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Editorial Board

Editorial Note

It is with much pleasure that we announce the first issue of the online eJournal of the Than Hsiang Buddhist Research Centre. This volume contains just a few research articles on different aspects of Buddhist studies belonging to all the three major traditions of Buddhism. We are quite happy for being able to make a contributive effort, even though it is on a very small scale, to meet the growing demand for research papers in Buddhist studies in today's world.

The subject of Buddhist studies has been developed into a vast field through the centuries embracing different disciplines of study. Exploration of those disciplines through research studies has immense value to the academic world. Buddhism has nothing to hide. It becomes brighter and brighter when it is revealed. As a living religion, it really needs more and more scientific investigation to explore its values to the human life for its wellbeing and progress. The eJournal of the Than Hsiang Buddhist Research Centre is purely devoted to publish research papers of Buddhist studies mainly with the intention of providing them to a wider audience. Grateful appreciation from the Editorial Board is extended to the postgraduate students and academia of the International Buddhist College in Thailand for submitting their research studies for publication.

Professor Kapila Abhayawansa

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Dr. Fa Qing

General Methodologies for Religious Studies

According to Friedrich Heiler, the research method in religious studies may draw simultaneously upon all the valuable knowledge supplied by ethnology, philology and psychology. There is no science without presuppositions, but is important for science to have the right ones.[1] Thus he suggests five conditions that are helpful in religious studies:

1. The first preliminary condition is a *strictly inductive method.*

Religion must never be forced into the constraint of a theological or philosophical system. It is necessary to be satiated with historical facts.[2]

2. One of the most important requirements of the inductive method is the *investigation of the sources,* that is to say, the texts and commentaries.

"Language and religion are very closely related. The Student of religion should be a student of language too."[3] Joachim Wach also says that the first necessary equipment for religious studies is the language, "the student of religions is never well enough equipped linguistically." It may not be necessary, but the chances of an adequate understanding are infinitely better where the interpreter is in a position to at least check on the translation of key terms.[4]

3. Religion should not only be studied in books, but in *living people*, both in individuals and in societies.

Those who wish to study religion, must attend religious services of all religions and confessions, and make himself familiar with both cult-like and puritanical devotion. What is required is not indifference, but rather an engagement of feeling, interest and participation.[5]

4. The fourth condition for a fruitful study of religion is a *universal point of view*.

The greatest danger, however, is that dogmatic view of religion that takes one's own religion as absolute, and regards that religion as a shining light, and all other ones as unrelieved

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1. Friedrich Heiler, "The Scholarly Study of Religion," *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion*. vol. 1, ed. Jacques Waardenburg (The Hague: Mouton & Co. N. V., 1973) 471.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. 472.
4. Joachim Wach, *The Comparative Study of Religions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963) 11.
5. Wach, 12.

darkness.[6] Ignorance, uncontrolled passion, and lack of direction are enemies of that state of mind which alone promises success in the venture of understanding.[7]

5. The fifth methodological requirement is *the phenomenological method*: one goes to the essence.

One should not remain on the outside, but penetrate everywhere to the heart of religious experience; from the fixed forms (ceremonial, dogmas), we must penetrate to immediate religious life.[8]

Above all there are three requirements for religious studies:

1. *Respect* for all real religions is essential.

2. The second requirement is *personal experience.*

One cannot be engaged in ethics without a moral sense, in history of art without any artistic experience, in philosophy without love of truth, in the study of religion without any religious feeling, in the broadest sense of the word.

3. The third requirement is *that one takes seriously a religious claim to the truth*: one cannot properly understand religion if one dismisses it as superstition, illusion, or as a scarecrow.

Any study of religion is, in the last analysis, theology, to the extent that it does not concern itself with psychological and historical phenomena only, but also with the experience of transcendental realities. Certainly, religion is a part of spiritual life and spiritual culture, but this spiritual life can be understood only on the basis of its final metaphysical source. This taking seriously a religious view of reality is, to a certain extent, a faith, but not a faith in the sense of a fixed theological or confessional dogma. The greatest scholars of religion, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Max Mūller, Nathan Söderblom, have been men of faith, but of a universal faith, a faith transcendental in mankind.[9]

Methodologies dealing with Buddhist Texts

A Critical Attitude toward the Texts

Buddhist doctrine of *anātman, no-self,* can be used as method for Buddhist studies itself. One should not stubbornly adhere to one's opinions and should remove pre-existing opinions in one's mind in order to seek the truth. Any dogmatic view towards the other religions or other schools should be avoided. The greatest danger is that religious dogmatism

6. Heiler, 473.
7. Wach, 13.
8. Heiler, 473.
9. Ibid.

causes one to take one's own religion/school as absolute, regarding it as a shining light, and all other ones as unrelieved darkness.[10]

Usually, a Buddhist attitude toward the texts of one's tradition are quite different from that of a Buddhist scholar. For research, a critical attitude toward the texts is required and the different functions of a Buddhist and a Buddhist scholar should not be confused. The only kind of truth one can have as scholar is what is subject to discussion and verification in the open arena of the academy.[11]

Linguistic Analysis

It is notable that distinguished Buddhist scholars like Stcherbatsky, Lamotte, Nagao etc., utilized the method of linguistic analysis to make great achievements in Buddhist studies. From their works, it is evident that a commonality among all of them is that they have mastered the Buddhist languages, i.e., Sanskrit, Pāli, Chinese and Tibetan. Prof. Nagao says "Buddhist studies in the future will have to be based upon a more critical and thorough-going philological analysis of the Buddhist texts that have been transmitted to us through several different traditions. In the present state of Buddhist studies, I feel that philology must precede philosophy or history, but what is even more important is the fact that the former must not nullify the latter."[12] Dr. Kawamura also says that these four languages are essential for a modern Buddhist scholar. Thus, in an investigation of Buddhist texts, it is essential to use the original languages, i.e., Sanskrit, Pāli, Tibetan and Chinese.

Investigating Background (Contextualization) and Understanding the Intentions of the Text's Author

This is the phenomenological *method*: one goes to the essence. The superficial manifestations should be investigated only for the sake of the essence upon which they are based. One should not remain on the outside, but penetrate everywhere to its very heart.[13] For example, Nāgārjuna's philosophy of emptiness should be better understood if one knows the background which was the refutation of the Abhidhamikas whose views take the dharmas as reality and recognize the three phases (past, present and future) of existence of dharmas.

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[10]. Heiler, 473.
[11]. Paul J. Griffiths, "Buddhist Hybrid English: Some notes on Philology and Hermeneutics for Buddhologists" *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* (*JIABS*, Vol. 4, No.2, 1981): 22.
[12]. Gadjin Nagao, "Presidential Address by Professor Gadjin M. Nagao" *JIABS* Vol. 1 (1979, No.2): 82
[13]. Heiler, 473.

Scholars such as Tsukamoto Zenryu have brilliantly demonstrated that Chinese Buddhism can only be understood when one knows the background of Chinese history and culture. In the same way, Indian Buddhism has to be studied in relation to Indian culture, as one of the manifestations of Indian spirituality. This can be achieved only when scholars are actively engaged in the study of all aspects of Indian culture.

Methodologies for Buddhist Text Translation

Translation of the Buddhist texts from classic languages such as Pali, Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan is essential for Buddhist studies. It is important to devise a method dealing with Buddhist text translation.

A Brief History of the Translation of Buddhist Text in the West

Doboom Tulku in his introduction to a *Buddhist Translations*, mentioned three phases on the history of the translation of Buddhist texts to the West.[14]
the first phase covers the early years of the colonial period on the Indian subcontinent. During this time the translations of Buddhist texts into English from Pali, Sanskrit and Tibetan were often done by missionaries or by persons who were deeply committed to and influenced by Christianity. Kern and Rhys Davis belong to this category.

The second phase covers roughly the first half of this century when the influence of Christianity and Christian values on western translators faded into the background. The categories and concepts of traditional western philosophy became dominant and most translators were vigorously influenced by Kant. The translators like Stcherbatsky and Conze were influenced by Kantian ideas.

The third phase is marked by "the introduction of still more models and conceptual schemes taken from the western intellectual and philosophical tradition." This phase can be said to run roughly from the middle of the twentieth century to the present. The ideas of Kant and Marx, as well as Berkeley, are largely abandoned. The new fashion has been to look to western psychology, as taught primarily by Freud and Jung, for conceptual schemes to be used in the translation and interpretation of Buddhist materials. There also has been a new tendency to adopt the concepts of linguistic relativism, particularly as propounded by Wittgenstein, for help in the work of translating Buddhist texts into English.

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[14]. Doboom Tulku, "Introduction," *Buddhist Translations Problems and Perspectives* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1995) 2-5.

What these three phases have in common is the imposition of the Western conceptual scheme upon Buddhist material. Whether it was Christian values or those of traditional Western philosophy or those of modern movements in Western intellectual circles, all of them are marked by the prevalent use of a particularly western system of thought in the translation of Buddhist texts. It would not be wrong to say that all the translators working in these three periods have looked at the Buddhist texts through some Western spectacle of one color or another. The result has inevitably caused distortion, to a greater or lesser extent of the original genuine Buddhist message. For example, Buddhist philosophers like Asanga and Vasubandhu have a very different outlook from that of the traditional western idealism.[15]

A similar problem arose when Buddhist texts were translated into Chinese from Sanskrit at initial stage of Buddhism in China, where Taoist and to a lesser extent Confucian concepts, influenced the translation and interpretation of Buddhist materials. This situation lasted over three hundred years from the beginning of the introduction of Buddhism into China until the arrival of Kumārajīva in AD 401. The most celebrated translator in the Chinese history was Hsuan-tsang (AD 600-664). Because of his perfect knowledge of both the Sanskrit and Chinese languages and because his deep penetration into the vast ocean of Buddhist philosophy and literature "laid once and for all the reliable and authentic foundation for interpreting the Sanskrit scriptures into Chinese."[16]

New Method of Translation

Doboom Tulku's suggestion for a new translation is that it **allows Buddhist texts to speak in English but with an authentic Buddhist voice**. Sometimes such attempts led to overly literal English translations which become difficult for the average English reader not familiar with the original language to understand. The new approach to translation will speak with a genuine Buddhist voice, presented in a language and style comprehensible to the average educated reader.[17]

Joe Bransford Wilson also consents that "analysis (philological, historical, and philosophical) is needed in translation, but it should be relegated to the introduction, to the footnotes, or perhaps to annotations."[18]

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15. Summary comments, *Op. cit*. 5.
16. W. Pachow, *Chinese Buddhism: Aspects of Interaction and Reinterpretation* (Washington, D. C., University Press of America, 1980) 106-7.
17. Doboom, 5.
18. Joe Bransford Wilson, "Problems and Methods in the Translation of Buddhist Texts from Tibetan," *Buddhist Translations Problems and Perspectives*, ed. Doboom Tulku (New Delhi, Manohar, 1995) 158.

Elizabeth Napper says that "the most useful translation is one that simply translates the text as accurately and as literally as possible,"[19] not to seek for the elegance of style, nor finding similar Western philosophical term, nor English idioms. She discusses translation of Buddhist texts from these perspectives:[20]

1. The criterion for what gets translated should not be elegance of style, but rather appropriateness as a vehicle to allow full understanding of this Buddhist tradition. A good translation requires making many decisions as to the meaning of the text. We need to translate Buddhist texts into accurate, readable English, in which decisions have been made as to the meaning of the text so that the translation is unambiguous. Such English may not be elegant, because the original language may not be elegant, but if it communicates the meaning of the text, it has performed its necessary function.

2. It is better to translate equivalents that simply translate the term rather than seeking to find a comparable term within the Western philosophical tradition. Because the Eastern and Western philosophical traditions are so different, seeking to use cognate terms often creates more confusion than clarity.

3. It is not proper to seek to shift Buddhist terminology into the current idiom of western culture. Because languages are in a constant state of change, too much concern with being current leads to translation that are quickly dated.

A new method suggested by Elizabeth Napper for Buddhist text translation was one in which one translates the text as accurately and as literally as possible, not to seek for the elegance of style, nor finding similar Western philosophical term, nor English idioms.

Conclusion

For research on Buddhist studies, any dogmatic view to the other religious or other schools should be avoided. Inductive method should be used where the first step is to investigate the sources by using the original language, i.e. Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese.

The method of translation of Buddhist texts should be as literal and accurate as possible, but should be clear, concise and readable English. Western philosophical analysis should not be applied in the translation of the text. It is not sufficient to translate a text and to explain briefly some technical terms. Both the introduction and the commentary of a

[19]. Elizabeth Napper, "Styles and Principles of Translation," *Buddhist Translations Problems and Perspectives*, ed. Doboom Tulku (New Delhi, Manohar, 1995) 41.
[20]. *Op. cit*. 38-42.

translation ought to give full information on all matters relating to the text. Whenever possible, the original Sanskrit terms should be provided alone with the English translation. It is better to use the Sanskrit terms for some technical terms. Dr. Nagao suggests that the translation should be a form of fresh translation with extensive and detailed philological commentaries.

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Unity in Buddhism

Sven Wittemann

Abstract

When observing the history of Buddhist thought more closely, various philosophical and psychological positions can be found. Thus, it seems difficult to define what exactly Buddhism proclaims as true. So, a legitimate question of whether or not Buddhism may be inconsistent in itself and just a system that consists of multiple philosophical assumptions which finally refer to different truths can easily come up. While asking this question directly, the problem that Buddhism appears as disunited may arise.

With regard to the above, the following text intends to show, that the doctrine of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*, Pāli: *paṭicca-samuppāda*) can function as a vital link which connects the doctrinal systems of fundamental Buddhist schools, such as the Theravāda, Early Madhyamaka, and Early Yogācāra, and therefore represents one of the most central teachings in Buddhist thought. It is clear that all Buddhist traditions, present in countries like Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Tibet, Mongolia, Bhutan, Nepal, Ladakh in the far north of India, China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, find their doctrinal and philosophical roots within the early Buddhist literature, the Perfection of Wisdom literature, and in the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra philosophies. Furthermore, the development of Buddhist philosophical thought that comes along with these traditions can be viewed as complementary rather than contradictory since a common philosophical ground is shared. Thus, an understanding of the Buddhist teaching as a heterogeneous system that is based on different philosophical assumptions must be rejected. It is of course not to dispute that philosophical distinctions are existent in Buddhist thought; however, it is to make clear that while emphasizing different aspects of the Buddha's teaching, all Buddhist traditions refer to the same truth; that being the absence of self-nature (*svabhāva*) in whatever phenomenon, whether the occurrence is mental and/or material.

Dependent Origination and Theravāda Theory of Building Blocks of Existence (*dharmas*)

According to the *Bahudhātuka Sutta* (M 3 63) the abstract form of the doctrine of dependent origination (*idappaccayatā)* states as follows: " … When this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases."[1] This means all phenomena or *dharmas*, either mental and/or material, do not arise, exist, and cease out of themselves; but do arise, exist, and cease upon certain conditions. Therefore, phenomena or *dharmas* cannot be understood as realities occurring with their own self-nature, since they do not exist independently.

The Theravāda theory of building blocks of existence holds that all mental and material phenomena which form the empirical existence of beings are constituted by 'building blocks'. These building blocks of existence are understood as realities underlying all phenomenal appearances; they are known as *dharmas*.[2] But what is meant by describing *dharmas* as realities? It is true that *dharmas* are defined as real (*saccikattha*) and ultimate (*paramattha*), however, defining them as real and ultimate does not imply the notion of taking them as absolute entities containing self-nature. It rather expresses that *dharmas* are not further reducible to any other kind of underlying substance. This means, there is no ground from where *dharmas* appear and to which they return. Thus, in accordance with the Theravāda Abhidhamma, *dharmas* are to be understood as representing the final point of analyzing empirical existence, although they themselves are not seen to be finally existent in their own right,[3] since they are understood as dependently existing.

Theravāda Theory of Building Blocks of Existence and Early Madhyamaka Philosophy in Harmony

From the above mentioned it is clear that the Theravāda theory of building blocks of existence is in line with the doctrine of dependent origination, as *dharmas* are clearly defined as dependent and not containing self-nature.

Nāgārjuna states that insofar as *dharmas* dependently arise, they are empty (*śūnya*) of self-nature. Since the negation and absence of self-nature (*niḥsvabhāva)* is to be understood

1. Majjhima Nikāya. Bhikkhu Ńāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* (Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications, 2005), p. 927.
2. Y. Karunadasa. *The Dhamma Theory: Philosophical Cornerstone of the Abhidhamma*, The Wheel Publication No. 412/413 (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1996), pp. 1-2.
3. *Ibid*., pp. 11-12.

as identical with the notion of emptiness (*śūnyatā*)—in fact, the absence of self-nature is emptiness—it is to conclude that Nāgārjuna's philosophy of emptiness is in harmony with the doctrine of dependent origination too.[4] On that note, in accordance with Chapter 24, verse 18 of MMK (Mūlamadhyamakakārikā), emptiness and dependent origination are explained in the following way: "(1 line) We state that whatever is dependent origination, that is emptiness (*Yaḥ partītyasamutpādaḥ śūnyatām tāṃ pracakṣmahe*). (2 line) That is dependent upon convention. That itself is the middle position (*sā prajñaptir upādāya pratipat saiva madhyamā*)."[5] Verse 19 of MMK then states the following: "Something that is not dependently arisen, such a thing does not exist. Therefore a nonempty thing does not exist (*Apratīya-samutpanno dharmaḥ kaścin na vidyate, yasmāt tasmād aśūnyo hi dharmaḥ kaścin na vidyate*)."[6] Here, Nāgārjuna mentions that everything, this includes emptiness itself as well, is declared to be dependently arisen, meaning everything lacks self-nature. In turn, it is then to conclude that nothing lacks emptiness and dependent origination.[7]

Early Yogācāra and its Relation to Early Madhyamaka

True "insight" into emptiness cannot be understood as holding any view about emptiness. This is explained in Chapter 13, verse eight of MMK, which states: "The Victorious Ones have announced that emptiness is the relinquishing of all views. Those who are possessed of the view of emptiness are said to be incorrigible."[8] Further, in Chapter 24, verse 11, Nāgārjuna explains the following: "A wrongly perceived emptiness ruins a person of meager intelligence. It is like a snake that is wrongly grasped or knowledge that is wrongly cultivated."[9] So, even at the time of Nāgārjuna, Buddhist thinkers were aware of the danger to which emptiness leads if misunderstood. Especially the view of taking the teaching of emptiness as nihilistic seemed to be predominant, since it would make all human work and effort useless. This danger inherent in emptiness was quite obvious to the Yogācārin's also, and it is generally believed that their system of thought was developed as a response to the potential danger of understanding emptiness as nothingness.[10] However, Yogācāra

4. Gadjin M. Nagao. *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra: A Study of Mahāyāna Philosophies*, L. S. Kawamura (trans.), (Delhi: D.K. Fine Art Press, 1992), pp. 211-212.
5. David J. Kalupahana. *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way* (Delhi: Shri Jainendra Press, 1991), p. 339.
6. Jay L. Garfield. Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*: *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 304.
7. *Ibid*., pp. 307-308.
8. Kalupahana, p. 223.
9. *Ibid*., p. 335.
10. Nagao, p. 214.

philosophy is not to be understood as commenting Madhyamaka thought only, but has tried to base insight into emptiness in a critical understanding of the mind, expressed in a comprehensive theoretical discourse (the Yogācāra system of consciousnesses). Nāgārjuna had refused all views (*dṛṣṭi*) as illusory, negating them by his dialectical method of emptiness. Asaṅga and Vasubandhu however had aimed at revitalizing theory as dependently arising understanding through reconsidering the meaning of emptiness.[11]

Again, Madhyamaka philosophy can be viewed as a method destructing all kinds of verbalized standpoints, while grounding its philosophy itself on insight into the teaching of emptiness and strict non-verbalizing of absolute meaning.[12] The Yogācāra system of consciousnesses is aimed at the transformation of consciousness, meaning the movement from insight into emptiness to a reaffirmation of being in the context of emptiness. In other words, the middle way, as expressed by the Yogācārin's, is a movement from **illusory being** to insight into **the non-being of emptiness**, and finally to a realization of **the being of emptiness**.[13]

Conclusive Thoughts

It is clear that the Theravāda theory of building blocks of existence and its interpretation of the nature of *dharmas* stands in perfect harmony with the doctrine of dependent origination. Likewise, Nāgārjuna's philosophy of emptiness proclaims that insofar as *dharmas* dependently arise, they are said to be empty of self-nature. In fact, Nāgārjuna equates dependent origination and emptiness, and clearly explains that a thing that is not dependently arisen does not exist. Therefore, Nāgārjuna's philosophy of emptiness is in entire harmony with the doctrine of dependent origination too.

Furthermore, even when the Yogācāra interpretation of emptiness goes a step further than the one of the Madhyamaka's, holding the absence of self-nature while proclaiming the very presence of that absence of self-nature, it would be a great mistake to assume any kind of substantialism within their interpretation of emptiness, because emptiness in Yogācāra is still seen as the result of viewing empirical existence as constituted by causes and conditions, and therefore characterized as dependently originated and empty of self-nature. Whereas the doctrine of dependent origination in Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka system is not specifically

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11. *Ibid*.
12. John P. Keenan. *Yogācāra* in Takeuchi Yoshinori, *Buddhist Spirituality: Indian, Southeast Asian, Tibetan, and Early Chinese* (New Delhi: Shri Jainendra Press, 1995), pp. 204-205.
13. *Ibid*., p. 208.

“placed” but equated with the notion of emptiness, we find it in Yogācāra thought located in their system of consciousnesses.

Having stated the above, the doctrine of dependent origination can be viewed as the middle doctrine bringing unity to diversity of Buddhism, as it runs like a thread throughout the whole of Buddhist philosophical thought.

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Buddhist Psychotherapy: Loving-Kindness Therapy

Denis Roger René Wallez

1. Definitions

1.1 Therapy

Therapy literally means "healing" and is the attempted remediation of a (health) problem, following a diagnosis (the recognition of a process and identification of a particular stage in the said process).

'Preventive' therapy is a treatment that is intended to prevent a condition from occurring. An 'abortive' therapy is a treatment that is intended to stop a condition from progressing any further. A 'supportive' therapy is one that does not treat or improve the underlying condition, but instead increases the patient's comfort.

Since its origin, Buddhism is concerned with suffering, which it associates to a process, be it expressed via the second noble truth, or via dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). The simile of the poisoned arrow, e.g. in the *Sunakkhatta sutta (MN 105*), thus presents Buddhism primarily as an abortive therapy: life is suffering already (first noble truth) but there is a treatment to cease suffering, based on understand the process from which suffering arises. It might also be seen as a preventive therapy, when one has accumulated merit and shouldn't waste it (by appropriating 'wrong' tendencies).

1.2 Loving-kindness

Metta or Loving-kindness[1] is the desire for all sentient beings to be happy. It often is accompanied by *Mudita* or Sympathetic-joy, the actual rejoicing when some sentient beings are happy and/or virtuous (even if this is temporary, due to the impermanent nature of conditioned phenomena).

Both Loving-kindness and Sympathetic-joy are parts of the four immeasurable (*appamaññā*), or *brahmavihāras*, alongside Equanimity and Compassion. These are so called because these wholesome attitudes do not suffer from bodily limitations, and can thus be offered to all. The four immeasurables are explained in *Visuddhimagga*, by Bhadantācariya

[1]. or Love, Friendliness, Benevolence, Amity, Friendship, Good-will, Kindness, or active wholesome interest in others.

Buddhaghoṣa, in which it is recommended to practice by taking each of the immeasurable in turn, and applying it to oneself, and then to close others, and expanding thus until all sentient beings are included.

It is worth noting that while the Mahāyāna evolution of Buddhism went as far as amending Selflessness to Emptiness, Loving-kindness retained its central therapeutic role.

The goal of training evolved from *arahant*-ship to supreme Buddhahood (via the *bodhisattva* path) but Equanimity was seen as the root of Loving-kindness, Loving-kindness as the root of Compassion, and Compassion as the root of *bodhicitta*, the most important factor to achieve Buddhahood[2]. Because of this last relation, compassion is at times described as the root of omniscience.

Compassion however is not so different from Loving-kindness: Compassion is the desire for all sentient beings *not* to suffer. Its main difference with Loving-kindness could be said to be about disentanglement: instead of seeking happiness for all (an intention which always risks turning into greed), one cultivates dis- passion from what's painful. With the wise understanding that all conditioned phenomena are impermanent hence painful if one is entangled, one simply cultivates dispassion at large, i.e. the cessation of *saṃsāra*.

When Loving-kindness is the application of love to suffering, compassion is the wish *not* to need an antidote (e.g. because the very causes of suffering —the noxious trio— have been addressed, rather than the symptoms hence the arousal of *bodhicitta*, from seeing Buddhahood as the best way to address the root causes of *dukkha*).

Loving-kindness can be seen as a 'therapy' (or part of a polytherapy, at least), either as an object of meditation or as a practical embodiment, to heal some mental unwholesome tendencies (causing suffering).

2. Individual therapeutic benefits

Eleven worldly benefits are listed in the *Metta sutta* (AN 11.16):

> One sleeps easily, wakes easily, dreams no evil dreams. One is dear to human beings, dear to non-human beings. The devas protect one. Neither fire, poison, nor weapons can touch one. One's mind gains concentration quickly. One's complexion is bright.

[2]. Tenzin Gyatso (HHDL): Stages of Meditation — Training the mind for wisdom. Snow Lion Publications, 2001.

> One dies unconfused and —if penetrating no higher— is headed for the Brahma worlds.

These are fully obtained of course only for an individual having fully cultivated, developed, pursued, steadied, consolidated Loving-kindness. Nonetheless, these are not benefits to ignore on one's way toward the complete cessation of suffering. Some of the direct therapeutic value should be evident, but some indirect aspects are not to be neglected either: being dear to other beings will certainly be supportive of the cessation of hatred, while quick concentration will certainly be supportive of the cessation of hatred and of lust but it will also support mindfulness and thus the cessation of ignorance.

While the individual benefits are clear, the practicalities of the cultivation may however remain harder to understand. For example, the *Tevijja sutta* (DN 13) indicates:

> With a heart of loving-kindness, he dwells suffusing one quarter, the second, the third, the fourth. Thus above, below, across, everywhere and to everyone as well as to himself, he dwells suffusing the whole world with lovingkindness that is vast, exalted, boundless, without hate, without ill-will.
>
> Just as a mighty conch-blower, *Vāseṭṭha,* might with little difficulty make a proclamation to the four quarters, so by this cultivation, *Vāseṭṭha*, by this liberation of the mind through loving-kindness, any *karma* done in a limited way neither remains nor persists there.

In line with the *Metta sutta*, the *Tevijja sutta* clearly points that fully cultivating Loving-kindness is enough already to be reborn in the higher realms. R. Gombrich goes as far as proposing that the traditional interpretation of this *sutta* is erroneous, and that the four immeasurables are in fact a gate into *nibbāna*, the goal of holy life.

The potential weakness of the above presentation of a cultivation is its high degree of abstraction. However, S. sc Hamilton presents[3] the abstraction of "suffusing all directions" as a call for transcendence.

If that is not enough for a specific practitioner (whose conditions are not yet supportive enough), (s)he may refer to the *Karaṇīya-metta sutta* (Sn 1.8) with its very

[3]. Sue Hamilton. Early Buddhism: A New Approach —The I of the Beholder. Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism Series, Routledge, 2000

popular *paritta* chant. Moreover, the *Visuddhimagga* by Buddhaghosa address meditative practicalities frontally (chapter 9).

While meditation techniques in relation to Loving-kindness may be extremely effective (and are extensively used in various traditions, from Theravāda to the Tibetan schools), they are linked to the cultivation of Wisdom. A favorable trait of Loving-kindness though is that it might *also* be cultivated —as a complement to meditation or as a substitute dharma gate for those of lesser abilities— by practical 'embodiment', by individual engagement for the benefit of all.

3. Individual therapeutic benefits in a social context

P. Harvey gives a succinct summary of how the practicalities of the meditation on Loving-kindness allow to pass from an individual concern to a wider scope:

The practice consists of developing a friendliness which is warm, accepting, patient, and unsentimental. The meditator begins by focusing this on himself, for otherwise 'loving-kindness' for others is likely to be limited by an inability to like himself properly. Focusing loving-kindness on himself helps him get to know, and come to terms with, all aspects of himself, 'warts and all'. Once these are accepted —not in a complacent way— then other people, with all their faults, can become the objects of genuine loving-kindness: 'loving your neighbor as yourself ', to use a Christian phrase, will then be of true benefit to others.

The Buddhist community has always had multiple axes of development though, notably with some people more cultivation-oriented, striving to realize the goal of holy life in this very life, and others more community-oriented. The meditators are not the only individuals gradually shifting their attention from individual benefits to communal benefits.

The early *saṅgha* was not overly-formalized in relation to decision-making. Respect for seniority and experience played a major part, but any individual can gain seniority and experience. This apparent lack of formality should not be confused with laxism, fuzziness, indecision or impracticality though: it allowed for context-based appropriateness.

Even if monastic rules were established, at its heart, the way of living in the monastic order is meant to be based on Loving-kindness and Compassion. Disciplinary decisions should of course take into account the facts of the case at hand, but the offenders mental state should also be considered. If "admirable friendship, admirable companionship,

admirable camaraderie is actually the whole of the holy life" (as per the *Upaddha sutta*, SN 45.2), expelling or simply pushing away a monastic is a serious matter indeed.

In fact, the *vinaya* goes as far as suggesting restraint in punishment, should it potentially drive a monastic away. [4]

> Then there is the case where a certain bhikkhu keeps going with (only) a modicum of conviction, (only) a modicum of affection. In that case, the thought occurs to the bhikkhus, "Friends, this bhikkhu keeps going with (only) a modicum of conviction, (only) a modicum of affection. If we, with repeated pressure, were to take action against him, he would lose that modicum of conviction, that modicum of affection. Don't let that happen." Just as if a man had only one eye, his friends and companions, kinsmen and relatives, would look after his one eye, (thinking,) "Don't let him lose his one eye, too." In the same way the thought occurs to the bhikkhus, "Friends if we, with repeated pressure, were to take action against him, he would lose that modicum of conviction, that modicum of affection. Don't let that happen."
>
> Bhaddāli, this is the cause, this the reason, why there are cases where, with repeated pressure, they take action against a bhikkhu. And this is the cause, this the reason, why there are cases where they don't, with repeated pressure, take action against the same sort of bhikkhu.

It must be considered that the monastic community is not seen in the *nikāyas* as the sole path (the *bodhisatta* path is not taught, but it is acknowledged), nor as a strictly necessary condition (householders might become *arahants* too). The monastic *saṅgha* is however very clearly presented as the most supportive environment for the cultivation of the Eightfold Path and, more generally, for the attainment of *nibbāna*. As such, it acts —up to a point— as a model of Enlightened society, and it is extremely important to see how Loving-kindness plays a therapeutic role in such a context: not only the practitioner might enjoy the individual benefits listed in the previous section, but the world affected by this practitioner will also enjoy improved support to cultivate the cessation of suffering. This role-model is critical for laypeople, two non-negligible components of the fourfold *saṅgha* (but not necessarily the components most inclined towards meditation).

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[4]. Bhikkhu Thānissaro. *The Buddhist Monastic Code II.*

Such a presentation remains centred around individuals, but it now includes a group of individuals. It also advocates for the benefits enjoyed by the individual at fault, not just the noble person.

R. Gombrich describes such a state of affairs as follows:

> Many a time the Buddha told monks to live together in amity, looking at each other with eyes full of affection. Buddhist loving kindness was no mere abstraction, no mere topic for meditation, but to be practiced by the Sangha in their daily lives. During the rains re- treats, when monks lived together for three months at a stretch, the Buddha forbade them to live in silence like dumb animals —as, he said, other renouncers did. And at the end of the retreat they hold a special *patimokkha* ceremony at which each asks all his fellows to forgive him if he has offended them in any way during the retreat. Monks in a good sangha were separate in body but one in thought.

Ethics are a core part of Buddhist cultivation, a way to get reins on untamed desires. Ethics are not cultivated by clinging to preconceived rules though, nor by following the commands of a God, but by 'seeing' causality as it is as well as seeing the desire shared by all sentient beings to avoid suffering.

When summarized to avoid discussing context-dependent details, the ethical precepts are often reduced to "do not harm," in echo to the Indian notion of *avihimsā* or non-violence. However, R. Gombrich highlights[5] that "the positive values of kindness and unselfishness characterize Buddhism better than do the moral precepts for the laity, which are expressed negatively."

Many *sutta*s make clear that disentanglement is not the same as obtuse disengagement, that equanimity is not indifference, for example AN 5.7:[6]

> Suppose a young infant boy, ignorant, lying on his back, were to put a stick or pebble in his mouth (. . .) His nurse would quickly attend to him and try to take it out. (. . .) she would take it out even if she had to draw blood. For what reason? There would be some distress for the boy —this I don't deny— but the nurse has to do

[5]. Richard Gombrich. Theravada Buddhism — A social history from ancient Benares to modern Colombo. The Library of Religious Be- liefs and Practices, Routledge, 2nd ed., 2006 (1988)

[6]. Bhikkhu Bodhi. (tr.). *The Numerical Discources of the Buddha* — A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikaya. Wisdom Publications, 2012.

> so for his good and welfare, out of compassion for him. However, when the boy has grown up and has enough sense, the nurse would be unconcerned about him, thinking "the boy can now look after himself. He won't be heedless."

The advantage of positive values is that they minimise the risk of interpreting "do not harm" as an extreme of disengagement. Loving-kindness comes with a sense of inter-dependent responsibility (thus promoting "right action", etc: the Eightfold Path).

4. Societal therapeutic benefits

In relation to the four immeasurables, S. Hamilton describes1 the teaching as "that by using feelings such as friendliness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and non-partiality one understands that boundaries are as it were self-imposed." As previously noted, the abstraction of "suffusing all directions" as per the *Tevijja sutta* is then seen as a call for transcendence, ultimately a call to "see things as they are".

And indeed, an enquiry into Loving-kindness inexorably shifts from individuals (possibly in groups) to tendencies, from conventional denominations (of 'apparent' entities) to causal processes and ultimate *dhammas*.

The *Dhammapada* (verse 223) proposes to conquer anger by Loving-kindness. Compassion is an antidote to cruelty, Sympathetic-joy to jealousy and discontentment, Equanimity to partiality and attachment; Loving-kindness is an antidote to hatred and fear (two aspects easily found in anger).

It must be remembered that the four immeasurable are not just the 'ordinary' qualities (possibly tainted by pride, conceit, or even greed —hoping to get into heaven as a result of one's good actions): Loving-kindness as an immeasurable is described, in relation to speech, in the *Kakacupama sutta* (MN 21) by

> Monks, even if bandits were to carve you up savagely, limb by limb, with a two-handled saw, he among you who let his heart get angered even at that would not be doing my bidding. Even then you should train yourselves: "Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will remain sympathetic, with a mind of good will, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading these people with an awareness imbued with good will and, beginning with them, we will keep pervading the all-encompassing world with an awareness imbued with good will —abundant,

> expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will." That's how you should train yourselves.

One may note how remote this is from the *lex talionis*, a retaliation authorized by law in which the punishment corresponds in kind and degree to the injury (also known as "an eye for an eye").

It is at times hypothesized[7] that Jesus of Nazareth was influenced by Buddhist ideas during his "lost years". The above-mentioned proposition by R. Gombrich that the four immeasurables are an actual gate into *nibbāna*, when combined with the Sermon on the Mount[8] (generally interpreted as criticism of the Old Testament teaching) would support such a possibility.

The societal benefits of Loving-kindness might seem (to the ordinary, ignorant mind) the most difficult to obtain: ignorance might lead one to the usual ill-will, usual clinging and excuses such as "let the others do the first step, and then I'll participate", etc.

This is precisely why cultivating and meditating on Loving-kindness is so important, and an 'antidote' to a selfish cyclical life.

The Buddha makes this extremely clear after he discovers a sick monk unattended (*Kucchivikara-vatthu*, Mv 8.26.1–8), once he questions the assembly "Then why don't the monks attend to him?" When he gets the answer "he doesn't do anything for the monks, lord, which is why they don't attend to him", the unwholesomeness of such an attitude is exposed.

Just like an individual, wise restraint from killing causally offers a better prospect of survival to all beings, Loving-kindness —as an antidote to individual anger, hatred and ill-will— offers a better prospect to all beings (who can only be 'victims' of such unwholesome tendencies). The genuine cultivation of Loving-kindness is a direct *individual* contribution to a better *world*, without presupposing limits. It thus naturally includes its 'immeasurable' trait, it doesn't so much need expansion; it only needs individual commitment, "right effort."

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7. James Hanson. Was Jesus a Buddhist? Buddhist-Christian Stud- ies, 25, 75–89. 2005

8. "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. But I say to you, do not resist an evildoer. If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."

The understanding either of co-dependent origination, or simply of *nāmarūpa*, should make clear that providing a mental antidote to an unwholesome mental tendency will not affect solely one mind: when hate ceases, physical violence does not arise, other beings feel safer and can start cultivating wholesome tendencies themselves, etc.

5. Conclusion

For all beings, the causes of suffering are greed, hate and ignorance. Hate is both self-harming (e.g. due to anguish of retaliation from hateful acts) and harming others. Lovingkindness is a direct cultivation of Non-hate.

"Whoever would tend to me, should tend to the sick" said the Buddha, showing the example (Mv 8.26.1–8). The cultivation of Non-hate is very practical; if the simile of the saw might seem a bit extreme, it is not to dismiss the application of Loving-kindness in daily life. While many meditative techniques have been devised to cultivate Loving-kindness, its embodiment should not be seen as a consequence that will arise 'later': the embodiment is itself a way to cultivate Loving-kindness (and Wisdom). Transcendence is a very pragmatic, practical topic in Buddhism: it is a therapy, an actual cure with actual results, not just a promise.

While Loving-kindness is cultivated at an individual level, it directly manifests its immeasurability, its transcendent nature: it is an antidote to what may hurt anyone, it thus improves the life of all. It is a practical therapy without limiting itself to symptoms: it directly addresses the roots of suffering. Because such root-causes are shared by all, the cultivation of Loving-kindness may inspire others (thanks to its individual benefits for the practitioner) but, even if only one individual ceases only one hate-related tendency, the benefit is for all. Which other therapy may claim such effectiveness?

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General Survey of Six Perfections (*Paramitas*)

Dr. Chan Kok Kiong, DVM

Tibetan Buddhism is a part of the Mahayana tradition and according to this tradition there are six practices to be cultivated in order to be able to reach enlightenment. These practices are known as the six perfection or six *paramitas*. The six perfections are generosity, ethical discipline, patience, joyous perseverance, meditative stabilization and wisdom.

By practicing the first four perfections a practitioner generates discipline and harmony in physical and verbal actions. With positive actions the practitioner cultivates the fifth perfection to generate harmony and stability in the mind. The sixth perfection, wisdom is needed to develop a Buddha's exalted understanding of reality and therefore enlightenment is possible. The order is explained as going from lower to higher where the practices are growing in importance and difficulty. The practice of each of the perfections is impossible without the cultivation of the preceding one from which it is developed.

As a practitioner, it is not enough just want to attain buddhahood; you must engage in the method of achieving it. This method has to be unmistaken because no matter how much you strive on a mistaken path, you will not obtain the result – like milking a horn in the hope of getting milk. Even if the method is unmistaken, if it is not complete in all particular, striving will not bring the result, just as the absence of a seed, water, earth or the like will preclude the production of a sprout.

The ideal practitioner of the six perfections is the bodhisttva, but the perfections are virtues for everybody. To practice the six perfections one must have the wish to transform oneself. The first step to cultivate each of the perfections is to reflect on the advantages of practicing and the drawbacks of not practicing the perfections. One should make the six perfections one's habits. All actions of body, speech, and mind must conjoin with the six perfections and this means to become familiar with the perfections by practicing them in everyday life.

The Perfection of Generosity

Generosity is the intention accompanying bodhisattvas' disinterested non-attachment to all their possessions and their body, and motivated by this the physical and verbal actions

of giving the things to be given. The perfection of generosity is to cultivate an attitude of non-clinging. It is the wish to give to everybody, without expecting any reward, and giving fully without attachment. Generosity is measured by the motivation, not the action itself. The practice of generosity entails generating in various ways the intention to give and steadily increasing this generosity, even though you may not be actually giving away something to others. The perfection of generosity is not measured by one's ability to give, but by the attitude and readiness to give whatever is needed. The motivation comes from bodhicitta with pure altruistic intention, the amount is not important.

The presentation of the divisions of actual generosity has three parts.

1. The gift of the teachings
2. The gift of fearlessness
3. Material gifts

The gift of the teachings is teaching the sublime teaching (*Dharma*) without making mistake, teaching the arts and the like, and involving others in upholding the fundamental precepts. This type of gift is considered more beneficial than material gifts. Possession of material helps for only a limited time, while Dharma is lasting and more deeply helpful. A person with material may still be suffering, but Dharma not only removes this suffering, it gives the person a new wisdom eye as well.

The gift of fearlessness is protecting living beings from fear of humans such as kings and robbers, from fear of non-human beings such as lions, tigers, and crocodiles, and from fear of the elements such as water and fire.

For most of us, basic material needs such as food and clothing are the types of material easiest to give. However, bodhisattvas are capable of giving their eyes, flesh and even their lives. The object we give is not the actual giving it is only the means for giving. The real activity of giving is the strong decision to give freely, without avarice. In this way, even if we possess nothing, we can practice generosity, because generosity depends on our state of mind, not on the object being given. To practice the generosity we need a very strong desire to help others and a very strong will. But if our motive for giving material is to gain fame, for instance, this is not the practice of generosity at all.

The Perfection of Ethical Discipline

Ethical discipline is an attitude of abstention that turns your mind away from harming others and from the sources of such harm. Therefore, you bring about the perfection of ethical discipline by progressively increasing your habituation to this attitude until you reach completion. Ethical discipline is measured by how developed our personal intention and ability to refrain from harm is. So practicing the perfection of ethical discipline starts with the intention. First of all one has to develop the wish to do beneficial and wholesome actions. Like all the other transcendent practices, the motivation should be bodhicitta, the altruistic intention and wish to help all living beings. Secondly, one has to be able to recognize negative and harmful actions in order not to do them. In addition to being able to distinguish between right and wrong, one has to pay close attention to thoughts and actions. It is important for the practitioners to examine themselves and discover their faults and shortcomings.

There are three divisions of ethical discipline:

1. The ethical discipline of restraint
2. The ethical discipline of gathering virtue
3. The ethical discipline of acting for the welfare of living beings

The ethical discipline of restraint is the practice of restraint and abstention that gives up any deed that is wrong by prohibition that would be associated with the vows of individual liberation. You must correctly restrain yourself physically, verbally, and mentally by not allowing a flicker of mere motivation for the non-virtues.

The ethical discipline of gathering virtue means that you focus on virtues such as the six perfections and then develop the virtues that you have not developed in your mind, do not spoil the ones that you have already developed, and increase both of these ever further.

The ethical discipline of acting for the welfare of living beings means that you focus on the welfare of eleven sorts of living beings, and then accomplish their aims in this and future lives in a suitable manner and without wrong doing.

The Perfection of Patience

Patience is (1) disregarding harm done to you, (2) accepting the suffering arising in your mind-stream, and (3) being certain about the teachings and firmly maintaining belief in

them. Perfecting patience means that you simply complete your conditioning to a state of mind wherein you have stopped your anger and the like. It is not contingent upon all living beings becoming free from undisciplined conduct because you would not be able to bring this about, and because you accomplish your purpose just by disciplining your own mind.

In developing the patience of disregarding harm done to you, no matter we are harmed bodily or mentally by others we should not react by getting angry or harming them in return. On analysis of the object, the subject and the basis, anger is unjustified. Contemplate from the depth of your heart, "All living beings have been in cyclic existence since beginningless time, and there is not one who has not been friend and relative-father, mother, etc. Being impermanent, they lose their lives and are miserable due to the three types of suffering. Crazed by the demon of the afflictions, they destroy their own welfare in this and future lives. I must generate compassion for them. How could it be right to get angry or to retaliate for harm."

The Perfection of Joyous Perseverance

When you have focused upon something virtuous, joyous perseverance is enthusiasm for it. It is delight in virtue. It is flawless state of mind that is enthusiastic about accumulating virtue and working for the welfare of living beings, together with the physical, verbal, and mental activity such a state of mind motivates. If you lack joyous perseverance, you come under the influence of laziness and become poor in all good qualities, so you lose every temporary and ultimate purpose of being human.

Armor-like joyous perseverance is the courage and energy that prepares one to withstand difficulties and continue until one's goal is achieved. This means to take on heavy burdens and being prepared to make sacrifice for the benefit of others. If you can generate a single attitude such as this, you easily complete limitless accumulations and purify measureless obscurations. This becomes the most excellent cause for never turning back; by just joyful no matter how long it takes, you quickly become a Buddha.

The joyous perseverance of gathering virtue is applying yourself to the practice of the six perfections in order to properly accomplish them. This means to conjoin all actions of body, speech, and mind with the perfection.

The joyous perseverance of acting for the welfare of living beings is properly applying yourself to the practice of eleven activities for other welfare. The practitioner

needed to be determined to keep going with the constant power of a great river until enlightenment is achieved.

The Perfection of Meditative Stabilization

Meditative stabilization is a virtuous, one-pointed state of mind that stays fixed on its object of meditation without distraction to other things. When you subdivide meditative stabilization according to nature, there are two kinds: mundane and supramundane; and according to orientation, there are three kinds: oriented toward serenity, toward insight, or toward both conjoined. If you subdivide it according to function, there are three types: meditative stabilization that stabilizes the body and mind in bliss within the present life, meditative stabilization that achieves good qualities, and meditative stabilization that carries out the welfare of living beings. The first, meditative stabilization that stabilizes the body and mind in bliss within the present life, is all meditative stabilization that generate mental and physical pliancy when you enter them in equipoise. The second, meditative stabilization that achieves good qualities, is all meditative stabilization which accomplish good qualities shared with sravakas. The third, meditative stabilization that carries out welfare of living beings, is meditative stabilization that accomplishes the eleven activities for others' welfare.

The Perfection of Wisdom

In general, wisdom is what thoroughly discerns the ontological status of the object under analysis, but in this context wisdom refers to proficiency in the five topics of knowledge and the like. With respect to indicating the benefits of wisdom, wisdom is the root of all good qualities for this and future lives. Bodhisattvas depend on wisdom to purify the other five perfections. Even when they give their flesh to someone who asks for it, they are unaffected by such thoughts as pride, discouragement, etc. It is as though they were taking a cutting from a medicinal plant. This is because their wisdom makes reality manifest. With the wisdom that sees the troubles of both cyclic existence and the peace of nirvana, they accomplish ethical discipline for the sake of others' welfare, so they practice pure ethical discipline. Through wisdom they know the faults of impatience and the merits of patience, and they then discipline their minds so they are not overpowered by suffering and others' misperceptions of them. With wisdom they understand well everything at which they joyously persevere, so their perseverance brings great success on the path. And through wisdom based on reasoning they accomplish the supreme delight and bliss of the meditative stabilization that is fixed upon the meaning of reality.

There are three types of wisdom. First, wisdom that knows the ultimate cognizes the reality of selflessness, either by means of a concept or in a direct manner. Second, wisdom that knows the conventional is wisdom that is proficient at the five topics of knowledge. Third, wisdom that knows how to act for the welfare of living beings knows the way to accomplish blamelessly the welfare of beings in their present and future lives.

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Indian Buddhism

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Introduction

The sociologist Max Weber had written a book *The Religion of India* in which he describes Buddhism and Jainism as "the two great heterodoxies" (1958, p. 192). There are different ways of defining the concepts of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, and there can be different ways of interpreting the status of a religion depending on a particular academic approach, philosophical worldview, religious perspective, and time period. The word *orthodox* is defined by the American Heritage Dictionary as "adhering to the accepted or traditional and established faith, especially in religion," and the word *heterodox* to signify the negation of the former ("orthodox"). In this particular definition there are three qualities attributed to the concept of orthodoxy: being "accepted," being "traditional," and being "established."

Akira Hirakawa states in *A History of Indian Buddhism* that Buddhism "was a major force in India from the fifth century B.C.E. until after the tenth century C.E.," and that this time period covers "about one-half of Indian history" which is historically labeled as the "ancient" period (1990, p. 9). With its 1,500 years of history, it is obviously justified to claim that Buddhism had been "established" and "accepted" in India. However, if the idea of orthodoxy is focused on the concept of "tradition," then another question arises: Did the Buddha follow a long "tradition" of India? The answer is in the negative if one were to consider that, at the time of the Buddha, the established religion had been that of the Vedic or Brahmanic line, and the Buddha himself stated that his knowledge consists of "the wisdom, the science, the light that arose in me concerning things not heard before" ("Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta").

For the general population during, say, 2nd century B.C.E. in India, Buddhism might have been considered as heterodox. But for the people living in, say, the 10th century C.E., it would be reasonable to imagine that Buddhism had by that time long been established enough to be popularly considered as an orthodox faith. However, even during that time, if one were to ask this question from a Hindu doctrinal view, Buddhism may still have been interpreted as heterodox, in the way that it continues to reject the authority of the Vedic texts, which, from

that view, had always been an "accepted," "traditional," and "established" source of that faith. For those living in India today, on the other hand, Buddhism may be identified as heterodox, simply because Buddhism had already disappeared almost a thousand years ago and thus is no longer "established" and "accepted" – perhaps Buddhism used to be a traditional faith in that land but had died out long ago.

The designation of *heterodoxy* does not necessarily connote polemics or belittling of a particular faith – as if it is a heresy or dissent – but simply means that it belongs to a different lineage. Jainism, too, may be designated as heterodox for similar reasons, even though it continues to be a living tradition today on a very small scale, and both Buddhism and Jainism are generally called *Nastika* – heterodox schools. Much of the concept seems to be conditional and relative to a given religious view and a particular time period in history. From the Buddhist perspective, for instance, other religions are also justly designated as heterodox. If one prefers to be diplomatic, for instance, such designation may be avoided and perhaps be done away with by the reason of its relative and ambiguous character. However, there may be significant reasons for using the designation. It may perhaps be helpful for gaining a deeper understanding of how Buddhism has had functioned in its relationship to civilizations across Asia. The concept of orthodoxy invites further analysis and can lead to deeper understanding of the relationship between religion and civilization in general. This essay explores the relationship Buddhism has had to the Indian civilization as a whole, from the point of view of Guénon's paradigm.

Understanding Buddhism under the Esoterism-Exoterism Paradigm

René Guénon is a renowned religious thinker of the early 20th century famous for triggering a religious movement called Traditionalism or Perennialism. In his works, he sets forth a paradigm that effectively distinguishes two forms of traditional organizations: *religion* and *initiatic order*. For Guénon, the former constitutes, among other things, a particular doctrinal delineation and adaptation of the higher knowledge and understanding acquired through the latter. This knowledge constitutes the inner apprehension of the universal, transcendent *Principle* – One Absolute Truth – which underlies religious doctrines and effectively unifies the apparent doctrinal or metaphysical conflicts. This knowledge, according to Guénon, is ineffable, interior, and esoteric in nature, and it is accessible only to a few through a disciplinary path supported by an initiatic order. Religions are the exteriorized and particularized forms of knowledge, and they are established so that common man could

comprehend and follow the lesser spiritual paths. Religious traditions, in other words, are the external manifestations – *exoterism* – of the inner Principle – *esoterism*. He also claims that every civilization is established and supported by a particular religious tradition adapted to a particular ethnicity, geography, and time.

For example, Catholicism of the West, Shinto of Japan, and Zoroastrianism of the ancient Persia had all structured the exterior order of the corresponding civilization which had brought forth a unique culture and spiritual guidance for the masses. In the case of China, the external order that had supported its civilization is Confucianism, whereas Taoism more or less represented the esoteric side of its tradition. In the Middle East, its exterior order belongs to the religion of Islam, whereas the Sufi orders represent the esoterism. In India, the Vedic or Brahmanic line of tradition could be identified as the exoteric orthodoxy, as indicated by the fact that it was the Brahmin class which had long been responsible for the support and continuity of the Indo-Aryan civilization as a whole.

This paradigm may be an effective framework in explaining intricate socio-religious relationship that is present in every civilizational sphere. From the Buddhist perspective, for instance, perhaps much of what Guénon identifies as the Principle could correspond to the direct knowledge of Dhamma as obtained through Jhanic insights and abhiññā. His explanation of how the particular adaptations of the Principle manifest in the forms of different religious doctrines does resemble the Buddha's message of the simile of the blind men and an elephant ("Tittha Sutta"). It may help to explain the doctrinal diversity of the lay oriented Mahāyānic schools as well as the presence of both esoteric and exoteric sides to the Tibetan Vajrayānic schools.

In particular, the exoterism-esoterism paradigm may prove to be a useful framework for analyzing the question of orthodoxy-heterodoxy in the Indian civilization. However, Guénon himself seems to have already come to a conclusion that Buddhism is considered to be a heterodox movement in the Indian civilization as a whole. For instance, he explains in one of his works, *The Crisis of the Modern World* that, "the rise of Buddhism, that is to say a revolt against the traditional spirit, [amounts] to a denial of all authority" (1946, p. 13). He claims that "Buddhism in India became identified with one of the principal manifestations of the Kshatriyas' revolt against the authority of the Brahmins ... and denial of the spiritual authority" (p. 40). This view is certainly possible and even natural when one approaches or defines Indian civilization from the strictly Vedic or Brahmanic perspective. Since it is a fact

that the Buddha had rejected the Vedic authority and denied the birthright sanctity of the Brahmins, if the primary focus of attention is on the outset a Vedic line of tradition, then Buddhism is naturally to be identified as heterodox. In the case of Max Weber, for instance, who identifies Buddhism and Jainism "the two great heterodoxies" (p. 192), it must be reminded that he, as a sociologist, may have been observing primarily the exterior, social, manifested aspect of a given civilization, and he may for this reason have aware of primarily the exoteric aspect of the phenomenon as a whole. Perhaps Guénon, who also lived during the early part of the 20th century, had had only a limited access to the account of Early Buddhism, even though he obviously held an understanding of the intimate interrelationship between the interior-exterior aspects of a tradition.

The Guénon's particular observation, however, is independent of the usefulness of his ideas, and this particular paradigm may prove to be useful for further investigation over the matter, and it may even allow a different conclusion from his own, as demonstrates in the subsequent analysis of this essay. For instance, other meaningful questions may arise from this paradigm. Is Buddhism to be considered a religion, or is it an initiatic order? Is Buddhism an orthodox tradition that is capable of establishing a civilization as its exterior manifestation? Is the rise of Buddhism in India to be understood as a replacement of the prior orthodoxy?

Understanding Buddhism under the Śramaṇa-Brahmana Paradigm

In India, the religions schools are generally classified into Astika and Nastika. The former refers to the orthodox schools which affirm Vedic authority, whereas the latter, which includes Buddhism and Jainism, refers to the heterodox schools that reject it. Nonetheless, it is simultaneously also true that many Hindu thinkers have claimed that Buddhism was a correctional teaching that is meant as a provisional movement having its particular role and function in guiding the heretics to the right path. Some have claimed that Buddhism had effectively corrected the degenerated Brahmanic practices. Some have also claimed that the Buddha was an Avatar of Vishnu "an incarnation of God who appears in the Age of Kali, or Kali-yuga, the most materialistic of the four earthly ages" ("Strategy of Atheism"). For instance, Swami Prabhupada, a leader of a Vaishnavism sect ISKON – also known as Hare Krishna Movement, – states that "Lord Buddha [was] a powerful incarnation of the Personality of Godhead." He teaches that "if people stop animal killing and accept Lord Buddha, then he becomes at least one step forward to God realization" ("Lord Buddha's

Secret Mission"). It is also interesting to recall that Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan states in his book *Indian Philosophy* that "Buddhism, in its origin at least, is an offshoot of Hinduism" (p. 361).

King Asoka, who is highly esteemed by the Buddhists as an ideal ruler who had fully supported the Dhamma, is also esteemed by the general Hindu populations as the ruler "who first succeeded in uniting the entire culture area of India into a unified empire" (Weber, 1958, p. 235), and it is also demonstrated by the national emblem of modern India, which is derived from the Lion Capital of Asoka, the sculpture of the pillar placed by King Asoka. In the face of such evidences, King Asoka's establishment of a Buddhist "semi-theocracy" – in the words of Max Weber – in the Indian subcontinent must be interpreted not as a *revolt* or *replacement* but as a continuity of its civilization (1958, p. 238).

Curiously, Prabhupada states that "[Buddha's] propaganda was to cheat the atheist class of men. Atheist class of men, they did not recognize existence of God, so He became one of them." In other words, the teaching of the Buddha, under this view, is not the Dhamma that explains *yathābhūtaṃ*, but it is a provisional "strategy" for "the enlightenment of especially materialistic and atheistic people" ("Strategy of Atheism"). Under this interpretation, it would be Buddhism itself which ironically turns out to be an application of *upaya* for the purpose of guiding the non-believers towards the gate of the Vedic religion – it is Buddhism that is a skillful means of the Vedic religion. Once this view is embraced, it would be even more difficult for the Vedic tradition to designate Buddhism as a heterodox religion. It may be identified only as heterodox in its exterior appearance in that it eventually guides the non-believers successfully towards the orthodoxy in a concealed way. Buddhism was, under the guise of heterodoxy, a perfectly orthodox manifestation of the Vedic line of tradition that had played a positive, active, and authentic role in the support of the Indian tradition.

