassion and selflessness is a defining feature of Mahayana Buddhism. However, Suzuki's focus on Zen sometimes downplays this aspect, presenting Zen practice more as a solitary path to awakening, centred on individual realization rather than collective liberation.

Portrayal of Chinese Buddhism: In his essays, Suzuki sometimes implies that Chinese Buddhism, including Chan, became bogged down with syncretism and lost some of its original vitality, supposedly revived in Japan. This portrayal neglects the complexity and depth of Chinese Buddhist traditions and their significant contributions to the development of Zen. Suzuki also claimed that Zen was the only Buddhist school in China during his time, neglecting the existence of other schools like Pure Land.[118] While Suzuki acknowledges the origins of Zen in Chinese Chan Buddhism, he often presents Japanese Zen as having perfected or purified the practice. This misrepresents Chinese Chan as a less mature or less developed form of Zen, despite its rich history and diversity.

[117] Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism (First Series)* (Rider & Company, 1958), 163 – 167.
[118] Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism (Third Series)* (Rider & Company, 1953), 320 – 323.

3. Neglect of Ritual and Devotional Practices

Underplaying Rituals: Suzuki's focus on the direct, experiential nature of Zen practice leads him to downplay the importance of rituals, liturgy, and devotional practices that are central to many other Buddhist traditions. He emphasizes that the first step in elucidating Buddhist thought is to inquire into the personal experience of the Buddha at the time of enlightenment. By focusing on zazen (seated meditation) and koan practice as the core of Zen, he overlooks the rich ritualistic and devotional dimensions present in other forms of Buddhism, such as Pure Land Buddhism, Vajrayana Buddhism, and even certain Zen practices.

Misrepresentation of Devotion: In distinguishing Zen from what he viewed as less authentic forms of Buddhism, Suzuki sometimes misrepresents devotional practices, particularly those found in Mahayana traditions like Pure Land Buddhism. He tends to depict these practices as secondary or less direct paths to enlightenment, which can lead to misunderstandings about their significance and the profound experiences they offer practitioners.

4. Minimization of Scholasticism and Philosophy

Critique of Intellectualism: Suzuki often contrasts Zen with the more scholarly and philosophical approaches found in other Buddhist traditions, particularly in India and Tibet. He emphasizes the inadequacy of intellectual understanding compared to direct experience, which can lead to a misrepresentation of the role of philosophy and scholarship in Buddhism. This portrayal overlooks the fact that many Buddhist traditions see the study of texts and philosophy as integral to the path to enlightenment, not as a hindrance.

Overemphasis on Satori: Suzuki's focus on sudden enlightenment as the defining experience of Zen can misrepresent other traditions that emphasize gradual practice and development, such as the gradual path in Tibetan Buddhism. This can create a false dichotomy between Zen and other forms of Buddhism, suggesting they are fundamentally less effective or less direct in leading to enlightenment.

Conclusion

In my understanding, Suzuki's philosophy is centred on the idea that Zen is not a philosophy or religion in the conventional sense but a way of being and directly experiencing the reality. His teachings emphasize the importance of non-duality, the immediacy of the

present moment, and the ineffability of true understanding, which cannot be fully captured by language or conceptual thought. Suzuki's impact on both the academic study of religion and popular culture was profound. His contributions to the global understanding of Zen are undeniable, offering a perspective that bridges the gap between scholarly analysis and lived experience, between Eastern and Western views of Zen's relevance in modern life. His call for mindfulness and self-awareness feels increasingly urgent. For Suzuki, the art of Zen is the art of living, and he believed that the Zen approach, marked by simplicity, spontaneity, and deep attention to the present moment, offers valuable insights for both artists and non-artists alike. Today, Suzuki is remembered as a key figure in the global transmission of Zen, with his writings still studied and appreciated by those interested in Buddhist philosophy, meditation, and the meeting of Eastern and Western spiritual traditions.

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Emptiness is Beyond Rational Thinking

By Apurbo Barua

Assoc. Prof. Mattia Salvini (Supervisor)

Emptiness is one of the most profound teachings of the Buddha. It is also one of the most used terms when it comes to the Mahāyāna Buddhism. However, very few people, even among the Buddhists, have the right perception of emptiness. The term "emptiness" translates the Sanskrit word *śūnyatā*. *Śūnya* in *śūnyatā* means "zero." Thus, hearing the term emptiness, one might understand it as "nothingness." But it is not nothing because Buddha refuted the two extremes, i.e., eternalism and nihilism. Thus, the true nature is neither nothingness nor permanence. It is said to be "empty." But the question is: what does it mean "to be empty?" The best answer to this can be found in the *The Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* by Nāgārjuna who is considered a founder of the Madhyamaka school. Although emptiness is explained in the *Mūlamadhyaaikakārikā*, it is still very difficult to understand its meaning. There are many reasons why emptiness is almost impossible to understand for an ordinary person. Among all of them, rational thinking seems to be one of the biggest obstacles.

Emptiness is a teaching that Buddha didn't teach to everyone because he knew that the human mind could not grasp it. It is more difficult to accept this teaching than to understand it. Even it was difficult to accept for the Arhant's. For example, according to a traditional account, when the teachings were presented to five hundred Arahants, they vomited blood, and many died because they couldn't accept the fact of emptiness. Candrakīrti, a great scholar who wrote the commentary *Madhyamakāvatāra*, also realized that everyone cannot grasp this teaching. He also asked not to give this teaching to everyone. Not only because one would not understand it. His concern was that the human mind might perceive it in many ways, and as a result, people might have many incorrect views toward it, and thus they would start to believe in wrong teachings. He said to give these teaching to only those who will have goosebump and have tears in their eyes when they hear the word "emptiness." But many of us, when we study the teaching of emptiness, don't feel anything. The reason for this is our rational thinking: emptiness is beyond the rational thinking capability of humans.

In this article, I would highlight the meaning of emptiness from two accounts, first would be the account of Mahāyāna Sūtras, and second would be the account of Madhyamaka school of Nāgārjuna. And finally, I will try to explain that emptiness is beyond rational thinking because the human mind is eager to fixate on one specific aspect of reality; humans tend to mix the concept of emptiness with science; and the human mind has limited cognition.

To begin, we must understand what emptiness is. Emptiness can be explained in many ways. The teaching is always the same, but since people have different levels of understanding, it is presented in different ways to suit their capacities. Buddha also taught the same teaching differently to different people. Thus, first, let us see the common understanding of emptiness. Emptiness does not mean something is completely void, or that there is nothing at all. It is not accepted in Buddhism as it is one of the two extremes denied by the Buddha. The real meaning of emptiness is that everything is "empty of essence." It means that something which we can see or which we see as real has no own power to arise by itself, i.e., everything arises depending on something else, and because of some causes and conditions, effect or result arises. For example, because we plant a seed as a cause, we get the tree as a result. Since we've planted a seed, the seed slowly gets water and all necessary nutrients from the ground, and as a result a tree slowly grows up. When the tree grows up, it inhales carbon dioxide from the air and exhales oxygen, and as a result all kinds of living beings get oxygen. Thus, because of the cause, the result comes about. In the same way, if animals and humans did not exhale carbon dioxide, trees could not inhale it by themselves from the air.

It is connected to the great teaching of the Buddha called "dependent origination" (*pratītyasamutpāda).* The twelve links of dependent origination show us the interdependence of things. The main theme of the dependent origination is that everything arises depending on something else. In the same way everything also ceases, depending on something else. Nothing has the power to arise by itself. It is the middle way, which is taught by the Buddha who denies the two extremes. The middle way is not fixating on either of the two extremes because everything is impermanent, i.e., its existence depends on something else.

Emptiness talks about the insight. It is the ultimate reality of all phenomena. It shows us the existence of all phenomena, which is empty. Just by the word empty one might

understand that it is nothing. But this view is also not the right one. The real meaning of emptiness is, all phenomena whether it is internal or external of the mind, have no inherent existence. All phenomena are dependent, meaning there is nothing which exists independently. Hence, nothing really exists.

Emptiness in the Mahāyāna Sūtras

The Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition is one of the major Buddhist sects in Buddhism. Its teachings are very profound and the Sūtras or discourses are rich. And in this Buddhist tradition, emptiness can be considered the core topic.

When we talk about the Mahāyāna sutras, we must talk about the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras. It is a text consisting of a collection of Mahāyāna sūtras and considered as the foundational Mahāyāna Buddhist text. It explains the perfection of wisdom (*Prajñā*) through realizing the emptiness. It emphasizes that one can perfect their wisdom, when one understands that all the phenomena including oneself and the external world has lack of independent nature of existing, or all phenomena has lack of inherent existence.

The Heart Sūtra, one of the most profound Sūtra from the text Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras, it is said that "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form." If it is analyzed word by word even without the proper interpretation, it can be simply understood as form is equivalent to emptiness. But if I explain it with the proper interpretation, it is referring that even though a form can be seen as a solid object, it does not contain any inherent existence. Meaning it cannot arise by itself. And if we analyze any form, mental or physical, we can see, there are many dependent factors behind it to arise to the point of the appearance that we can see with our eyes. Donald S. Lopez Jr., in his comprehensive analysis of the *Heart Sutra*, points out that this statement is a radical deconstruction of ordinary perceptions. It challenges practitioners to understand that what we perceive as concrete reality is actually devoid of intrinsic nature.[119]

Another Sūtra from the same text, Śūrangama Sūtra, also talks about emptiness. According to this Sūtra, the mind has no permanent essence, and it is empty itself. Whatever one experiences mentally or physically is just delusions. And one cannot see the true empty

[119] Lopez, Donald S. Jr. *The Heart Sutra: A Comprehensive Guide*, p. 57.

nature of the mind when one starts to get attachment to these mental thought and external objects. Through meditation one can remove the illusion of the mind and see the true empty nature of all phenomena.[120]

The Diamond Sūtra (Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra), also teaches the same concept and even adds that the concept Buddha and Dharma are also empty. It teaches that one should not get attached to any thought or any kind of label because they are illusions. Everything in this world is impermanent and empty. This Sūtra gives various examples like dreams, bubble, lightning as metaphor. Dreams seem real until one wake up. In the same way everything in real life seems solid and real but ultimately empty of independent essence. Everything in this world is fragile and temporary like a bubble. A bubble can pop at any moment. In the same way everything that we experience is temporary. A Lightening appears very bright and strong when it flashes, but it also disappears after a few moments. All these examples teach that all things in the phenomena are temporary, impermanent, and illusory. Nothing the inherent existence.[121]

In the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra, it teaches the point of view of the Yogācāra (mind only) teachings as well as the teaching of emptiness. This Sūtra emphasizes that everything that is experienced in the world is just a projection of one's consciousness. Through this Sūtra, one can realize the differences between conventional reality and ultimate reality. The conventional reality is that everything that appears in front of our eyes or in the mind, is just conventionally real. Like a solid object which we can see or touch or feel including the thoughts in our mind. But in the ultimate sense, everything arises due to some cause and condition of other phenomena. Nothing arises due to their own individual power. So, ultimately everything is empty. This Sūtra also emphasizes that one can fix this dualistic view by achieving insight of emptiness through deep meditative practices.[122]

The Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra is another great one to understand emptiness. In this sutra the wise layman Vimalakīrti talks about non-duality, compassion and the ultimate

[120]Buddhist Text Translation Society (Trans.). *The Śūrangama Sūtra*. Burlingame, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2009, pp. 57-72.
[121] Conze, Edward (Trans.). *The Diamond Sūtra: A General Explanation of the Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. London: Buddhist Society, 1957, pp. 45-50.
[122] Suzuki, D.T. (Trans.). *The Lankavatara Sutra: A Mahāyāna Text*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1999, pp. 210-225.

reality emptiness. The teaching of non-duality in this sutra is one of the most important parts to understand the reality. Dualistic views such as good and bad, self and others, existence or non-existence all are illusions and cannot exist separately. They arise depending on each other; hence they are interconnected. To achieve wisdom, one has to see beyond these dualistic views. One has to realize that these are not separate entities and the nature of all these are empty, meaning they don't have the inherent existence to exist separately.[123]

These are few of many Mahāyāna Sūtras, which explains the emptiness. In sum, all these Sūtras are saying that emptiness is the ultimate reality. It does not fall under any of the two extremes, Eternalism and Nihilism. Many practitioners might think emptiness as nihilism or nothingness. But it is not nothing. It is the middle way. From this theory one of the major Mahāyāna Buddhist school was born named Madhyamika or Middle way school, which we will discuss in the later part of the report. And this school is based on the theory of this reality emptiness. Emptiness refers to the lack of inherent existence of all phenomena. It clearly teaches us the selflessness of all phenomena, which means there is no self or soul (ātman) within any of us or anything in the world.

Madhyamaka

Madhyamika school or the middle way school is one of the most important and influential Buddhist school in the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition. This school was founded by Nāgārjuna who is considered as one of greatest Buddhist philosopher. This school is crucial to understanding the reality of the phenomena. The *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā,* is the foundational text, which was authored by Nāgārjuna, where he explained the reality, emptiness. This school was developed as a critique against the non-Buddhist view of phenomena having inherent existence. The *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* is very much influenced from the *Prajñāpāramitā* sutras. This text is great not just because it explains the reality of emptiness, but also in this text, Nāgārjuna explains how he accepts the middle way, avoiding two extremes eternalism, which refers to eternal existence, and nihilism, which refers to no existence at all.[124]

[123] Thurman, Robert A. F. *The Holy Teachings of Vimalakīrti*. Motilal Banarsidass, 2006, pp. 167-172.
[124] Siderits, Mark, and Shōryū Katsura. *Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā: The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2013, pp. 1–5

The key teaching of this school is emptiness (*śūnyatā*). Previously, I have explained the meaning of emptiness which is highly influenced from the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā.* It is the central philosophy which the whole school is based on. Because emptiness is the wisdom of reality that one must obtain through meditative practices to be enlightened. And Nāgārjuna refers the teaching of dependent origination, the original teaching of the Buddha to explain the concept of emptiness.

If we see the Madhyamika point of view, in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā,* Nāgārjuna wrote:
Yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaḥ śūnyatām tāṃ pracakṣmahe
sā prajñaptir upādāya pratipat saiva madhyamā ||
The translation: " Whatever is dependently co-arisen That is explained to be emptiness. That, being a dependent designation, Is itself the middle way."[125]

This verse emphasizes that everything that arises depending on other causes and conditions, is nothing but empty. In another word, they are impermanent and selfless. This verse makes it clear about how dependent origination and emptiness convey the same approach. Through understanding the dependent origination, one can clearly understand the cause-and-effect concept. It clearly gives the idea that everything arises due to the cause and condition of other phenomena, nothing has its own inherent existence. Since nothing has its own inherent existence, nothing has a permanent self, and it is empty. The problem factor is many understand this empty as nothing as I have mentioned in the beginning. They see it in the nihilistic point of view. It is where the middle way concept shines. Let me discuss this problem elaborately.

In the first verse of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* it is said that nothing arises. The English translation of the verse is:
Not from self, not from other,
Not from both and not from neither—
Not for any entity at all anywhere,
Is there ever any production.[126]

[125] Nāgārjuna, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, Chapter 24, Verse 18, trans. Jay Garfield, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 300.

The confusing part here is that first it is said that things are dependently arisen. On the other hand, it is said that nothing arises from anything. Why then are there two contradictory statements? In fact, they might seem contradictory, but they are saying the same thing. Dependent origination shows that everything dependently arises. But we misunderstand it and think that everything arises from something else. Conventionally, it might seem to arise, but if we analyze it, ultimately no production can be found. According to the Middle Way school, things might be viewed as arisen by means of four extremes: from self, from others, from both, or from neither. So, the first one is clear that things do not arise by themselves, because nothing inherently exists. Then people understand the dependent origination and think that things arise depending on something else. But when we analyze that, we can see that it is also not true.

In the Rice Seeding sūtra, Buddha has given example of a seed and a sprout. If sprouts really came from seeds, then they should be the same. But they are not the same, they are different. This demonstrates the second point that is things don't arise from others. Further Buddha said, if the sprout comes from the seed, they need to have some connection or contact with each other, but that is also not possible, because the seed ceases when the sprout arises. Thus, they have no contact with each other.[127] In that case, one cannot say that sprouts specifically came from the seeds. That demonstrates the third point too, which is that they didn't arise from either because the seed and the spout don't have any connection. And the last point is, they arose from neither or uncaused. That is also not true. Nothing can arise without causes and conditions.

So, according to *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, things can arise only in these four possible ways. But since we can see nothing can arise because of these four possible ways, we can say it is dependent arising. It is called dependent arising not only because it is unable to arise by itself, but because it cannot arise by itself, not by others, not by both, not uncaused. It is the proper meaning of dependent arising: things arise only when causes and conditions come together.[128]

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[126] Siderits, Mark, and Shōryū Katsura. *Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā: The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2013, p. 18

[127] 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha. "*The Rice Seedling Sūtra (Śālistamba Sūtra)*." Translated by Tony Duff, 84000.co, 2018, https://read.84000.co/translation/toh210.html.

[128] Candrakīrti. *Introduction to the Middle Way: Candrakīrti 's Madhyamikavatara, with Commentary by Jamgön Mipham*. Translated by Padmakara Translation Group, Ebook ed., Shambhala Publications, 2012.

In that case, if nothing can arise by itself, then there is nothing permanent or eternal. So, the eternalism view is denied. On the other hand, other phenomena also cannot give birth that means nothing have the power to give birth, which confuses people to lead them towards the nihilistic view. But when we see the final point that nothing arises uncaused, meaning without causes and conditions, it becomes clear that the nihilistic view is also not the right way to understand the phenomena and this view can be denied. It is the middle way that everything arises due to causes and conditions because things arise conventionally due to causes and conditions and in the same way ceases due to causes and conditions. In the ultimate sense they are empty of essence. Hence empty. Which leads to another crucial teaching of the Madhyamika school, the two truths.

The two truths refer to the conventional truth and the ultimate truth. Whatever we see as real objects, are just existing conventionally. Like material objects, mental objects, physical objects etc. They exist conventionally without any permanent existence. But the ultimate truth is that they all are empty of essence. They are not permanent; they don't have self or inherent existence.

The problem of Human Rational thinking

Next, let us look at the reasons why it is very difficult to understand emptiness. First, it is because of human rational thinking. Rational thinking refers to the process of using logical reasoning and evidence-based decision-making to reach conclusions or solve problems. The human mind is always eager to solve any kind of problem with a precise decision, which is the first problem mentioned above. When people receive the teaching on emptiness, they immediately try to take a decision based on the word “empty” meaning “nothing.” But if we see what emptiness is, it is totally different from what an ordinary mind can perceive based on the word. When they hear emptiness doesn't mean nothing, they try to fixate on the other extreme, but when they realize that another extreme is also denied by the Buddha, they start getting confused because they are trying to fixate on one exact conclusion. Even when it comes to the dependent arising, they are fixating that it is dependent arising because it is unable to arise by itself, it is arisen by something else, that's why it arose dependently, which is not really the case. This fixation of mind cannot make one understand the emptiness. This is the first point. There is one more possible misunderstanding: when people hear about emptiness being the dependent arising, they fixate on the depending arising,

as something real, i.e., causes and conditions are real, thus arising is real. In this way, they misunderstand emptiness as being “real dependent arising.” But Nāgārjuna in the first verse teaches it is not.

Secondly, humans always want scientific proof to believe something. Science can never explain emptiness, i.e., emptiness cannot be explained scientifically. It can be understood by realizing the truth, believing in it and practicing it. To understand emptiness, one must understand what dependent arising is. The four possible ways of arising, described in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā,* are not possible to explain through science. In the modern time, with the modern invention of science, people are so biased toward it. Explaining emptiness is beyond the capability of science. When people prove something scientifically, they fixate on one specific decision. As a simple example, if we see a table, from Buddhist perspective the table is not real, it is empty, because it does not have any inherent existence, but from the perspective of science, it is real because it is a hard thing which we can touch, feel, and see. In that case, it exists, and it is real. Thus, science only can explain things on the level of conventional reality. But when it comes to the ultimate reality, science cannot prove it, since the ultimate reality cannot be touched, felt, or seen. And this point leads us to the final problem which is our limited cognition.

Emptiness deals with profound philosophical concepts that go beyond conventional thinking. It requires a deep understanding of interconnectedness and impermanence, which can be difficult for the limited cognitive mind to grasp fully. Emptiness is ultimately a non-conceptual realization. It's not something that can be fully understood through intellectual analysis alone. It requires direct experience and insight, which transcend the limitations of our cognitive mind.

In conclusion, emptiness, a central notion in the Mahāyāna Buddhism, can be misinterpreted as a state of nothingness. However, it refers to the absence of inherent essence in all phenomena. It is difficult to understand emptiness because of our tendency to come to fixed conclusions, our reliance on scientific validation, and the limitations of our cognitive capacities. Emptiness transcends our ordinary vision of the universe allowing us to see the interdependence and connectivity of all the parts of existence. Although science can explain everyday events it cannot address the ultimate reality, which is answered by the teaching of

emptiness. Accepting emptiness requires insight and a desire to move beyond typical cognitive patterns. This means that, in order to understand that emptiness is the only reality, individuals must be open-minded, modest, and capable of thinking beyond the limits of conventional methods of knowing. One must believe in it first rather than thinking about it rationally. Because emptiness is beyond the level of rational thinking. If it was possible to understand it rationally, everybody would become a buddha already. Emptiness can be understood through having faith in this teaching and meditating on it. That is why Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche in his book said: "With our limited rationale, we have a set definition of what makes sense and what is meaningful – and emptiness goes beyond that limit. It is as if the idea of "emptiness" cannot fit inside our heads."[129]

[129] Khyentse, Dzongsar Jamyang. *What Makes You Not a Buddhist*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2006 (Ebook edition).

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"Analytical Study of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* in the *Paṭṭhāna*"

By San San Aye

Dr. Ooi Eng Jin (Supervisor)

Abstract

This paper will explore the concept of *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, i.e., Dependent Origination, that shows cause and effect of living things and the view of conditional relations or *Paṭṭhāna* that shows not only cause and effect but also the conditioning forces of living things and non-living things. I shall focus highly on the relations between *Paṭiccasamuppāda* and *Paṭṭhāna* that explains the cause and effect of all phenomena in detail.

Chapter One: Introduction

Buddhism is one of the great world religions, which accepts the law of *Kamma* (Action and Reaction Law). The Buddha's teaching can be summed up in one word: "the cause and effect or the casual relation." There are two ways to explain the casual relations: *Paṭiccasamuppāda naya* and *Paṭṭhāna naya* (method of dependent origination and method of conditional relation).

Paṭiccasamuppāda explains the cause and effect in the *Saṃsāra* (cycle of birth and death), primarily focusing on living beings, while *Paṭṭhāna* extends this analysis by incorporating both living and non-living phenomena. *Paṭiccasamuppāda* (Dependent Origination) explains the process of *Saṃsāra* (cycle of birth and death) through interconnected causes and effects. It consists of twelve links: ignorance, formations, consciousness, name and form, six sense bases, contact, feeling, craving, clinging, process of becoming, rebirth, and the process of being old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair. It also highlights that ignorance (*avijjā*) and craving (*taṇhā*) are the root causes of continued existence in *Saṃsāra*. Liberation from this cycle requires breaking ignorance (*avijjā*) and craving (*taṇhā*) through wisdom (*maggañāṇa*) and insight meditation (*vipassana*). The *Paṭṭhāna* expands on conditionality by describing 24 types of conditions that govern existence. These conditions explain not only cause-and-effect relationships but also the power of conditioning forces (*satti*). *Paṭiccasamuppāda* focuses on cause and effect in living being experience, while *Paṭṭhāna* provides a deeper analysis of conditions that influence these

effects. *Paṭiccasamuppāda* describes suffering and its causes, while *Paṭṭhāna* elaborates on the mechanisms behind them. Understanding *Paṭṭhāna* helps in deeper insight into *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, leading to a clear path toward enlightenment. Buddha's teachings depend extensively on these two doctrines. Learning about these doctrines is, therefore, very helpful because it develops understanding the nature of things and the core of the Buddha's teachings.

This paper could not explain in detail these two doctrines and would only approach them from the *Theravāda* perspective. However, it is important to understand that this study of the relationship between *Paṭiccasamuppāda* and *Paṭṭhāna* helps in the understanding of Buddha's doctrines.

1.1 Objectives

- To better understand the concept of Dependent Origination as it is presented in *Paṭiccasamuppāda* and *Paṭṭhāna*.
- To conduct a comparative analysis between *Paṭiccasamuppāda* and *Paṭṭhāna* and
- To observe the significance of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* and *Paṭṭhāna* from a Theravada Buddhist perspective, as well as their interrelation.

Chapter Two: The Study of *Paṭiccasamuppāda*

The doctrine of *Paṭiccasamuppāda,* or Dependent Origination is not only teaching for the right view of existing *dhamma* but also a kind of practicing for liberation in Buddhism. Because most people believe the fact that the *atta* from the present life shifts to another life when someone dies. Unlike, *Paṭiccasamuppāda* explains the following as a means to obtain the right view. On account of *avijjā* (ignorance), beings do both the good and bad deeds that are called *saṅkhara* (formation) in past life. As a result, beings get *vipākaviññāṇa* (fruition-consciousness) at the beginning of their new lives after their death in past lives. Then, as a consequence of *vipākaviññāṇa*, the formation of *nāma* and *rūpa* (five aggregates), which is also known as *upapattibhava* or *jāti,* is become.

According to Buddhism, life is, in fact, an infinite process of births and deaths. Beings are trapped in this cycle of *Saṃsāra* for millennia upon millennia. Thus, every living being has to face old age and death, and nobody can escape from these sufferings of life[130].
Paṭiccasamuppāda explains that *Saṃsāra,* the cycle of birth and death, is perpetuated by a chain of interconnected links of cause and effect. It also reveals how to break this chain and put an end to the cycle.