Even though such views obviously do not represent the Buddhist stance, it may still be possible to gain a partial understanding of them. While it is obviously not the Buddhist understanding to consider its own teaching as merely of a corrective role that is meant to guide towards another doctrine that the Buddha himself had rejected, it is also not the Buddhist understanding to consider the rise of Buddhism as a revolutionary establishment of a new civilizational form, and the records clearly indicate that it was obviously not the intention of the Buddha to revolt or replace the preexisting Brahmanic tradition. It may be

tempting and common for outsiders to project a sweeping image to Buddhism by noticing certain aspects of its teaching that align so well with theirs, and its relevance today may be witnessed in relation to certain contemporary egalitarian theories, ideological "isms," and some forms of epistemological theories derived from Western tradition. As Douglas M. Burns states in his book *Nirvana, Nihilism and Satori*, "it has been said, and probably correctly, that Buddhism is the least understood and most misunderstood of all major religions" (1968).

In numerous discourses, the Buddha recommended the followers to respect both ascetics and Brahmins and to support them in alms. In fact, the phrase "ascetics and Brahmins," or "recluses and Brahmins," is used quite often, and both types of religious practitioners appear in pair. For example, in the Sigalovada Sutta, the Buddha asks a lay disciple, "how, young householder, does a noble disciple cover the six quarters?" and he subsequently teaches as follows:

> The following should be looked upon as the six quarters. The parents should be looked upon as the East, teachers as the South, wife and children as the West, friends and associates as the North, servants and employees as the Nadir, ascetics and brahmins as the Zenith. *("Sigalovada Sutta")*

It is just one of the many discourses in which the two types of sacerdotal traditions are mentioned always in pair. Furthermore, some of the traditions and the practices of the Brahmins are also respected, and he positively recommends his lay disciples to follow them. For example, the Buddha is recorded to have recommended the lay disciple to "offer alms in honor of my departed relatives." Narada Thera explains that "this is a sacred custom of the Aryans who never forgot the dead. This tradition is still faithfully observed by the Buddhists" ("Sigalovada Sutta"). The Mahaparinibbana Sutta explains the necessary conditions of the welfare of a nation, and the Buddha states that if "the Vajjis show respect, honor, esteem, and veneration towards their *shrines,* both those within the city and those outside it, [emphasis mine]" then "the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline" ("Mahaparinibbana Sutta"). Here, the *shrines* obviously could not have referred to the Buddhist sanctuary in this period of time but could to the prevailing sacerdotal tradition.

Modern scholars generally acknowledge that there are "two primary classes of religious practitioners in India: the *brahmanas* and the *sramanas.*" Hirakawa explains that the former represent the "followers of Vedic religion," whereas the latter belong outside of the Brahmanic tradition, since they are "not mentioned in the older *Upanisads*" (1990, p. 16).

What is to be noted here, however, is his opinion that the Brahmana is "the more traditional type of practitioner" than the Śramaṇa, and the latter "was a new type of figure" (p. 16). Either way, the Pāli Canon demonstrates the fact that the Buddha was affirmative of the coexistence of the two distinct strains of religious practitioners. As to the question of the relationship between Buddhism and the Indian civilization, perhaps it may be fruitful to approach it by finding out the origin of the Śramaṇa tradition and its relationship to the Indian civilization.

In the context of the social structure, the Brahmana tradition may be considered as the primary one of the two, for the obvious reason that it had occupied the top of the caste hierarchy. It originated from the Aryan migration which had brought in a new religious tradition, and hence it may be said to be the orthodoxy if the Indian civilization is primarily defined in terms of the continuity of the Aryan civilization. However, it must be reminded here that the exact origin of the Śramaṇa tradition still remains a mystery. We have seen how it may have its origin in the Vedic civilization, the prior Indus Valley civilization, or perhaps another indigenous tradition outside of these contexts. Superimposing a simplified, dualistic picture onto the working of a civilization is to be avoided, yet it is interesting to speculate the dynamics that must have occurred between the two lines. It is also curious to note that the Buddha mentioned in one of the discourses an existence of four "ancient" and "original" traditions that are "unadulterated from the beginning" and are "not open to suspicion." In the Ariya-vamsa Sutta, the Buddha describes them as follows:

> These are the four traditions of the Noble Ones — original, long-standing, traditional, ancient, unadulterated, unadulterated from the beginning — which are not open to suspicion, will never be open to suspicion, and are unfaulted by knowledgeable contemplatives and *brahmans. ("Ariya-vamsa Sutta")*

The four traditions seem to indicate the presence of four types of disciplines, which consist of being "content with any old robe cloth ...," of being "content with any old almsfood ...," of being "content with any old lodging ...," and of "developing (skillful mental qualities) ...." The Buddha further implied these four to be valid forms of tradition that successfully guide the practitioners toward true attainments:

> ... a monk endowed with these four traditions of the Noble Ones, if he lives in the east, conquers displeasure and is not conquered by displeasure. If he lives in the west... the north... the south, he conquers displeasure and is not conquered by displeasure. *("Ariya-vamsa Sutta")*

It is obvious that the discourse is not a description of any Brahmanic discipline as we know it, and the four descriptions do not necessarily refer to the existence of four separate religious paths, but they could refer to the four qualities of a stream of religious tradition that had long been standing in the Indian subcontinent. These four disciplines also describe the way the Buddha established his own samaṇa order, as if being the foundational framework upon which Buddhism is built, and they also seem to characterize the essential aspects of how the Buddha himself had practiced before the full Enlightenment.

The four traditions described in the sutta seem to correspond to what collectively refer to as the Śramaṇa tradition, characterizing the disciplinary qualities of the "recluses" and "ascetics" which the Buddha often mentioned in pairs with the "brahmins." If that is the case, then this particular sutta possibly corroborates the theory that the Śramaṇa tradition actually belongs to an ancient tradition that had long existed prior to and independent of the Vedic civilization. In other words, it shows that the Brahmana was not "the more traditional type of practitioner" than the Śramaṇa, and the latter was not "a new type of figure," as Hirakawa states in his book (1990, p. 16). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the four traditions "will never be open to suspicion, and are unfaulted by knowledgeable contemplatives and *brahmans* [italics mine]" ("Ariya-vamsa Sutta"). In other words, even the Brahmins had tended to accept the authenticity of these qualities of the Śramaṇic tradition – even when the latter was allegedly a heterodox tradition.

There is, then, a possibility that Śramaṇic religions, including Buddhism and Jainism, constitute a more ancient orthodoxy of that land – though it would be going too far if one were to claim the other extreme that it was rather the Vedic religion which is heterodox. Jainism is also worthy of further investigation in relation to the present orthodoxy-heterodoxy debate. Sometimes it is misleading to simply treat both Buddhism and Jainism in pair, as if both are simply two manifestations of the single line, for the reason that there seems to be significant difference between the nature of two teachings which makes the latter more capable of claiming itself as an Indian religion.

Mahavira was a contemporary of the Buddha, yet he was not the founder of Jainism but rather was the most recent enlightened tīrthaṅkara in its history of long tradition. According to the Jain doctrine, Rishabha was the first of the 24 enlightened tīrthaṅkaras, who was not only the founder of its religion but also the founder of the mythical Indian empire Ikshvaku dynasty, established in 7190 B.C.E. (Mittal, p. 22). In contrast, modern scholars

generally ascribe the Aryan migration to have occurred in 1500 B.C.E., which rather makes the Jain tradition to go much farther back than the Vedic tradition. In addition, the Jain version of Mahābhārata tells that the cousin of Krishna was a 22nd Tirthankara. The son of the first tīrthaṅkaras was Bharata, whose name appears in both Rigveda and Mahābhārata. All these claims indicate that Jainism had long been involved in the making of the Indian civilization to justifiably be called an "ancient," "traditional," and "established" faith of Indian civilization – claims that are absent in the universality that characterizes Buddhism.

On one hand, superimposing a clear dialectic picture onto the Indian history may obscure more than clarifies the role of Śramaṇa tradition in its relationship to the civilization. On the other hand, to question the popular designation of orthodoxy only to the Vedic line of tradition does not necessarily entail an inverse claim that it is the Śramaṇa tradition that actually represents the true orthodoxy. The Guénon's paradigm perhaps explain better the strongly esoteric role the Śramaṇa tradition had played in its synthetic relationship with the newer Aryan import. The Vedic tradition may have played an overt role – the exterior, exoteric, or societal aspect of the dynamics – in the Indian history, which continuity must be thought of possibly extending back even further than the Indus Valley period, especially considering the Guénon's mention of the cycle of Yuga along with what is taught in the Cakkavatti Sutta.

Understanding Buddhism's Role in the Establishment of Civilizations

According to Guénon, the role of an initiatic order is to support the reclusive or ascetic discipline for the initiates for the purpose of attaining inner, esoteric knowledge of the highest order. The admission is limited to only a few who is capable of training in the discipline. The esoteric knowledge, according to Guénon, possesses a universal characteristic that transcends particular forms of religious doctrine adapted to particular ethnicity, geography, and time period. It is ineffable, subtle, and comprehended only by a few who are capable of undergoing proper spiritual training. On the other hand, the role of the religion is to support the exterior establishment of a social, political, or cultural order, and its doctrine is made to be linguistically transmitted, doctrinally understood, and followed by the common masses or laity without an ascetic discipline. Religions, for Guénon, are particular exoteric formulations derived from the esoteric understanding of the Principle.

As the Buddha explained to Ananda that "I have set forth the Dhamma without making any distinction of esoteric and exoteric doctrine" ("Maha-Parinibbana Sutta"), the

doctrine of Buddhism is made open to all, and he had taught both the householders as well as the monks. Buddhism definitely has the aspect of what Guénon defined as religion. Although the above *prima facie* seems deny the presence of esoterism, to say that there is no esoteric or secret doctrine is different from saying that it has no esoteric aspect of initiatic order in the Guénon's sense of the word. The Buddha once explained that "there is no householder who, without abandoning the fetter of householdership, on the dissolution of the body has made an end of suffering" (Bodhi, 1995, p. 588), and it is for this reason that he established the Sangha, or what Guénon calls an initiatic order, or *esoterism*. It seems reasonable to say that Buddhism possess the characteristics of both exoteric and esoteric characteristics.

Furthermore, in between the exoteric-esoteric spectrum, the Buddha seems to emphasize more on the latter pole than the former, as he ascribes in his teaching the supremacy and centrality to the path of reclusive. The purpose of the Sangha is to keep out of the influence of the worldly interactions, and that of the monastic discipline is to disengage and be indifferent to the societal matters. While it is true that there is an aspect in Buddhism which teaching is intended for the lay devotees, and while it undeniably includes political, social, and economic advice that encourages and guides towards improving the society, its aspect of social philosophy, while being significant, constitutes, unlike a system of socio-political philosophy, only a minor part of its teaching as a whole. The priority is to the life and discipline in the Sangha, which members are not allowed to be engaged in politics and commerce. For instance, after witnessing the monks having discussions that included politics, the Buddha stated,

> It isn't proper, monks, that sons of good families, on having gone forth out of faith from home to the homeless life, should talk on such a topic. When you have gathered you have two duties: either Dhamma-talk or noble silence. *("Raja Sutta")*

The knowledge the Buddha discovered was described as being "abstruse, subtle, deep, hard to see, going against the flow" ("Ariyapariyesana Sutta"). Right after his Enlightenment, a thought occurred to him that "if I were to teach the Dhamma and others would not understand me," and even after being interceded by the Brahma Sahampati, he realized that there are "those easy to teach and those hard [to teach]." The fact that only a small fraction of the entire population is fit for the monastic path can be made obvious from the necessary truism that if the majority joins the Sangha, both the Sangha and the host society itself would become unsustainable. The highest order of attainment consists of ineffable knowledge that cannot be transmitted through words but must be directly experienced by a few who are

capable of following ascetic discipline and attaining interior experience of insight and abhiñña. For example, Dhammapada verse 218 reads: "One who is intent upon the *Ineffable* (Nibbana), dwells with mind inspired (by *supramundane* wisdom) ... [italics mine]" ("Piyavagga"). These facts indicate that its highest knowledge consists primarily of what Guénon calls *esoteric* knowledge and its Sangha is to be identified more or less as the *initiatic* order. The *religious* or *exoteric* aspect seems to be only secondary in its aim – especially in the case of the Early or Theravāda Buddhism. Can we conclude from these that Buddhism should primarily be identified as an initiatic order when considering its relation to the structure of a civilization? If affirmative, then Guénon's framework actually explains further some interesting fact about the Buddhist history.

The history of Asia often demonstrates harmonious relations Buddhism has had with the host civilizations, and the establishment of Buddhism in a particular society has not necessarily entailed an establishment of a new civilization. When Buddhism had spread into different countries, its cultural impacts had indeed been significant, yet the nature of impact had not entailed a form of destructive creativity or a replacement of civilization. When Buddhism arrived in China, for example, it coexisted with other preexisting religions such as Taoism and Confucianism. When it arrived in Japan, it did not replace the preexisting Shinto civilization either, but in fact, it was the very prince of the Shinto emperor lineage who actively incorporated Buddhism almost to the status of a state religion – Prince Shotoku promulgated 17 Constitutional Articles, of which the second involved taking of refuge in the Three Jewels. The Khmer Empire was originally a Hindu civilization, but even as Buddhism started to gain dominance, Hinduism had gradually been replaced by Mahāyāna and later by Theravāda Buddhism, and it had more or less maintained the structural continuity throughout – Angkor Wat, for instance, was originally a Hindu temple but later became a Buddhist center. These examples contrast to other world religions, such as Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, which are strongly tied to the particular forms of civilizations, and the change of religion generally entailed a change of civilization.

However, these facts do not necessarily signify that Buddhism is purely or altogether an initiatic order that is incapable of supporting, structuring, or establishing a civilization. For example, Tibet had a unique civilization that is built upon Buddhism in its exoteric socio-political aspect as well as esoteric aspect. But it must be noted that Tibetan Buddhism is a form of Vajrayāna Buddhism that is even more *developed*, so to speak, than other Mahāyāna schools, to a point that Tibetan Buddhism bears an outer resemblance of a Hindu religion

synthesized with local Lamaism, even though its inner foundation stays very much Buddhism, supported by Madhyamika and Yogācāra doctrines. Its sophisticated system is capable of defining, supporting, and justifying its social structural orders, even though it is still built upon the knowledge of unchanging, universal, one and only Dhamma. It may thus be an example of what Guénon describes as a particularization of the universal Principle, the external adaptation and application of the Dhamma.

It is the strongly initiatic or esoteric aspect of Buddhism that allows its dissemination to other civilizational spheres without much conflict with the pre-established structures, for the Dhamma, being the Principle, transcends any particular forms of civilizational structures, and it is thus adaptable to particular conditions. Perhaps the downside had been that Early Buddhism by itself may not be strong enough in its exoteric aspect. To be capable of establishing a civilization, it has to extend, apply, adapt, and develop its religious aspect towards a particular society. In this, there is perhaps legitimacy in extending or adapting to a certain degree the original form of Buddhism, as seen in some forms of Theravāda Buddhism. Even though it successfully preserved the original form of Buddhism, it still has some extensions and adaptations in the form of its social functions, sponsorships, localized traditions, legends, and commentaries. Perhaps Theravāda Buddhism in Thailand has allowed extending itself just enough to be able to provide some of essential social support for the host society. In this, Guénon's paradigm also explains well the sacerdotal reason behind the royalty's employment of Brahmanic rituals. The form of coexistence with the regal, sacerdotal exoterism coincides with how Buddhism had coexisted within the Brahmanic society during the Buddha's time, as well as how it has coexisted within the Japanese society whose royalty is of Shinto lineage.

In determining what effect the rise of Buddhism had upon the Indian civilization, it may be helpful to invoke the inverse question of what effect the fall of Buddhism around the eleventh century C.E. had on the Indian civilization. The disappearance of Buddhism in India is not generally conceived to be, as it were, a revival of the lost Vedic civilization. When the Vedic line of religion had reemerged in the form of Hinduism, there had also been significant doctrinal developments from the earlier theologies of Brahmanism. It is well known that the Advaita Vedanta of the prominent Hindu teacher Adi Sankara had been positively influenced by the Buddhist doctrines. Even though Hirakawa observes that the fall of Buddhism "mark[s] the division between ancient and medieval history" (p. 9), it must be recalled that Buddhism had also went through adaptation and development prior to that demarcation point

especially in the form of Vajrayāna Buddhism, which had already start to resemble Hinduism in its exterior appearance at that time. In all this one may observe behind the fall of Buddhism a graceful continuity in the revival of the new Hinduism – not a revival of a preceding civilization, but a continuity of the same civilization with the modified exterior form of exoterism. As a side note, even though Buddhism had disappeared in India, Jainism had curiously survived after that demarcation point up until today, which fact corroborates the prior observation on the stronger relationship Jain doctrine has to the particular civilizational form.

Conclusion

The paradigm set forth by René Guénon provides a new way of understanding the two lines of tradition in the Indian civilization. From the Vedic perspective, Buddhism may be called a heterodox movement at least in its exterior form. From the Buddhist perspective, Buddhism, as a predominantly initiatic tradition, is an orthodox tradition in its own right – regardless of it being or not being orthodox in its exoteric aspect. Because of its strong initiatic character, Buddhism could coexist well with any orthodoxy of an exterior order. The Dhamma itself is an autonomous, independent discovery of the Sakyamuni Buddha, thus the Dhamma had always existed with or without a tradition. However, Buddhism as a social phenomenon did in fact emerge from one of the two strains of Indian tradition – the Śramaṇa.

The Brahmanic tradition, being primarily an exoteric religion, had supported the Indian social structure, whereas the Śramaṇic tradition had existed, more or less, as the esoteric side of the civilization. Even during the fall of Buddhism, the Brahmanic tradition had been positively influenced by the esoteric aspect of Buddhism. Perhaps it is here that allows one to share an understanding of the popular Hindu interpretation of the role Buddhism had onto their system. Sankara's role is perhaps significant in effectively synthesizing both lines of tradition, which according to Guénon is only possible from the side of the Principle. His esoteric understanding may also be observed in his capacity of unifying a number of conflicting Upanishads doctrines. In the context of Guénon's paradigm, then, it may perhaps be said that, in some ways, the Dhamma had not altogether disappeared in India but at least partially lives on in the esoteric aspect of Hinduism

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Introduction of Buddhism to China from the 1st to the 6th century CE

Minh Ngoc Pham

Introduction

Historical records showed that Buddhism was gradually introduced from India to China during the Han period (206 BCE-220 CE) by missionaries and traders along the well-trodden Silk Road through Central Asia. The earliest mention that a Buddhist community was already in existence in China, and winning converts among the royal family, dated from 65 CE. The Han emperor Ming had praised that his brother, the prince Ying of Qu, respected the Buddha, and the latter organized a vegetarian feast for Buddhist monks and pious laymen in his kingdom.[1] Tradition also noted that around 67-68 CE, emperor Ming dreamt of a flying golden deity that was interpreted as a vision of the Buddha. At his request, two Indian monks later arrived in the capital of Luoyang bringing Buddhist scriptures. Thus began the official establishment of Buddhism, and translation of Buddhist texts in China.

In 'Buddhism in China,' Arthur F. Wright noted the considerable cultural gulf that must be bridged for this Indian religion to be made intelligible, and accepted in China. Besides the great divergence of their social and political values, the two countries also differ in terms of language, grammar, literary modes, imagery, attitudes toward the individual, analysis of personality, psychology, concepts of time, space, etc.[2]

The development of Buddhism in China can be divided into four periods:

(i) early introduction of Indian and Central Asian Buddhism (1st-4th centuries CE);

(ii) formative development of Chinese versions of Indian Buddhist schools (5th-7th cent.);

(iii) emergence of distinctively Chinese Buddhist schools (7th-12th cent.); and

(iv) continuance of Chinese Buddhism to the present day (13th cent. onwards).[3]

In describing the interaction of Buddhism and Chinese cultures, Wright also suggested four phases or periods:

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1. Kenneth Chen, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964) p. 33.
2. Arthur F. Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1971) pp. 32-34.
3. Dan Lusthaus (1998) Buddhist philosophy, Chinese. In E. Craig (Ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. London: Routledge. Retrieved November 27, 2013, from http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/G002.

(i) Period of Preparation (65-317);

(ii) Period of Domestication (317-589);

(iii) Period of Acceptance and Independent Growth (589-c.900)

(iv) Period of Appropriation (c.900 to the present).[4]

I. The Period of Preparation, 65-317 CE

When Buddhist monks first arrived, China under the Confucian Han Dynasty was politically unified and stable, and Buddhism found but small followings in the outlying regions. It became actively propagated in the early centuries of the common era due to a confluence of political, social, and intellectual factors to create an atmosphere of receptivity for a religion that rejected class.

1. Political and social climate in the Period of Disunity.

During the late second century, the Han empire began to disintegrate, leading to mounting social disorder. The earlier reigning Confucian ideology was undermined and its moral sanctions discredited. The cultured elite, while taking a Neo-Daoist attitude of retreat and seclusion from public life, began searching for new systems of thought to explain the warring, uncertain times, and find prescriptions for their ills. Meanwhile, the increasing oppression and alienation of the peasantry led to the destructive Yellow Turban revolt, and paved the way for the emergence of a foreign religion, with new religious doctrines and institutions.[5]

2. Buddho–Daoist Interaction and Synthesis

Initially it was through recourse to indigenous traditions of practice associated with Daoism that Buddhism began to gain a foothold in intellectual circles. These were particularly interested in the systematic and detailed Buddhist meditation techniques, including visualizations of the Buddha, which they adopted as supplements to the more obscure and elusive Daoistic techniques.[6] Thus, in 150 CE, seemingly to fulfil existing

4. Arthur F. Wright, "Buddhism and Chinese Culture Phases of Interaction." *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 17 No.1 (Nov., 1957), pp. 17-42. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2941332. Accessed: 30/10/2012 13:01
5. Wright, Interaction, pp. 17-42.
6. Bumbacher, Stephan P. "Early Buddhism in China: Daoist reactions." *The Spread of Buddhism*. Ann Heirman and Stephan P. Bumbacher eds. (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2007): 203-246, pp. 225-228. See also Lusthaus, ibid.

demand, An Shigao first concentrated on translating meditation texts, which helped establish Buddhism firmly on Chinese soil.[7]

This early Buddhism in China, however, was generally regarded as an exotic variant of Daoism, also called Dark Learning (xuanxue), as it was imbued with magical practices, and offered novel formulas for attaining supernatural power, immortality or salvation.[8] On the whole, the methodological quest for the Dao, or the truth of existence was equated with the quest for the Dharma.[9] It offered a simplified presentation of Buddhism, by parallel reference to Daoism, thus effacing Buddhism's Indian origins, and its fundamental doctrines of impermanence and selflessness.[10] Chinese emperors worshiped Laozi and the Buddha on the same altar, and the Chinese populace could hardly tell the difference between Daoism and Buddhism, especially as the latter did not assert its distinctiveness until the fifth century.

3. Early Translation Efforts - Geyi

The early translators had to develop ways and means of translating the foreign religion into language, metaphors, and behavioural patterns which the Chinese could understand and adopt. The earliest Buddhist text translated during the Eastern Han, the Sutra in Forty-two Sections, introduced an image of the Buddha as a deity, similar to the Daoist supernatural immortals, and taught people to purify their minds and reduce their desires.[11]

The first translations of Buddhist sutras into Chinese utilized a Daoist vocabulary to make the Buddhist concepts intelligible to the Chinese.[12] This practice of 'geyi' or 'matching the meanings,' was a tactical device to elucidate Buddhist ideas in terms of traditional Chinese philosophy and literature, mainly derived from Laozi, Zhuangzi and the Yijing. Thus ‘prajna' (wisdom) was seen as the equivalent of ‘dao’ (way), nirvana as that of ‘wuwei’ (non-action) and ‘sunyata’, the Mahayana concept of emptiness of phenomena was identified with

7. Bumbacher, p. 219
8. Wright, Buddhism in Chinese History, pp. 32-34.
9. Kenneth K. Inada "The Chinese Doctrinal Acceptance of Buddhism." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 24:1 (1991): 5-17.
10. Leon Hurvitz, and Tsai Heng-Ting "The Introduction of Buddhism," in Wm Theodore De Bary and Irene Bloom (eds.) *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008) p. 229.
11. Jiahe Liu "Early Buddhism and Taoism in China (A.D. 65-420)." Dongfang Shao, tr. *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, Vol. 12 (1992): pp. 35-36.
12. Latika Lahiri, *Interpretation of Buddhist Terminology at the Background of Chinese Traditional Thoughts*. http://www.budsas.org/ebud/ebdha180.htm.

the Daoist notion of ‘wu’ (nonbeing), etc.[13] This method had been inaugurated by Dao’an, but he later abandoned it as 'deviating from the principles of Buddhism.' [14]

4. Buddho-Daoist conflict - the 'Conversion of the Barbarians (huahu)' Theory

In *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, Erik Zurcher devoted a full chapter six to analyzing the increasing conflict between Buddhism and Daoism, expressed in the acrimonious huahu polemic. According to this, Laozi, after composing his *Daode Jing*, had gone westwards to become the Buddha, and preach this doctrine called Buddhism to 'convert the barbarians.' Around 300 CE, the Scripture of (Laozi’s) Conversion of the Barbarians, the *Huahu Jing*, was produced, to claim the superiority of Daoist practices over those of Buddhism, which was crafted specifically for unruly barbarians, or even aiming at their destruction, and consequently quite unfit to be introduced into China. Not to be outdone, Chinese Buddhist then composed reverse versions of the legend in apologetic treatises and sutras, where it was argued that Laozi and other venerated figures of Chinese history were in fact disciples of the Buddha.[15]

There were certainly many instances where each side appropriated whole texts originally belonging to the other religion. One example in about 370 CE, was the transformation of the 'Scripture in Forty-two Sections' into the Daoist version called 'Declarations of the Perfected' (Zhen gao), with the claim that the latter was revealed by the gods to correct its inferior Buddhist version. Conversely, Buddhists would also produce 'apocryphal' replicas of Daoist texts.[16]

II. The Period of Domestication, 317-589

5. Imperial Patronage:

In northern China, after the Han, the non-Chinese conquerors often turned to Buddhist missionaries from Central Asia for their military, political and diplomatic counsel, and for their feats of magic. In turn, monks such as Fotudeng, who came from Kucha to Luoyang in 310, were willing to demonstrate their skill in magic to promote Buddhism over the traditional shamanism of the 'alien' warlords. They favoured the Buddhist appeals of equality

13. Paul Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2008) p.330. Also Lahiri, ibid.
14. Zurcher, Conquest, p.12.
15. Zurcher, Conquest, pp. 288-319
16. Bumbacher, pp. 234-242

and universality because, as foreign and relatively uneducated rulers, they would have been disadvantaged by Confucian social stratification standards. They drew a parallel between their own foreign leadership with Buddhism, a foreign religion, and depended on it to give them similar legitimacy to the Mandate of Heaven, and unify their ethnically diverse population.[17] This official use of Buddhism to sanction and strengthen imperial power went so far as to elevate the Northern Wei ruler Dao Wu as the Tathagata incarnate, so that the Chief monk Faguo, and monks under him, many of whom were employed in government posts, could bow down to pay reverence to the emperor.[18]

6. Confucian Criticisms

Always in the background was the rivalry and opposition of resentful Daoists and Confucianists who denounced many Buddhist ideas and practices as immoral or unsuited to China. In 574-577, to justify his suppression of Buddhism, emperor Wu Di declared in an edict that Buddhism 'practiced unfilial conduct, wasted wealth, and instigated rebellion'.[19]

The Confucian Chinese harboured strong moral and social objections to certain aspects of Buddhism, as they violated their most cherished cultural values:

(i) filial piety and ancestor worship: monks had to leave the family, give up their surname and take a vow of celibacy, thus transgressing their sacred duty of begetting sons to maintain the family lineage, and paying proper respect to their ancestors through appropriate rituals.[20] Their practices of shaving their heads and cremating the dead were decried as violations of their bodies, which should be inviolable gifts from parents. The concept of rebirth also undermined respect for ancestors, who could possibly be mired in the lower realms.[21]

In rebuttal, Buddhist monks encouraged lay devotees to donate their worldly wealth to the monastic community, in order to gain merit and transfer them to ancestors. The performance of such pious acts on the ancestors' behalf, as well as the offering rituals or 'humane sacrifices' of vegetarian feasts, like that of Prince Ying of Qu, constituted utmost expression of filial piety. The Scripture of Forty-two Sections stated that, if one achieved enlightenment, then one's family would be saved from suffering as well. Furthermore, to suit

17. Chen, pp. 77-80
18. Chen, pp. 145-146
19. Williams, p. 130
20. Peter Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) p. 106.
21. Chen, pp. 137-138

the Confucian Chinese, each section of this Sutra started with "The Buddha said," in the manner of the Confucian Analects' "The Master said."

(ii) social and political order: to the loyal Heaven-fearing Chinese, a claimed independence of the Buddhist institution was seen as a serious threat to political authority.[22] In 404, Huiyuan wrote a treatise "On why monks do not bow down before kings,"[23] to assert the monastic order's extraterritorial prerogatives, which challenged those of the state and of the emperor, invested in him by Heaven.[24] Still, he tried to assure the ruler that Buddhism was not subversive, as lay Buddhists make good subjects because they follow the precepts and wish to accumulate wholesome karma for beneficial rebirths.[25] After initial refusal to pay homage to the emperor, Chinese monks later undertook such un-Indian practice as prostrating to him.[26]

(iii) emphasis on the world of the senses and economically productive relationships: The monks' world-negating stance and their failure to contribute to the tax coffers - yet spending great sums on temple constructions, statues, and ceremonies - were denounced as threats to the welfare of the people and the state.[27] Conversely, the monks explained that, by praying for the well-being of the emperor and his subjects, they were protecting the state, not draining it. Later, they adapted further to the Confucian work ethic by farming the fields, and contributing through physical labour to their own sustenance.

(iv) the prescriptions of the Chinese Classics: among the principal objections to Buddhism were that it was foreign with strange Indian customs, especially as there was no mention of the Buddha in the ancient Chinese classics. As well, it has no real magic power to confer longevity, so could be of no use to the pragmatic Chinese.[28] Toward the end of the second century, Mouzi's "Disposing of Error" (Lihuo Lun) was the first book by a lay Buddhist to answer critics of Buddhism. He wrote: "What accords with rightness is to be followed, what heals the sick is good. The gentleman-scholar draws widely on all forms of good and thereby benefits his character... The records and teachings of the Five Classics do not contain everything. Even if the Buddha is not mentioned in them, what occasion is there for suspicion?"[29]

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[22]. Williams, p. 130
[23]. Hurvitz, p. 231
[24]. Gregory, p. 107
[25]. Chen, pp. 138-140
[26]. Williams, p. 132
[27]. Williams, p. 130
[28]. Williams, p. 131
[29]. Hurvitz, pp. 229-231, 421-426

7. Sutra Translations

One of the more important contributions to the growth of Buddhism in China during this period continued to be the work of translation. The various Buddhist doctrines from different periods and schools in India were imported at about the same time, and this overlapping created a formidable challenge.[30] The Chinese knew little about the splintering of Buddhism into sects in India. They did not realize that the texts from India could be divided along sectarian lines, and took all translated texts as the word of the Buddha.[31]

Starting in 401 CE, Kumarajiva and his assistants under imperial auspices in Changan would produce sophisticated translations of Mahayana sutras such as the Lotus Sutra and Diamond Sutra, which quickly became popular classics. As these translations became more accurate, their Chinese audiences could better understand the spirit of Buddhism. Then Chinese monks like Faxian began undertaking the arduous journeys to India to discover for themselves what might have been lost in translation.

In noting his puzzlement as to why the Chinese accepted Buddhism, a foreign ideology, when they already had established Confucian and Taoist traditions, Kenneth Inada quoted Fung Yu-Lan, who characterized the Chinese mind as one endowed with a continental spirit.[32] It was an illimitable, totalistic nature that could accept change. While Buddhism had to make allowances to meet the needs of the Chinese, they in turn, profoundly impacted the way Buddhism was transformed into a 'humanistic' religion. By providing a spiritual and philosophical balance between, on the one hand, the concern of Confucianism with social order and good government, and on the other, the mystical unity with the nature of Daoism, Buddhism would soon become a powerful religious, as well as intellectual and cultural force in China.

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30. Liu, ibid.
31. Leon Hurvitz, et al. "Schools of Buddhist Doctrine." Wm Theodore De Bary and Irene Bloom (eds.) *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008) p. 238.
32. Yu-Lan Fung. *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*. Derk Bodde ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1966) p. 16, quoted by Inada, ibid.

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The Significance of the Platform Sūtra and its Similarities to the Pāli Canon

Sanjoy Barua Chowdhury

Introduction

Platform Sūtra which was composed in China between the 8th to 13th Century undoubtedly influenced Ch'an Buddhism[1]. Eminent Buddhist scholar Dr. D.T. Suzuki precisely states two significant teacher's names for the development of Ch'an Buddhism, they are Bodhi-dharma (the founder of Ch'an Buddhism) and Hui-neng (the sixth patriarch)[2]. The Platform Sūtra, however, is widely known as the Sūtra of the sixth patriarch Hui-neng (638-713 C.E.) due to his heartfelt association in composing this Sūtra, which subsequently became renowned as one of the most influential texts in all of Chinese Buddhism[3]. In addition, the earliest extant version of the Platform Sūtra was written around the year 780 C.E[4]. By contrast, the original version of the text was written to resolve a conflict in early Ch'an that had been formed by the sixth patriarch Hui-neng's disciple Shenhui (684-758 C.E.), who carried out a vigorous campaign on behalf of his teacher Hui-neng's "Southern School" against the "Northern School" of Shenxiu's students[5]. Nevertheless, the Platform Sūtra of Hui-neng had been playing an important role in ascribing the themes of inherent enlightenment, sudden awakening, non-dual nature of wisdom and meditation among both Ch'an masters and Ch'an practitioners. Moreover, Hui-neng had gathered many teachings from particularly spiritually advanced sūtras (discourses) to make a clear understanding on the basic doctrine and practice, especially on how to be enlightened by observing one's own mind. Here, this essay will depict the main characteristics and significance of the Platform Sūtra, and will also show its relationship to central teachings from the Pāli Canon.

1. Buswell, Robert E., *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*; New York: Thomson Publications, 2003, p 655.
2. Suzuki, D.T., *The Zen : Doctrine of No Mind*; Boston : Red wheel Publication, 1972, p 9.
3. Yampolsky, Philip B., *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*; New York : Columbia University Press, 1962, p. 53.
4. Buswell, p. 655
5. Dr. Fa Qing, Lecture notes of '*the Ch'an (Dhyāna) School- A Historical Survey (Course Code : MC6219)*' at International Buddhist College, Thailand.

The Main Characteristics of the Platform Sūtra

The Platform Sūtra is the collection of coherent and comprehensive Dharma talks given by the sixth Patriarch Hui-neng. The entire Platform Sūtra consisted of ten chapters[6] and each chapter is entitled with an individual name, which clearly denotes the insight of that chapter. In the first chapter of the Platform Sūtra, the autobiography reveals quite a bit about the life of the sixth patriarch[7]. According to the Platform Sūtra, the sixth patriarch became enlightened when he heard someone reciting the Diamond Sūtra while he was selling firewood[8]. Successive chapters discuss *prajñā* (wisdom), question and answers, *samādhi* (meditation), *dhyāna*, sitting meditation, repentance, temperament and circumstances, the sudden school and gradual school, royal patronage and final instructions respectively.

In Buddhism, *samādhi* (concentrative meditation) is renowned for its method to acquire stillness and stability of mind which leads to the path of freedom. The Platform Sūtra explicitly emphasizes upon the meditation (*samādhi*) of oneness of straightforward mind at all times- walking, staying, sitting and lying[9]. The Platform Sūtra illustrates that straightforward mind is the place of practice and that straightforward mind is the pure land[10]. The Platform Sūtra, moreover, instructs about the posture and state of mind, and also points out wrong perception of mind during the meditation practice as illustrated in a question and answer section where the patriarch Hui-neng stated that some people teach men to sit viewing the mind and viewing purity, not moving and not activating the mind, and to this they devote their efforts. Deluded people do not realize that this is wrong, cling to this doctrine, and become confused. Those who instruct in this way are, from the outset, greatly mistaken[11].

Furthermore, in the Platform Sūtra, the sixth patriarch Hui-neng precisely states the importance of cultivating *prajñā* (wisdom) along the path to enlightenment (*bodhi*). The patriarch states that when at all times successive thoughts contain no ignorance and the practitioner always practices wisdom, this is known as the practice of *prajñā* or wisdom[12]. Another significant aspect of the Ch'an school is that it believes in sudden enlightenment which recognizes the transcendence of the body and mind followed by non-defilement in knowledge and perception. In the sutra, the patriarch Hui-neng says that sudden insight into

6. Yampolsky, p. 53.
7. Ibid, p. 125-131.
8. Ibid, p.133.
9. Verse No. 14; Ibid, p. 136.
10. Ibid.
11. Yampolsky , Verse no. 14; p. 137.
12. Verse no 26; Ibid, p. 147.

the true nature is followed by gradual purification of intentions[13]. By contrast, the platform Sūtra does not specifically deal with the period after sudden enlightenment has been gained. It is possible to construe this to mean that nothing more is needed, that the student has achieved all that is necessary for him to achieve[14].

In addition, the main doctrinal features of the Platform Sūtra are as follows: non-thought, non-objectivity, non-abiding, practice of direct mind, and non-attachment to dharmas[15]. According to the Platform Sūtra, thoughts are conceived of as advancing in progression from past to future, in an unending chain of successive thoughts and attachment to one instance of thoughts leads to attachment to a succession of thoughts, and thus to bondage. By cutting off attachment to a succession of thoughts, one may attain to no-thought, which is the state of enlightenment[16]. Non-objectivity refers to the complete eradication of all subjective separation so as to make the nature of dharma pure. In fact, all dharmas (all objects) are pure in nature[17]. Non-abiding is defined as the original nature of a man. Hui-neng expresses that non-abiding means to isolate each arising thought from the previous one i.e., and to not think of the past event with a separate mind. Our thoughts – the past, present, and forthcoming, proceed in unending succession[18].

A Comparative Analysis of the Platform Sūtra and the Pāli Canon

The Platform Sūtra was composed one thousand and two hundred years after the Buddha's passing away (*mahāparinibbāna*) by the sixth patriarch Hui-neng and his disciples. The main purpose of the Platform Sūtra was to ascribe the Buddha's teachings and deliver it among the general populace paving the way to Nibbāna. In comparing the main teachings of Platform Sūtra to the early Pāli Canon, numerous similarities appear. In addition to the main teachings of the Platform Sūtra - non-thought, non-objectivity, non-abiding and practice of direct mind without attaching to dharmas; they have substantial similarities to the Pāli Canon.

13. Verse no. 38; Ibid, p. 163.
14. Ibid, p. 163.
15. Dr. Fa Qing, Class Handout : Lecture notes -7.
16. Yampolsky, p. 116.
17. Dr. Fa Qing, Class Handout : Lecture notes -7 & 8.
18. Hui, Venerable Jing, *The Gates of Chan Buddhism*; Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc., 2004. Web link : www.buddhanet.net, p. 68.

According to the Platform Sūtra, non-thought refers to no thoughts of separation or thoughtlessness[19]. Thoughtlessness is similar to the Pāli word *nipapañca* which means non-fabricating mind[20]. *Papañca* (mental fabrication) is the opposing word for *nipapañca*. In addition, Buddhism strictly claims that wholesome or unwholesome thoughts arise from the mind due to *Papañca* (mental fabrication)[21]. In the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya,* Venerabl Mahakacchayana addresses, *"Cakkhuṁ ca paṭicca rupe ca cakkhu viññānaṁ upajjāti ṭinnaṁ saṁgiti passo*"; which states, 'when the agent sees (perceives) anything (object), the object arises into the mind, and creates consciousness- these three contacts make mind consciousness'[22]. Furthermore, for a clearer understanding of state of consciousness arising, Venerable Tannissaro Bhikkhu provides a visual map as follows:

Contact > Feeling > Perception > Thinking > The perceptions and categories of *papañca* [23].

In a similar way of describing *nipapañca* and *papañca* in the Pāli Canon, we can see the sixth patriarch Hui-neng expresses thoughtlessness as the stage of non-thinking and non-fabricating condition of mind[24].

Another important doctrinal statement from the Platform Sūtra is 'non-objectivity' which refers to freeing oneself from an absorption in external objects[25]. The sixth patriarch Hui-neng used the term 'non-objectivity' as the state of absolute existence which is similar to the Pāli word *dhammatā* or *yabhābūdhadassana*[26]. According to the *Aggaññ a Sutta*[27] of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, the Buddha denotes *dhammatā* as nature. In addition to the Pāli Chronicle text *Abhidhammāvatāra-purāṇatīkā*, the Buddha mentions the five universal laws (*pañca-niyāmās*), namely, *utu-niyāma, bija-niyāma, kamma-niyāma, citta-niyāma* and *dhamma-niyāma*[28]. Among the five universal laws (*pañca-niyāmās*), Hui-neng particularly refers to the character of the *dhamma-niyāma (*steadfastness and orderliness of the *dhamma*)

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19. Suzuki, *The Zen : Doctrine of No Mind*; p. 77.
20. Madhupiṅdikasuttaṁ : MN I, *PTS;* p. 108.
21. Bhikkhu Tannissaro, *Madhupindika Sutta: the Bell of honey.* Access on Date: 15th August, 2013. (http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.018.than.html)
22. Madhupiṅṁikasuttaṁ : MN I, *PTS;* p.108.
23. Bhikkhu Tannissaro, *Madhupindika Sutta: the Bell of honey.* Access on Date:15th August, 2013. (http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.018.than.html)
24. Cf- Suzuki, D.T., *The Zen : Doctrine of No Mind*; Boston : Red wheel Publication, 1972, p 77. & Yampolsky, Philip B., *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*; New York : Columbia University Press, 1962, p.116.
25. Suzuki, *The Zen : Doctrine of No Mind*; p. 61.
26. Dr. Fa Qing, Class handout : Lecture notes -7.
27. Aggañña sutta - DN III, *PTS*; p. 80.
28. Silva, Lily De, *The Buddhist attitude towards Nature;* Kandy :Buddhist Publication Society, 2005. Access on Date : 19 August, 2013. (http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/desilva/attitude.html)

which is similar to the statement of 'non-objectivity'. This denotes the state of absolute existence.

Moreover, another fundamental teaching from the Platform Sūtra is non-attachment or non-abiding, which refers to isolating each arising thought from the previous one[29]. In the *Maha-satipatthana Sutta* from the *Dīgha Nikāya*, the Buddha precisely instructs that the mind should watch the thought process mindfully (*cittanudassana sāti*) and it should also detach from various thought[30]. In the same discourse, the Buddha also instructs to focus on present moment and restrain from thinking of external matters in the same way that Hui-neng expresses in the Platform Sūtra as thus : 'When looking at the phenomenal world we would better not view or understand such externals according to fixed concepts or characteristics'.

The Importance of the Platform Sūtra for Meditators

The Platform Sūtra is one of the seminal texts in the Ch'an school; it is centered on discourses given at Shao Zhou temple attributed to the sixth Ch'an patriarch Hui-neng[31]. The key topics of the discourses, such as, sudden enlightenment, the direct perception of one's true nature, and the unity of *Sīla (*morality*), dhyāna* (concentration) and *prajñā* (wisdom) obviously have played an important role for Ch'an practitioners along the path to liberation. In the Platform Sūtra, Hui-neng tirelessly emphasized on practice with avoiding greed (*lobha*), delusion (*moha*) and hatred (*dosa*). Hence, the Patriarch Hui-neng states as follows : "*Your mind is deluded and you cannot see. You yourself are deluded and you do not see your own mind. I (Hui-neng) cannot take place of your delusion; even if you see for yourself, you cannot take the place of my delusion*"[32].

Moreover, Hui-neng advocates the importance of meditation for practitioners in the Platform Sūtra. Emphasizing on the importance of meditation, the patriarch Hui-neng advocates, "*Meditation is internal to see the original nature of mind and not to become confused*"[33]. For the serious practitioner, Hui-neng advocates on how to practice meditation

[29]. Suzuki, *The Zen : Doctrine of No Mind*; p. 102.
[30]. Mahasatipatthana Sutta, DN : 22, *PTS*; p. 290.
[31]. Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro, *Essays in Zen Buddhism (Third Series)*; London: Rider and Company, 1973, p. 208.
[32]. Yampolsky , Verse no. 43; p. 168.
[33]. Ibid, p. 117.

in a perfect way. Hence, he mentioned a practitioner should neither cling to the notion of a mind, nor to cling to the notion of purity, nor to cherish the thought of immovability[34].

On the contrary, Hui-neng repeatedly emphasizes that for Ch'an life, awakening , is not attained through study or careful deliberation, but live action. One of the best instances comes immediately after he explains about seated meditation (*zuachan*; Japanese : *zazen*). For all Ch'an practitioners, Hui-neng is well-known for his Platform Sūtra which subsequently flourished over all seventy-four Ch'an sects[35]. As Ch'an is based on practice, meditation, wisdom and finally emancipation, the Platform Sūtra of Hui-neng shows how one is able to attain Enlightenment without having an education, but just through practice and wisdom. In this way, the Platform Sūtra is much more important as well as popular among Ch'an meditators.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would say the sixth patriarch Hui-neng provides little detail on the specifics of practice. All in all, Hui-neng's teaching style is quite challenging. Hui-neng demonstrates knowledge of the great body of Prajñā-pāramita (perfection of wisdom) literature (of which the Diamond Sūtra is one rather late example), as well as the techniques of Mādhyamika school. The portrait of Hui-neng emerging from the Ch'an tradition and the Platform Sūtra in particular is quite compelling. The Patriarch is portrayed in these discourses in a brilliant way and takes on a truly heroic stature through his trials and eventual triumph. In his statements, Hui-neng comes across as immensely charismatic. He is, in turn, insightful, iconoclastic and humorous. At the beginning of the Platform Sūtra, is the stanza composed by Hui-neng which earned him the status of the sixth patriarch. The stanza thus:

"Bodhi is no tree,
Nor is the mind a standing mirror bright.
Since all is originally empty,
Where does the dust right?"[36]

Undoubtedly, Hui-neng's knowledge was profound, and his teaching was so in depth, therefore, the Platform Sūtra is renowned for having advanced teaching in Ch'an Buddhist schools, and influences all Ch'an schools that are still in existence to this present day.

[34]. Suzuki, *The Zen : Doctrine of No Mind*; p. 47.
[35]. Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro, *Zen Buddhism*; New Delhi : Aryan Books International, 1996, p. 111.
[36] Yampolsky , p. 132.

Abbreviations

C.E.	Common Era
DN	Digha Nikāya
i.e.	id est (that is)
MN	Majjima Nikāya
P.	Page Number
PTS	Pāli text Society

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Skilful Means – *Upāyakaśalya* As The Main Theme Of The *Lotus Sūtra*

Ven Huynh Thi Havy

Introduction

The Lotus Sūtra is one of the early Mahāyāna scriptures. Its Sanskrit title is *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* meaning "The Lotus Blossom of the Wonderful Dharma". It is the most important and influential scripture of Mahāyāna Buddhism and also considered the "King of Sūtras". This Sūtra is venerated as the quintessence of truth by the Japanese Tendai (Chinese T'ien-t'ai) and Nichiren sects. In this Sūtra, the Śākyamuni Buddha employed his skillful means (*upāyakauśalya*) in order to adapt his teaching to the capacity of his hearers. This teaching of skillful means is the key doctrine of the great tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism and also the main teaching of the Lotus Sūtra. These skillful means are done by Buddhas through the motivation of compassion, animated by wisdom, for the sake of benefiting all living beings.

The Lotus Sūtra (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*) and Skillful Means in General View

The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* recorded the sermon of the historical Buddha on Mount Gridhrakuta in India sometime towards the end of his lifetime (c.485-565 B.C.E).[1]It seems to have been compiled at the end of the second century. The Sanskrit text of the Lotus Sūtra survives in a number of different versions, mainly fragmentary. Meanwhile, among Chinese translations, the Lotus Sūtra translated by Kumārajīva is the most significant one expressing the Sūtra's importance in East Asian Buddhism. It consists of twenty-eight chapters which have generally been divided into two parts. The first part from the first chapter to the fourteenth chapter deals with the historical dimension. In this part, we can see that a person named Siddhartha Gautama was born, grew up, left home to find the truth, practiced and attained enlightenment, then taught the *Dharma* and passed into *Nirvāṇa*. It is generally concerned with what happened during the Śākyamuni Buddha's lifetime. The second part, including the remaining chapters, focuses on the ultimate dimension. The

1. Thich NhatHanh, *Opening the Heart of the Cosmos: Insights on the Lotus Sūtra* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 2003), p.1.

ultimate dimension indicates the existence of the Buddha in a different stage which goes beyond the ordinary perception of space and time. This is the Buddha as the *Dharmakāya*. It is not concerned with ideas such as birth and death, coming and going, subject and object. The ultimate dimension reveals true reality, the eternal meaning of the Buddha's teachings and the essence of *Dharma* beyond all dualisms.

Only the Buddhas can perfect and realize this profound doctrine. The Buddhas of the present, past as well as future, therefore apply skillful means (*upāyakauśalya*) in order to make the doctrine clear and adapt their teaching to the capacity of all sentient beings. If one can understand the foundation teaching of skillful means, then one will be able to comprehend the Lotus Sūtra in its entirety.

Skillful Means (*Upāyakauśalya*)

Skillful means, *upāyakauśalya* in Sanskrit, 方便 (fang-pien) in Chinese, also *hōpen* in Japanese[2] is an expedient device which focuses on the special ability of an enlightened being, a Buddha or a Bodhisattva. In simple terms, it means the Buddhist teaching is the appropriate method applied by the Buddha according to the different capacities of living beings. Some beings have small capacity (*alpa puruṣa*), some have middle capacity (*madhyama puruṣa*) and some have great capacity (*uttama puruṣa*). Skillful means originates in the Buddha's great compassion for helping sentient beings to transcend the wheel of existence. The *Avataṃsakasūtra* also says: "The Buddhas benevolently rescue all living beings, compassionately liberate all living beings, their great benevolence and compassion universally aiding all: however, great benevolence and great compassion rest on great skill in means."[3]

On the other hand, it is necessary to perceive the thought of skillful means illustrated through the simile of 'the finger that indicates the moon'.[4] The 'finger' indicates the whole Buddhist teaching as skillful means or the conventional truth (*saṃvṛti satya*) for the sake of seeing the 'moon' or realizing the ultimate truth (*paramārtha satya*). For it is impossible to comprehend the ultimate truth without conventional truth.

2. MichaelPye, *Skilful Means: A Concept in Mahayana Buddhism* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 12.
3. *AvataṃsakaSūtra*, Thomas Cleary(trans.), (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1985), Vol II:290.
4. *The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*,Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki(trans.),(Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc.,1991), pp. 168-169. This simile also appears in *The Sūtra of Complete Enlightenment*, Sheng-yen(trans.),(Shambhala, 1999), p. 38.

The Buddha also makes use of expedient methods throughout the Theravāda discourses of the *Pāli* canon. In the *Pāli Nikāyas*, He taught the monk Sona (the former musician) that meditation is the same as playing music. It is considered as the string which is neither too tight nor too loose. The Buddha, in another Sūtra, also expresses that learning meditation is like learning to ride an elephant. He used these illustrations as examples to teach the Dharma. This is the use of skillful means. In addition, Hewarns, in *Alagaddūpama Sutta* in MN I: 22, his disciples to learn the Dharma through the simile of the raft. The raft represents skillful means for the sake of saving living beings and taking them towards the other side safely. Dr. Fa Qing, in his lecture, also says "According to the Pāli texts, the Buddha used all kinds of devices, all kinds of skillful means in order to help disciples gain higher stages".[5]Nevertheless, clinging to means is never accepted by the Buddha who mentioned thus: "Bhikkhus, when you know the Dhamma is similar to a raft, you should abandon even good states, how much more so bad states".[6]We leave them behind, like a raft left lying on the bank by a man who has crossed a stream and needs it no more.

Skillful Means as the Motivation of Mahāyāna's Emergence

The idea of 'skillful means' was developed during the formative period of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India. Some scholars opine that the Mahāyāna accurately reveals the thought that the Buddha really wanted to express. The Mahāyāna Sūtras hold and reveal deep thought that was realized out of his words. Therefore, the Mahāyānists cannot but form an expressible conception, i.e., *skillful means-upāyakauśalya,* and then relied on this concept for systematizing all Buddhist doctrines. In other words, the Mahāyāna's establishment was absolutely based on the thought of *upāyakauśalya*. The doctrine of skillful means, in considerable detail, prompted the Chinese Buddhist philosophical schools to produce a schema known as p'an chiao.[7] It also operates "within philosophical framework where all phenomena have but relative existence, entails almost infinite flexibility in adapting the teaching of the Buddha to suit changing circumstances".[8]The concept of *upāyakauśalya*, hence, is the joint point which is not only considered as the thread linking all schools of Buddhist thought especially the Mahāyāna sūtras and the *Pāli Nikāyas*, but also plays a very important role in understanding and applying the Buddha's teachings.

5. Fa-qing, *Class notes of The Lotus Sūtra,* International Buddhist College, 2014.
6. *Alagaddūpama Sutta*, MN I: 22.
7. Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*(New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 143.
8. Ibid., p. 144.

Furthermore, the *upāyakauśalya* tends to guide the Mahāyānists to motivations for creating possible practices including the Bodhisattva path, the religious movements for lay Buddhists, worship of the texts, and so on. Numerous ways of approaching people as such are considered *upāyakauśalya*. Michael Pye also asserts, "Buddhism taking a form is skillful means, and nothing else".[9]"The Lotus Sūtra represents the essence of the Mahāyāna tradition's fundamental orientation"[10], Peter Della Santina says. Paul Williams still states "the teaching of skill-in-means, or skillful means, is a key doctrine of the Mahāyāna, and one of the key teachings of the Lotus Sūtra".[11]Consequently, it is reasonable to say that the history of Mahāyāna Buddhism is the process of evolution and development on the *upāyakauśalya,* for nothing can be exhaustively spoken. As stated in *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* "Buddha turns the wheel of teaching without verbal explanation, because of knowing that all things are inexpressible".[12]Thus, it is fair to say that the method of thought and practice of skillful means is one of the leading and fundamental principles of Mahāyāna Buddhism as a working religion. The Japanese writer Sawada Kenshō has also claimed that it is hardly possible to discuss Mahāyāna Buddhism at all without reference to it (skillful means).[13]

Skillful Means as the Main Theme of the Lotus Sūtra

"In many ways, the Lotus Sūtra is the foundation Sūtra of the Mahāyāna tradition. It has great influence in the Mahāyāna Buddhist world".[14]The second chapter "Expedient Devices" is regarded as the key to the understanding of the whole The Lotus Sūtra. This chapter introduces the concept of 'skillful means'. The Buddha opens by saying that the wisdom of Buddhas is profound and incalculable beyond comprehension for *Pratyekabuddhas* and *Śravakas*. It is "the insight of seeing the true nature, the ultimate reality of everything – all dharmas – in time and in space, in the phenomenal world as well as in ultimate dimension".[15] The Buddha mentions that he had taught the path of *Pratyekabuddhas* and *Śravakas* only as the skillful means to help beings escape suffering.[16]By this, He means these are worthy paths but not the ultimate goal due to the fact that they are not considered as the great aspiration to devote their own practice to help the whole world attain liberation. The

9. Michael Pye, p. 127.
10. Peter Della Santina,*The Tree of Enlightenment* (Chico Dharma Study Foundation, 1997), p. 134.
11. Williams, p. 143.
12. Cleary,Vol II:324.
13. Michael Pye,p. 1.
14. Santina, p. 133.
15. Nhat-Hanh, p.24.
16. Asaf Federman,*"Literal Means and Hidden Meanings: A New Analysis of Skillful Means"Philosophy East and West*, Volume 59, Number 2, (University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), p. 129.

teaching of the three-vehicles of *Pratyekabuddhas*, *Śravakas* and *Bodhisattva* is but a skillful means in historical dimension. In fact,

> "There is only the Law of the one vehicle
> There are not two, there are not three,
> Except when the Buddha preaches so as an expedient means,"[17]

It is the so-called Buddha Vehicle (*Buddhayāna*) meaning opening up, pointing out the insight of the Buddha and then helping living beings awake to and enter this path. In addition, "the Buddhas of the past…present…future used countless numbers of expedient means, various causes and conditions, and words of simile and parable in order to expound the doctrines for the sake of living beings. These doctrines are all for the sake of the one Buddha vehicle".[18] The Buddhas simply adapt the doctrines to the level of all living beings whether their level is less or great. All are done through the motivation of great compassion, animated by wisdom, for the benefit of others. This is proved by the parable of rain and of growing vegetations belonging to the fifth chapter "the Parable of Medical Herbs" of The Lotus Sūtra. Rain falls alike representing the Buddha's dharma. It benefits all growing trees… great, middle and little. All of them according to their own particular species and nature receive as much rain as they need in the same way that all living beings nourish themselves according to their capacity from the dharma.

Consequently, the Lotus Sūtra makes use of similes and parables to further clarify skillful means" for through similes and parables, those who are wise obtain understanding".[19]

The Parable of Burning House

The most famous of all the parables is probably the story of the burning house. It appears in the third chapter of the Sūtra and follows the chapter on skillful means as an illustration of the purpose and reasons for the Buddha's teaching of the above-mentioned three vehicles.

The brief summary story is of a wealthy man who has an old great house but with only one narrow door. Suddenly, fire breaks out from the four directions and threatens all his children

[17]. *The Lotus Sūtra,*Burton Watson (trans.), (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1999), p. 35.
[18]. Ibid., pp. 31-32.
[19]. Ibid., p. 56.

who are absorbed in playing with their toys. The man calls them in vain and then thinks: "I must now invent some expedient means that will make it possible for the children to escape the harm".[20] He calls out that those goat-carts, deer-carts and bullock-carts they like are waiting for them outside the door. Upon hearing this, the children scramble out of the burning house and are saved. At this time, the father gave each of his sons only the best cart, i.e. bullock-cart. It is easy to see that the burning house resembles the afflicted world; the children are the people of the world who are unaware of the suffering of the world; the father is the Buddha; the carts are the vehicles (*yānas*) of the *Śrāvakayāna*, the *Pratyekabuddhayāna* and the *Bodhisattvayāna* or *Buddhayāna*.[21]

The Buddha has given only the bullock-cart, *Buddhayāna* to his disciples because there are no three vehicles, but only one that actually exists. The true teaching of the Buddha is aimed only at Buddhahood. The goal of Buddhahood is superior to the goals of *Pratyekabuddhas* and *Śravakas*. They were taught only for the benefit of beings with strong attachments and little wisdom. These paths or the *saṃvṛtisatya* were, hence, only means to help beings enter the one and only path: Buddhahood or *Buddhayāna* – the *paramārthasatya*. They serve as anointer mediatory and provisional stage.

Furthermore, it is clearly seen that, through this, the Buddha taught both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna. He taught the Hīnayāna path for those who believe in the existence of the world and the Mahāyāna for those whose merit is well matured. To have taught only the Hīnayāna would have been miserly. If the Buddha had taught only the Mahāyāna, beings would have despaired of attaining the goal of enlightenment and not entered the path at all. Thus, the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna are expedient devices for all living beings and designed to suit their different capacities and inclinations.

The Buddha also says *Arhats* will all eventually attain Buddhahood although they all practiced only to become *Arhats*. The achievement or the *nirvāṇa* of *Arhatship* is just anointer mediatory stage like a phantom city conjured up by a wise guide. This message of skillful means is explained in the seventh chapter of the Lotus Sūtra.

The Parable of Phantom City

[20]. Watson, p. 57.
[21]. Fa-qing, 2014.

There is a man who is leading a party of travelers to a vast treasure. Along the way, the travelers grow weary, tired and want to go back. Therefore, the wise guide conjures up a city which has all the amenities needed for them to rest and recover their strength. They will be able to continue their journey until, thereafter, they eventually reach the real treasure. In this parable, the guide is the Buddha, the travelers are all beings and the phantom city is the *nirvāṇa* of the *Arhats*.

In the same way, because of knowing the timid and weak minds of living beings, the Buddha "using the power of skillful means preaches two *nirvāṇas* (of *Pratyekabuddhas* and of *Śrāvakas*) in order to provide a resting place along the road"[22] for the sake of reaching Buddhahood. If living beings cling to these two stages, they have only remained close to the Buddhas' wisdom, not achieving the true extinction. It is because "there is only the one Buddha vehicle for attaining extinction and one alone".[23] On the contrary, once they realize that they rested and recovered their strength in two temporary *nirvāṇas*, they must expend great effort and diligence for moving onward to the final goal - Buddhahood. It should be understood that, the teaching of two *nirvāṇas* or two vehicles is only a restful preliminary to the real attainment, *Buddhayāna* required. Thus, all the *Arhats* become Buddhas eventually and the one Buddha vehicle has been taught as three vehicles in order to make distinctions.

A second aspect of this story touches on the issue of gain and loss. It seems as if the travelers will stay in the phantom city with "ease and tranquility"[24] forever unless the leader wipes it away. By deserting such a resting place, the people achieve a greater gain. However, only the leader, the Buddha who alone can apply the power of expedient means and compare the phantom city to the treasure city, knows this. He causes the phantom city to disappear, an act that must be understood as an allegory for wiping away the teachings of various paths or conventional truth. This is exactly what the Lotus Sūtra does.

The Parable of Destitute Son

The third parable to be analyzed here, which belongs to chapter four of this Sūtra, is that of the son who did not recognize his father. The son leaves his father and wanders abroad for years. He accidentally comes to the city where his father lives; in the meantime the father has become very wealthy. The father recognizes the son, but the son does not recognize the

[22]. Watson, p. 136.
[23]. Ibid., p. 135.
[24]. Ibid., p. 136.

father. The father also realizes the difficult situation and does not reveal his relationship to him. Instead he employs the son, slowly building up his confidence until he can treat him as an adopted son and give him responsibilities for the whole estate. At last the father, who is near the end of his life, calls together many witnesses and reveals the true, original relationship.

According to this parable, the father acts skillfully three times. First, he recognizes the problem and avoids using direct action. Second, he gives his son smaller jobs, but pays him double. Third, he makes an effort to be close to him and gains his confidence.

The message of the simile is that we all are the lost sons of the Buddha, destined to become Buddhas. This is explained by pointing out that we lack belief in our own capacity which has been hidden for a long time in Saṃsāra and for good reasons. We are actually the sons of the Buddha and will get this inheritance of Buddhahood.[25]

Another interesting feature of *upāya* is revealed in the final act. Toward the end of his life, the father reveals his use of skillful means and proclaims the true relationship. The father shares his point of view with the son in the same way that the Buddha shares his point of view with us. Step by step, He brings us along to his potential road until such a time when we can realize our true nature and kinship and then ready to accept this inheritance of Buddhahood.

The final act is not only a self-reference to the teaching of skillful means in the Lotus Sūtra but also the status of this very story in this very Sūtra.[26]It only takes the right means, right road and even the right practices to follow but everyone has the potential to become a Buddha.

The Parable of Wise Physician

The sixteenth chapter of the Lotus Sūtra demonstrates how the life of the historical Buddha was in fact a manifestation of skillful means. Buddha says “I described how in my youth, I left my household and attained *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*. But in truth, the time I attained Buddhahood is extremely long”[27]; and simply “I use this expedient means to teach

[25]. Fa-qing, 2014.
[26]. Federman, p. 129.
[27]. Watson, p. 226.

and convert living beings and cause them to enter the Buddha way".[28] It should be understood that, therefore, his life span "is an immeasurable number of asamkhya kalpas" and during that time, he has "constantly abided here without ever entering extinction".[29]This is proved as the parable of the father, the physician prepares an excellent antidote for his children who have taken poison. Because some of the children deeply affected by the poison ignores the medicine, he fakes his own death and retires elsewhere. Brought to their senses by shock, the sons take antidote. In fact, the father still lives in another country. His death was a skillful device.

In the same way, the Buddha is still with us. Through manifesting a normal life of birth and death as skillful means, the Buddha wants to tell his disciples that "it is rare thing to live at a time when one of the Buddhas appears in the world".[30] Hence, they will thirst to gaze upon the Buddha and then make extra effort to attain the Buddha way. In order to save living beings, thus, the Buddha speaks of passing into extinction as skillful means.

To sum up the parables, there are four features about skillful means. First, there is a gap between the ultimate truth known by the Buddhas and the conventional truth known by living beings. Second, due to beings under the influence of desire, hatred, and ignorance, the Buddhas cannot reveal the truth as a whole and are forced to use skillful means. Third, the motivation of the Buddhas is compassion together with wisdom; and they understand well the different capacities of beings. Finally, by the end of each story, the ultimate truth is shown with a full justification for the trickery

Conclusion

The central theme of the Lotus Sūtra is skillful means *(upāyakauśalya)*. It is intimately connected with the Buddhas' Dharma and shared with all the Buddhas. Due to great compassion, the Buddhas appear in the world. Due to great compassion, they applied skillful means through countless forms, conditions, practices. Skillful means serves as an explanatory and apologetic instrument for justifying the process of reinterpretation of the historical narrative of the life of the Buddha and his teachings. It explains the relative knowledge about the teachings, the goals, the paths, Arhatship and the biography of the teacher as a phantom in order to attain the true reality. It is designed by perfect wisdom and

[28]. Ibid.
[29]. Ibid., p. 227.
[30]. Ibid.

for a perfectly good cause in accord with the varying capacities of all sentient beings. In this way, the Mahāyāna tradition offers a new religious orientation of Buddhism and achieves phenomenal popularity not only in India but also in Central and East Asia.

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The Birth of a Savior: Exploring less-studied factors in the spread of Pure Land Buddhism in China

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Introduction

The Pure Land School (净土宗) is undoubtedly the most influential sect of Chinese Buddhism, to the extent that except Chan (禪), no other school enjoys such popularity. The life of this school in China began with the introduction of *Sukhāvatīvyūha* Sutra into China which later served as the main text of the sect.[1]

The concept of the Pure Land (Sanskrit: *buddha-kṣetra*, lit. Buddha field) is believed to be rooted in the Buddhist cosmology which postulates the existence of multiple planes of existence. These lands are called "pure" because through the power of bodhisattvas' merits and vows they "are devoid of evil, disease and suffering".[2]

The transmission of the Pure Land sect in China is claimed to be started by Huiyuan[3] (4-5 centuries CE) and the alleged foundation of the White Lotus Society[4] by him. After this, the transmission of the school continued in several lines and over a few centuries the teachings were adopted by almost all of the other Buddhist schools in China even those with less devotional aspects (e.g. Chan though Chan's interpretation of the concept of Pure Land is a little different from that of the Pure Land sect itself).[5]

Historically speaking, there is no mention of the concept of Pure Land in the Pali scriptures and early Buddhism only talks about the notion of heavenly realms inhabited by divine beings. Here, it is necessary to clarify one point: in the time of the Buddha, certain doctrines (including the presence of devas; a cosmology based on the existence of hell and heavenly realms; and the notion of rebirth) were considered as to be undeniable facts. The

1. Ch'en, Kenneth K. S. *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*. New Jersey: Princeton University , 1964. Print, p.338.
2. Getz, Daniel A. "Pure Lands." Ed. Buswell, Robert E. *Encyclopedia Of Buddhism*. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004. 703-6. PDF file, p.703.
3. 慧遠
4. 白蓮教
5. Gomez, Luis O. "Pure land Schools." Ed. Buswell, Robert E. *Encyclopedia Of Buddhism*. New York: McMillan References USA, 2004. 706-709. PDF file, p.707.

Buddha treated this cosmology as a fact while stripping gods of their power and denying the existence of a creator for the universe. However, he suggested an alternative ultimate goal and simply questioned the soteriological benefit of rebirth in heavenly planes of existence. According to him, even life in a heavenly realm is plagued by suffering of impermanence. So, even as a provisional goal, he never encouraged his disciples to seek rebirth in a paradise or a similar realm. Myths about the Tushita Heaven-- which is not by definition a Pure Land-- as a place where the Buddha lived before "descending" to this world undoubtedly date back to a later period when the first hagiographic works about the Buddha's life were developed.

The early scriptures of Buddhism regard the Buddha as a more or less ordinary man.[6] The early biographies which attributed birth miracles and a super mundane state to the Buddha were compiled in early centuries of the Common Era.[7] By this time two developments had already taken place: firstly, the Buddha was considered as a super-human and at the same time the rift between the sects with devotional tendencies and those with less emphasis on faith and devotion had deepened enough to give rise to the sects like *Lokottaravāda*.[8] The idea of the Pure Land, therefore, has no precedent in early Buddhism.

Nattier describes the course of development of the Pure Land doctrine in several stages and explains how the idea of only one Buddha for each time was developed in India and how this notion gave rise to the doctrine of other planes of existence. With this introduction she draws the conclusion that the roots of the Pure Land School are purely Indian.[9]

However, her argument seems to fail to refute the role of any foreign influence in the formation of the school. Firstly, she explains, the first Buddha to which a Pure Land was attributed is *Akṣobhya* Buddha; however, gradually the Pure Land of *Amitābha* Buddha gained importance[10]. This poses an important question: why is it that instead of the

6. Nakamura, Hajime. *Indian Buddhism: A Survey with Bibliographical Notes*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987. Print, p. 83.
7. Ibid p.130
8. One of the stories which are frequently cited by some scholars (usually those who are themselves Mahayana Buddhists and intent to prove the "orthodoxy" of the idea of super-mundane state of the Buddha) is a story where the Buddha, in response to the question whether he is human or god says he is neither human nor god but he is the Buddha. However, indeed, by saying this, the Buddha is unlikely to have intended to attribute a superhuman state to himself. He rather wanted to underline the importance of the awakening experience and the status of an enlightened human in the universe.
9. Nattier, Jan. "The Indian Roots of Pure Land Buddhism: Insights from the Oldest Chinese Versions of the Larger Sukhavativyuha." *Pacific World Journal* (2003): 179-201. PDF file, p.193.
10. Ibid, p.185

development of myths around this first Pure Land, *Amitābha*'s Buddha-field became the center of interest? What is the reason that no cult of *Akṣobhya* Buddha developed?

She further says the existence of such Pure Lands was postulated, after Buddhist meditators started to disclose their "visions" of such realms; therefore, in development of such an idea, scholarly work and interpretation of early scriptures played a minimal role.[11]

Citing meditative visions as the proof of the existence of a realm about which the Buddha himself did not talk is not in full conformity with the Buddha's approach. He never endorsed grasping all meditative visions as concrete realities; and in the Buddha's discourses as recorded in the Pali literature there is no mention of the Pure Land. So, possibly here non-Buddhist elements have played a role. Nattier does not explain why "the purely Indian" Pure Land sect thrived in China and East Asia rather than its supposed birth place, as factors like the extinction of Buddhism in India cannot easily explain this. One reason is the position of the Pure Land doctrine in Vajrayana Buddhism which was directly imported from India to Tibet and contradicts Nattier's view. Given the history of Buddhism in Tibet and the story of two Chinese and Indian schools which competed to become the dominant sect in that land, one can conclude Vajrayana must be a form of Buddhism which was widely practiced in India before its extinction.[12] On the other hand, except for some uses in the *Phowa* (Wylie: *'pho ba*) tradition (transferring consciousness at the time of death), the Pure Land doctrine has never been central in Tibetan Buddhism.[13] Tibetan Buddhism clearly reflects the dominant trend among Indian religions: while Vajrayana is full of ritualistic aspects, pujas and instructions on how to appease demons, which are probably elements borrowed from shamanistic beliefs of nomadic people in Tibet, the path it prescribes for salvation goes through the manipulation of "winds" (Sanskrit: *prāṇa*) in a series of postulated subtle channels. This yoga legacy is typical of many Indian schools and was probably introduced into Buddhism under the influence of ascetic traditions.

These facts suggest although it is possible that the doctrine of Pure Land salvation passed through its embryonic stages in India, its further development and maturity in China must have taken place under the influence of certain factors which were present in this country.

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[11]. Ibid, p.184

[12]. Kapstein, Matthew T. *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. Print, p. xvii.

[13]. Getz, Daniel A. "Pure Lands." Ed. Buswell, Robert E. Encyclopedia of Buddhism. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004. 703-6. PDF file, p. 705.

Several factors have so far been cited as the forces behind popularity of the Pure Land School in China. In fact, the popularity of the Pure Land School is explainable to some extent by providing the masses with an easy path of salvation: a path which only requires trust and devotion and is even open to those who cannot enter into the rigors of a monastic life or meditation.[14]

Besides this factor, other elements have been cited as contributing to the popularity of the school, including the chaotic situation of the age; the emergence of the doctrine of *Mofa* (Pinyin: *Mò Fǎ*) [15] or the age of decline; and of course the decline in scholastic activities in China.[16]

While the author acknowledges the possible role of these factors, the paper will explore other less-discussed elements which might have contributed to the spread of the Pure Land sect. Needless to say that identifying all of the social, economic and cultural forces which were involved in the growth of the Pure Land School in China requires a comprehensive study which is out of the scope of this paper. Also the author admits that what has been put forward in this paper is only a speculative hypothesis which requires more research to be verified.

The Factor of Nationalism

The Pure Land tenets are certainly in more conformity with the Chinese nationalistic sentiments which were prevalent during the advent of Buddhism in the country; however, the possible role of this factor has not been discussed adequately by scholars.

China has a long history of xenophobia and in ancient times non-Chinese cultures were viewed as barbarian. The term Huaxia[17] which is used for calling China in the ancient time is opposite to the term Man Yi[18] (neighboring barbarians) which suggest an idea of Chinese supremacy held by Confucian culture.[19] In this context, for the first time China had to embrace an alien religion which was founded by a person who was considered as to be

14. Olson, Carl. The Different Paths of Buddhism: A Narrative-Historical Introduction. New Brunswick: Rutgers University, 2005. PDF file, p.187.
15. 末法
16. Ch'en, Kenneth K. S. *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*. New Jersey: Princeton University , 1964. Print, p.350.
17. 華夏
18. 蠻夷
19. Hai, Yu. "Racism and Xenophobia in China." The East West Dialogue. Barcelona: Casa Asia, 2005. n.pag. PDF file, n.pag.

"barbarian", though from a noble family. This posed a challenge to the idea of the supremacy of the Chinese race. This conflict is well reflected in the idea promoted by the *Classic on Conversion of Barbarians* (Pinyin: Huàhújīng[20]). However, since the claim that *Śākyamuni* Buddha and Laozi (老子) is in fact one person lacked any historical support, over time, the xenophobic reactions of the Chines elite could have found other outlets to manifest.

"Cognitive dissonance" is the name of an important psychological theory which holds that people try to act and think in such a way that they can stay in harmony with their values and norms. They even selectively choose cognitive inputs to avoid any conflict with their accepted values. For example, people with certain political leanings usually refer to the same-minded news outlets for information to avoid encounter with material which is not in conformity with their value system. In this way, they evade anxiety caused by questioning their values and norms.[21]

This principle is also true about the ancient Chinese people who grew up in an environment of xenophobia. One effective strategy to avoid this cognitive dissonance was possibly introducing celestial Buddhas to marginalize the role of the Indian founder of the religion and replace him with heavenly and mythical beings.

The use of this strategy is also evident in Japan's extremely xenophobic society where *Amitābha* and *Vairocana* (Japanese *Dainichi Nyorai*[22]) occupy a central role in *Judo* and *Shingon* sects respectively and we surprisingly see *Nichiren* prohibits paying devotion to *Śākyamuni*'s statue (worshipping the Buddha's statue is one of the so-called "four slanderous acts")[23]. The same phenomena possibly took place in China and celestial figures without any known ethnicity or historical existence occupied central places in Chinese Buddhism.[24]

One of the interesting clues to support this hypothesis is the religious monuments at Longmen[25] Caves. During the Northern Wei Dynasty people started carving Buddha figures in these caves as an act of devotion. The work continued through the 8th century CE. Keneth Ch'en cites statistics showing the number of figures of each Buddhist deity according to the

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20. 化胡經
21. Hart, William et al. "Feeling validated versus being correct: A meta-analysis of selective exposure to information." Psychological Bulletin (2009): 555-588. Web, p.588.
22. 大日如来
23. Department, SGI-USA Study. *The Untold History of Fuji School: The True Story of Nichiren Shoshu*. New York: World Tribune Press, 2000. PDF file, p.1.
24. In Bon Po religion of Tibet which historically represents the more nationalist section of Tibetan society who resisted Buddhism, we see a celestial entity is credited as the founder of the religion.
25. 龙门

time of their construction. These statistics indicate that over two centuries the importance of *Śākyamuni* and *Maitreya* decreases and instead the number of *Amitābha* and *Avalokiteśvara* figures increases. Ch'en says the reason for this shift is not fully clear.[26]

The Central Asian Effect

Buddhism was introduced to China through the Silk Road and imported from Central Asian oasis kingdoms. Many early translators who founded the scholastic foundations of Buddhism in China and translated Buddhist scriptures came from these kingdoms.[27]

The region used to hold a special status in terms of cultural interactions as it was located on a crossroad where Greek, Persian and Indian cultures met. Although Buddhism was one of the important religions of the region, some clues suggest that the worship of Persian, Greek and Indian deities was not uncommon there.[28]

One of the most important religions in the region was Zoroastrianism which was founded by Zoroaster in an unknown time. The region where Zoroaster spent most of his life is believed to be the Eastern parts of Persia. He was a reformer of a system of beliefs our knowledge of which is scarce. Through the study of the *Gatha* songs which are attributed to Zoroaster himself, however, one can speculate the belief system which Zoroaster tried to reform was possibly a mixture of the worship of Indo-Aryan deities; animal sacrifice; using psychedelic substances (*homa*); and shamanistic rituals which were carried out by magi, a caste of shamans or magicians. Later the deities and rituals Zoroaster had fought against resurfaced in the religion and a well-organized clergy institution replaced the caste of shaman-magi priests. So, it is not surprising that the Zoroastrian and pre-Zoroastrian deities were worshiped in Central Asia. Archeological excavations also suggest the presence of folk beliefs; worship of fairies and natural forces; and shamanistic beliefs which were the inseparable part of any form of nomadic life. As a rule, nomadic people were usually less rigid in their adherence to the worship of specific deities and due to political reasons they usually chose from a liberal pantheon of various faiths.[29]

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[26]. Ch'en, Kenneth K. S. *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*. New Jersey: Princeton University , 1964. Print, p.172.

[27]. Poceski, Mario. "China." Ed. Buswell, Robert E. *Encyclopedia Of Buddhism*. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004. 139-45. PDF file, p.140.

[28]. Nattier, Jan. "Central Asia." Ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*. New York: MacMillan, 2004. 120-22. PDF file, p.121.

[29]. Frye, Richard N. *The Heritage of Central Asia: Antiquity to the Turkish Expansion*. Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1998. Print. pp.30, 67-73

Zoroastrianism has been credited by some scholars with introducing the idea of hell and heaven into Judaism and Christianity.[30] The idea of a land without suffering and full of happiness, i.e. the vivid image of the Pure Land some Mahayana sutras depict, is closer to Zoroastrian /Abrahamic cosmology than the Buddhist one. The more important element which could be adopted from Persian cosmology is the dichotomy of light and darkness which is somehow present in the Pure Land sect. The symbolism of light, which is used to describe *Amitābha* or the Buddha of "Infinite Light", has no precedent in early Buddhism.

Another religious force to be considered is Christian beliefs and their spread to Asia. While totally in contradiction with the original teachings of the Buddha, the idea of salvation through grace of divinity and only faith is undoubtedly well-established in Christianity and still constitutes one of its core teachings. Despite its Semitic origins, Christianity as a religion is rather a Hellenistic phenomenon and the presence of Hellenistic culture during the reign of hybrid Greek dynasties in Central Asia could have played a role in its expansion in the region.[31] [32]Christian tradition holds that the first missionary activities in Central Asia and India were responsibility of Saint Thomas the Apostle and it started in the first century CE.[33] Christianity was among the religions which existed in this geographical region during the reign of Parthian Empire who was religiously tolerant and it could have played a role in the development of the idea of a savior among Buddhists there.

Cultural norms and beliefs usually develop over years and centuries and manifest in the form of "sediments" in subconscious of nations. For people from Central Asia who grew up in a milieu rich in diverse cultural elements, even after embracing Buddhism, such cultural elements possibly survived. In this way, over generations, old beliefs re-emerged in the form of myths and doctrines within the new religion.

The Influence of Manichaeism

Mani was a prophet from Mesopotamia who started his mission in the 3rd century CE. His religion, described as "the religion of light", considered Jesus, Zoroaster and Buddha as God's messenger. After Mani's execution by the Sassanid King and persecution of his

[30]. Gier, N. F. "Iranian Impact on Judaism, excerpted from Theology Bluebook, Chapter 12." n.d. *University of Idaho.* Web. 14 February 2014, n.pag.

[31]. Attridge, Harold W. *A Portrait Of Jesus' World - Hellenistic Culture: From Jesus To Christ* . April 1998. Web. 7 March 2014.n.pag.

[32]. We should remember that Mahayana with its philosophy of other-salvation in general found its footing in these dominions of Hellenistic culture.

[33]. Mingana, Analecta. *The Early Spread of Christianity in India*. n.p.: Georgia Press, n.d. PDF file, p.435

followers, they started to move to Central Asia and based on some excavations, Manichaeism existed in China in the second half of the sixth century CE.

There is a mythical account about Mani's conversion of a king called "Turan Shah" in Baluchistan. This account describes Mani as a "Buddha".[34] In another story which reminds us of the stories of the people who first had "visions" of the Pure Land is the account of Mani's conversion of Shapur's brother, Mihr Shah. The story says Mani shows Mihr-Shah "the Paradise of Light", a heavenly realm promised to righteous ones.[35]

Is it possible that after the spread of Manichaeism in China, people who heard the stories of Paradise of Light of Mani "the Buddha," were indirectly encouraged to find its analogue in the paradise of the Buddha of Infinite Light?

Conclusion

There are several hypotheses regarding the origins of Pure Land Buddhism which have been categorized into three groups: 1) hypotheses advocating a foreign origin for Pure Land Buddhism (possibly Persian one); 2) hypotheses which see Hindu influence as the origin of the school; and 3) hypotheses which consider the school as an inner development within Buddhism. This latter hypothesis has been gaining support in recent years.[36] While supporters of each hypothesis have their own reasons and arguments, the dynamic nature of religions necessitates the contribution of a myriad of factors in the development of the school.

Suggesting an accessible method for salvation; abandoning difficult and demanding methods of practice; and bringing hope to desperate masses who had generally difficulties in understanding of philosophical concepts must have all played a role in the popularity of the Pure Land School in China. However, there could be other less explored socio-cultural factors involved.

This paper suggests three factors which could have promoted the school in China. Finding an alternative for non-Chinese figures among celestial beings; possible influence of first Buddhist missioners and translators from Central Asia; and later synergic effect of Manichaeism's cosmology are these three factors. Through propagating their myths some of

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34. Baker-Brian, Nicholas J. *Manichaeism: An Ancient Faith Rediscovered*. London: T&T Clark International, 2011. PDF file, p.74.
35. Ibid p.134.
36. Pas, Julian F. *Visions of Sukhavati: Shan-tao's Commentary on the Kuan wu-liang-shou-Fo ching*. Albany: State University of New York, 1995. PDF file, p.5.

which were strikingly reminiscent of the descriptions of the Pure Land, followers of Manichaeism could have created an environment conducive to the spread of the sect in China.

These are hypotheses which require further research and some of them cannot be proved without multidisciplinary studies. Until then, the possible role of these factors remains a speculative hypothesis, though a highly possible one.

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Matikas, *Dhammas* and the Two Truths: The Forces Driving the Formative Development of the *Abhidhamma*

Oh Kian Seng

Introduction

Theravadin sources have it that the Abhidhamma (Sanskrit: Abhidharma) was first expounded by the Buddha in *Tavatimsa* to an assembly of devas which included his mother, Maya. That its genesis should be so prominently figured is indicative of the high regard that the early Buddhists had for the Abhidhamma, the seven books of which for them were as good as *buddhavacana*.[1] So much so that King Kassapa V of the 10th century had it all inscribed on gold plates and the first book set in gems while King Vijayabahu of the 11th century used to study the first book before his royal duties every morning.[2] After all, the Abhidhamma represents the essence of the Buddha's doctrine.

However, long before it became an object of contention due to the disparities among the different versions of the various Nikaya schools some of which refused to accept its authority as the word of the Buddha, the Abhidhamma had more humble beginnings in the form of *matikas* ('lists' or 'matrices') in the oldest suttas.

Matikas

During the time when Buddhism was still an oral tradition, *matikas* were an indispensable mnemonic device in the delivering and memorizing of discourses. The Buddha has himself frequently made use of lists in his discourses to give structure to his teaching so that his message could be more clearly understood. One of the best examples of his endorsement of the use of lists is the well-known *Dhammacakkappavattana* sutta in which he preached on the two extreme views, the noble eightfold path, the four noble truths, the eight kinds of suffering, the five aggregates of suffering and the three causes of suffering, all in a considerable short sutta.

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1. Namely the Theravadins and the Sarvastivadins, since theirs are the only two Abhidhamma texts which have been preserved intact.
2. Narada, Mahathera. *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma: The Abhidhammattha Sangaha of Acariya Anuruddha*, 27th November 2013 http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/abhiman.html

Another list that he mentions many times in the suttas is that of the 37 *bodhipakkhiya dhammas*, most famously in the *Mahaparinibbana* sutta in which he says:

"And what, bhikkhus, are these teachings? They are the four foundations of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four constituents of psychic power, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven factors of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path..."

These 37 dhammas helpful to enlightenment were seen to represent the crux of the Buddha's doctrine and partly influenced the structure of the *Samyutta Nikaya* and the *Samyutagama*.

This general penchant for lists on the part of the Buddha's followers can also be seen from the way the *Anguttara Nikaya* is organised with several thousand discourses being arranged in eleven *nipatas* or 'books' in accordance with the number of dhammas mentioned.[3] The *Sangiti* and *Dasuttara* suttas are also prime examples of discourses the presentation of which would be difficult and unpalatable without the use of lists.

From the time of the Buddha's passing until the time the scriptures were first consigned to writing several centuries later, the importance of lists was even more pronounced. With no mention of the Abhidhamma in the reports of the first Buddhist council, its earliest forms most likely first took shape around the time of King Asoka. Lists were an essential tool in the detailed assembly and meticulous summarization of the Buddha's large legacy of discourses by his followers whose primary concern was the preservation of the integrity of his teachings and their systemization. They were extremely careful not to add anything new.

However, fundamentally different teachings arose in the course of time as the Abhidhamma soon grew to become a vehicle by which a particular school could define itself in its doctrinal disputes with other schools during the time of Nikaya Buddhism. This was because the preservation and systemization of the Buddha's teachings slowly gave way to scholastic reworking and re-interpretation as the prime concern of his followers. This happened independently of anyone's conscious will and the impetus for such an evolution came from the development of the idea of *the dhamma theory* which is the "philosophical

[3]. This is also the format in the Sanskrit version of the Anguttara Nikaya - the *Ekottara Agama* - although there is considerable disparity between the contents of the two.

cornerstone of the Abhidhamma."[4]

The Dhamma Theory

The use of the word 'dhamma' in the context of the dhamma theory refers to either those physical or mental events which have been analysed to be the fundamental components of sentient experience, akin to the atoms of the physical world. The principle underlying the dhamma theory is that sentient experience is ultimately made up of a number of elementary constituents or dhammas which rise and interact with one another and then cease in rapid succession. This represents the culmination of the Buddhist notion that what is known as an individual person is but *pannatti* (Sanskrit: *prajnapti*,), a mere convenient designation for the composite of *nama* ('name' or 'consciousness') and *rupa* ('matter' or 'corporeality'), two ever-fluctuating parts of sentient experience which in turn can be reduced to the five *khandas* (aggregates):

- *rupa* (matter),

- *vedana* or (feeling),

- *sanna* or (perception),

- *sankhara* or (volitions), and

- *vinnana* or (consciousness).

The purpose of such investigation aims to elaborate on the tenet of *anatta*: that there is not a real and independent 'self' or 'ego' either inside or outside the five *khandas*.

Similar approaches to analyse sentient experience can be found in many of the Buddha's discourses and Karunadasa has identified an additional three:

- Into the six *dhatus* (elements): *pathavi* (earth), *apo* (water), *tejo* (temperature), *vayo* (air), *akasa* (space), and *vinnana* (consicousness);
- Into the twelve *ayatanas* (avenues of sense-perception and mental cognition): the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind; and their corresponding objects: visible form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental objects;
- Into the eighteen *dhatus* (elements) which are the twelve *ayatanas*, the six kinds of

[4]. Karunadasa, Y., 1996, *The Dhamma Theory: Philosophical Cornerstone of the Abhidhamma*, The Wheel Publications No. 412/413, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.

consciousness which arise from the contact between the sense organs and their objects namely: visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and mental consciousness.

As the fact that there were at least five approaches showed that none was exhaustive, the Abhidhammikas rigorously pursued such a line of inquiry to reach the point where these elements could not be further reduced anymore.

In the end, the Theravadin Abhidhammikas came up with a scheme of 82 dhamma categories under a fourfold classification as follows:

- the bare phenomenon of consciousness (*citta*) consisting of a single dhamma type of which the essential characteristic is the cognizing of an object;
- associated mental factors (*cetasika*) encompassing 52 dhammas; and
- material phenomena (*rūpa*) including 28 dhammas that make up all physical occurrences.

The above three categories are conditioned (*sankhata*) under which the dhammas arise and cease subject to numerous causes and conditions, and constitute sentient experience in all realms of *saṃsara*. The 82nd dhamma is unconditioned (*asankhata*) as it neither arises nor ceases through causal interaction. This is *nibbana*.

The Sarvastivadins on the other hand adopted a system of 75 categories under a fivefold classification, the first four categories being for conditioned dharmas. The first category of consciousness is the same as the Theravadins. The second category of associated mentality (*caitta*) consists of 46 dhammas. Their category of physical phenomena (*rupa*) also includes 11 dhammas and another 14 factors dissociated from thought (*cittaviprayuktasaṃskara)* which explain a range of experiential events dissociated from both material form and thought. The fifth category in the Sarvastivadin taxonomy comprises three unconditioned dhammas: space and two states of cessation (*nirodha*).

This exhaustive account of every possible type of sentient experience that may present to one's consciousness in terms of its constituent dhammas is only half of the function of the dhamma theory. The other half involves the clarification of their causal and conditioning relationship to one another.

Therefore, the Abhidhamma enterprise involves both the analysis (*vibhanga*) of

dhammas into multiple categories, which is the focus of the first six books of the Theravadin Abhidhamma; and their synthesis (*paccaya*) into a unified structure by means of their manifold relationships of causal conditioning, which is the scope of the sixth book[5]. While "analysis shows that composite things cannot be considered as ultimate unities, synthesis shows that the factors into which the apparently composite things are analysed… are not discrete entities."[6] The former prevents one from falling into eternalism while the latter prevents one from falling into materialism and nihilism, and both involve knowing the distinction between *sammuti-sacca* (conventional truth) and *paramattha-sacca* (ultimate truth).

The Two Truths

The other driving force that was behind the Abhidhammikas' efforts to dissect every possible sentient experience into its final constituents was the idea of 'designation by provisional naming' or *pannatti*, as mentioned earlier. This is the idea that sentient experience is all about nominal existence and that behind one's everyday familiar world of substantial objects, there is an ultimate reality (*paramattha-sacca*). It was the resolve to get at the nature of this ultimate reality that spurred on the Abhidhammikas to search for what it was that was actually behind the veil of conceptualization, both in terms of name (*nama-pannatti*) and words (*attha-pannatti*). They found the answer through the dhamma theory and conclude that all sentient experience is but a mental fabrication formed by the mind out of the raw data provided by various elementary mental and physical events known as dhammas.

It is this method of *nippariyaya-dhammadesana* (unembellished discourse on the Dhamma) that sets the Abhidhamma apart from the Suttas in which the Buddha makes use of the conventional truth (*sammuti-sacca*) to expound on his doctrine. Whereas the Abhidhamma is a method of exposition on the Buddha's doctrine which is strictly restricted to the employment of terms which are valid only from the perspective of ultimate truth (*paramattha-sacca*). However, this does not mean that *paramattha-sacca* is the higher truth, just like one cannot say that the Abhidhamma Pitaka is to be preferred over the Sutta Pitaka. For while the Abhidhamma Pitaka teaches *pariccheda-nana* (knowledge of analysis) and the Sutta Pitaka teaches *sammuti-nana* (knowledge of linguistic conventions), they are but two

5. The last book, the Kathavathu, is supposed to be a later polemical work.
6. Karunadasa, Y., 1996, *The Dhamma Theory: Philosophical Cornerstone of the Abhidhamma*, The Wheel Publications No. 412/413, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.

different ways to the same objective of *nibbana*.

Conclusion

It should be pointed out that there were other factors which have influenced the development of the Abhidhamma as well, like the need to defend one's doctrinal position against other schools during the times of Nikaya Buddhism. But these forces came into play only after the formative stage of the Abhidhamma has been completed. Before that, the above were the main developments that have influenced the genesis of the third great division of the canon, transforming it from what started off as an initial effort to systematize the Buddha's doctrine into the 'higher teaching' that is the Abhidhamma, the aim of which is nothing less than "to articulate a comprehensive vision of totality of experienced reality" which is extensive in range, complete in systemization and precise in analysis.[7]

[7]. Narada, Mahathera. *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma: The Abhidhammattha Sangaha of Acariya Anuruddha*, 27th November 2013 http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/abhiman.html

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Chinese Buddhist Thought: A Brief Doctrinal Exposition of the Tiantai School

Ven. Joymony Tanchangya

Introduction

The introduction of Buddhism to China has been considered as one of the major factors for the development of the literature, religion, philosophy, arts and social-construction of the Chinese society. Historically, it was during the time of the Emperor Ming (58-75)[1] that Buddhism entered mainland China, but many historians disagreed with this and have expressed that Buddhism entered at a much earlier date.

Tiantai, one of the sole Chinese Buddhist Schools, was established during the Sui dynasty (581-618). It is one of the Buddhist schools, which have no direct counterpart in Indian Buddhism. *Zhiyi* (538-597) is considered as the founder and third patriarch of this school, who systematized, arranged, analyzed all the doctrines and brought them to final completion.[2] The name *Tiantai* came into existence because *Zhiyi* stayed in the *Tiantai* Mountain and spent most of his life time there. According to *Dr. Fa Qing*,[3] it is the first time that the Chinese expressed their understanding of Indian Buddhism with confidence.[4]

As we all know throughout the historical Buddhist timeline, a lot of literature, Buddhist scriptures, sutras, and commentaries have flowed into China. Despite the strong philosophical customs and beliefs of Taoism and Confucianism; Buddhism has also taken root deeply in the heart of the Chinese. In this short paper we will explore the doctrinal exposition of the *Tiantai School*, like the five periods and the eight teachings, threefold truth, one mind contains three thousand worlds, Zhi Guan, and of course some *Tiantai* essence from the various sutras and we will see how *Tiantai* teachings established its position in the heart of the Chinese .

1. Fung Yu-Lan, *A short history of Chinese Philosophy* (Collier Macmillan Publisher, London 1966), P. 241.
2. Kenneth Ch'en, Buddhism in china: a historical survey (Princeton university press, U.S.A, 1964), P. 303.
3. Permanent lecturer of IBC.
4. Dr. Fa Qing, Tian Tai Buddhism and its significance to Modern Society. P. 1.

Discussion

With the great flow of Buddhist literature from India and Central Asia into China, the Chinese people were confused about Buddhism. Thus during that time Zhiyi who presented the chronological idea of the five periods and eight teachings provided the solution.. We have to remember that *Tiantai* considers all scriptures are the true words of the Buddha; which we can see through its comprehensive and encyclopedic nature and the importance given to all Buddhist scriptures. Let us discuss some doctrinal exposition of the *Tiantai* School.

The root practice of *Tiantai* School is *Zhiguan* (*Samatha* and *Vipasyana*), which was presented by *Zhiyi*, where he made a system consisting of three practices: - gradual; rounded and sudden; and intermediate. Among the three practices gradual can be applied in daily life, rounded and sudden can be applied both at once, and intermediate for higher level of practice[5]. When one practices *Zhiguan (Zhi*- concentration; *Kuan*- insight*)* one will come to understand the natures of the *dharmas*, by practicing concentration (*Zhi)* one knows that all the *dharmas* do not have self-nature, and by practicing insight (*Kuan)* one realizes all *dharmas* do not have real existence.[6] So if one practices *Zhiguan,* one will understand the real nature of the dharma and will attain enlightenment. Another feature is that in *Tiantai Zhiguan* is inseparable and interdependent; as calming produces contemplation and contemplation brings calm; but in the Indian system the *samath-vipasyana* practitioner observes calming and contemplation in a sequential order. So these are the two differenct ways of practicing *Zhiguan* (*Samatha* and *Vipasyana*).

The Lotus Sutra which was composed around 300-350 CE was translated by *Dharmasema* into Chinese in 421.[7] To *Zhiyi* this sutra is considered the highest and chronologically the final teaching of the Buddha. In this sutra Buddha nature is the main key concept for discussion. This sutra advocates vegetarianism, and according to this sutra *Sravaka* and *Pratyaka* Buddha do not understand the purport of the *sunyata,* because it has twofold characteristic, one is *sunyata* or *samsara* (birth and death) and another is *non-sunyata (Mahaparinirvana*); whereby *sravaka* and *pratyaka* Buddha realizes *sunyata* but do not understand non-*sunyata*, that is why it says that they do not practice the middle way but practice one extreme. Here we have to understand no-self refers to birth and death, and self to great nirvana. So the Buddha nature is the middle path where both no-self and self are seen.

5. Lecture note 8, on Chinese Buddhist Thought.
6. Kenneth Ch'en, Buddhism in china: a historical survey (Princeton university press, U.S.A, 1964), P. 313.
7. Dr. Fa Qing, Lecture Note 3, on Tiantai.

In the Lotus Sutra, *Zhiyi* emphasized on the notion of *Upāya* and its application on the five periods and eight teachings of the Buddha. How skillfully he was able to maintain and interpret the whole career and teachings of the Buddha.

The five periods are: - 1.*Avatamsaka,* 2.*Āgama,* 3.*Vāipulya,* 4.*Mahāprajnaparamitā,* 5.*Saddharma and Mahāparinirvāna* and the eight teachings are: - 1.sudden doctrine, 2.gradual doctrine, 3.secret doctrine, 4.indeterminate doctrine, 5.pitaka doctrine, 6.common doctrine, 7.special doctrine and 8.round and perfect doctrine. Through this presentation, on one hand they were able to produce a chronological and methodological understanding of the vast literature for the Chinese people and on the other hand made a notional distinction between the eternal Buddha and his manifestation according to the sutras.[8] By these ways *Zhiyi* was able to solve fundamental metaphysical problems as well. So we have to understand these categorized teachings in this way and of course we cannot neglect its practical aspect and benefits as well.

Another key concept in *Tiantai* thought is the establishment of a threefold category of truth. This was an endeavor to transcend the dichotomy of the traditional Mahayana twofold (absolute and relative) with its inherent dangers of elevating one at the expense of the other, and to set forth a synthesis in the form of the middle way. The philosophical basis for the origin of this idea is found in *Nagarjuna's Mulamadhyamakakarika*: "We declare that whatever is relational origination is *sunyata*. It is a provisional name for the mutuality of being and, indeed, it is the middle path"[9].

In other words, *sunyata* is equated with *Pratitya-samutpada* and this is declared to be the middle path *(madhyama pratipada*) or a temporary name for the expression of truth. *Zhiyi* developed the thought in the following manner: (A) Follow the temporary and enter into the realization of Emptiness. This awareness does not mean the acceptance of either the temporary or Emptiness as actual entities, nor does it mean the total abandonment of the one for the other. Emptiness is to be discovered within the relative world for it is identical to the temporary. (B) Follow Emptiness and Enter the Temporary. Which stresses the movement from the realization of Enlightenment to actual functioning in the temporary world? But this step alone has an inherent danger of corruption if a return to the experience of Emptiness is

8. Paul Williams, Mahayana Buddhism (Routledge taylor and francis group, London, New York, 1989), P.156.
9. (MMK, Chap. XXIV verse 18).

not regularly affected. (C) This is the Middle Way. This ideal balances between the realization and the actual application.

On the account of the "one mind contains three thousand worlds" we can see how *Tiantai* school emphasized on the absoluteness of the mind. We can say that reality is only one, we experience it in different ways, because all of them in accordance with its actions[10]. So reality gets affected by individual action. But we should understand that it is the way of experiencing the universal oneness, which means no difference between one and others. That is the universal love which is without discrimination and realized by the wise.

The feature one mind contains three thousand worlds, is expressing the perfect teaching of the *Tiantai* School, because it is very subtle to understand, without realizing this feature it will be obviously tough for one to understand the teaching of *Tiantai*. It shows the direct path to the Buddhahood. Though the *samsaric* beings are still in the suffering; by practicing the good continually; one day, they will be Buddha. All these depend on the mind and Buddha's teaching for that is to stop the evil, do good and purify the mind.

As Kenneth Chen explains in his book[11] about the absolute mind, which is very pure and brings Buddha in one mind; which is very vital and subtle teachings of the *Tiantai* School. As the illustration that was given; "a monk who asked a person to imagine just a single hair pore and then a distant large city. When the person did so, the monk drew the lesson that the hair pore and the large city are integrated in the absolute mind".[12] So from this view point of *Tiantai* on mind, we can say that is this school emphasizes on the enormous power of the mind. One mind can produce the *samsara* and *nirvana* or hell and heaven, according to the one's own mind power and understanding. That is why it says the Buddha is within our mind and if our mind is pure we can see him.

MahāPrajnāparamitā sutra and *nirvāna sutra* are two primary sutra sources for *Tiantai* teachings and mainly describes the Buddha-nature and elaborate grounds for it. We should remember that *Tiantai* Buddha-nature is compassion and it is *tathata*. For the *Tiantai* awareness of *tathata* is Buddhist awakening and leads to and co-present with Buddhahood. As *Kumarajiva* explained, translated and characterizes ten aspects of the *tathata* which was nicely elaborated by *Zhiyi.* They are 1. Its form, 2. The properties of its form, 3. The

[10]. Paul Williams, Mahayana Buddhism (Routledge Taylor and Francis group, London, New York, 1989), *Tiantai* .
[11]. Kenneth Ch'en, Buddhism in china: a historical survey (Princeton university press, U.S.A, 1964),
[12]. Ibid P. 312

underlying essence of its form, 4. Its potential function, 5. The manifestation of that function, 6. Its cause, 7. Its condition, 8. Its result, 9. Its retribution and 10. The sum of the above.[13] Buddha nature is something described by the *nirvana sutra* that by seeing it one will be free from all the sufferings which is hidden in those aspects of the *tathata.*

Conclusion

During *Zhiyi*'s life time, *Tiantai* was so popular that even the Emperor decreed that the revenue from an entire district in the vicinity of the *Tiantai Mountain* be devoted to his upkeep and his community. The teaching of the *Tiantai* is so systematic, classified and nicely explained that many scholars consider it as the finest product of Chinese Buddhist philosophy. As a result within its existing time it took root in Japan as the *Tendai Buddhist School* introduced by *Saicho* (767-822).

It is very difficult to give a brief exposition for the *Tiantai* teachings within the limits of time and space, because the essence of the *Tiantai* lives in the mind of the individual. So as long as one can purify the mind with the teachings of the *Tiantai*, it will live within the deep heart of the mind.

Many people still do not understand *Tiantai* doctrine, because of various reasons but if one goes beyond the cultural barrier and has a good understanding of Buddhist philosophy, it is easier to understand. That is the exact reason *Acariya Nagarjuna* emphasized the study of *Abhidharma* before reading his philosophy.

The *Tiantai School* is the sunflower of Chinese Buddhism, which started blooming long time ago during the sixth century but its fragrance is still there. To get that fragrance, one has to take the flower and smell it; otherwise one cannot realize the exact fragrance of that flower. So the doctrinal aspect of *Tiantai* cannot be realized just by reading and writing but has to be put into practice. By this way only one will be able to realize the subtle and supreme truth which is *Nibbana* as explained by *Tiantai,*. That is the main reason that the Chinese people hold firmly, practice and protects *Tiantai* Teachings like a precious jewel.

13. Wiley Blackwell "A companion to Buddhist philosophy" P. 116.

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An Outline of Zen Buddhist Teachings

Professor Petrina Coventry

Introduction

Zen Buddhism emerged as a distinctive school in Japan during the Kamakura period (1185-1336) as a development of the Caodong and Lin-chi lines of Chinese Chan Buddhism (Tamura, 2000, pp. 91-102). This paper presents an outline of the teachings of Japanese Zen Buddhism, beginning with an overview of several key concepts, including awakening, Buddha-nature and emptiness. It then summarises Zen Buddhism's teaching on the stages of meditative development and finishes with a summary of the main training methods used in Japanese Zen Buddhism.

The Nature of Zen Buddhism: The Essence of Awakening

Zen Buddhism claims to transmit the "essence of awakening"—the embodied wisdom of the historical Buddha himself (D. T. Suzuki, 1956, p. 70). Zen Buddhism traces its origins to an exchange between the Buddha and Mahakashyapa in which this "essence" was first transmitted. It was then conveyed through a line of direct "mind-to-mind" transmissions in India until it was reputedly carried to China by Bodhidharma, and finally, to Japan (Smith & Novak, 2003, p. 89).

What is transmitted "with no dependence on words" is the direct experience of enlightenment itself. This is the realisation of one's true nature, Buddha-nature, or the absolute reality of all things, which Japanese Zen Buddhism asserts is intrinsically pure and inherent in all beings and all things (Kapleau, 1985/2000, p. 180). It was Dogen who interpreted the passage from the Mahapari-nirvana Sutra: "All beings possess Buddha-nature without exception" as "All existence is Buddha-nature" (Kim, 2004, p. 126). In doing so, he extended the Mahayana conception of Buddha-nature to all things. Moreover, whereas some Mahayana Buddhist schools viewed the Buddha-nature as a "seed", or potential, that was to be developed through practice, Dogen asserted not that we have the Buddha-nature, but that we are the Buddha-nature thereby removing the implied duality in the concept (Kim, 2004, p. 125-141).

In line with Mayahana teachings, the Buddha-nature is understood to be emptiness, which is variously referred to as "equality", "non-differentiation", and "oneness", and is considered the true nature of reality. Yet this emptiness is not a nihilistic non-existence, but rather it refers to the understanding that it is all phenomena as they are in their "suchness" (Schuhmacher, 2002). The relationship between the absolute and the relative in Zen Buddhism is described in the Sandokai, The Identity of Relative and Absolute by Shitou/Sekida (Glassman, 2002, p. 117). On the one hand, reality is all One—the Buddha-nature. On the other hand, reality is the diversity or "manyness" of phenomena. The term Sandokai, associated with the image of two hands shaking, expresses the unification or equality of the relative and the absolute (and of form and emptiness) in that they interpenetrate freely, but at the same time they retain their distinctiveness (Glassman, 2002, p. 120).

Zen Buddhism makes clear the limitations of conceptualisation in the coming to this realisation. Awakening to one true nature occurs "outside the scriptures, without dependence on words or letters"—it cannot be arrived at through discursive thinking. It is because of a misunderstanding of this stance that early Western accounts characterised Zen Buddhism as being anti-intellectual and antagonistic to doctrine and scriptures (see Hyers, 1989, pp. 1-5). In part, this may be due to D.T. Suzuki's influential writings epitomised by the assertion that "Zen has no teachings" (D.T. Suzuki, 1969, p. 38). Certainly, Zen is not a philosophy in the Western sense in that it lacks a formulated or systemized body of doctrines or philosophy (Abe, 1985, pp. 3-4) that is founded on logic or analysis (D. T. Suzuki, 1969, p. 38). Yet this does not mean that it is impervious to intellectual and philosophical elucidation (Abe, 1985, pp. 3-4). Moreover, Japanese Zen shares scriptures with other schools of Buddhism and has its own texts which are a key feature of Zen monastic life, such as the Platform Sutra (e.g., D. T. Suzuki, 1950) and many of its key figures, such as Dogen and Hakuin wrote extensively (Hyers, 1989, p. 3). Zen Buddhism is not antagonistic to scriptures or conceptuality; rather, it places a greater emphasis on practice and direct experience for the attainment of nonconceptual wisdom. Zen acknowledges that conceptual understanding is helpful to some—a "finger pointing at/ the moon"—but cautions that it is not a substitute for direct experience itself (Kapleau, 1985/2000, p. 32).

Realization of the Buddha-nature: Stages of Meditative Development

The aim of Zen Buddhism is awakening—the discovery of one's true nature. While human beings are seen as inherently complete and whole as they are, they fail to perceive their true nature because it is obscured by delusions; but because it is the natural state it is capable of being uncovered at any time.

The path of meditative development within Zen Buddhism begins with the scattered mind, which through training, is brought to a state of "one-pointedness" or "one-mind" (samadhi) and then to the experience of "no-mind" or "no-thought" which is the realisation of one's true nature (Sekida, 1985, pp. 193-206). At the same time, however, it is to be understood that the true nature has been present from the very start (Loori, 2013, p. 3). In other words, awakening is both gradual and sudden; and moreover, as was noted by Hui-neng, gradualness and suddenness are merely provisional concepts that are obviated with enlightenment (Schuhmacher, 2009, p.78).

The stages of meditative development are depicted in the various "ox-herding pictures" (e.g., Loori, 2013; Myokyo-ni, 1988) and in terms of the five relationships between the absolute and the relative described in the Sandokai (Glassman, 2002, p. 117). The initial phase of training involves quietening the body and mind and strengthening concentration. Eventually a state of samadhi is reached which is a precondition for experiencing "no-mind". The initial experience of "no-mind" is called "seeing into one's own nature" (satori or kensho), and is typically only a fleeting glimpse of one's true nature; this experience traditionally marks the beginning of Zen training (Kapleau, 1985/2000, p. 18). The methods devised by Zen masters have the aim of inducing or cultivating further awakenings, which eventually culminate in the experience of ultimate satori or enlightenment. Such an awakening is the realization of emptiness—the insubstantiality out of which all things ceaselessly arise and return (Kapleau, 1985/2000, p. 20). At the same time, it is a re-affirmation of the world of phenomenal distinctions in which all things are seen for what they are, as pure objects—free of the obscurations that beset the unawakened mind—and to have been complete and pure from the very start (Loori, 2013, pp. 61-66).

Once formal training has ended, a person returns to ordinary everyday life, "with bliss bestowing hands", in which the fully enlightened practitioner assists others through spontaneously-emerging compassion and skilful means (Loori, 2013, pp. 68-79). The Buddha-mind is understood to be none other than the true nature of our ordinary minds and to

be actualised in the midst of one's everyday activities. Yet, what is to the unenlightened mind an ordinary everyday activity is to the enlightened mind a source of wonder "How miraculous, how wonderful! I draw water, I carry wood".

Training Methods of Japanese Zen Buddhism

Ultimately Zen Buddhism cannot be understood apart from its practices. The centrality of the experiential method is revealed in the very name of the tradition: the word Zen (Ch. Chan) is a transliteration of the Sanskrit term dhyana, which refers to meditative practice or the resultant states of meditative absorption (Harvey, 2013, p. 361-62). In Zen Buddhism, however, the term refers to something other than absorptive focus on some particular object, as this type of meditation still contains a subject and object and the state of awareness Zen refers to is considered beyond such dualities (Leighton, 2004, pp. 1-2).

Zen meditation is zazen, or "sitting meditation", and is considered the foundation of Zen (D. T. Suzuki, 1969, p. 34). In Japanese Zen Buddhism, zazen is used as the basis for both koan study, emphasized by the Rinzai school, and shikantaza, which is emphasized by the Soto school. Commentators are divided as to whether these approaches reflect differences in emphasis or reflect more fundamental differences in these methodologies (e.g. Kasulis, 1981; Zhu, 2005).

Rinzai Zen emphasises kaon study and dokusan. The koan is a paradoxical story—to the unenlightened mind—assigned to a student in order to assist their awakening and to assess the deepness of their realization (Kapleau, 1989/2000, pp. 76-77). Dokusan is a one-to-one encounter between student and teacher which has the aim of guiding and assessing the student's understanding or realization (pp. 56-80). Koan study has its origins in the methods of the Chinese Lin-chi school in which abrupt shouts and hits were used by the Chan masters to awaken students from their conceptual entrapment and bring them back to the experience of the present moment (Dumoulin, 2005a, pp. 180-202). Hakuin, regarded as the patriarch of Japanese Rinzai Zen, added new elements and systemized koans into a course of study (Dumoulin, 2005b, pp. 379-385). In general, study begins with the koan "Mu" which has the aim of precipitating a first awakening; subsequently the student is exposed to a series of koans of increasing difficulty to provoke further awakenings (Fletcher & Scott, 2001, p. 110). Hakuin's method involves a process of becoming "one with" and the koan and the generation of great doubt (Fletcher & Scott, 2001, p. 110). The solution of a koan results in a glimpse of

the "true nature" in those who are sufficiently mature as the process of "solving" the koan is synonymous with the emergence, however briefly, of the enlightened mind.

Soto Zen emphasizes the practice of shikantaza, or "just sitting" (Leighton, 2004, pp. 1-2). It has its origins in the method of "silent illumination" espoused by Zhengjue/Hongzhi (1091-1157) who taught that awakening was to be experienced by sitting quietly, without focusing on anything in particular (Dumoulin, 2005a, p. 256). Dogen introduced the term shikantaza as an advanced form of zazen to distinguish it from the Rinzai practice of using zazen for solving koans (Leighton, 2004, pp. 1-2). Although Dogen did not deny the use of koans he was critical of the mechanical type of koan that he considered to have become stultifying (Imaeda, 1994, p. 117). Leighton (2004, pp. 1-2) describes shikantaza as an "objectless meditation [focussing] on clear, nonjudgmental, panoramic attention to all the myriad phenomena in the present experience" in which all things are allowed to be as they are and with no striving to achieve anything. Dogen considered shikantaza as the "gateway to liberation"; it was not a method to be used to attain enlightenment, but rather when sitting in the correct posture and with the faith that one is already a Buddha, to be enlightenment itself (Harvey, 2013, p. 232).

As with other Buddhist schools, training in mental cultivation occurs in conjunction with training in ethical behaviour. For example, traditional Zen training in both the Soto and Rinzai schools, involves detailed study of the sixteen Bodhisattva precepts (Glassman, 2002, p. 159). Traditionally, students are taught precepts only toward the end of formal training because it is thought that their full import cannot be grasped in the absence of a mature level of awakening and extensive zazen practice (Kapleau, 1985/2000, p. 18).