2.1 Definition of *Paṭiccasamuppāda*

Paṭiccasamuppāda means the Law of Dependent Origination. *Paṭiccasamuppāda*'s central theme is the cycle of birth and death, which explains how all living beings are interdependent and connected through twelve links. Nothing exists or arises on its own, according to the doctrine; rather, everything depends on those twelve links. This is why the Buddha said that he who sees interdependent origination, sees the Dharma, and he who sees the Dharma, sees the Buddha. This is also why he said that understanding interdependent origination is the key to liberation.[131]

2.2. Concept of *Paṭiccasamuppāda*

Paṭiccasamuppāda provides a profound insight into the suffering and the causes of suffering. Getting the present life is due to the deeds that are acted based on desire in the past life. Then, beings continue to make these desire-based actions in the present life so that the new life will be gained in the future.

Hence, it can be said that unless living beings cut the desire down, they make the actions again and again and will remain in *Saṃsāra.* To escape from *Saṃsāra*, it is necessary to break that desire[132].

2.3. The Root Cause of *Paṭiccasamuppāda*

The Buddha explained that there are two portions in the process of *Paṭiccasamuppāda: avijjā* (ignorance) and *saṅkhāra* (formation) are described as the first causes in the past life, as well as *viññāṇa* (consciousness), *nāma-rūpa* (mind and body), *salāyatana* (six sense-

[130] Ven. Mahasi, Sayadaw (Myanmar) & U Aye Maung (trans.), *Discourse on Paticcasamuppāda* (Yangon: Buddha Sāsanā Nuggaha Organization, 2020), 1.
[131] Peter Della, Santina (Dr.), *The Tree of Enlightenment*: *An Introduction to the Major Traditions of Buddhism* (Chico: Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc., 1997), 125
[132]Mogok, Sayadaw, *Paticcasamuppāda*, 12, 13.

bases), *phassa* (contact), and *vedanā* (feeling) are the present effect. In this portion, *avijjā* (ignorance) is *mūla* (the root of origin). The second portion starts from the present causes and ends at the future effects, covering *taṇhā, upādāna, bhava, jāti,* and *jarā-marana*. In this portion, *taṇhā* (craving, attachment) is the root or origin (*mūla*). Therefore, *avijjā and taṇhā* are the two roots of the whole process of *Paṭiccasamuppāda.*

Chapter Three: The Views of Conditional Relations or *Paṭṭhāna*

Among the three *Piṭaka* of Buddha's Teachings, *Paṭṭhāna* is grouped under the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka.* The various conditional relations is known as the *Paṭṭhāna* are explained in this section. The conditional relations between the conditioning state (cause) and the conditioned state (effect), such as the *rūpa* cause and *nāma* effect, the *nāma* cause and *rūpa* effect, the *rūpa* and *nāma* cause to form *nāma* effect, and the *rūpa* and *nāma* cause to form the *rūpa* effect, are clearly explained. Since this is a scientific era, it will be convincing and reliable only when the conditional relations between *rūpa dhamma* and *nāma dhamma* can be explained[133]. *Paṭṭhāna,* the method of conditional relations, is described in the *Abhidhamma*, contains an explication of a scheme of 24 conditional relations (*paccaya*) for plotting the causal connections between various categories of phenomena.

3.1. Definition of *Paṭṭhāna*

The term "*Paṭṭhāna*" means "various condition" or "conditional relations".

The 24 modes of conditionality; correlate all the mental and material phenomena by cause & effect relations with specific illustrations occurring in real life are:

1) *Hetu-paccayo* - Root condition
2) *Ārammana-paccayo* - Object condition
3) *Adhipati-paccayo* - Predominance condition
4) *Anantara-paccayo* - Contiguity condition
5) *Samanantara-paccayo* - Immediacy condition
6) *Sahajāta-paccayo* - Co-nascence condition
7) *Aññamaññña-paccayo* - Mutuality condition
8) *Nissaya-paccayo* - Dependence condition
9) *Upanissaya-paccayo* - Powerful Dependence condition
10) *Purejāta-paccayo* - Pre-nascence condition

[133] Ashin Kuṇḍalābhivaṃsa & Daw Than Than Win (Trans.), *Paṭṭhāna, and Vipassanā 1: Hetu Paccayo* (*Root Condition*) (Yangon: Saddhammaramsī Meditation Centre, 2008), 3.

11) *Pacchājāta-paccayo* - Post-nascence condition
12) *Āsevana-paccayo* - Repetition condition
13) *Kamma-paccayo* - Kamma condition
14) *Vipāka-paccayo* - Kamma-result condition
15) *Āhāra-paccayo* - Nutriment condition
16) *Indriya-paccayo*—Faculty condition
17) *Jhāna-paccayo* - Jhāna condition
18) *Magga-paccayo* - Path condition
19) *Sampayutta-paccayo* - ssociation condition
20) *Vippayutta-paccayo* - Dissociation condition
21) *Atthi-paccayo* - Presence condition
22) *Natthi-paccayo* - Absence condition
23) *Vigata-paccayo* - Disappearance condition
24) *Avigata-paccayo* - Non-disappearance condition [134]

3.2 The Significances of *Paṭṭhāna* in Some Discourses

It can be found in the early literatures, like the *Anattalakhṇa Sutta* and *Nidānavagga Samyutta*, *Dukkha Vagga*, *Upādāna Sutta*, the following significant theories that are related to *Paṭṭhāna.*

a) All things are conditional; nothing exists in itself.
b) All things are therefore subject to change; nothing is permanent.
c) Therefore, neither there are any soul nor God nor any other permanent substance.
d) There is, however, continuity of the present life, which generates the second continuous life while the first withers away.

Chapter Four: The Relations Between *Paṭiccasamuppāda* and *Paṭṭhāna*

Many people are wandering about in *Saṃsāra* (the cycle of birth and death) because they do not realize the interlinking relationship between cause and effect. So, The Buddha helps the beings to escape from the *Saṃsāra* by preaching the discourses of cause and effect. These two doctrines (*Paṭiccasamuppada* and *Paṭṭhana*) are very profound and subtle. Both of these doctrines mention "cause and effect." If one needs to learn about cause and effect, one

[134] Mon, *Essence of Buddha Abhidhamma*, 240.

can learn firstly twelve factors of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* and secondly twenty-four conditions of *Paṭṭhāna*.

4.1. Three Types of Discourses on Cause and Effect.

There are three types of discourses on cause and effect.

1) The Four Noble Truths (The True realities for the Spiritually ennobled),
2) *Paṭiccasamuppāda* (Law of Dependent Origination),
3) *Paṭṭhāna* (24 modes of conditionality).

Among these three discourses, the most concise form of cause and effect is the Four Noble Truths. In it, there are two causes and two effects. The second Noble Truth, the truth of the origin of suffering (*samudaya sacca*), and the fourth Noble Truth, the truth of the path (*magga sacca*) are causes. The first Noble Truth, the truth of suffering (*dukkha sacca*), and the third Noble Truth, the truth of cessation (*nirodha sacca*) are effects or results.

In *Paṭiccasamuppāda,* the *Buddha* elaborated on the first and the second Noble Truths as the continuous current of causes and effects that, in forward order, accumulate conditions that bind us to *Saṃsāra* (*Paṭiccasamuppāda anuloma*). The third and the fourth Noble Truths, the Buddha explained as the way of ending. In reversed order, the continuous current of causes and effects, thus leading to the cessation of conditions that bind us to *Saṃsāra* (*Paṭiccasamuppāda paṭiloma*).

To have complete exposition, the Buddha had preached a wider and deeper explanation of *Paṭṭhāna.* According to more explanations of causes and effects on living and non-living things, *Paṭṭhāna* elaborates the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*. So, *Paṭṭhāna* is the widest and deepest exposition of the cause and effect of Buddha's teaching.

4.2. The Two Great Doctrines Describe Different Methods

The primary distinction between these two great doctrines is that *Paṭiccasamuppāda* only explains cause and effect, whereas *Paṭṭhāna* also incorporates the conditioning force. A force *(satti*) is that which has the power to bring about or accomplish an effect. In order to properly comprehend the *Abhidhamma* teaching on conditional relations, it is essential to understand the three factors involved in any particular

relation: the conditioning states (*paccayadhamma*), the conditioned states (*paccayuppannadhamma*), and the conditioning force of the condition (*paccayasatti*), the particular way in which the conditioning states function as conditions for the conditioned states [135].

a) conditioning state (*paccaya dhamma*),
b) conditioned state (*paccayuppanna dhamma*) and
c) conditioning force (*satti*).

Only the first two types are used to elucidate cause and effect in *Paṭiccasamuppāda*.

a) Conditioning state *(paccaya dhamma*): It is the state that is the cause on which the effect is dependent. It is the cause that is related to an effect and without which there can be no effect.
b) Conditioned state *(paccayuppanna dhamma)*: It is the state that is the effect that results from a cause. It is the effect that is related by a cause.
c) Conditioning force (*satti*): *Satti,* which has the power to bring about or accomplish. Just as the hotness of chili is inherent in it and cannot exist apart from it, so also, the conditioning forces inherent in the states cannot exist apart from those states. Therefore, the force and a state that possesses the force cannot be considered apart from each other. It has to be remembered, however, that a state can possess many conditioning forces [136].

4.3 Comparison of Two Profound Doctrines

Paṭiccasamuppāda is a very deep *dhamma* to explain because of its depth of meaning, its depth of phenomena, its depth of teaching, and its depth of penetration as Bhikkhu Bodhi described in "The Great Discourse on Causation." Ven. *Ānanda* also remarked to the Buddha that this profound *Paṭiccasamuppāda* seemed easy to him. The Buddha immediately admonished not to say this word to Ven. *Ānanda* and told," It seems deep, and it really is deep." In fact, you consider it to be easy after understanding it from my explanations. Actually, you do not know it by your own wisdom, but realize it through my wisdom"[137].

At the beginning of obtaining omniscient knowledge (*sabbaññuta ñāṇa*), the Buddha investigated *Paṭiccasamuppāda,* which was known deeply by himself, and he also

[135] Ācariya Anuruddha & Bhikkhu Bodhi (Trans.), *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society,1999), 293, 303, 304.
[136] U, Nārada*, Conditional Relations (Paṭṭhāna)* (Bristol: The Pali Text Society, 2010), xii.
[137] DN 15, D II 55.

investigated *Nibbāna,* which is the cessation of *Paṭiccasamuppāda*. When He reflected on these *two dhammas*, he realized they were very profound in nature, so sentient beings have huge difficulty knowing the profound nature of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* and *Nibbāna*[138].

Again, *Paṭṭhāna* can be estimated how it is subtle, abstruse, wide, and deep by seeing this event. The Buddha contemplated the preceding six treatises of *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*: *Dhammasanganī*, *Vibhanga*, *Dhātukathā*, *Puggala Paññatti*, *Kathā Vattahu*, and *Yamaka*. Only when The Buddha contemplated the last treatise of *Abhidhamma Patika* (*Paṭṭhāna*), theravadins believed that the rays of six colours were issued from the body of The Buddha.

4.4 Analytical Study of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* in the *Paṭṭhāna*

(a) *Avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā*

The Buddha started *Paṭiccasamuppāda* with the first link with "*avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā*." *Paṭiccasamuppāda* states simply, "Because of *avijjā, saṅkhāra* arises." It does not mean that *avijjā* (ignorance) produces *saṅkhāra (cetanā)*; actually, when *avijjā* exists, *saṅkhāra* exists. It can be seen in these *Pāḷi* phrases: "*imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti*," "When this exists, that exists [139]."

Avijjā (ignorance) means not knowing the truth, and it conditions any productive *kamma*, both wholesome and unwholesome. For example, a blind man who is helpless to walk, sometimes he may walk the right path and reach the destination he wishes; sometimes he may walk the wrong path and cannot reach the destination he wishes. In the same way, while travelling in *Saṃsāra,* beings who do not realize the truth may sometimes perform good actions (*kusala*) and sometimes perform bad actions (*akusala*). With ignorance (*avijjā*) as a condition, both *kusala* and *akusala* actions are performed.

Because of ignorance, the first Noble Truth is not realized; suffering (*dukkha*) is wrongly seen as happiness (*sukha*). Because of good *kamma*, people obtain good existences; it means they receive old age, disease, and death; they receive a lot of suffering [140]. So, among twenty-four relations, two relations, *ārammaṇa and upanissaya paccayas,* will be applied as a relationship between *avijjā* and *Kusala saṅkhāra.*

[138] Nandamālā, *The Analytical Study of Dependent Origination* in the Perspective of Conditional Relations, 75.
[139] *Visuddhimagga Mahāṭīkā*, 2. 264.
[140] Nandamālā, *Analytical Study of Dependent Origination in the Perspective of Conditional Relations*, 15, 18.

And, there are several conditioning powers of ārammaṇa, ārammaṇādhipati, ārammaṇūpanissaya, upanissaya, hetu, sahajāta, aññamañña, nissaya, sampayutta, atthi, and avigata when avijjā conditions akusala.

When *akusala citta* arises in the mental process, it usually arises seven times, performing the functions of *javana*. So, in *javana* places there are six conditioning powers of *āsevana, anantara, samanantara, upanissaya, natthi and vigata* when *avijjā* conditions *akusala.*

(b) *Saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ*

In the earlier part of *Paṭiccasamuppāda, kamma* is called "*saṅkhāra,***"** and in the later part, in the link *"bhavapaccayā jāti," kamma* is called "*bhava"* (becoming). The Buddha used these different terms because he wanted the sentient beings in the world to know the importance of *kamma. Kamma* is associated with *kilesa* (defilements), and *kamma* and *kilesa* together create the world.

Kamma is called *saṅkhāra* because *kamma* creates mind and matter or mental and material phenomena. *Kamma* builds, creates, and produces Nāma and *Rūpa*. Here, *saṅkhāra* can be divided into two types: *kusala* and *akusala kamma*, wholesome and unwholesome *kamma*. Here, *Lokuttara Kusala Kamma* are not included because *Paṭiccasamuppāda* only deals with the round of rebirth.

According to the power of *saṅkhāra* (which means *kamma*), it conditions *viññāṇa*, consciousness. *Kamma* produces *viññāṇa* in two times, i.e., *paṭisandhi* and *pavatti*. This can be found in the "The signisificance of dependent origination in Theravada Buddhism," by Ñānatiloka Mahāthera at page 14 as follow: "The Kamma-formations are to all the classes of consciousness (which include rebirth consciousness, patisandi-viññāna) a condition by way of kamma and thus also a condition by way of decisive support." Firstly, at the beginning of life, called the rebirth-linking moment (*paṭisandhi kāla*), *paṭisandhi* happens at the very beginning of a life. Secondly, from this rebirth-linking moment until the end of life, *kamma* gives results that last the whole life; this is called *pavatti*. At these two times, *kamma,* which is *saṅkhāra,* can cause the resultant consciousness (*viññāṇa*). In the preceding paragraph, reference has been made to the *kamma* can cause the resultant consciousness. According to

Paṭṭhāna, *kusala* and *akusala kamma* give results through the conditioning forces of *kamma paccaya* and *upanissaya paccaya* [141].

(c) *Viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ*

In "*viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ"; viññāṇa* refers to *citta* or consciousness, whereas *nāma* refers to *cetasika*. *Viññāṇa* gives support to *nāma-rūpa* in accordance with "*Viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ*," however, this definition can be divided into three types.

1) *Viññāṇapaccayā nāmaṃ:* Because of *viññāṇa*, *nāma* arises.
2) *Viññāṇapaccayā rūpaṃ*: Because of *viññāṇa*, *rūpa* arises.
3) *Viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ*: Because of *viññāṇa*, *nāma* and *rūpa* arise.

(i) There are nine conditioning forces between *Viññāṇa and nāma* from the view point of *Paṭṭhāna*. They are *sahajāta, aññamaññā, nissaya, sampayutta, vipāka, āhāra, indriya, atthi,* and *avigata.*

(ii) At the second part, "*viññāṇapaccayā rūpaṃ*" — due to consciousness, *rūpa* happens; this is the very first *rūpa* that arises together with *citta* (*paṭisandhi citta*). It is the *hadaya vatthu rūpa*. There are nine conditioning forces *(satti) between Viññāṇapaccayā rūpaṃ (hadaya) sahajāta, aññamaññā, nissaya, vippayutta, vipāka, āhāra, indriya, atthi,* and *avigata*[142].

(d) *Nāmarūpapaccayā Saḷāyatanaṃ*

In "*nāmarūpapaccayā saḷāyatanaṃ*", *nāma* means 52 *cetasikas*. *Rūpa* means four great elements, six *vatthus* (bases), and *jīvitindriya.* Next, *saḷāyatana* means six sense bases (*āyatana*). This *saḷāyatana* can also be divided into two types, i.e.*chaṭṭhāyatana* and *saḷāyatana*. It means *manāyatana* and the remaining five *āyatanas,* which are *cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā,* and *kāya*.

This relation is too much to be explained; due to the limited words, I will explain in general. In general, in "*nāmarūpapaccayā saḷāyatanaṃ*," *nāma* means *cetasika* and *rūpa* means *vatthurūpas* in *pañcavokāra bhūmi*. Thus, the *nāmarūpa* here means both *cetasikas* and *vatthurūpa.* How does this *nāmarūpa* relate to the *manāyatana* called *citta*. If covering

[141] Nandamālā, *Analytical Study of Dependent Origination in the Perspective of Conditional Relations*, 19, 22, 23, 26, 31.
[142] Ibid, 71, 72, 84.

the *cetasikas* and *vatthus* in a general way, *cetasikas* and *citta* arise together; there are eight forces: *sahajāta*, *aññamaññña*, *nissaya*, *vipāka*, *sampayutta*, *vippayutta*, *atthi*, and *avigata* [143].

(e) *Saḷāyatanapaccayā phasso*

The word "*saḷāyatana*" in "*saḷāyatanapaccayā phasso*" can have three meanings. They are,

1) *Chaṭṭhāyatana*: Sixth base.
2) *Saḷāyatana*: Six *ajjhattika āyatana* or internal bases.
3) *Saḷāyatana*: Six *bāhira āyatana* or six external bases.

These bases are the possible *dhammas* taking place. However, according to the viewpoint of *Suttanta*, *bāhirāyatana* means external bases. When external bases contact internal bases, *phassa* will arise.

There are six types of *phassa* in "*saḷāyatanapaccayā phasso*" because of six *āyatanas*. Minimally there must be a meeting of three *āyatanas;* then *phassa* comes to be, thus, because of many *āyatanas, phassa* arises. For the eye process, the Buddha stated in the *Suttanta*: "*Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso*." There needs to be an eye and a visible object. When the eyes and the visible object come together, eye-consciousness arises at that moment. These things have taken place: eye, visible object, and eye-consciousness. When these three meet, *phassa* arises together with them.

i) The *phassa* in "*pañcāyatanapaccayā phasso*" (*cakkhāyatana, sotāyatana, ghānāyatana, jivhāyatana,* and *kāyāyatana*) from the viewpoint of *Paṭṭhāna, pañcāyatana* condition to *phasa* with six forces: *nissaya*, *purejāta*, *indriya, vippayutta, atthi,* and *avigata*.

ii) In "*manāyatanapaccayā phasso," phassa* refers to *manosamphassa*. In "*manāyatanapaccayā manosamphasso*," *manāyatana* is related to *manosamphasso* by nine conditions: *sahajāta, aññamaññña, nissaya, vipāka, āhāra, indriya, sampayutta, atthi, and avigata* [144].

When the six external objects are related to their corresponding consciousnesses, then the related *phases* arise.

[143] Nandamālā, *The Analytical Study of Dependent Origination in the perspective of Conditional Relations,* 94, 104.
[144] Ibid, 107, 109, 111, 112.

Six sense objects, *bāhirāyatana* (external bases), can give support to *phassa* with *ārammaṇa, purejāta, atthi*, and *avigata*. In total, there are four conditions.

(f) *Phassapaccayā vedanā*

In this relation, there are six kinds of *phassa* and six kinds of *vedanā. Phassa (cakkhusamphassa e*tc.) *and vedanā (cakkhusamphassajā vedanā* etc.) are in the *viññāna* (*cakkhuviññāṇa* etc.). Though they are born simultaneously, *phassa* is the cause and *vedanā* is the effect.

From the viewpoint of *Paṭṭhāna,* there are eight conditions between *phassa* and *vedanā: sahajāta, aññamaññna, nissaya, vipāka, āhāra, sampayutta, atthi,* and *avigata*[145].

(g) *Vedanāpaccayā taṇhā*

In this relation, the meaning of *vedanā* should be noted as the 'feeling' of mind. *Taṇhā* is actually the *lobha cetasika.* When *lobha* appears in the mind, the mind becomes hungry or is famished. It has the nature of desire and wanting an object and also not being contented.

For this "*vedanāpaccayā taṇhā*," *upanissaya satti* is taking place. Regarding the statement "*vedanāpaccayā taṇhā*," we know that *vedanā* will not always cause *taṇhā* to arise. Even though there are feelings in the Buddha and arahants, craving do not arise in them anymore. Craving in other people arise because there is still *anusaya* (latent defilements). Because *vedanā* can lead to *taṇhā*, they are related to the *upanissaya* condition. We can observe this from the viewpoint of *Paṭṭhāna*[146].

(h) *Taṇhāpaccayā Upādānaṃ*

Because of craving, *upādāna* (grasping, clinging, or firmly holding on to an object) arises. At first, when the sense bases come into contact with objects, feelings arise. Due to that feeling, craving comes into existence. Later the craving develops into *upādāna*. The word *upādāna* can be divided into two parts: *upa* and *ādāna*. "*Upa"* means firmly, and "*ādāna*" means clinging or grasping. The *taṇhā* in "*vedanāpaccayā taṇhā*" is mild because it has not reached the stage of clinging yet. *Taṇhā*, which is *upādāna*, is a strong craving that

[145] Nandamāla, *Analytical Study of Dependent Origination in the Perspective of Conditional Relations*, 116.
[146] Ibid., 120, 127.

one cannot soften and let go of. Here, the *taṇhā* that wishes for something not obtained yet can be avoided or changed accordingly. However, when this *taṇhā* reaches the stage of *upādāna*, making it soft is very difficult.

In "*taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṃ*," the *upādāna* can be classified into four types: (1) *kāmupādāna,* 2) *diṭṭhupādāna,* 3) *sīlabbatupādāna*, and (4) *attavādupādāna*. *Kāmupādāna* means *taṇhā* or *lobhacetasika*. *Diṭṭhupādāna*, *sīlabbatupādāna,* and *attavādupādāna* are all *diṭṭhi cetasika*. *Diṭṭhi* means wrong view.

(i) "*taṇhāpaccayā kāmupādānaṃ*" can be translated as "due to *taṇhā*, *kāmupādāna* arises." *Kāmupādāna* is clinging to sensual pleasure or clinging to sensual objects. Due to the supporting of *upanissaya-satti*, *tanhā* causes *kāmupādānam* [147].

(ii) In "*taṇhāpaccayā diṭṭhupādāna*, *sīlabbatupādāna,* and *attavādupādāna," f*rom the viewpoint of *Paṭṭhāna*, the craving relates to these *upādānas* by the power of *sahajāta*, *aññamaññā*, *nissaya, sampayutta, hetu, atthi,* and *avigata.*

(i) *Upādānapaccayā bhavo*

This "*upādānapaccayā bhavo*" taught by the Buddha is very wide. This is the *Dhamma* trying to cover the whole world. They are two-fold; *kamma*-process becoming and rebirth-process becoming. first, *kamma* process becoming, in brief, is both volition and the states of covetousness, etc., associated with the volition and reckoned as *kamma* too, according as it is said: "Herein, what is *kamma* process becoming? The formation of merit, the formation of demerit, the formation of the imperturbable, either with a small (limited) plane or with a large (exalted) plane: that is called *kamma* process becoming. All *kamma* that leads to becoming is called *kamma* process becoming". The rebirth process, briefly, is aggregates generated by *kamma.* [148]

Upādāna is actually *taṇhā* and *diṭṭhi,* which are mental factors. When the *upādāna* caused *akusala kammabhava* arises, *taṇhā* and *diṭṭhi* arise together with *cetanā* in the same mind, *sahajāta*, *nissaya, aññamaññā, sampayutta, atthi, and avigata are supporting* [149].

[147] Nandamālā, *The Analytical Study of Dependent Origination in the perspective of Conditional Relations,* 129, 133, 137.
[148] Ñāṇamoli (trans.), *Path of Purification* (*Visuddhimagga*), 593.
[149] Nandamālā, *Analytical Study of Dependent Origination in the Perspective of Conditional Relations*, 151.

From the viewpoint of *taṇhā*, the *taṇhā* relates to the *cetanā* that arises together by *hetu-paccaya*. As for the viewpoint of *diṭṭhi*, *hetu paccaya* is not included. Instead of *hetu, magga* is included. As for *nāma* and *rūpa*, there is *vippayutta-paccaya* [150].

(j) *Bhavapaccayā jāti*

In "*upādānapaccayā bhavo*," *bhava* means both *kammabhava* and *upapattibhava*; thus, "because of clinging, *kammabhava* and *upapattibhava* arise." In "*bhavapaccayā jāti*," the *bhava* is not related to *upapattibhava*; it is only related to *kammabhava*. *Upapattibhava* is not taken into consideration as it is defined as "*jāti.*"

"Jāti" means the arising or birth of *viññāṇa*, *nāma-rūpa*, *saḷāyatana*, *phassa,* and *vedanā*, the manifestation of the aggregates. Due to *kamma satti (*which is actually *nānākkhaṇika kamma)* and *upanissaya-satti*, *jāti* in the *Saṃsāra* takes place because of *kamma*. Thus, the *kamma* relates to *vipākakkhandha,* or resultant aggregates, through the power of *upanissaya-satti* and *nānākkhaṇika-kamma.*

(k) *Jātipaccayā jarā, maraṇa, soka, parideva, dhukkha, domanassa, upayāasa*

Because of birth, aging, sickness, and death will happen. In "*bhavapaccayā jāti*," *jāti* means arises. "*Jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ*" with the coming of *jāti*, *jarā* (aging), and *maraṇa* death) also follow.