Conclusion

Japanese Zen Buddhism is characterised by an approach to teaching that de-emphasizes the importance of intellectual and conceptual understanding and emphasizes the importance of direct experiential understanding. Its aim is to come to a full direct realization of one's true nature and its methods are designed to suddenly overcome the conceptual mind (zazen, koan study, dokusan) and/or gradually allow the unfolding and embodiment of the true nature (shikantaza). The realisation of this true nature is none other than the direct apprehension that form and emptiness are "not one, not two", and to be actualised in ongoing meditation practice and the ordinary activities of everyday life.

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The Origin of the Term *Suñña* or *Suññatā* And Its Development In *Mahayana* Buddhism

Ven. Chandaloka

ABSTRACT

My central argument in this paper is to attempt to clarify that the origin of the term '*suññatā*' (emptiness) is not just a notion for the *Mādhyamika* School of Nāgārjuna or *Mahāyāna* tradition, but some of the relevant sources and facts which have already expounded in the Pāli canonical and post-canonical texts as well.

THE ORIGIN

Generally speaking, the significance of the term *suññatā* is always attached to and especially connected with the *Mādhyamika* School of Nāgārjuna. However, the term and the concept *suññatā* can be found clearly and unmistakably in nascent form in early Buddhism, in the *Cūḷasuññatā* and the *Mahāsuññatā-suttas* of the *Majjhimanikāya*. The *Cūḷasuññatāsutta* is a shorter discourse on emptiness. It gives the basic idea of the *suññatā* as it is the distinctive feature of all phenomena whose perception as such by the adept in his reaching the state of 'dwelling in emptiness' (*suññatavihāra*). Moreover, the progressive meditation leads us to experience gradually from empty dwelling place to deeper and deeper aspects of emptiness.[1] The *Mahāsuññatasutta* is a greater discourse on emptiness, given to those *bhikkhus* who have grown fond of socializing; the Buddha stresses the need for seclusion in order to abide in emptiness.[2] In brief, it is not difficult to stress that both the *Cūḷasuññatasutta* and the *Mahāsuññatasutta* draw their attention to the ultimate sense of 'emptiness' by emphasizing the important doctrines of 'impermanence.' All phenomena are empty due to its impermanent and unsubstantial nature.

The *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, the first book of the *Abhidhammapiṭaka*, assumes each of its examinations of the factors found in any given state of mind with a *suññatāvāra*, a chapter on

1. M III 104-109. Cf. T 1. no.26, 736c-738a.
2. M III 109-118. Cf. T 1. no.26, 738a-740c.

emptiness.[3] This section deals with the concept of emptiness through the nature of all factors and phenomena.[4] In addition, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*[5] goes further to identify twenty-five types of emptiness, as follows:[6]

(1) Voidness as voidness

(2) Voidness of formation

(3) Voidness in change

(4) Supreme voidness

(5) Voidness by characteristic

(6) Voidness by suppression

(7) Voidness by substitution of opposites

(8) Voidness by cutting

(9) Voidness by tranquillization

(10) Voidness as escape

(11) Internal voidness

(12) External voidness

(13) Voidness in both ways

(14) Similar voidness

(15) Dissimilar voidness

(16) Voidness in search

(17) Voidness in embracing

(18) Voidness in obtainment

(19) Voidness in penetration

(20) Voidness in unity

(21) Voidness in difference

(22) Voidness in choice

(23) Voidness in steadiness

(24) Voidness in fathoming

(25) Voidness in the ultimate meaning of all kinds of voidness

Each of these twenty-five types of emptiness is to be understood with reference that the five aggregates are empty by way of their particular character and own-nature.[7] Curiously enough, some interesting and uncertain viewpoints have been explored by modern scholars.

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3. Rhys Davids 1996: 33.
4. Cf. EB VIII: 199.
5. Traditionally accounted, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* is defined as part of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*. See PED ix; Lamotte 1998: 156-159; von Hinüber 2001: 42-43.
6. Ps 356-361: suñña-suññam, samkhāra-suññam, viparināma-suññam, agga-suññam, lakkhana- suññam, vikkhambhana-suññam, tadaṅga-suññam, samuccheda-suññam, paṭippassadhi-suññam, nissaraṇa-suññam, ajjhatta-suññam, bahiddhā-suññam, dubhato-suññam, sabhāga-suññam, visa- bhāga-suññam, esanā-suññam, pariggaha-suññam, paṭilābha-suññam, pativedha-suññam, ekatta- suññam, nānatta-suññam, khanti-suññam, adhiṭṭhāna-suññam, pariyogāhana-suññam, paramattha- suññam.
7. *Ibid*. 356.

For example, the late erudite Indian scholar T.R.V. Murti has presented a list of twenty modes of *śūnyatā*: The twenty modes of *śūnyatā*, as enumerated in the *Pañcavimśatisāhasrikā*, are as follows:

1. The unreality of internal elements of existence (*adhyātma-śūnyatā*),
2. The unreality of the external objects (*bahirdhā-śūnyatā*),
3. The unreality of both together as in the sense organs or the body (*adhyātma-bahirdha-śūnyatā*),
4. The unreality of (the knowledge of) unreality (*śūnyata-sūnyatā*),
5. The unreality of the great (infinite space), (*mahāśūnyatā*),
6. The unreality of the ultimate reality, *Nirvāna* (*paramārtha-śūnyatā*),
7. The unreality of the conditioned (*saṁskṛta-śūnyatā*),
8. The unreality of the unconditioned (*asaṁskta-śūnyatā*),
9. The unreality of the limitless (*atyanta-śūnyatā*),
10. The unreality of that which is beginningless and endless (*anavarāgra-śūnyatā*),
11. The unreality of the 'undeniable' (*anavakāra-śūnyatā*),
12. The unreality of the ultimate essences (*prakṛti-śūnyatā*),
13. The unreality of all elements of existence (*sarvadharma-śūnyatā*),
14. The unreality of all determination (definition), (*lakṣaṇa-śūnyatā*),
15. The unreality of the past, the present and the future (*anupalambha-śūnyatā*),
16. The unreality of relation or combination conceived as a non-ens (*abhāva-śvabhāva-śūnyatā*),
17. The unreality of the positive constituents of empirical existence (*bhāva-śūnyatā*),
18. The unreality of non-ens (of the non-empirical), (*abhāva-śūnyatā*),
19. The unreality of self-being (*svabhāva-śūnyata*),

20. The unreality of dependent being (*parabhāva-śūnyatā*).[8]

This statement is located an appendix for his pioneer work on *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* states that this list is a later innovation by Nāgārjuna.[9]

In addition, Chan Wing-tsit insists that the doctrine of void is essential to all *Mahāyāna* schools, which have determined the voidness under as many as eighteen categories. The eighteen categories of emptiness (*aṣṭādaśa-śūnyatā*) are:

1. The unreality of internal elements of existence (*adhyātma-śūnyatā*),

2. The unreality of the external objects (*bahirdhā-śūnyatā*),

3. The unreality of both together as in the sense organs or the body (*adhyātma-bahirdhā-śūnyatā*),

4. The unreality of (the knowledge of) unreality (*śūnyatā-sūnyatā*),

5. The unreality of the great (*mahāśūnyatā*),

6. The unreality of the ultimate reality (*paramārtha-śūnyatā*),

7. The unreality of the conditioned (*saṁskṛita-śūnyatā*),

8. The unreality of the unconditioned (*asaṁskṛita-śūnyatā*),

9. The unreality of the limitless (*atyanta-śūnyatā*),

10. The unreality of that which is beginningless and endless (*anavarāgra-śūnyatā*),

11. The unreality of the ‘undeniable (*anavakāra-śūnyatā*),

12. The unreality of the ultimate essences (*prakṛiti-śūnyatā*),

13. The unreality of all elements of existence (*sarva-dharma-śūnyatā*),

14. The unreality of all determination (*lakṣaṇa-śūnyatā*),

15. The unreality of the past, the present and the future (*anupalambha-śūnyatā*),

16. The unreality of non-ens (of the non-empirical) (*abhāva-śūnyatā*),

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8. Murti 1955: 351-352. Cf. Obermiller 1933: 170-187.
9. Murti 1955: 351.

17. The unreality of self-being (*svabhāva-śūnyatā*),

18. The unreality of relation or combination conceived as a non-ens (*abhāva-svabhāva-śūnyatā*).[10]

These eighteen lists of emptiness, however, are exactly the same as twenty modes of emptiness as mentioned above except number of eighteen and twenty. Honestly speaking, Murti and Chan as it seems to me, neglect in paying attention to the long list of emptiness found in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* as listed above. Therefore, the explanation of both Murti and Chan cannot be accepted when counting the twenty-five types of emptiness found in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*. In order to better understand and make sure of this aspect, W.S. Karunaratne has rightly observed by saying that, "If this list is compared with what is given in *Mahāyāna* texts [*Pañcavimśati-sāhasrikā*] it will be found that most of the items in the latter are already found in the *Theravāda* texts [*Paṭisambhidāmagga*]."[11] Karunaratne's perspective, undoubtedly, shows an accurate and authentic interpretation and consequently we can observe and find out those intimate sources from the early Buddhist texts as mentioned above. From this point of view, Karunaratne once again emphasizes that it is not an exaggeration to confirm our view that early Buddhist teaching on *suññatā* is considerably well developed and that the *śūnyatā* of *Madhyamaka* does not, therefore represent a development that is altogether new in the history of Buddhist thought.[12] Therefore, there is no doubt that whatever the word *śūnyatā* means it was only an ancient concept adapted to a new interpretation. Thus, Nāgārjuna's intent was primarily to take refuge in the concept already suggested in the early texts.

In my opinion, the Buddha used different aspects of the term '*suññatā*' for psychological reason that need to be got rid of by individuals who seek freedom from *saṃsara*. What the Buddha really meant is that the notion of emptiness is attached to the doctrine of non-self, which holds that each individual is totally empty of any permanent or fixed entity. This important aspect helps us in observing things as they really are (*yathābhūta*). The other aspect is that it helps us in eliminating our dogmatic views by giving us the true understanding of the phenomenal world. As E. Conze has clearly stated, "Emptiness is not a theory, but a ladder which reaches out into the infinite, and which should

[10]. Chan 1946: 107.
[11]. Karunaratne 1959: 16; 1988a: 179; 1988b: 52.
[12]. Karunaratne 1959: 17; 1988a: 179; 1988b: 52.

be climbed, not discussed. It is not taught to make a theory, but to get rid of theories altogether. Its traditional uses is to express wisdom's negation of this world."[13]

Besides the Pāli *Nikāyas*, the post-canonical texts such as the *Visuddhimagga*, a commentary written by Buddhaghosa, also give an important place to the concept of emptiness. The *Visuddhimagga* asserts that the four noble truths should be understood from the standpoint of emptiness. This perspective, in the ultimate sense is expressed as follows:

> For there is suffering, but there is no sufferer; doing exists although there is no doer; extinction is but no extinguished person, and consequently although there is a path, there is no one who walks the path.[14]

The *Visuddhimagga* explains further by stating that, one should realize by understanding all conditioned phenomena as empty followed by:

1. A two-fold emptiness contemplation: The two modes are referred to:[15]

   (1) Empty of self

   (2) Empty of what belongs to self

2. A four-fold emptiness contemplation: The four modes are indicated to:[16]

(1) He sees no self anywhere [of his own],

(2) Nor does he see it as deducible in the fact of another's owning,

(3) Nor does he see another's self,

(4) Nor does he see that as deducible in the fact of his own owning.

3. A six-fold emptiness contemplation: The six modes are attached to each of the sense organs, the six kinds of objects attaching to them and the six kinds of consciousness arising from them:[17]

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[13]. Conze 2002: 243.

[14]. Vism II 513: Dukkham eva hi koci dukkhito kārako na kiriyā va vijjati, atthi nibbuti, na nibbuto pumā, maggam atthi, gamako na vijjatī ti.

[15]. *Ibid*. 653: Suññam idaṃ attena vā attaniyena vā ti dvikoṭikaṃ suññataṃ pariggaṇhāti. Cf. S IV 54.

[16]. *Ibid*. 654: Neva katthaci attānaṃ passati, na ca kvacani parassa ca attānam kvaci passati, na taṃ parassa kiñcanabhāve upanetabbaṃ passati, na parassa attānaṃ attano kiñcanabhāve upanetabbaṃ passati.

[17]. *Ibid*: Evaṃ catukoṭikaṃ suññataṃ pariggahetvā puna chah' ākārehi suññataṃ pariggaṇhāti. Kathṃ? Cakkhu suññaṃ attena vā attaniyena vā niccena vā dhuvaena vā sassatena vā avipariṇāma- dhammaena vā…mano suñño…rūpā suñño…dhamma suñño…cakkhuviññāṇaṃ…mano… viññāṇaṃ…cakkhusamphasso ti evaṃ yāva jarāmaraṇā nayo netabbaṃ.

(1) Self
(2) Property of a self
(3) Permanent
(4) Lastingness
(5) Eternalness
(6) Non-subjectness

4. Eight-fold emptiness contemplation: The eight modes of emptiness are concerning: Materiality, feeling, perception, etc., that they have no core, are coreless, without core. They are:[18]

(1) Non-essential
(2) Essentially unstable
(3) Essentially unhappy
(4) Essentially non-substantial
(5) Non-permanent
(6) Non-stable
(7) Non-eternal
(8) Evolutionary

5. A ten-fold emptiness contemplation: The ten modes of emptiness are: He sees materiality, feeling, etc., as:[19]

(1) Devoid
(2) Empty
(3) Void
(4) Not-self
(5) No overlord
(6) Unfree
(7) Disappointing
(8) Powerless
(9) Non-self
(10) Separated

6. A twelve-fold emptiness contemplation: The twelve modes of emptiness are: He

[18]. *Ibid*: Puna aṭṭhah' ākārehi pariggaṇhāti. Seyyathīdaṃ: Rūpaṃ asāraṃ nissāra sārāpagata nicca- sārasārena vā dhuvasārasārena vā sukhasārasārena vā attasārasārena vā niccena vā dhuvena vā sassatena vā avipariṇāmadhammena vā; vedanā…saññā…sankhārā…viññānaṃ cakkhu…jarā- maraṇaṃ asāraṃ nissāraṃ, sārāpagataṃ, niccasārasārena vā, dhuvasārasārena vā, sukhasāra- sārena vā, attasārasārena vā, niccena vā, dhuvena vā, sassatena vā, avipariṇāmadhammena vā.

[19]. *Ibid*. 655: Puna dasah' ākārehi pariggaṇhāti. Kathaṃ? Rūpaṃ rittato passati, tucchato, suññato, anattato, anissariyato, akāmakāriyato, alabbhanīyato, avasavattakato, parato, vivittato passati; vedanaṃ…pe…viññāṇaṃ rittato…pe…vivittato passatī ti.

materiality, feeling, etc., as:[20]

(1) No living being	(7) No self
(2) No soul	(8) No property of a self
(3) No human being	(9) Not myself
(4) No youth	(10) Not mine
(5) No female	(11) Not another's
(6) No male	(12) Not anyone's

7. Forty-two-fold emptiness contemplation. The forty-two modes emptiness is through full understanding as investigating. He obverses materiality, feeling, etc., as:[21]

(1) Impermanent	(22) Devoid
(2) Suffering	(23) Void
(3) Disease	(24) Not-self
(4) Tumour	(25) Unpleasant
(5) Evil	(26) Disadvantageous
(6) Painful	(27) Changing
(7) Affliction	(28) Essenceless
(8) Alien	(29) Originating pain
(9) Decaying	(30) Torturing

[20]. *Ibid*: Puna dvādasah' ākarehi pariggaṇhāti. Seyyathīdaṃ: rūpaṃ na atto, na jīvo, na naro, na māṇavo, na itthī, na puriso, na attā, na attaniyaṃ, n' aham, na mama, na aññassa, na kassaci; vedanā…pe…viññāṇaṃ…na kassacī ti.

[21]. *Ibid*: Puna tiranapariññāvasena dvācattāḷīsāya ākārehi suññataṃ parigganhāti: Rūpaṃ aniccato, dukkhato, rogato, gaṇḍato, sallato, aghato, ābādhato, parato, palokato, ītito, upaddhvato, bhayato, upasaggato, calato, pabhanguto, addhuvato, atāṇato, aleṇato, asaraṇato, asaraṇībhūtato, rittato, tucchato, suññato, anattato, anassādato, ādīnavato, vipariṇāma-dhammato, asārakato, aghamūlato, vadhakato, vibhavato, sāsavato, saṅkhatato, mārāmisato, jātidhammato, jarādhammato, vyādhi- dhammato, maraṇadhammato, soka parideva dukkha domanassa upāyāsa dhamma, samudayato, atthaṅgamato, nissaraṇato passati; vedanaṃ…pe…viññāṇaṃ aniccato…pe…nissaranato passati.

(10) Distressing	(31) Annihilating
(11) Disaster	(32) Cankers
(12) Fearful	(33) Compounded
(13) Menace	(34) Frustrating
(14) Unsteady	(35) Subject to birth
(15) Perishable	(36) Subject to ageing
(16) Unstable	(37) Subject to illness
(17) No protection	(38) Subject to death
(18) No shelter	(39) Subject to grief, sorrow, and lamentation
(19) Refuge	(40) Arising
(20) Refugeless	(41) Departing
(21) Empty	(42) Dissolving

These various definitions have been given in the *Visuddhimagga*. The notion of emptiness, from a Buddhist perspective, could be understood as divisions that help in comprehending the whole conditioned phenomena. One should look at things as being empty without its own-nature. It means that one should realize the whole universe of objects and subjects in the light of various types of emptiness contemplation. In this process, the *Visuddhimagga*, not merely provides the pivotal concept of emptiness from the viewpoint of meditation perspective, but also emphasizes the philosophical standpoint as well. Furthermore, Buddhaghosa also tells us another important feature of the twelve-fold emptiness that is related to the dependent origination (*paticcasamuppāda*). The passage reads as follows:

> However, ignorance – and likewise the factors consisting of formations, etc. – is void of lastingness since its nature is to rise and fall, and it is void of beauty since it is defiled and causes defilement, and it is void of pleasure since it is oppressed by rise and fall, and it is void of any selfhood susceptible to the wielding of power since it exists in dependence on conditions. Or ignorance – and likewise the factors consisting of formations, etc. – is neither self nor self's nor in self nor possessed of self. That is why this wheel of becoming should be understood thus

'void with a twelve-fold voidness.[22]

Here, I would like to point out some mistaken and ambiguous views which have been extolled by modern scholars; for them, the point that *śūnyatā* is equal to 'dependent origination' is an invention by Nāgārjuna. Among those scholars, Chan Wing-tsit insists: "In the treatises by Nāgārjuna, who first formulated the doctrine, 'causal relations' and the entities they produce are dialectically negated, leaving the void above all specific characters and partial or temporary existence."[23]As expressed by N. Aiyaswami Sastri "Nāgārjuna's main contribution to the evolution of Buddhist thought is an emphasis on *Prajñā*, the ultimate knowledge derived from understanding the true nature of things in their real, viz., *śūnyatā*. This *śūnyatā*, in his opinion, is only a synonym for 'dependent origination.' *Śūnyatā* doctrine is not quite unfamiliar to the early Buddhists who take it for *nairatmya*. Sastri concludes: *Śūnyatā* as an equivalent for 'dependent origination' is quite an innovation of Nāgārjuna."[24] Finally, Gadjin M. Nagao states that dependent co-arising is the basic truth of Buddhism: "It is the substance of Gautama Buddha's awakening. As this conclusion it was Nāgārjuna who first related it directly to emptiness."[25]

Are these conclusions correct? My studies show that Chan, Sastri and Nagao have understood the notion of emptiness and that they have not noticed the fact that even Buddhaghosa in his *Visuddhimagga* has seen the relationship between *suññatā* and dependent arising. Thus, *śūnyatā* as an equivalent term for 'dependent origination' is, undoubtedly, neither the pivotal standpoint of Nāgārjuna nor an innovation of his. Strictly speaking, this concept is not an innovation of either Buddhaghosa or Nāgārjuna and is merely a point of the teaching of the early *suttas*. As W.S. Karunaratne comments, that the identification of *suññatā* with *paṭicca- samuppāda* comes about as a logical development of the concept of *suññatā* to explain the arisen and ceasing of suffering from the world. This is explained in Buddhism through a theory of causal dependent of twelve factors beginning with ignorance (*avijjā*).[26] Therefore, this passage has not wholly escaped from the standpoint of early Buddhism. According to the above investigation, it is quite obvious that the synonymous nature of 'emptiness' and 'dependent origination' is not a unique conception introduced by Nāgārjuna,

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[22]. *Ibid*. 668: Yasmā pan'ettha avijja udayabbayadhammakattā dhuvabhāvena, saṅkiliṭṭhattā saṅki- lesikattā ca subhabhāvena, udayabbayapīḷitattā sukhabhāvena, paccayāyattavuttitā vasavattana- bhūtena attabhāvena ca suññā; tathā samkhārādīni pi aṇgāni. Yasmā vā avijjā na attā, na attano, na attani, na attavatī, tathā samkhārādīni pi aṅgāni, tasmā dvādasavidha-suññatā suññam etam bhava- cakkan ti veditabbam.

[23]. Chan 1945: 107.

[24]. Sastri 1949: i.

[25]. Nagao 1991: 212.

[26]. Karunaratne 1959: 17; 1988a: 180; 1988b: 53.

as Chan, Sastri and Nagao have thought.

It is quite clear that the *suññatā* is a concept that is found in the oldest and most reliable tradition, the Pāli canon and also in the post-canonical texts. Therefore, the teaching of emptiness is equally a significant concept for all Buddhist schools. The term emptiness, hence, should not be the unique teaching of Nāgārjuna or of early *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. As we have seen already, various definitions have been given in the Pāli scriptures as well as of the post-canonical texts. Pointing to the fact that whatever the term *suññatā* means and it was only an old term transformed to a new concept. The fundamental conception of the term empty, however, is not really out of place from the essential teaching of the Buddha and it has widely been found in the ancient Pāli canonical texts. It seems then Nāgārjuna took the concept from early Buddhism and gave it a key role in the central philosophy of the *Mādhyamika* School.

Its Development

Thus, according to historical surveys, we must not forget that the original and fundamental conception of the term *śūnya* or *śūnyatā* is found in the earliest teachings of the Buddha that are recorded in the *Cūḷasuññatasutta* and the *Mahāsuññatasutta* of *Majjhimanikāya*. The *śūnyatā* concept of Nāgārjuna has its origin in some important theories found in early Buddhist texts. Thus, the *Mādhyamika* School of Nāgārjuna does not separate itself from the original teachings of early Buddhism. This could be seen by examining Nāgārjuna's *Mādhyamakakārika* and some other works.[27] Yet, according to Nāgārjuna's way of thinking, the term *śūnyatā* can mainly be broken into three categories: emptiness as dependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*), as Four Noble Truths (*catvāri āryasatyāni*), and as without own-being (*niḥsvabhāva*).

Śūnyatā as Dependent Origination

The theory of dependent origination, undoubtedly, is one of the most important teachings of early Buddhism. This important feature of early Buddhism also appears in the *Mahāyāna* tradition. For instance, the contents of the *Mūlamādhyamikakārikā* are divided into twenty- seven chapters. The first and twenty-fourth chapters: the Examination of

[27]. Many works are attributed to Nāgārjuna, however, among which the following are considered by scholars to be authentic, they are as follows: *Yuktiṣaṣtikā*, *Śūnyatāsaptati*, *Vigrahavyāvartani*, *Vaidalyaprakaṇa*, *Vyavahārasiddhi*, *Ratnāvali*, *Sūtrasamuccaya*, *Pratītyasamutpādahṛdayakārikā*, *Bodhisaṃbhāraka*, *Suhṛllekha*, and *Catuḥstava*. Lindtner 1982: 11.

Relational Condition (*Pratyaya parīkṣā*) and Examination of the Twelve-fold Causal Analysis of Being (*Dvādaśāṅga parīkṣā*) of the *Mūlamādhyamikakārikā* describe the theory of dependent origination. No one can deny the fact that the doctrine of dependent origination is fundamental to all forms of Buddhism. In early Buddhism, dependent origination reveals the middle path which rejects two extremes: existence (*atthitā*) and non-existence (*natthitā*).

According to Indian texts, 'existence' is generally referred to as permanence; while in the Buddhist point of view, while rejecting the dogma of existence, it simply means the empirical fact of phenomena. 'Non-existence' is related to complete annihilation without any form of continuity; hence, the Buddhist's view appeals to the empirical world of arising of phenomena. The universal principle of mutual dependence is presented frequently in early Buddhist texts as:

> When that exists, this comes to be; on the arising of that, this arises. When that does not exist, this does not come to be; on the cessation of that, this ceases.[28]

As a matter of fact, nothing is independent; that all things, mental and psychical, exist and arise due to certain conditional features. It is, therefore, evident that the conception of dependent origination is utilized to explain the processes of human bondage as well as of freedom from the cycle of life (*saṃsāra*). As a consequence, how does the notion of 'emptiness' relate to the concept of 'dependent origination'? By such questioning, the answer is evidently given in the *Mādhyamikakārikā* chapter twenty-four verses 18 & 19. Nāgārjuna equates emptiness with the principle of dependent origination by saying that:

> Whatever is dependent arising, that is emptiness.
> That is dependent upon convention.
> That itself is the middle way.[29]
> Since there is no dharma whatever originating independently,
> therefore, there is no dharma whatever exists which is not empty.[30]

In rejecting the notions of both existence and non-existence, Nāgārjuna resorts to the view of a 'middle path', namely 'dependent origination.' Nāgārjuna makes a critique on the conception of self-nature (*svabhāva*), and argues that everything which arises due to conditions and all the phenomena can have no self-nature; for what it depends on is what conditions it. Hence, the doctrine of 'dependent origination' indicates that all the *dharmas* are

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[28]. M I 262-264: Iti imasmiṁ sati idaṁ hoti, imass' uppādā idaṁ uppajjati.

[29]. MMK 24.18: Yah partītyasamutpādaḥ śūnyatāṃ tāṃ pracakṣmahe/ sā prajñaptir upādāya pratipat saiva madhyamā//

[30]. *Ibid*. 24.19: Apratītya samutpanno dharmaḥ kaścinna vidyate/ yasmāttasmādaśūnyo hi dharmaḥ kaścinna vidyate//

relative; they have no separate reality of their own. In other words, *nihsvbhāvatvā* is synonymous with emptiness i.e. devoid of own-being; dependent existence and phenomena are devoid of independent reality. Moreover, "in the absence of self-nature, whence can there be other-nature? For, self-nature of other-nature is called other-nature."[31] Furthermore, "if there is neither own-nature nor other-nature, there cannot be anything with a true, substantially own nature."[32] It is also said that "those who perceive self-nature as well as other-nature, existence as well as non-existence, they do not perceive the true message of the Buddha himself."[33] That is to assert that "exists implies grasping after eternalism. Does not exist implies the philosophy of annihilation. Therefore, a discerning person should not depend upon either existence or non-existence."[34] Consequently, whatever, "that exists in terms of self-nature, that is not non-existent implies eternalism; it does not exist now, but existed before implies annihilation."[35]

The term 'dependent origination', as pointed out above, refers to the fundamental thought of the Buddha. That is why, Nāgārjuna has expressed this fact by the term *niḥsvabhāva* (no self-nature), and that is, things have no nature of their own. Emptiness of everything simply means that all entities have 'no self-nature' and finally, are relative and dependently originating. According to the general way of thinking, emptiness usually means no self-nature, hence emptiness. As a result, dependent origination, which means 'no self-nature', is synonymous with emptiness. Hence, Nāgārjuna has described dependent origination as emptiness in his *Mūlamādhyamikakārikā* by means of the eight-fold negation and made emptiness, dependent origination, and the middle path to be the same. The same idea appears at the end of Nāgārjuna's *Vigrahavyāvartanī*: "I pay respect to that incomparable Buddha who taught emptiness, dependent origination, and the middle path as synonymous."[36]

By this criterion, it is reasonable to conclude that in the *Mādhyamika* perspective, each phenomenon is devoid of inherent nature. Therefore, all things are said to have non-

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[31]. *Ibid*. 15.3: Kutaḥ svabhāvasyābhave para-bhāvo bhaviṣyati/ svabhāvaḥ parabhāvasya parabhāvo hi kathyate//
[32]. *Ibid*. 15.4: Svabhāva-para-bhāvābhyām ṛte bhāvaḥ kutaḥ punaḥ/ svabhāve parabhave vā sati bhāvo hi sidhyati//
[33]. *Ibid*. 15.6: Svabhāvaṃ para-bhāvaṃ ca bhāvaṃ cābhāvam eva ca/ ye paśyanti na paśyanti te tattvaṃ Buddha-śāsane//
[34]. *Ibid*. 15.10: Astīti śāśvata-grāho nāstīty uccheda-darśanaṃ/ tasmād astitva-nāstitive nāśrīyeta vicakṣaṇaḥ//
[35]. *Ibid*. 15.11: Asti yadd hi svabhāvena na tan nāstīti śāśvataṃ/ nāstīdānīm abhūt pūrvam ity ucchedaḥ prasajyate//
[36]. Vy 70: Yaḥ śūnyatāṃ pratītyasamutpādaṃ madhyamām pratipadaṃ ca/ ekārthaṃ nijagāda praṇa- māmi tam apratimabuddham//

nature as their nature. Thus one substance cannot be separated from another. Ultimately, the main feature of *Mādhyamika* philosophy is not simply its insistence upon emptiness. Instead, the unique achievement of Nāgārjuna lies in his identification of emptiness with dependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*). The same statement appears in the *Vigrahavyāvartanī* and it reads: "Whatever is the nature of conditionality of the existents, it has been described as 'emptiness.' Whatever is the nature of conditionality is indeed the absence of self-existence of that."[37] They are mutually conditioned, are dependent on others, and thus, devoid of any kind of self-nature; they have, no real existence of their own. Whatever exists that has originated dependently, this is empty (*śūnya*). Therefore, dependent origination is synonymous with emptiness (*śūnyatā*). All names are but conventional designations; for in the ultimate sense they refer to no real existence. The distinction between two truths, conventional and ultimate, shows the identity of the concept of emptiness and dependent origination with reference to the elements of being. It is because all *dharmas* are empty of inherent existence. They have no essence. They are relative.

Generally speaking, it is because they are merely dependent on causes and conditions that they lack any inherent existence, and that they are totally empty. Therefore, the notion of *śūnyatā* is merely a refinement of the theory of no-self. It is simply an extension of the earlier teachings of the Buddha. Hence, in the *Visudhimagga*, Buddhaghosa defines: "When arising, it arises together, that is, coordinately, not singly or without a cause."[38] This interpretation emphasizes the existence of a group of causes and their appearance together. In the dedicatory verses found at the beginning of the *Mūlamādhyamikakārikā*, Nāgārjuna declares dependent origination by eight negatives. He says that there is neither origination nor cessation, neither permanence nor impermanence, neither unity nor diversity, neither coming in nor going out in the principle of dependent origination. To sum up, Nāgārjuna emphasizes that these negatives express the unrelatedness of everything produced through this principle and that dependent origination is rightly declared as the cessation of phenomena and self existence.

Śūnyatā as Four Noble Truths

The doctrine of Four Noble Truths (P. *cattāri ariyasaccāni*, S. *catvāri āryasatyāni*), no doubt, is one of the most important teachings of early Buddhism. Why they are called 'noble

[37]. Vy 22: Yaś ca pratītyabhāvo bhāvanaṃ śūnyateti sā proktā/ Yaś ca pratītyabhāvo bhavati hi tasyā-svabhāvatvam//

[38]. Vism II 596: Uppajjamāno ca saha samā ca uppajjati na ek'ekato na pi ahetuto ti samuppanno.

truths'? What is meant by such epithet? The Buddha explains this by saying that, the concept of 'truth' means that this suffering is real, not unreal, not otherwise, and so on.[39] Furthermore, the Buddha says that he taught them because it is beneficial; it belongs to the fundamentals of the holy life, and is conducive to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation of suffering, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, and to *Nirvāna*. That is why the Buddha declared it.[40]

It is not surprising to say that the Four Noble Truths constitute the most fundamental Buddhist teachings; they appear many times throughout the most ancient Buddhist texts, the Pāli canon and even in the *Mahāyāna* literatures. They are the truths that the Buddha realized during his enlightenment experience. The Four Noble Truths are also very practical. They have everything to do with the present moment, and how we relate to it? The fourfold structure could also be placed into more practical points as: see the problem, how the problem arose, solution to the problem, and path to the solution. The point made here is parallel with the present treatment of doctors: diagnose a disease, identify its causes, determine whether it is curable and outline a course of treatment to cure it. In other words, Buddha simply says: "this is ill [suffering], this is the practice that leads to the ceasing of ill."[41] Hence, the Four Noble Truths are the basis of all Buddhists attempt to figure out the real existence, the structures of the reality of life, the suffering that invade these structures and the ultimate goal of absolute freedom. It is quite clear that for early Buddhism, emptiness is indeed a meditative object for the practitioner to aid him in the process of abandoning desire and attachment, and for fully understanding all as they really are. As a consequence, the traditional way of thinking, however, has given the concept of 'emptiness' in the clarification of the Four Noble Truths. Buddhaghosa states:

> In the highest sense, all the truths are to be understood as empty because of the absence of an experiencer, a doer, someone extinguished, and a goer. Hence this is said:
>
> For there is only suffering, no one who suffers; no doer, only the doing is found; extinction there is, no extinguished man; there is the path, no goer is found.
>
> Or alternatively,

[39]. S V 430: Idaṃ dukkham ariyasaccan ti bhikkhave mayā paññattaṃ, tattha aparimāṇā vaṇṇā apari- māṇā vyañjanā aparimāṇā saṃkāsanā itīpidam dukkham ariyasaccan ti.

[40]. D I 189: Kasmā pan' etaṃ bhante Bhagavatā vyākatan ti? Etaṃ hi kho Poṭṭhapāda atthasaṃhitaṃ etaṃ dhammasaṃhitaṃ etaṃ ādibrahmacariyakaṃ, etaṃ nibidāya virāgāya nirodhāya upasamāya abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya saṃvattati. Tasmā taṃ mayā vyākatan ti.

[41]. S V 434: Tasmā ti ha bhikkhave idam dukkhan ti yogo karaṇīyo, la-pe ayaṃ dukkha-nirodha- gāminī paṭipadā ti yogo karaṇiyo ti.

> The first pair are empty of stableness, beauty, pleasure, self; empty of self is the deathless state. Without stableness, pleasure, self; is the path. Such, regarding them, is emptiness.[42]

What we are concerned with here is how suffering is related to emptiness. In early discourses, emptiness has no-self as its main meaning, and *nirvāna* as its ultimate meaning. Hence, the following statement shows the relationship between emptiness and impermanence (and therefore suffering):

> Thus developed and practiced, monks, the perception of impermanence, exhausts all desire for sensuality, exhausts all desire for material form, exhausts all desire for becoming, exhausts all ignorance, removes all self-pride.[43]

And the corresponding Chinese counterpart in the *Saṃyukta-āgama* reads:

> One who practices the perception of impermanence, can establish the perception of not-self. The mind of a noble disciple who abides in the perception of not-self is aloof from self-pride, and will go on to nirvāna."[44]

It is clear from both Pāli and Chinese texts that in general there is a connection between the notion of impermanence and the understanding of no-self and *nirvāna*. In addition to that, the full understanding of dependent origination is equally important to realize the Four Noble Truths. As Nāgārjuna says: "Whoever realizes dependent origination also realizes this suffering, its arising, its ceasing and the path."[45]

Consequently, to make this point completely clear, let me quote the following in Nāgārjuna's word. Someone may object to the Buddhist doctrine of emptiness, declaring: "If all is empty and there is neither creation nor destruction, then it must be concluded that even the Fourfold Noble Truth does not exist."[46] If the Fourfold Noble Truth does not exist, "the recognition of suffering, the stoppage of accumulation, the attainment of cessation, and the

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[42]. Vism II 587. Cf. S III 82: "They are all not-self in the sense of having no core, in the sense of having no core because of any core of self conceived as a self, an abider, a doer, an experiencer, one who is his own master; for what is impermanent is painful" and S III 66: "It is impossible to escape the impermanence, or the rise and fall and oppression of self, so how could it have the state of a doer, and so on? Hence it is said: *Bhikkhus* were any of the five aggregates self, it would not lead to affliction, and so on."

[43]. S III 102: Idha bhikkhu assutavā puthujjano ariyānaṃ adassāvī ariyadhammassa akovido ariya- dhamme avinīto sappurisānaṃ adassāvī sappurisadhammassa akovido sappurisadhamme avinīto rūpam attato samanupassati, rūpavantaṃ vā attānaṃ attani vā rūpaṃ rūpasmiṃ vā attānaṃ, vedanaṃ, pe saññaṃ, saṅkhāre, viññāṇam attato samanupassati, viññāṇavantaṃ vā attānam attani vā viññāṇaṃ viññāṇasmiṃ vā attānaṃ. Cf. A IV 357.

[44]. T 2. no.99, 71a.

[45]. MMK 24.40: Yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaṃ paśyatīdaṃ sa paśyati/ duḥkham samudayaṃ caiva nirodhaṃ mārgam eva ca//

[46]. *Ibid*. 24.1: Yadi wunyam idaj sarvam udayo nasti na vyayah/ caturnam aryasatyanam abhavas te prasajyate//

advancement of discipline, all must be said to be unrealizable."[47] If they are altogether unrealizable, "there cannot be any of the four states of saintliness; and without these states there cannot be anybody who will aspire for them."[48] If there are no wise men, the *sangha* is then impossible. Further, "as there is no Fourfold Noble Truth, there is no good law."[49] Therefore, "as there is neither good law nor *sangha*, the existence of Buddha himself must be an impossibility. Those who talk of emptiness, therefore, must be said to negate the Triple Treasure altogether."[50] As a result, "emptiness not only destroys the law of causation and the general principle of retribution, but utterly annihilates the possibility of a phenomenal world."[51]

However, according to Peter Harvey, in early Buddhism, the teaching of emptiness implies that the Four Noble Truths were themselves empty, thus subverting the Buddha's teaching.[52] In his reply in the *Mādhyamikakārikā*, Nāgārjuna argued that it is the notion of *dharmas* with inherent nature which subverts the Four Noble Truths. Therefore, "One who rightly discerns relational origination will, indeed, rightly discern universal suffering, its suffering, its extinction, and the way to enlightenment."[53] As is shown, however, we need not misunderstand the ultimate sense of Nāgārjuna as destroying the Four Noble Truths through the notion of *śūnyatā*. In the author's opinion, in order to realize the real concept of *śūnyatā*, Nāgārjuna simply engages in a critique for eliminating the dogmatic views of human beings.

Śūnyatā as Niḥsvabhāva (without own-nature)

In the Pāli canon, what are generally considered to be the earliest texts, the term own-nature or own-being (P. *sabhāva*, S. *svabhāva*) is absent. In later texts, it generally refers to 'state (of mind),' 'character' or 'truth.'[54] The term *svabhāva* was never explored in the Pāli canon in general. It occurs in the post-canonical texts and it becomes a standard concept in

47. *Ibid*. 24.2: Parijñā ca prahāṇaṃ ca bhāvanā sākṣikarma ca/ caturṇām āryasatyānām abhāvān nopapadyate//
48. *Ibid*. 24.3: Tad abhāvān na vidyante catvāry ārya-phalāni ca/ phalābhāve phalasthā no na santi pratipannakāḥ//
49. *Ibid*. 24.4: Saṃgho nāsti na cet santi te 'ṣṭau puruṣa-pudgalāḥ/ abhavāc cārya-satyānāṃ saddhar- mo 'pi na vidyate//
50. *Ibid*. 24.5: Dharme nāsati saṃghe ca kathaṃ buddho bhaviṣyati/ evaṃ trīṇy api ratnāni bruvāṇaḥ pratibādhase//
51. *Ibid*. 24.6: Śūnyatāṃ phala-sadbhāvam adharmaṃ dharmam eva ca/ sarvasaṃvyavahārāṃś ca laukikān pratibādhase//
52. See *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teaching, History and Practices*, p. 100.
53. *Ibid*. 24.40: Yah pratītyasamutpādaṃ paśyatīdaṃ sa paśyati/ duḥkhaṃ samudayaṃ caiva nirodhaṃ mārgam eva ca//
54. PED 502-503.

the commentarial definitions of the *dhammas*.[55] The term *sabhāva* appears in various contexts in the five canonical or paracanonical texts: the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, the *Peṭakopadesa*, the *Nettippakraṇa*, the *Milindapañha*, and the *Buddhavaṃsa*. Even though these texts are generally understood as late additions to the Pāli canon, they contain parts that predate the latest works of the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* and that are certainly older than the main Pāli commentaries. Traditionally explained, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and *Buddhavaṃsa* are included in the *Khuddaka-nikāya*, but the latter remained open for additions and the actual number of texts contained in it is not uniform across the *Theravādin* countries.[56] By way of *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* explanation, the *Atthasālinī* states: "They are *dhammas* because they uphold their own self-existence or they are *dhammas* because they are upheld by conditions or they are upheld according to their own-nature."[57] Thus, R.M.L. Gethin, in discussing the word *dhamma* in the Dhammasavgani and the *Atthasālinī* writes, '...the force of *sabhāva* here appears to focus not so much on the essential nature of particular *dhammas*, but rather on the fact that there is no being or person apart from *dhammas*; *dhammas* are what exist.'[58]

This concept has played a key role in the systematization of *Abhidhamma* thought. In the post-canonical *Abhidhamma* literature, *sabhāva* is used to distinguish an irreducible, interdependent, momentary phenomenon (*dhamma*) from a conventionally constructed object. Thus, a collection of visual and tactile phenomena might be mentally constructed into what is conventionally referred to as a 'table'; but, beyond its constituent elements, a construct such as 'table' lacks 'intrinsic existence' (*sabhāva*). As Paul Williams writes, the concept of self-existence or essence (*svabhāva*) was a development of *Abhidharma* scholars, where it seems to indicate the defining characteristic of a *dharma*. It is that which makes a *dharma* what it is, as, for example, resistance or hardness is the unique and defining characteristic of earth *dharma*. In the *Abhidharma* only *dharmas*, ultimate existents have essences. Conventional existents – tables, chairs, and persons – do not. This is because they are simply mental constructs out of *dharmas* – they therefore lack their own specific and

[55]. Nanamoli 1982: xvii.
[56]. Lamotte 1988: 156-159; von Hinüber 2001: 42-43.
[57]. Tin, 1958: 50: Attano pana sabhāvaṃ dhārentī ti dhammā. Dhāriyanti vā paccayehi dhāriyanti vā yathā sabhāvato ti dhammā.
[58]. Gethin 2001: 150, in a related footnote (26), he further mentioned: The earliest usage of *sabhāva* in Pāli sources is even more problematic. *Paṭisambhidāmagga* 104 explains *hetu* [cause] as the *sabhāva* of a *dhamma* (i.e. it acts as a cause for other *dhammas*) and *paccaya* [condition] as its *parabāva* (i.e. other *dhammas* act as conditions for its occurrence)...According to *Paṭisambhidā- magga* 178-9 *dhammas* are 'empty by self-existence (*sabhāvena suññā*).'

unique existence.[59]

Nāgārjuna in his *Kārikā* insists that *svabhāva* is not produced and the arising of self-existence from conditions and causes is not proper. A self-existence (*svabhāva*) arising from causes and conditions will be one that is manufactured.[60] Nāgārjuna further states, for 'own-being' is unmade and not dependent on another.[61] And for the complement of a nature never occurs.[62] Finally, having denied the *svabhāva* of entities, Nāgārjuna says that those who perceive self-existence as well as other-existence, they do not perceive the truth embodied in the Buddha's teaching.[63] *Svabhāva*, therefore, is by definition the subject of contradictory ascriptions. If it exists, it must belong to an existent entity, which means that it must be conditioned, dependent on other entities, and possessed of causes. But a *svabhāva* is by definition unconditioned, not dependent on other entities, and not caused. As a matter of fact, the existence of a *svabhāva* is impossible. As Peter Harvey writes, "it is because of the fact that things are impermanent that they are also *dukkha*: potentially painful and frustrating. Because they are impermanent and unsatisfactory, they are to be seen as not-self: not a permanent, self-secure, happy, independent self or I. They are empty (*śūnya*) of such a self, or anything pertaining to such a self."[64] This means that there are no 'own-beings' which would warrant the positing of different 'types' of 'events.' It seems that the absence of own-being is equivalent to emptiness as this term is used by Nāgārjuna.[65]

According to the above statement and investigation, the concept of *śūnyatā*, the core of *Mādhyamika* philosophical thought, is presented in many ways in Nāgārjuna's writings. What we can clearly observe is that the notion of emptiness in the former sense comes close to empirical and phenomenal aspect; the concept of emptiness in the latter sense is transcendental. To sum up, it is clear from our initial study that Nāgārjuna was fully respectful and appreciative of the early Buddhist teachings. The value of Nāgārjuna's ideas embodied in the notion of *śūnyatā* is that it endorses a broad notion of *śūnyatā* as an essential feature of early Buddhism. Further, they contribute in developing the deepest and profound

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59. Williams 2009: 60.
60. MMK 15.1: Na saṃbhavaḥ svabhāvasya yuktaḥ pratyayahetubhiḥ/ hetupratyayasaṃbhūtaḥ svabhāvaḥ kṛtako bhavet//
61. *Ibid*. 15.2: Svabhāvaḥ kṛtako nāma bhaviṣyati punaḥ kathaṃ/ akṛtrimaḥ svabhāvo hi nirapekṣaḥ paratra ca//
62. *Ibid*. 15.8: Yadyastitvaṃ prakṛtyā syānna bhavedasya nāstitā/ prakṛteranyathābhāvo na hi jātūpa- padyate//
63. *Ibid*. 15.6: Svabhāvaṃ parabhāvaṃ ca bhāvaṃ cābhāvameva ca/ ye paśyanti na paśyanti te tattvaṃ Buddhaśāsane //
64. Harvey 1990: 50.
65. Vy v. 22: Yaśca pratītyabhāvo bhāvānāṃ śūnyateti sā proktā/ yaṣca pratītyabhāvo bhavati hi tasyā-svabhāvatvam//

meaning and philosophical standpoint of the *Mādhyamika* School. Nāgārjuna is probably the most interesting and important *Mahāyānist* philosopher or torchbearer who has taken the point from early Buddhism and employed it playing an important role in the central philosophy of the *Mādhyamika*. Hence, H. Dayal says that, "The term *suññatā* also appears in several passages in the Pāli *Nikāya*, and *Andhakas* had a definite theory of *śūnyatā* (e.g. *Kathavatthu*, xix, 2, p.578). The *Mahāyānists* merely re-iterated the old doctrines and developed the ideal through logical conclusion."[66]

In addition, Roger R. Jackson remarks that: "The *Mādhyamaka* insistence that all entities and concepts are 'empty' may be seen as a radical, but logical, extension of the early Buddhist doctrine of no-self, rooted in the understanding that a permanent, independent, partless 'self' may be imputed not only to persons, but to virtually any object of knowledge – including no-self or emptiness itself. Since every seedbed of a self-view must be destroyed, every entity or concept there is must be shown to be empty."[67] As for Nāgārjuna, emptiness is merely one of the means to express the idea of without own-nature (*niḥsvahāva*). It is synonymous with the notion of 'no-self' in the early context of Buddhism. That is to say, Nāgārjuna, however, is not isolated from the core teaching of the Buddha, but is part of early Buddhist discourses.

Hence, the work of Nāgārjuna, unquestionably, is what we call the revival of the early teaching of the historical Buddha and the establishment of the transcendental sense in the *Mahāyāna* form of Buddhism. To be sure, we find that in most of his writings Nāgārjuna admits to the fact that he presented nothing new and that he was merely elaborating an early teaching of the Buddha.

Finally, the term *śūnya* or *śūnyatā* in the *Mādhyamika* standpoint is not different from the basic teaching of Buddhism. Therefore, the ultimate philosophical goals of Nāgārjuna must coincide with the most original and primary teaching of the Buddha, i.e., the doctrine of dependent origination, the Four Noble Truths, middle path, no-essence (no-self), etc. As Nāgārjuna himself has declared several times in the *Mūlamādhyamikakārikā*, he is only following the ancient path of the Buddha. As a matter of fact, the unique doctrines of dependent origination, middle path, four noble truths, and no-self cannot be considered the monopoly of either *Theravāda* or *Mahāyāna* traditions, but they are the real teachings of the

66. Dayal 1970: 238.
67. Jackson 1997: 336.

Buddha. Both *Theravāda* and *Mahāyāna* schools have followed and studied these fundamental concepts of the Buddha's teaching. This means that the spirit of Nāgārjuna's standpoint is no exception. In this respect, T.R.V. Murti says, "the early Buddhist view was like that of the *Mādhyamika*.[68] This is actually the turning point of Buddhism and of course, it is the central or pivotal philosophical system of Buddhism."[69]

To sum up this chapter, the only thing that Nāgārjuna did was to uphold and follow the fundamental concepts of dependent arising, middle path etc. However by using them, he formulates a system known as the *Mādhyamika*. In considering the ultimate goal of Nāgārjuna, the teaching of *śūnyatā* does not literally mean an antithetical emptiness or nothingness, but in a higher sense of the term it elaborates the state of 'emptiness' of all conditions of phenomena. Hence, the notion of emptiness thus reflects a renewed understanding of the basic Buddhist doctrines of dependent origination, middle path, without own-nature, four noble truths, which conclude that all known realities are constructed realities whose identities are merely intellectual conveniences used to order the world so that it can be understood. Considering, when Nāgārjuna composed his *Mūlamādhyamikakārikā* at its very beginning, he insists in the invocational verse: "I pay homage to the Sage who has taught the profound doctrine of dependent origination."[70] This verse contains the famous eight negations which we have mentioned before. Indeed he esteemed the Buddha as the great master precisely because of his elucidation of dependent origination.

Śūnyatā Concept in Mahāyāna Buddhism

Returning now to the origin and development of the term *śūnyatā* in *Mahāyāna* contexts, we must ask the question: what is the principle teaching of *Mahāyāna*? E. Conze has drawn attention to two important concepts for *Mahāyāna* studies: the introduction of the *Bodhisattva* concept and the doctrine of 'emptiness.' These two are great contributions that *Mahāyāna* has made to human thought.[71] Although the notion of *śūnyatā* is always associated with the *Mādhyamika* School of Nāgārjuna, it is reasonable to assert that the concept of *śūnyatā* is not the principle or a novel concept for *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. I have mentioned above most of the relevant sources found in the ancient Pāli canonical texts as well as of the post-canonical literatures. Regarding the origin and development of the term *śūnyatā* in

1. [68] Murti 1955: 53.
2. [69] *Ibid*. 5.
3. [70] MMK: Anirodham anutpādam anucchedam aśāśvataṃ/ anekārtham anānārtham anāgamam anirga- maṃ// yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaṃ prapañcopaśāmaṃ śivaṃ/ deśayām āsa saṃbuddhas taṃ vande vandatāṃ varaṃ//
4. [71] Conze 1959: 298.

Mahāyāna contexts, it could be noticed that the beginning of the term *śūnyatā* is probably found in the *Mahā- prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, often translated as 'The Great Discourse on the Perfection of Wisdom.' Hence, some observations have been made by modern researchers who consider Nāgārjuna's idea was systematized and was influenced by the philosophy of the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. They are as follows:

1. La Vallée Poussin's explanation: We know that Nāgārjuna was the putative father of the great vehicle, *Mahāyāna*, and in particular, the revealer of the *sūtras* of the *Prajñā- pāramitā*, the teaching of which is akin to that of the *Madhyamaka*. It is even possible that several *sūtras* of the great vehicle were written with the sole purpose of stating the theories of the *Madhyamaka* philosophy under the guise of 'words of the Buddha.' It is difficult to determine what part Nāgārjuna played in the redaction of the *sūtras*, but respect for tradition would lead us to believe that his share was a large one.[72]

2. M. Walleser's explanation: The systematic development of the thought of voidness laid down in the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* is brought into junction with the name of a man of whom we cannot even positively say that he has really existed, still less that he is the author of the works ascribed to him: this name is Nāgārjuna.[73]

3. T. R.V. Murti's explanation: The *Mādhyamika* system is the systematized form of the *śūnyatā* doctrine of the *Prajñāpāramitā* treatises; its metaphysics, spiritual path (*ṣaṭ- pāramitā-naya*) and religious idea are all present there, though in a loose, prolific garb.[74]

4. Frederick J. Streng's explanation: Nāgārjuna's position is closely allied to, and probably dependent on, that found in the early *Mahāyāna* literature known as the *Prajñā- pāramitā-sūtra* (perfection of wisdom verses), in which texts the notion of *śūnyatā* (emptiness, void) is an important term for the wayfarer on the path to enlightenment and becomes the distinguishing term in the *Mādhyamika* school.[75]

5. David S. Ruegg's explanation: Nāgārjuna's writings are the first philosophic treatises (*śāstra*) known to us in which an attempt has been made to give a systematic

[72]. ERE 8: 235-236.
[73]. Walleser 1922: 421.
[74]. Murti 1956: 83.
[75]. Streng 1978: 809.

scholastic exposition of the theory of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and non-substantiality (*niḥsvabhāvatā*) not only of the self (*ātman*) or individual (*pudgala*) but also of all factors of existence (*dharma*), one of the most fundamental ideas of the *Mahāyānasūtras*. In Buddhist tradition Nāgārjuna is linked especially closely with *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, the *Mahāyānist* scriptures that devote much space to this theory; and he is indeed credited with having rescued parts of them from oblivion.[76]

6. Gadjin Nagao's explanation: *Mādhyamika* philosophy is primarily a philosophy of emptiness, teaching that all things are without essence and empty, that the nature of reality is emptiness. Within Buddhism, this way of thinking first appeared consistently with the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures and the *Mahāyāna* philosophy of Nāgārjuna's *Mādhyamika*.[77]

7. Peter Harvey's explanation: The *Madhyamaka* School was also known as the *Śūnyatāvāda*, the 'emptiness teaching', for its key concept is that of 'emptiness', also central to the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras*…many other works are attributed to Nāgārjuna, though several were probably by later writers of the same name. Among the more reliable attributions is the Averting the Arguments (*Vigraha-vyāvartanī*), which seeks to overcome objections to his ideas. However, his outlook seems close to that of the perfection of Wisdom scriptures (*Prajñāpāramitāsūtras*).[78]

8. Leslie S. Kawamura's explanation: The *Madhyamaka* developed by the second-century philosopher Nāgārjuna on the basis of a class of *sūtra* known as the *Prajñāpāramitā* (perfection of wisdom), can be seen in his foundational *Mūlamadhyamakakārika* (Fundamental central way verses).[79]

9. Paul Williams's explanation: It is precisely in the claim that all things absolutely and without exception, no matter what, are empty that the concept of emptiness really comes to the fore in Buddhist thought. This claim is most frequently associated with the perfection of wisdom (*Prajñāpāramitā*) literature and its philosophical clarification and development in the *Madhyamaka* School, particularly the work of

[76]. Ruegg 1981: 5-6, 101-103.
[77]. Nagao 1989: 3.
[78]. Harvey 1990: 95-96.
[79]. Kawamura 1998: 58.

Nāgārjuna.[80]

10. Mark Siderits's explanation: Nāgārjuna was the first philosopher systematically to develop the assertion made in the *Prajñāpāramitā* (perfection of wisdom) literature of early *Mahāyāna* Buddhism that all things are empty (*śūnya*). His principal work, *Mūlamadhyamakakārika* serves as the foundational text of *Madhyamaka*, one of the two chief philosophical schools of *Mahāyāna*.[81]

The various perspectives that have been given above show that the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* is the first *Mahāyāna* literature that gave rise to the development of the *Mahāyāna* tradition. It probably started from 100 B.C. According to E. Conze, the *Prajñāpāramitā* literatures have extended over about 1,000 years, strictly speaking, they can be divided into four categories as follows:

1. The elaboration of a basic text (ca. 100 B.C. to 100A.D.), which constitutes the original impulse;

2. The expansion of that text (ca. 100 A.D. to 300);

3. The restatement of the doctrine in 3a. Short *sūtras* and in 3b. Versified summaries (ca. 300 A.D. to 500);

4. period of *Tantric* influence and of absorption into magic (600 A.D. to 1200).[82]

The *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, according to the above information, can clearly be observed as the fundamental discourse very much connected to the notion of *śūnyatā*. However, Warder refused to accept that there is a close relationship between *Madhyamakakārikā* and *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras*. For him the primary sources of the *Madhyamakakārikā* are coming from the Pāli canon and the Chinese *Āgamas*. As far as my research is concerned, I believe that we cannot totally deny the fact that there is a relationship between *Mādhyamakakārikā* and *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras*, but at the same time we cannot forget that the fundamental sources for both *Madhyamakakārikā* and *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras* traditions come from the fundamental concepts of the original teachings of the Buddha or of early Buddhism. T.R.V. Murti says, "the *Prajñāpāramitās* are not innovations; they can and do claim to expound the deeper, profounder teachings of Buddha."[83] As a result, Nāgārjuna, I think, derived his fundamental works from the Chinese *Āgamas*. This is in order to expound

[80]. Williams 1998: 78.
[81]. Siderits 1998: 638.
[82]. See Conze 1978: 1. Cf. also Conze 1950: 167; Conze 1953: 117.
[83]. Murti 1955: 83.

and demonstrate the deepest and profound meanings for supporting *Mādhyamakakārikā* as *Mahāyāna* tradition whose essences however are not away from the real content of the Buddha's teaching.

This shows that the theory of Nāgārjuna is not out of place in the earliest teaching of Buddhism but they fit within the framework of an overall Buddhist structure. Hence nobody can reject the fact that the doctrines of '*śūnyatā*' demonstrated in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā* literature which was composed from time to time constitute the fundamental Buddhist thought, especially, of *Mahāyāna* Buddhist thought.[84] The fundamental conception of this *sūtra* is aspiration for the perfection of wisdom (*prajñā*), and after aspiring one should realize not just the emptiness of a self (*pudgalanairātmya*), but of all phenomenal existences (*dharma- nairātmya*). Accordingly, *Mahāprajñāpāramitā* discourses present *śūnyatā* and praise the wisdom of *prajñā* through which emptiness is seen. This means that all phenomenal things we observe have no self-nature (*svabhāva*). The ultimate truth is beyond speech and thought; therefore, it is emptiness (*śūnyatā*). In other words, all worldly conditions are illusory.

Besides the *Mādhyamika* School, the *Yogācāra* School is the other major school of early *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. Like the *Mādhyamikas*, the theory of *Yogācāra* recognizes that all conditions and phenomena are empty and without self-nature. Phenomenon has no existence and is not a reality. It is a term in opposition to reality. We only say this or that is visible in order that we might distinguish between things. Having dealt with the object of the teaching of *śūnyatā*, *Yogācārins* proceed to say that all things do not really 'exist' and are 'empty.' This could be found at the very beginning of the *Madhyānta-vibhāga* which reads:

> There exists the imagination of the unreal, there is no duality, but there is emptiness, even in this there is that.[85]

Thus, in this verse, Vasubandhu says that the imagination of the unreal (*abhūta-parikalpa*) is the discrimination between the duality of the subject grasping and the object grasped. Thus for the *Yogācāra* School, the term *śūnyatā* is primarily empty of the unreal imagination which is lacking in the condition of being grasper and grasped. The adjective unreal is used to qualify the notions or imagination that singles out as existent things that are

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[84]. Cf. Shoyu 1966: 16.

[85]. See *Madhyānta-Vibhāga* I.1: abhūta-parikalpo 'sti dvayaṃ tatra na vidyate/ śūnyatā vidyate tv atra tasyām api sa vidyate// Cf. its Chinese counterpart: T 31. no.1599, 451a:「虚妄分別有、彼處無有二、彼中唯有空、於此亦有彼」。

non-real existences that is, 'empty.' In order not to remove the misunderstandings in relation to the basic conceptions of emptiness, Vasubandhu further states the following verse:

> Therefore, everything is taught as neither empty nor non-empty, because of its existence, its non-existence, and its existence, and this is the middle way.[86]

Thus emptiness is the principle of avoiding the extremes of both exist and non-exist, and of affirming the middle path through negation. By describing the imagination of the unreal and of the absolute state of emptiness, a negation of subjectivity and objectivity, it is important to realize these two fundamental statements: one affirmation and the other negation. Having avoided these two extremes, the *Yogācārins* state their middle way. There is nothing that can be called either exclusively empty or exclusively non-empty. This idea too clearly appears in the *Kaccāyanagotta sutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, as I have mentioned earlier. But it is given a special significance in the treatises of the *Yogācāra* School. The *Mādhyamika*s see emptiness as simply indicating the absence of inherent nature in phenomena, but the *Yogācārins* see it as itself positively existing – in the form of the non-dual nature of construction of the unreal. Reality, understood according to the true middle way, is empty of duality but not empty of existence. Honestly speaking, both *Mādhyamika* and *Yogācāra* establish their philosophical standpoints on the basis of 'emptiness,' and they try to include all else into this emptiness.

Thus, both *Mādhyamika* (*Madhyamakakārikā*) and *Yogācāra* (*Madhyānta-vibhāga*) schools can be probably considered as '*śūnyavāda*,' because both traditions declare emptiness, as Stefan Anacker has said.[87] I could add here that all Buddhist schools declare 'emptiness' as a key concept in their teachings. What, then, is the meaning of 'emptiness'? Does it mean to say that all conditions are empty or nothing? Surely not, what it means by emptiness is not nothingness or nihilism. It is synonymous with the core idea of non-self (*anatman*) and without own-nature (*niḥsvabhāva*) in the early context of Buddhism. In other words, it merely describes the real nature of things and that ultimately there is nothing that belongs to us. This statement is not a new idea introduced in *Mahāyāna* contexts; it is already there in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*. For example, on one occasion, the Buddha explains 'empty is the world,' to one of his great disciples' venerable Ānanda.

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[86]. *Ibid*. I.2: Na śūnyaṃ nāpi cāśūnyaṃ tasmāt sarvaṃ vidhīyate/ satvād asatvāt sattvāc ca madhyamā pratipac ca sā// Cf. its Chinese counterpart: T 31. no.1599, 451a:「故說一切法、非空非不空、有無及有故、是名中道義」。

[87]. Cf. Anacker 2005: 193-194.

Likewise, it seems to be that both *Mādhyamika* and *Yogācāra* follow the ancient tracks and doctrines of the Buddha. Both schools I think do not dispute the authenticity of the basic theory of the Pāli canon. The *Saddharmapuṇḍārika-sūtra* (*Lotus Sūtra*) proceeds to an exposition of emptiness by presenting it from several perspectives. For example, emptiness in relation to *dharmas* is frequently used in many places of the *Lotus Sūtra*. In the chapter V of the *Lotus Sūtra* we find the following statement: "I, knowing the doctrine…leading to voidness."[88] Furthermore, emptiness is realized by the one who fully realizes that all conditions are void, an illusion, a dream or a mirage. It is said:

> He, having obtained the knowledge, perceives that the Triple World in all directions is void, similar to a magic creation, similar to an illusion, similar to a dream, a mirage, and an echo. He perceives that all the dharmas are not produced, do not cease, are not bound, are not released, that they are not darkness, gloom, nor light. Whoever perceives that the dharmas are profound in such a way, perceives, by not seeing, the whole Triple World with the various dispositions and propensities of beings.[89]

Moreover, the text reads: "He, who perceives that the *dharmas* are empty, devoid of substantiality, knows according to Truth the Enlightenment of the perfectly enlightened *Bhagavants*."[90] A similar definition of the relationship between emptiness and *dharmas* is also given in the chapters VIII, X, XI and XIII. In them, *śūnyatā* is described: "the four herbs are to be considered [to present] emptiness, [the state] devoid of causes, [the state] devoid of purpose, the door of *nirvāṇa*…thus producing in themselves emptiness, [the state] empty of cause, [the state] empty of purpose – the doors of liberation, beings suppress ignorance."[91] Thus it is clear that in a word, "*dharmas*" are not the abstract and objective truth as an object of enlightenment. They are realized through practices by Buddhas themselves and comprise a Buddha's wisdom and spiritual stages. In other words, two meanings of "*dharma*" are shown in the *Lotus Sūtra*: an objective meaning of "*dharma*," which Buddhas awaken to as the truth, and a subjective meaning of "*dharma*," which Buddhas actualize as characteristics making up their own spiritual stages, such as wisdom and compassion. Finally, the term emptiness is referred to the one who can sees things as they really are:

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[88]. See SBE XXI, chapter V 124-125: So 'haṃ…dharmaṃ viditvā…ākāśagatikam.

[89]. *Ibid*. chapter V 137: So 'vabudhya traidhātukaṃ daśasu dikṣu śūnyaṃ nirmitopamaṃ māyopa- maṃ svapnamarīcipratiśrutkopamaṃ lokaṃ paśyati/ sa sarvadharmān anutpannān aniruddhān amuktān na tamo 'ndhakārān na prakāśān paśyati/ ya evaṃ gambhīrān dharmān paśyati sa paśyaty apaśyanayā sarvatraidhātukaṃ paripūrṇam anyonyasattvāśayāshiktam//

[90]. *Ibid*. chapter V 138: Yas tu śūnyān vijānāti dharmān ātmavivarjitān/ saṃbuddhānāṃ bhagavatāṃ bodhiṃ jānāti tattvataḥ//

[91]. *Ibid*. chapter V 136-137: Yathā catasra oṣadhayastathā śūnyatānimittāpraṇihitanirvāṇadvāraṃ ca draṣṭavyam/…evaṃ śūnyatānimittāpraṇihitāni vimokṣamukhāni bhāvayitvā sattvā avidyāṃ nirodhayanti//

> O Mañjusri, the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva looks upon all the doctrines as empty, assuming the doctrines as they are, immovable, not to be shaken, not liable to turn back, not changing – being as they are, having the nature of space, devoid of explanation and of designation, unborn, not becoming, not conditioned, not not-conditioned, not being, not not-being, inexpressible by words, without contact with anything, not existing, coming forth from false notions and error.[92]

Hence, the concepts of emptiness in the *Lotus Sūtra* explain that the Buddha was the master of all *dharmas*, who shows his *dharma* to all beings so that they might attain omniscience and 'Great trees' ultimately. The *Sūtra* further states, "those who possess the supernatural powers, who meditate on the four meditations, who hearing about emptiness feel delight, and who emit thousands of rays, they are called 'Great Trees.'"[93] In other words, there is no *nirvāṇa* without omniscience (*sarvajñatvamṛte nāsti nirvāṇaṃ*). It means that the attainment of the ultimate *nirvāṇa* is the realization of emptiness.

Whatever the concepts of emptiness found in *Mahāyāna* contexts are, it seems, they all show that the idea of *śūnyatā* is not removed from the fundamental sense of impermanence, and no-self in all conditional features. For example, we find endless lists of things that say: 'empty' like a dream, a mirage, and a magical illusion. Garma Chang has made it very clear that the core teaching of *Mahāyāna* is based on early Buddhism. As he has told us, the concept emptiness of selfhood (*svabhāva śūnyatā*) in the teaching of *Prajñāpāramitā* is actually an extension, or evolved principle, of the no-self doctrine (*anātman*) of early Buddhism. Indeed it is a doctrine originally presented by the Buddha himself.[94] It is only after having studied and compared their different interpretations that one can try to distinguish the emptiness concepts of early Buddhism from early *Mahāyāna* traditions.

In view of this fact, it is important to emphasize the fact that the way of explaining the notion of emptiness in *Mahāyāna* scriptures is somewhat different from that of early Buddhism. *Mahāyāna* scriptures seem to widen the extension of emptiness by application of it to say that everything is empty. For instance, there are no *dharmas*; the character of emptiness is like a dream, and so on. But, we can realize that the primitive concepts of

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92. *Ibid*. chapter XIII 277-278: Punar aparaṃ mañjuśrīr bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ sarvadhamāñ śūnyān vyavalokayati yathāvatpratiṣṭhitān dharmān aviparītasthāyino yathābhūtasthitān acalān akampyān avivartyān aparivartān samādāya yathābhūtasthitān ākāśasvabhāvān niruktivyavahāra- vivarjitān ajātān abhūtān na saṃskṛtān nāsaṃskṛtān na sato nāsato 'nabhilāpapravyāhṛtān asaṃga- sthān asthitān saṃjñāviparyāsaprādurbhūtān.
93. *Ibid*. chapter V 131: Ya ṛddhimantaś catudhyānadhyāyino ye śūnyatāṃ śrutva janenti prītim/ raśmīsahasrāṇi pramuñcamānās te caive vuccanti mahādrumā iha//
94. See Chang 1972: 75.

emptiness are not that different from each other because both traditions stress within the framework of impermanence, there is no such thing that could be called 'own-nature,' and ultimately it destroys belief in phenomena as real. Thus, it is not an exaggeration to say that both schools undoubtedly emphasize 'the real heart teaching of the Buddha.' As a consequence, I would like to pay attention in the following sections, by discussing the full structures of the notion of emptiness that appears in *Mahāyāna* scriptures.

Conclusion

Having studied the Buddhist standpoint of *suññatā*, it could be concluded that the *suññatā* concept should at least be understood from the following standpoints:

i. The first is that the concept *suññatā* must be understood in relation to no-self (*anattā*) or without own-nature (*niḥsvabhāva*) which points out that there is no lasting reality underlying the world; therefore, the conditioned and component things are empty in essence;

ii. The second is that it should be understood in relation to dependent origination. The conditions themselves are not self-existent, but are dependent upon one another. Their conditionality, relativity and interdependence affirm the emptiness of their self-nature. Thus the doctrine of emptiness and the teaching of dependent origination are not contradictory to each other, but they correspond to each other;

iii. The third point is that it should be understood in relation to the middle path which excludes the dogmatic views of both existence and non-existence. The middle path is intended to correct both of these dogmatic views of the ordinary people. Both existence and non- existence do not describe the reality of phenomena.

Evidence confirms again and again and will continue to do so that everything in this world is impermanent and selfless. In fact the root of this teaching exists in the early Buddhist text known as the *Cūḷasaccakasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*: "All formations are impermanent, all things are not self."[95] The impermanent nature of the totality of existence is often explained in the early discourses in relation to the five aggregates (*khandha*), the twelve personal and external sense bases (*āyatana*), etc. Therefore, according to these early textual explanations, the world is empty; it lacks entity or entities. In the *Mādhyamika* tradition, this concept of no-self in all things, persons and conditions was taken to constitute to be its

5. [95] M I 228: Sabbe sankhārā aniccā, sabbe dhammā anattā. Cf. also *Dhammapada*, 277.

central teaching under the concept of *śūnyatā* and this was subsequently followed up by both *Mahāyāna* and *Tantric* forms of Buddhism.

We can now conclude this study by stating that there is no such *suññatā* notion that has been innovated by Nāgārjuna and that it was an early concept directly adopted by him from the early discourses of the Buddha. Nāgārjuna is best known for his exposition of the doctrine of *śūnyatā* but we should not forget that this concept was already found in the ancient canonical texts with sufficient details though not in the technical terms and concepts that Nāgārjuna used for philosophical debates, but in those terms that the follower who is sitting in front of the Buddha could grasp the idea to practice and attain the ultimate freedom from the cycle of birth and death.

ABBREVIATIONS:

A	Aṅguttara Nikāya
D	Dīgha Nikāya
EB	Encyclopedia of Buddhism, by G.P. Malalasekera
ERE	Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics
MMK	Mūlamādhyamakakārikā
M	Majjhima Nikāya
Ps	Paṭisambhidāmagga
PED	Pāli English Dictionary, by T.W. Rhys Davids
PEW	Philosophy of East and West
SBE	Sacred Books of the East
S	Saṃyutta Nikāya
T	Taisho = Chinese Tripiṭaka
V	Visudhimagga
Vy	Vigrahavyāvartanī

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Some Misunderstandings about the definition of Nibbāna in Theravāda Buddhism

Jalal Mortazavi

Introduction

Understanding Nibbāna as the ultimate goal of Buddhism has been a matter of challenge for scholars and practitioners during the history of this religion. The descriptions in the Buddha's discourses were resulted from the direct understandings and experience of his enlightened mind through meditative examination and practice. He tried to deliver an explanation about his experience and knowledge to the others to provide them a perspective and roadmap for their mental development practice and final destination. These efforts were continued by Buddhist scholars who tried to expound the original teachings based on their understanding experience about the Buddha's teachings. The change of providing a clear definition for Nibbāna as the ultimate reality behind the conventional world has led to different interpretations in particular among different Buddhist schools. These descriptions have led to many confusions and misunderstandings among some practitioners and non-Buddhist or western scholars who have tried to understand and examine Buddhist doctrine relying on dualistic approach of the ordinary mind.

What is Nibbāna

Nirvāṇa (Sanskrit) or Nibbāna (Pali) literally means "blowing out" or "to extinguish," such as extinguishing the flame of a candle. The term is an ancient Sanskrit term and not a product of Buddhism and has been considered as the ultimate and soteriological goal within some of the Indian religions including, Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism.[1],[2]

The concept of Nibbāna originated from the samana, a Non-Vedic movement which begun in the earliest centuries of the first millennium BCE. The ancient tradition gave rise to Jainism, Buddhism, and Yoga, and the concept of saṃsāra, the cycle of life and death and moksha or liberation from that chain. The term Nibbāna as used in Buddhism is understood to

1. Richard Gombrich,. *Theravada Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benāres to Modern Colombo*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
2. U Sayadaw Dhammapiya,. *Nibbāna in Theravada Perspective*. Selangor: Selangor Buddhist Vipassana Meditation Society, 2004.

be an "unbinding" of the mind from defilements after the fire of the Three Poisons lobha, dvesha and moha or "greed," "hate" and "ignorance" in particular has been extinguished.

Some Misunderstandings about Nibbāna

Some scholars mostly non-Buddhists and western interpreters such as Max Muller (1823-1900) have translated the term as utter annihilation or absolute extinction while others with another negative perspective interpret it as escaping from suffering. Such a perspective arises from misunderstanding about the four noble truths which is the core teaching of Buddhism. The doctrine of four noble truths indicates that suffering arises from ignorance of the sentient beings about the ultimate reality, while following the eightfold path leads to enlightenment and liberation from samsara and suffering.

According to the Buddhist schools, suffering arises because people do not see things as they really are and their mind are deluded with the concept of permanent self. The notion of this illusory self leads to Taṇhā, a wanting that is not in accordance with nature. Therefore, the transcendence of suffering can only arise when such a wrong concept is totally removed and the individual overcomes defilements and becomes able to see the dependent co-arising origination in everything as their true reality. [3]

The deeper a sentient being understands the notion of not-self or anattā, the less he/she remains attached to the kleshas or the Three Poisons.

Nibbāna is not annihilation of the self, since the so-called 'self' does not exist. Though attaining nibbāna entails the annihilation of egoism. While reading Buddhist texts one should remember a key fact that no sensual feeling or word can describe the state of Nibbāna because it is really experienced when the delusive self completely ceases. So what is described in Buddhists texts and commentaries are just showing a tangible taste of the state and not what it really is. [4]

3. Wit Wisadavet. "*Theravāda Buddhist Ethics*." The Chulalongkorn Journal of Buddhist Studies 1 (2002): 1-15.
4. Bhikkhu, Pesala. *What is Nibbāna*. Alperton: Association for Insight Meditation, 2009.

Attaining Nibbāna is not just cessation of suffering but happiness which is considered by almost all of the philosophical schools as the most valuable thing in life. According to the Buddhist threefold classification, happiness can be identified in three forms including sensual happiness, jhāna happiness, and Nibbāna happiness. Phra Rājavaramunī highlights that a person who have achieved Nibbāna experiences a sustain happiness, but is not attached to any form of it, even the happiness of Nibbāna. In other words although an arahant experiences a feeling similar with an ordinary counterparts, that feeling does not lead him to any form of Taṇhā or carving and the suffering which is its inevitable result.[5]

> "There is, bhikkhus, that sphere, in which there is neither extension nor movement, nor the infinite ether, nor that of perception or non-perception, neither this world nor another one, neither moon nor sun. Here I say that there is neither going nor coming, neither staying nor parting, neither boing nor ceasing for this itself is without a support, without continuity, without an object – this itself is the end of suffering.
>
> There is (atthi), bhikkhus, an unborn, un-caused, un-created, un-composed and if there were not, O bhikkhus, that un-born, un-caused un-created, un-composed then there would not be shown a way out from that which is born, caused, created and composed of parts. And because there is an unborn, un-created, un-composed of parts (indivisible!) therefore a way out can be shown for that which is born, created, and composed of parts." [6]

Therefore it can be considered that cessation of suffering is not the final goal but the fundamental and understandable fact which can strongly motivate captives in Samsara to step into the path of enlightenment.

A person can attain Nibbāna before dying but he reaches complete Nibbāna after death. When a fully enlightened being dies he will not reborn again. That death is referred as pariNibbāna. But what happens after pariNibbāna cannot be known, as it is beyond of all conceivable experience. However, "the final state of Nibbāna is not absolute cessation, but absolute peace. As a matter of fact, the concept of Nibbāna has nothing to do with the view of annihilation technically, since Nibbāna practically exists as the unconditioned ultimate reality. One can reach the state of Nibbāna by means of practice because it exists unconditionally in the transcendental state."[7]

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5. Wit Wisadavet,. "*Theravāda Buddhist Ethics*." The Chulalongkorn Journal of Buddhist Studies 1 (2002): 1-15.
6. "Udāna." Klostermaier, K.laus K. *Buddhism: , A Short Introduction*. OXFORD: Oneworld Publication, 2006. 113-114.
7. U Sayadaw Dhammapiya,. *Nibbāna in Theravada Perspective*. Selangor: Selangor Buddhist Vipassana Meditation Society, 2004. p.2

Misunderstandings about definitions of Nibbāna in Theravāda Buddhism

According to Theravāda Buddhist teachings, arahants or worthy ones are beings who have achieved the fourth and highest stage of enlightenment. This statement has led some outsiders to believe that the Theravāda path is for Arahantship only. However, according to Theravāda teachings, there are three kinds of beings who have reached the fourth stage of enlightenment: Buddhas, Pacceka-Buddhas, and Arahants who are also called Savakas or Disciples. The difference is that Buddhas can save many beings, or teach them to save themselves, but Pacceka-Buddhas do not teach others as they are solitary Buddhas who do not teach as a rule. However, the Arahants can save other beings much as Buddhas who have the highest level of enlightenment and wisdom. The other different is that those who have achieved Arahantship won't reach Buddhahood neither in that life nor afterwards, since they will have no more rebirths. [8]

Despite the claim of critics, Theravāda scholars say that the followers of the tradition of the elder are not forced to follow any of the three paths but decide to become a Buddha, Pacceka-Buddha, or an Arahant according to their choice. Therefore, Theravāda is for all three paths and not for the path to Arahantship only.[9]

So a Theravāda Buddhist can aspire for Buddhahood and eventually reach that state; indeed he/she must be determined to fulfill the Paramis for the long, long time required for the fulfillment of Buddhahood. Otherwise he/she may aspire for Pacceka-Buddhahood, or one of the states of Arahantship and stay in the round of rebirths for the time required for his/her particular choice of the path accumulating the necessary Paramis and 'save' as many beings as possible. So a Theravāda Buddhist is free to choose what suits his/her willingness to go through the round of rebirths and suffering.

The reason that Arahantship is very important in Theravāda Buddhism is that an aspirant for Buddhahood has to undergo countless rebirths and therefore very few sentient beings can attain Buddhahood. On the other hand, attaining Arahantship is much practical, and many sentient beings become Arahant during the time of a Buddha. For that reason, Theravāda Buddhism encourages followers to become an Arahants as a practical choice to become free from rounds of rebirth and suffering.

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8. U Silanand,. *Is Theravada Buddhism for Arahantship only*? 18 Aug August 18, 1997. 10 Sep 2012.
9. U Silanand,. *Is Theravada Buddhism for Arahantship only?* 18 Aug August 18, 1997. 10 Sep 2012.

Although Theravāda doctrine is more based on canonical texts, Grace G. Burford in her book Desire, Death, and Goodness argues thatTheravāda teachings concerning Nibbāna and the path to it are incoherent, and counterproductive to religious practice. According to her argument, the two views about Nibbāna found in the early Aññhakavagga of the Suttanipàta, and the later commentaries are incompatible. The book also argues that the far difference between the two interpretations of Nibbāna makes it virtually inaccessible for the followers of Buddhism.[10]

Burford argues that scholars should not continue using Theravāda commentators' interpretations as standards in translating difficult passages because there is not sufficient textual homogeneity to justify this procedure. She suggests Theravādin scholars to return to the pre-Abhidhammic view of Nibbāna and the path as found in the Aññhakavagga because it provides a more unified and compelling theory and is more religiously beneficial than the classical commentarial view. Aññhakavagga pictures those reached Nibbāna as pure calm beings that are in a desire-less living and dying state; a tangible condition which can be emulated by other Buddhists.

According to Burford, the picture that the commentaries draw about the ultimate salvation is transcendent condition beyond birth and death. The commentaries portray a Nibbāna -without-support which can only be attained after death while in Nibbāna -with-support (kamma) that Aññhakavagga defines, the being liberates himself before death. The critic concludes thatTheravāda teachings fail to build a strong reconciliation between the two different worldly and metaphysical points of views. She highlights that the commentaries' unattainable goal undermines Aññhakavagga which is more in tune with the Buddha's anti-metaphysical stance. Such an approach would not provide any clear perspective for practitioners to pursue and confuses them because without-support-Nibbāna can just be realized after death.

Unlike Burford's reading, Itivutakka as a part of the Pali Canon clearly categorizes Nibbāna into two types including before and after death forms. "These two Nibbāna -states are shown by Him Who seeth, who is such and unattached. One state is that in this same life

[10] Grace G Burford,. *Desire, Death, and Goodness: The Conflict of Ultimate Values in Theravàda Buddhism*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1991.

possessed With base remaining, tho' becoming's stream Be cut off. While the state without a base Belongeth to the future, where in all Becomings utterly do come to cease."[11]

Therefore reviewing the original canonical texts may provide a more orthodox and practical reading of Theravāda teachings which does not ignore pariNibbāna. In other words, it seems that misunderstandings about the newer Theravāda texts has been more have responsible for demotivating practitioners rather than any incoherence between commentaries and pre-Abhidhammic texts. In other words, the contrast between the views found in earlier texts and the later commentaries may show the importance of reading back the earlier classical Theravāda sources.

Undoubtedly, the different interpretations provided by latter commentators and scholars might be confusing for some readers due to their different level of development and understanding. However, it should be considered all these commentaries were developed by the Buddhist scholars' to provide a clearer and better understanding of the canonical texts about Nibbāna and none of the arguments can ignore their critical role in the development and flourishing of the Buddhist of schools. These interpretations were themselves a sort of reform in their time which led to newer understanding and deeper understanding in the subsequent Buddhists and answers to their questions.[12]

Conclusion

It should be all the time remembered that Nibbāna as the ultimate goal of Buddhism is extremely subtle and hard to describe state. It is not a place like heaven or paradise but a state beyond the grasp of dualist minds which just highly realized ones who have completely liberated from the delusive self can understand. Therefore any attempt to describe Nibbāna is just an effort to provide a sensual taste of it for the clinging and unenlightened minds. The difference is like description about the flavor of chili or the smell of a rose and having a direct experience. [13]

> Nagasena says in "The Debate of King Milinda": "As ghee is recognizable by its special attributes, so nibbāna has special attributes; as ghee has a sweet fragrance, nibbāna has the sweet fragrance of virtue; as ghee has a delicious taste, nibbāna has the delicious taste of freedom."

11. Nàrada Mahà Thera. "Itivuttaka." *A Manual of Abhidhamma; Saïgaha, Being Abhidhammattha; Anuruddhàcariya Bhadanta*. Kuala Lumpur: The Buddhist Missionary Society, 1979. 358.
12. Mavis Fenn. "Ultimate Values in Theravāda." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* (31 March 1996).
13. U Sayadaw Dhammapiya. *Nibbāna in Theravada Perspective*. Selangor: Selangor Buddhist Vipassana Meditation Society, 2004. P. 5

> "Like a mountain peak, it is very high, immovable, inaccessible to the defilements, it has no place where defilements can grow, and it is without favouritism or prejudice."[14]

The study Ti-Pitaka, commentaries and sub-commentaries alone is not sufficient to thoroughly comprehended Nibbāna and precise of mindfulness meditation is highly necessary.

When one becomes able to experience the significance of purification of mind that is momentarily free from mental suffering or happiness due to delusion, the mind begins to become purified and comes to experience the significance of spiritual liberation, which involves peace and happiness from moment to moment. That peacefulness and happiness is the result of the "I" being removed from one's mind. Since the minds of the meditators are overwhelmed by spiritual peace and bliss, the practitioners begin to hope that the final liberation is not far away any longer, the absolute peace of Nibbāna is there. Thus Buddhist meditators apply these pragmatically in order to attain the final realization or Nibbāna, but do not use merely the philosophical methods through wordy language.

[14]. Bhikkhu Pesala. *What is Nibbāna*. Alperton: Association for Insight Meditation, 2009.

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Possible Origins of the Self-inflicting Tradition in Chinese Buddhism

Zhu Xiaoning

Introduction

Religions can be broadly classified into two categories: those such as Buddhism and Jainism are 'inwardly focused' while others such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam are generally known as 'outwardly focused'.[1] That means the religions like Buddhism which emphasises the freedom through eradication of all kinds of attachments to the world while others seek the spiritual salvation from an external god or goddess. However, Buddhism, generally known as a religion that aims inwardly at the purification of mind and follows 'the Middle Way (Pāli: *Majjhimapaṭipadā*)', which is free from the extremes of both asceticism and self-satisfaction,[2] can sometimes be very outwardly-oriented and even going to extremes. Martyrdom, a largely Judeo-Christian concept[3] which evoked a touch of universal sympathy among people and contributed significantly to the dissemination of Christianity especially in the first three hundred years of its history, found its variant in Chinese Buddhism. While the Christian martyrs were victims of religious persecutions, their Chinese Buddhist counterparts were in the majority those of the self-inflicted rituals because of their strong faith in the great virtue of such sacrifices—using one's own physical body as a way of sacrifices to the Buddha as a means of achieving religious goals. They remain controversial ever since their emergences. At a first glance, the Chinese civilisation with its Confucian and Daoist humanistic values seems to be the least possible hotbed for such fanatic religious practices; however, the sacrificial cult continued over a thousand years. Even today, a much more moderate version of such sacrifices—leaving scars on the scalp of a newly ordained monk/nun with burning incenses on the occasion of his/her taking the Bodhisattva precepts—remains a ceremonial practice for many zealous monks at some Chinese monasteries though

1. "Religion" *Britannica Concise Encyclopedia* (2006) 1605b3.
2. The idea of the 'Middle Way' here generally represents the practical view of the Early Buddhism (T.1, No.26, 701b28-c1); however, later in Mahāyāna Buddhism, which adopted the Sanskrit language, the concept of the 'Middle Way (Sanskrit: Madhyamāpratipad)' was endowed with much philosophic significance, which signifies the liberation from the extreme views of both nihilism and eternalism.
3. For the origin of the word 'martyr', see Allison A. Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 2-3.

it is officially abolished.[4]

Sacrificing one's own precious life for other sentient beings' welfare is considered as one of the greatest virtues according to Buddhist ethics. It is the manifestation of the sacrifice's great compassion, which is one of the important prerequisites for the realisation of Buddhahood. In Buddhist canon, both of the Theravada and Mahāyāna, there are countless stories exemplifying such heroic quality;[5] however, it was in ancient China that such altruistic spirit evolved into a kind of cult that emphasised using one's own body as an offering to the Buddha. Those Buddhist sacrificed either immolated themselves or resorted to other means of violent self-destruction. Those accounts bear one distinct common feature: the monks, sometimes even nuns, used their own bodies as offerings to pay their debts of gratitude to the Buddha, or in some cases simply to express their contempt to the physical body. Even to those who are well informed about the fundamental Buddhist principles and Theravada or Tibetan Buddhist traditions,[6] such practices may still sound foreign because they apparently run counter to the traditional Buddhist values and can hardly fall into any of the 'Three learnings (*tisraḥ-śikṣāḥ*)' of Buddhism, namely the Buddhist precepts (*śīla*), meditation (*dhyāna*) and wisdom (*prajñā*), to which all serious Buddhist practitioners must apply themselves. On the contrary, those self-destructive deeds might remind the modern people of those horrible human sacrifices practised in the religions of the early Semites, Mayans, Vikings, or the Thugs in pre-colonial India though the motives and the objects in those cases were of quite different nature. By and large, those sacrifices were carried out forcibly against the victims' wills to appease their gods while in Chinese Buddhism the monks volunteered to die as the fulfillment of a personal duty, which was believed to be manifestations of ultimate detachment from worldly entanglements and one's devotion to the Buddha.

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4. In December 1983, such practices were abolished officially by China's Buddhist Association, "Sengjia zhidu僧伽制度," *Zhongguo Fojiao xinxi wang*中國佛教信息網, Web, 3 July 2008. http://www.buddhism.com.cn/fjcs/tancong/僧伽制度.html.

5. The Jataka stories are in the tenth division of the Khuddaka-Nikāya in the Pāli cannon; for Chinese versions, there are collections of Jataka stories in such sūtras the *Liudu ji jing*六度集經 (The Collections of the Six Pāramitās Sūtra; T03, No.152), *Pusa bensheng man lun*菩薩本生鬘論(*Jātakamālā*; T03, No.160) , etc., those that recounts a single story, such as *Yueguang Pusa jing* 月光菩薩經 (*Candraprabhabodhisattvacaryāvadāna sutra*; T03, No.166), etc., and others that contain some Jataka stories, such as *Xianyu jing* 賢愚經 (*Damamūkanidāna sutra*; T04, No.202) and *Za baozang jing*雜寶藏經 (*Saṃyuktaratna sutra*; T04, No.203), etc.

6. The recent politically motivated self-immolation cases in Tibet proper and the surrounding Tibetan autonomous regions in protest against the Chinese government's religious persecutions are only the modern adaptation of such religious practices, probably inspired by the Vietnamese monk Thich Quang Doc's self-burning deed in 1963, and they can hardly find any religious basis in their own relevant Buddhist scriptures.

Since the 9/11 attacks in the U.S., the term sacrifices has become 'an active word in our national vocabulary, making it a topic that interests scholars and popular audiences alike.'[7] Compared with numerous books on the issue of Islamic extremism, the discussions on Buddhist sacrificial rituals are almost negligible. There are some research works on the issue of self-killing in Buddhism; however, most of them are limited to brief introductions to the relevant historical records and discussions of its ethical undertones. This essay means to explore the origins of the gift-of-the-body rituals in Chinese Buddhism based on the accounts in the three popular Biographies of the Prominent Monks 高僧傳[8] from the Jin 晉 Dynasty (265—420) to the early part of Northern Song 北宋 (10th century), covering nearly 700 years of history, which was the most important historical period for Chinese Buddhism to take root and evolve its unique identity. Those accounts of unusual deaths of the monks offer us a good opportunity to explore the self-determined deaths, an important yet often neglected aspect of Chinese Buddhism. As the motives and circumstances under which the monks carried out their self-killing deeds were varied, the focus here is on those ritualistic or dubious suicidal cases.

The Indian Origins

If we analyse those ritualistic self-destructive deeds against the Buddhist scriptures, it is quite obvious that most of them can be traced back to the stories or prescriptive instructions from some Buddhist texts. For instance, the self-immolation was obviously inspired by the legend of Bodhisattva Medicine King 藥王菩薩 (Bhaiṣajyagururāja) in the *Lotus Sūtra* while those feeding hungry tigers with their own bodies and some cases of self-cutting were largely copies of similar Bodhisattva deeds of Prince Mahāsattva 薩埵太子(Pāli: Mahāsatta) and King Śibi尸毗王(Pāli: Sivi) in the jātaka stories. Other acts of self-mutilation may find their archetypes in the prescriptions of other Mahāyāna texts. It is safe to say that the most direct and immediate influences came from Indian Buddhism itself.

Even before the Mahāyāna became a distinctive school, there had already been quite many Buddhist scriptures narrating the self-sacrifices of Bodhisattvas. The bodily self-

7. Kathryn McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence: A Comparative Study of Sacrifice* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008) 1.
8. The three biographies of the monks refer to the *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (The Biographies of the Prominent Monks) by Huijiao慧皎, *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (the Continued Biographies of the Prominent Monks) by Daoxuan道宣 and *Dasong gaoseng zhuan* 大宋高僧傳 (the Biographies of the Prominent Monks compiled in the Great Song) by Zanning贊寧.

sacrifices of Bodhisattvas appeared first in the Buddhist literary genres called jātaka and avadāna both in Pāli and Sanskrit.[9] However, the most influential scriptures were probably those in Mahāyāna, such as the Chinese *Brahmajala sūtra*梵網經, *Dazhidu lun* 大智度論, and the *Miaofa Lianhua Jing* 妙法蓮華經 or better known as *The Lotus Sūtra*. Among these texts with self-sacrificial stories or injunctions, *The Lotus Sūtra,* translated into Chinese in 406 by Kumārajīva, has achieved its most lofty status largely due to its great popularity among Chinese people.

Mahāparinirvānavāda and the Body-Offering Tradition

Although bodhisattva deeds (*bodhisattvacaryā*) was valued very much in the early Mahāyāna around the period from 100 to 250 CE, according to Ku Cheng-mei, there had been no formulated regulations for practitioners until the rise of 'a Mahāyānic syncretical school called the Mahāparinirvānavāda',[10] which was based upon the main teachings of the Sarvāstivāda and early Mahāyāna.[11] One of the most important features for the Mahāparinirvānavāda is the cultivation of good will, which was explained consistently as 'making offerings (*dāna*)', both spiritual and material ones; another important factor of this school's teachings is the permanent existence of the Buddha's 'Truth Body (*dharmakāya*)', which was expressed unequivocally in the *Lotus Sutra*.[12] These two factors led to the glorification of donations, either internally or externally, to the omnipotent Buddha, who is ever overlooking the human world, offering people salvation.

At the same time, *vaipulya sūtra,* originally one of the three additional methods of Buddhist expositions by the Mahāparinirvānavāda to the traditional ninefold ones (*navāṅgaśāsana*), which later extended to refer to all the texts composed by the school, played an essential role in the development of the self-sacrificial rituals.[13] After the introduction of some *vaipulya sūtras* by Dharmarakṣa 竺法護 (c. 233—310) to Dunhuang 敦煌 in the Western Jin西晉 (265—316), the systematical study of these texts had not been

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9. Reiko Ohnuma, *Head, Eyes, Flesh and Blood: Giving away the Body in Indian Buddhist Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007) 7.

10. Ku Cheng-mei. "A Ritual of Mahāyāna Vinaya: Self-Sacrifice," *Buddhist Thought & Ritual,* ed. David J. Kalupahana. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1991) 159. Ku uses the term 'Mahāparinirvānavāda' to refer to the Mahāyānic movement marked by the compilation (*saṃgīti*) of early Mahāyāna scriptures centering on the *Mahāparinirvāna sūtra*. The movement started from the Buddhist council in Kaśmir under the patronage of the king Kaniṣka迦膩色迦 (2nd century) till the end of the third century. See Ku Cheng-mei, *Guishuang Fojiao zhengzhi chuantong yu Dacheng Fojiao* (Taibei: Yunchen Wenhua, 1993) 543.

11. Ku, "Ritual" 159.

12. Ku, "Ritual" 160.

13. Ku, "Ritual" 161.

undertaken until Juqu Mengxun沮渠蒙遜 (368—433), a Tokharian ruler of the Northern Liang北凉(412—439), launched it after he conquered Dunhuang in around 420. Mengxun recruited a Kashmiri monk called Dharmakṣema曇無讖 (385—433) to help him promote the idea of *cakravartin*, the ideal kingship (a universal king with immense political power and vast materialistic wealth), which had come into being in Buddhism before the early Mahāyāna but was fully developed by the Mahāparinirvānavāda.[14] Realising that the success of the Buddha dharma relies on the monarch's patronage, the Mahāparinirvānavāda gave special emphasis to the protection of Buddhist teachings by the monarch. According to the scriptures composed in this period, the duties of a *cakravartin* are closely related with the protection of Buddhist teachings (*dharmarakṣa*), which includes making materialistic offerings called offerings of *nirmāṇakāya*.[15] The *Mahaparinirvāna Sūtra*大般涅磐經, the most important text of the Mahāparinirvānavāda translated by Dharmakṣema, together with other *vaipulya* texts including *The Lotus Sūtra,* simply reiterated these ideas. This campaign for the propagation of the concept of *cakravartin* ushered in the spread of the practices of *bodhisattvacaryā.* With these, the Mahāyāna vinayas were introduced during this period by the heir apparent Xingguo興國. In the *Bodhisattvaprātimokṣa*菩薩戒本 supposed to be preached by Bodhisattva Maitreya, the penalties for the violations of many rules are meted out according to one's practice of making offerings. For example, the first two *pārājika-dharmas* 波羅夷法[16] are applied to those who do not observe the dharma-offering and materialistic offerings, which make the Mahāyāna vinaya quite different from those traditional ones. In early Buddhism as well as the Early Mahāyāna(Śūnyavāda), all worldly existences are regarded as illusory; however, the Mahāparinirvānavāda asserts that such worldly affairs as long life and fortune are two goals that a practitioner needs to pursue in the very life.[17] According to the *Upāsakaśīla Sūtra*優婆塞戒經 translated by Dharmakṣema, a bodhisattva needs to realize two embellishments 莊嚴 (*vyūha*) so as to benefit both oneself and others. They are 'materialistic embellishment福莊嚴' and 'wisdom embellishment智莊嚴'. The former can be achieved through practicing the perfection of Giving (*dāna-pāramitā*), morality (*sīla-pāramitā*) and effort (*vīrya-pāramitā*) while the latter through the practices of perfection of forbearance (*kṣānti-pāramitā*), meditation (*dhyāna-pāramitā*) and

[14]. Ku, "Ritual" 164.
[15]. Ku, "Ritual" 162-163.
[16]. As the most serious violations of the vinaya, the sinner will lose his/her qualification for the Bodhisattva initiation.
[17]. Ku, "Ritual" 165.

wisdom (*prajñā-pāramitā*).[18] The Sūtra further asserts that materialistic embellishment is the same as the wisdom one福德莊嚴即智莊嚴，智慧莊嚴即福莊嚴.[19] Here the materialistic and spiritual cultivation bear the same importance. Ku further notes that the Mahāparinirvānavāda also highlights the importance of moral practices, such as 'filial piety, respect to elders and dharma masters, friendliness and trust in good friends,'[20] which are in accordance with the Confucian values. However, all materialistic possessions one gains must be dedicated to making offerings to realise a Bodhisattva's non-attachment as far as *bodhisattvacaryā* is concerned.[21] Such absolute offerings finally culminate in self-sacrifices.

The disciplinary injunctions of the Mahāyāna vinaya are generally believed for lay Buddhists despite the fact that there are a few Mahāyāna texts such as the *Brahmajāla Sūtra* 梵網經 containing disciplines applicable to both the lay and monastic, and that even in many South Asian Mahāyāna scriptures they 'advocate a monastic, rather than lay, bodhisattva lifestyle.'[22]

Although suicide is clearly defined as a violation of the monastic law in vinayas, certain Buddhist sectarian schools such as the Sarvāstivāda 一切有部 actually permitted it for a religious purpose.[23] In the *Fo shuo Longshinü jing* 佛說龍施女經 (Sūtra Spoken by the Buddha on the Girl Nāgadatta), a girl named Nāgadatta committed suicide by jumping from a high building as a body-offering to the Buddha, which, according to the text, enabled her to change her sex in the next life.[24] Here the suicide was regarded as a religious act to display her determination to achieve Buddhahood. Such discipline was inherited by the Mahāparinirvānavāda School, which considered killing and self-killing out of *dharmarakṣa* as permissible.[25] Another example can be found in the *Milepusa suowen jing lun* 彌勒菩薩所問經論 (Treatise on the Sūtra of the Questions Asked by Maitreya Bodhisattva) composed by Vasubhandu世親. It unequivocally declares that suicides do not constitute killing. According to the text, a person killing himself commits no sin of killing because in such a case the slayer

18. T.24, No.1488, 1045b6-10.
19. T.24, No.1488, 1045b15-16.
20. Ku, "Ritual" 166.
21. T.24, No.1488, 1041a28.
22. Susanne Mrozik, Virtuous Bodies: the Physical Dimensions of Morality in Buddhist Ethics (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 5.
23. Ku 166.
24. T.14, No.558, 910a5-10. The male sex is one of the prerequisites for a person to achieve Buddhahood.
25. Ku 166.

does not kill another being.[26] In other words, only when the killer and the killed are separate entities can it be called killing.

Popularity of the Lotus Sūtra

Numerous as bodhisattvas' self-sacrificial stories are in the Buddhist literature, the most popular and influential one for Chinese Buddhists is from that of the bodhisattva Medicine King藥王 in the chapter 'Former Affairs of the Bodhisattva Medicine King 藥王菩薩本事品(simplified as 'the chapter of the Medicine King' hereafter in the *Lotus Sūtra*妙法蓮華經(*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*). By simply exploring the relation between the *Lotus Sūtra and* the self-immolating cases recorded in the three *Biographies*, we can get a general knowledge of the influences of Indian Buddhism over the Chinese Buddhists' self-sacrificial rituals.

According to the story, Bodhisattva Gladly Seen by All Living Beings 一切眾生喜見菩薩, one of the previous incarnations of Bodhisattva Medicine King 藥王菩薩 (Bhaiṣajyagururāja), burnt himself up as a kind of bodily offering to Buddha Sun Moon Pure Bright Virtue 日月淨明德如來. As Gladly Seen by All Living Beings had been practising the dharma while listening to the teaching of *The Lotus Sūtra* by the Buddha Sun Moon Pure Bright Virtue for twelve thousand years, he was able to achieve *samadhi* (a state of intense concentration through the practice of meditation) in which one can manifest all kinds of physical forms. He was so delighted that he made offerings of various kinds of flowers and incenses to the Buddha and the *Sūtra* through his supernatural power gained from the *samadhi*. After that, he decided to make an offering with his own body. To show how much the ritual recorded in the Indian Buddhist literature on self-sacrifices has influenced the Chinese mind, here is an excerpt from the *Lotus Sūtra*:

> Thereupon he swallowed various perfumes, sandalwood, kunduruka, turushka, prikka, aloes, and liquidambar gum, and he also drank the fragrant oil of champaka and other kinds of flowers, doing this for a period of fully twelve hundred years. Anointing his body with fragrant oil, he appeared before the Buddha Sun Moon Pure Bright Virtue, wrapped his body in heavenly jeweled robes, poured fragrant oil over his head and, calling on his transcendental powers, set fire to his body. The glow shone forth, illuminating worlds equal in number to the sands of eighty million Ganges. The Buddhas in these worlds simultaneously spoke out in praise, saying: 'Excellent, excellent, good man! This is true diligence. This is what is

[26]. T.26, No.1625, 249c17-20.

called a true Dharma offering to the Thus Come One. Though one may use flowers, incense, necklaces, incense for burning, ..., presenting offerings of all such things as these, he can never match this! Though one may make donations of his realm and cities, his wife and children, he is no match for this! Good man, this is called the foremost donation of all. Among all donations, this is the most highly prized, for one is offering the Dharma to the Thus Come Ones! '

After they had spoken these words, they each one fell silent. The body of the bodhisattva burned for twelve hundred years, and when that period of time had passed, it at last burned itself out.

After the bodhisattva Gladly Seen by All Living Beings had made this Dharma offering and his life had come to an end, he was reborn in the land of the Buddha Sun Moon Pure Bright Virtue, in the household of the king Pure Virtue...[27]

The sacrificial story does not end up here. Then the bodhisattva prince went to Buddha Sun Moon Pure Bright Virtue, who was near the end of his life span. The Buddha entrusted his Dharma and his relics to the prince, and then entered his *nirvāṇa*. Having cremated the Buddha, the bodhisattva divided the Buddha's relics up into 84,000 portions, and enshrined them into 84,000 *stūpas*. Determined to make an ultimate offering to the *stūpas*, he burnt his two arms for 72,000 years, making a vow that his arms would recover as before if his wish to achieve a Buddha's golden body by virtue of his bodily offering could be realised. Without doubt, his wish was fulfilled. Later he became Bodhisattva Medicine King 藥王菩薩 for he had 'healed his own body' by virtue of his sacrifice and 'echoing in Buddhist terms the story of primordial Person of *Purusa-sukta*,'[28] the Brahmanical poem "Praise of the Person" in *Ṛg-Veda* which gives an account of the primordial Person who had immolated himself as a sacrifice.

By comparing the description of the self-burning process above with those self-immolating accounts in the three *Biographies,* one can find they bear striking similarities in many ways. Most of the self-immolaters recited the chapter of the bodhisattva Medicine King in the *Lotus Sūtra* partly quoted above, some chanting a Buddha's name. Fayu法羽, Huiyi慧益, Sengqing僧慶 and two bhikṣuṇī sisters followed exactly the procedure of the Bodhisattva's self-immolation: taking incense powder or oil and wrapping the body with oil-drenched clothes. The difference between the bodhisattva's auto-cremation and theirs is that

[27]. Burton Watson, trans. *The Lotus Sutra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) 282.
[28]. Dennis Hudson, "Self-Sacrifice as Truth in India," *Sacrificing the Self: Perspectives on Martyrdom and Religion,* ed. Margaret Cormack (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) 142.

the bodhisattva did it by exerting his supernatural power while the Chinese by igniting the body with a torch. In other self-burning stories of the three Biographies, the people chose to burn themselves alive on a pyre. They are clearly the evidences that they were inspired by the bodhisattva's self-sacrificial story in the *Lotus Sūtra*.

It is very difficult to know whether such literature ever inspired Indian Buddhists in ancient times to act accordingly; however, it is in China that such kind of legendary tales were actualised and ritualised. For a modern reader of the tale in the *Lotus Sūtra*, he/she can immediately discern their symbolic nature: the bodhisattva practised dharma for twelve thousand years; the glow of the bodhisattva's self-immolating fire illuminated 'worlds equal in number to the sands of eighty million Ganges;' and the bodhisattva's body kept burning for twelve thousand years. Har Dayal mentioned that Indian authors 'often push a good idea to such extremes that it becomes grotesque and ridiculous.'[29] When the original idea of altruistic self-sacrifices degenerated into the ritualistic expression of religious fervour, it actually lost its moral lustre to a large extent. However, for an uncritical Chinese reader, no matter how strange such self-sacrificial stories may sound, they are the best examples of making offering that are suggested for emulation. For a devoted Chinese Buddhist who was brought up in a context of Confucian realism and thus not fully aware the allegorical nature of Indian literature, he would probably tend to interpret such text in a literary way, and get the impression that bodily sacrifice is the indispensable and probably most direct way leading to the Buddhahood. Due to the strangeness with Indian culture and the people's mentality, plus its intricacy of the Sanskrit language, general Chinese Buddhists took in every word from the religious canons as exactly from the Buddha himself (*Buddhavacana*).

Although the story of Medicine King's self-immolations in the *Lotus Sūtra* were probably the most important agent for the propagation of Buddhist self-sacrificial rituals in China, and most Buddhists tend to interpret this passage literally; however, there exist other explications about the Bodhisattva's magical deeds more sensible and thus veracious. Actually the most representative among these interpretators is also the most authoritative person that has ever given this sūtra so much profound meaning and imcomparable importance in Chinese Buddhism. He is Zhiyi智顗 (538—597), the founder of the Tiantai天台 School, which is based on his insightful elucidation of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

Due to the popularity of the *Lotus Sūtra* in Chinese Buddhism, there were numerous

[29]. Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970) 182.

commentaries on the scripture. Just in the Southern and Northern Dynasties, there were as many as over seventy.[30] Zhiyi could finally rise above others was due to his exquisite and flawless delineations of the *Lotus Sūtra* and advanced meditational techniques. His greatest contribution to the Chinese Buddhism is the establishment of the most systematic and sophisticated Chinese hermeneutics of Buddhism based upon the insight into the subtle meanings in *The Lotus Sūtra*.

As an authority of this scripture, his interpretation of the self-immolation of Medicine King is probably the most cogent and illuminating one. In the *Sūtra,* the bodhisattva's self-immolation is praised as a 'True Dharma Offering'. In Zhiyi's *Fahua wenju* 法華文句 (The Commentaries on the *Lotus Sūtra*), he interprets the term 'True Dharma Offering' as a religious practice that requires internally activating the analytical insight into the causality of all the afflictions so as to eradicate them with the wisdom of emptiness; by perceiving the true nature of the body and fire, the sacrifice and the receiver of the sacrifice all as non-existent.[31] So according to the Master Zhiyi, the 'True Dharma Offering' is to eliminate the distorted view of the inherent existence of the self and achieve the emptiness of all dharmas. The 'fire' in the self-burning legend is an analogy to the penetrating insight of Buddhist wisdom of non-ego, which can burn up all mental defilements and leads to liberation. Such 'offerings' do not necessarily involve a physical body or tangible fire; it is the transcendental wisdom based on subtle meditation that truly counts. Only through such metaphorical interpretations can the true meaning of the controversial self-immolating legends be revealed accurately. It is very difficult to know whether those who were committed to self-burnings really had reached such high-level spiritual realisations. Even so, the number such persons must have been very few.

Master Zhiyi's comment on this issue best reflects the true meaning of Mahāyāna Buddhism.[32] Such a genuine practice of Buddhism, as Zhiyi defined, is much more profound than those superficial imitations. As he commented on the part of the scripture that states burning one's finger is better than offering one's wife and external treasure, Zhiyi used few words briefly mentioning that external offerings are inferior to the internal ones.[33] The scant and matter-of-fact explication of the self-immolation here could be regarded as an expression

30 Gao Guanru. "Miaofa lianhua jing," *Zhongguo Fojiao*, vol. III (Shanghai: Dongfang Chuban Zhongxin, 1996) 141.

31 T.34, No.1718,143b18-21.

32. Shi Hengqing, "Lun Fojiao de zishaguan," *Taiwan daxue zhexue pinglun,* 9 (1986): 195.

33. T.34, No.1718, 143b26-28.

of his attitude towards such extreme practices in real life. On the one hand, skimming through the subject could avoid giving too much metaphorical interpretations, which might incur displeasure from those who were determined to follow suit literally; on the other hand it would leave himself some room for maintaining his own position. According to his illumination on the concept of 'True Dharma Offerings', it is not so unreasonable for us to form the opinion that his 'internal offerings' might be understood as a reference to cultivations of transcendental wisdom. In this regard, the 'True Dharma Offerings' could signify the culmination of the transcendental wisdom leading to the realisation of the ultimate truth.

Based on Zhiyi's superb illuminations on this issue and complemented by esoteric Buddhist doctrines, the Japanese Tendai School further developed the idea:

> The *homa* (sacrificial fire offering) in the esoteric teachings is a practice of brāhmaṇas (religious practitioners) in the Vedas. The Medicine King's burning of his arms and body is a genunine *homa*.... The deed of Bodhisattva Medicine King's burning up of his arm and body in the *Fahua* is a great practice of the supreme vehicle, which is the subtle observance of the precepts 密行 on the offering to the genuine Dharma. The so-called 'burning the two arms' means to annihilate the two extremes so as to return to the Middle Path; 'immolating the body' means to burn off the Distinct Teaching别教 to reveal the perfect Triple Truths三谛 (the truth of emptiness空, temporariness假 and the mean中)….[34]

As Medicine King's immolation is explained from the esoteric perspective, it is imbued with mysticism. Just as Zhiyi's interpretation, the Japanese esoteric approach to the self-immolation model is highly metaphorical. Their opinions are probably most consonant with the original idea the *Lotus Sūtra* tries to convey. Influential as master Zhiyi's discussions on this scripture, his view on the self-burning ritual seemed to be submerged by the prevailing glorifications of the gift-of-the-body ritual.

Teachings from Buddhist Scriptures of Doubtful Origins

More inciting are those Mahāyāna scriptures containing injunctions for self-sacrificial rituals. The two most popular and influential texts in Chinese Buddhism that unequivocally and forcefully propound the self-immolating practices are the Chinese *Brahmajāla Sūtra*, or *Fanwang jing*梵網經 (Brahma's Net Sūtra) in Chinese, and the *Shoulengyan jing*首楞嚴經 (*Śūraṃgama sūtra*). The second volume of the *Fanwang jing*, which is on Mahāyāna

34 T.76, No.2410, 720a13-24.

disciplines, has become the most important scripture for Mahāyāna moral codes in Chinese Buddhism. It contains the instruction on self-immolations, claiming that if a pupil comes to seek a master's teaching on Mahāyāna sūtras and disciplines, the master should delineate all kinds of acetic practices for him, such as burning one's body or body parts as an offering to all Buddhas, feeding hungry carnivorous beasts and hungry ghosts with one's own body. If the practitioner cannot act accordingly, the person then cannot be called a monastic bodhisattva.[35] Such homily is reiterated in the *Shoulengyan jing*, a very important text for Chan Buddhism, in which the practitioner is encouraged to burn one finger or toe as an offering to a Buddha's image or stūpa. According to this *Sūtra,* such an offering can redeem the practitioner's sins since the beginningless aeons, and by virtue of such sacrifices the person will be free from all defilements even though he/she is yet to achieve enlightenment; on the other hand, even an enlightened being has to sustain retributions in human form if the person fails to make such 'tiny' contributions.[36] In the *Lotus Sūtra,* the offerings of the same kind are said to be much more significant than materialistic offerings with one's country, wife and all the treasures in the universe (See the quotation above). Together with the aforementioned famous *Dazhidu lun*大智度論 and Buddhist texts with the similar instructions, these scriptures greatly fuelled the trend of religious self-immolations and self-mutilations in ancient China. However, both the Chinese *Brahmajāla Sūtra* and the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, together with the *Dazhidu lun*, are regarded as apocryphal by most modern scholars. According to Tang Yongtong湯用彤, the Chinese *Brahmajāla Sūtra* was probably composed out of the demand to promote the Mahāyāna vinaya after the persecution of Buddhism[37] during the Emperor Taiwu太武帝 of the Northern Wei北魏 by northern Chinese.[38] The authenticity of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra* was even questioned as early as it was first introduced into Tibet and Japan in the eighth century. In China, this *sūtra* had not been officially included in the collections of Buddhist scriptures in the Tang, Song, Yuan and Ming Dynasties, and was rejected by Chinese Yogacara School as apocryphal.[39] Lü Cheng呂澂 (1896—1989), a famous modern Buddhist scholar in China, even gave a list of one hundred and one fallacies of the *Shoulengyan jing* to refute its authenticity though many of them

35. T.40, No.1814, 675c9.
36. T.19, No.945, 132b13-19.
37. Tang, *Han* 446.
38. Tang, *Han* 827.
39. Xingyun, ed. "Lengyan jing楞嚴經," *Foguang dacidian 佛光大辭典,* 3rd edition (Gaoxiong: Foguang Chubanshe, 1989) 5493c.

sound not so convincing.[40] Although most Chinese Buddhists, including such illustrious figures as Xuyun 虛雲 (1840—1959) and Taixu太虛 (1889—1947), recognise these texts as authentic Buddha's teachings, their confidence is largely based upon their religious faith or sentiment rather than historical and philosophical grounds.