In the original *Pāḷi* discourses, the Buddha defined the manners and characteristics of old age as "*khaṇḍicca, pālicca, valittacata*." *Khaṇḍicca* means broken; it refers to broken teeth. *Pālita* means white hair, whereas *valittacata* means the wrinkling of the skin[151].
When there is *jāti*, there is *jarā*. Aging cannot be avoided. From the viewpoint of *Paṭṭhāna*, *jāti* (birth) supports *jarā* (aging) through the power of *upanissaya satti*.

The meaning of death is "*khandhānaṃ bhedo*" — the breaking up of the aggregates2 [152] , which are the *rūpakkhandha, vedanākkhandha*, *saññākkhandha*, *saṅkhārakkhandha,* and *viññāṇakkhandha;* they are all destroyed. In "*Jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ*" — due to birth, aging slowly takes place. Finally, death takes place, and this is the end of life. Birth relates to *jarā-maraṇa* by the power of *upanissaya satti.*

[150] Ashin, Pandita (Trans.), *Visuddhimegga Myanmar translation* (Yangon: U Aung Pyone, 2017), 158.
[151] SN 12.2
[152] *Dīgha Nikāya*, 2.24. (*Mahāvaggapāḷi, Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*).

When there is birth, aging and death will take place definitely. Normal beings suffer not only aging and death but also sorrow, lamentation, suffering mental pain, and grief arise. But these do not happen to all beings. Some beings, such as arahants, do not have *soka* (sorrow), *parideva* or lamentation, *domanassa*, and *upāyāsa*. Because arahants have eradicated all the impurities of mind.

According to "*bhavapaccayā jāti*," due to *bhava*, *jāti* or rebirth arises. It is *dukkha* because a sentient being has to face the disturbances and torments from the continuous arising and passing away of all phenomena. From the viewpoint of *Paṭṭhāna*, birth is the main cause for these sufferings, like sorrow, lamentation, etc., happening through the conditioning force of *upanissaya*[153].

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This work entitled "Analytical Study of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* in the *Paṭṭhāna*" is to study the concept of these *dhammas* and the aims of this work is to provide a basic understanding of the concept of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* thought of Burmese famous Vipassana master Mogok Sayadaw and Burmese well known *Abhidhamma* master Dr. Nandamālābhivaṃsa's "The Analytical Study of Dependent Origination in the Perspective of Conditional Relation" as a foundation for further exploration into this work. Here, it will be studied mainly the relation between *Paṭiccasamuppāda* and the *Paṭṭhāna*, then made a rather comparison with these *dhammas* and also with other Buddhist texts from an academic point of view.

To liberate from the cycle of birth and death, it is necessary to gain the Magga *Ñāṇa*. To gain that Magga *Ñāṇa*, it is required to realize insightfully the interlinks of cause-and-effect, the conditioning state, conditioned state and conditioning force that explained in *Paṭiccasamuppāda* and *Paṭṭhāna*. *Paṭiccasamuppāda* provides a structured explanation of beings suffering and the cycle of rebirth through its twelve interconnected links. However, *Paṭṭhāna* expands this analysis by offering a broader and deeper perspective on causality, incorporating not just beings' experiences but all conditioned phenomena—both animate and inanimate.

[153]Nandamālā, *Analytical Study of Dependent Origination in the perspective of Conditional Relations*, 152, 154, 155, 158.

By examining their relationship, this study highlights that while *Paṭiccasamuppāda* presents a fundamental framework for understanding the nature of suffering and liberation, *Paṭṭhāna* offers an extensive analysis of the conditioning forces that influence all realities. From a practical perspective, understanding these doctrines enhances one's ability to analyze the causes of suffering and find a path toward Liberation (*Nibbāna*). The knowledge gained from studying both *Paṭiccasamuppāda* and *Paṭṭhāna* allows for a more profound realization of impermanence (*anicca*), non-self (*anatta*), and the cessation of suffering (*dukkha-nirodha*) for all *dhammas*.

In conclusion, this research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of these relationships to the concept of these valuable *dhammas* through wisdom (*paññā*) and meditative practice (*vipassana*).

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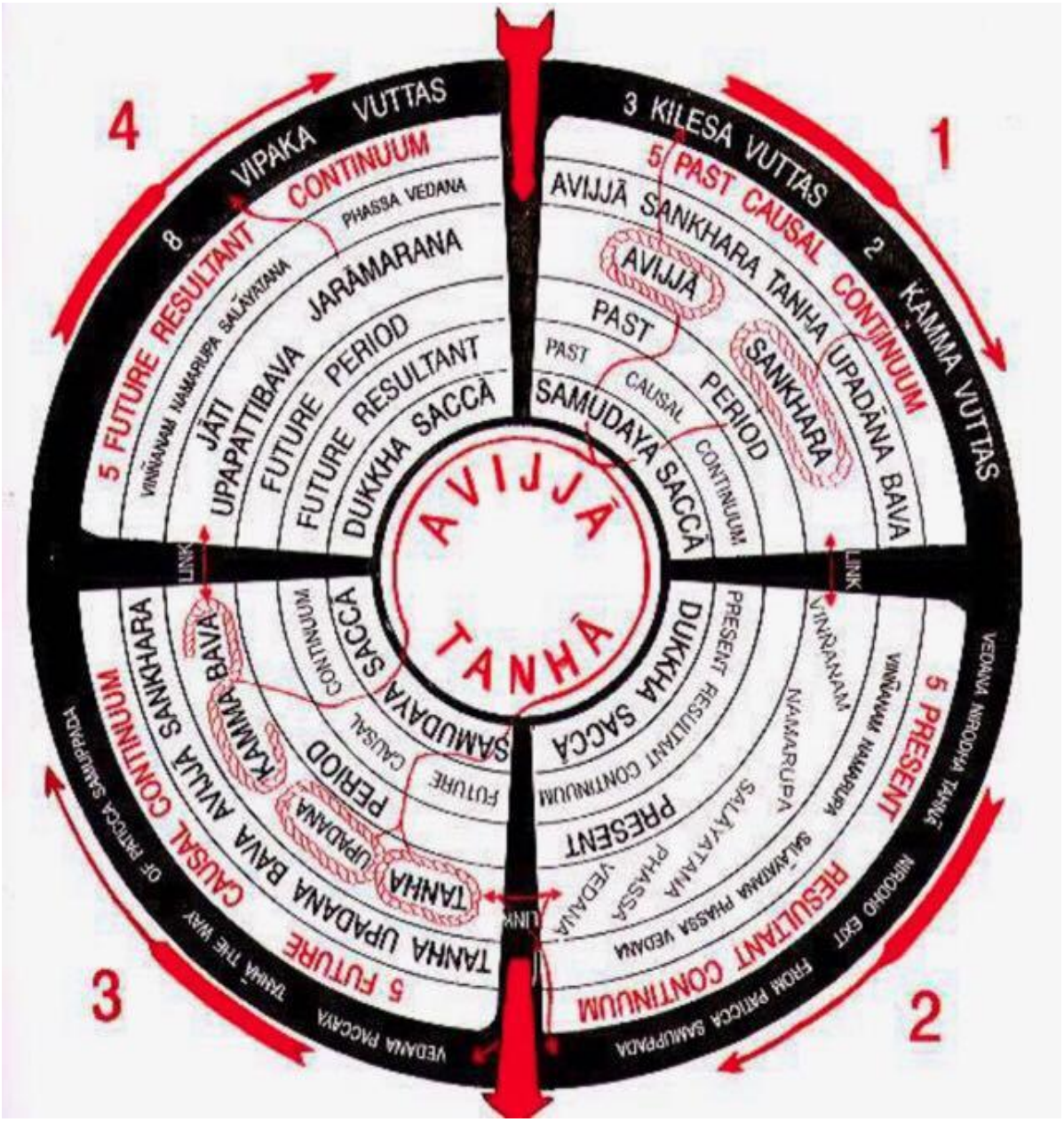
APPENDIX

The Chart of Paṭccasamuppāda created by Venerable Mogok Sayadaw



This chart is extracted from "*Paṭcasamuppāda*, The Law of Dependent Origination" by Mogok Sayadaw.

Representation of the Buddha in Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* (1879): An Orientalist Study

By Kazal Barua

Prof. Tilak Kariyawasam (Supervisor)

Abstract

In *The British Discovery of Buddhism* (1988), Philip C. Almond explores how the Victorian understanding and interpretation of Buddhism reflect both the cultural dynamics of nineteenth-century England and its perceptions of the Orient. Using Edward Said's concept of Orientalism as a framework, Almond examines the Victorian portrayal of the Buddha and his teachings, suggesting that the English view of the Buddha aligned with the characteristics of an ideal Victorian gentleman. In a review of Almond's work, Jonathan A. Silk highlights that the Victorian representation of the Buddha was shaped by European categories and influenced by Western agendas.

Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* (1879), a Victorian narrative poem detailing the Buddha's life, exemplifies this process. Armold draws upon Buddhist texts available during that period, such as Samuel Beal's translation of *The Romantic Legend of Sakya Buddha* from the Chinese version of the *Abhiniṣkramaṇa-sūtra*, Spence Hardy's *A Manual of Buddhism*, and the *Lalitavistara*. His depiction of the Buddha and his teachings is deeply informed by the ideological, cultural, and political context of Victorian England. This essay explores how Arnold's portrayal of the Buddha in the poem reflects the broader socio-cultural landscape of the Victorian era.

Introduction

The Light of Asia, a long narrative poem by Edwin Arnold, was first published in 1879 during the Victorian era, a time of profound material and ideological transformations that significantly influenced Victorian society. Emerging within this historical context, the poem achieved widespread popularity and played a crucial role in fostering interest in Buddhism. Drawing from Buddhist texts available during that period, such as Samuel Beal's translation of *The Romantic Legend of Sakya Buddha* from the Chinese version of the *Abhiniṣkramaṇa-sūtra*, Spence Hardy's *A Manual of Buddhism*, and the *Lalitavistara*,

Arnold's depiction of the Buddha and his teachings is deeply informed by the ideological, cultural, and political context of Victorian England. This essay explores how Arnold's portrayal of the Buddha in the poem reflects the broader socio-cultural landscape of the Victorian era.

The Perspective of Orientalism

In the 19th century, discussions about the Buddha evolved through several phases, beginning with his identification with various mythological and divine figures, culminating in the recognition of his historical existence as "locatable in history through his contemporary textual presence"[154] by the mid-to-late Victorian period. However, as Almond argues, the Victorian portrayal of the Buddha, constructed from available textual sources, reflects not only their understanding of the Buddha but also "the Victorian image of the ideal man."[155] Almond applies Edward Said's theoretical framework of Orientalism to examine how the Victorians interpreted the Buddha and his teachings. In the introduction to his book *The British Discovery of Buddhism*, Almond writes: "I hope to show the way in which 'Buddhism' was created, and discourse about it determined, by the Victorian culture in which it emerged as an object of discourse."[156] He further grounds his approach in Said's work, asserting that Victorian discourse about Buddhism is part of a broader Orientalist framework, similar to the one Said analyzed in his study of Islam and the Middle East in *Orientalism*. While Almond acknowledges the distinctions between the discourse on Buddhism and that on Islam and the Middle East, he highlights that his focus is not on how Buddhism truly was but on examining the internal logic and structure of Victorian views on Buddhism, shaped by broader cultural and ideological forces.[157]

To further clarify Almond's approach, it is essential to refer to the theory as articulated by Edward Said. In his seminal work, *Orientalism*, Said analyzes "the processes by which the 'Orient' was, and continues to be, constructed in European thinking."[158] He defines Orientalism as "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological

[154] Philip C. Almond. "*The British Discovery of Buddhism*", New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 56.
[155] ibid, p. 77.
[156] ibid, p. 139.
[157] Almond, pp. 4-6.
[158] Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen, *The Post- Colonia Studies: The Key Concepts* (2nd Edition), London and New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 153.

distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident.'"[159] Moreover, Said explains that "Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."[160] He argues that "without examining Orientalism as a discourse, one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period." [161] Said emphasizes that "the relationship between Occident and Orient" is fundamentally "a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony."[162] This perspective underscores how the West constructed and controlled the idea of the Orient through a pervasive and multifaceted framework of authority and influence.

A Brief Overview of the Nature of Victorian Buddhism

The historical context in which Buddhism was introduced to and received by Britain is crucial for understanding *The Light of Asia*. Before 1800, Buddhism was only slightly known in the West. However, by the 1830s, it began to attract serious attention.[163] Much had been written about Buddhism during this period, but it was clear that little was understood, as most writings were based on non-Buddhist sources and no original Buddhist texts had been examined. As a result, there was a call for "a critical investigation of its origin, system of doctrines, and the history of its diffusion."[164]

From the 1850s onwards, translations of Sanskrit and Pali Buddhist texts began to emerge, which allowed Buddhism to be seen as a distinct "object" of study.[165] During this time, the textual analysis of Buddhism became the central scholarly task.[166] Several material and ideological factors fueled the growing scholarly interest in Buddhism during this

[159] Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen, *The Post- Colonia Studies: The Key Concepts* (2nd Edition), London and New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 153.
[160] Said, Edward, W. "*Orientalism*", New York: Vintage Books, 1979, p. 3.
[161] ibid, p. 3.
[162] ibid, pp. 2-5.
[163] Bluck, Robert, *British Buddhism: Teaching, Practice and Development*, London: Routledge, p. 4.
[164] Almond, p. 25.
[165] Almond, p. 13; Franklin, J. Jeffrey, *The Life of the Buddha in Victorian England*, ELH, Vol. 72, No. 4, Winter 2005, pp. 941-974, published John Hopkins University Press.
[166] Almond, p. 24.

period.[167] Franklin identifies four key conditions: first, Victorian society faced a "crisis of faith" as Christianity's influence waned. Second, the rise of Darwinism heightened tensions between religion and science. Third, the emergence of Comparative Religion as an academic discipline offered a fresh framework for studying religious traditions. Lastly, British colonial rule in India brought the British into direct contact with Buddhist culture and teachings, further sparking interest.[168]

Another important factor in the rise of Victorian Buddhism was the increasing interest in reading, particularly among the growing middle class, which had gained socio-economic power and developed a "voracious appetite for literature of all kinds."[169] The socio-economic developments, growing population, cheap and popular literature, and improvements in education all contributed to a demand for reading materials. This was complemented by the "Victorian penchant for religious literature." [170] Clarke refers to this as a "boom in orientomania,"[171] a period of intense fascination with the East.

Additionally, the period saw the rise of religious and ideological pluralism, as competing views circulated widely, creating a "climate of opinion in which quite apart from any specific doubts, the habit of doubt was unconsciously bred. One had an uneasy feeling, perhaps only half-conscious, that his beliefs were no longer quite secure."[172] Victorians were often baffled by the sheer volume of new scientific and historical knowledge, which led to a growing sense of ideological uncertainty.[173] This uncertainty, combined with the cultural fascination with the East, fueled interest in Buddhism.

However, while there was significant interest in Buddhism, the conversion of Victorians to Buddhism was rare. Social pressures discouraged the expression of beliefs that could be seen as deviant or destructive to Christian orthodoxy.[174] It was only towards the end

[167] Almond, p. 13; Franklin, J. Jeffrey, *The Life of the Buddha in Victorian England*, ELH, Vol. 72, No. 4, Winter 2005, p. 33
[168] Franklin, pp. 942-943.
[169] Almond, p. 34.
[170] Almond, pp. 33-35; Cook, Chris, *The Routledge Companion to Britain in the 19th Century*, London and New York: Routledge, 2005, p. 109.
[171] Clarke, J. J., *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter between Eastern and Western Thought*, London and New York: Routledge, 1997, p 73.
[172] Almond p. 34; Brooks, Wright, *Interpretation of Buddhism to the West*, New York: Bookman, 1957, p. 69; Houghton, Walter, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870*, p. 12.
[173] Houghton, p. 12.
[174] Almond, p. 36.

of the century and in the first decade of the 20th century that some Victorians began converting to Buddhism, leading to the formation of a Buddhist society in Great Britain and Ireland.[175] Almond suggests that the failure of Buddhism to attract widespread conversion was due to the Western attitude of "unquestionable superiority" over the East, which hindered any genuine appreciation or appropriation of Buddhism.[176]

According to Almond, the Buddhism that emerged in the Victorian context was "the Victorian creation of an ideal textual Buddhism,"[177] constructed from available Buddhist sources in Western institutions. This ideal Buddhism was often rejected as decadent and degenerate when compared to the Buddhism practiced in the East, thus justifying the missionary efforts of Christian colonialism. At the same time, this idealized form of Buddhism allowed for the incorporation of certain aspects of Buddhist thought into Victorian culture, grounded in the past and constructed through Western texts.[178] This context—marked by social, cultural, and ideological forces—shaped *The Light of Asia* and its participation in the ongoing debates about religion and culture.

The success of *The Light of Asia* can be attributed to its timely response to the socio-cultural and historical context of the time. Arnold, who was part of the liberal movement, deliberately wrote the poem "as a witness for religious liberalism."[179] His choice of India as the subject was influenced by his personal experiences, but he also recognized the growing audience for such writing.[180] As Clarke observes, Arnold believed in a "close intellectual bond between Buddhism and modern science," an idea that was widely accepted among intellectuals at the turn of the century.[181] Clarke notes that the poem arrived at a time when the scholarly approach to Buddhism was changing and, by presenting a portrayal of the Buddha and his teachings that resonated with the optimistic spirit of the late Victorian era, it helped spread the Buddhist message to a broad and receptive audience.[182] The poem also

[175] Almond, p. 13; Franklin, J. Jeffrey, *The Life of the Buddha in Victorian England*, ELH, Vol. 72, No. 4, Winter 2005, p. 36.
[176] Almond, p. 36.
[177] Almond, p. 40.
[178] ibid, p. 40.
[179] Brooks, p. 71.
[180] ibid, p. 68.
[181] Clarke, pp. 82-83.
[182] ibid, p. 88.

reflected the growing pluralism and eclecticism of the time, supporting the belief that truth could be expressed through many different traditions and was not exclusive to Christianity.[183]

The Victorian Conceptualization of the Buddha

Over the course of the 19th century, Victorian perceptions of the Buddha evolved significantly. During the pre-Victorian period, the Buddha was often conflated with various mythological and divine figures based on etymological research and euhemerist interpretations. British scholars identified the Buddha with deities such as the Scandinavian god Woden, Neptune, Osiris, Jupiter, Brahma, Pan, Apollo, Krishna, and Shiva.[184] Until the late 1830s, the Buddha was also commonly regarded as an incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu.[185]

Throughout the first half of the 19th century, the concept of two Buddhas—a founder and a reformer—was widely accepted, contributing to further confusion about his identity. Alongside this was the misconception that Buddhism originated outside of India, with proposed origins in regions such as Africa, Persia, or Mongolia. Another prevalent misunderstanding was the belief that Sanskrit was the older, original source of early Buddhist teachings, from which they were later translated into Pāli. This was part of a broader debate throughout the 1840s concerning the historical precedence of Buddhism or Brahmanism.

Over time, these misconceptions began to diminish. By 1847, a clear distinction had been made between the Hindu conception of the Buddha and the Buddha of Buddhism. The theory of two Buddhas was abandoned by the mid-1830s. By the late 1840s, the Indian origin of Buddhism was widely accepted, and in May 1844, it was definitively stated that India was the birthplace of the Buddha. The priority of Brahmanism was established in the 1850s, and by the end of that decade, the historical existence of the Buddha was indisputably recognized. As Almond observes, the Buddha of the mid- and late-Victorian era emerged as a distinctly human figure. Rather than being compared to mythological or divine entities, he was regarded as a historical personality akin to Jesus, Mohammed, or Martin Luther.[186] This transformation marked a significant shift in how the Victorians conceptualized the Buddha, grounding him in history rather than mythology.

[183] Clarke, p. 88.
[184] Almond, pp. 54-88; Bluck, p. 5 King, p. 144.
[185] Almond, p. 30.
[186] Almond, p. 56.

Representation of the Buddha in *The Light of Asia*

In the preface to *The Light of Asia*, Arnold firmly asserts the historicity of the Buddha, stating: "The Buddha of this poem—if, as need not be doubted, really existed—was born on the borders of Nepal about 620 B.C. and died about 543 B.C. at Kusinagara in Oudh."[187] As noted earlier, the Victorian understanding of the Buddha had shifted from the pre-Victorian conception of a divine figure to a human one, "locatable in history through his contemporary textual presence."[188] This transition rendered untenable the earlier view of the Buddha as a divine being rooted in mythical time and ushered in a search for a historically plausible account of his life.[189]

This Victorian quest for the historical Buddha paralleled the European search for the historical Jesus, which emphasized a method of "excluding the miraculous and the supernatural" [190] and accepting what remained as historically credible. Living in an intellectual climate dominated by a "nostalgia for origins,"[191] Arnold approached Buddhism with the critical assumptions prevalent in liberal Protestantism. He adhered to the notion that the earliest and most primitive form of any doctrine was the truest, with subsequent developments seen as distortions introduced by priests and theologians.

In this light, Arnold gravitated towards the Hinayana (the Lesser Vehicle) or Theravāda (the Doctrine of the Elders) tradition of Buddhism, which he regarded as a "more austere faith" and "the more primitive tradition."[192] Rejecting the supernatural and doctrinal orthodoxy, Arnold was uninterested in Buddhist beliefs that paralleled those he had already dismissed in Christianity. Instead, he sought to construct a "quest of the historical Buddha," [193] portraying him through a lens shaped by Victorian ideals and critical methodologies.

With the historicity of the Buddha firmly established, admiration for Buddhism shifted from its intrinsic religious aspects to the personality and character of its founder, who was celebrated for his charm, tact, tenderness, "calm and sweet majesty," "rigid truthfulness,

[187] Arnold, Preface to *The Light of Asia*.
[188] Almond, p. 56.
[189] ibid, p. 64.
[190] ibid, p. 67.
[191] King, p. 147.
[192] Brooks, p. 89.
[193] Brooks, p. 90; King, p.148.

rare humility, extreme chastity, unwearying patience, filial devotion, boundless self-sacrifice, and genuine deep and constant enthusiasm for humanity," along with his "noble physique, superior mental endowments," "serene gentleness and benignity," wisdom, eloquence, "intellectual originality," and, above all, his compassion and "intense sympathy for suffering" that captivated millions, embodying, as Almond observes, the qualities of an "ideal Victorian gentleman" and the virtues of Thomas Carlyle's Great Men—heroes who profoundly shaped history.[194]

Given this context, it is unsurprising that the Buddha depicted in *The Light of Asia* is endowed with all these admirable qualities. Building on the historical background outlined above, the following section examines the representation of the Buddha in *The Light of Asia*.
As previously noted, one of the most debated topics during the Victorian era was the existence of God. As Brooks Wright observes, Arnold aligns with "the southern school, known as the Hinayana (the lesser way) or the Theravada (wisdom of the elders),"[195] which represents the older and more austere tradition. This tradition "worships no supreme God and regards Buddha as entirely human, rather than the embodiment of any divine principle."[196] Thus, while the Buddha in *The Light of Asia* is depicted with god-like attributes and an almost divine demeanor, he is ultimately presented as a man, not a deity.

In the poem, the Buddha himself declares, "I am as all these men who cry upon gods..." and, addressing Sujata, he says, "…me who am no God,/But one thy Brother."[197] Like other humans, he experiences a range of physical, mental, and emotional states. He feels pain when he pricks his hand with a barb, falls in love, experiences joy and sorrow, and even exhibits moments of pride. These human qualities underline his portrayal as a relatable figure, grounded in the human experience, despite his elevated moral and spiritual stature.
Another notable attribute of the Buddha admired by the Victorians was his humility and gentleness, qualities that are also prominently depicted in the Buddha of *The Light of Asia* from an early age. For instance, when he first goes to study under his teacher, Visvamitra, he "stood/With eyes bent down before the Sage," [198] demonstrating profound respect and humility.

[194] Almond, pp. 77-79.
[195] Brooks, p. 89.
[196] ibid, p. 89.
[197] Arnold, VI.201.
[198] ibid, I.173-174.

The narrator further emphasizes his gentleness, describing him as "in speech/Right gentle, yet so wise, princely of mien,/Yet softly-mannered; modest, deferent,/And tender-hearted, though of fearless blood."[199] These characteristics not only reflect the Buddha's noble demeanor but also align him with the Victorian ideal of moral and emotional refinement, reinforcing his image as both a compassionate teacher and a figure of exemplary character.

Another defining attribute of the Buddha is his majestic appearance and commanding personality, which is consistently highlighted throughout the narrative. The first glimpse of his solemn and awe-inspiring presence is offered through the perspective of the young women attending the "court of pleasure," an event organized for the prince to choose a wife. Struck by his grandeur, they move slowly, their "large black eyes/Fixed on the ground," overwhelmed by the "awe of Majesty" that made their "fluttering hearts" race.[200]

Seated "so passionless/Gentle," the prince's serene and dignified demeanor instills a sense of reverence, causing the girls to approach him with "down-dropped lids." His presence is described as "so divine he seemed, so high and saint-like and above her world,"[201] underscoring his extraordinary and otherworldly charm.

Another instance of his striking elegance is conveyed through the perception of an Indian woman who observes him wandering after his renunciation. Her reaction encapsulates his almost transcendent allure:

The dark surprised eyes of some Indian maid
Would dwell in sudden love and worship deep
On that majestic form, as if she saw
Her dreams of tenderest thought made true, and grace
Fairer than mortal fire her breast.[202]

These portrayals enhance the Buddha's persona, presenting him as a figure of unmatched dignity and grace, seamlessly blending human qualities with transcendent ideals.

[199] ibid, I.154-156.
[200] ibid, II.73-76.
[201] Arnold, II.85.
[202] ibid, V.89-93.

The Buddha's appearance is so captivating that it evokes profound feelings of "love and worship" in the hearts of those who behold him. Kisagōtami describes his brow as being "like a god's." Similarly, the people of Rajagriha are mesmerized as they witness him enter the city. Struck by "The passage of our Lord moving so meek,/With yet so beautiful a majesty,"[203] they pause in their work and conversations, unable to look away. While some regard him as "Sākra or the Devaraj," others believe he is a "holy man."

A similar impression is shared by Sujāta's maid Radha, who is sent to prepare an altar under the tree for an offering of milk-rice. Upon seeing the Buddha seated beneath the tree, she mistakes him for a god and returns, exclaiming with excitement:

Ah, dear Mistress! look.
There is the Wood-God sitting in his place,
Revealed, with folded hands upon his knees.
See how the light shines round about his brow!
How mild and great he seems, with heavenly eyes,
Good fortune is it thus to meet the gods.[204]

Yet, as previously noted, the Buddha is not a god but a human being. Like any other person, he experiences the full range of human emotions and physical sensations. He feels pain when pricking his hand on a barb, falls in love, experiences both sadness and happiness, and even displays moments of pride.

Another attribute of the Buddha, highly esteemed by the Victorians, is his boundless self-sacrifice. *The Light of Asia* presents numerous examples of the Buddha's willingness to forsake personal happiness for the sake of alleviating the suffering of the world. One of the most poignant instances is his separation from his beloved wife, Yashodhara. The poem vividly portrays their romantic relationship, beginning with their love at first sight, Siddhārtha's triumph over other suitors to win her hand, and their blissful married life. However, this idyllic relationship reaches its turning point when Siddhārtha decides to leave Yashodhara, driven by his greater love for the suffering world.

[203] ibid, V.351.
[204] Arnold, V.149-154.

This decision marks a crucial juncture in Siddhārtha's life, requiring him to choose between his devotion to his family and his mission to liberate humanity. In a reflective monologue, he engages in an internal dialogue, wrestling with his emotions, and ultimately resolves to leave his family and kingdom. Sacrificing the comfort and luxury of palace life, he embraces the austere path of a wanderer, with hardship as his sole companion and the earth as his bed. His love for the suffering world overpowers his attachment to his wife, unborn child, and father.

Later, when Channa, his charioteer, expresses concern for the grief that King Suddhodhana would feel upon learning of his renunciation, Siddhārtha responds, "Friend, that love is false/Which clings to love for selfish sweets of love,"[205] reaffirming his commitment to a greater cause. He sets out on a life of asceticism, marked by steadfast dedication and perseverance in the face of adversity.

The poem richly describes Siddhārtha's austere lifestyle, emphasizing his unyielding focus and resilience. He meditates "motionless," so deeply absorbed that he is oblivious to the birds and insects moving on and around him. Under the scorching heat of the blazing sun and amidst the oppressive "reeking air," he remains immersed in contemplation. His unwavering resolve to unravel the mysteries of life and navigate its labyrinths exemplifies his profound dedication to his mission, even as he endures the lurking dangers of wild beasts and the harshness of nature.

The Victorians also admired the Buddha's deep enthusiasm for humanity, which is clearly expressed in his monologue, where he reveals his longing to learn about the world beyond the palace. This curiosity is sparked by an ancient tale told by one of his maids. He asks, "Why have I never seen and never sought?/Tell me what lies beyond our brazen gates,"[206] showing a sense of restlessness and a yearning to explore the unknown. His speech conveys an instability, a hunger to discover what lies beyond the familiar confines of royal life.

[205] ibid, IV.450-451.
[206] Arnold, III.91-92.

In response to his inquiry, he is told that beyond the palace are many sights to behold: first the city, then the temples, gardens, groves, and fields, followed by ravines, parks, and the jungle of "a quarter of a yojana."[207] Beyond these, the realm of King Bimbisāra and, further still, "the vast flat world" populated by countless people. The prince, eager to see all this for himself, expresses his desire to visit the city to King Suddhodāna.

Despite the King's strict command to shield Siddhārtha from the harsh realities of life by ensuring that only joyous scenes greet him, the prince soon becomes aware of the suffering of the people. On his first visit, he encounters an old man, which leads him to understand the impermanence of youth. Realizing that his father has kept the harsh truths of life hidden from him, Siddhārtha expresses his disappointment to the King. He laments that he has not been able to learn about "the people and the streets, / Their simple usual ways, and workday deeds," and he asks to be allowed to explore the world "Beyond my happy gardens."[208] He adds, "I shall come / The more contented to their peace again, / Or wiser, father, if not well content."[209]

The following day, Siddhārtha visits the city once more, this time in disguise, wearing "a merchant's robe" so that he may observe the lives of the people without being recognized. The narrator then offers a detailed depiction of the everyday lives of people from various walks of life, as seen through the prince's keen eyes. Siddhārtha carefully observes and gathers insights into the daily lives of the people, deepening his understanding of their struggles and their way of life.

The Buddha in *The Light of Asia* is portrayed as an optimistic believer in the potential of humanity. In contrast to the passive and indifferent gods or the inaction of priests, this Buddha is active, hopeful, and determined. His optimism is emphasized throughout the poem, seen in his repeated affirmations like "there must be aid... there must be help!"[210] and "There must be refuge!"[211] In a monologue, he expresses his deep conviction in the strength and inventiveness of human beings. Aware of humanity's long history of struggle and survival, he reflects on how people have overcome adversity: discovering fire in "flint stones," mastering

[207] Ānandajoti Bhikkhu, footnotes, 191, 192, 193 respectively, *The Light of Asia*, electronic version, 2008.
[208] Arnold, III.347-351.
[209] ibid, III.350-353.
[210] ibid, III.567-568.
[211] ibid, IV.310-311.

agriculture, and inventing language. These achievements were made possible through relentless "search," "strife," and "sacrifice," which brought mankind to its current state.

The Buddha, who experiences no sorrow for himself except for his grief for others, believes that if he sacrifices everything "for love of men" and dedicates his life to seeking the truth, he will eventually find it—no matter the obstacles. He is convinced that the truth might be hidden in the most unexpected places, "Whether it lurks in hells or hides in heavens,/Or hovers, unrevealed, nigh unto all."[212] This unwavering belief in the power of human effort and his determination to discover the truth, even at the cost of his life, is central to his character. As he states, "Since there is hope for man only in man, / And none hath sought for this as I will seek, / Who cast away my world to save my world."[213] Through this, the poem establishes the Buddha as an optimist, firmly believing in the capacity of humanity and his own ability to uncover the truth that no one else has sought.

The Buddha's most dominant attribute, emphasized throughout *The Light of Asia*, is his deep sympathy and compassion, which are evident from his childhood and grow stronger over time. His profound compassion for the suffering of beings ultimately leads him to renounce his family and kingdom in search of a solution to suffering. This compassionate nature is highlighted both directly by the narrator and implied through the Buddha's actions, words, thoughts, and behavior.

The earliest evidence of his compassion is seen in the first book, where his kind and empathetic nature is portrayed as innate, stemming from the seed of Buddhahood within him. Even as a child, he instinctively shows compassion for animals and his playmates. As he matures, this compassion expands, "as a great tree grows from two soft leaves/To spread its shade afar."[214]

A pivotal moment showcasing his compassion occurs in the royal garden when he finds a wounded and bleeding swan shot by his cousin Devadatta. Without hesitation, Siddhārtha gently lifts the bird, cradles it in his lap, and begins to heal its wounds. The narrator describes in detail how he spends an hour comforting and tending to the bird. In an

[212] Arnold, IV.337-338.
[213] ibid, IV.545-547.
[214] ibid, I: 68-69.

effort to understand the bird's pain, Siddhārtha pricks his own wrist with a barb. Realizing the intensity of the bird's suffering, his eyes fill with tears, but he continues to heal the swan. When Devadatta demands the bird, a heated argument ensues between the cousins. Siddhārtha refuses to return the swan, saying, "the swan's neck beside his own smooth cheek,"[215] and firmly asserts his right to keep it, based on his act of saving it.

This conflict contrasts the characters of Siddhārtha and Devadatta, highlighting Siddhārtha's kindness and compassion against Devadatta's cruelty. The council's decision to support Siddhārtha's claim to the swan reinforces the theme of compassion. At this moment, Siddhārtha's latent compassion "stirs" within him, and he expresses his desire to become a teacher of compassion - "a speechless world's interpreter"[216] who alleviates suffering not just for humans, but for all living beings.

Throughout the narrative, Siddhārtha's compassion becomes the driving force of his actions. Whenever he encounters suffering, whether human or animal, he actively seeks to relieve it. His commitment to eradicating suffering becomes his sole life's purpose, growing stronger with each instance he witnesses the pain of others. His unwavering compassion ultimately shapes his path and solidifies his resolve to alleviate suffering in the world.

At the royal ploughing festival, Siddhārtha gains a deeper understanding of suffering. On a beautiful spring day, the king invites him to observe the festivities in the field. As he sits aside, he takes in the vibrant scene, surrounded by the beauty of nature. The narrator paints a vivid picture of the landscape: the tinkling of rippling water, balsams and lemon grass forming intricate patterns like embroidery, sowers scattering seeds, birds singing in their nests, insects rustling in the thickets, sun-birds flashing in the mango trees, coppersmiths laboring in their forges, bee-eaters chasing butterflies, squirrels darting playfully, mynas perched nearby, the brown sisters chattering in the thorns, egrets stalking among buffaloes, kites soaring in the golden sky, peacocks flying toward the painted temple, doves cooing, and the distant sound of a village drumbeat for a wedding. This serene and picturesque scene evokes an atmosphere of peace and abundance, and Siddhārtha delights in it.

[215] Arnold, I. 309.
[216] ibid, I:315.

However, as he reflects on the scene, his thoughts take a darker turn. The beauty around him suddenly fades, and he begins to see the underlying suffering. The “rose of life” is tainted by “thorns,” and the harmonious sight becomes a horrific vision of struggle. Siddhārtha realizes that the peaceful appearance of nature masks a brutal truth: all beings, from worms to humans, survive by mutual destruction—one being kills another, and in turn, is killed. This realization of the violence inherent in the natural world fills him with sorrow. Overcome by this truth, Siddhārtha retreats to sit beneath a jambu tree to meditate on the “deep disease of life”—its source and its remedy.[217] As he meditates, his heart swells with boundless pity and compassion for all living beings. He is filled with a passionate desire to heal their pain. In this moment of profound insight, his soul reaches a state of ecstasy, purged of the mortal taint of sense and self. He attains Dhyāna, the first step on the path to enlightenment.

After the two incidents illustrating the Buddha's compassion, the narrator describes a series of three key events that further deepen Siddhārtha’s understanding of human suffering and ultimately lead to his renunciation. The first of these occurs on the first day of his visit to the city, when he notices an elderly man begging for alms. Upon asking about the man, Channa, his charioteer, explains the inevitability of aging. Siddhārtha learns that youth, beauty, and vitality are fleeting, and even his beloved wife will one day age. This realization profoundly saddens him, and he reflects on the impermanence of life in a monologue. He now understands that all human life is subject to aging, and his heart fills with a deeper sense of compassion for mankind.

The second incident takes place the following day. As Siddhārtha walks through the city, he hears a mournful voice calling out for help. He hurries to the source of the sound and finds a sick man in need of comfort. Siddhārtha gently lifts him and places the sick man's head on his knee, offering comfort through his tender touch. When Channa expresses concern that the prince might contract the illness, Siddhārtha, undeterred, continues to offer his kindness without fear of contagion. Upon learning about the disease, Siddhārtha realizes that illness affects everyone in many forms, and no one can escape it. This knowledge deepens his understanding of the fragility of the human body, eventually leading to death.

[217] Arnold, I.98-99.

As Siddhārtha and Channa continue their walk, they encounter a group of people carrying a dead body to be cremated. Siddhārtha, disturbed by the sight, asks Channa about the condition of the body after death. Channa explains that death comes to all, regardless of status, and that it is a universal part of the human experience. He tells Siddhārtha that after death, individuals are reborn and must face the same cycle of suffering in a new life. This revelation fills Siddhārtha with profound sorrow and sympathy for all beings trapped in the cycle of life and death. Overcome with compassion, he reflects on the nature of the "suffering world" and vows to find a way to help relieve their pain and break the cycle of suffering.

Another remarkable quality of the Buddha highlighted in the poem is his eloquence. There are several instances in the narrative that showcase this attribute. For example, on his way to King Bimbisāra's palace, he encounters Kisagōtami, a grieving mother whose child has recently died from a snakebite. She approaches the Buddha, seeking solace, and he instructs her to collect a tola of black mustard seeds from a household where no one has ever died. However, after searching in vain, Kisagōtami returns disheartened, realizing that death is an unavoidable part of life for all. The Buddha then compassionately consoles her, teaching her about the universal nature of human suffering and helping her to understand that her grief is shared by all.

Another example of the Buddha's eloquence is demonstrated at King Bimbisāra's "hall of offering," where the Buddha delivers a profound discourse on compassion. He argues persuasively against the practice of ritual sacrifice, emphasizing the sanctity of life, the importance of mercy, the cycle of life, the law of karma, and the need for mutual harmony and equality. His speech moves the listeners so deeply that the priests cease the sacrificial rites, and King Bimbisāra issues a royal decree forbidding the killing of animals and the consumption of meat.

The impact of the Buddha's speech is further highlighted when King Suddhodāna and Princess Yasodhara send nine messengers and nine horsemen, respectively, to ask him to return home. However, upon entering the Bamboo-Garden, each of them becomes so absorbed in the Buddha's discourse that they forget their mission. "Eye-rapt upon the Master" and "heart-caught upon the speech," they are entirely captivated by the Buddha's words,

which are described as “compassionate, commanding, perfect, pure, enlightening all,” flowing from his sacred lips.[218]

The Buddha's profound wisdom is another significant attribute highlighted in the poem. For example, following the Queen’s dream, the interpreters foresee that she will give birth to “a holy child / Of wondrous wisdom” who “shall deliver men from ignorance.”[219] A similar prophecy is made by Asita, a revered sage, who, observing the prince’s physical marks such as “the rosy light, the foot-sole marks, / The soft curled tendril of the Swastika, / the sacred primal signs thirty and two, / The eighty lesser tokens,”[220] predicts that the child will become the Buddha. Asita worships the infant and declares, “Thou art Buddha, and thou wilt preach the law and save all flesh / who learn Law, though I shall never hear.”[221] He further states that the prince will fill the world with “Wisdom’s scent / And Love’s dropped honey.”[222]

The Buddha’s wisdom is also acknowledged by his teacher, who, recognizing the young prince’s superior knowledge, prostrates before him, saying, “Thou art Teacher of thy teachers—thou, not I, art Guru.”[223]

Throughout his six-year journey in search of truth, the Buddha encounters a variety of individuals, learning from each one. He meets ascetics and philosophers, including Alāra and Udra, two great sages of the time, who share with him their highest teachings. However, the Buddha remains unsatisfied with their instruction and continues his quest. His insatiable curiosity for knowledge is further demonstrated in an incident when he is meditating and notices a group of “nautch-dancers of Indra’s temple”[224] passing by, singing a song. While another holy man, sitting nearby, pays no attention, the Buddha's keen mind perceives deep meaning in the song. He realizes that his previous approach to asceticism was flawed—he had pushed himself too hard, weakening his body and failing to see the truth. Understanding that he must regain his strength to continue his journey, the Buddha decides to eat the food offered by Sujāta.

[218] Arnold, VII.247-252.
[219] ibid, I.45-47.
[220] ibid, I.131-132.
[221] Arnold, I.135.
[222] ibid, I.40-41.
[223] ibid, I. 246-248.
[224] ibid, VI.84-85.

After regaining his strength, the Buddha inquires about Sujāta's philosophy of life. She shares her simple, grounded view: to perform her duties, care for her family, be loyal to her husband, and observe traditional customs. The Buddha appreciates her wisdom, saying, "Thou teachest them who teach, / Wiser than wisdom in thy simple lore."[225] Nevertheless, he resolves to discover a truth that "none hath sought"[226] before, continuing his pursuit of deeper understanding. Almond further says,

"It was perhaps inevitable that the Buddha, *qua* religious reformer, should be compared with Martin Luther, and that Buddhism should be compared with the Protestant Reformation; inevitable, not only because of Carlyle's vision of Luther as he who broke the idols of Formulism and pagan Popeism, but also because the historical Buddha entered Western history in the 1850s during an especially virulent outbreak of anti-Catholicism in England."[227]

In addition to portraying the Buddha as a supreme human with exceptional qualities, he was also depicted as a challenger to the prevailing Hinduism of his time. The Buddha was seen as a great social reformer who opposed the "inequities of the caste system" supported by the "Brahminical hierarchy."[228] In contrast, he championed the "equality of all men."[229] This portrayal of the Buddha as a reformist figure was influenced by contemporary political and ideological interests. As Jonathan A. Silk observes, "Within a British colonial context it was mainly as a counter to the predominant Hindu system in India that the Buddha could be of use"[230] because "in this he was aligning himself with the vast majority of Victorians."[231] Almond adds, "It was perhaps inevitable that the Buddha, *qua* religious reformer, should be compared with Martin Luther, and that Buddhism should be compared with the Protestant Reformation; inevitable, not only because of Carlyle's vision of Luther as he who broke the idols of Formulism and pagan Popeism, but also because the historical Buddha entered Western history in the 1850s during an especially virulent outbreak of anti-Catholicism in England."[232]

[225] ibid, VI.275-276.
[226] ibid, IVI.546.
[227] Almond, p. 73
[228] ibid, p. 72.
[229] ibid, p. 72
[230] Silk A., Jonathan *The Victorian creation of Buddhism*. J Indian Philos 22, p. 182.
[231] Almond, p. 70
[232] ibid, p. 73

The Light of Asia also portrays the Buddha as a critic of sacerdotalism and sacrificial practices. His first criticism of sacerdotalism appears in a monologue in Book the Fourth, where he questions the necessity of the power of gods, casting doubt on their existence. This is emphasized through the repeated questioning of "Who hath seen them (gods)—who?"[233] He expresses his disillusionment by questioning what the gods have done for their worshippers, who offer sacrifices, support temples, feed priests, and visit shrines dedicated to gods such as Vishnu, Shiva, and Surya. Yet, the gods fail to save anyone, not even "the worthiest,"[234] from suffering. No one can escape the inevitable agonies of life, including the pains of love, transience, disease, old age, and death. Furthermore, the cycle of life perpetuates new and old suffering alike. The Buddha points out that no woman, despite offering "white curds and trim tulsi-leaves,"[235] has gained the "fruit of the fast or harvest of the hymn,"[236] nor has she experienced less pain during childbirth.

Another instance of his critique of priesthood occurs when he encounters herdsmen bringing a hundred goats and sheep to King Bimbisara's palace for sacrifice. Siddhārtha expresses a desire to accompany them, and among the animals, he notices a lamb limping and bleeding from an injury. Showing compassion, he lifts the lamb onto his shoulder, stating that it is better to actively help one suffering animal than to remain passive like the priests praying in distant caves. The Buddha also takes action to abolish the practice of sacrifice. Upon arriving at the hall of sacrifice, he sees preparations for the ritual. As the priest is about to strike the animal, the Buddha gently intervenes, saying, "Let him not strike, great King!"[237] He loosens the animals' bonds, disregarding any opposition. He then delivers a speech against sacrifice, arguing that life is precious to all creatures, even the most humble, and cannot be taken or given at will. He emphasizes "pity," which softens the world "to the weak and noble for the strong," and speaks on the importance of mercy.[238] He argues that no amount of blood can cleanse the soul or appease gods, whether good or bad. Impressed by his arguments on kindness, compassion, mutual harmony, and equality, the priests halt the sacrifice, and the king decrees an end to animal killing and meat consumption.

[233] Arnold, IV.272.
[234] Arnold, ibid, IV.279.
[235] ibid, IV.294.
[236] ibid, IV.292.
[237] ibid, V.389.
[238] ibid, V.396-397.

The Buddha's criticism of sacerdotalism extends further when he advises his followers not to seek favors from "helpless gods"[239] through gifts or hymns, nor to bribe them with blood, fruits, or cakes. Instead, he teaches them to seek deliverance within themselves. For the Buddha, suffering is self-inflicted, and no external force compels it: "Ye suffer from yourselves. None else compels."[240] His belief in the power of individual action is reflected in his words: "Each hath such lordship as the loftiest ones... Act maketh joy and woe... Who toiled a slave may come anew a Prince / For gentle worthiness and merit won; / Who ruled a King may wander earth in rags / For things done and undone."[241] These lines reflect Victorian discourses of "improvement," "self-help," and the idea that ones work and worthiness, rather than bloodline or status, define their fate.[242]

In *The Light of Asia*, the Buddha also plays a pivotal role in dismantling the barriers of the caste system. During his ascetic practices, he becomes so weak that he collapses on the ground. A shepherd, noticing his condition, carefully pours drops of warm milk on the Buddha's lips, cautious not to commit any transgression by touching someone of a higher caste. Once revived, the Buddha asks for milk to drink from the shepherd's lota (a pot or jar). However, the shepherd refuses, stating that, as a Sudra, he is impure. In response, the Buddha says, "Pity and need...Unto my quest it shall be good for thee,"[243] highlighting his views against caste discrimination. According to the Buddha, all men are connected through "pity and need." He further argues that just as blood has only one color and has no caste, and everyone's tears are salty, there is no inherent difference between people. He points out that no one is born with a "tilka-mark" on their forehead or a "sacred thread on their neck,"[244] implying that caste distinctions are arbitrary. It is one's deeds or karma, not caste, that determine good and evil.

The shepherd, moved by the Buddha's words, offers him milk in his lota, symbolizing the rejection of caste distinctions. The Buddha's humanistic ideals of mutual harmony and equality are further emphasized when he speaks about how beautiful the world would be if all beings lived in harmony, equally sharing the resources that the earth abundantly provides.

[239] Arnold, VIII.130.
[240] ibid, VIII.169.
[241] ibid, VIII.146-149.
[242] Franklin, p. 960.
[243] Arnold, VI.73-81.
[244] ibid, VI.76-77.

This vision of equality is further reflected in Book VIII, when the Buddha delivers his dharma to a diverse audience that includes people from all walks of life, regardless of their caste or social status. In this gathering, even birds and animals join, and the narrator notes that they "Had sense of Buddha's vast embracing love / And took the promise of his piteous speech."[245] This conveys a sense of universal brotherhood, indicating that all beings—whether human or animal—shared in the Buddha's teachings and the compassion he extended. It suggests that, even before his enlightenment, the Buddha longed for a world where all had equal access to his teachings and lived in harmony.

Conclusion

The discussion above explores how the socio-cultural and ideological context of Victorian England shaped the construction of Buddhism and the image of the Buddha as "an ideal Victorian gentleman."[246] This portrayal reflects the values and concerns of nineteenth-century England. According to Almond, such a representation of Buddhism and the Buddha is a creation "by the West, in the West, and primarily for the West."[247] As a product of its time, *The Light of Asia* mirrors the contemporary socio-cultural, ideological, and political landscape. The Buddha depicted in the poem as a hero and social reformer represents a projection of Victorian ideological and political interests onto the image of the Buddha.

However, toward the end of the century, this portrayal of the Buddha as a social reformer began to fade. Almond suggests that this shift occurred due to concerns that the Buddha might be seen as an early proponent of the socialist ideals that were perceived as threatening to the structure of English society, especially from the 1880s onward. In an environment of rising anti-socialist sentiment, the Buddha's role as a radical social reformer challenging both the priestly and secular ruling classes became less acceptable. In the context of anti-socialism, the Buddha, too influential to be ignored, was gradually moved to the right-wing of the political spectrum.[248] This transformation in the portrayal of the Buddha reflects how Western political concerns were projected onto Eastern religions, shaping the evolving understanding of the Buddha in the West.[249]

[245] Arnold, VIII.86-87.
[246] Almond, p. 79.
[247] ibid, p. 5.
[248] Almond, pp. 75-76.
[249] King, p. 145.

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Why Be Mindful? The Buddhist Concept of *Sammā Sati* and Contemporary Approaches to Mindfulness

By Christian Meng Mahoney

Professor Tilak Kariyawasam（Supervisor）

Chapter 1: Introduction

Many of the Buddha's teachings mention mindfulness in one way or another, but, in the context of the present discussion, the most important *sutta* or discourse in which the Buddha explains the fundamental principles of mindfulness is the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*. As the tenth discourse in the *Majjhima-nikāya*, one of the principal texts of the Pāli canon, this *sutta* explains what are called the four foundations of mindfulness, namely, mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of feelings, mindfulness of the mind, and mindfulness of mental objects. According to the Buddha, "Bhikkhus, this is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for the attainment of the true way, for the realisation of Nibbāna — namely, the four foundations of mindfulness. What are the four? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world."[250]

Another canonical collection of texts, the *Dīgha-nikāya*, includes the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna-sutta*. Its title has been translated as "the Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness", and this *sutta* is an extended and more detailed version of the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* insofar as it provides more extended coverage on subjects such as meditation and the Four Noble Truths. Here, the Buddha emphasized the importance of the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*: "It was said: 'There is, monks, this one way to the purification of

[250] Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi. *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya* (The Teachings of the Buddha). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and distress, for the disappearance of pain and sadness, for the gaining of the right path, for the realisation of Nibbāna: – that is to say the four foundations of mindfulness', and it is for this reason that it was said."[251]

As Buddhist scholar Rupert Gethin pointed out, T. W. Rhys Davids might have been the first to translate the term *sati* in Pāli or *smṛti* in Sanskrit as "mindfulness" in English, and, since then, various translators have assigned different denotations for this term.[252] As Gethin further suggested in his article, an important definition was provided by the Buddhist scholar monk Nyanaponika who described *sati* primarily as "bare attention."[253] According to Gethin, "Nyanaponika's understanding of mindfulness as bare attention appears to have been widely influential. And while he may have been careful to present it as merely an elementary aspect of the practice of mindfulness and to distinguish it from a fuller understanding of mindfulness proper—right mindfulness as a constituent of the eightfold path—there has sometimes been a tendency for those who have written on mindfulness subsequently to assimilate it to 'bare attention.'"[254] Gethin is specifically referring to Western Buddhist teachers such as Jack Kornfield and Joseph Goldstein who play principal roles in the Western insight meditation movement.[255] In other words, Gethin argued that an identification of *sati* with bare attention is an oversimplification which does not address the broad range of meaning that the term *sati* includes.[256] Thus, to put things differently, *sati* includes bare attention but is not limited to it.