Influences of the Ancient Hindu Asceticism

The rise of the Buddhist literature on self-sacrifices, especially those on self-immolations, might find its predecessor in some ancient brahmanical scriptures. In the *Mānava Śrautasūtra* (8.25) recorded an initiation ceremony for brahmanical renunciation (*saṃnyāsa*) to internalise the sacred fire: 'Entering the fire' was mentioned as 'the road of the hero (*agnipraveśanaṃ vīrādhvānam*)' because it was the 'most difficult method of killing oneself'.[41] The story of the self-immolation of the Indian Brahmin Calanus (Sphines) recorded by Plutarch confirms that as a religious ritual such practice did exist among Hindus;[42] however, it was probably in Mahāyāna Buddhism that such an ancient self-sacrifice was adopted into its teachings, known by modern people through the Chinese sacrifices. Buddhism in its course of development 'came to adopt certain practices which it had initially abandoned'.[43] Such mutual influences between different religions in human history are quite commonplace. At the same time, these 'innovative elements', which the Buddha himself might have dismissed as ineffective to spiritual freedom, might have finally posed hidden dangers to Buddhism itself,[44] and aggravated its decline.

From the idealisation of the altruistic selflessness of *bodhisattvacaryā* in the early Buddhist literature to the ritualisation of self-sacrifices in some Mahāyāna scriptures, such transition might reflect the vicissitudes of Mahāyāna Buddhism in Indian subcontinent. In India, the radicalisation of the bodhisattva idea of making offerings might have signified a desperate gesture to compete against the dominating Hīnayāna Buddhism as well as the burgeoning Hinduism. With these scriptural advocacies, many Chinese Buddhists regarded such self-killing practices as a short-cut to achieve the Buddhahood, and devoted themselves to those radical measures.

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40. Lü Cheng. "Lengyan bai wei," Lü Cheng Foxue lunzhu xuanji, vol. 1 (Jinan: Qilu Shushe, 1991) 370-395.
41. Qtd. in Johannes Bronkhorst, The Two Sources of Indian Asceticism, 2nd ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1998) 15-16.
42. Bernadotte Perrin, trans., Plutarch's Lives VII: Demosthenes and Cicero; Alexander and Caesar by Plutarch (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919) 417-419.
43. Bronkhorst 83.
44. Hirakawa 3.

Influences of Chinese Traditions

However, as the modern Chinese philosopher Mou Zongsan牟宗三 asserted that a foreign religion wishing to take root on a land like ancient China, whose culture has already been fully developed, should first be in no ways in disagreement with the core values of the native culture.[45] In a full-fledged and highly conservative society like ancient China, which called its neighbours disdainfully as 'barbarians', one can hardly imagine how those bloody rituals in Chinese Buddhism could become a long-lasting tradition. As mentioned above, the success of Mahāyāna Buddhism in China was due to some of its prominent features which share with those of Confucianism together with the staunch support from the monarch. The adaptability of Mahāyāna Buddhism itself to the new environment might be another important factor. But these could hardly account for the popularity of something as outlandish as the self-inflicting practices. After all, it was in China, not India, the motherland of this religion, that such extreme practices became religious rituals. There must have been some ethnic elements for us to find the answer from.

Confucianism and Legalism: The Redemptive and Grateful Body

Brilliant as the Chinese civilisation was, it always got tangled up with some most inglorious elements in human history. Cruel torturing punishments and burying people alive with the dead are just two of the most notable examples. They stemmed from the Chinese view of the meaning of the individual and the significance of the body.

In Confucian China, the status of the individual was invariably bound within a 'larger familial, social, and cosmic whole,' and such a 'holistic' individualism[46] had to be interpreted within a sophisticated web of 'relationships with people, objects, and event'.[47] Although during the feudalistic times from the 8th to the early 3rd century BCE before the establishment of the first autocratic united empire Qin秦 (221—206 BCE) and the tumultuous period of the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420—589), some Chinese thinkers and intellectuals endeavoured to formulate the Chinese-style individualism in their own fashions, among

45. Mou Zongsan, "Tan zongjiao daode yu wenhua," *Shidai yu ganshou* (Taibei: E'hu chubanshe, 1984) 177.
46. Instead of total negation of the existence of the concept 'individualism' in ancient Chinese history, Brindley uses the term in its broadest sense, which includes two aspects: (1) a belief that individuals possess certain positive privileges or powers in the world through their existence, and (2) a belief that individuals can achieve their ideals by means of their own 'autonomous, or self-inspired, authority of some kind'. See Erica Fox Brindley, *Individualism in Early China: Human Agency and the Self in Thought and Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010) xx. Here I adopt the use of the word in her definition.
47. Brindley xi.

whom Yangzhu楊朱 of the fourth century BCE was probably the only unadulterated individualist in the western sense; however, their influences were mostly felt within the scope of the intelligentsia. Impressive as their ideals were, they could do little to reform the highly hierarchical society marked by Confucianism, which highlights the conformist attitude one should take towards his/her superior or universal powers. In this kind of social system, except for those on the top of the social ladder, who were endowed with absolute power, other people were constrained to varying degrees according to their corresponding status in social relations. For ordinary beings, they were no more than a means of implementation of their superiors' wills.

Confucianism as the predominant ideology in ancient China is generally regarded as humanistic. However, unlike the humanism in the Renaissance of western countries, the Confucian 'humanism' emphasises human relations instead of man's freedom, and the most advanced culture in ancient China was its political ethics.[48] Confucianism regards the human body as a gift from one' parents. No one is entitled to do the slightest harm to one's own body. In *Xiao Jing*孝經 (*Classic of Filial Piety*), one of the Thirteen Classics十三經 of the Confucian School, it states: 'Your physical person with its hair and skin are received from your parents. Vigilance in not allowing anything to do injury to your person is where family reverence begins'.[49] Normally, such excessively self-protective teaching should have led to a non-violent culture similar to the Indian-style *ahiṃsā*; on the contrary, in the ancient Chinese judicial system, miscellaneous inhuman physical tortures were applied to prisoners, aiming to mete out pain and shame to the convicted according to his/her charges of indictment.

In Chinese judicial system, obtaining convicts' verbal confessions had crucial importance in conviction. Extorting a confession from a suspect by tortures was an acceptable practice in criminal interrogations. And criminal penalties including both the legal and illegal were full of inhuman cruelty, which might range from flogging with a stick, branding in the face, cutting off the nose, ears or feet, dismembering, removing intestine, skinning, pick out patellas, joint-twisting, poisoning to death, beheading, cutting into two at the waist, to even baking, etc.[50] It is no exaggeration that China was really encyclopedic about cruel tortures. One cannot find in Confucian texts any speech that openly sanctions such violations to the

[48]. Liu Zehua, Wang Maohe and Wang Lanzhong, *Zhuanzhi quanli yu Zhongguo shehui*, in *Lishi fansi congshu* (Changchun: Jilin Wenshi Chubanshe, 1988) 243.

[49]. Henry Rosemont Jr., and Roger T. Ames, *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence: A Philosophical Translation of The Xiaojing* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009) 105.

[50]. Bao Zhenyuan and Ma Jifan, *Zhongguo Lidai Kuxing Shilu* (Beijing: China Social Science Press, 1998) 1.

convicts' dignity. Actually some Confucian scholars were openly opposed to brutal physical punishments. For instance, Zigao子高, a Confucian official of the Chu楚 State in the Warring States period, succeeded in dissuading the King of the Qi齊王 from carrying out the corporal punishment of tearing a criminal's body into pieces with five horse-drawn carts steered toward different directions.[51] Although Confucius himself was opposed to the enforcement of human sacrifices, he had little objections to volunteered self-sacrifices in accordance with the feudal ethical codes.[52] In *Lienü zhuan* 列女傳 (Categorised Biographies of Women), a textbook-like biographies for educating women, there is a story about Jing Jiang 敬姜, the mother of a powerful aristocrat in the Lu 魯 State. Being worried that her son's reputation might be ruined as her son's concubines were 'overreacting' to her son's death, Jing Jiang 敬姜 reproached them and besought them to be self-restraint because 'the man favours the inner quarters, his women will die for him; the man prefers public life his officers will die for him.' Heard of this, Confucius praised her for her 'sagacity'.[53] From his favorable comment on Jing Jiang's admonition, we can at least say that Confucius approved of those voluntary sacrifices to an extent as they were in accord with the ancient rituals. Moreover, considering that the Chinese bureaucratic system and its performance were largely based on Confucian ideology, Confucianism was not totally inculpable of such brutalities.

Although Confucianism held benevolent rule in highest esteem, it did not exclude corporal punishments.[54] The Chinese character *xing* 刑, signifying penalty or punishment, also means tortures. Confucius's teaching on the relation between the ethical reclamation through rituals and corporal punishments is: 'To bring them into consonance with rituals so people will (have a sense of) shame 齊之以禮, 則民恥矣; with punishments/tortures to deter tortures so people will be in fear (of penalties) 刑以止刑, 則民懼矣.'[55] Such a stance of open-endedness concerning penalty/tortures in Confucianism more or less provided the theoretical justification for the abuse of tortures in Chinese judicial system. In ancient Chinese tradition, the penal law and the law of war were undifferentiated. The titles and functions of some officials in charge of criminal cases were intricately intertwined with those

51. Wang Junlin and Zhou Haisheng, trans. and annotated, *Kong congzi* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2012) 178.
52. Huang Zhanyue, *Gudai rensheng renxun tonglun* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2004) 293.
53. Zhang Jing, trans.and annotated, *Lienü zhuan jinzhu jinyi* by Liu Xiang (Taibei: Taiwan Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1994) 26.
54. Jin Liangnian, *Kuxing yu Zhongguo shehui* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 1991) 140.
55. Wang & Zhou 52

of military officers.[56] The cruel punishments to the enemies of tribal wars could also be applied to the criminal offenders, which greatly aggravated the cruelty of the punishments.[57] Any disobedience against the superior, not to mention the armed rebellion, would be regarded as a violation to the Confucian dogma of loyalty. Although it propagates kindness and morality on the ruler's side and due respect and submission on the subject's side, Confucianism does not leave the subjects much room. With absolute power, the ruler was apt to abuse the authority while the people could only plead for the ruler's mercy to bring them justice. Furthermore, the absolutisation of Confucian ethics made the severe punishments as the means of reigning.[58]

Moreover, legalism, an offshoot of Confucianism that interpreted human nature as evil, regards Confucian ideal of governing people through ritualistic influences as unrealistic. It advocates severe punishments to criminal acts to rectify the society, and amplifies the harshness of punishments to the convicts. Unlike Confucianism, legalists propounded the equality of measurement of penalty to both noblemen and commoners; however, both legalists and Confucianist emphasised the absolute authority of the monarchy. To them the law is tantamount to the means of brutally forcible execution of the law.[59] In ancient Chinese bureaucratic system, the two schools complemented one another. Ritualistic influences intensified by tough enforcement of law and order, such amalgam of Confucian-Legalist ideologies or 'Imperial Confucianism'[60] dominated the imperial China's politics over 2 millenniums.

Another hideous custom in Ancient China that can rouse strong indignation is the implementation of human sacrifices, which can be generally classified into two kinds: those offered to spirits and those buried alive with the dead. The former signify the victims, mainly captives from enemies, to 'late ancestors, divinities and all natural objects' while the latter those 'close relatives, subjects and servants' of the newly-deceased, who were 'clan chiefs, family heads, slave owners and feudal loads (sic)'.[61] They are called *sheng*牲 and *xun*殉 respectively in Chinese. Generally speaking, the situations for those who died as *xun*殉 were

56. Jin 137.
57. Jin 138.
58. Guo Chenglong, "Rujia sixiang yu Zhongguo gudai kuxing儒家思想與中國古代酷刑," The research Centre for Criminal Justice of Renmin University of China. Web, 15 May 2013. http://www.criminallaw.com.cn/article/default.asp?id=2141.
59. Jin 141.
60. John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History,* 2nd ed. (Harvard University Press, 2006) 61.
61. Huang Zhanyue 304.

much better than the *sheng,* who were either dismembered alive, tortured to death, or lucky enough to be simply decapitated. As the *xun* had been the former retainers, clerks or close relatives of the deceased, they were granted the privileges to retain their whole body after death, being buried alive inside the burial chamber. They died willingly or at least refrained from expressing their objections openly, believing it their responsibility to accompany their masters to the nether world as they owed everything to their masters.[62] The *xun* practices were manifestations of the Chinese value of repaying the debt of gratitude, which bore certain similarity to self-immolating practices in Chinese Buddhism.

This kind of loyalty reflects the unequal relationships between the masters and their subordinates, which permeated ancient Chinese society. Among those sacrificed, there were also occasionally the wives, courtiers, or intimate ministers of the monarch and those high-minded men called *yishi* 義士 in Chinese who volunteered to die for their superiors.[63] Their voluntary self-sacrifices, with thanks to the effective means of brainwashing through the Confucian dogma of 'subduing one's self to restore the feudal ethics and rites 克己復禮', which successfully maintained the authoritarian rule through millenniums. The fact that Confucianism could become the state religion was largely because of it was based on the patriarchal system. The systematic and pervasive education of 'illuminating human relations' 明人倫 extended the concept of 'filial piety', one of the most important proprieties in Confucianism, to the relations between the emperor and his subjects. In Confucianism, the idea of *zhong* 忠 or loyalty, especially to the monarch, is always closely related with *xiao*孝 or filial piety. As the idea of loyalty was elevated to a level as high as that of filial piety, it becomes an inherent responsibility that one needs to fulfil. For the inferior, the superior's remuneration for his/her service is a kind of favour that the inferior should always keep in mind. Total submission to one's superior was regarded as a necessity for maintaining a harmonious relationship of the society. Deep in the concepts of 'royalty' 忠 and 'filial piety' 孝 is the sense of an obligation to repay a debt of gratitude to those who show their kindness. This idea, though not unique to the school, is given special priority in Confucianism, and has become part and parcel of traditional Chinese ideal.

The phenomenon of human sacrifices once widely popular in primitive societies around the world, it surprisingly continued in China for almost its whole imperial history till

62. Huang Zhanyue, 85.
63. Huang Zhanyue 292.

as late as the late 17th century in the reign of the Emperor Kangxi 康熙 (1662-1722) of the Qing 清 Dynasty as he decreed prohibition of such practices for those deceased middle and low-level Manchu officers in 1673. This prohibition put an end to human sacrifices to the funerals not only of ordinary officials but those of the imperial family and high-rank nobility.[64] But human sacrifices as a social phenomenon continued among the people till around the founding of the Republic of China in 1911. Due to the authority's commendations for the loyalty of those volunteered sacrifices, the number of those women who were sacrificed for their deceased husbands during the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1911) could have reached 500,000 to 600,000, averaging 1,000 each year.[65]

From the facts presented above, it is easy to see that the body in ancient China as a carrying agent of ritual ancestor worship was endowed with much social functions. The body can be served as the best means to displaying the sacrifice's loyalty, gratitude and submission to pay for his or her deceased superior's favour. In this regard, we can say that the body in the traditional Chinese sense had already been endowed with certain religious elements in very ancient times, which had, in some senses, laid the foundation for the Mahāyāna body-offering practices.

If the traditional Chinese view about the body and its relevant functions had served as a cultural basis for the development of the body-offering practices in Buddhism, then the Buddhist self-sacrifices had much more in common with the Mohists and their derivative *xia* 俠, which can be roughly translated into English as knight-errants though the word in Chinese bears much broader connotations.

Mohism and the *Xia* Culture: The Code of Honour and Morals

All ancient Chinese philosophic traditions are generally summed up into two major schools: the Famous or Predominant Learning 顯學, which derived its name due to its prevailing position or popularity; and the Dark or Mysterious Learning 玄學. The former generally refers to the pragmatic teachings propounded by Confucius孔子 and the highly idealistic, altruistic, religious yet short-lived doctrines by Mozi 墨子 (4th 4entury BCE), and the latter the Neo-Daoist movement of a highly philosophic and metaphysical nature during the 3rd to 6th century. Though it has its universal appeal to the modern people around the

64. Huang Zhanyue 286.
65. Huang Zhanyue 295-296.

world, early Daoism had been generally regarded as a subculture during the pre-Buddhist era in China.

The name 'Mohism' or rather 'Mo House 墨家' is derived from the name of its founder Mozi.[66] Rising to fame from a probably low birth due to his altruistic hardships, Mozi was influenced by Confucian traditions of respecting the modest mode of social management by the ancients while abhorring the aristocrats' extravagant way of living. However, he was opposed to the rituals and the social refinements propounded by the Confucius School, and instead advocated thrifty and hard labour for the good of the many.[67] Mohism was famous for its philosophy of indiscriminating or universal love 兼愛. Such an all-inclusive love, as he indicated, is the Will of Heaven 天志. It advocated unselfish distribution of services to the people for a just cause even at the cost one's own life. He suggested following the Will of Heaven because of its selfless and undifferentiated generosity,[68] which 'invoked a strong rhetoric for conformity to authority—in particular, the authority of one's leaders and Heaven above'.[69] However, it is individuals themselves not the Heaven that decide what they should do and the Heaven only metes out rewards or punishments accordingly.[70] In this regard, he seemed to recognise the significance of 'free will'. However, for the believers of his school, they can exert such 'free will' so long as they were endowed with the correct view of the morality, which is called as Heaven's *Yi*義, or justice. Yet as few people have such endowments, the majority of the people have to rely on the practice called as 'Upward Conformity尚同', acting accordingly to the sage's guidance. Only by following the instructions of those who have the right understandings of the Heaven's *Yi*義, usually the leader of the organisation, can the disciples tread on the right path.[71] Mozi's philosophy was based on the beliefs in the Will of Heaven and the justice of ghosts and gods, hence religious. Mozi's teachings enjoyed great popularity among the people, especially the grass roots, during his lifetime, which can be reflected from the fact that his disciples following him all around numbered one hundred and eighty, far exceeding

66. The late illustrious historian Qian Mu錢穆 thought that the word '*mo*墨' might be derived from an ancient punishment of tattooing in a criminal's forehead, and hence reflected his low social status, rather than from his surname. See Qian Mu, "Mozi," *Mozi, Hui Shi, Gongsun Long, Zhuangzi zhuan*, in *Qian Binsi xiansheng quanji*, vol. 6 (Taibei: Lianjing chubanshe, 1998) 3.
67. Qian, "Mozi" 33-34.
68. Wu Yujiang, comp., *Mozi jiaozhu* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1993) 30.
69. Brindley 1.
70. Brindley 5.
71. Brindley 6.

Confucius's seventy-seven retinues.[72] The followers formed a highly-organised paramilitary society, following their leader from place to place for their peace-keeping missions.

However, just as Qian Mu pointed out that there existed a deadly inherent conflict in Mozi's philosophy. To benefit others at the cost of one's own interests is simply against human nature; and the popularisation of his ideals requires interaction among people. But, in reality, most people only wish that others take the initiative while they themselves enjoy the benefits.[73] Such unrealistic teaching asked too much from its followers. That partly explains why such a doctrine once so influential would finally sink into oblivion. A touching story from *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (Mister Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals) would illustrate the situation well:

Meng Sheng孟勝, the leader of the Mohists soon after Mozi's death, was appointed to be in charge of the vavasory of Lord of Yangcheng陽城君 in the state of Jing荊. Lord of Yangcheng broke a piece of jade into two and gave a half to Meng, informing him only when the two pieces were fitted into a whole would he be entitled to carry out whatever actions Meng deemed appropriate. Later, after the King of Jing荊王 died, the officials and ministers were united to attack the Prime Minister Wu Qi吳起 (440—381 BC), whose reform had greatly reduced the power of the aristocrats in Jing, as Wu was holding the funeral procession. Wu, in his anxiety, bent over the king's corpse in the hope that the king's body might bring him some security. But he was shot dead by the arrows from the attackers' bows. However, some arrows missed the target and struck the king's body, which incurred the death sentences to the three generations of the shooter according to the laws of Jing. Lord of Yangcheng was just one of those shooters. Later, as the prince of Jing ascended the throne, he decreed that those who were involved in revolt be executed and their vavasories be confiscated. The lord escaped successfully. Meng, as the trustee of the city, decided to end his life as a fulfillment of his responsibilities for either resistance or surrender would make him a rebel against the new king or the lord respectively. Despite the bitter dissuasion from his disciple Xu Ruo徐弱, Meng was resolved to commit suicide. Unable to discourage the master from his resolve, Xu, as a Mohist himself, killed himself in advance. After Meng's self-sacrifice, one hundred and eighty-three Meng's followers committed suicides to follow their

[72]. Qian, "Mozi" 43.
[73]. Qian, "Mozi" 36—37.

masters.[74]

There are quite a few such heartbreaking stories about the Mohists. Their selfless deeds signified their belief that the meaning of life is to fulfill the obligations of a Mohist to realise their Universal Love, even at the cost of their own lives. The Mohists followed Mozi's example to live a stringent life and sacrifice themselves for the benefit the people. From their behaviours, we can find some similarities with those of altruistic deeds by some of the eminent monks.

Another aspect which needs to be addressed in the story above is Mohist attitude towards the *xun*殉 tradition. As Huang Zhanyue points out that Mozi's stance of opposition to extravagant burial rites without condemning the *xun*殉 tradition might have been responsible for the phenomenon that in the Eastern Zhou東周 many ministers or 'righteous men' volunteered to die with their masters though it is hard to say that any pre-Qin Chinese philosopher overtly advocated human sacrifices.[75] This conclusion might sound somewhat hasty for it is clearly a reiteration of an assumption by Guo Moruo郭沫若 (1892—1978) based on a passage in the text *Mozi*墨子 in which the author described the human sacrifices and extravagant burials during his time and only criticised the practice of burying luxurious material goods with the dead and the absurdity of burial rites.[76] The lack of condemnation of human sacrifices in the *Mozi* did not necessarily represent Mozi's approval of such brutal practices. Moreover, there is a remote possibility that Mozi himself ever composed the text. However, Mohist ideas of 'Upward Conformity尚同' and '*Yi*義' did have a significant influence over the later generations. This is important because later we will have more cases of the similar nature that reflected another aspect in Chinese culture that emphasised the bodily self-sacrifices as a way of repaying a debt of gratitude. To summarise, a strong sense of duty and morality prompted the early Mohists to fulfil their missions of safeguarding righteousness even at the cost of their own lives. The ascetic way of living and unadulterated self-discipline produced these stoics. They were willingly to die for a just cause they believed to be of universal value.

Mohism as a distinctive philosophic school was short-lived because of innately

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74. Xu Weiyu trans. and com. *Lüshi Chunqiu jishi* by Lü Buwei,vol. 2, in *Xinbian Zhuzi Jicheng* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2009) 521—522.
75. Huang Zhanyue 293.
76. Guo Moruo, "*Mojia jiezang bu feixun*," *Guo Moruo quanji: Lishibian*, vol.3 (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1984) 137—138.

discrepant elements. The appeal of early Mohism was from its followers' deeds rather than the doctrines.[77] Later its emphasis diverged from religious idealism to a rationalistic philosophy, then sophism, and finally died out. However, their spirit of great courage, austerity and selfless dedication to the course was inherited by those called *xia*俠 or knight-errants in the early years of the West Han 西漢.[78] In this regard, those Mohists can be regarded as the forerunners of the *xia* tradition in later generations. Largely misleading and stereotyping, those people depicted in popular fictions and films were invariably adept in martial arts and eager to defeat the evil guys with either their kicks and beats or swords. Actually, many of those xia俠 were ordinary people or even gentle intellectuals who gave up their lives simply out of self-imposed duties. Although many of them fell far shorter of moral advantages compared with the Mohists, their selfless, sometimes even foolish sacrifices are really touching and remembered by the people.

Before the appearance of the word *xia* 俠 in the text by legalist Han Fei韓非(*c*. 280—233 BCE) its closest equivalent we can find now had been the Chinese word *jia*夾, symbolising two small people or *ren*人 holding a big person in the middle under its arms. The idea can be unmistakably deduced that it defines the action of assisting an important person. According to the *Shuowen jiezi zhu*說文解字註 (A Commentary on the *Explaining and Analyzing Characters*) by the philologist Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (1735—1815), the word *jia*夾 had been used in the place of the word *xia*俠 in classic works, and Duan also quoted the words by Ru Chun如淳 (3rd century) to explain that '(the person) Keeping in line (with his superior's view of) right and wrong is a *xia*同是非為俠' and 'With the power, (he) runs amuck in the village and town, with the force (he) defeats the duke and marquis權行鄉里, 力折公侯者也.'[79] Han Fei, who had lived centuries before and been contemporary to the golden age of the *xia* 俠 culture, made such comments on these people, which would give us more details:

The Confucians with their learning bring confusion to the law; the knights[80] with

77. Qian, "Mozi" 60.
78. Qian, "Mozi" 79.
79. Duan Yucai, annotated, *Shuowen jiezi zhu* by Xu Shen (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1981) 373a.
80. The word 'knights' here, preferably rendered simply as *xia*俠, is not an appropriate translation as it may cause confusions to the reader, especially a westerner. As the constitution of Chinese *xias*俠 is much more diverse and their qualities intermingled than the word 'knights' might suggest. I choose to use *xia*俠 throughout my text.

> their military prowess violate the prohibitions. Yet the ruler treats both groups with respect, and so we have disorder. People who deviate from the law should be treated as criminals, and yet the scholars actually attain posts in the government because of their literary accomplishments. People who violate the prohibitions ought to be punished, and yet the bands of knights are able to make a living by wielding their swords in a private cause....[81]

From the descriptions above, we can say that the original meaning of the word *xia* 俠 represented by its variant *jia*夾 referred to the assistance that was given by the people of lower social status to their superiors. The addition of another person or *ren*亻to the left side of the word *jia* 夾 endows the word with the status of a noun. Such a person who defied laws with his "military prowess" to serve his superior only would be immediately at odds with the Legalist moral codes, and hence incurred Han's condemnations. This corroborates the fact that with the weakening of the central government and the rise of the warlords in the vassal states, the feudalistic Eastern Zhou周 was unable to maintain its control. With the fierce competitions among the states, each state sought to reform its old system for survive or dominance in their bitter struggles. With the social classes reshuffled, aristocrats could no longer have their prestiges like before, and people had to redefine their own identities in the society. Many government officials and servicemen with their education and military training no longer felt contented with their meagre existences, and began travelling from state to state to seek their fame and fortune. Those who excelled at martial arts and military strategies were probably the earliest xias 俠 in China.[82] The interesting thing is that Han juxtaposed those xias with Confucian scholars without recognising that the Confucians' remonstration of the application of harsh laws in governing the people had the same purpose as his: to consolidate the ruler's absolute power. Their only difference lies in that Confucians sought to rule people in a more sustainable way while legalists cared for the instant effect. Han's remarks demonstrated his belief in the supremacy and effectiveness of law.

However, unlike the word 'knight' in the Western sense which stands for a social class of professional soldiers serving their lords or sovereign, the Chinese *xia* 俠 was more inclusive, denoting such a group of people from all social strata that were able to easily give up their lives for a particular cause, in most cases for their superiors or benefactors. It was a social phenomenon especially popular before the Wu Emperor of the Han Dynasty漢武帝 (141—87 BCE). It was an individualistic trend in defiance of an unjust and corrupt

[81]. Burton Watson, trans. *Han Fei Tzu: Basic Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964) 105.
[82]. Wang Yonghao, *Zhongguo youxia shi* (Shanghai: Fudan Daxue Chubanshe, 2001) 7-8.

bureaucracy. Unlike early xias 俠 in the Zhou周 Dynasty (11th century—256 BCE), most of whom had been probably from the *shi* 士 class, gentry scholars well trained in both literary and military arts before Confucianism had been well-established,[83] the composition of *xiad* 俠 ever since the later Zhou周 Dynasty became highly diversified with the great changes of the Chinese society. Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145—85 BCE) of the Han漢 Dynasty depicted a picture of miscellaneous xias: officials, aristocrats, reclusive scholars unwilling to serve the corrupt aristocrats or government, ordinary people and even thugs.[84] Among these people, many were not marked for their martial arts at all.[85] The moral integrity of xias were also vastly different. It is obvious that Sima's xias俠 were quite different from that of Han's. Sima's xias were of different social backgrounds and character traits. The common features as summarised by Sima are selfless courage, steely determination, personal royalty and trustworthiness though he did recognise that all xias of his time were not conditioned by the sense of righteousness.[86] Sima's appreciative stance on the xia's bravery and resoluteness is probably susceptible to his discontent at his colleagues' callousness as he was subject to the inhuman punishment. In his *Shiji*史記, Sima Qian intentionally highlights the positive characters of the heroes with the *xia*俠 qualities. However, his redefinition of the *xia* concept highlights the individual's personality instead of the painstaking services a subordinate did for his/her superior,[87] which the originally had stood for. I identify with Sima's inclusive definition as it presents it as a kind of quality that ancient Chinese once possessed, especially prevalent throughout the Eastern Zhou東周, Qin秦 and early Han漢 Dynasty. Such a spirit, as it has been generalised by Sima Qian司馬遷, is the adjectivisation of the word *xia*俠 in the sense of *xiayi*俠義, being loyal to one's personal friend/master and willing to sacrifice oneself.[88] Here the justifiability of the heroic deed itself is intentionally ignored. Thus, the word *xia*俠 has been cleansed of any indecent factor and retains its positive sense only.[89] In

83. Wang Yonghao 3-4.
84. Sima Qian, *Shi ji* (Shanghai: Zhonghua Shuju, 1999) 2413-14.
85. Wang Yonghao 28.
86. Sima 2413.
87. Wang Yonghao 18.
88. Dictionary Editing Department, Language Institute of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, "俠 (xia)," *Xiandai Hanyu cidian*, 6th Edition (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 2012) 1402a.
89. Jiang Zhiyou 蔣智由 (1865—1929) was very critical of Sima's selection of the *xia* in his *Shi ji*史記, pointing out that Mozi's effort to promote the universal justice has the greatest and purest *xia* spirit in its true sense while in Sima's *Shi ji*史記 most people recorded as *xia*俠 who aspired to reward their friends/masters with their own lives for personal benevolence are of inferior qualities. See Jiang Zhiyou, preface, *Zhongguo zhi Wushidao* by Liang Qichao, in *Yinbingshi quanji* , vol. 24 (Shanghai: Zhonghua Shuju, 1936) 3.

this regard, Liang Qichao's adoption of the Japanese term '*bushido* 武士道' to represent the ancient Chinese heroism generalises well such specific qualities of ancient Chinese people. As Liang's friend Yang Du 楊度 (1875—1931) indicated that the word '*bushido* 武士道', or the way of a warrior, may express the national character of the whole Japanese race instead of the samurai class only,[90] the Chinese xia spirit, which embraced the ancient Chinese people, lacks no characteristics of its Japanese counterpart.

In Sima's biographies of the *xia* 俠 in his *Shi ji*史記, the ultimate embodiment of the xia spirit is probably the sacrifice of one's own life for paying a debt of gratitude to one's bosom friend or master. Among those fearless xias in his text are many assassins, who sought justice or revenge for their sponsors.[91] Such voluntary deaths, as Yang Du楊度 concluded, are all of wholesome nature according to the criteria proposed by the Japanese educationist Kato Totsudo 加藤咄堂(1870-1949).[92] The recurrent theme of the self-sacrifices for the sake of fulfilling one's responsibility or repaying the debt of gratitude is not so dissimilar to the Buddhist self-immolating rituals. However, the Chinese *xia* spirit is not limited to the superior-inferior relationships. In its broad sense, it stands for strong sense of dignity and responsibility. Following are several most touching and representative cases, from which we may have a glimpse of the ancient Chinese mentality and get the trace of its fusion with the Buddhist idea of 'Perfection of Giving'.

The story about an assassin called Yu Rang豫讓 is probably among the most heartbreaking ones. Yu Rang served Count Zhi智伯, the most powerful minister of Jin晉 State, and was treated with respect. Count Zhi tried to extract part of the lands from the three distinguished families Zhao趙, Han韓 and Wei魏, whose heads were all Jin's ministers, but was rejected by the Zhaos. Count Zhi sent his army to attack Zhao's manor but was only destroyed by the three families and his land was also carved up by them. Zhao Xiangzi趙襄子, the leader of the Zhao family, made a drinking vessel of Count Zhi's skull. Yu Rang

[90]. Yang Du, preface, *Zhongguo zhi Wushidao* by Liang Qichao, in *Yinbingshi quanji*, vol. 24 (Shanghai: Zhonghua Shuju, 1936) 5。

[91]. In Sima Qian's *Shi ji*史記, most of the xias are actually under the subtitle of 'Biographies of Assassins'. Sima puts the wandering xias and assassins under separate subtitles; however, they both signified the *xia* qualities as he generalises. That is the reason why Wang Yonghao 汪涌豪 treats both as xias.

[92]. The positive ways of death include: confronting death the same as life, sacrificing one's life so as to achieve the well-being of the society, and willing accepting the approaching death as the mandate of heaven; the negative ones are committing suicides to eliminate suffering, dying for love in the hope of acquiring a second life, and committing suicide in the hope to achieve the happiness in the afterlife (qtd. in Yang Du 14) .

escaped into mountains and vowed to avenge his master's death. He changed his name and disguised himself as a slave in the penal servitude to work at Zhao's toilet decorating the walls, seeking the chance to murder Xiangzi with the knife concealed in his clothes. One day, as Rang was working, Xiangzi went into the toilet to do his needs, but he was suddenly filled with apprehension. He immediately grabbed Rang and discovered his true identity. Instead of killing the assassin, Xiangzi just released him for his loyalty to the deceased master.

Not discouraged by the failure, Rang disfigured himself by smearing some paint on his whole body, which caused the skin to be covered with sores, just like a leprous patient. On top of that, he swallowed scorching charcoal to render his voice hoarse so that even his wife was unable to recognise him. Then he was dressed as a beggar in the market, waiting there to kill his enemy. But one of his old friends discovered him and asked him why as a capable man he had not contrived to be an assistant to Xiangzi so it would be much easier for him to achieve his goal without having to undergo such self-inflictions. Rang replied that it would only make him a bad example for the future generations as an unfaithful official to his unsuspecting superior. Later, Rang hid himself under the bridge that Xiangzi had to pass every day to ambush him. However, when Xiangzi approached the bridge, his horse was startled, which made him believe that Rang was nearby. So he asked his men to find him. As Rang came to Xiangzi, Xiangzi blamed him, ‘You'd served the Fans範 and Zhongxings 中行 before working for Count Zhi. Count Zhi killed them both and you didn't avenge their deaths. Instead, you chose to serve Count Zhi. Now Count Zhi was already dead. Why did you take revenge for him only?’

‘The Fans and Zhongxings treated me as an ordinary person while Count Zhi regarded me as an eminent guy. I returned their favours according to their due differently.’ Rang replied.

Xiangzi was deeply moved by his steadfast will. He sighed, ‘Alas, Mr. Yu! You’ve established your reputation for avenging Count Zhi's death and I did my duty to set you free last time. But this time I shan't let you go. Settle the case for yourself, please.’ With these words, he ordered his soldiers to besiege Rang.

Rang thanked Xiangzi for his generosity and expressed his willingness to receive his death. However, he asked Xiangzi for a last favour: to let him thrust his robe three times as a token of the fulfillment of his vow. Xiangzi gave his consent and passed him his robe. Rang

struck the robe three times with his knife and then killed himself. The whole state was stunned by his action.[93]

The direct cause of Count Zhi's downfall, as we can see, is his insatiable and excessive greed for land and power, which hardly bears any moral justifications. In this regard, Yu Rang's sacrifice is blind and lacks universal ethical basis. It does not fully comply with the Confucian ethics, either. Although Confucianism advocates repaying a debt of gratitude, it at the same time emphasised the principle that one should not go against the superior犯上. Yu Rang's attempt to murder Zhao Xiangzi, a high minister of the state, simply for his personal grudge is obviously not so permissible. Moreover, compared with Rang's lofty selflessness, Xiangzi's magnanimity also displays his charismatic personality. To kill such a great person out of one's personal hatred also runs contrary to the norm. Such disproportionate loyalty at the cost of one's own life may sound ridiculous for most people. However, it is such total submission of oneself to one's masters or bosom friends that became the most distinctive feature of the code of conduct for Chinese *Bushido*.

Immediately after this story in the *Shi ji* is another assassin's story that even involves a heroine.

Yan Sui 嚴遂, an official of the Han State 韓國was at odds with Minister Han Kui韓傀, who won the favour of the Marquis of Han 韓侯. The situation worsened to the degree that Han was going to kill Yan. Yan fled to the Qi State 齊國, inquiring about the person who could avenge his defeat. There he found a butcher named Nie Zheng 聶政, a fugitive famous for his bravery. After having paid several fruitless visits, Yan finally had the chance to invite Nie to a meal. At the table, Yan presented a handsome amount of money to Nie as the present for his mother's birthday, and then secretly told him about his plan. Nie promised that he would help Yan after he fulfilled his family obligations to his mother and sister. Years later, after his mother's death and sister's marriage, Nie traveled to the Han State and murdered Han while Han's bodyguards were around. Fearing that it might get his sister in trouble, Nie disfigured himself by gouging out his eyes and cutting his face with his sword. Then he cut his stomach open till his entrails spilled out. He died then.

Nie's corpse was displayed in the public place, and a large sum of money was offered to have the assassin's identity revealed, but nobody was able to identify the killer. After the

[93]. Sima 1962-63.

news of the reward for the identity of Han's murderer spread to the Qi State, Nie's sister Rong 榮 hurried to the Han State and recognised Nie's body. She wailed beside his corpse, which attracted the attention of the passers-by. She told them about Nie's story. As the people wondered how she could be so bold as to reveal the assassin's identity and her relationship with him. Rong told them that she would not be afraid to get killed by the Hans because she wanted her brother's name to be remembered by the people. Yan's visit to his humble dwelling made him determine to repay the gratitude. Now he had honoured his promise and deserved to win a good fame. After she had related the story, she cried out heavens three times and died of great sorrow for her brother. Nie could have saved the trouble to disfigure himself if he had known his sister's unyielding nature well.[94]

In the story above, the character of both Nie Zheng and Rong embodies the principles of Chinese knight-errantry. Nie Zheng, as the main character in this story, revealed his loyalty to his friend, who appreciated the value of his talents and fearlessness. As Nie Zheng promised to do what was requested from him, his life had already been dedicated to his friend. For the people like Nie Zheng, good fame weighs far more than life and wealth. To requite favours to one's patron or bosom friend is a great honour. All these tributes easily make us to draw parallels with those of Bushido. And his valour to sustain the great pain to disfigure himself let us think of Sengya's deeds.

In this story, the other important character Rong is no less impressive. As a female figure she demonstrated such bravery that most men are short of, which was especially significant in a male-dominated society. She had definitely foreseen the danger of going to the the Qi State to claim her brother's body before her journey, but the will to honour her brother's death lest his glory be buried in history prompted her to carry out the death mission, leaving the great fame of both her brother and herself generations later.

Such stories are quite few in Sima Qian's *Shi ji*, and yet the heroes were not limited to male or a specific social group. This kind of heroic and selfless sentiment, which might have initiated by knight-errantry, had actually been pervasive before an autocratic China was fully consolidated. Among them there were even aristocrats and men of letters. [95] One more story in the *Zuo zhuan*左傳 (Chronicle of Zuo) may suffice to fully illustrate the ubiquity and

94 Sima 1964—67.

95. Liang Qichao梁啓超 counts Confucius as the number one in his list of heroes in the *Chinese Bushido* as Confucius demonstrated his gallantry and royalty to his home state in his diplomatic mission with the powerful Qi齊. See Liang, *Wushidao* 1.

idiosyncrasy of the Chinese *xia* spirit:

Duke Xuan宣公 of the Wei衛 State had had illicit sexual relation with his father's concubine Yi Jiang夷姜 since he was still a prince and they had a son called Ji急. As the duke succeeded the throne, Ji was made crown prince then. As Ji was to marry Xuan Jiang宣姜, a princess of the Qi齊 State, Duke Xuan had long coveted the beauty of his future daughter-in-law, so he secretly took her as his own wife. Soon Xuan Jiang bore him two children: Prince Shou壽 and Shuo朔, and wanted to make one of her own son as the crown prince. Prince Shou, the elder son of Xuan Jiang, had been keen on Ji since childhood, yet Shuo was a guy with evil thoughts. Both the duke and his wife felt ashamed of their scandal, so with Prince Shuo's incitations, they both wanted Shuo to replace Ji as the heir apparent. Though Duke Xuan tried to find fault with Ji so as to deprive of his title, Ji had always behaved himself well. Urged by Shuo and Xuan Jiang, the Duke plotted to kill Prince Ji. As the Duke of Qi request the Wei State to join the forces attacking a small state called Ji紀, Duke Xuan asked Prince Ji to be the envoy to the Qi State negotiating the details. At the same time, Duke Xuan arranged the ambush of bandits on the way to the Qi State beforehand, and asked them to kill the man holding a white *jie* 節, a token signifying an envoy's identity. Having overheard the plot, Shou warned Ji of the danger just before his departure, and pleaded him to decline the mission. However, Ji resolved to fulfill his filial piety and the duty as an envoy in spite of Shou's warning. Unable to dissuade Ji from his death mission, Shou managed to steal Ji's *jie* 節 and hurried to the spot where the bandits had been waiting. He got killed there. Found the *jie*節 lost, Ji rode to the spot and told the bandits that he was the person they had been waiting for. The bandits killed him and took both heads of Shou and Ji to the duke for rewards. Stricken by the deep sorrow of the loss of another innocent son and probably with the pang of guilty, he died heartbroken soon.[96]

From the story of Ji and Shou, we can feel the same undauntedness, loyalty and honour as those manifested in Yu Rang's. Without causing any damage to their dignity, both Shou and Ji could have averted their deaths if they had chosen to. However, they both made the difficult choice to fulfill their obligations as a 'Superior Man' or *junzi*君子 in Chinese. As a friend, Shou sacrificed his life to right the wrong of his father; Ji, as a son virtually disowned and snared by his father unjustly, chose to die a hero's death as a dutiful son instead

[96]. Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhu*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1995) 145-146.

of seeking revenge. These are incomprehensible to westerners, who believe in individualism and social justice. However, in view of the traditional oriental ethics, they are all perfect examples of humanity. Their way of choosing the difficult path instead of the easy ones bears striking resemblances to that of the monks who used their flesh as offerings to the Buddha in their determination, unequivocal moral principles and self-sacrificial valour despite the fact that they had different objectives in their minds.

Although the xia侠 spirit demonstrated some traditional values that rulers would like people to inherit—such selfless loyalty, if being directed towards the monarch, would have been welcome, its individualism, militancy and lawlessness were too much for any dictators to tolerate. After autocratic empire had been established, knight-errants were supressed, especially during the reins of the emperor Jing景 (188—141 BCE) and Wu武 (141—87 BCE) of the Han Dynasty.[97] The ethos of suicidal militancy and personal loyalty was greatly diminished yet never totally died out. It simply turned into a subculture and went underground. Condemned as antisocial and lawless by the authority, it kept winning favour from the grass roots as a way to compensate for the social injustice in an autocratic society, and was praised as the resurrection of the long-lost ancient values of loyalty and valour.

It will not be so difficult to see that with the introduction of body-offering teaching in Mahāyāna Buddhism, the xia侠tradition might have easily given full vent to the religious fervour. The integration between the existing subculture with the foreign religious teachings gave rise to new forms of religious rites and the cause of devotion became much loftier—the enlightenment of the ultimate truth and liberation from all defilements. The appeal was almost irresistible.

This supposition of the relation between knight-errantry and ritualistic sacrifices may sound far-fetched to some people; however, certain features of similarities between the two cannot be overlooked and can be treated as evidences of such integrations.

Similarities between Xias and the Self-Sacrificial Monks

It is obvious that the xias and Buddhist monks belong to different social groups and differ in their values and ideals. The xias sacrifices their lives for either personal loyalty to someone or justice while the monks for religious accomplishments. However, through a close

[97]. Liang Qichao, introduction, *Wushidao* 21.

look at all these self-sacrificial deeds we can find many similar features between the two, which can be roughly summarised in three aspects: the social status, personality trait and motivation.

As far as their social status is concerned, xias as a whole and Buddhist monks were both marginal in the Chinese society. Many of their principles are at odds with the norms of Confucianism. Buddhism, though once had been predominant during some historical periods in ancient China, were generally considered as a sub-culture. Its renunciation of world life, transcendental ideal and material or bodily offerings to the Buddha were always targets of condemnations from mainstream Confucian scholars. The fate of Buddhism in China was largely at the mercy of the government, which was composed of Confucian literati, who from time to time sought restriction of its influences if not its total annihilation. On the other hand, to the orthodox Confucians the xias were tantamount to lawless people who violate laws and act wilfully. The constant witch-hunt for xias by the government demonstrates how abominable the xias in the eyes of the authority. Although monks in China were accorded the legal status in the society while xias were not, they both were supposed to be non-mainstream, more or less detached from worldly concerns in the eyes of the common people.

Marginal as they were, the most prominent qualities that make these two kinds of people similar might be their personality traits. They both shared quite a few features, among which the unconditional loyalty, uncompromising individualism and strong sense of mission and honour can be the most striking ones.

The unrestrained loyalty displayed itself in different manners for these two kinds of people. The self-immolating monks' bodily offerings were out of their piety to the Buddha, and the xias' suicidal deeds could be ascribed to their loyalty to their friends/masters. Both did not serve any utilitarian purposes—at least as the literary meaning of the word suggests. For many of them, leaving behind a good reputation sufficed for the loss of life. Their contributions were devoid of any consideration for this life; instead they were purely spiritual. Even the sacrifices of xias contains much religious significance, beyond the wildest imaginations of the worldly people. The monks aimed at the perfection of their religious practices while xias strove for the self-directed justice. Both were not meant for the ordinary people.

Not less impressive is the uncompromising individualism these two kinds of people revealed in their fearless deeds. They strived hard to maintain their freedom from the certain

social bounds they deem stifling, and both manifested themselves in the ways Durkheim might conceptualise as egoistic and altruistic suicides: the former refers to those resulting from 'the lack of integration of the individual into society'[98] or little integration of the individual into family life, while the latter suggests that when one's life is totally governed by principles and habit, self-homicides occurs due to certain higher commandments, which can be either religious sacrifice or personal commitments and allegiance. Both the monks and xias were discontented with the superficiality of the Confucian society, and tended to redress the social problems—hypocrisy, and social injustice—with them having their own doctrines, which rejected certain Confucian values. In Confucianism, the family is the core of all relationships in the society. It emphasises one's responsibilities in the family, and expands such family duties into the whole web of human relations. However, for the monks and most of xias neglected such social conventions. The monks usually highlighted their devotion to the Buddha or the Buddhist courses by renouncing their families, and most xias tended to put their relationships with their masters or bosom friends over that of the lineal relatives.[99] Yao Li要離, a man below average stature and strength yet famous for his dauntlessness, sacrificed his wife and his right arm for King Helü闔閭 (514—496 BCE) of the Wu吳 to gain the access to the King's enemy prince Qingji慶忌 to assassinate him.[100] Ths story is probably a fiction, but it to certain extent stereotyped the image of a heroic *xia* 俠. Filial piety is one of the most important virtues in Confucian morality. Buddhist monks abandon their families to join the monastic orders, caring about the parents' spiritual well-being rather than providing material support and affection. On the other hand, xias also had a bad reputation on this issue, and some were simply unwilling to perform filial duties.[101] Such practices of placing 'righteousness above family loyalty大義滅親' might sound cool and could be proud of for monks and xias, but unacceptible to most ordinary Chinese. They rejected generally-accepted stereotypes that Confucianism had established. The violent deeds of both the self-immolating monks and suicidal xias pushed such obstinacy to the extreme.

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98. Emile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, trans. John A. Spaulding and George Simpson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 2002) xiv.

99. In this regard, the case of Nie Zheng **聶政** might be an exception. He had chosen to fulfil his family obligations before his mission. Although there were some *xias* who followed the traditional morals and behaved gentlemanly, the basic values of the *xia* as a whole are antithetical to the generally-accepted social norms. See Wang Yonghao 307.

100. Zhao Ye, *Wuyue chunqiu*, in *Jiangsu difang wenxian congshu* (Nanjing: Jiangsu Guji Chubanshe, 1999) 35—40.

101. Wang Yonghao 310.

Inalienable sense of mission and honour is another important quality the two shared. Such sense of mission reached a level of incurable obsession for both. For the monks who did the bodily-offerings and the xias died for their bosom friends, once a great vow or promise was made, it had to be fulfilled to the fullest extent. It seems to them that any modest alternative meant a discount on their religious fervour or valour, and thus would bring shame upon them. In this regard, honour is a very important incentive that impelled them to carry out the mission. Those monks such as Puan 普安, Shaoyan 紹巖 and Shao Sheli紹闍梨 who had failed to accomplish their premeditated bodily offerings due to certain accidents usually felt depressed henceforth. Being depraved of the honour of achieving the ultimate donation could be a very important cause.

The other important factor that could make these two different kinds of people resemble each other lies in their motivations. As it has been mentioned before that repaying the debt of gratitude had been a traditional virtue long before the introduction of Indian Buddhism into China. As Buddhism was making its way into Chinese culture the traditional Chinese ideas also influenced Buddhism. According to the chapter titled 'Repaying the Debt of Gratitude 報恩品' in *Mahāyāna Sūtra of Mind Ground Contemplation* 大乘本生心地觀經, there are four kinds of kindness for which a Buddhist needs to repay. They are the kindness of one's parents, of all sentient beings, of the ruler and of the Triple Gems三寶.[102] The first three intensified the traditional moral teachings in ancient China, which concern filial piety to one's elders, kindness to others, and loyalty to the monarch, while the last refers to the Buddhist trinity: the Buddha, *dharma* and *saṃgh*a. The term of the 'Three Fields of Blessings 三福田 (*puṇya-kṣetra*)' appears in *Youposaijie jing* 優婆塞戒經 (*Upāsakaśīla sūtra*).[103] The first, the 'Field for Paying the Debt of Gratitude 報恩田,' refers to one's parents, teachers and spiritual masters; the second, the 'Field of Blessings of Merits 功德田,' includes those who attained various stages of Buddhist achievements. The accumulation of merits prepares the foundation for the future deliverance from the cycle of life and death. Although such donations to the 'Field of Blessings of Merits 功德田' are generally regarded as worldly ones leading to the spiritual liberation, the immolating monks accorded them no less inferior status. The categorisation of those benevolent factors can vary in different *sūtras*, but they generally represent the introduction of the religious venerations on the basis of the worldly

[102]. T.3, No.159, 297a12-13.
[103]. T.24, No.1488, 1051c5-6.

morality, which coincides with Confucianism. Among all the benevolent elements, the 'benevolence of the Buddha 佛恩' is the most significant for a Buddhist as it is the source of the whole Buddhist teachings. As the *Youposaijie jing*優婆塞戒經points out that the Buddha is both the 'Field for Paying the Debt of Gratitude報恩田' and the 'Field of Blessings of Merits功德田'. Inspired by the *jātaka* stories and those Mahāyāna scriptures promoting the bodily-offering rituals, the self-immolation soon became a fashion among Chinese Buddhist circle. As to xias 俠, although they paid little attention to most Confucian values, they regarded the virtue of 'repaying a debt of gratitude' as their highest principle. The motto that 'a gentleman would die for a bosom friend 士为知己者死' can be observed in the *xia* culture. The objects for the repayment of benevolence are different for these two traditions; however, their central themes are not so dissimilar to one another.

All these similarities between the monks and xias who sacrificed their own lives to realise their ideals should not be simply dismissed as a coincidence. They were the result of the age-old integrations of two different ancient cultures. The *xun* 殉 practice of the ancient times and the suicidal deeds of xias had already paved the way ideologically for the acceptance of the bodily-offering ritual as a legitimate religious practice by many Chinese Buddhists, if not all. The idea of repaying the debt of gratitude as one's inalienable responsibility in traditional Chinese thinking, inspired by the emotional urge to express the gratitude for the Buddha's benevolence, coupled with the Buddhist teaching on selfless donations, particularly the Mahāyāna concept of Perfection of Giving (*dānapāramitā*), evolved into the extreme rituals.

In essence, both traditions, in implementing their respective duties or decisions, demonstrated their self-will in a highly autocratic and centralised society. Unlike the situations in Europe, in ancient China monarchism and humanistic ideas were not two opposing ideologies; monarchism was part of the humanistic ideas based on natural economy.[104] Although the Chinese humanistic tradition cultivated some people of integrity who dared to uphold their lofty ideals against the despotic power, the imperial examinations, and the lack of the Western-style medieval hierarchy improved the pluralism and the fluidity of members in the society, but the feudal ethical codes with the deeply ingrained sense of hierarchy depraved people of their individuality and the freedom of thought as a whole.

[104]. Liu Zehua, *Zhongguo de wangquanzhuyi: Chuantong shehui yu sixiang tedian kaocha* (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 2000) 215.

However, both xias and the monks' self-sacrificial traditions struggled to assert themselves in this unfavourable social conditions, and found the outlet for their individuality.

Conclusion

Ritualistic self-killings in Buddhism as a whole have generally come to an end nowadays in China; however, the modified versions of self-immolation as ways of offerings to the Buddha, such as finger-burning, incense-burning on arms and foreheads, etc., still persist. The ensuing debates over their legitimacy remain lively within the Buddhist circle. Although the mainstream believes such practices only tarnish the image of Buddhism as a peaceful, compassionate and rational religion, some still insist that as a way of expression of religious devotion and selfless donation such practices are Bodhisattva deeds. The end of the controversy over this issue is still nowhere in sight.

As it is mentioned before that those gift-of-the-body deeds in the three *Biographies* were inspired by some *jātaka* stories and Mahāyāna scriptures including the Bodisattva precepts in the Chinese *Brahmajala sūtra* 梵網經; however, the majority were directly influenced by some of the Mahāyāna texts. As Mahāyāna scriptures are of relatively later productions, and many of them promoting the bodily-offering rituals are of doubtful origins, it is better to have a look at some suicidal cases recorded in the early Buddhist texts. Through this we can get a genuine view of the Buddha's opinion about this issue.

In Chinese Buddhist canons, the four *Āgamas*阿含 (scriptures) are considered to be of early Buddhist scriptures. Although suicides are forbidden according to the *Vinaya*, some suicidal cases committed by the Buddha's disciples even had the Buddha's consent, which make the Buddhist view on this issue rather confusing. However, by surveying the causes, it is not difficult to form a general idea about the Buddha's attitude to suicides.

In Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama* 雜阿含經, there are several accounts about the monks' suicides. Chaṇḍaka 闡陀 (Pāli: Chaṇṇa) killed himself with a knife after having been plagued by the severe pain from his disease for quite a long time.[105] A similar incident about self-killing from the same volume is that of Vakkali 跋迦梨.[106] Godhika's 瞿低迦 suicide is interesting in its own way. It was not because of unbearable pain but the lack of meditational power to retain the spiritual attainment. As Vakkali's story is the most elaborate among the three, and only he had the opportunity to talk directly with the Buddha, by analysing it we can get a general idea of the Buddha's view on the self-killing in the situations alike.

[105]. T.2, No.99, 347b16-348b2.
[106]. T.2, No.99, 346b7-347b13.

Following is a translation of the excerpt of the dialogue between Vakkali and the Buddha in the text:

> ‘Can you endure this pain? Is what your body is suffering from increasing or reducing?’ asked the Buddha.
> Vakkali answered, ‘The pain is aching. It's too severe to bear. I want to get a knife to kill myself, and am not happy to live such a painful life.’
> The Buddha asked him, ‘Forms are permanent or impermanent?’
> ‘Impermanent,’ Vakkali answered.
> ‘If they’re impermanent, are they sufferings?’
> ‘Sufferings, indeed.’
> ‘If (they are) impermanence, sufferings, they are of changeable elements (*pariṇāmadharma*). Are there anything in which that are desirable, likable?’
> ‘No.’
> …...
> The Buddha told Vakkali, ‘If (the person) has nothing to desire for the body, so this means (he/she) will have a good death, and the next life will also be good.’[107]

After this conversation, on that night Vakkali wanted to commit suicide. Before the dawn next day, two celestial beings visited the Buddha to inform him of Vakalli's suicidal attempt and his attainment of liberation善解脫 (*vimukta*). After their disappearance, the Buddha sent a monk to Vakalli to tell him about the news. Just as the messenger arrived, Vakkali had already been carried out of his hut, preparing to kill himself. After the monk told Vakkali what the celestial being had told the Buddha together with the Buddha's prediction 記 (*vyākaraṇa*) that his afterlife would be a good one because of his eradication of attachment to his own body, Vakkali killed himself with a knife. Having heard of the news, the Buddha came to Vakkali's place with other monks. Seeing the auspicious signs on Vakkali's body, the Buddha declared that Vakkali had attained arhatship.[108]

Chaṇḍaka’s suicide is similar. The difference is that this time the visitors were two of the Buddha's great disciples—Śāriputra舍利弗 and Mahākauṣṭhila摩訶拘絺羅. They tried to dissuade Chaṇḍaka from his suicidal act vainly. They both also had a dialogue with Chaṇḍaka, asking him about the doctrines, and got the satisfactory answers. After Chaṇḍaka had committed suicide, the Buddha commented that the people who have transcended transmigrations are not to be blamed by giving up their lives while those who are still to have their continuation of transmigrations are culpable. Having heard of Chaṇḍaka’s understanding

[107]. T.2, No.99, 346b26-c7.
[108]. T.2, No.99, 346b26-347b13.

of the doctrines, the Buddha confirmed that he had also achieved arhatship.[109]

Godhika's situation is different from the other two. He attained the 'mind-release through *samsdhi*時受意解脫 (*samayatimukta*),'[110] a state of temporary spiritual liberation acquired through advanced meditation. However, from time to time he retrogressed hopelessly from this enlightened mental state. He became so frustrated that on the seventh time as he had attained this liberation he decided to kill himself in order to die in the enlightened state to attain the permanent liberation.[111] More dramatic in this story is that the demon king Māra tried to use his persuasion to make the Buddha dissuade Godhika from committing suicide, so he could keep Godhika within his realm of desire. The Buddha reprimanded the demon and chose not to interfere.