Another important explanation of *sati* that Gethin links with the definitions provided by Nyanaponika, Kornfield, and Goldstein is associated with the founder of the modern mindfulness in the United States and Europe, namely, Jon Kabat-Zinn who explained that mindfulness is "nonelaborative, nonjudgmental, present-centered awareness in which each thought, feeling, or sensation that arises in the attentional field is acknowledged and accepted as it is."[257] A more extended version of Kabat-Zinn's definition of mindfulness includes nine

[251] Walshe, Maurice. *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya* (The Teachings of the Buddha). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.
[252] Gethin, Rupert. "On some definitions of mindfulness." In J. Mark G. Williams and J. Kabat-Zinn (Eds.), *Mindfulness: Diverse perspectives on its meaning, origin and applications* (Routledge, 2011), 263.
[253] Gethin, 266.
[254] Gethin, 267.
[255] Gethin, 267.
[256] Gethin, 267.
[257] Mindfulness Training. "9 attitudes of mindfulness by Jon Kabat-Zinn." n.d. https://mbsrtraining.com/attitudes-of-mindfulness-by-jon-kabat-zinn/

foundational attitudes such as non-judging, patience, beginner's mind, trust, non-striving, acceptance, letting go, gratitude, and generosity.[258]

One question, however, that lurks in the background of many contemporary, secular mindfulness-based initiatives such as the one advocated by Kabat-Zinn is the following: Why should one be mindful? Or, in other words, what is the moral justification for being mindful? As will be seen in the upcoming discussion that this paper provides, for Buddhist practitioners, practicing right mindfulness makes sense because as one of the principal elements of the Buddha's teachings, the Noble Eightfold Path, right mindfulness is embedded in the ethical framework that the other path factors provide. But, presumably, for secular mindfulness practitioners, this element is absent since most, if not all, of the current secular mindfulness approaches do not identify exclusively with one particular system of ethics or follow a particular type of moral teachings.

Thus, the first section of this paper, "The Buddhist Concept of *Sammā Sati*" provides a short overview of the canonical view of right mindfulness as it is found in the Buddha's most important teaching, namely, the Four Noble Truths. The second section, "Contemporary Approaches to Mindfulness," focuses on the characteristics of secular mindfulness approaches such as Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and other mindfulness-based programs (MBPs). The third and final section, "*Sammā Sati* vs. Secular Mindfulness," argues that mindfulness when combined with an ethical framework is more effective than when it is used as a stand-alone method or therapeutic technique.

Chapter 2: The Buddhist Concept of *Sammā Sati*

In his seminal text, *The Noble Eightfold Path: The way to the end of suffering*, Bhikkhu Bodhi explained that "The ultimate truth, the Dhamma, is not something mysterious and remote, but the truth of our own experience . . . What brings the field of experience into focus and makes it accessible to insight is a mental faculty called in Pali *sati,* usually translated as 'mindfulness.' Mindfulness is presence of mind, attentiveness or awareness."[259] Right mindfulness or *sammā sati* is the seventh element of the Noble Eightfold Path preceded by right effort (*sammā vayama*) and followed by right concentration (*sammā samadhi*).

[258] Mindfulness Training. "9 attitudes of mindfulness by Jon Kabat-Zinn."
[259] Bhikkhu, Bodhi. n.d. *The Noble Eightfold Path: The Way to the End of Suffering*. (Buddha Dharma Education Association, Inc. n.d.), 70.

Bhikkhu Bodhi further pointed out *sammā sati* can be divided into four, distinct categories: *kāyānupassanā (*mindful contemplation of the body), *vedanānupassanā* (mindful contemplation of feelings), *cittānupassanā* (mindful contemplation of the mind), and *dhammānupassanā* (mindful contemplation of phenomena).[260] Mindful contemplation of the body can be defined as the reflection on and analysis of the different aspects and dimensions of the physical body while mindful contemplation of feelings involves an examination of the three types of feelings human beings experience: pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral. An investigation of our ever-changing mental states is the subject of the mindful contemplation of the mind, and the mindful contemplation of phenomena has as its focus mental factors such as "the five hindrances, the five aggregates, the six inner and outer sense bases, the seven factors of enlightenment, and the Four Noble Truths."[261]

As is evident from the above, *sammā sati* is deeply rooted in the *Buddhadhamma* and appears in many of the key doctrines of the Buddha's teachings, such as the Four Noble Truths (via the Noble Eightfold Path), the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, the Five Spiritual Faculties, the Seven Factors of Enlightenment, and the Thirty-Seven Factors of Awakening (Insight Meditation Center, n.d.). But mindfulness, as such, cannot be considered in isolation insofar as, with regard to the Noble Eightfold Path, it is preceded by Right Effort (*sammā vayamo*).

As Bhikkhu Bodhi explained, Right Effort consists of four elements: 1) the effort to limit the presence of negative mind states; 2) the effort to get rid of negative mind states that are present; 3) the effort to develop positive mind states; and 4) the effort to maintain positive mind states that are present: "The unwholesome states (akusalā dhammā) are the defilements, and the thoughts, emotions, and intentions derived from them, whether breaking forth into action or remaining confined within. The wholesome states (kusalā dhammā) are states of mind untainted by defilements, especially those conducing to deliverance. Each of the two kinds of mental states imposes a double task. The unwholesome side requires that the defilements lying dormant be prevented from erupting and that the active defilements already present be expelled. The wholesome side requires that the undeveloped liberating factors first be brought into being, then persistently developed to the point of full maturity."[262]

[260] Bodhi, 73.
[261]Bodhi, 84.
[262] Bodhi, 63-64.

Instrumental in the task of engaging in Right Effort is the rousing of energy (*viriya*). As Bhikkhu Bodhi suggested, *viriya*, as such, is a neutral mental factor which "fuels desire, aggression, violence, and ambition on the one hand, and generosity, self-discipline, kindness, concentration, and understanding on the other . . . The exertion involved in right effort is a wholesome form of energy, but it is something more specific, namely, the energy in wholesome states of consciousness directed to liberation from suffering . . . For wholesome energy to become a contributor to the path it has to be guided by right view and right intention, and to work in association with the other path factors."[263] In other words, to implement the four aspects of Right Effort, energy is needed to eliminate the Five Hindrances and develop the Seven Factors of Awakening. But since energy can be used for wholesome and unwholesome purposes, it is important to align it with the other factors of the Noble Eightfold Path, most notably, Right View and Right Intention, because the first two path factors establish the ethical framework that the other path factors follow.

To summarize, Right Mindfulness works because it is preceded by Right Effort which clearly delineates what needs to be done to establish Right Mindfulness. But Right Effort can only be effective if it proceeds in accordance with the path factors that precede it such as Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood. Of particular importance, as was pointed out earlier, are the roles that Right View and Right Intention play in the Buddhist path toward liberation. As Bhikkhu Bodhi indicated, Right View, the first path factor, establishes the foundation on which all other path factors are based. He divided the Noble Eightfold Path into three parts: "Considered from the standpoint of practical training, the eight path factors divide into three groups: (i) the moral discipline group (sīlakkhandha), made up of right speech, right action, and right livelihood; (ii) the concentration group (samādhikkhandha), made up of right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration; and (iii) the wisdom group (paññākkhandha), made up of right view and right intention. These three groups represent three stages of training: the training in the higher moral discipline, the training in the higher consciousness, and the training in the higher wisdom."[264] To put it differently, the "moral discipline group" relations to our actions; the "concentration group" focuses on our meditative efforts, and the "wisdom group" has to do with how we develop our understanding of the way things are.

[263] Bodhi, 61.
[264] Bodhi, 13.

Chapter 3: Contemporary Approaches to Mindfulness

Research into the effects and benefits of mindfulness-based practices (MBPs) is a fairly recent endeavor. As Tang et al. have suggested, "Although meditation research is in its infancy, a number of studies have investigated changes in brain activation (at rest and during specific tasks) that are associated with the practice of, or that follow, training in mindfulness meditation. These studies have reported changes in multiple aspects of mental function in beginner and advanced meditators, healthy individuals and patient populations."[265] In their article titled "Trends and Developments in Mindfulness Research over 55 Years: A Bibliometric Analysis of Publications Indexed in Web of Science," Baminiwatta and Solangaarachchi indicated that between 1966 and 2021, more than 16,000 publications (mainly articles) used the term "mindfulness" in their titles or included the term in their abstracts.[266] The overall trend is that each year, the interest in mindfulness and related topics has increased, and in 2020 alone, more than 2000 scholarly articles were devoted to this topic. The authors also suggested that "recent trends (2016–2021) revealed a rising interest in mechanisms and moderators, long-term meditation, neuroscientific studies, and smartphone/online delivery of interventions."[267]

Mindfulness Based Programs (MBPs)

The contemporary, secular mindfulness movement in the West, and particularly in the United States, has, from its beginning, been closely tied to Western medicine and Western psychology. Generally considered to be one of the founders of this movement and its most important representative, Jon Kabat-Zinn started an eight-week course called "Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction" (MBSR) at the medical school of the University of Massachusetts.[268] In his account of how he developed MBSR, Kabat-Zinn clearly acknowledges the connection between the Buddhist teachings and his approach to teaching mindfulness: "Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) was developed as one of a possibly infinite number of skillful

[265] Tang, Yi-Yuan., Britta K. Hölzel, and Michael I. Posner. "The neuroscience of mindfulness meditation." *Nature Reviews. Neuroscience*, 16, no. 4 (2015): 213. https://doi.org/10.1038/nrn3916

[266] Baminiwatta, Anuradha, and Indrajith Solangaarachchi. "Trends and developments in mindfulness research over 55 years: A bibliometric analysis of publications indexed in web of science." *Mindfulness*, 12, no. 9, (2021): 2099–2116. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-021-01681-x

[267] Baminiwatta and Solangaarachchi, "Results."

[268] Kabat-Zinn, Jon. "Some reflections on the origins of MBSR, skillful means, and the trouble with maps." In J. Mark G. Williams and J. Kabat-Zinn (Eds.), *Mindfulness: Diverse perspectives on its meaning, origin and applications* (pp. 281-306). Routledge, 2011.

means for bringing the dharma into mainstream settings. It has never been about MBSR for its own sake. It has always been about the M. And the M is a very big M."[269]

He further explained that he deliberately avoided any explicit reference to the Buddha or Buddhism in his book *Full Catastrophe Living*: "I wanted it [the book] to articulate the dharma that underlies the curriculum, but without ever using the word 'Dharma' or invoking Buddhist thought or authority, since for obvious reasons, we do not teach MBSR in that way. My intention and hope was [sic] that the book might embody to whatever degree possible the dharma essence of the Buddha's teachings put into action and made accessible to mainstream Americans facing stress, pain, and illness."[270] But in order to prevent MBSR from being seen as pseudo-religious or "spiritual," Kabat-Zinn decided to bend "over backward to structure it and find ways to speak about it that avoided as much as possible the risk of it being seen as Buddhist, 'New Age,' 'Eastern Mysticism' or just plain 'flakey.'"[271]

Schuman-Olivier et al. indicated that "In *mindfulness meditation* (MM), the practice is to pay attention to present-moment experience with an orientation of curiosity, openness, acceptance, nonreactivity, and nonjudgment."[272]This, as was mentioned earlier, is consistent with the definition that Kabat-Zinn provided. The authors further pointed out that "MM is an active and intentional practice of cultivating awareness of present-moment experience that may include strong emotions, difficult thoughts, or unpleasant sensations. MM cultivates both awareness and equanimity, an even-minded mental state or dispositional tendency toward all experiences/objects, regardless of their affective valence (pleasant/unpleasant/neutral)."[273] So, there are mindfulness practices, as such, in combination with mindfulness meditation which is intended to promote a sense of awareness and equanimity although it is not explained, in this case, the goal toward which equanimity is directed.

Chapter 4: Contemporary Approaches to Mindfulness vs. *Sammā Sati*

There is no doubt that contemporary approaches to mindfulness are effective and affect those who engage in secular mindfulness practices positively. An increasing number of studies show that different types of MBPs can help individuals who experience a variety of mental and physical problems. Powell pointed out that "In recent decades, public interest in

[269] Kabat-Zinn, 281.
[270] Kabat-Zinn, 282.
[271] Kabat-Zinn, 282.
[272] Schuman-Olivier, para. 1.
[273] Schuman-Olivier, para. 2.

mindfulness meditation has soared. Paralleling, and perhaps feeding, the growing popular acceptance has been rising scientific attention. The number of randomized controlled trials — the gold standard for clinical study — involving mindfulness has jumped from one in the period from 1995–1997 to 11 from 2004–2006, to a whopping 216 from 2013–2015, according to a recent article summarizing scientific findings on the subject" (para. 5).[274] In addition, there is evidence that suggests that mindfulness practices can assist in the treatment of "irritable bowel syndrome, fibromyalgia, psoriasis, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder."[275]

But, and this is the main point of this paper, mindfulness outside of an ethical framework can only accomplish limited objectives, that is to say, address the symptoms without addressing the causes, and it is only within an ethical framework such as the Buddha's Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path that the full potential of mindfulness can be released. To put it differently, mindfulness as a stand-alone technique or strategy that is employed in pursuit of resolving physical and mental problems does have some benefits, but its benefits are even greater when it functions as a part of a moral system that is designed to reduce human suffering.

That is why *sammā sati* is one of the essential elements of the Noble Eightfold Path. Preceded by Right Effort and followed by Right Concentration, Right Mindfulness assists practitioners in carrying out what Right Effort establishes: 1) to prevent the arising of unwholesome states of mind and to get rid of unwholesome states of mind that have already arisen and 2) to develop and maintain wholesome states of mind.[276] Right Mindfulness also helps maintain vigilance during Right Concentration, that is, either insight (*vipassanā*) or serenity (*samatha)* meditation. It alerts the meditator to the presence of the Five Hindrances. But, ultimately, it is the first element of the Noble Eightfold Path from which Right Mindfulness derives its ethical justification: Right View or *sammā-diṭṭhi*. Included in this element, as Bhikkhu Bodhi indicated, is the law of *kamma* according to which thoughts, words, and deeds are inextricably intertwined with the results or consequences they produce:

[274] Powell, Alvin. "When science meets mindfulness: Researchers study how it seems to change the brain in depressed patients." 2018. *The Harvard Gazette*. https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2018/04/harvard-researchers-study-how-mindfulness-may-change-the-brain-in-depressed-patients/

[275] Powell, Alvin. "When science meets mindfulness: Researchers study how it seems to change the brain in depressed patients." 2018. *The Harvard Gazette*. https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2018/04/harvard-researchers-study-how-mindfulness-may-change-the-brain-in-depressed-patients/

[276] Bodhi, 59.

"Kamma is first distinguished as unwholesome *(akusala)* and wholesome *(kusala).* Unwholesome kamma is action that is morally blameworthy, detrimental to spiritual development, and conducive to suffering for oneself and others. Wholesome kamma, on the other hand, is action that is morally commendable, helpful to spiritual growth, and productive of benefits for oneself and others." [277] Bhikkhu Bodhi also pointed out that "Innumerable instances of unwholesome and wholesome kamma can be cited, but the Buddha selects ten of each as primary. These he calls the ten courses of unwholesome and wholesome action. Among the ten in the two sets, three are bodily, four are verbal, and three are mental."[278]

Of course, Right Mindfulness also connects to all of other elements of the Noble Eightfold Path such as Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood because whether it is a thought, word, or a deed, mindfulness will be instrumental in keeping the practitioner on the straight path and help avoid unwholesome mind states, actions, and speech. So, for those who follow the Buddhist teachings, being mindful makes sense because it connects to many other aspects of the Buddhist path, but this may not be the case for those who engage in secular mindful practices because such practices lack an overall framework or worldview, which would offer a recognizable context and purpose, and in which specific ethical guidelines are necessary components of the path - they are indeed one of the main areas of application of mindfulness.

Why be mindful? For the Buddhist practitioner, the answer is clear, but for the secular practitioner . . . not so much. Both mindfulness and meditation are practices that are value-neutral insofar as simply being in the present moment or sitting silently while observing one's thoughts does not require adherence or allegiance to a particular code of ethics or moral system. Mindfulness can be useful for the purpose of burglarizing the next-door neighbor's apartment, and meditation can be used to contemplate torturing one's favorite enemy.

How does the secular practitioner of mindfulness determine whether being mindful is right or wrong? In the absence of an ethical framework that assigns a place and function to activities such mindful thoughts, deeds, and speech as well as meditation, it is difficult to distinguish between wholesome and unwholesome states of mind.

[277] Bodhi, 18.
[278] Bodhi, 18.

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A Study of Móuzǐ's Treatise on Clarifying Doubts (牟子理惑论) in Early Chinese Buddhist Thought

By Oong Giam Wah

Dr Fa Qing (Supervisor)

Introduction

Buddhism is now a central element of Chinese culture, shaping language, philosophy, literature, art, and daily life, alongside Confucianism and Daoism. Despite its foreign origins and early doctrinal differences, Buddhism eventually gained acceptance and integrated into Chinese culture. This study of *Móuzǐ's Treatise on Clarifying Doubts* (hereafter abbreviated: Treatise) explores Buddhism's early reception in China, focusing on cultural conflicts, Buddhist doctrines, and their adaptation by the intellectual elite, which facilitated Buddhism's integration into Chinese thought.

The Treatise has attracted significant scholarly attention regarding its authenticity, dating, apologetic style, and syncretic integration of Buddhism with Confucianism and Daoism. While existing studies often emphasize the Treatise's syncretic and apologetic aspects or debates over its dating, this paper primarily explores the underlying Buddhist doctrines presented within the text.

Introduction of Buddhism to China

Buddhism's introduction to China is often linked to Emperor Hàn Míng Dì's (汉明帝) dream of a golden figure, suggesting its awareness in China as early as the first century CE.[279]. Historical records, such as the *Weai-Lueh* (魏略), indicate that Buddhism's presence in China can be traced back to the early Common Era[280]. During the Han dynasty, China's philosophical landscape had already been shaped by the "Hundred Schools" of thought, which flourished during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods[281]. By the time

[279] Kenneth K.S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 29-30.
[280] Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, p. 32.
[281] Yu-Lan Fung, edited by Derk Bodde, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York: The Free Press, 1966), pp. 30-37.

Buddhism arrived, Confucianism was the dominant ideology[282], with Daoism also enjoying imperial patronage[283]. This created challenges for Buddhism as it sought to integrate into a society with entrenched traditions.

I. Early Chinese Thoughts

The Chinese philosophy is deeply rooted in practicality, focusing on governance and social harmony. Confucianism emphasizes filial piety (孝) as the foundation of virtue and societal harmony,[284] encapsulated in texts like the *Classic of Filial Piety* (孝经)[285]. It advocates self-cultivation (修身) and hierarchical relationships to sustain governance and ensure state stability[286]. Personal virtue and ethical behavior are seen as essential for maintaining familial and societal order, promoting a well-ordered and stable state[287].

Daoism, although advocating naturalism and non-interference, similarly aims for societal harmony. Daoist philosophy promotes the idea of aligning with the natural order (the *Dao*) and achieving balance through minimal intervention, akin to the "invisible hand" concept in modern free-market economic systems[288]. The belief is that society will naturally reach equilibrium if left to follow its natural course with minimal interference[289]. For instance, Chapter 57 of *The Classic of the Way and Virtue* (道德经) advises governing with integrity and achieving dominance through non-interference[290].

[282] Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, pp. 21-22.

[283] During the rule of Emperor Wen and Emperor Jing (文景之治) in Western Han, emperors adopted policies that minimized government interference, reduced tax and levy, simplified rules that were in accordance with the Daoism teachings.

[284] Kenneth K.S. Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 14.

[285] Rosemond Henry, Jr., and Roger T. Ames, *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence : A Philosophical Translation of the XiaoJing* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), p. 105.

[286] 大学第一章"…..古之欲明明德于天下者, 先治其国; 欲治其国者, 先齐其家; 欲齐其家者, 先修其身; 欲修其身者, 先正其心; 欲正其心者, 先诚其意; 欲诚其意者, 先致其知。"

[287] Karyn L. Lai, *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 4-8.

[288]https://www.britannica.com/money/invisible-hand.

[289] Chapter 57 of *Dào Dé Jīng* discussed how excessive governance, and control can lead to chaos, while practicing non-action (无为) brings peace and order suggesting by minimal interference, things will naturally settle into balance. "…..我无为而民自化; 我无事, 民自富; 我无欲, 而民自朴。"

[290] "以正治国, 以奇用兵, 以无事取天下。"

II. Key Indian Philosophical Thoughts and Traditions

Indian philosophical traditions, particularly those of the *śramaṇa*[291] movements like Buddhism, focus on individual liberation and spiritual development. They withdrew from ordinary society, becoming wanderers who pursued truth through ascetic practices, studying nature, abandoned all social commitment and spent time thinking in pursuit of ultimate bliss and peace of mind[292]. The primary aim of Buddhism is the attainment of enlightenment and the ultimate bliss of *Nirvāṇa*, emphasizing emancipation from the cycle of birth and death (*saṃsāra*[293]), rather than governance or serving the needs of the ruling class.

Buddhist philosophy prioritizes personal spiritual growth, emphasizing emancipation from the cycle of birth and death to attain Nirvāṇa. Buddhist monastics (saṅgha) existed outside ordinary society, with their own codes of discipline, often independent of state control[294]. This stands in sharp contrast to Chinese philosophies, where social harmony and the state's role in maintaining order are central concerns.

Ancient Indian rulers often respected religious leaders rather than expecting subservience. For example, in the *Fruits of the Ascetics Sūtra* (Sāmaññaphala Sūtra), King Ajātaśatru respectfully sought the Buddha's guidance.[295] Similarly, King Pasenadī expressed profound veneration for the Buddha in the *Sūtra on the Adornment of the Dharma*.[296] These narratives highlight how spiritual authority held precedence over political power in Indian culture. Buddhism also emphasized moral redemption and spiritual transformation. The story of Aṅgulīmāla, a reformed criminal turned monk, illustrates how spiritual enlightenment transcended past actions.[297] This spiritual focus contrasted with Chinese philosophies, which placed the state and ruler at the center of moral authority, complicating Buddhism's initial reception in China.

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[291] Hirakawa Akira, translated and edited by Paul Groner, *A History of Indian Buddhism: From Sakyamuni to Early Mahayana* (The United States of America: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), p. 16.

[292] A.K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Reprint 2004), pp. 32-33.

[293] Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 14.

[294] Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, pp. 36-37.

[295] 《长阿含经》卷 17：「阿阇世王即前头面礼佛足, 於一面坐, 而白佛言：「今欲有所问，若有闲暇, 乃敢请问」(CBETA 2024.R2, T01, no. 1, p. 108a12-14)。

[296] 《中阿含经》卷 59：「拘萨罗王波斯匿再三自称姓名已, 稽首佛足, 却坐一面」(CBETA 2024.R2, T01, no. 26, p. 795c21-23)。

[297] 《增壹阿含经》卷 31：「善乐此正法之中, 勿有懈怠, 修清净梵行, 得尽苦际, 我当尽形寿供养衣被、饮食, 床臥具, 病瘦医药。」(CBETA 2024.R2, T02, no. 125, p.720c20-23)。

Despite its profound philosophical traditions, Buddhism faced significant hurdles in gaining acceptance in China due to cultural and linguistic barriers. China's sense of cultural superiority often led to the view that foreign customs, including Buddhism, were barbaric. For instance, the *Analects* (3.5) reflects this perspective, stating that even monarchs from culturally backward regions were inferior to China.[298] This ingrained worldview initially hindered the acceptance of Buddhism.

Buddhist scriptures were primarily in Sanskrit, a language unfamiliar to the Chinese. Early translators struggled to accurately convey Buddhist concepts, many of which had no direct counterparts in Chinese thought. As E. Zürcher noted, before the late fourth century, few Chinese had any knowledge of Sanskrit,[299] making translations labor-intensive and imprecise.

Key Buddhist teachings—such as the Four Noble Truths, the Middle Path, the Law of Karma, rebirth, no-self, and dependent origination—were alien to Chinese traditions. These doctrines conflicted with established Chinese philosophical and political ideologies, further complicating Buddhism's assimilation[300].

Despite these challenges, Buddhism eventually adapted to Chinese culture, becoming one of its major religious and philosophical systems. This success highlights both the resilience of Buddhism and the adaptability of Chinese thought when new ideas were appropriately contextualized.

By emphasizing values that resonated with Chinese traditions, such as ethical conduct and societal harmony, Buddhism gradually gained acceptance, illustrating its ability to thrive in a culturally distinct environment.

[298] 狄夷之有君, 不如诸夏之亡也。

[299] Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (The Netherlands : Hotel Publishing, 2007), p. 2.

[300] Hirakawa, *History of Indian Buddhism*, pp. 38-59.