According to the stories above, it is very probable that Chaṇḍaka and Vikkali only achieved the 'liberation through wisdom慧解脫 (*prajñāvimukta*; Pāli: *paññavimutti*)'. The people who have attained this kind of 'liberation' have achieved the enlightenment that results in 'the permanent eradication of contaminants (*āsravakṣaya*), and leads to the cessation of rebirth' through the 'insight (*vipaśyanā*) into the three marks of existence: impermanence (*anitya*), suffering (*duḥkha*), and nonself (*anātman*)' without the mastery of meditation,[112] which explains the reason why these who had attained arhatship were still unable to endure the physical pain. Godhika 瞿低迦, on the other hand, had attained the 'mind-release through *samādhi*', which requires advanced meditation. However, his meditation was not so stable as to ensure him the final liberation from samsara. It is possible that this kind of liberation is a temporary one,[113] which is susceptible to external and internal factors. In this case, according to *Sāratthappakāsinī*, a commentary on the *Samyutta Nikāya* by Buddhaghoṣa, it suggests that it was due to the physical illness.[114] His suicide seems somewhat more culpable compared with the other two as he could have had the possibility to

[109]. T.2, No.99, 347b16-348a29.
[110]. Shi Hengqing 188.
[111]. As to the occasion when Godhika committed suicide, the Chinese and Theravāda versions are different. Chinese text explicitly points out he killed himself while in his seventh temporary liberation while the Pāli canon have two versions: some are the same as the Chinese one, and others say he killed himself when having fallen back a sixth time. See Marcus Bingenheimer, *Studies in Āgama Literature: With Special Reference to the Shorter Chinese Saṃmyukt āgama,* in. *Dharma Drum Buddhist College Special Series* 1, ed. Liao Bensheng (Taibei: Shin Wen Feing Print Co., 2011) 121—122.
[112]. Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr. '*prajñāvimukta*'" *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014) 659a.
[113]. Bhikkhu Anālayo, *From Craving to Liberation—Excursions into the Thought-world of the Pali Discourses* 1 (New York: Buddhist Association of the United States, 2009) 154.
[114]. Qtd. in Bhikkhu Anālayo 154.

consolidate his liberation if he had not given up his endeavour. Martin G. Wiltshire mentions that the three monks achieved their arhatship only after they had committed suicide.[115] However, whether they achieved their enlightenment before or after their suicides is not the key point. Their spiritual development for the maturity of the arhatship is the most important factor that counts in these cases.

From the stories above, we can see some important features that generalise the incidents. The first concerns the conditions for the Buddha's consents to these suicidal deeds. They seem to be twofold. First, the person involved should be undergoing unbearable physical pain or other great difficulties; second, the person have already attained certain level of spiritual liberation—even momentarily, which ensures the person be free from future transmigrations.

Damien Keown points out that the general view among Buddhist scholars is that although Buddhism is generally opposed to suicide it makes certain exceptions for those enlightened as mentioned above; however, his conclusion is that although Buddha had great sympathy for those monks who were undergoing great pains, 'there is little evidence that he ever condoned suicide.'[116] He argues that the Buddha's general opinion seems that although suicide is wrong those who commit suicides because of great pain or distress should not be judged too harshly.[117] If it is the case, then it will be really difficult to explain why the Buddha refused to prevent Godhika from killing himself when he was able to. In these cases above, the Buddha's empathy for those suffering monks was obvious. Suicide is not right for people as a whole, but for those spiritually advanced people suffering unbearable pains, ending their own lives could be an alternative. As such severe pain makes the person's remaining life unbearable, unproductive; and more importantly, the person has already secured his/her liberation and been free from all the attachments, there is no reason why he/she should carry on such burdensome existence. It does no good to the suffering person and others. However, such exceptions are based on the stringent conditions: the suffering person must have achieved high level of enlightenment. In this regard, such self-killing incidents can hardly affect the overall Buddhist stance on this issue.

When discussing these monks' self-killing incidents, some scholars always like to

[115]. Martin G. Wiltshire, "The 'Suicide' Problem in the Pāli Canon," *Journal of the International Association of the Buddhist Studies*, 16.2 (1983): 133—134.
[116]. Damien Keown, *Buddhist Ethics: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 106.
[117]. Keown, 106.

evaluate the Buddhist morality on this issue more or less inadvertently with the modern ethics. They easily forget that the view on suicides in our modern society is largely based upon the Western standards, generally 'the Semitic and secular traditions', which believe that man has only one life to live; according to this view of life, a person either ends in 'total annihilation (according to "secularism") or is allotted the fate for the remainder of eternity.[118] Such views are totally different from those of the Indian people. Almost all Indian native faiths hold that all beings have to undergo endless lives and deaths. Their objective is to get free from this evil cycle, and liberation is also what Buddhists try to achieve. In Buddhism, especially the Early Buddhism, when worldly interests and the way of liberation cannot be reconciled, invariably a true Buddhist will regard liberation as his/her priority. This guideline seems to be followed as far as the Buddha's view on suicides is concerned. In Indian Buddhism, there is no doubt that suicides are forbidden generally, especially for the purpose of sacrificial rites, which is one of the cardinal differences between Buddhism and Brahmanism. However, for those enlightened people being deeply plagued by diseases and resolutely renouncing the world, the Buddha's consent to their self-killings is just the demonstration of the compassionate spirit in Buddhism. This is almost foreseeable. It might be the case as some scholars assume that these self-killing incidents discussed above might have happened before the Buddha pronounced the precept forbidding self-killing.[119] The unusual dialogue between the Buddha and the demon king before Godhika's suicide could also be none other than the interpretation by the author of the text, and the Buddha refrained from preventing Godhika's suicide might have other reason than stated. For these, any over-interpretation sounds redundant. The remarkable thing in Godhika's story is the Buddha's affirmation of his attainment of arhatship, which just emphasises the key point that spiritual liberation is the ultimate concern.

However, these examples discussed above are intrinsically different from those body-offering rites done by many Chinese monks. The latter exhibit more of the characteristics of the ancient human sacrificial rites than any Indian Buddhist qualities, hence are very different from the Buddhist fundamentals.

From the prohibition of self-killings in the Vinaya to the encouraging attitude of the Sarvāstivāda, and finally the appearance of the problematic Bodhisattva precepts in Chinese

[118]. Wiltshire 125.

[119]. Shi Tianzhen, *Za'ahanjing zhong yin bingtong zisha de xinli tanjiu: yi Vakkali yu Channa weili*, in *Huayan Zhuanzong Xueyuan Foxue Yanjiusuo lunwen ji*， Web. June 2014, http://www.huayencollege.org/thesis/PDF_format/88_008.pdf 7.

Brahmajāla sūtra urging bodily offerings to the Buddha, the Chinese Mahāyāna view of Buddhism on the issue of self-killings has moved further away from those of the mainstream Buddhism. The evolvement of the 'gift-of-the-body' tradition in Chinese Buddhism has its root in the popularity of certain Mahāyāna scriptures such as the *Lotus sūtra* and some texts of doubtful origins. At the same time, it has been deeply imbued with the ethnic tradition of repaying the debt of gratitude and the body-offering legacy. The development of the self-immolation tradition in Chinese Buddhism is a process of transfusion of the Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism into the indigenous Chinese culture. The monks' self-inflictive deeds were not only the expression of their religious fervour, but also, in certain historical periods, demonstrations of their protests against the government's religious policies, which had quite the effect of the long-established tradition of 'death remonstrance屍諫' among Confucian scholars. The famous Vietnamese Monk Thich Quang Doc's self-immolation in 1963 demonstrated such spirit; however, such self-sacrifices hardly had any relation with Indian Buddhism. It had something more to do with the Eastern Asian culture itself.

One thing needs to be pointed out that the attitude of the Chinese Vinaya School towards monks' self-immolations marked by Daoxuan's philosophy is quite of doctrinarism. It has also to a great extent shaped the course of Chinese Buddhism on this issue.

It requires excessive caution to pass judgement on such extreme practices because of their impalpable nature. Diverse as their motivations as well as their ways of self-killings were, the majority of them concern body-offering rites, which almost outshine those altruistic and compassionate self-sacrifices. One thing remains clear that such religious suicides would be incompatible with the modern society as they would do more harm than benefit to the image of Buddhism. They may send a quite misleading message to the public: suicides in the name of religion can be a short cut to achieve Buddhahood. At the same time, we should never rule out the possibility of psychiatric disorders in some cases. Anyway, mental disorders happen to lay people as well as priests. We can never take those stories at face value.

Using one's own body as an expression of religious passion can also be a way to manifest the individual's will under certain social systems. As a member in a highly autocratic society like the ancient China, the individual could hardly found his/her full expression. From the ancient *xia*俠 tradition to the Buddhist body-offering practices, both demonstrated how an individual could release oneself from the social constraints.

The biographies on self-sacrificial deeds offer modern readers precious historical records to understand this uniquely Chinese way of Buddhist practice in different historical periods. They also reflect their differences in their authors' attitudes towards religious issues, which mirror the socio-political environment. Although the moderate versions of self-immolations still can be heard of occasionally, such practices as a way of religious sacrifice have become quite unpopular nowadays; however, as a cultural phenomenon, its appeal for the general people remains strong. Controversial as some of the cases are, these life stories have inspired countless Chinese Buddhists to devote their lives for the religious endeavour throughout the history. Their fascination can always be keenly felt.

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谈佛教研究方法

法庆

一、有关文章介绍

中国佛教文化研究所出版的《佛学研究》第六期、第七期发表了一些有关佛学研究方法论的文章，其中有杜继文教授的“佛学研究经验谈”和日本学者平川彰的“佛教学的方法论”，等文章。

杜继文教授提到了他的老师吕澂先生对佛学研究的态度，非常难得，其述如下：“吕先生的学风是认真而严谨。他给我们规定了一条纪律：学习期间不许发表有关佛教的文章。原因很简单，避免轻率、浮躁，甚或急功近利，自误误人。在他看来，佛学研究中最忌讳的是望文生义，一知半解，有论无据，以‘专家’ 自居，夸夸其谈。不论你对佛学的态度是肯定，还是否定，是信仰还是批判，都应该以准确的认识为基本前提。”[1]

杜继文教授自己提出了“进去”、“出来”说： “一要进去，二要出来出入其中，才能客观观察。” 他继续解释说：“所谓‘进去’，第一，就是要下功夫认真读书，把他们读懂。‘出来’ 就是要能客观地了解文中表达什么内容，讨论什么问题，以及最后是如何解决的。真正掌握文章的思想内容，用自己的语言明白无误地表达出来。第二，信仰可以非理性的，但研究必须是理性的。知有理性的研究，才能认识佛学的全貌及其在社会和文化宗教中的客观地位。因此，‘出来’，就是一种超越，超越佛学的语言障碍，使今人能够理解；超越对于佛学的盲目性，便于人们全面如实的认识。”[2]

这些看法对后学者，很有启发性，提供了指导性的作用。杜教授还认为历史、哲学、语言是佛学研究中的三个前提。[3] 此三种方法也是国际上通用的方法，杜教授虽提出了这三点，但没有强调此三者之间的关系。日本学者平川彰强调佛学研究要具备一定的条件，他归纳有四点：[4]

1、 修行和学问
2、 佛教概论和佛教史
3、 基础的学问：《俱舍论》和《唯识论》
4、 语言的问题

没有基础，也就谈不上方法了，这是我对他文章的印象。后篇，他谈到大藏经，大乘佛教的研究等等，也是强调学者要有一定的佛学基础。

《佛学研究》还发表了其他有关研究方法的一些文章，象苏晋仁先生的关于 “佛教文献的整理” 一文 ，从六个方面：文意的理解、校勘、考证、考异、正误、补遗，探讨了佛教文献方面的整理方法。[5]

在台湾有关佛学研究方法论的文章，有张曼涛主编的《佛学研究方法》，[6] 搜集了一些日本和中国学者的文章。关世谦译自日本学者的《佛学研究指南》，则主要研

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1. 杜继文，“佛学研究经验谈”《佛学研究》 (中国佛教文化研究所，第7 期, 1998): 5页。
2. 同上， 7页。
3. 同上，6页。
4. 平川彰， “佛教学的方法论”《佛学研究》 (中国佛教文化研究所，第6 期, 1997): 1-7页。
5. 苏晋仁，“关于佛教文献的整理”《佛学研究》(中国佛教文化研究所，第7 期, 1998): 51-4页。
6. 张曼涛主编,《佛学研究方法》现代佛教学术丛刊41 (台湾：大乘文化出版社， 1978)。

究佛教某一时期或专题所涉及到的具体问题。[1] 印顺法师的《以佛法研究佛法》提出依缘起三法印研究佛法，还认为研究佛教要本着对真理的追求的精神，并把真理体现在人格上。[2] 杨白衣博士认为，“写佛学文章绝不可只求词藻之美，或只作印象式的传达，甚至冒充行家乱缀一知半解的术语。佛学之研究，一方面固然依据汉语作训诂式的解释，但对语源(原典)的意义，亦应有彻底的了解。设若不然，不特愈扯愈远，且牵强附会流于文字把戏，甚至于愈学愈糊涂而边见丛生。”[3]

致力提倡用现代学术方法来研究佛教的华人学者，则首推吴汝钧博士了，为此，他曾出版了专著：《佛学研究方法论》。[4] 吴汝钧博士曾先后留学日本、德国、加拿大，对西方各个学派都有所接触，特别推崇维也纳学派，用文献的和哲学的方法双管齐下来研究佛学。他认为光讲义理而不讲资料文献，结果只能成就一种境界，而不能成就学术；而光讲资料文献，则终是流于堆砌资料的干枯工作，而有违佛教哲学的思辩与智慧，安心立命之说。[5] 下面抄录一段吴汝钧博士对巴利文和藏文学习的见解：“中国佛教根源于印度，而早期的佛教教理较完整地保存在巴利文中，虽然早期佛教保存在中文的阿含经中，但作为一种现代的佛教学者最好是能懂一点巴利文。我们可以藉着中文的四部阿含与有部的资料大体可以得到前期印度佛教的轮廓。[6] 但后期方面则几乎全部阙如。实际上，后期的印度佛教，在义理方面有飞跃的发展；在中观学一面，后期中观学吸收了有部、经量部和唯识的要义，消融了它们与中观学的矛盾，而成一瑜伽行中观派的综合哲学。这一综合哲学与龙树的系统相比较，内容丰富了，体系也壮大了。这恐怕不是龙树的空之哲学所能笼罩的。唯识学一面，后期唯识学几乎全是因明学亦即是逻辑与知识论的道路，表现出印度民族惊人的思辩才华。这些资料主要存于西藏文藏经中，但我国的学者中，太少人懂藏文，故对这些思想上的重要发展，也极其陌生。”7

吴汝钧博士书中的观点，这里不便一一介绍，对现代方法论有兴趣者，可读他的原书 —《佛学研究方法论》（国内读者可到北京国家图书馆港台阅览室借阅此书）。此书比较系统地讨论了现代研究方法论，下面介绍一些最近西方学者的研究方法。

二、最近西方学者的动态

A、研究态度

西方宗教研究历史上，最基本的研究方法是“语言-历史的”，这种方法是随着十九世纪开始的科学语言学 (scientific philology) 和历史编纂学 (historiography) 。十九世纪

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1. 关世谦译，《佛学研究指南》(台湾: 东大图书公司,1986) 。
2. 印顺，《以佛法研究佛法》14-15页，见《印顺法师佛学著作集》光碟版（Ver 2.0 1999.1.15），财团法人印顺文教基金会发行: http://localhost:1215/read?database=yinshun&book=a16&block=2&innercode=0
3. 杨白衣，“佛学研究法述要”《佛学研究方法》，张曼涛主编 (现代佛教学术丛刊41，大乘文化出版社，1978) ：16-17页。
4. 吴汝钧，《佛学研究方法论》（台湾：学生书局, 1983)。
5. 吴汝钧，“译者前言”，《佛教中观哲学》梶山雄一著，吴汝钧译 (高雄：佛光出版社，1986再版) 1-2页。又见，吴汝钧，《佛学研究方法论》29页。
6. ....赤沼智善认为学巴利文要先学梵文：“在日译巴利文方面，是要把巴利文先恢复为梵文，而且又须找出相当于梵文的汉译才可以，因为不可能把巴利文直接解释为汉译语的。所以说，学习巴利语时，必须先学梵文的用意，亦即在此。”见《佛学研究指南》关世谦译 (台湾: 东大图书公司,1986) 8页。
7. 参看吴汝钧，《佛学研究方法论》 497页。

的那种“未探究之前决不接受传统”(refusing to accept the tradition without questioning it)的批判精神在今天的宗教研究上也是主要精神之一。[8] 现阶段，有学者认为宗教有别于其它的学科，研究者应用不同的态度，如弗勒贝尔 (Friedrich Heiler) 认为研究者应具备三点要求：[9]

21. 对宗教真诚地尊重
22. 有亲身经验 (personal experience) ：一个人如没有一点道德意识不可能投身于伦理学的研究，没有艺术经验的人不可能深入艺术历史研究，不爱好真理的人不可能深入哲学研究，没有一点宗教感情的人怎么能深入宗教研究？[10]
23. 应严肃地对待某一宗教所宣称的真理：一个人如果已认定它是迷信、虚构等前提，不可能真实地理解它的教义。

我想这三点也适合国内学者对佛教的研究。日本学者平川彰把修行和学问列为第一条件，印顺法师所说的学问要反映在日常的待人接物上，是对学者提出了更高的要求。佛教是非常强调实践的，从某一角度上讲也是国人精神生活和文化的一部分；它也是一种信仰，但并不是那种一成不变的神学教条主义，世界上著名的佛教学者都有信仰，其实对真、善、美、智慧的追求是人类普世的信仰。

对佛教徒来说，应用“中道”的态度来研究佛教，信仰上的狂热和偏激，认为自己的传统灿烂辉煌而别人漆黑一团，或自宗派是至高无上而贬低他人，都是不可取的，所谓“依法不依人，依义不依语”[11] 不失为好的指导思想。也就是上面吕澂先生所提倡的“应该以准确的认识为基本前提”，杜继文教授的“理性的研究”说。

B、对语言的重视

在国外关于佛教研究方法的英文文章，不是很多 (有关佛教方法论的专书在1998年时还没有发现)，但有很多宗教研究方面的书和文章。即使是一般宗教研究的书，也非常重视语言的学习，因为要想完全地阅读宗教的经、论就要求有一定的语言知识。弗勒贝尔说：“语言和宗教是密切相关的，研究宗教的学生也是研究语言的学生。”[12] 约阿希姆 (Joachim Wach) 说：“研究宗教的学生在语言上永远没有准备充足。” 这虽然有一点极端，但对于我们来讲，有一点的梵文 (或其他语言) 知识，靠查字典，我们最少能够查看某些关键词的原意。此外，像国际上知名的佛学者，舍尔巴茨基 (Stcherbatsky)、拉莫特 (Lamotte)、 普辛（Poussin）、长尾雅人（Nagao Gadjin）等，无一不是利用了语言学的分析方法研究佛教而有所成就。从他们的作品中可以得知，他们掌握了梵语、巴利语、古汉语或藏语。

许多世纪以来，日本人学习佛教都是基于汉语佛教文献，在最近一百年里日本学

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8 Kurt Rudolph, “The Position of Source Research in Religious Studies”, *Science of Religion: Studies in Methodology* (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1979) p. 99.

9 Friedrich Heiler, “The Scholarly Study of Religion,” *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion,* vol. 1 ed. Jacques Wardenburg (The Hague: Mouton & Co. N. V., 1973) 473.

10 Joachim Wach说：“What is required is not indifference, but rather an engagement of feeling, interest and participation — [宗教研究] 所要求的不是漠不关心，而需要投入一种感情、兴趣和参与。”见*The Comparative Study of Religions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963) 12.

11 佛经中说的四依，“依法不依人，依义不依语，依了义不依不了义，依智不依识” 南北传解释有别，详见《中华佛教百科全书》 “四依” 条。又见，Anguttara Nikāya, Vol.3 chapter 2 (London: Pali Text Society) (南传《增支部》17，304页)。

12 Heiler, 472: “Language and religion are very closely related. The student of religion should be a student of language too.” Wach, 11: “The student of religions is never well enough equipped linguistically.”

者除汉语外，他们增加了对梵语，巴利语和藏语的学习。[13] 在研究方面，他们取得了很大的成就，归因于他们对语言的重视。比如，加拿大日裔学者河村澄雄博士 (Leslie Kawamura) 经常强调这四种语言是一个现代的佛教学者所必备的。

现代佛学研究方法也反映在西方大学里的教学大纲上。作为佛学研究生，除专业课外，必修课包括西方宗教、宗教哲学、宗教方法论等。在北美的一些大学里，博士候选人的考试 (笔试) 有佛学基础：历史和教义；有语言考试：通常要考两门古典佛教语言（梵、藏、巴、汉，古典语言考试与候选人的研究项目有关），另加一门外语(英文除外) ─ 日文、法文或德文 (比如有学生曾参加梵文、日文的考试。因为其母语是中文，成绩单中曾有修学古汉语的记录，所以免考；没有考巴利文，因为该学生曾就读于斯里兰卡的巴利佛学研究院；在论文提纲中，有关方法论的描写部分他没有提到藏文文献，此外他曾有旁听藏文的记录，所以藏文免考)。

研究佛教有很多方法，如历史分析，对比研究，归纳法等等，在具体研究方面，各人所用方法也会不同；但共同的工具则是语言：如归纳法就要从阅读经、论开始；又如对比研究，就要求读懂不同版本、不同语言、不同翻译的文章，也就是说有价值的对比研究最少要求读两种语言以上的版本。日本学者长尾雅人教授认为未来的佛学研究方法还是文献学为主：“未来的佛学研究，必将是对保存在几个不同传统的佛教典籍作出多一点的批评，在文献学上进行更透彻的分析。关于现阶段的佛学研究，认为文献学 (philology) 必须领先哲学或历史；而且非常重要、也是事实的是，前者不能 [因为] 后者被废弃。”[14]

C、新方法论

象中国佛教史一样，西方学习佛教的开始也是从翻译佛典开始；从佛教经论的翻译历史上分析也可看出西方研究佛教的历史。佛教经论的翻译可分为三个阶段：[15]

第一阶段指早年在印度的次大陆上的殖民时期，这时期主要是西方的传教士和一些深受基督教影响的人从巴利文、梵文和藏文中的翻译。这些翻译也因此含有大量基督教的词汇或者直接用基督教的教义去理解佛经，如克恩(Kern)　　和里斯. 戴维斯(Rhys　Davis)　等人。克恩的《法华经》早期翻译是这时期的例子之一，如他直接用《圣经》片语“the flesh pots of Egypt (直译：埃及的肉盆)”来表示感官上的堕落；又如他的使用〞死亡〞作为涅槃的翻译不仅不正确，也把佛教的最高目标贬低了。

第二阶段概略地指二十世纪前半个世纪，在佛教学者中，基督教的影响力和价值观已衰退，但传统的西方哲学范畴和概念占优势，大多数的学者深受康德的影响，象舍尔巴茨基 (Stcherbatsky)[16] 和孔滋 (Conze) 等人。然而，把康德的哲学范畴和概念被用来翻译和解释佛教，并不能体现佛典的真实意义。如舍尔巴茨基，他的片语“the thing in itself” 的重复使用来表示佛教的胜义(paramārtha)真如 (tathatā) 是直接

[13] ...在阅读日本学者的书时，也要注意到某些日本人的动机，“日本佛学研究把焦点从中国移到印度去，重视藏译贬低汉译，这是配合着尽量去除中国文化对日本的影响的一种做法。”见吴汝钧，《佛学研究方法论》6页。

[14] Gadjin Nagao, “Presidential Address by Professor Gadjin M. Nagao” *JIABS* Vol. 1 (No.2, 1979): 82 “Buddhist studies in the future will have to be based upon a more critical and thorough-going philological analysis of the Buddhist texts that have been transmitted to us through several different traditions. In the present state of Buddhist studies, I feel that philology must precede philosophy or history, but what is even more important is the fact that the former must not nullify the latter.”

[15] Doboom Tulku, “Introduction,” *Buddhist Translations Problems and Perspectives* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1995) 2-5.

[16] 中国社会科学出版社曾出版过他的两本译著：《小乘佛教》、《大乘佛教》立人译 1994

来自康德的形而上学指“绝对实体”，他的用词对人们理解佛教并没有多大帮助。孔滋坚持用康德的“absolute”(绝对） 来翻译胜义，也是把康德的哲学范畴强加在佛教的思想上。

第三阶段大约从二十世纪中叶到现在，学者们不再重视康德、马克思和贝克莱（Berkeley） 的思想，而采用西方心理学的概念来翻译和解释佛教， 主要是弗洛伊德(Freud) 和荣格(C. G. Jung)。也有一新的趋向，即采用语言相对论 （linguistic relativism) 的概念模型，特别是维特根施泰因（Wittgenstein）的语言相对论，来帮助翻译和解释佛教。大规模的使用现代西方心理学和语言相对论的概念和术语者，如 Guenther 等，最明显的例子是用 mentality（脑力）一词翻译唯识宗的第七末那识。[17]

这三时期的相同之处是把西方的概念模型强加在佛教的教义上，不管它是基督教的价值观或传统的西方哲学，或现代西方的学术运动，全部都是用西方的思想体系来理解佛教。其结果不可避免地、或多或少会扭曲佛教的原意。举例来说，象无着和世亲的唯识哲学完全有别于传统的西方唯心主义(Idealism）。[18] 现在西方学者已经意识到了这点，提倡要尽量少用哲学、心理学的词汇；而是用清楚明了的语句，让佛教的文章能真正地传达出佛教的本义，所用的语言应该是受过一般教育的读者能理解的。[19] 对于有些佛教概念可以用现代语言来表示，然后把一方加括弧来处理，放上传统的翻译，或者加上脚注给予说明。[20]

我们可以用哲学的方法如逻辑等用来研究佛教，[21] 但用哲学或心理学的词汇来替代佛教的重要概念时，应谨慎一点。西方学者已开始不用西方哲学的概念来解释佛教，我们有必要吗？现在，在斯里兰卡等亚州国家的学者，在使用英文词汇方面还是停留在上面提到的第二阶段，甚至第一阶段上；我们讲哲学方法的同时，应该意识到这点，不能给佛教加上太多的“主义”。能用现代的语言表达，就用现代语言，没有必要找哲学的对等词。

新的方法就如中国佛教史上道安、鸠摩罗什所倡导的扬弃“格义”的运动。是杜继文教授所说的“真正掌握文章的思想内容，用自己的语言明白无误地表达出来”、“超越佛学的语言障碍，使今人能够理解。”

三、形式

无论是写论文还是佛学讲座，如果是他人的思想，应该忠实地告诉读者或听众。学术性的文章就要求用脚注或尾注，对文章的来源加以说明，对佛教的重要概念进行诠释；文章中所引用的书、文章等资料要求列出来，所以文章最后一部分应该是“参考文献”。有的学者在阅读文章之前先看参考文献（特别是教授看学生的论文），主要看学生参考了什么书。形式，这里指学术性文章中有关脚注、尾注、参考文献的格式。

有关论文格式，国内没有统一标准；在英文方面，有美国当代语言协会出版的

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[17] Hervert V. Guenther, Philosophy and Psychology in the Abhidharma (Berkeley: Shambhala, 1974) 5-6.

[18] Tulku, 5.

[19] 同上.

[20] 有关新的翻译佛典方法请参看，Joe Bransford Wilson, “Problems and Methods in the Translation of Buddhist Texts from Tibetan,” *Buddhist Translations Problems and Perspectives*, ed. Doboom Tulku (New Delhi, Manohar, 1995) 158-60；
Elizabeth Napper, “Styles and Principles of Translation,” *Buddhist Translations Problems and Perspectives*, ed. Doboom Tulku (New Delhi, Manohar, 1995) 41ff.

[21] 吴汝钧说: “佛家逻辑是佛学的方法论。” 吴汝钧，《佛学研究方法论》56页。

《MLA论文写作手册》 (*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*) 和《芝加哥手册格式》(The Chicago Manual Style), 有些学术刊物有自己的一套规定。现在作者引用的资料不限于书或杂志了，象国际互联网、CD光盘、软盘等出版物。这些国内没有标准可依，也是许多人头痛的问题。无论哪种形式无非是让读者知道资料的来源，本着这一点，下面提出一种格式，供佛学院的学生写论文时作参考。

A、“参考文献”样式

1、引用书

通常格式是： 作者姓名，《书名》出版社，出版年代。英文样式不作说明，根据《MLA论文写作手册》只列实例，如果是用手写或打字机英文斜体部分可改为底下划线 (请注意标点符号)：

王邦维《大唐西域求法高僧传校注》，中华书局，1988。

Wang, Bang-wei. Da tang xi yu qiu fa gao seng chuan xiao zhu. Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1988.

如果出版社地址不明，应加出版地址，如：

吴汝钧《佛学研究方法论》，台北：学生书局，1983。

Ng, Yu-kwan. *Methodology of Buddhist Studies*. Taipei: Student Book co., ltd., 1983.

其它的情况，如再版、两人合著等，也应交待清楚。

2、引用期刊论文、杂志

基本格式：作者姓名〈文章名〉，《杂志名》期刊号，出版日期：文章在杂志中页数。如：

杜继文〈佛学研究经验谈〉，《佛学研究》(中国佛教文化研究所)第7 期, 1998: 5-9页。

Du, Ji-wen. “Some Personal Experience in Buddhological Study.” *Buddhological Study*, Vol. 7, 1988: 5-9.

王柏寿 〈老子教育思想之研究〉，《嘉义师院学报》，第4期，1990。

牟宗三 〈老子《道德经》讲演录一〉，《鹅湖》28卷10期，2003.10。

——〈老子《道德经》讲演录二〉，《鹅湖》28卷11期，2003.11。

3、引用书中的前言、序言等

如：

吴汝钧〈译者前言〉《佛教中观哲学》梶山雄一著，吴汝钧译，高雄：佛光出版社，1986再版。

Ng, Yu-kwan. “Preface,” *Madhyāmika Philosophy*. Y. Kajiyama, trans. Ng Yu-Kwan. 2nd ed. Gaoxiong: Foguang Press, 1986.

4、国际互联网、光盘、软盘等

须写明网址，上网日期，如：

http://www.buddhanet.net/mahayana/text01.htm, 4/30/2002

CD光盘、软盘等出版物，请参考后面的“参考文献”部分。如果是讲座，则注明：讲者姓名，“主题”地点，日期。

B、“尾注”、“脚注”样式

一般文章中只用尾注，但如果是用电脑写作，最好用脚注，以方便读者。引用某一本书的基本格式是：作者姓名，《书名》（出版社，出版年代）页数。如：

王邦维《大唐西域求法高僧传校注》（中华书局，1988）25-26 页。

Bang-wei Wang, Da tang xi yu qiu fa gao seng chuan xiao zhu (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1988) pp. 25-26.

第二次出现时，如只引用此作者这一本书（也没有其它的文章），则写出作者姓名和页数即可。如：王邦维，87页。如果此作者有多本书、文章被引用，第二次引用则应写出姓名、书名和页数。如果与上面的尾注/脚注是同一本书，则用“同上”然后写上页数即可。其它的样式则不一一列举，读者可参考本文的脚注。无论用哪一种格式，从头到尾一定要保持一致。

四、结语

研究佛教有很多方法，在具体研究方面，各人所用方法也会不同，但在研究的态度上，不应有前提：认定它是迷信或其他极端；如果有，那应该是“以准确的认识为基本前提”。西方的佛学研究，无论是过去，现在，抑或未来，文献分析是其主要研究方法。我们可以用哲学的方法研究佛教，但应避免用哲学或心理学的词汇；能用现代的语言表达，就用现代语言，没有必要找哲学或心理学对等词。学术性的文章要求用脚注或尾注，对文章的来源加以说明，对佛教的重要概念进行诠释；也是为了方便在国际上交流。只要我们努力，在不久的将来，我国的佛学研究会在国际学术上具有举足轻重的地位！

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如来藏思想的影响

释同宝

如来藏思想在印度已孕育生成，经过发展，其思想内容不断扩展变化，但还未形成理论化的体系，在中国才真正被独立出来成为如来藏学。印度如来藏学传到中国后，得到更精致的发展，如来藏思想理论在中国发展才是最高阶段与终结。如来藏教义，在中国佛教界，是最熟悉的一种教说。在中国佛教思想，一说到如来藏，便想到一切众生有佛性，可以成佛，如来藏成了佛教的核心教义。可以说，离开如来藏，即不能显示佛法的深广圆妙。

第一节 如来藏思想的简括

通过研读有关如来藏思想的经典与资料，现在简括如来藏思想，同时对“什么是如来藏？”作一回答。

在《胜鬘师子吼一乘大方便方广经》中，如来藏是法界藏、法身藏、出世间上上藏、自性清净藏：“世尊，如来藏者，是法界藏、法身藏、出世间上上藏、自性清净藏”。[1]此性清净如来藏，而客尘烦恼、上烦恼所染，不思议如来境界。何以故？刹那善心非烦恼所染，刹那不善心亦非烦恼所染。烦恼不触心，心不触烦恼。云何不触法而能得染心？世尊，然有烦恼、有烦恼染心，自性清净心而有染者，难可了知。唯佛世尊，实眼实智，为法根本，为通达法，为正法依，如实知见”。[2]

在《佛说不增不减经》中，如来藏是众生界，法身：“舍利弗。甚深义者即是第一义谛。第一义谛者即是众生界。众生界者即是如来藏。如来藏者即是法身。舍利弗。如我所说法身义者。过于恒沙不离不脱不断不异。不思议佛法如来功德智慧”。[3]

《金光明最胜王经》：“善男子。是身因缘境界处所果。依于本难思议故。若了此义。是身即是大乘。是如来性。是如来藏”。[4]

《楞伽阿跋多罗宝经》卷二：“佛告大慧：“我说如来藏，不同外道所说之我。大慧！有时说空、无相、无愿、如、实际、法性、法身、涅槃、离自性、不生不灭、本来寂静、自性涅槃，如是等句，说如来藏已”。[5]

《大宝积经》卷119：“如是法身不离烦恼。名如来藏”。[6]

《大乘密严经》卷3：　“佛说如来藏　以为阿赖耶　恶慧不能知　藏即赖耶识　如来清净藏　世间阿赖耶　如金与指环　展转无差别”。[7]

《楞伽经》中说：“有时说空、无相、无愿、如实际、法性、法身、涅槃离自性、不生不灭、本来寂静、自性涅槃如是等句，说如来藏已”。[8]

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[1]. 《胜鬘经》卷一，大正12，页222中。

[2] 同上。

[3]. 《不增不减经》卷一，大正16，页467上。

[4] 大正16，页409下。

[5] 大正16，页489中。

[6] 大正11，页677上。

[7] 大正16，页747上。

[8]《楞伽阿跋多罗宝经》卷二，大正16，页489中。

《大乘义章》卷9：“真心之体是如来藏”。[9]

《宗镜录》卷47：“若有不信阿赖耶识即是如来藏。别求真如理者。如离像觅镜。即是恶慧”。[10]

《宗镜录》卷80：“隐则名为如来藏。显则名为法身”。[11]

《宗镜录》卷29：“佛从中出。名如来藏。明体不染贞实法性。名自性清净心。功德自体。亦名法身。能出四乘。能入二乘。亦名一乘。与法华一乘别。无垢称经。遮理有差别。名不二法门。大慧经中。表无起尽。亦名不生不灭。涅槃经中。彰法身因。多名佛性。离缚解脱。亦名涅槃”。[12]

《究竟一乘宝性论》: “真如佛性如来藏义住无障阂究竟菩萨地”。[13]

《佛性论》卷三: “涅槃即真如法性，即如来藏”。

《大乘起信论》“真如自体相者，名为如来藏”。[14]

在如来藏思想中，如来藏与法界、真如、空性、实际、法性、佛性、自性清净心、心性、法性心等是异名而一体的，不论以何名出现，如来藏还是不动不坏、不增不减、无有变异、清净本然；又能将世间一切净不净法统统显现出来。这就是《胜鬘经》所说“刹那善心非烦恼所染，刹那不善心亦非烦恼所染。烦恼不触心，心不触烦恼。云何不触法而能得染心？世尊，然有烦恼、有烦恼染心，自性清净心而有染者，难可了知”。[15]所以才会有《楞伽经》说：“依如来藏故，有世间涅槃苦乐之因”[16]，换句话，如来藏即是一切众生都能成佛的最基本之基础，也就是大乘佛教最独特的思想，如来藏思想最重要的理论。

“善男子！一切众生虽在诸趣烦恼身中，有如来藏常无染污，德相备足如我无异。……善男子！诸佛法尔，若佛出世若不出世，一切众生如来之藏常住不变”。[17]

第二节 如来藏思想对中国佛教思想的影响

在印度，如来藏学说的兴起，约在公元三世纪，而是继承了初期大乘佛教思想，并加以独到阐发而成。在公元四、五世纪中，此说非常流行，有关如来藏说的各种经典，也纷纷流传出来。佛教传入中国后，在早期的思想吸收过程中，受印度如来藏思想的影响，在中国译经史上，从公元三世纪末起，到七世纪止，所译出的如来藏系经论也为数不少。如来藏思想或佛性思想是中国佛教思想史上重要的思潮，在中国佛教诸宗派中都可以看到如来藏思想的影响。《楞伽经》的如来藏的三义为胎藏，法身与库藏，如来藏说强调了佛身的已然、现实的存在性即“已然性”、“现实性”[18]，而非“当然性”[19]、“可能性”。[20]

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[9] 大正44，页652中。
[10] 大正48，页695上。
[11] 大正48，页857中。
[12] 大正48，页585上。
[13] 《宝性论》，大正31，页840中。
[14] 《楞嚴經疏解蒙鈔》卷3，X13，页605上。
[15] 《勝鬘師子吼一乘大方便方廣經》卷1，大正12，页222中。
[16] 《入楞伽經》卷8〈15化品〉，大正16，页 560下。
[17] 《如来藏经》，大正16，页457下。
[18] 如来藏作为“库藏”的意思是指如来藏在众身身中是一切清净法和杂染法的库藏，这是指“现实性”。
[19] 如来藏作为“法身”的意思是说，如来藏是空如来藏，毕竟平等，究竟无染，这是指“当然性”。

中国乃至整个东业佛教的核心思想是心性如来藏思想。中国大乘各宗，对如来藏特别重视，如三论宗[21]、天台宗[22]、华严宗[23]、慈恩宗[24]、密宗[25]、净土宗[26]，禅宗都有这方面的理论。在中国佛教中，如来藏思想主要通过《涅槃经》、《楞伽经》、《十地经论》和《大乘起信论》等渗透到包括禅宗的诸宗派中。主张此说在印度有《涅槃经》[27]及如来藏系统的各经典，在中国则有以道生为首的"涅槃师"[28]以及后来的天台宗、华严宗和禅宗。《涅槃经》传入中国时，法显首先翻译了其中一部分，这就是《六卷泥洹经》，经中虽说一切众生悉有佛性，但是阐提众生却不具佛性，不能成佛。当时，道生认为《六卷泥洹经》自相矛盾："禀气二仪者，皆是涅槃正因。阐提是含生，何无佛性事"。[29]道生的佛性理论对禅宗的真正创始人慧能产生了重大影响。在道生佛性理论的基础上，慧能提出了教外别传，不立文字，直指人心，见性成佛的禅宗立宗思想，主张修习佛教没有必要念经参禅，只要反观自心，明心见性就能够得道成佛，慧能说："心是菩提树，身为明镜台，明镜本清净，何处染尘埃。"

中国佛教如来藏思想具有两大特色，主要表现在"涅槃佛性说"与"心性佛性说"上。涅槃佛性说自东晋南朝竺道生首创"一切众生皆能成佛"以来，通过实相说把佛性与性空般若沟通起来、统一起来，使性空般若成为涅槃佛性说的最主要的理论根据之一，这是中国佛教如来藏思想的最大特色。隋唐时期，由于三论宗、天台宗兼弘《涅槃经》影响日大，使涅槃佛性说成为各宗的重要理论部分而得到充分阐发。中国佛教的如来藏佛性说，另一个特色就是其更注重心性。禅宗作为中土佛教的代表，把一切万法完全归诸心性， 认为"即心即佛"，众生的佛性是无差别的，人人都有恒常清净的佛性，佛性就是本心，人人的本心都具有菩提的智慧，一旦认识本心，就是顿悟、解脱。正如六祖慧能在《坛经》中所讲： "何期自性，本自清净；何期 自性，本不生灭；何期自性，本自具足；何期自性，本无动摇；何期自性，能生万法，"这里的自性也即是本心，也是如来藏。天台宗把诸法实相归结为一念心，认为"观一念心，即是中道如来宝藏，常乐我净佛之知见"。华严宗在《华严经》"法性本净"的传统看法上，进一步阐明"真心即性"，侧重于从心之迷悟去说众生与佛之异同。

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[20] 如来藏作为"胎藏"的意思是指众生身中皆有内藏的如来法身，像胎儿一样，逐渐可以长大成为如来，这是指成佛的可能性以胎藏义的佛性如来藏为其存在根据，这是指"可能性"。

[21] 吉藏《大乘玄论》："经中有名佛性，法性，真如，实际等，并使佛性的异名。"

[22] 天台宗的佛性中有两点值得注意："性具善恶"（众生的心性之中本来就具有善和恶）与"无情有性"（不仅一切众生即有情有佛性，而且无情也有佛性）。

[23] 法藏《华严经探玄记》："若三乘教，真如之性通情，非情，开觉佛性唯局有情。故涅槃云：非佛性者谓草木等。若圆教中，佛性及性起皆通依正，如下文辩，是故成佛具三时间，国土身等皆是佛身，是故局唯佛果，通遍非情"。

[24] 《成唯识论掌中枢要》卷上："总而言之，涅槃据理性及行性中少分一切唯说有一。"主要的立场是坚持印度传来的"五性各别"的观念。

[25] 此宗的宗旨在《大日经》："菩提心为因，悲为根本，方便为究竟"。这里的菩提心就是觉悟的心。也可以看做是佛性。

[26] 此宗的经典虽不是主要论述佛性问题，但是认为众生只要有愿望，是可以到达佛的境界的，众生是有往生佛国净土的可能性的。

[27] 关于《涅槃经》前后两译的关系，以及昙无谶译《大般涅槃经》前后两部分之间的思想变化，参见高崎直道，《如来藏思想的形成》，日本春秋社1974年版。页128-190。

[28] 涅槃师是研习、弘传《大般涅槃经》的佛教学者。关于竺道生的佛性思想，研究甚多，主要参见吕澂、汤用彤的相关研究，以及任继愈编《中国佛教史》第三卷第三章第一节，《竺道生及其佛性顿悟学说》，中国社会科学出版社，1988年，330-369页。

[29] 《续藏经》，第7套，第1册，页15。

总之， “一切众生悉有佛性”[30]是中国佛教中一个至关重要的理论问题，它把成佛的可能性交给一切众生，保证了一切众生都有成佛的可能，从而使佛教更加具有了普遍。

第三节 印度的如来藏与中国的佛性之联系

印度佛教在原始佛教时期，佛的地位至高无上，到大乘佛教时期，众生都能成佛的观点逐渐为人所知，如来藏思想就是在这样的怀孕与产生，但是如来藏思想在大乘佛教发展过程中不是发达到顶峰的时期。经过翻译经典与传入中国，如来藏思想对中国的各个宗派影响颇为深远。华严宗的性起思想，天台宗的本觉法门说，地论宗的净识缘起说，禅宗的见性成佛说都是依如来藏思想发展出来的。可以说如来藏思想不仅对于中国佛学，对于中国一般思想，学术的影响都是十分巨大、重要的。

如来藏思想是中国佛教思想中最重要的观念，也是印度佛教思想影响中国佛学最有影响的观念之一。佛性思想是中国佛教重要的思想、也是魏晋南北朝至隋唐时期最盛行的佛学思想之一。虽然在印度早期的中观学中对“佛性”的讨论并不是很明显，但是三论(龙树著的《中论》、《十二门论》加上提婆著的《百论》)传入中国后，对佛性的讨论日趋激烈，特别是《涅槃经》、《胜鬘经》、《如来藏经》等经典的阐扬，佛性思想就更为盛行。可以说“佛性”问题是魏晋至隋唐时期最重要的佛学问题之一，因此，佛性问题是佛教的中心问题，也是中国佛教的主要论题之一。

如来藏佛性思想开始在中国产生影响，是始于《涅槃经》的翻译和南北朝涅槃学的兴起。《涅槃经》佛性思想的出现，影响了中国当时佛学的整个思潮，僧人们的义学从《般若经》的对于空的玄辨转向了涅槃佛性的探讨。这一时期对于佛性理解的大讨论，很大程度上决定了中国佛教隋唐以后的发展方向，从此可以看出印度如来藏佛性思想的发展。中国佛教是重经的，因此，如来藏思想的经典传到中国来，受到中国佛教高度的赞扬。

虽然中国佛教接受与赞扬如来藏思想，但是在发展过程中也带着中国佛教理论的特色，到了禅宗发展的阶段，佛性慢慢地代替如来藏这个字，成为中国佛教独特的思想。之所以如来藏思想从印度发源地的起源，而在中国发展到顶峰的阶段是因为：一个比较明显的特征是如来藏思想与空思想的结合。第二个明显特征是禅宗通过对如来藏概念的再解释，将如来藏概念由一个表达众生成佛可能性的成佛论的概念，延伸为修行论和境界论的概念。

如来藏思想在中土最终占据佛学的主流，“如来藏”一语往往被等同于 “佛性”，不过 “佛性”概念函盖更广。如来藏思想可说是大乘涅槃佛性思想充分发展的形态。“佛教在大乘佛教新的大发展中，导入了任何人都得以成佛这一前所未有的看法。在此之前，佛是超然的存在，修行者无论怎样努力最多只能或得阿罗汉果，根本谈不到成佛。在这样的精神史的状况之中，一种认为经过自己的努力即可得佛果的革命的思想孕育出来了，以这种新的精神水平为基础，佛教大大向前飞越了”。[31]对于中国思想的历史发展来说，外来佛教无论是作为思想体系和文化系统， 最有价值、影响最为巨大、深远的是它的心性理论。如来藏思想在中国的传播和影响，基本限制在佛教范畴之内，即主要是说明对于中国佛学思想的发展所发挥的作用。如果从更广阔的历史背

[30] 吕澂，《佛性义》，《吕澂佛学论著选集》卷一，页419-424。
[31] 孙昌武译，《中国的神话传说与古小说》，中华书局，1993年，页230。

景看，两晋以来，随着佛教被社会上下广泛接受，特别是得到知识阶层相当普遍地欣赏、认同、信仰、借鉴、发挥 ，从而对思想、文化领域更广阔的层面逐渐发挥十分重大的影响。目前国内学界对于中国佛教宗派的研究比较多，其中对于宗派思想的起源研究涉及到了一些如来藏经典，但对于如来藏作为一个思想体系在中国的传播与发展的讨论比较薄弱。南北朝时期，如来减经论的翻译者和传播者来自于印度的不同学派，他们的思想对于当时中国的佛学思想有着重要影响。如来藏思想有着独特的言说方式和深邃的哲学内涵，对中国佛教各个宗派都产生过重要影响。上述这些问题的研究涉及如来藏思想与印度佛学、中国佛学的诸多层面，从理论上进行详细深入地探讨，对于理解佛教历史文化以及近代中国佛学思想的发展有着重要意义。

总结

石中、沙中有金, 木中也含藏着火。在沙堆中都能炼出真金，木柴互相摩擦都能生火。所以，在垢藏中，很污垢中，还是同样佛性满足。一切众生都有如来藏性，如来藏自性清净，但为客尘烦恼所染，其自性清净、常恒不变、俱足一切功德而言，如来藏即是如来法身。出缠即名法身，在缠名如来藏。如来藏是一切有情众生所具有，有情的生死流转依如来藏而成立；其解脱涅槃也依如来藏而成立。

从自性清净演变到佛性，形成如来藏思想。如来藏（*Tathāgatagarbha*）不只是一个概念用来指“众生能成佛”的真理，而也成为一独特的佛教哲学系统。虽然其不是印度大乘佛教的独立思想，但是大乘佛教的两大学派都含有如来藏思想。

经过研究大乘佛教的如来藏思想的过程，有关其争论的几个问题已经很清楚：其一，佛教的如来藏不等于婆罗门的我，存在些误解是因为对其的词源分析不够深刻。其二，考察如来藏的发展历史，将其经典作为总结，归于三经一论，若要深解其思想以及印度大乘佛教的历史发展，必须研讨三经一论，特别是《宝性论》，此部论清楚地解释了如来藏思想。其三，对于如来藏是否成为大乘三系之一这个问题，经过综合前人研究的成果加入个人的看法，学僧认同大乘佛教只有两大学派中观与瑜伽，如来藏思想即是大乘思想中之独特思想，是修行者的究竟目的。圣谛所依的就是如来藏，也是如来之所出。圣谛微细难知，是凡夫、二乘甚至菩萨难以完全了达的。

虽然，在研究这个课题的工作中，达不到圆满的结果，但是在认识方面，对学僧来讲还是得益匪浅。人人本具佛性，只要在这如来藏中，我们自己反观自性，找出了我们自己的真如本性。诸佛出现三界，来人间寻寻觅觅，就是要找有缘人度化，开众生悟佛知见。我们的本心之所以不能显现出来，是因为我们让所有的烦恼和障碍所隐。我们若能悟实相的道理，我们就看得开，很多的障碍自然障除，佛性自然体显。我们若能了彻，就能够很清楚人人本具佛性，人人皆有如来藏，一切众生都能成佛。我们总是局限自己，束缚自己，所以无法真正自在无碍，去来自在。其实，如来本性就是本来自在。若我们能入真如本性实相的道理，自然事理圆融，自在无碍，自然流注，任运去来，这就是已经能够入一切诸佛究竟圆满大智慧。从研究方面到修行方面，此是我们追求的目的。

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早期佛教念佛观

释真醍

念佛及其意义

念佛，是早期修行方法之一。早期的念佛是忆念十方佛的功德。念佛　　（梵buddhanusmṛti　），是“六念”之一。《杂阿含经》的“如来记说”，从念佛而组合为“三念”、“四念”、“六念”；[1]《增一阿含经》更增列为“十念”。[2]　根据印顺导师，念佛法门更适合 “信行人”，是“佛涅槃后，佛弟子心中的永恒怀念”而特别发展出来的。[3]

依据佛光大辞典，念佛，即是在心里称念法身佛，观想具体存在的佛相或佛陀之功德，乃至口中称念佛之名号，皆称为念佛。念佛是一般修行佛道之基本行法之一。[4]

印顺导师认为早期念佛的主要意义是死后不堕三恶道，可以生天及决定向三菩提。在《长阿含经》中云：

> 我昔为人王，为世尊弟子，以笃信心为优婆塞。一心念佛，然后命终，为毘沙门天王作子，得须陀洹，不堕恶趣，极七往返，乃尽苦际。[5]

频婆沙罗王是阿阇世王子所弒的。临命终时，却能够一心不乱专念佛。因此，脱离了堕入三恶道的恶果，得以生天。

其次，《杂阿含经》提及念佛能离怖畏。云：

> 汝等当行于旷野中，有诸恐怖，心惊毛竖。尔时，当念如来事，谓如来、应、等正觉，乃至佛世尊。如是念者，恐怖则除。又，念法事，佛正法、律，现法能离炽然，不待时节，通达亲近，缘自觉知。又，念僧事，世尊弟子善向、正向，乃至世间福田。如是念者，恐怖即除。[6]

此外，《大智度论》很清楚地告诉我们，念佛亦有拔济苦厄的作用。论云：

> 昔有五百估客，入海采宝；值摩伽罗鱼王开口，海水入中，船去駛疾。船师问楼上人：“汝见何等?”答言：“见三日出，白山罗列，水流奔趣，如入大坑。”船师言：“是摩伽罗鱼王开口，一是实日，两日是鱼眼，白山是鱼齿，水流奔趣是入其口。我曹了矣！各各求诸天神以自救济！”是时诸人各各求其所事，都无所益。中有五戒优婆塞语众人言：“吾等当共称南无佛，佛为无上，能救苦厄！”众人一心同声称南无佛。是鱼先世是佛破戒弟子，得宿命智，闻称佛声心自悔悟，即便合口，船人得脱。[7]

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[1] 《杂阿含经》卷20，《大正藏》册2，页143中 - 页144上。
[2] 《增一阿含经》卷1，《大正藏》册2，页553下。
[3] 释印顺，《初期大乘佛教之起源与发展》，台北，正闻出版社，1989，页854。
[4] 慈怡，《佛光大辞典》，高雄，佛光出版社，页3208上。
[5] 《长阿含经》卷五，《大正藏》册1，页35上。
[6] 《杂阿含经》 卷35，《大正藏》册2，页254下。

念 (smṛti) 是忆念、系念，而由于一心系念，就能获得正定。[8]

《阿含经》中的念佛

“念佛”一词，有甚多的名称，其主要依据时代的背景而立。比如在早期原始时期的佛教，《阿含经》中提到“念佛”，就是“念如来”。其意是指通过观念如来之德相庄严，德行圆满来调整心念，由杂乱不净倾向纯净之境。所以，《阿含经》所说的念佛，主要是忆念佛的种种名号功德。

念佛的方法有很多，例如“三念”[9]，即是念佛、念法、念圣众三尊。《中阿含经》的“四增上心”[10]，分别为念如来、念法、念众、念尸罗及《杂阿含经》中提到的“诸天天道”[11] 为念如来、念法、念僧与念圣戒可称为“四念”。此外，《杂阿含

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[7]《大智度论》卷7，《大正藏》册25，页109上。

[8] 《杂阿含经》卷33，《大正藏》册2，页237下：“念如来事，如来、应、等正觉、明行足、善逝、世间解、无上士、调御丈夫、天人师、佛、世尊。圣弟子如是念时，不起贪欲缠，不起嗔恚、愚痴心，其心正直，得如来义，得如来正法；于如来正法、于如来所得随喜心；随喜心已，欢悦；欢悦已，身猗息；身猗息已，觉受乐；觉受乐已，其心定；心定已，彼圣弟子于兇崄众生中，无诸恚阂，入法流水，乃至涅槃。又见巴利文ANG:10 Mahānāma。

[9]《增一阿含经》卷49，《大正藏》册2，页819下:“若善男子、善女人念三尊已：佛、法、圣众，堕三恶趣者，终无此事！若彼善男子、善女人修念三尊，必至善处天上、人中。”

[10]《中阿含经》卷30，《大正藏》册1，页616下:

舍梨子！白衣圣弟子云何得“四增上心”，现法乐居，易不难得？

(一)“白衣圣弟子念如来，彼如来，无所著，等正觉，明行成为，善逝，世间解，无上士，道法御，天人师，号佛，众佑。如是念如来已，若有恶欲即便得灭，心中有不善、秽污、愁苦、忧戚亦复得灭。白衣圣弟子攀缘如来，心靖得喜。若有恶欲即便得灭，心中有不善、秽污、愁苦、忧戚亦复得灭。白衣圣弟子得「**第一增上心**」，现法乐居，易不难得。」

（二）「复次，舍梨子！白衣圣弟子念法，世尊善说法，必至究竟，无烦无热，常有不移动。如是观、如是觉、如是知、如是念法已，若有恶欲即便得灭，心中有不善、秽污、愁苦、忧戚亦复得灭…白衣圣弟子得此「**第二增上心**。」

（三）「复次，舍梨子！白衣圣弟子念众，如来圣众善趣正趣，向法次法，顺行如法，彼众实有阿罗诃、趣阿罗诃，有阿那含、趣阿那含，有斯陀含、趣斯陀含，有须陀洹、趣须陀洹，是谓四双八辈…白衣圣弟子是谓得「**第三增上心**」，现法乐居，易不难得。」

（四）「复次，舍梨子！白衣圣弟子自念尸赖，此尸赖不缺不穿，无秽无浊，住如地不虚妄，圣所称誉，具善受持…白衣圣弟子是谓得「**第四增上心**」，现法乐居，易不难得。」