Introduction of *Móuzǐ's Treatise on Clarifying Doubts*

Móuzǐ's Treatise reflects the interaction and fusion of Buddhist ideas from India and Chinese native thoughts[301]. It was the first work listed in *The Collection on the Propagation and Clarification of Buddhism (*弘明集) , compiled by *Sēng Yòu* (僧佑) between 515-518 CE and *The Expanded Collection on the Propagation and Clarification of Buddhism* (广弘明集) by *Dào Xuān* (道宣) in 664 CE. According to *Yú Jiā Xī* (余嘉锡) in his article *A Review of Móuzǐ's Treatise on the Removal of Doubts*(牟子理惑论检讨) published in 1936, the original title of the Treatise was *Zhì Huò Lùn* (治惑论). The word *Zhì* (治) was changed to *Lǐ* 理 on account of *Táng* (唐) taboo[302]. The text, approximately ten thousand words in length, comprises a preface, content of the Treatise, and a closing section. The preface provides historical context, outlining the background of the Western Han period, a brief introduction to *Móuzǐ*, the author who is a Confucian gentleman well-verse not only in the *Classic* but also in the works of philosophers as Mencius and *Lǎo Zǐ*. He fled the chaos at the end of the Han dynasty to the Gulf of *Jiāozhǐ* 交趾 (modern Hanoi) which was under Chinese political control then. Circumstances then lead him to seek retirement and to ponder the Buddhist Path through an examination of the teachings of the *Lǎo Zǐ (*老子). He is criticized by his literati colleagues for turning his back on the *Classic* he has so assiduously studied and for adopting the strange and heterodox path of Buddhism. Despite his desire to remain in seclusion, he is forced to respond to his critic thus he uses his leisure to collect citations and compose the Treatise to convince his critics of the validity of being a traditional Chinese scholar and at the same time a devout Buddhist[303]. The Treatise presents the author's responses to thirty-seven questions or doubts posed by an imaginary interlocutor, addressing concerns about Buddhist teachings, practices, and skepticism. In the conclusion, the interlocutor, satisfied with the author's answers, declares their intention to observe the Five Precepts and become a lay Buddhist follower, highlighting the effectiveness of the author's defense and the interlocutor's acceptance of Buddhist principles.

[301] 杜忠全,"牟子理惑论所反映之佛教与道教的思想交融", Journal of Sonological Studies, Vol.12 (2021)。
[302] Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest of China*, p. 13.
[303] John P. Keenan, *How Master Mou Removes Our Doubts : A Reader-Response Study and Translation of the Mou-tze Li-huo lun* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 1-2.

I. Views on The Dating and Authenticity of the Treatise

Scholars debate the authenticity and dating of *Móuzǐ's* Treatise. Paul Pilliot and *Hú Shì* (胡适), dated it to the late second century, suggesting *Móuzǐ* was a contemporary Chinese intellectual[304]. However, scholars such as *Liáng Qǐchāo* (梁启超) and Tokiwo Daijo 常盘大定, proposed a later composition, likely in the fourth or fifth century, attributing the works to others who intended to give an earlier appearance. These claims arise from references to later Buddhist teachings not available in the second century and the absence of the Treatise in known literature before the fourth century. Hú Yìng Lín (胡应麟, 1551–1602) was the first to question its authenticity, describing it as "a forgery made by a scholar of the Six Dynasties" in his *On the Authenticity and Spuriousness of the Four Divisions* (四部正伪)[305].

Wú Yǒng's 2007 research highlights the stability of southern China, including Jiāozhǐ (交趾, modern-day Hanoi, Vietnam), during the period of political turmoil in the north. This stability fostered vibrant cross-border trade and allowed early Buddhist knowledge to develop independently through foreign monks rather than relying solely on northern texts[306]. Malaysian scholar Toh Teong Chuan calls for a reevaluation of the Treatise's authenticity, incorporating Vietnamese perspectives and sources that emphasize Jiāozhǐ's role in introducing Buddhism to China[307].

Despite uncertainties about its dating, the Treatise provides valuable insights into Buddhism's reception in early Chinese intellectual circles and its integration into Confucian and Daoist frameworks. Kenneth Ch'en argues that the text reflects the evolving spirit of independence within Chinese Buddhism. He notes that during the Han Dynasty, interest in the Huang-Lao teachings was prominent, but later shifted to Lao-Zhuang philosophy. *Móuzǐ's* Treatise marks the beginning of this shift, with numerous quotations from Laozi used to support Buddhist teachings. Thus, the Treatise plays a strategic role not only in Chinese Buddhism but also in the broader context of Chinese thought[308].

[304] Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, p. 37.
[305] Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest of China*, p. 13.
[306] 吴勇,"牟子理惑论之真伪"。
[307] 杜忠全,"牟子理惑论成书论考"。
[308] Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, p. 40.

Eight Core Buddhist Doctrines

The Treatise subtly addresses eight core Buddhist doctrines through Móuzǐ's responses to various questions, as outlined below:

i) **Greatness and Extraordinary Attributes of the Buddha** – Explored in responses to Questions 1, 2, 8, and 28.
ii) **Profoundness and Greatness of the Buddha's Teachings** – Discussed in Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 18.
iii) **Renunciation and Non-attachment** – Addressed in Question 15.
iv) **Generosity** – Highlighted in Question 17.
v) **Rebirth and Karma** – Delved into in Question 12.
vi) **Morality** – Covered in Questions 9 and 10.
vii) **Cultivation of Mind** – Featured in Question 19.
viii) **The Universality of the Buddha's Teachings** – Presented in Question 14.

These themes reflect the Treatise's subtle engagement with Buddhist principles while addressing doubts and fostering understanding.

Approaches in the Arguments

The Treatise formulates thirty-seven questions, aligning with the Thirty-seven Factors of Enlightenment in Buddhist teachings and the first thirty-seven chapters of *The Classic of the Way and Virtue*. Additionally, it extensively quotes the *Analects* to validate Buddhism. Béatrice L'Haridon identified twenty-two references to the *Analects*, sixteen references to *The Classic of the Way and Virtue*, and five references to the *Classic of Filial Piety* within the Treatise. She noted that:

"Móuzǐ is quite distinctive in its way of selecting the text it quotes: indeed, it relies mainly on *The Analects*, *The Classic of the Way and Virtue*, and the *Classic Filial Piety*, and makes no use of Chinese apocrypha, whose intention was often to demonstrate that Buddhism had roots in the 'sacred' ancient history of China. ... He relies on an exegesis of 'mainstream' texts in order to put forward the openness of classical tradition and its compatibility with Indian Buddhism."

In contrast, the *Treatise on Authenticity and Misrepresentation* (正诬论), the second apologetic text in *The Collection on the Propagation and Clarification of Buddhism* (弘明集), employs apocrypha such as *The Scripture on Transforming a Barbarian* (化胡经) and *The Scripture on the Western Ascension* (西升经), which advocate for the idea of the Buddha as a reincarnation of Lǎo Zǐ[309].

Furthermore, Toh Teong Chuan found at least eighteen instances in the *Treatise* where the phrases "Laozi said" or "Laozi stated" appear, or where Laozi's ideas are used to support arguments[310].

Conclusion

Móuzǐ's Treatise illustrates early efforts to harmonize Buddhism with Confucian and Daoist traditions. Although its authenticity is debated, its influence on early Chinese Buddhist thought is evident. The Treatise addresses doubts by quoting Confucian and Daoist sources, employing a method similar to *gé yì*[311] used in early Buddhist translations. A key theme is filial piety, which highlights how Chinese Buddhism adapted this concept. Notably, the Chinese *Brahmajāla Sūtra* (梵网经) incorporates filial piety into the bodhisattva precepts of Mahāyāna Buddhism[312]. While Confucian filial piety emphasizes social harmony through emotional ethics, Buddhist filial piety is grounded in the law of karma, focusing on rational ethics and the consequences of actions[313].

Móuzǐ's insights into Daoism and Buddhism, especially regarding the interpretation of the Way (道), facilitated Buddhism's gradual integration into Chinese culture. To gain acceptance among Chinese intellectuals, Buddhism absorbed key elements of Confucianism and Daoism. Móuzǐ also elevated Buddhism above both traditions, as shown in several dialogues within the Treatise[314].

While early critiques of Buddhism in China were primarily from a Confucian perspective, both Confucian and Daoist ideas were used to address doubts. As Buddhism

[309] L'Haridon, *Quoting the Confucian Analects*.
[310] 杜忠全, *"牟子理惑论所反映之佛教与道教的思想交融"*, (Journal of Sinological Studies, Vol.12 , 2021)。
[311] Arthur F. Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1959), p. 37.
[312] Ch'en, *Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, p. 30.
[313] 广兴, "早期佛儒孝道观的比较研究", 《普门学报》第 45 期/五月/论文 2008 年 。
[314] 曹秀明, "牟子之道及其对儒道佛三家之评价", 台湾: 佛学与科学, 2010 年。

grew in prominence, tensions with Daoism intensified. Approximately one-third of the entries in the *Collected Essays on Buddhism* focus on debates with Daoists, reflecting the increasing conflicts between these traditions[315].

In conclusion, *Móuzǐ's* Treatise not only serves as an early defense of Buddhism but also exemplifies how Buddhism adapted to Chinese intellectual and cultural frameworks. Its synthesis of Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist ideas demonstrates the dynamic interaction between these traditions, shaping the unique trajectory of Chinese Buddhist thought.

[315] 季羡林, 季羡林学术论著自选集: “佛道儒三者的关系”, 北京师范大学出版社, 5 月版 1991 年。

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《摩诃止观》中“十乘观法”之研究

研究生：释界慧

指导老师：法庆博士

摘要

《摩诃止观》作为天台宗“教观双美”思想的集大成之作，其核心构建的“十乘观法”体系，为修行者提供了从凡夫心至佛果的完整修证路径。本研究聚焦“十乘观法”，旨在通过深入文本分析，厘清其核心理论基石、严密修证次第及其在《摩诃止观》整体结构中的枢纽地位。研究发现：其一，“十乘观法”以“观不思议境”为枢要，其理论基础深植于智顗大师融合《法华经》“开权显实”、《中论》中道思想、唯识学及中国心性论所创立的“一念三千”、“三谛圆融”等核心教义；其二，其修证次第以“观不思议境”为核心发端，经由“发真正菩提心”至“离法爱”九重观法的层层递进与深化，构成一个逻辑严密、理观与实践交融的圆顿止观体系；其三，在《摩诃止观》“五略十广”的文本结构中，“十乘观法”居于“正观”章，是连接前六章教理阐释（“大意”至“方便”）与后三章证果论述（“果报”至“旨归”）的实践核心，深刻体现了天台宗“教观并重”、“即理论实践”的根本特质。本文力求通过严谨的文本解读与理论阐释，揭示“十乘观法”作为汉传佛教重要修行体系的丰富内涵与不朽价值。

关键词：摩诃止观；十乘观法；圆顿止观；一念三千；三谛圆融；

第一章《摩诃止观》“十乘观法”的背景与定位

《摩诃止观》由智顗大师口述、弟子灌顶整理于隋开皇十四年（594年），其思想脉络可追溯至北齐慧文禅师的“一心三观”与南岳慧思的“法华三昧”。智顗大师以《法华经》“开权显实”为核心教义，将《中论》“八不中道”、《解深密经》阿赖耶识思想及中国传统“心即理”观念相融合，提出“一念三千”“三谛圆融”等核心理论，为“十乘观法”的展开奠定了坚实的基础。

《摩诃止观》以《法华经》为宗骨，融合《大智度论》《大集经》等经论的思想精华，构建起独具特色的天台宗修行理论体系。该书采用“五略十广[316]”的立体架构，体现了实践圆顿止观的全过程，涵盖了自利、利他直至圆满的修行路径。“十广”则系统地阐述了修证次第，此十章构成了《摩诃止观》的整体架构，其中正观章为核心，详细论述了“十境”与“十乘观法”的相互关系。前六章着重阐发教理，第七章转向实践，形成了“以教导观，以观证教”的修行理论。

在正观章中，观法的对象被划分为十种，称为“十境”，具体包括阴入界境、烦恼境、病患境、业相境、魔事境、禅定境、诸见境、增上慢境、二乘境、菩萨境。此“十境”是行者修观所缘的具体对象（所观境）。而针对此十境所施设的具体观修方法，即称为“十乘观法”（能观智）。

[316]五略“谓发大心、修大行、感大果、裂大网、归大处”大正46，No.1911，第4页上。十广：“今当开章为十：一、大意，二、释名，三、体相，四、摄法，五、偏圆，六、方便，七、正观，八、果报，九、起教，十、旨归。”大正46，No.1911，第3页中。

二者相互依存，构成能观与所观统一的完整实践体系：行者需依不同境相，灵活运用相应观法，方能破除障惑，证悟实相。此外，《摩诃止观》于“方便章”详述之“二十五方便”（具五缘、呵五欲、弃五盖、调五事、行五法），实为行者进入正观修习不可或缺的前行基础，总摄戒、定、慧三学之初步调适，为深入止观实修铺平道路。

综观全书，《摩诃止观》构建宏大缜密修行体系的关键，在于其独特融贯的理论与实践特质。它不仅在“五略十广”的框架下系统阐释了“十乘观法”的十个次第环节，更将此观法深深植根于天台圆教思想的核心。无论是揭示诸法实相的“一念三千”与“一心三观”妙理，还是提供具体实践路径的“四种三昧”及“二十五方便”，都彼此交织、相互支撑，共同构成了一套次第分明、理路清晰、直指解脱核心的修行指南。

第二章《摩诃止观》“十乘观法”的修证次第

智顗大师在《摩诃止观》指出：“十法成乘者，一一法中皆具十法。[317]”这意味着“观不思议境”不仅是修行的核心，更是贯穿后续九观的修证全过程。对于利根者而言，仅凭“观不思议境”即可顿悟；钝根者则需借助其余九法，逐步破除执着，最终达至究竟解脱。本章将系统剖析十观之内在逻辑结构，着重阐明“观不思议境”的理论基础与实践方法，并揭示其与后续九观的辩证统一关系。

[317]大正 46，No.1911，第 52 页下。

一、观不思议境：圆顿止观的核心契入

“观不思议境”作为“十乘观法”的核心环节，是行者契入天台宗圆教思想的关键实践，“观不思议境”如其车高广，象征如来知见的不可思议性[318]。此处的”观不思议境”并非抽象概念，而是通过“观思议境”逐步深化而成。

（一）从“观思议境”入手

“观不思议境”并非一蹴而就，修行者需从“观思议境”着手奠基。所谓“思议境”，是指凡能运用思维、语言来描述与理解的境界，乃修行初期所面对的相对浅显层次。正如《摩诃止观》卷五所言。

观心是不可思议境者，此境难说，先明思议境，令不思议境易显。思议法者，小乘亦说心生一切法，谓六道因果、三界轮回。若去凡欣圣，则弃下上出，灰身灭智，乃是有作四谛，盖思议法也。[319]

此段指明，小乘虽讲“心生一切法”，但其范围限于六道轮回、三界因果，目标在厌离凡俗、欣求圣境，追求出离三界、证入“灰身灭智”的涅槃，此属需刻意修持的“有作四谛”，仍在“思议”范畴。大乘佛教同样主张“心生一切法”，其格局扩展至涵盖凡圣的“十法界”，视野更广阔，但本质上仍属可思议之法。行者通过对大小乘所揭示的“心生一切法”现象（即认识一切现象皆由心识所变现）的深入观察，初步领悟诸法

[318]静权《天台宗纲要》第 57 页。
[319]大正 46，No.1911，第 52 页中。

因缘和合而生、缘散而灭的空性本质。这种对“思议境”的透彻观照，旨在为超越言思的“不思议境”（诸法实相）的显发铺平道路。

（二）向“不思议境”的超越

行者从“观思议境”向“观不思议境”的过渡，是修行深化的关键。推动行者实现认知模式的根本转变：从“心生万法”（强调能观之心与所观之法的二元分立）转向“心即万法”（体证心与万法当体不二、能所双泯）。此即契入《华严经》所诠：“心如工画师，能画诸世间，五蕴悉从生，无法而不造”[320]。智顗大师释此“种种五阴”即十法界五阴全体，并点明“法界”三义中，核心在于“十”为能依（事）、“法界”为所依（理），理事相即、圆融无碍。不思议境即此事理不二之绝待实相，非思量分别可及。

（三）一念三千：奠定不思议境的理论基石

“一念三千”为“观不思议境”提供所观境的内在依据。智顗提出：夫一心具十法界，一法界又具十法界、百法界。一界具三十种世间，百法界即具三千种世间。此三千在一念心。若无心而已，介尔有心，即具三千。[321]

此中，“一念”指刹那心识活动，“三千”乃宇宙万法之总摄，其构成逻辑为：十法界互具→百法界

百法界×十如是（相、性、体、力、作、因、缘、果、报、本末究竟）

[320]大正 46，No.1911，第 52 页中。

[321]同上，第 54 页上。

百法界×三世间（五阴世间、众生世间、国土世间）→三千世间

关键义在于：当下一念妄心，本具理具（本性具足）与事造（随缘显现）两重三千，且空、假、中三谛圆融互具不二。故观此一念心，即是观全法界实相，如《法华玄义》所示：理具事造，两重三千，同居一念”[322]。这为“观不思议境”提供了观照的直指对象与理论依据：观此一念妄心，即观全体法界实相。

（四）一心三观：观不思议境的实践方法

“一心三观”是于“观不思议境”中所运用的根本观照法门。

空观：观照诸法缘起性空，无独立、恒常之自性。破斥对诸法实有的执着（“见思惑”）。如《中论》所揭示：“诸法不自生，亦不从他生，不共不无因，是故知无生”[323]。

假观：照见诸法虽无自性，然如幻假有，宛然存在，破“尘沙惑”，生起度化众生之方便妙用。

中观：双照空假，即空即假，双遮双照，直证中道实相，破根本“无明惑”。

三者非次第修习，而是于一念心中同时具足、圆融无碍地运作：

一空一切空，无假中而不空…一假一切假…一中一切中。[324]

[322]大正 33，No.1716，第 693 页。

[323]大正 30，No.1564，第 2 页上。

[324]大正 46，No.1911，第 55 页中。

此“一心三观”所证之境，即是空、假、中三谛在一心中圆融互具、无碍统摄的诸法实相。

综上，“观不思议境”以“一念三千”为所观境、“一心三观”为能观智，通过理事不二、三谛圆融的直观，直证法界实相。其为十观之枢要，亦为钝根者后续九观奠基。

二、“十乘观法”的其余九观

行者若未能顿契不思议境，则需依次修习后续九观。此九观既为次第深化之阶梯，亦皆以不思议境为归趣，体现“一一法中皆具十法”的圆融特质。

发真正菩提心：此心非造作而生，乃基于对“生死即涅槃、烦恼即菩提”之实相体认，自然涌起的无缘大慈、同体大悲及上求下化之誓愿。智顗大师强调：“慈悲即智慧，智慧即慈悲----非前真正发菩提心”[325]。此为圆顿止观之根本动力，与“观不思议境”互为表里，一体不二。

善巧安心止观：标志着修行重心转向实践操作，将心安住于所观不思议境。此非偏空守寂，而是依“一心三观”法要，于当下妄心直观三谛圆融实相。智顗大师融通大小乘止法（如体真止、随缘方便止），强调“止即是觀，觀即是止”[326]。止观不二，定慧等持。

[325]大正 38，No.1777，第 530 页下。
[326]大正 46，No.1911，第 26 页上。

破法遍：体现天台止观对治烦恼的深度与广度。智顗大师强调需普遍地、彻底地破除一切执着。其核心方法是“四性推检”（推究诸法为自生、他生、共生、无因生），揭示诸法毕竟不可得：“明破法遍者，法性清净…破颠倒令不颠倒，故言破法遍耳”[327]。其要义在于遍破众生对一切法之颠倒执着，导引行者彻证本自清净之法性境界。

识通塞：此观与“破法遍”互为表里。“通”指能通向解脱的智慧与法门（如空观通真谛破见思惑），“塞”指障碍解脱的惑业（如见思惑塞真谛，尘沙惑塞俗谛）。“识通塞”要求行者明辨修行路上的障碍与对治通路，智顗通过四教判摄，指导行者抉择契理契机之法。

道品调适：指圆融地修习三十七道品（四念处、四正勤、四神足、五根、五力、七觉支、八正道）。天台宗将其提升至圆教高度，主张“一心具足三十七品”。智顗大师强调根据根器与修证阶段，善巧调整道品的修习重点（如偏重定或慧），以通达权实二智，融通定慧等持，使道品成为证入实相之善巧工具。

对治助开：当正观力量不足或遭遇特定障难（如重贪、嗔、昏沉、散乱等）时，需运用辅助性的对治法门（如不净观对治贪欲、慈悲观对治嗔恚、数息观对治散乱等）。智顗大师融合小乘毗昙的对治方法与大乘般若实相观，强调对治仅为助缘，终极目的仍在开显实相（“助开体”），不可执着方便而忘失根本。

[327]同上，第 59 页中。

知位次：明了修行所证的阶位，避免未证言证之增上慢。天台宗以“六即佛”（理即、名字即、观行即、相似即、分证即、究竟即）判摄圆教修证位阶。此判摄既显示修行的渐次性（六即），又强调当体即具佛性（即佛），体现理事不二、圆融无碍之旨。

能安忍：于内证功德或外缘逆境的考验中，能安住不动，不惊不怖。此安忍建立在“三谛圆融”的智慧基础上，超越二乘的偏真安忍与菩萨的次第安忍，直契中道实相。

离法爱：要求行者不仅离世间爱见，更要超越对修行过程中所得禅定、智慧、境界乃至涅槃本身的贪着（“法爱”）。智顗大师指出“無法愛者，行上九事，過內外障，應得入真，而不入者，以法愛住著而不得前”[328]唯有彻底离一切爱著，方能究竟证入无上菩提。此标志着对能观、所观及一切证量之最终超越，契入绝待圆融。

“十乘观法”以“观不思议境”为体性枢要，前观为后观奠基，后观深化前观所证。其体系建构于“一念三千”之实相论与“三谛圆融”之认识论根基，并具体落实于“一心三观”之实践方法论。就根器差异而言：钝根者需依十法次第破除障惑，利根者则能于一观中圆具十法精义。从“破法遍”对遍计所执的彻底扫荡，到“观不思议境”对诸法实相的直观朗现，体现“解行相即”（教理诠解与止观实践互资互成）的天台宗风。

[328]大正 46，No.1911，第 99 页下。

十法环环相扣，共同构成次第严整而圆具互摄的修行体系，为行者提供从初发心至究竟佛果的完备菩提道次第。

第三章 总结

本研究通过系统剖析《摩诃止观》“十乘观法”，揭示其作为天台圆顿止观核心体系的内在理路与实践精义:

其一，该体系以智顗融摄《法华经》开权显实思想与《中论》中道哲学所创“一念三千”实相论及“三谛圆融”认知论为根基。其中“观不思议境”为枢要，以“一念三千”为所观境、“一心三观”为能观智，彰显天台宗“教观一体”（即教理与实修不二）的根本特质。

其二，其修证次第体现严整的实践逻辑：以“观不思议境”直证实相为轴心，“发真正菩提心”开显圆教动力，“善巧安心”落实操作基础，“破法遍”至“对治助开”次第扫荡三惑（见思、尘沙、无明），“知位次”（六即佛）与“能安忍”稳固证悟进程，终以“离法爱”超越能所证量。十法环环相扣，形成次第严整而圆具互摄的“乘体”，为三根行者提供完备的菩提道次第。

其三，在《摩诃止观》“五略十广”结构中，“十乘观法”作为“正观章”核心，是贯通前六章教理阐释（“教”）与后三章证果论述（“证”）的实践枢纽。其与“十境”（所观对象）结合，实现“依教立观，以观证教”的修证循环，完整体现天台“教观双美、解行并进”的宗风。

综上，“十乘观法”不仅是《摩诃止观》的思想精髓，更因其深邃的实相诠释（一念三千）、严密的止观次第（十法成乘）与高度的教观统一性（即教即观），成为汉传佛教修行体系的范式性建构。其为后世开显了兼具义理深度与实践效能的解脱进路，对理解天台哲学的核心精神及汉传佛教修证传统具有不可替代的学术价值。

参考文献

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大正 30，No.1579，第 1 頁上

大正 09，No.262《妙法蓮華經》鳩摩羅什譯

大正 30，No.1564《中論》龍樹造

大正 33，No.1716《妙法蓮華經玄義》智顗著

大正 38，No.1777《維摩經玄疏》智顗著

大正 46，No.1912《止觀輔行傳弘決》湛然著

大正 46，No.1911《摩訶止觀》智顗著

靜權《天臺宗綱要》福建莆田廣化寺，2008

八识架构下的烦恼体系[329]

研究生：释净智

指导老师：法庆博士

瑜伽行派的心识理论有两个明显的特征，一是末那（*manas*）与阿赖耶识（*ālaya-vijñāna*）的引入，二是诸识俱起的主张。这二者是相互关联的，因为末那与阿赖耶识，除非进入无余依涅槃，否则会一直相续不断，而在此过程中，前六识会随缘起灭，故主张八识的宗派必然同时承许诸识俱起。说一切有部则主张六识次第而生，所谓“一一有情由法尔力，但有一心相续而转。”[330]若谓多识俱转，不仅与契经中“三受不俱起”、“心独行”的教法相违，而且理论上会导致染净、三界、四生、五趣的混滥。[331]《瑜伽师地论》卷 51 为了证明诸识可以俱起，列举了以下三个理由：

且如有一俱时欲见，乃至欲知，随有一识最初生起，不应道理。由彼尔时作意无别，根境亦尔，以何因缘识不俱转？……谓或有时忆念过去曾所受境，尔时意识行不明了，非于现境意现行时，得有如是不明了相，是故应许诸识俱转。……谓若略说（识）有四种业，一了别器业，二了别依业，三了别我业，四了别境业。此诸了别刹那刹那俱转可得，是故一识于一刹那，有如是等业用差别，不应道理。[332]

[329] 本文节选自释净智博士学位申请论文《瑜伽行派对早期佛教烦恼学说的继承与发展——以《瑜伽师地论》为中心》第六章第三节。

[330] 《大毗婆沙论》卷 10，大正 27，49b。

[331] 详见《大毗婆沙论》卷 10，大正 27，49c；《顺正理论》卷 19，大正 29，443b。

[332] 大正 30，579bc。

意即在作意（*manaskāra*）、根（*indriya*）、境（*viṣaya*）都无差别的情况下，眼识（*cakṣur-vijñāna*）、耳识（*śrotra-vijñāna*）等应该俱时生起，此前彼后不应道理。其次，因意识（*mano-vijñāna*）在回忆过去境时行相模糊，返成意识在明了色等现境时，必有俱起的眼等识协助。最后，眼等识在了别色等粗显境时，阿赖耶识也在不间断地缘取器界（*sthāna*）和有根身（*sendriyaḥ kāyaḥ*），末那也在恒执阿赖耶识为俱生之我，既然诸识同时发生作用，故它们必定同时生起。

不过，诸识俱起说使得心识结构变得立体的同时，也导致传统的烦恼学说必须进行重构，以适应新的心识俱起体系。首当其冲的就是相应学说，原本在单一心识的情境下，烦恼只能染污同一刹那相应的同聚心识，但在多识俱起的情境下，烦恼是否会“跨界”染污其他的心识，则是有待说明的。瑜伽行派解释说，诸识虽然俱起，但因为彼此处于不同的维度，故它们相应的善、恶、无记性不会混滥。如本论卷 51 云：

复次，阿赖耶识，或于一时与转识相应善、不善、无记诸心法俱时而转。如是阿赖耶识虽与转识俱时而转，亦与客受，客善、不善、无记心法俱时而转，然不应说与彼相应。何以故？由不与彼同缘转故。[333]

举例而言，不善的意识、有覆无记的末那识、无覆无记的阿赖耶识可以同时生起，但意识中的不善烦恼不会与末那、阿赖耶识相应，故也就不会改变末那识的有覆无记性及阿赖耶识的无覆无记性，反之亦然。不过，尽管烦恼不能以相应的方式直接染污他识，却可以用其他方式间接染污他

[333] 大正 30，580c。

识。以下我将分三小节，讨论前六识、末那识、阿赖耶识各自的烦恼特点，以及俱起情况下它们之间是如何相互影响的。

一、与前六识相应的烦恼现行

意识能与一切烦恼相应，佛教各部派没有异议。但无分别的前五识能否与烦恼相应，则众说纷纭。犊子部、南传上座部等主张前五识不与烦恼相应，而大众部、化地部、说一切有部等主张前五识可与烦恼相应。瑜伽行派与说一切有部的主张大体相同（见第五章第一节“烦恼与诸识的相应”），二派唯一的不同在于，说一切有部认为前五识的烦恼可依自力起。比如，某一有情长时串习烦恼，一旦遇到对应的境界，不待意识分别，五识烦恼即可生起。如《顺正理论》卷 4 云：

然诸众生有种种性，或软烦恼，或利烦恼。软烦恼者，要先发起虚妄分别，然后烦恼方现在前；利烦恼者，不待分别，境才相顺，烦恼便起。由此道理，或有先起染污意识，或有先起染污余识。如燃火时，或先烟起，渐次生焰，后方洞然；或遇卒风，猛焰顿发，俄成灰烬。如人身中，病本若少，饮食乖适，然后病生。病本若多，少遭风热，外缘所触，众疾竞起。烦恼病起，理亦应然。故五识身亦通三性，理得成立。[334]

瑜伽行派则认为，前五识的染净必随意识而转，如《瑜伽师地论》卷 3 云：

[334] 大正 29，349ab。

由染污及善意识力所引故，从此无间，于眼等识中染污及善法生，不由分别，彼无分别故，由此道理说眼等识随意识转。[335]

意即意识相应的烦恼可以跨界影响前五识，令其随之产生烦恼。瑜伽行派“五识有染，意识决定”的立场，本质上是折中了部派佛教关于五识有染、无染的不同意见。既维护了前五识无分别的主张，又不违背契经中“六爱身”的教言。[336]

二、与末那识相应的烦恼现行

末那恒与有覆无记性的萨迦耶见（*satkāyadṛṣṭi*）、我慢（*ātmamāna*）、我爱（*ātmasneha*）、不共无明（*avidyā āveṇikī*）相应（见第五章第一节的“烦恼与诸识的相应”）。此四烦恼的名称及有覆无记性，在瑜伽行派提出恒行末那识的概念前，就已经存在于其他部派中。如《大毗婆沙论》卷18云：

或复有执五法是遍行，谓无明、爱、见、慢及心，如分别论者。[337]

印顺法师据此推测末那与四惑相应的思想，是从分别论者演化而来。[338]又说一切有部的西方师主张类似名称的四无记根（*avyākṛta-indriya*），[339]如《大毗婆沙论》卷156云：

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[335] 大正30，291b。

[336] 六爱身，指眼触所生爱，乃至意触所生爱。如《杂阿含经》卷13云：“云何六爱身？谓眼触生爱、耳触生爱、鼻触生爱、舌触生爱、身触生爱、意触生爱。”（大正2，87a）说一切有部与瑜伽行派皆认为，六爱身与六受身一样，都是指六识相应的心所，故前五识可与贪相应，而若有贪，则应也有与其对立的瞋，及必然俱起的无明，故五识亦可与瞋、痴相应。

[337] 大正27，90c。

[338] 详见印顺《唯识学探源》（正闻出版社新版，2000）106页。

[339] 原本契经中只有三善根、三不善根的说法，而主张有无记法的说一切有部之东方师（即毗婆沙师），效仿契经中的三善根、三不善根，立三无记根，而说一切有部西方师则立四无记根。

无记根有四，谓无记爱、见、慢、无明。无记爱者，谓色、无色界五部爱。无记见者，谓欲界有身见、边执见，及色、无色界五见。无记慢者，谓色、无色界五部慢。无记无明者，谓欲界有身见、边执见相应无明，及色、无色界五部无明。[340]

尽管西方师所说的无记烦恼，只是意识相应的萨迦耶见、边执见及上二界的烦恼。但无可否认，四无记根的说法，启发了瑜伽行派成立末那四惑。[341]毕竟契经中只有三善根、三不善根的说法，而无记根是说一切有部阿毗达磨中才出现的新概念。另外，瑜伽行派将末那识视为意识生起的不共所依，称为意根（*mana-indriya*），[342]而四无记惑也恰好是无记根，故这二种“根”的结合，也可能存在一定的关联性。

四无记烦恼，不仅染污末那本身，还因为末那是意识生起的所依，故亦间接染污意识。如《瑜伽师地论》卷 51 云：

又复意识，染污末那以为依止，彼未灭时，相了别缚不得解脱，末那灭已，相缚解脱。[343]

这种跨界的染污不是令意识也变成同末那一样的有覆无记性，而是使意识在了别境界相（*nimitta*）时，即使处于善心状态，也始终处于被束缚的有漏状态，只有消灭了作为我执根源的染污末那，意识才能从束缚中获得解脱。

[340] 大正 27，795b。
[341] 详见印顺《唯识学探源》，107 页。
[342] 详见《瑜伽师地论》卷 51，大正 30，580b。
[343] 大正 30，580c。

末那识中潜在的现行烦恼，介于表面现行的前六识烦恼，及深隐待发的第八识烦恼种子之间。既与末那相应，又与前六识不相应。故瑜伽行派施设的末那四惑，相当于用另一种方式，间接解决了部派佛教关于“随眠”与“心”是否相应的争论。因为若只承许烦恼随眠而不承认末那潜在的现行烦恼，便会招致以下难题——凡夫的善心为何是有漏的？若说此时未受烦恼影响，则为何还是有漏的状态？若说此时受烦恼影响，则不易解释何谓凡夫的善心。若说因烦恼种子随逐，那么有学圣者在见道等时，同样有未断的烦恼种子随逐，为何彼心却是无漏的？[344]故以随眠的概念解释有漏善时，无论是将随眠解释为与心不相应的烦恼种子，还是与心相应的烦恼现行，都难免顾此失彼，而末那识中恒行烦恼的妙处，在于它既是与末那相应的，又是与前六识不相应的，既是现行于末那识上的，又是潜伏于六识之下的。

三、阿赖耶识所摄的烦恼种子及习气

前七识相应的烦恼，可以熏生或熏长阿赖耶识中的烦恼种子（*bīja*），虽然不会改变阿赖耶识本身的无覆无记性，但可以促使阿赖耶识继续处于有漏的状态，无法转识成智。而烦恼种子，作为前七识烦恼生起的亲因，本质上却是所有染污的根源，故《瑜伽师地论》又将之称为粗重（*dauṣṭhulya*）和随眠（*anuśaya*），如卷 2 云：

又于诸自体中所有种子，若烦恼品所摄，名为粗重，亦名随眠。[345]

[344] 详见《顺正理论》卷 1，大正 29，331b。
[345] 大正 30，284c。

将烦恼种子称为随眠，是因为它能随逐、随缚有情（见第五章第三节“随眠与缠的含义”）。将烦恼种子称为粗重，是因为它能令修行者身心不调柔，于修善止恶无所堪能（*akarmaṇya*），如本论卷 64 云：

无所堪能不调柔相，是粗重相。……由有此相顺杂染品，违清净品相续而住。[346]

由于无始以来烦恼的数数熏习，令阿赖耶识中贮藏了大量的烦恼种子，这些染污种子的存在，使得行者在修习善法时无堪能性，如同逆水行舟，而在造作恶法时则如同顺水而下。换句话说，烦恼种子看似休眠，但一旦修行者要对治它，它就会产生一种抗力，使得行者于修善止恶力不从心。从这种意义上来说，烦恼种子也是有染污性的，如印顺说：

它虽没有积极的活动到精神界去，它在不生现行的时候，还是染污净心的。[347]

烦恼习气（*kleśa-vāsanā*）是指烦恼种子断除以后，类似烦恼的行为惯性。二乘无学虽能断尽烦恼种子，却不能如佛陀般断尽烦恼习气。如本论卷 50 云：

云何如来永害习气？谓诸如来或于动转，或于瞻视，或于言论，或于安住，似有烦恼所起作业多不现行，是名如来永害习气。诸阿罗汉虽断烦恼，而于动转、瞻视、言论及安住中，而有种种似有烦恼所起作业。[348]

[346] 大正 30，657a。
[347] 印顺《唯识学探源》，134 页。
[348] 大正 30，574a。

说一切有部认为，烦恼习气是是以劣慧为体的不染无知相应心品，或善无记心被烦恼间杂所熏，带有似烦恼的气分，如《顺正理论》卷 28 云：

此所引劣智，名不染无知，即此俱生心心所法，总名习气，理定应然。或诸有情有烦恼位，所有无染心及相续，由诸烦恼间杂所熏，有能顺生烦恼气分，故诸无染心及眷属，似彼行相差别而生。[349]

瑜伽行派则主张烦恼习气即是异熟品粗重，如本论卷 57 云：

问：诸烦恼品所有粗重，阿罗汉等永断无余，复有何品粗重，阿罗汉等所未能断，由断此故，说名如来永断习气？答：异熟品粗重，阿罗汉等所未能断，唯有如来名究竟断。[350]

此异熟品粗重，即阿赖耶识中所藏的异熟品所摄种子，如本论卷 2 云：

又于诸自体中所有种子，……若异熟品所摄及余无记品所摄，唯名粗重，不名随眠。[351]

另外，本论还将烦恼习气称为有漏粗重（*sāsrava-dauṣṭhulya*），与之相对的是烦恼种子导致的漏粗重（*āsrava-dauṣṭhulya*）。如卷 58 云：

复次，略有二种粗重：一漏粗重，二有漏粗重。漏粗重者，阿罗汉等修道所断烦恼断时，皆悉永离，此谓有随眠者有识身中，不安隐性、无堪能性。有漏粗重者，随眠断时，从漏所生，漏所熏发，本所得性，不安隐性，苦

[349] 大正 29，502a。
[350] 大正 30，619b。
[351] 大正 30，284c。

依附性，与彼相似无堪能性，皆得微薄。又此有漏粗重名烦恼习，阿罗汉、独觉所未能断，唯有如来能究竟断，是故说彼名永断习气不共佛法。[352]

意即二乘无学已断除了烦恼导致的粗重，但仍有微薄的类似烦恼的不安隐性，苦依附性，无堪能性，此有漏粗重即烦恼习气，唯佛乃能究竟断尽。尽管烦恼种子与烦恼习气都是由烦恼熏习而来，都能导致身心粗重，但烦恼种子能生起烦恼现行，而烦恼习气只是无记的异熟种子，不能生起染污的烦恼现行，故二者有所差别。

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[352] 大正 30，625b。

《瑜伽師地論．聲聞地》之“補特伽羅”的十一差別

研究生：賴秋雨

指導老師：法慶博士

摘要：《瑜伽師地論．聲聞地》中對“補特伽羅”（Pudgala）的分類方法反映了佛教唯識學對生命輪回中的個體差異的深刻理解。本文通過分析《瑜伽師地論》中對“補特伽羅”進行的十一種分類方式，探討其依據修行根性、修行狀態、個體行為差異等進行劃分的理論依據。這些分類方式不僅使得佛教的教義理論更加嚴謹和系統，也為修行者提供了個性化的修行指導，幫助他們根據自身根性選擇適合的修行道路。

關鍵字：瑜伽師地論 聲聞地 補特伽羅 分類方法

一、“補特伽羅”與《瑜伽師地論·聲聞地》

“補特伽羅”是梵語“Pudgala”的音譯，最早來自於巴利語《阿含經》文獻，是“自我”的代稱，指生命在生死輪回過程中所具有的意識主體。英語或將其對譯為“Body; Soul”，在印度耆那教中有相同意義的名詞“Poggala”。它與奧義書中的“阿特曼”（Ātman）有很大不同，雖然都是對個體存在的名稱安立，但是佛教認為個體意識之存在只是表面的暫時現象。佛教在究極理念上否認輪回過程中存在個體意識，但是沒有個體意識的存在，就難以解釋輪回中的種種現象。所以必須依賴世俗語言建立“補特伽羅”這個概念來加以闡釋，“補特伽羅”相對於“阿特曼”來說是更受制於因緣條件的，是在輪回過程中才有的現象。在這方面尤以部派佛教時期的“犢子部”對“補特伽羅”概念的施設最為出名。《異部宗輪論》中提到：

其犢子部本宗同義，謂補特伽羅非即蘊離蘊，依蘊處界假施設名。諸行 有暫住，亦有剎那滅。諸法若離補特伽羅，無從前世轉至後世，依補特伽羅可說有移轉。

犢子部認為“補特伽羅”既非“色受想行識”五蘊本身，也不在此五蘊之外。是“不一不異”的，是根據“五蘊、十八界、十二處”等條件和合而設立的自我之代稱。一切事物都有暫時的生住和滅亡。如果脫離“補特伽羅”這個代稱，則輪回中的前後生意識轉移也無從安立，正因為有補特伽羅方便說法，輪回現象的理論才能建立起來。犢子部認為輪回過程中的不同補特伽羅之間具有“一致性”，儘管補特伽羅在輪回過程中歷

經多次生死，其五蘊組合在每一世皆隨緣而異，然於此變異之中，仍有一“補特伽羅”得以在諸生之間貫穿，從而維繫個體延續性的觀念。此一立場不僅回應了關於業報歸屬與道德責任承繼的哲學關切，同時也為解脫的主體設立了理論基礎。

《瑜伽師地論》為大乘佛教瑜伽行派（Yogācāra）之重要論典，對於唯識思想的系統建構與發展具有深遠影響。全論分為一百卷，共計十七地。其中各“地”代表修行過程中的不同層次與實踐面向。在《瑜伽師地論》中，“聲聞地”的內容大概佔據了二十卷。“聲聞地”作為論述小乘聲聞行者修道階次之重要篇章，內容包括界定聲聞根性、闡明戒定慧三學的次第修行、以及對不同補特伽羅類型的分類與觀察，對於理解佛教實修理論與行者心理特質具有關鍵意義。

《瑜伽師地論．聲聞地》以“阿賴耶識”為生命本體，在“補特伽羅”的基本意涵上繼承了部派佛教的思想，即認為其是輪迴主體的施設假名，沒有單獨闡釋其不同的概念意涵。但《瑜伽師地論．聲聞地》中發展出了更詳細豐富的“補特伽羅”分類理論。與此相關的內容主要集中在二十六卷之“聲聞地第十三第二瑜伽處之一”，此處開頭即說有二十八種補特伽羅：“鈍根者”、“利根者”、“貪增上者”、“瞋增上者”、“癡增上者”、“慢增上者”、“尋思增上者”、“得平等者”、“薄塵性者”、“行向者”、“住果者”、“隨信行者”、“隨法行者”、“信勝解者”、“見至者”、“身證者”、“極七返有者”、“家家者”、“一間者”、“中般涅盤者”、“生般涅盤者”、“無行般涅盤者”、

“有行般涅盤者”、“上流者”、“時解脫者”、“不動法者”、“慧解脫者”、“俱分解脫者”。

二、“補特伽羅”的分類方法

這些“補特伽羅”的種類大致是根據生命體的佛法修行領悟能力的不同、生命行為習慣的不同，以及佛法修行解脫的方式、解脫情況的不同來劃分的。如上述之第 3、4、5 就是根據人的“貪”“瞋”“癡”染污程度不同來分類。它們都是涵蓋在“十一差別”的分類方法中，在此卷的後一段中提到：

雲何建立補特伽羅？謂由十一差別道理，應知建立補特伽羅。雲何十一差別道理？一根差別故，二眾差別故，三行差別故，四願差別故，五行跡差別故，六道果差別故，七加行差別故，八定差別故，九生差別故，十退不退差別故，十一障差別故。

1、“根差別”、“眾差別”

“根差別”是根據學佛修行的領悟能力的不同即“根性”，從中可以劃分出“鈍根”與“利根”兩種，“鈍根”指較愚笨的學佛修行者，“利根”較聰明的學佛修行者。

“眾差別”則指根據佛法修行者世俗身份的不同來劃分“補特伽羅”，可以分為：“比丘”（梵語 Bhiksu，下同），指在佛教出家的男性僧人；“比丘尼”（Bhikkhuni），指在佛教出家的女性僧人；“式叉摩那”（śikṣamāṇā），指剛出家的沙彌尼要成為正式比丘尼所需考驗的第一個步

驟；“勞策男”（śrāmaṇera），指未成為出家人的沙彌；“勞策女”（śrāmaṇera），指女性沙彌尼要成為正式比丘尼所需考驗的第二個步驟；“近事男”（Upāsaka），指學佛的在家男居士；“近事女”（Upasika），指學佛的在家女居士。

2、“行差別”、“願差別”

“行差別”是根據佛教輪回理論導致的習性、心理的行為的不同劃分的“補特伽羅”分類。可以分為：“貪增上者”，即輪回中貪欲較多的人；“嗔增上者”，指輪回中好於憤怒、嗔恨的；“癡增上者”，指輪回中較愚笨的人；“慢增上者”，指輪回中好於驕傲自滿之人；“尋思增上者”，指輪回中多於思考的人、“薄塵性者”，指輪回中煩惱較為輕薄的人。其中如“貪增上者”又可以根據程度的不同劃分“上、中、下”三品。“願差別”即願力差別，是根據不同“補特伽羅”所發出的菩提願望不同來劃分，可以分為“聲聞種姓”（追求入小乘佛法般涅盤之人）、“獨覺種姓”（無佛時代入般涅盤者）、“菩薩種姓”（追求入大乘佛法般涅盤的人）。此中“種姓”梵語為“Jāti”，以印度種姓制度之“種姓”意義相同，但這種“種性”說是以佛法修行狀態來建立的，雖然仍有一定的先天固化思想，但與古印度由世俗社會身份不同所劃分的“種姓”根本上相異的。

此種分類在《菩提道次第廣論》中有類似的“三士道”思想，其中把“菩薩種姓”歸類為“上士”，把“獨覺種姓”歸類為“中士”，把聲聞種姓歸類為“下士”。但它省略了對辟支佛道分類的補特伽羅，而

《瑜伽師地論》沒有把人天善法乘的歸類進去，且認為如果不符合自己的根性，縱然發了其餘種姓相應的正願，終究還是會退墮回適合自己根性的種姓。如聲聞種姓的人雖然發了大乘成佛的願望，但由於大乘根性、時機的不成熟終究會從大乘修行退墮回聲聞乘的修行之中。

3、“行跡差別”、“道果差別”

“行跡差別”分類的“補特伽羅”，是根據修行領悟的“根性”不同和有沒得到“根本靜慮”這兩個特性進行分類的。“根本靜慮”是指佛教四禪八定中能獲得涅槃的“滅盡定”。鈍根眾生沒得到這種禪定即是“苦遲通”，意為在世俗苦諦中難以證悟佛法的行者；利根者不得此定可以稱為“苦速通”，意為在世俗苦諦中能比較快證悟的行者；鈍根得此定稱為“樂遲通”，意為雖然內心有寂靜快樂，但是最終遲緩證悟的行者；利根得此定稱為“樂速通”，意為能快樂又快速地證悟佛法的行者。

“道果差別”建立的“補特伽羅”是根據佛法修行證果程度的不同來分類的。可以分為“預流果向”、“一來果向”、“不還果向”、“阿羅漢果向”、“預流果”、“一來果”、“不還果”、“阿羅漢果”。根據《阿毗達摩俱舍論》的說法，“預流果”（Srotāpanna）是要經歷七次輪回欲界才得涅盤的聖人；“一來果”（Sakrdāgāmin）是只需經一次往返欲界的聖人；“不還果”（Anāgāmi）是在色界天即得涅盤的聖人；“阿羅漢果”（Arhat）是即生可證得涅盤的聖人。至於前四這裏所謂的“XX 果向”是指將會證悟此果位的修行者之意。

4、其餘“差別”

“十一差別”後面的“加行差別”、“定差別”、“生差別”、“退不退差別”、“障差別”都是根據佛法修行方式和程度的不同所做的分類。“加行差別建立”是以修行方式為根據的劃分，可以分為“隨信行”和“隨法行”兩種，分別指從佛教信心入門修行的人和從佛教教理入門修行的人。

“定差別建立”是根據佛門“四禪八定”（Catvāri -dhyānāni）修持程度來劃分的，每一禪定的境界就是一種分類，共有“有色觀諸色解脫”（色界初禪定）、“內無色想觀外諸色解脫”（色界第二禪定）、“淨解脫身作證具足住”（色界第三禪定）、“空無邊處解脫”（無色界第一禪定）、“識無邊處解脫”（無色界第二禪定）、“無所有處解脫”（無色界第三禪定）、“非想非非想解脫”（無色界第四禪定）、“想受滅解脫”(走向涅槃的“滅盡定”）八種。

“生差別建立”是根據輪回投生去處不同來分類的，有“極七返有”、“家家”，即如上所述的“預流果”者；“一間”，如上所述的“一還果”者；“無行般涅盤”，指不必主觀努力就可自然證入般涅槃者；“有行般涅盤”，指需主觀努力才可證入般涅槃者；“以上流補特伽羅”，指“四果”之“不還果”需要不斷往色界天更高層次投生才可般涅槃者。此處和“道果差別”不同之處在於此是以過程的不同來看待，後者是以最終成果不同來看待。

“退不退差別建立”是專指已證得阿羅漢果言的聖人而言，分為“退法阿羅漢”，指證得阿羅漢果位還會退失者；“不退法阿羅漢”，指證得阿羅漢果位且不會退失者。而“障差別建立”也是專指證得阿羅漢果的人而言，分為“慧解脫者”，指只在智慧上獲得解脫的阿羅漢，但不能通達“四禪八定”最後一定“滅盡定”的阿羅漢；“俱解脫者”，指既能從智慧上獲得解脫，又能通達“滅盡定”的阿羅漢。

此外，在《瑜伽師地論》的其他章節中也有一些另類關於“補特伽羅”的分類方法，如在此文的第七十卷有根據身份上是否依屬他人、佛法修行是否成熟來劃分的“補特伽羅”，以及根據是否有涅槃法緣劃分的“無種姓補特伽羅”和“有種姓補特伽羅”等。但這些分類的分類方法上，都基本與本文“十一差別”的分類標準十分相似。

三、总結

“補特伽羅”這一概念在唯識理論成立之前就已存在。《瑜伽師地論·聲聞地》對於“補特伽羅”分類方法以不離大乘佛法教義為本，所提到的十一種分類方式以及二十八個品類，使得“補特伽羅”的內涵愈發豐富，一定程度上促進了佛教理論的發展。

通過這些分類，佛教不僅可以為修行者提供明確的指引，也能反映出對個體差異的深刻理解。這種分類不僅在理論探討中具有重要意義，也在實際修行過程中發揮著不可忽視的作用。未來的研究可以繼續探索這一概念在當代心理學、哲學和社會學中的應用，如與心理學中關於人格類型

的分類對比。借此推動更廣泛的跨學科交流與理解，從而使得佛教思想與現代科學相結合，形成新的視角與啟示。

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“大乘非佛说”的再认识

研究生：释则延

指导教师：朱晓宁博士

摘要

“大乘非佛说”的论题研究由来已久，是从近代日本的明治维新时期的富永仲基、古河永、西依一六、村上专精等学者以及西方学者对于巴利语经典的考证引发。此议题对于以大乘为主的佛教传统具有重大意义。而对此议题，中国佛教有关学者与大德也做过许多探讨，均有所偏颇。本文通过对“佛说”的重新界定，以解决此一问题。得出的结论是，大乘佛教虽不必佛亲口所宣，但其是对基本佛陀思想深化的诠释。

关键词： 大乘非佛说 佛说 历史学

“大乘非佛说”的相关研究由来已久，学术界对此已经基本形成了共识，一致认定大乘经典是大约公元前一世纪左右出现[353]的，是佛教内部出现的新的佛教思想。对此问题，中国佛教界一致认为大乘经典是佛金口所说，是为了保持汉传大乘佛教的正统性。这个就和主流佛教界的观点产生了冲突。本文对此议题的探讨关键在于对于“佛说”一词的界定，以达成大乘佛教存在的价值目的。进一步来探讨对于“大乘非佛说”说法的一种合理的解读。

“大乘非佛说”是指大乘佛教的经典非是释迦牟尼佛所说，而主张大乘经典是由后世的佛弟子们所依据佛教义理所撰写的说法。“大乘非佛说”的议题是在古代的印度，即佛灭四、五百年左右，因为大小乘佛教徒之间的争论，小乘教徒为了贬低大乘而提出的[354]。并伴随着佛教传入中国。

“大乘非佛说”观点在近代，是由日本江户时代的大阪学者富永仲基所著《出定后语》提出，到了明治维新时期古河永、西依一六、村上专精等人依据西方科学文献考据的方法去研究佛典，在富永仲基的研究基础上重提“大乘非佛说”的观点，并把这方面的相关研究进一步深化推向了历史的高潮。而其议题一直是南传上座部对于大乘佛教的态度。印顺的《中观今论》中就记载了上座部所持有这种的观点。“声闻三藏与摩诃衍——大乘，一向被诤论著。一分声闻学者，以《阿含经》等三藏为佛说，斥大乘为非佛说；现在流行于锡兰、暹罗、缅甸的佛教，还是如此。一分大乘学者，自以为不共二乘，斥声闻为小乘，指《阿含经》为小乘经，以

[353] “所以大乘经典的首度出现，几乎确定可以上推到西元前一世纪”平川彰《印度佛教史》（贵州大学出版社，2013 年）第 241 页。

[354] 伊藤义贤〈大乘非佛说论之由来〉，《现代佛教学术丛刊-99：大乘佛教的问题研究》（大乘文化出版社，1979）第 255 页-256 页。

为大乘别有法源。”[355]西方学者以魏莱·蒲仙（La Vallée Poussin）与魏尔本（G.R. Welbon）等为代表在研究巴利语佛典的看法。“对于一个孕育于教会神圣传统中的天主教学者来说，宗教不单只是祖师的原来教义般简单。可是，蒲仙强烈地觉察到他必须分佛教经典为古老及近代两层。魏尔本却说：“那些所谓巴利及梵文的佛教圣典，若不采用最近的‘样态史’的方法，则很难分辨出何者是佛陀的真实教诲，何者为后人的解释，但这些方法却是西方学者从来未接触过的。”[356]他们运用西方诠释学的方法，得出佛典是弟子们对佛所说义理的诠释，非是佛陀的本义。

因“大乘非佛说”话题是在历史考据发现中达成的历史定论，导致了大乘佛教界对大乘佛法在历史上的评判，有着二种观点的出现：一种是以印顺（1906-2005）为主的调和派，“在古代流行的佛法上看，大体上有守旧与创新的两派……佛法的流行，就是从变的观点，从史的演化去观察。历史需要考真伪，……从佛法的流行中，探索它的精髓，使它在新的时代中流行！”[357]这里既肯定历史事实，又不否定大乘价值；另一种是以谈锡永（1935-2024）等人为代表的极端保守主义，主张一切都是佛说，反对佛法的发展观。其著作中提到“佛陀当日教导弟子，依次第而教，因此开示的理论便亦依次第。但我们却不能说佛陀于教导“四谛”时不识“十二因缘”，于教导“十二因缘”时不识“中观”，于教导“中观”时不识“唯识”，于教导“唯识”时不识“如来藏”。因此，为我们不能说这种种学

[355] 印顺〈总序〉，《中观今论》（中华书局，2009 年）第 3 页。
[356] 狄雍原〈欧美佛学研究小史〉，《世界佛学名著译丛》71（华宇出版社，1986 年）第 108 页。
[357] 印顺〈大乘是佛说〉，《现代佛教学术丛刊-99：大乘佛教的问题研究》（大乘文化出版社，1979 年）第 333-335 页。

说，实由“发展”而来，而非佛陀的次第说法。是故各种不同的佛家见地，只有传播的先后差别，而非由一个思想发展成另一个思想。也可以这样说，有“佛家思想传播”的历史，而无“佛家思想发展”的历史……由是可知，佛家经论实为由上向下的建立，而非由下向上的发展。”[358]中国佛教对于“大乘非佛说”的看法，涉及到大乘佛教的价值的讨论，二种观点即是对其反驳，亦是对自身信仰的肯定。对“佛说”概念的解读是理清此议题的核心，本文接下来论述。

本文进入对 “大乘非佛说”中“佛说”一词的界定的探讨，“佛说”一词有着狭义与广义之分，狭义的“佛说”是指历史人物的释迦佛金口所说。其佛经的主体结构记录的是弟子的提问与佛陀的回答。佛经不是释迦佛说法的原始记录，所以在佛经开头都会加上“如是我闻，一时，佛在某处”来作为经典的可靠性证明。而“佛说”的广义是指符合佛法义理的经典都可以统称为是“佛说”。佛经通五种人说，《十诵律》中“法者，名佛所说、弟子所说、天所说、仙人所说、化人所说，显示布施、持戒、生天、涅槃。”[359] 五种人所说的标准在经论中有记载。玄奘的《阿毘达磨大毘婆沙论》谈论到，“若佛说，若弟子说，不违法性，世尊皆许苾刍受持。”[360]诃梨跋摩在《成实论》以“若法入修多罗、随顺毗尼、不违法相。”[361]为佛说的标准。印顺在其《佛法概论》等著作当中提到了，“三法印，为佛法的重要教义；判断佛法的是否究竟，即以此三印来衡量。若

[358] 谈锡永〈总序〉，《传统文化典籍导读丛书 1：杂阿含经导读》（中国书店，2006 年）第 3 页。
[359] 《大正藏》，第 23 册, 第 70 页下。
[360] 《大正藏》，第 27 册, 第 1 页中。
[361] 《大正藏》，第 32 册, 第 365 页上。

与此三印相违的，即使是佛陀亲说的，也不是了义法。反之，若与三印相契合——入佛法相，即使非佛所说，也可认为是佛法。法是普遍的必然的理性，印是依此而证实为究竟正确的；依此三者来印证是佛法，所以称为法印。三法印的名称，是‘诸行无常’、‘诸法无我’、‘涅槃寂静’。”[362]不管是谁说的，大小乘所公认的佛法标准是“三法印”。是以符合“三法印”义理的即可统称为“佛说”。

广义的“佛说”围绕着“三法印”来展开，大乘就是对“三法印”当中的诸法无我印、涅槃寂静印二印的深化。印顺《中观今论》中对于声闻注重无常的不实义，大乘注重无为的无生义。“佛说”是以其中的一个法印为中心来解读另外的二个法印，三印不离。所以对于“佛说”的概念内涵的认知是随着三印的解读核心的转移而变化。《中观今论》中“正觉体悟的无为、不生，是三乘圣者所共证的，已如上述。为了教导声闻弟子证得此无生法，依《阿含经》所成立的教门说，主要是三法印：一、诸行无常，二、诸法无我，三、涅槃寂静。此三者，印定释迦的出世法，开示世出世间的真理。此三者，是可以随说一印，或次第说此三印的。次第三法印，即是以明解因果事实的生灭为出发点，依此而通过诸法无我的实践，到达正觉的涅槃。这如《杂阿含经》（二七〇经）说：“无常想者能建立无我想，圣弟子住无我想，心离我慢，顺得涅槃。”三法印的次第悟入，可看为声闻法的常道。但大乘佛教，本是充满利他悲愿的佛教行者在深证无生的体悟中，阐发释迦本怀而应运光大的。在这无生的深悟中，以佛陀为模范，不以为“所作已办”，而还要进一步的利他无尽。本着此无生无

[362] 印顺《佛法概论》（中华书局，2009 年）第 105 页。

为的悟境去正观一切，即窥见了释迦立教的深义，因之与一般凡庸的声闻学者不同。所以大乘佛教的特色，即“诸法本不生”，即是依缘起本来不生不灭为出发的。”[363] 大小乘的教门，声闻注重无常印，大乘注重无生印即指向无为法，二者不离，偏重点不同。就形成了“佛说”概念内涵的变化。印顺按照“三法印”把大乘分为三期：性空唯名、法相唯识、真常唯心，这就是“三法印”在大乘当中的应用。

综上所述，对于“大乘非佛说”的观点，本文围绕着界定“佛说”一词来讨论，从狭义的“佛说”看历史，大乘非释迦佛金口所说，而广义的“佛说”论价值，大乘是佛说。因为他们对于“佛说”一词的内涵解读的不同，导致得出了不同的观点。本文从对“佛说”的诠释角度，得出的结论是，大乘佛教虽不必佛亲口所宣，但其是对佛陀基本思想深化的诠释。

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新加坡汉传佛教建筑研究

研究生：邹璐

指导老师：李葛夫博士

摘要

新加坡汉传佛教及其建筑在跨文化语境下展现出独特的风格范式。本文通过文献考据、田野调查、图像分析等多种方法，系统考察新加坡汉传佛教建筑的历时性演变与共时性特征。其建筑形式经历不同阶段的演化，与中国传统佛教建筑既同源又异质；通过空间功能的重构，融合了宗教用途与社区服务；装饰艺术方面亦呈现本土化的转译。新加坡汉传佛教建筑不仅承载了民众信仰，更在多元宗教对话中探索传统建筑遗产的活化路径，展现汉传佛教在都市化环境中的生存智慧与发展策略，为东南亚华人文化研究及宗教建筑创新提供重要参考。

关键词：新加坡汉传佛教 佛教建筑 人间佛教 都市宗教 文化在地性

一．前言

汉传佛教建筑历史悠久，源远流长。其源起于印度，经过两千余年的发展，在中国形成了独特的建筑形制、空间布局、审美艺术与宗教思维。佛教建筑不仅是物理结构，更是佛教思想与文化的外化体现。寺院、庙宇、佛塔等构成了中国传统佛教建筑体系，其轴线秩序、材质隐喻、比例象征以及飞檐斗拱等建筑语言，构建了独特的佛教建筑风格。

当汉传佛教建筑体系进入南洋多元文化环境，形制符号逐渐发生转译，功能空间亦有所调适，成为宗教本土化进程的重要物质见证。新加坡自 1819 年开埠至今，已走过 200 多年历史，作为一个移民国家，不同种族、不同宗教信仰的移民汇聚于此，其中佛教信仰者在全国人口中占较大比例[364]，据不完全统计，本地有超过 200 多间佛教寺院及组织、机构，因而在全岛各地散布着不少引人注目的佛教建筑。

汉传佛教在新加坡有着深厚的历史根基，其建筑艺术不仅是宗教信仰的物质载体，更是中华文化流传到海外，与时俱进，兼容并蓄的现实演绎。本文结合田野调查、图像采集、文献分析及访谈等研究方法，在广泛收集资料的基础上，对新加坡汉传佛教寺院建筑进行概括性研究与系统分析，构建其发展谱系。

[364] 2020 人口普查 佛教仍是本地第一大宗教 但有更多人无宗教信仰，《联合早报》，2021..6.16，“新加坡统计局公布的 2020 年全国人口普查数据显示，佛教仍是本地第一大宗教，佛教徒占 15 岁及以上总居民人口的 31.1％。第二和第三大宗教依次为基督教（18.9％）和回教（15.6％）。”（https://www.zaobao.com.sg/realtime/singapore/story20210616-1156741）

二. 文献回顾

2007 年出版的《新加坡佛教建筑艺术》是迄今为止研究新加坡佛教建筑艺术的重要参考文献,为该领域研究填补历史空白。书中系统梳理了新加坡佛教建筑的发展历程，并探讨了影响其演变的关键因素。

本地历年来也有宗教建筑的著作出版，但都仅限于个案研究。如《新加坡佛牙寺建筑纪实》（2005）、《莲山双林禅寺 120 周年文集》（2019）、杨芷善所著《粤海清庙：建筑与历史的对话》（2020）等。这些研究主要集中于个别宗教建筑的历史与结构，较少对整体佛教建筑发展趋势进行归纳分析。

中国华南理工大学新闻传播学院袁忠教授，曾在 2017 年发表论文《南洋空间的嬗变：新加坡华人庙宇的多元杂义性》。论文指出：“目前对新加坡庙宇研究多是个体探讨，如单个庙宇、单个信仰等的探讨，很少群体或者概括性研究；多为历史和静态研究，少有关系和动态研究；多为单学科研究，较少跨学科研究。”[365]他的论文“以整体视角，由古及今，分析传统庙宇从中国大陆南部向亚洲东南部的审美转换与人文演化，概括出其发展特征和原因等。[366]”

[365] 袁忠<南洋空间的嬗变：新加坡华人庙宇的多元杂义性>《华南理工大学学报》（社会科学版），2017。http://www.xml-data.org/HNLGDXXBSKB/html/2017-6-77.htm

[366] 同上。

从其文章举例，庙宇多为传统道教信仰的庙宇建筑。他认为：“新加坡华人庙宇是中国内陆文明与东南亚海洋文明互动的产物，和中国传统庙宇相比，它从实体艺术到空间活动都发生了许多变迁，出现本土化的现象，审美空间、信仰行为和活动项目多种多样，意义与价值混杂，形成多元杂义性特征。”

综上所述，现有研究虽对新加坡佛教建筑的个别案例提供资料，但缺乏系统性、跨学科的整体分析。本研究将在前人工作的基础上，结合田野调查和综合研究方法，进一步探讨新加坡汉传佛教建筑的历时演变及空间适应策略。

三．新加坡汉传佛教历史探源

在探讨新加坡汉传佛教建筑之前，需先简要概述汉传佛教在本地的发展历程。佛教建筑的历时性演变与佛教自身的发展进程息息相关，不仅承载着宗教功能，还反映了移民社会的信仰变迁、文化融合及建筑风格的调整。

(一) 历史维度：佛教传入及不同发展阶段

新加坡的汉传佛教主要由早期中国移民带入，其信仰体系和建筑风格深受福建、广东、潮州等地传统影响。早期佛教建筑的选材、工艺乃至营造方式均源自中国原乡，不同地缘的传承直接影响了建筑材料的使用及建筑风格的呈现。

随着大量中国南方移民来到新加坡，他们不仅带来了原乡的民间风俗和宗教信仰，也在异国他乡建立庙宇，以维系华族的精神寄托和文化认同。新加坡最早的汉传佛教建筑包括四马路观音堂佛祖庙（1884 年）、莲山双林禅寺（1898 年）等。这些建筑承袭了中国寺院的传统风格，移民在异地建造与家乡极为相似的寺庙，以此维系信仰，成为汉传佛教在新加坡发展的重要基石。

新加坡早期佛教建筑是移民潮与信仰移植的产物，随着时间的推移，僧团结构、社会功能以及建筑艺术不断演化。值得注意的是，早期寺院住持多来自中国南方，上世纪下半叶，部分僧人则来自江浙地区及北方。然而，寺院的经济基础主要仍掌握在闽南、潮州、广东的华人居士家族手中。

早期佛教建筑整体风格仍保留着中国传统建筑的形式，以满足移民对于家乡文化和宗教仪式的需求。随着社会发展和现代化进程的推进，佛教建筑逐渐发生变化，开始融合本土建筑材料、施工技术以及新加坡多元文化特征。同时，在传统寺院的维护、翻新过程中，本地佛教界也与中国大陆、香港、台湾的古建筑专家、设计师和建筑施工团队展开合作，共同探索适应南洋气候条件的建筑技术问题。

从社会发展层面来看，1942 年至 1945 年的日本占领时期成为新加坡历史的重要分水岭。这段时期，华人社会遭受严重创伤，许多史料毁于战火，而民众对宗教信仰的需求亦随之增强，寺庙及信众数量显著增长，甚至出现佛祖、观音菩萨显灵的传闻。战后的六、七十年代，国家进入经济

复苏阶段，庙宇重建或购地新建成为佛教界的核心任务。至八、九十年代，随着新加坡经济腾飞，佛教界日益繁荣，大量佛教团体成立，寺院兴建和重建活动更加频繁。

然而，随着新加坡语文政策的调整导致华文华语及华族文化逐步边缘化，汉传佛教寺院成为年长者聚集的场所，而年轻人出家的比例显著降低。佛教建筑的修建和翻新减少，这种趋势在社会现代化进程中值得进一步关注。

（二）类型划分：汉传佛教寺院、团体的类型

新加坡的佛教信仰体系多元化，来自不同国家的传承形成全球佛教传播的“文明枢纽”。汉传佛教寺庙及相关团体的具体数量尚无精确统计，本文参考《新加坡汉传佛教发展概述》（释能度主编），书中收录了 1884 年至 2006 年间创立的 79 座寺院，以及 22 个缁素团体和 36 个机构组织。大致可以分类如下：

1) 传统僧伽寺院（Sangha-oriented Monasteries）。据不完全统计，约有 79 间，名称各异，有寺、禅寺、堂、庵、精舍等；
2) 缁素共修团体（Lay-Clergy Hybrid Communities），即佛教团体，多为居士组织创办。又分为海外联谊组织、本地协会、外来寺院的海外分部等。据不完全统计，约有 22 间；
3) 佛教界创办的学校，包括世学教育和佛学教育，世学教育有菩提学校（1948）、弥陀学校（1954）、文殊中学（1981）；佛学教育有新加坡女子佛学院（1962-1975）、新加坡佛学院（2005）；

4) 佛教文化传播机构，包括佛教杂志、佛教书局及图书馆等；

5) 佛教慈善服务机构。主要以安老院、中、西医诊疗服务、洗肾中心、关怀辅导为主。

6) 独自居住在社区的出家人精舍，类似阿兰若。

（三）地理分布：汉传佛教寺院的区域分布概况

从空间分布来看，新加坡汉传佛教寺院在全岛呈现明显的区域集中现象。田野调查结合谷歌地图分析发现，佛教寺院的分布与城市发展高度相关。

芽笼区是佛教寺院最为密集的区域之一，该地也是著名的红灯区，当地民众常戏称“芽笼一边是万丈红尘，一边是漫天神佛”。大量佛教团体在此设立，其原因各异。口述历史显示，1967 年新加坡城市重建局（URA）城市规划催生了芽笼的宗教建筑集群，同时由于该地是红灯区，房价相对较低，吸引了宗教团体、会馆及社团在此落户。

此外，东部景万岸、友诺士、直落古楼一带也分布着多间汉传佛教寺院，如灵峰般若讲堂、法施林、英文佛教会、延庆寺等，各寺院间步行可达，展现出较为紧密的信仰网络。

近年来，一些新建或重建项目获政府批准，在新兴住宅区或工业区兴建寺院，如：位于榜鹅的新加坡佛光山；位于武吉巴督组屋区的竹林寺；位于兀兰的吉祥宝聚寺等。

新建寺院多采用现代建筑风格，以适应城市空间限制。其中，一些寺院采取“垂直寺院”的模式，结合传统与现代设计，如佛殿保持传统风格，而教学楼或功能大厦采用现代高层建筑形式。这一现象揭示了佛教建筑如何在都市环境中调整自身空间特性，以符合现代社会需求。

四．新加坡汉传佛教建筑研究

本次田野调查对新加坡汉传佛教建筑进行了系统性研究，共考察 50 余处佛教建筑，重点分析其外观设计、内部空间功能及其演变轨迹，并结合历史、风格与社会互动等维度，探讨新加坡汉传佛教建筑的发展趋势。

（一）历史维度：汉传佛教建筑的形制演化

佛教随着移民传入新加坡，确切地说，最早是作为民间信仰的一部分，被带来新加坡，因此并没有所谓的纯正、正信佛教，更没有正统、典型、具规模的佛教建筑，“称其为宗教建筑更为贴切。”[367]随着时间推移，寺院逐渐增多，就其外观、功能、风格特征等产生形制上的演化，大致分析如下：

1. 传统建筑范式移植（1880-1940）

这一时期的汉传佛教建筑基本承袭中国传统寺院风格，尤其以福建传统寺院为蓝本。例如：莲山双林禅寺、光明山普觉禅寺、龙山寺等。这些寺庙的创办时间较早，开山祖师多来自福建，其中部分寺庙更是中国祖庭的海外廨院，建筑风格沿袭传统，保持中轴对称、飞檐斗拱等中国寺院的基本特点。

[367] 刘先觉、李谷合著《新加坡佛教建筑艺术》（新加坡 Kepmedia International Pte Ltd，2007）页 3。

2. 战后兴建与在地化调适（1940-1990）

二战结束后，新加坡经历社会重建，寺庙建筑在形式与材料上出现明显的本土化调适，例如：本地釉面砖取代闽南红砖，降低建造成本；结合南洋建筑特色，如开阔通风的结构设计；建筑更趋向简朴实用，寺庙多为单层平房，内部装饰采用南洋地砖、瓷砖。代表性寺庙包括：延庆寺、法华禅寺、清莲寺、旃檀林等。这一阶段的佛教建筑多为私人清修或家庙，不对外开放，建筑风格简朴，强调空间功能性。

3. 都市环境中的建筑创新（1990 至今）

近 30 年来，新加坡佛教建筑发生显著变化，主要呈现仿古、现代化、功能化等趋势：仿古建筑如福海禅寺、佛牙寺、吉祥宝聚寺，外观参考传统中国寺庙，内部融合现代设施。现代建筑如药师行愿会、观音禅林、新加坡佛光山等，外观简洁现代，仅以装饰元素体现佛教属性。

4. 传统与现代及不同传承融合

部分寺庙借鉴日本佛教、藏传佛教建筑风格，体现跨文化借鉴，例如：九华山报恩寺，结合了环保节能理念，沿着坡道还设置了藏式转经筒；佛牙寺采用唐代建筑风格，其灰色瓦片由日本建筑商特制。

此外，越来越多寺庙采用"垂直寺院"模式，即高层建筑替代传统院落式寺庙，同时引入电子结算设备、环绕音响、线上共修等现代管理方式，展现汉传佛教的适应性发展。

（二）共时比较：汉传佛教建筑风格分析

新加坡汉传佛教建筑风格类型简要划分为以下几类：（1）传统中国式寺院建筑（如莲山双林禅寺）；（2）仿古中国式寺院建筑（如佛牙寺）；（3）结合南洋天气状况等形成的早期南洋建筑（如延庆寺）；（4）传统与现代相结合的新型建筑（如菩提佛院）；（5）现代高层建筑（如新加坡佛光山）；（6）传统店屋翻新工程等。风格类型及发展趋势展现出新加坡佛教建筑的灵活适应性，以务实取向为主导，既坚守文化认同，又融入都市环境的生存智慧。

（三） 社会维度：汉传佛教建筑的现代化实践

新加坡是一个高度现代化、宗教融合的国际大都会，佛教建筑不仅是宗教信仰的载体，也承担了社区服务、文化传承等多元功能。从社会维度来看，新加坡汉传佛教建筑主要呈现以下特点：

1. 高密度城市信仰网格

新加坡仅 734.3 平方公里，却拥有超过 200 多座佛教建筑，形成高密度宗教空间（约 4.3 座/km^2）。寺院广泛分布于住宅区、商业区、工业区，突破传统寺院"深山藏古刹"的范式，体现人间佛教理念，使宗教空间深度融入市民日常生活。

2. 宗教建筑的实用性与社会服务

在新加坡，许多佛教寺庙不仅承担宗教功能，还开办养老院、幼稚园、中医诊所、心理辅导、慈善机构等。这些寺庙通常采用现代建筑风格，

仅在内部陈设上增加佛教元素，使得一些佛教团体外观几乎无法辨识为宗教建筑。

3. 多元宗教的空间治理

新加坡政府通过宗教用地配额制，强制不同信仰建筑毗邻共存，以促进宗教和谐。例如：马里安曼兴都庙（1843）是新加坡最古老的兴都庙；詹美回教堂（1826）是保留原始风貌的回教堂；佛牙寺（2007）是汉传佛教建筑。这些宗教建筑紧密毗邻，共同构成新加坡独特社会人文景观。

4. 气候适应性建筑创新

由于新加坡为热带海洋性气候，终年高温湿润，佛教建筑需要耐潮湿防腐材料（如现代水泥结构）、通风良好的设计（减少湿气积聚）、抗风雨结构优化（防范雨季的影响）、许多寺庙在建筑修复过程中面临技术难题，需从中国等地引进施工团队以维护传统结构。

5. 跨宗教对话中的建筑语言

新加坡佛教建筑逐渐趋向现代化、实用化，摒弃繁复装饰，转向庄严、简洁、大方的建筑风格，例如：垂直空间分布、多功能讲堂、极简主义设计等，这一趋势体现了佛教建筑的社会适应性，展现佛教在都市环境中的生存智慧。

五．结语

本文以新加坡汉传佛教建筑为研究对象，结合佛教在新加坡的发展历史，以及人类学、社会学的田野调查方法，深入分析其在都市化进程中的空间存在逻辑。本研究揭示，新加坡佛教建筑通过功能折叠（如垂直寺院）、技术革新（如仿古建筑材料）、符码组合（如三教合一）等策略，形成具有独特地域特征的建筑艺术。其核心特征体现为高密度信仰网格建构、跨宗教空间治理、气候适应性技术创新，以及在多元宗教环境下的建筑语言创造性转化。

研究进一步发现，新加坡汉传佛教建筑在保持宗教核心功能的同时，积极拓展医疗、教育、公益、慈善、社区服务等社会功能，并整合智能管理系统，推动传统寺院向都市精神综合体的现代化转型，以回应都市社会需求和时代发展趋势。这种建筑实践不仅承载海外华人的文化记忆，更在多元宗教对话中探索传统文化的活化路径，为东南亚华人文化研究及宗教建筑创新提供重要借鉴。

新加坡作为移民国家，历史相对短暂，其城市发展倾向于现代性、创新性、实用性，潜在地影响着历史认同与民族意识，并在某种程度上形成自觉或不自觉的消解与摒弃。新加坡汉传佛教建筑所体现的“层叠现代性”，即在现代混凝土框架中嵌套古老木构记忆，在智能楼宇里延续香火传承。这种建筑语言不仅是文化认同的物化展现，更是佛教在当代都市环境中适应社会变迁的创新实验。值得关注的是，未来佛教建筑的发展是否

会进一步适应时代需求，削弱自身独特性，趋向普适化？是否更倾向于慈善事业的扩展？这些问题既关乎建筑独特性，也影响佛教的未来发展。

佛教建筑研究不仅是对历史的回溯，更是对未来的展望。佛教建筑因承载信仰，具备人间道场、城市丛林、弘法利生、利益社会的特殊功能与价值，因此，其保护与发展值得特别关注。

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佛学研究

电子期刊

第十二册, 2025

檀香佛学研究中心

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