[11]《杂阿含经》卷30，《大正藏》册2，页216中：
尔时，世尊告诸比丘：“有四种诸天天道。何等为四？

一）“谓圣弟子念如来事，如是：如来、应、等正觉、明行足、善逝、世间解、无上士、调御丈夫、天人师、佛世尊。于此如来事生随喜心，随喜已，心欢悦，心欢悦已，身猗息，身猗息已，觉

经》中也提到五种欢喜之处，例如念如来事、法事、僧事、自持戒事及自行世事，即是“五念”。[12]

《阿含经》中多处提到“六念”。“六念”，又称为六思念、六随念。“六念”指的是念佛、念法、念僧、念戒、念施、念天。在《杂阿含经》中“念佛”的记载为：

> 佛世尊、如來、应、等正觉所知所見，说六法出苦处升于胜处，说一乘道净诸众生，离诸恼苦，憂悲悉灭，得真如法。何等为六？谓圣弟子念如來、应、等正觉所行法净，如來、应、等正觉、明行足、善逝、世间解、无上士、调御丈夫、天人师、佛世尊。圣弟子念如來、应所行法故，离贪欲觉、离嗔恚觉、离害觉。如是，圣弟子出染著心。何等为染著心？谓五欲功德，于此五欲功德离贪、恚、痴，安住正念正智，乘于直道，修习念佛，正向涅槃，是名如來、应、等正觉所知所见，说第一出苦处升于胜处，一乘道净于众生，离苦恼，灭憂悲，得如实依据法。[13]

《杂阿含经》[14] 中提到“六念”中的“念佛”功德是“当念佛功德如来十号。此如來、应、等正觉、明行足、善逝、世间解、无上士、调御丈夫、天人师、佛、世尊。”依据觉音尊者在其《清净道论》一书中，为“佛随念”念佛功德作了深入的解释[15]：

(1) 如来：即是阿罗汉，含有五个意思:一、远离故；二、破贼故；三、破幅故；四、应受资具等故；五、无秘密之恶故；
(2) 等正觉：由于自己正觉一切法，故称“等正觉”。即是说他是一切法的正觉者，应该通达的诸法业已通达觉悟，应该遍知的诸(苦)法业已遍知，应断的诸(集)法业已断绝，应证的诸(灭)法业已证得，应修的诸(道)法业已修习；
(3) 明行足：因为明与行具足，故为明行具足者。由于明的具足，而世尊的一切智圆满，由于行的具足，而他的大悲圆满；
(4) 善逝：善净行故，善妙处行故，正行故，正语故为“善逝”；
(5) 世间解：完全了解世间，故为“世间解”；

受乐，觉受乐已，三昧定，三昧定已，圣弟子作如是学：“何等为诸天天道？”复作是念：“我闻无恚为上诸天天道。”作是念：“我从今日，于世间若怖若安，不起嗔恚，我但当自受纯一满净诸天天道。”是名“**第一诸天天道**”，未净众生令净，已净者重令净。”

二）“复次，比丘！圣弟子念于法事，谓如来说正法、律，现法离诸炽然，不待时节，通达涅槃，即身观察，缘自觉知。如是知法事已...我当受持纯一满净诸天天道。”是名“**第二诸天天道**。”（三）“复次，比丘！若于僧事起于正念，谓世尊弟子僧正直等向，所应恭敬、尊重、供养，无上福田...我但当受持纯一满净诸天天道。”是名“**第三诸天天道**。”

四）“复次，比丘！谓圣弟子自念所有戒事，随忆念言：“我于此不缺戒、不污戒、不杂戒、明智所叹戒、智者不厌戒。”于如是等戒事正忆念已...我当受持纯一满净诸天天道。是名“**第四诸天天道。**”

[12] 《杂阿含经》卷30，《大正藏》册2，页218中：佛告释氏难提:“汝见佛、若不见佛，若见知识比丘、若不见，汝当随时修习五种欢喜之处。何等为五？汝当随时念如来事：如来、应、等正觉、明行足、善逝、世间解、无上士、调御丈夫、天人师、佛世尊，法事、僧事、自持戒事、自行世事。随时忆念：“我得己利，我于慳垢众生所，当多修习离慳贪住，修解脱施、舍施、常炽然施、乐于舍，平等惠施，常怀施心。如是，释氏难提。”

[13] 《杂阿含经》卷20，《大正藏》册2，页143中。

[14] 同上，页145中。

[15] 觉音著，叶均译，《清净道论》，北京，中国佛教文化研究所出版，1991，页178 - 页189。

(6) 无上士：因为他自己的德更无超胜之人，故以无过于他之上者为“无上士”；
(7) 调御丈夫：他能御其应调御的丈夫为“调御丈夫”,调御即调伏的意思。应调御的丈夫是说未调御而当调御的畜生丈夫、人类丈夫及非人类的丈夫；
(8) 天人师：以现世，来世及第一义谛而适应的教诲，故为“师”。“天人”即天与人；
(9) 佛：以他的解脱究竟智业已觉悟一切所应知的，故为“佛”。或者以自己觉悟四谛，亦令其他有情觉悟，以此等理由故称为“佛”；
(10) 世尊:这是与德之最胜，一切有情之最上，尊敬之师，故称世尊。

佛的名号具足，表明佛的功德具足。忆念名号的实质是忆念佛的功德，既可蒙佛力加被，亦可增强修行者的信心。

印顺导师认为：“六随念所念境--念佛、法、僧，是三宝的功德；念戒与舍，是自己所有的功德；念天是当来果报的殊胜庄严。”[16] “六念”的修习往往是与其他法门联系在一起，例如依“四不坏净”又称“四不坏信”，即佛不坏净、法不坏净、僧不坏净、圣戒成就及“六法”。[17]

“六念”的修持必须以对佛、法、僧等的信仰为前提，这与净土宗所强调的“信”是一致的。不仅如此，修“六念”须确立正信、严持戒律、勤于布施、听闻正法、悟解空性、智慧增上为根本。可见，《阿含经》对信仰与智慧都非常重视。念佛应以对佛法的绝对信仰和殊胜的智慧为基础。[18]

印顺导师在其著作《佛法概论》对《阿含经》中所提到的“六念”提出由于当时在家信众听说佛陀与僧众要到别处去，所以心中感到非常难过。此外，亦由于身体健康方面的病苦，导致信众觉得更须要佛陀的加持。而且，当贾客及修行者到旷野森林修行时，由于心中的畏惧，他们不得忆念佛陀的功德来安慰自己。由此可见，除了念佛的功德，“六念”主要是为信众建立信心及给予安慰。这在佛法的流行中，特别是“念佛”有着非常的发展。[19]

《增一阿含经》中则提到 “十念”。“十念”即是念佛、念法、念僧、念戒、念施、念天、念止观、念安般、念身、念死。经中很明确地指出由于念佛的光明相好与殊胜功德，能够远离世间的贪爱、骄慢及无明。[20] 除此之外，经中也提到如果众生希望可以增寿，相貌庄严，精力充沛，快乐及拥有美妙的声音，就应该专心精进的一心念佛。[21]

《杂阿含经》则提到修行念佛，可“净诸众生，离诸恼苦，忧悲悉灭，得真如法。”[22] 经中亦提到当贾客或比丘在旷野修行的时候，如果生起恐惧及心灵不安的

[16] 释印顺，《华雨集》册2，台北，正闻出版社，1975，页57。
[17].《杂阿含经》卷33，《大正藏》，册2，页238下: 应“依六法修六念”：佛告摩诃男：“汝见如来，不见如来，见诸比丘，不见诸比丘，且汝常当勤修六法。何等为六？正信为本，戒、施、闻、空、慧以为根本，非不智慧。是故，摩诃男，依此六法已，于上增修六随念，念如来事，乃至念天。”
[18] 《略论《阿含经》的“念佛”思想》，《闽南佛学》2004。网络，2014年12月31日：http://www.nanputuo.com/nptxy/html/200711/1814324962113.html
[19] 释印顺，《佛法概论》，台北，正闻出版社，2004，页212 - 页213。
[20].《增一阿含经》卷42，《大正藏》册2，页780下: “是谓比丘有众生修行此十念者。断尽欲爱色爱无色爱一切无明骄慢，皆悉除尽。”
[21].《增一阿含经》卷5，《大正藏》册2，页566上: “此谓一人出现于世，此众生类便增寿益算，颜色光润，气力炽盛。快乐无极，音声无雅。”
[22] 《杂阿含经》卷20，《大正藏》册2，页143中。

情况时，便应当念如来。[23] 在《杂阿含经》中亦记载，当释氏难提听说佛陀要到其他地方游行时，心中便生起苦恼。此时佛就教诫他：

> 汝见佛，若不见佛，若见知识比丘，若不见，汝当随时修习五种欢喜之处。何等为五？汝当随时念如来事。如来、应等正觉、明行足、善逝、世间解、无上士、调御丈夫、天人师、佛、世尊。[24]

因此，这说明即使无法亲眼见佛，但以称念如来十号的功德能够让念佛者离恶不善法，趋向善处及证入涅槃等。

《阿含经》中多处提到，修行念佛可以获得来世的殊胜果报如上升天道及趋于涅槃。 例如《长阿含经》云：“六法向涅槃”[25]，六法即是六念。《杂阿含经》中更提到念佛属于六念法门之一。它可通过修习念佛的功德，逐步上升，直到涅槃。

> 若比丘在于学地，求所未得，上升进道，安隐涅槃，彼于尔时，当修六念，乃至进得涅槃。[26]

十法即是十念。《增一阿含经》也提到若修行十法，便可达至涅槃。

> 云何修行十法，得至涅槃。所谓十念，念佛、念法、念比丘僧、念天、念戒、念施、念休息、念安般、念身、念死，是谓修行十法，得至涅槃。[27]

有关念佛的方法，《增一阿含经》云：

> 正身正意，结跏趺坐，系念在前，无有他想，专精念佛，观如来形，未曾离目。已不离目，便念如来功德：如来体者，金刚所成，十力具长，四无所畏，在众勇健。如来颜貌，端正无双，视之无厌；戒德成就，犹如金刚而不可毁。清净无暇，亦如琉璃。如来三昧，未始有减，已息永寂而无他念，憍慢强梁，诸情檐怕，欲意恚想，愚惑之心，犹豫纲结，皆悉除尽。如来慧身，智无涯底，无所罣碍。如来身者，解脱成就，诸趣已尽，无复生分，言我当更堕于生死。如来身者，度知见城，知他人根，应度不度，此死生彼，周旋往来，生死之际，有解脱者，无解脱者，皆具知之。是谓修行念佛，便有名誉，成大果报，诸善普至，得甘露昧，至无为处，便成神通，除诸乱想，获沙门果，自致涅槃。[28]

此一念佛方法，是系念忆念，专心观想佛的形像，一意观想佛的无量功德，包括观想佛的身体、颜貌；佛的戒德、三昧、智慧、解脱、解脱知见等的五分法身。若能如此修行念佛法门，便得成就大果报，乃至自致涅槃，自得解脱。[29]

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[23].《杂阿含经》卷35，《大正藏》册2，页254下 - 页255上：“尔时世尊告诸贾客，汝等当行于旷野中，有诸恐怖，心惊毛竖，尔时当念如来事。”

[24] 《杂阿含经》卷30，《大正藏》册2，页218中。

[25].《长阿含经》卷10，《大正藏》册1，页59下：“云何六法向涅槃。谓六思念，念佛、念法、念僧、念戒、念施、念天。”

[26] 《杂阿含经》卷33，《大正藏》册2，页237下。

[27] 《增一阿含经》卷43，《大正藏》册2，页781上。

[28] 《增一阿含经》，卷2，《大正藏》册2，页554上 - 页554中。

[29] 释圣严，《念佛生净土》，台北，法鼓文化，1997，页129。

有鉴于此，学佛者应对如来十号的名称加以了解，明白其中的含义。佛陀是自觉、觉他及觉行圆满的宇宙证悟者，万德具足，是世出世间的人天师范。因此，在称念佛号时，应以虔诚恭敬的心，忆念佛陀的福德智慧，进而以佛陀为榜样，学习佛陀的精神，乃至达至“是心是佛，是心作佛”的境界来报答佛陀的恩惠。

综合上述，，《阿含经》中早期的念佛观念不但重视信仰，同时也重视智慧。唯有两者兼具，方能够达到念佛的真正意义。此外，《阿含经》中也提出念佛除了可获得来世殊胜的果报外，也可获得现世的利益。在佛陀时代，修行者在森林修行，难免会生起害怕恐惧之心，因此借着念佛的功德，来克服心中的畏惧，平复修行上的困扰。

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《摩诃止观》“破法遍”之概述

释果智

绪 论

《摩诃止观》是天台宗详细叙述圆顿止观法门或修行方法的一部重要著作。智者大师在此书中，详细阐述了圆顿止观法门之甚深义理和止观修行法要。智顗师事慧思，受“渐次、不定和圆顿”三种止观的影响，发挥自己的观行体系，于“空、假、中”三谛圆融之境，立“一念三千”之观，阐明圆顿止观法门之甚深要旨。作为天台三大部之一的《摩诃止观》，便是发挥了智者大师自己的观行体系，显示圆顿止观法门的甚深意旨，止、观双运，解、行并重，最为精要。《摩诃止观》为智者大师晚年所述之著作，亦是其著作体系中最圆满纯熟之论书。书中主要述说观心之事，详说圆顿止观之法门，及智者大师独特之修学体验与理论实践，并叙说了怎样以禅观思维方式，加以体悟和实践圆顿止观境界之实际修法。

《摩诃止观》“破法遍”之概述

“破法遍”又名“破诸法遍”、“能破法遍”，简称“破遍”，为智顗在天台宗《摩诃止观》中所立“十乘观法”之第四部分，系以“空、假、中”三观遍破所有诸惑烦恼，实为遍破心生一切虚妄之法。心安住于法界之理，以其执着故，犹未能悟入，故应遍破其烦恼执着；虽然名为破法，但是仅仅为除掉其病患而已，并非断除其根本惑法。

“十乘观法”又称“十法成乘观、十乘轨行、十种观法、十观成乘、十法成乘、十法成观、十法止观、十重观法、十乘观、十乘或十观”等，乘是车乘，犹如行者修行佛道驾驶大白牛车，直达涅槃宝所，故名为乘。此十乘虽称为十，然只有一法，即“观不思议境”，即以能观之智，观自己心中微细的妄念，此妄念是指一切法的起源，故此心即是法，此法亦即是心，要将其观成“即空、即假、即中”的不思议境，若是上根之人，即能够悟入涅槃妙心，直达宝所。此十乘观法因能安住众生心，故以坐处喻之，而有“十乘床”之称；又以观法能除去迷妄，犹如风能拂去灰尘，故喻称十乘风。

此十种观法为：一、观不思议境。即观凡夫于日常所起一念心中，具备人之一生当中所有一切念，三谛相互一体化为不思议之妙境。观为能观，为“观不思议境”之主体，“不思议境”为观之所观之客体，此中三谛三观虽有能所和主客关系，但皆为观慧之内容，故以观不思议境之智慧，为锻炼凡夫日常所起之无记六识心。以“一念三千、三谛圆融”为妙体，则须观六识心，以“三谛圆融、一心三观”即为所观，依此而成立能所之相互关系。十乘观法以此境为根本。先说可思议境，即大小乘中都说心生一切法，不说心具，所以无论是说六道还是说十法界，都属于可思议境。次说不可思议境，又开作性德、修德、化他三境，天台一家“一念三千”、“三谛圆融”的观法所谓不可思议境，指众生实用现前六根六尘相对所起一念的妄心，此介尔一念，具足十法界，一一法界又各具足十法界、十如、三世间，即有三千的法数，所以只要有一念心，即法尔具足三千诸法，无有缺减，即心是一切法，一切法是心，非纵非横，

非一非异，玄妙寂绝，非识所识，非言所言，所以称为不可思议境。于此一念心、念念用即真（空）、即假、即中三观观察。如观一法即一切法，是为假观；观一切法即一法，是为真观或空观；非一非一切，是为中观。一空一切空，无假、中而不空，是总空观；一假一切假，无空、中而不假，是总假观；一中一切中，无空、假而不中，是总中观。所观照的是三谛圆融的境，能观照的是空、假、中三观，总称不可思议一心三观。二、发真正菩提心，又称起慈悲心。修行者依初观未成时，改发圆教无作之菩提心，为求菩提救度众生，立四弘誓愿，上求佛道下化众生，以便助成此观法。真正发菩提心，是既已深识不思议境，了知一苦一切苦，思惟彼我，伤痛自他，即起大悲，发两种誓愿，誓愿度无边众生，誓愿断无尽烦恼。又深识不可思议心，了知一乐一切乐，理会我及众生以前，但求人天二乘之乐而不知究竟乐的原因，即起大悲，发两种誓愿，誓愿知无量法门，誓愿成无上佛道，如此慈悲誓愿和不可思议境智，同时俱起，这叫作真正发菩提心。三、善巧安心止观，又称巧安止观。善于巧妙运用止观，以方便善巧安住于一心，使心安住于真实之本性。此观是安心在法性上，体达此心毕竟只是法性，起是法性起，灭是法性灭；然而法性空寂，实无起灭，即名为止。观察此心无明痴惑和法性相等等，本来皆空，空亦不可得，就真理当体朗然显现，即名为观。即以三谛为安心的处所，止观为安心的方法。四、破法遍。即破除遍于一切诸法所执着之心。此观安以“一心三观”的智能，遍破是依无生教门，用从假入空、从空入假、中道第一义谛三观的智慧，彻照三谛，遍破“见思、尘沙、无明”三惑的情势，然后乃能得证。一切诸惑烦恼。如藏、通二教只用空观破见思惑，别教虽用隔历次第的“空、假、中”三观破除三惑烦恼，但无明还没有全断，所以都不能够说是遍。圆教“空、假、中”三观只在一心，横、竖诸法都在一心中具，破心即一切皆破，这就是“破法遍”。五、识通塞。：能观智之知通塞，识别情智之得失。此观能够了别烦恼、生死、六蔽等为塞，菩提、涅槃、六度等为通，而离塞从通。是因苦集、十二因缘、六蔽、三惑等法能蔽塞实相之理，即名为塞；道灭、灭因缘智、六度、一心三观等法能显发实相之理，即名为通；而着重于加以识别“于通起塞”，并须破塞。如在破法遍中，所破的三惑是塞，能破的三观是通，但苦于能破的三观又生爱着，这个能着心也同样是塞，也必须加以破除。如此于一一能、一一所、一一心、节节检校，破塞养通，是为识通塞。六、道品调适，又称修道品。即检讨个人对于三十七道品之修法，以选择适合行者之能力实践为主。此观能知正道之法门，必与我不相应，如是则当一一调试三十七科道品，采纳适合自己的修法，修之以入道，中根人自此第六观，必发真证。即是说，此观是将三十七道品调停适当随宜破惑入理，如修四念处生四正勤，四正勤发四如意足，四如意足生五根，五根生五力，五力生七觉支，七觉支入八正道，这是善巧调适。此中道品即四谛的道谛，而无作道谛的三十七品，是基于“一心三观”而成立的，于此以七科解脱道品的义相，并说假如于前一道其中未能与法性相应，应当次第用其余的道品展转调停。更举藏、通、别、圆四教的空、无相、无作三解脱门，说明道品的功能。七、对治助开，又称助道对治。如以六度对治六蔽等善法，以帮助破除障碍之法，即开辟三解脱门，以对治烦恼障碍。此观则必有迷事的粗惑为障，如是则当修五停心观或六度等行，以对治事惑，助开正道理观。即是说，此观是因行人正修观时烦恼忽起，障蔽正行，应当用六度及五停心观等加以对治而助开解脱。如修道品时，悭贪忽起、激动观心，当用布施度加以对治；破戒心起，当用持戒度加以对治；瞋恚勃发，当用忍辱度加以对治；懈怠懒惰、放逸纵荡，当用精进度加以对治；散乱不定，当用禅定度加以对治；愚痴迷惑，当用般若度加以对治。并当观察这个助道不可思议摄一切法，而事行和理观配合，才能够开解脱门，得见佛性。八、知位次。修习此观，绝不会生起登圣位之慢心，更须了知自己修

行之阶段，善自分别了知修证分齐。即谓于修行乃至证道的位次，如实了之。此观是令行人了知修行所历的阶位次第，以免生增上慢，未得谓得，未证谓证，并叙述四教的阶位次第。九、能安忍。此观对于内外障碍，心不动摇而能安忍，成就觉道。即谓至此障转慧开，神智爽利，于内外障碍皆能够安忍不动。即是说诸行人，或未入五品弟子位，或入初品，神智爽利，为众所围绕，外招名利，内动宿障，以致废损自行，应当安忍深修三昧，不为名誉、利养眷属等外障和烦恼、业、定见、慢等内障所动。十、无法爱、又称离法爱。即破除对非真菩提之执着，而证入真正菩提位。谓至此内外障惑，悉皆断除，唯有法爱存在，若断法爱，即发现真正中道。此观是说行人虽除内外二障，然而执着中道相似之法，心生爱乐，不能真入中道，进至初住；只在顶位法中，不进不退，称为顶堕。必须破除这个法爱，才能进入萨婆若海。以上系就阴入界境显示十乘观法，具体说来就十境的各境，是应该加以推广，对于智者大师所叙述十乘观法的一一阐明，又称为“十法成乘”。

“破法遍”释义

在智顗《摩诃止观》中，“十乘观法”之第四为“明破法遍”，关于“明破法遍”之意，主要是说，如果行者修习巧安止观后，定慧仍无法启发者，实因有法执未泯灭，则必须修此“破法遍”观法，即可依于一心三观，遍破对三惑烦恼的执著。

就圆教“无生”之理而言，实是一心中具足三谛三观，遍破一切法之执着，而悟入诸法实相。[1] 此十乘观法中的“破法遍”一段，在很大程度上主要是为了顿根者而设立。“破法遍”的意思是，指普遍、彻底地破除修行者对于一切诸法的执着。因为“众生多颠倒，少不颠倒”，所以为“破颠倒，令不颠倒”，故说“破法遍”。

所谓破法遍，是指法性清净无染，既不是合而为一又不是分散为二；既不是破又不是不破。可是为什么要遍破一切法呢？由于众生多颠倒、无明烦恼和妄想执着等，很少有不颠倒迷惑的，因此必须破除众生颠倒妄想之心，令其清净不染，还原其本性，获得真如佛性，清净无碍，所以说“破法遍”。若人以止观之法，通过禅定而开发出智慧，并足以善巧安心之法达到清净无染，则不必等到使用另外的法再加以破除；如果心性散乱不定，就应该以定、慧止观双修之法，用具有禅定之智慧而完全清除杂乱之心，所以说“破”；遍破一切妄心之法，故名“破法遍”。

无生门“破法遍”

无生门破法遍者，分为三种，即：一、从假入空破法遍；二、从空入假破法遍；三、两观为方便，得入中道第一义谛破法遍。如此三观，实在一心，法妙难解，寄三以显一而已。《大智度论》云：“三智实在一心；为向人说，令易解故，分属三人”。[2] 《华严》亦有二意，宣说菩萨历劫修行，[3] 彼为钝根。初发心时便成正觉，所有慧身不由他悟，[4] 彼是利根。《法华》唯一意，“正直舍方便，但说无上道”。[5] 今

[1] 参考释本圆之论文：天台止观之“观不思议境”初探——以《摩诃止观》为主第215页。
[2] 见于《大正藏》第25册，第260页中。
[3] 见于《华严经》，《大正藏》第9册，第386页中之意。
[4] 见于《华严经》，《大正藏》第9册，第449页下之意。
[5] 见于《法华经》，《大正藏》第9册，第10页上。

欲借别[6]　　显总，即指寄别相前后，显一心总相。举次第而论不次第，故以三义来解释。

破法必须依靠门加以破除。门有很多种，具差别与趣入之两义，于法有种种之差别，能使人趣入涅槃，故经中所说之法皆为门。智顗《四教仪》卷一中认为，门者以能通为义，佛教所诠正四句法，通行人至真性实相之理，故名为门。门，又区别于法相义理等名目之用语。例如“平等门与差别门”二门，“有门、空门、亦有亦空门与非有非空门”四门，“圣道门与净土门”二门等种种不同分类。盖佛教之教化乃应对象而有种种差别，然皆为导人趣入菩提之入口，故称为“法门”。

佛教诸经中说，门各有不同：或以文字为门，如四十二字门[7]；或以观行为门，如菩萨修三三昧，缘诸法实相[8]；或以智慧为门，如“诸佛智慧甚深無量，其智慧门难解难入”[9]；或以理为门，如无生法无来无去，无生法即是佛；无灭法无来无去，无灭法即是佛；实际法无来无去，实际法即是佛；空法无来无去，空法即是佛。[10]

智者大师认为，修行的目的是为了达到对于“无生”的认识。他说：“且依空无生门。无生门能通止观，到因到果，又能显无生，使门光扬。何者？止观是行，无生门是教。”智者大师以“不生生、不生不生、生不生、生生”四句说无生门。又说：“不生生亦不可说、生生亦不可说、生不生亦不可说、不生不生亦不可说、生亦不可说、不生亦不可说。按照此六句，明无生门破法遍。”

“无生门破法遍”，虽有“从假入空”、“从空入假”、“中道第一义谛”三个阶段，就钝根者而言，必须先修“从假入空破法遍”，达到世界本质“空”的体认。所以智者大师说：“三界无别法，唯是一心作。今求心不可得，即一切空。观心无心，观空无空，即无所得空。观有见三假不可得，即有法空；观无见三假不可得，即无法空；观亦有亦无见三假不可得，即无法有法空。”

智者大师在《摩诃止观》“破法遍”中，针对人们面对止观修习过程中的各种错误认识、一切执着，展开十分彻底的破斥。他认为，修行的目的是要达到对“无生”的认识，由事入理，所以“破法遍”乃是根本的手段。总之，依无生教门，用“从假入空、从空入假、中道第一义谛”三观的智慧，彻照“空、假、中”三谛，遍破一切诸惑烦恼。如“臧、通”二教只用空观破见思惑，别教虽用隔历次第的“空、假、中”三观破“见思、尘沙、无明”三惑，但无明烦恼还没有全部断尽，所以都不能够说是“遍”。圆教“空、假、中”三观只在一心，横竖诸法都在一心中具备，破除心即一切皆破，这就是“破法遍”。[11]

无生门通于止观

[6] 见于《大正藏》第46册，第62页上。
[7] 见于《摩诃般若菠萝蜜经》卷五之广乘品，《大正藏》第8册，第256页上至中，明四十二字门之意。
[8] 见于《大智度论》卷二十，《大正藏》第25册，第206页下至207页下，释论明菩萨修三三昧解脱门之意思。
[9] 见于《妙法莲华经》卷一之方便品，《大正藏》第9册，第5页中。
[10] 《摩诃般若菠萝蜜经》卷二十七之法尚品，《大正藏》第8册，第421页中。
[11] 参见曾其海著《摩诃止观论要》第127页，宗教文化出版社，2010年7月。

诸佛已无生死，但为了普度众生，无生而生，非灭示灭。[12] 观一切诸法无生之理，为入佛道之初门，即称为无生门。暂且依照空无生门来说，《摩诃止观》卷五下指出：“无生门能通止观，到因到果、又能显无生，使门光扬。又认为，止观是行，无生门是教，依教修行，通至无生法忍，因位具足。”[13] 《净名经》中有三十二菩萨，各说入不二门，皆是菩萨从门入位，而以无生为首。[14] 即是说，法自在菩萨之入不二门以无生为始。止观光扬无生门者，法不自显，弘之在人；人能行行，法门光显，使无生教纵横无碍，触处皆通。

止观能显果；果不自显，由行故果满，果满故一切皆满。智者大师以“不生生、不生不生、生不生、生生”四句说无生门，认为能因此而“摄自行、因果、化他、能所等法皆遍。”又说：“不生生亦不可说，生生亦不可说，生不生亦不可说，不生不生亦不可说，生亦不可说，不生亦不可说。按此六句，明无生门破法遍。”此六句，既可破“思议惑”，又可破“不思议惑”，是为对一切执着的彻底破除。

次第三观“破法遍”

行人修习天台“空、假、中”三观，先从假入空，次从空入假，后乃双离空假，入中道第一义观，名次第三观。[15] 根据《菩萨瓔珞本业经》记载，以次第来说明观的体相，称为次第观，主要有三种：一、从假入空观，又称作二谛观；二、从空入假观，又称作平等观；三、通过修习空、假二观，作为方便道，得以悟入中道，双重运用空、假二谛，使念念相续的心寂灭，自然流入一切智之大海，此种修法亦称作中道第一义谛观。

一、从假入空“破法遍”

宇宙人生之真相，乃是“心行处灭，言语道断”，即非语言思虑所能及。所以，“无生门破法遍”虽有“从假入空”、“从空入假”、“中道第一义谛”三个阶段，但就对钝根者而言，首先要修“从假入空破法遍”。通过修习，获得对于世界本质“空”的认识。

智者大师认为，三界无别法，唯是一心作。今求心不可得，即一切空。观心无心，观空无空，即无所得空。观有见三假不可得，即有法空；观无见三假不可得，即无法空；观亦有亦无见三假不可得，即无法有法空。

假若认识到世界的本质是空，就能够知道“无明即法性，不二不异”，本末双寂，毕竟清净，是明为止。又观无明即法性，不二不异。法性本来清净，不起不灭。无明烦恼惑心亦复清净，又有谁起谁灭呢？若谓此心有起灭者，横得法性有起灭罢了。法性没有生起，谁又生忧？法性没有消灭，谁又生喜呢？假如没有忧和喜，谁又分别这是法性、那是无明呢？能观与所观，犹如虚空。如此观时，毕竟清净，是为从假入空观。

[12] 参见陈义孝编《佛学常见词汇》“无生之生”词条。
[13] 见于《大正藏》第46册第59页下《摩诃止观》卷五下。
[14] 参见《佛光大辞典》第三版“无生门”词条；《摩诃止观》卷六下；《止观大意》第5079页；释慧岳监修、释会旻主编《天台教学辞典》。
[15] 参见陈义孝《佛学常见词汇》“次第三观”词条。

从假入空观，即为二谛观。首先，因为观假是对于进入空谛的主观诠释，所观之空通过观假这一前提方能领会，将主观的能诠和客观的所诠合论，故称作二谛观。其次，领会空谛之日出之法，不仅仅是见空，同时亦要识别假谛的存在，譬如除去烦恼乌云之障碍，空慧之日出由上而显现，世间假谛在下而明，既然由真空使假谛显明，可得此二谛观之名；现在由观假而领会真空，怎么不能说是二谛观呢？再次，世俗之假谛是所破，而用来破除世俗假谛的是真谛。如果从所破的角度看，应说这是俗谛观；但如从能破的角度看，应说这是真谛观；将所破和能用二方面合论，故称作二谛观。再其次，可分别从说法的三种角度来看：一、从藏、通二教而言，有为了他说法的随情二谛观；二、从修行立场而言，则有自证说他的随情智二谛观；三、从证悟角度而言，则有依其自内证而宣说的随智二谛观。在此虽为藏、通二教的初观，修行之功尚未契合真理，但初后相通，因此可说有依随言教和依随修行的二谛观。

智者大师特别指出，“无明即法性”是世间万物之实相，这一思想对于“信行利根”者而言，当“一闻即悟”；于“法行”者而言，思之“即能得解”。但是对于钝根者来说，必须“从假入空观”修习做起，先破除对于一切事物的执着。智者大师强调说：“其钝根者，非唯闻思不悟，更增众失。故《中论》指出，将来世中，人根转钝，造作诸恶，不知何因缘？故说毕竟空。是故广作观法，说于《中论》。今亦如是，为钝根故广破。所以，从根本上来说，“从假入空破法遍”是为钝根者设立的一种修行法门。

二、从空入假“破法遍”

从空入假观，即为平等观。如果说从假入空观，离开假而入空，尚且无空可入，那么再从空入假观中，离开空而入假，又有何假可入？所以，应当知道此从空入假观，是为了度化众生，了知真空并非是离假之空，空中可开出无数方便之假名，所以在这个意义上说“从空”；分别众生的不同病患而对症下药，毫无差谬，故称作“入假”。

所谓平等观，是指针对与从假入空观相对应而称平等。先用从假入空观破除世俗之见的假病，而不用世俗的假名，再用出世间的真空之法，只破掉世俗烦恼之见，而不破除执着真空之烦恼病患，所以不能称作平等。现在此观既破空病，还用世俗的假名，破空病与用假名均同，破时即是用时，用时即是破时，所以称作平等。

现在用譬喻来加以说明，比如盲人刚刚恢复视觉时，虽能见虚空和形形色色的东西，但所见非常朦胧，不能分别种种花卉树木的根、茎、枝、叶，亦不能够识别何为良药何为毒药的种类。从假入空自证随智之时，虽然也见到空、假二谛，却不能方便用假。如果人的智慧之眼开启后，便能够见到虚空和形形色色的东西，对所见之物当即能识别种类，洞察其因果关系，对粗细医药、食物，都能识别利用，方便利益别人，此是用来比喻从空入假观。“从假入空和从空入假”二观同时具备真、俗二谛，但从空入假观是用假谛作为度化众生的方便，此种观法既称作“入假”，又称为“平等”，其意义在于使用方便善巧之法，利于破除众生的烦恼执着，从而达到身心轻安的境界。

三、中道第一义“破法遍”

所谓“中道第一义”，是指诸法莫过于中道，故曰第一义。[16] 中道第一义观即为三观中中观之德名。空假二谛，双照而离有无二边之观法，即为破障中道之根本无明。《摩诃止观》卷三认为，二观为方便，得入中道。双照二谛心心寂灭，自然流入萨婆若海，是名中道第一义观，此名出自《菩萨璎珞本业经》。[17]

中道第一义观，首先，主要是指在最初的从假入空观中，世俗的假法被观照为空，从空去对治生死的迷惑妄想执着等烦恼；其次、是通过从空入假观中，出世之空亦被观照为空，则是从空去对治涅槃的烦恼执着；再次，是对于片面的空、假二边进行双重否定，此种观法就称作“二空观”，作为进入更高真理的方便道，得以领会中道第一义观。所以能使念念相续的心寂灭，自然流入一切智之大海。此外，从假入空观用“空”，从空入假观用“假”，此二观都是针对不同对象的方便法门。进入中道第一义观时，能同时用此空、假二观。所以《菩萨璎珞本业经》认为，心如果停留在此定中，能知世间一切生、灭法相。至于空、假二观的最终目的，亦是为了进入中道第一义观的二种方便；其意义在于帮助众生断尽烦恼，了脱生死，得到最终的解脱。

四、次第三观与化法四教之关系

有人曾经问难，《大般涅槃经》里说过，凡是定力偏多和慧力偏多者，都不能见佛性。对此经义应如何理解？回答是这样的，“从假入空、从空入假、中道第一义”次第三观与“藏、通、别、圆”化法四教一一相互对应：藏教的声闻、缘觉二乘与通教菩萨只有最初的空观，属于定多慧少，不能见佛性；别教菩萨虽进入 到第二层次的假观，但属于慧多定少，也不能见佛性。唯有对于圆教菩萨来说，前两种空、假二观都不过是方便的过渡阶段，由此进入更高层次的第三中道观，定慧相等，如此则见佛性。

又复问难，《大般涅槃经》里不是说十住菩萨以慧眼之故，故见佛性不甚了了，并非说全不能见佛性。最初的空观得慧眼位，尚且能见佛性，进到第二假观能获得法眼位，怎么倒反说慧眼与法眼都不能见佛性呢？回答如此，即所说二眼都不能见到佛性，是在次第三观的层次上而言。因为前二观偏于空、假，相应的也各偏于定、慧，为佛所呵斥，故不能说慧眼与法眼能见佛性。现在你所引经文说慧眼能见佛性者，这名称虽与别教的十住位相同，其实是借用来说明圆教的十住之位。在圆教阶段，当“空、假、中”三观现前，悟入“空、假、中”三谛圆理时，即进入圆教十住位，在此亦称获得十住位者为慧眼。所以，《妙法法华经》中说，诚愿如释迦牟尼世尊一样，获得第一清净的慧眼。像圆教十住位上所证之慧眼，因为尚有残余的无明存在，故见佛性亦不能明了。这就好比在苍茫辽阔的夜空中，难以看清物体；仰观天空，难以分辨出飞翔的天鹅于大雁。圆教十住位上之慧眼，虽不能究竟明了真如佛性，但这种境地，决非偏空的二乘圣人所得的慧眼能够相比，亦绝非二乘圣人所能得知。

以是之故，《妙法莲华经》譬喻显示，好比有人在高原上穿土凿井，一开始唯见干土，施功挖土不已，转而见到湿土，逐渐深至泥水层，最后则得到清水。在此，干土譬喻最初层面的空观，湿土譬喻第二层面的假观，泥水譬喻第三层面的中道观，清水譬喻圆顿止观中的一心三观。又以此三观譬喻四教：三藏教因不懂中道，犹如干

[16] 参见丁福保《佛学大辞典》“中道第一义”词条。
[17] 参见丁福保《佛学大辞典》“中道第一义观”词条。

土；通教虽高于三藏教，但也不懂中道，犹如湿土；别教虽已能诠释中道，但教义不纯，犹如泥水；圆教完美圆满地阐释中道，犹如清水。像藏教和通教此二教既不懂中道，又不懂空、假二观相即相成的行法，如此片面偏空的慧眼，岂能见得佛性？若说不懂中道观者也能见佛性，这是一点也没有道理的。

五、明“次第三观”遍破法一切诸之要旨

次第三观，为天台化法四教中别教所立之观法。此三观又称作别相三观、隔历三观；即以隔历次第而修习“空、假、中”三观之法。对此而言，圆教所立一心三观之观法，称为不次第三观。盖别教认为，“空、假、中”三观乃互相隔历而不融通，故须次第渐观之，由此便可以依照次第破除“见思、尘沙、无明”三惑，而得“一切智、道种智、一切种智”等三智。然圆教则认为，于一念心中，即能圆观“空、假、中”三谛，而不须次第修习之，故圆教之三观又称为圆融三观、不次第三观。若将三观配于别教菩萨之行位，则十住位修习空观、十行位　修习假观、十回向位修习中道观。然亦有通修三观者，如十住位之菩萨，除修习空观外，亦兼修假观及中道观。盖天台宗将三观分为“次第与不次第”两种，乃系以别教之次第三观，彰显圆教之不次第三观，以明示圆教之圆融无碍教相。[18]

次第三观分别依于“空、假、中”三谛。首先，进入“从假入空观”，此观使烦恼妄想执着的动乱灭止，破除如磐石般坚固的“见、欲爱、色爱、有爱”四烦恼住地，所悟入之空，空即是实相的真理，空之智慧能够显现出实相的真理，此三层含义，共同构成“从假入空观”的体相。其次，“从空入假观”中，观智通达于理，则与理和谐无碍，观智通达于事，则与事和谐无碍；从而识别假名、假法，破除无知之障，观照假名之理，区别分明而无错谬，假名与实相真理恒常宛然，此三层含义，共同构成“从空入假观”的体相。再次，“中道第一义观”使空、假二种边见都空去，悟入中道实相理论，继而证得中道法性，此三层含义，共同构成“中道第一义观”之体相。以上所述是依据大乘经论，阐明巧度次第三观的体相。以大乘经义配随其空、假、中体相，使三观的次第体相条理分明。

如果论三观，以空、假、中逐层推进，则有权与实、浅与深的区别，智为观的结果。如果论“空、假、中”三智，则同样有优与劣、前与后的区别。如果论修行天台次第三观所获得的三种行位，则有十住、十行和十地中初地的大小深浅之区别。这些都是在圆教之前的次第分别上，并非现在所说的圆教止观的体相。

结 论

“破法遍”与十乘观法中其它九重观法联系起来看，显示出“方便”法门的原则，在智者大师全部止观修习中所起的作用。止观的原理可以归结为一种，但是止观实践却有多种。根据基本的原理，展开不同的实践，都能达到止观的目的。可以认为，在“十乘观法”中，智者大师处处贯彻着方便善巧、悉檀对治的止观思想学说。

[18] 参见《菩萨璎珞本业经》卷上；智顗《观无量寿佛经疏》；《摩诃止观》卷三上；《法华经玄义》卷三上、卷四下；《四教义》卷一、卷五；《天台四教仪集注》卷下本第2465页、“三观”第706页；以及《佛光大辞典》（第三版）；释慧岳监修，释会旻主编《天台教学辞典》。

《摩诃止观》卷五下认为，一切凡夫，未阶圣道，介尔起计，悉皆是见。以有见故，三假苦集，烦恼随从。勤用止观，而摧伏之。入空之观，破见及思；总而言之，只是破有。次观所破，只是破无；中观所破，双非二边，正显中道。

就钝根凡夫而言，不可能迅速进入“一心三观”，所以当务之急是要破除“有”的见思惑。“从假入空破法遍”只是止观的“方便道”，从“方便道”入手，“深识见爱无明因缘，介尔心起即知三假”，于是“止观随逐，破性破相。虽复贪瞋尚在，而见着已虚。”在此修习的基础上，进而修“从空入假破法遍”。最后以前两者为方便而修“中道第一义谛破法遍”。这意味着对于一般的止观修习者来说，不可能一念即入中道第一义谛，而必须借助于方便，“善用悉檀，信、法回转，巧修止观。”

从智者大师对于有关钝根者修习方面的一系列方便教化中，可以看到大师内心深处对于末法众生尤其钝根者修习禅观忧虑的思想观念。此种观念不仅使他建立起念佛、忏悔、禅坐等实践手段，而且还以自身的克己度人和慈悲化他精神感化教团，实践佛教的真实理念。

在智者大师的全部止观学说体系中，止观的原理和止观的践行、理论的抽象和方法的具体，存在着内在的统一。这与世俗哲学体系相类似，是一种“极高明”与“道中庸”的和谐统一。止观的原理属于“极高明”的部分，止观的实践则属于“道中庸”的部分。“一心三观”和“一念三千”是智者大师关于止观体系之高度概括的抽象理论，主要对象应当是“利根”者；但又深恐对于“末法”时代的“钝根”者，很难接受这部分类似玄妙深奥的理论，故主要必须以四种三昧、十乘观法、二十五方便等予以“对治”。现实人类中，总是利根者少而钝根者多。利根者悟得止观原理，尚须止观实践修证；钝根者以方便修习为根本，证得中道实相，也即领悟实相原理，所以章安灌顶曾赞扬“十乘观法”的修习法门。

此十乘观法或十重观法，横竖收摄身心，为微妙精巧善法。初则简境真伪，中则正助相添，后则安忍无着。意圆法巧，赅括周备；规矩初心，将送行者，到彼萨云。非暗证阐师、涌文法师所能知。盖由如来积劫之所勤求，道场之所妙悟，身子之所三请，法譬之所三说，正在兹乎！正因为十乘观法“意圆法巧，赅括周备”，故而无论修习者根性如何，都可达到觉悟。[19]

[19] 参见匡亚明主编、潘桂明著《智顗评传》第343-347页，南京大学出版社，1996年2月；潘桂明、吴忠伟著《中国天台宗通史》第175-176页，江苏古籍出版社，2001年12月。

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越南陈朝的佛教特色

释源悔

禅宗是中国佛教十大宗派之一，从菩提达摩祖师到今经过千多年的发展，宗风鼎盛。唐朝六祖慧能主张顿悟成佛，他的思想形成了禅宗的理论基础，其对中华文化，教育及风俗信仰都有很大影响。后来禅宗从中国传到越南，系统地传播，与越南社会文化互相融合，形成越南独立的禅宗思想。到陈朝时（1225-1400），禅宗统一为竹林安子禅派系统，由陈朝第三皇帝陈仁宗建立，成为越南禅宗，发展至今。

越南陈朝

越南的地理位置在印度和中国的两大古老文明之间，属于东阳半岛。所以越南在政治、经济、文化、商业等方面深受两大古老文明的影响，其中，越南佛教不含著印中佛教的特色，已早就传入越南。

越南陈朝或者陈家是越南历史上的君主专制朝代。从李朝末代君主李昭皇[1]禅位给陈煚（陈太宗）1225年开始，国号大越[2]，经过十二位朝王，1400年，黎季犛废少帝，自立为新君主，建立胡朝，陈朝遂亡。陈朝存在总共175年。

陈朝诸帝及贵族当中，陈太宗曾向从来自中国的临济宗天封禅师参学，后来其学说传至出身贵族的慧忠上士，在其封邑（在今海阳省）修禅授徒，陈仁宗即是其中之一。陈仁宗于1293年（重兴九年，三月改元兴隆）将禅位传给陈英宗后，担任上皇，并出家当为僧，号“调御觉皇”，又自称“香云大头陀”、“竹林上士”等，收徒众，开创竹林禅派，以临济义玄为祖，认为佛法即是老子的“道”，亦是孔子所说的“中庸”，提倡“三教合一”。竹林禅派亦成为陈朝的官方佛教。陈英宗也奉行佛教，并率先受菩萨戒，朝廷上下遂多效法。1314年（兴隆二十二年，三月改元大庆），将英宗禅位传给陈明宗后，也担任上皇，跟着名僧人法螺大师铸造佛像和印经。陈明宗亦从事佛教活动，愿做佛寺大师，但因忙于政务，经常出任朝廷。陈宪宗从父亲陈明宗学习佛经，常遊览国内名寺，批准刊刻佛经，他本人常到寺院念经拜佛，参予佛事。陈顺宗于1396年（光泰九年）被黎季犛强迫退住后，亦前往保清官（在清化省）出家为僧。到陈朝末年，朝廷着重儒学和道学，才限制了佛教势力发展，沙汰僧徒。

陈朝时期由于政府推动儒学，儒学得到了长足的发展。当时儒士阶层人数渐多，他们在越南的政治及文化思想方面，渐渐取代佛教僧侣的地位，获任朝廷要职及承担文学创作。陈朝时期较重要的思想家，如朱文安、黎文休、阮诠等人亦属儒士阶层，使儒学大力发展。因儒学和佛教开始发生冲突，儒家学者黎文休、黎括、张汉超等，对佛教进行严厉批判排斥，使佛教的优势逐渐减弱，其重要地位遂让给儒家。

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1 李昭皇让位给陈煚的日期，有数种不同的说法。《越史略》记载在乙酉年（建嘉十五年）十二月初一日（西历1225年12月31日）。《大越史记全书·李纪·昭皇》记载在乙酉年（天彰有道二年）十二月十一日（西历1226年1月10日），而同书《陈纪·太宗皇帝》，则记载在十二月十二日（西历1226年1月11日），而两处都加上“戊寅”。见《越史略》卷下，收录于《钦定四库全书·史部》（第466册），上海古籍出版社，619页；吴士连等《大越史记全书·李纪·昭皇》及《陈纪·太宗皇帝》，东京大学东洋文化研究所，316页及321页。

2 大越是越南国号从1054年至1400年，即是李圣宗登位（LÝ THÁNH TÔNG，1054）开始，到陈朝遂亡（1400年）。黎季犛（HỒ QUÝ LY）建立湖潮，越南国号是“大虞”。

陈朝佛教之大概

十三世纪时，毘尼多流支，无言通和草堂的禅宗三派慢慢合并成一派。受到陈太宗和慧忠上士的巨大影响，此三禅派合并后来发展称为竹林禅派，即是陈朝唯一的禅派。此派从安子山[3]出现而由现光禅师成立。第二祖是圆证禅师，陈太宗是他的弟子。第三祖是大灯国师，与陈太宗同师。另一位国师代表越南佛教统一的领袖是无言通第十六世应顺禅师的弟子。“一宗”之名词是陈太宗尊敬此位禅师也是说明越南佛教统一成一宗唯一的意思。

竹林禅派，为陈仁宗所创，而实际上始于陈朝开国皇帝陈太宗。陈太宗曾受教于由中国的天封禅师，又从宋朝禅师德诚参学。越南史学家陶维英则认为这一派是由禅月禅师传位陈太宗，后经定香长老、圆照大师，至道惠禅师(皆无言通禅宗派名僧)时分为三个支系，其中主要的一支由逍遥禅师传绘慧忠上士，再传给调御觉皇，即陈太宗。陈太宗所著《课虚录》提出“四山”之说，认为生、老、病、死，乃四座大山，人能求佛学禅，勤行修忏，便可“超苦海，渡迷津”，越过四山，解脱轮回。该书为竹林禅派的基本著作。慧忠将禅宗要旨传给陈仁宗。竹林禅派以陈仁宗为初祖，他笃志禅学，即使日理后朝政，夜至宫内资福寺研习禅学。以后禅位而出家，在海阳东潮县安子山花烟寺出家修行，讲授禅法，正式创立竹林禅派，亦称竹林安子禅派。自号香云大头陀，竹林上士，人称调御觉皇。著作甚多。该派承袭无言通禅派法统，以唐代禅宗五家之一临济宗为主，认为佛法亦即老子的“道”与孔于的“中庸”。宣扬佛法不离世间法。主张坐禅和采用临济宗的“四宾主”师徒问答方式传道。认为心即是佛，佛在众人心中。陈仁宗之后，有二祖法螺，三祖玄光，会称“竹林三祖”。法螺创立琼林院，编撰佛经，著有《参禅旨要》等。玄光，状元出身，后出家从学法螺，1317年继承竹林派衣钵，著有《玉鞭集》等。该派因得皇室大力扶持，成为陈朝时期越南佛教的主要学派，对越南佛教的发展影响很大。[4]

陈仁宗与建立竹林安子禅派的过程

陈仁宗（Trần Nhân Tông，1258－1308）是越南陈朝第三代君主，1278年至1293年在位。名陈昤（Trần Khâm），《元史》作陈日燇。他是陈圣宗的长子，元圣天感皇后所生。[5]

1278年接受父亲陈圣宗的禅位，称孝皇，尊奉父亲为太上皇。

1280年，沱江道郑角密发动叛乱，陈仁宗命昭文王陈日燏前去招安。郑角密投降，入京朝见了陈仁宗，并留其子为人质。1281年，派遣宗室陈遗爱出使元朝，元朝以陈朝皇帝，“不请命而自立”为由，立陈遗爱为安南国王，派柴椿以兵千人护送归国。[6]

1282年，陈朝杀死陈遗爱及其同党。元朝以此为藉口，遣安南行省右丞唆都领

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[3] 安子山：属于京门府，东朝县，今是广宁省，东朝县。

[4] 阮郎 (释一行) Nguyễn Lang《越南佛教史论Việt Nam Phật Giáo Sử Luận》河内：文学出版社，2000年12月，页163-166。

[5] 看黎文休，潘孚先，吴士连等（Lê Văn Hưu, Phan Phu Tiên, Ngô Sĩ Liên...）编《大越史记全书Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư》1272-1697.越南社会科学院译，1985-1992.社会科学出版，1993，陈朝（Nhà Trần），仁宗皇帝（NHÂN TÔNG HOÀNG ĐẾ）。

[6] 看黎文休，潘孚先，吴士连等（Lê Văn Hưu, Phan Phu Tiên, Ngô Sĩ Liên...）编《大越史记全书Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư》1272-1697.越南社会科学院译，1985-1992.社会科学出版，1993，陈朝（Nhà Trần），仁宗皇帝（NHÂN TÔNG HOÀNG ĐẾ）。

兵五十万，进攻谅山。陈仁宗跟太上皇一起来到陈舍湾指挥抗元。副都统军、仁惠王陈庆余击败了元军。此后，越军又于1284年和1288年两次击退了元军的进攻。

1290年，因牛吼蛮在哀牢（老挝）支持下不服陈朝统治，陈仁宗御驾亲征讨伐哀牢。1293年，陈仁宗禅位给皇太子陈烃，是为陈英宗。英宗即位后，尊仁宗为宪炎光圣太上皇帝。元朝遣兵部尚书梁曾至越，要求陈仁宗入朝。仁宗托病，遣陶子奇出使元朝。元朝又欲进攻越南，但因忽必烈的逝世而放弃了出征的计画。

1308年，陈仁宗病逝。謚号法天崇道应世化民隆慈显惠圣文神武元明睿孝皇帝，葬德陵。

陈仁宗于1299年到安子山出家后，创立了竹林派禅宗。这在越南佛教史上是一件很关键的事。重新开始一个段落佛教自东汉时期传入越南以来，日渐兴盛，特别是968年，越南摆脱中国统治建立自主王朝后，在越南政治、社会生活佛教已占有重要的地位。越南独立后，从王朝丁朝到前黎朝和李朝，都以佛教为国教，各位国师皆是佛学高深的僧人，形成了“帝与僧共天下”的局面。

但是，这一时期越南佛教的各宗派创造者不是本国人。例如毗尼多流支派之南天竺人毗尼多流支(?一594)，无言通派之唐代僧人无言通(?一826)和草堂派之北宋云门宗僧人草堂。竹林派的创立则结束了各宗派的外人垄断的局面，表明佛教已在越南当地扎根，为本地人所理解消化。

竹林派之三位祖师，陈仁宗为“竹林第一祖”，法螺为“竹林第二祖”，玄光为“竹林第三祖”，有关他们的思想言行的资料保留在《三祖宴录》。陈仁宗出家以前，陈朝已有70年的统治时间，所以竹林派的创立，只是在本来的宗派中做了继承和发展。后人撰写的记录陈仁宗的师傅慧忠上士思想言行的《竹林慧忠上士语录》[7]中，人们已经发现了竹林派的传承线索，有一张记载自李朝时期的几位禅师到竹林三祖的谱系图，叫“略引禅派图”：

通祥→息虑→应顺→逍遥→慧忠→竹林→法螺→玄光[8]

根据“略引禅派图”，逍遥有很多弟子，慧忠上士可能是最出色的一个。陈仁宗的祖父陈太宗撰写的《课虚录》，从此可以看出来竹林禅宗的一些思想传承源流。1236年，陈太宗曾隐入安子山参见竹林大沙门国师圆证[9]，同时拜访天封禅师，后来曾邀请到升龙宣讲佛学。

从此可以看出竹林派其实继承了无言通派的体系。陈仁宗到安子山出家时，安子山上无言通派和临济宗的思想已经融合起来。所以陈仁宗一定吸收了临济宗的思想与影响，他带着太上皇的身份建立了一个统一的佛教组织，使自己位居政教之首，在越南历史上是绝无稀有有的。

虽然仁宗受慧忠的思想之影响，但还具有特殊性，慧忠思想比较直接，简单和现实，而陈仁宗偏向于文章方面。仁宗比较阅世，但他禅语不比慧忠上士。他认为人的体性觉悟本有的，不追寻而回来自性觉悟，有追寻道之意念就永远见不到道。此是仁宗的所得，《居尘乐道赋》中提出不追寻的规则：

居尘乐道且随缘，饥则飧兮困则眠。
家中有宝休寻觅，对镜无心莫问禅。[10]

竹林和陈太宗很重视无常规律，达到觉悟解脱和此觉悟解脱必须了知无常。因

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7 《慧忠上士语录》是研究竹林派思想的重要资料。

8 前三位是无言通派第十三、十四、十五代的弟子，《禅苑集英》已单独为他们立了传。逍遥没有单独的传，只提到他是应顺的弟子。可见，逍遥对竹林派的形成起了重要的作用。

9 圆证是无言通派第十二代传人常照的弟子。圆证的弟子大能曾跟随中国临济派天封禅师学禅。

10 阮慧芝Nguyễn Huệ Chi，《李陈诗文》卷二，科学出版社，1978年，页504。

知春节会走过，而不让春节无益地走过：

身如呼吸鼻中气，世似风行岭外云。
杜鹃啼断月如驻，不是寻常空过春。[11]

陈仁宗明明了知，他虽身为竹林派禅宗的领袖，但并既不排斥儒教，还加以推广。他的继承者法螺和玄光也都是饱浸儒学的优博之士，尤其是玄光名列会试甲榜。

法螺禅师与玄光禅师的两位高僧

法螺禅师，竹林禅派的第二祖，姓同，名坚刚[12]，英宗兴隆第十二年（1304）在南册河调御觉皇陈仁宗受为徒，当时他二十一岁，法号为善来，向调御受沙弥戒，后来调御教他向性觉和尚于琼惯参学，所得时才回来。一天，师提出三个诗颂都被调御贬，劝自己参禅，到夜里就觉悟。从此师发愿实行十二头陀行。

英宗兴隆十三年（1305）调御传给声闻戒和菩萨戒，号为法螺。1306年调御推举法螺为报恩寺的主持。这里师遇到玄光，当时师才二十三岁。两年后，调御圆寂，师奉命送调御的舍利回京都，师为调御所讲于石室编辑起来成石室寐语。

1319年12月，师运动僧众和居士放血印大藏经五千卷。陈英宗也自己放血而写大藏经。师专讲华严经[13]，每次讲经就有一千听众。师有很多得法的弟子，但是只有玄光留下来禅学和诗歌。陈宪宗开佑二年（1330），师圆寂，圆寂之前偈曰：

万缘裁断一身閒，四十余年梦幻间。
珍重诸人休借问，那边风月更迩宽。[14]

二十多年行道，法螺不辜负竹林调御的心愿而弘扬正法，所作的印行大藏经之事成为当时伟大的工程。

玄光禅师[15]为禅宗第三祖，从法螺禅师得法。陈圣宗宝符二年（1274），他参加博士考试和得到状元，当时他才21岁。父母虽已经给他订婚，但得到状元之后，就嫁给了国王的公主，他拒绝了，被任命到翰林院服务，接收中国大使。有一天，他跟着陈英宗至凤眼县之永严寺，听到法螺禅师讲经，就餐谈而说：
“做官是如在奉岛，得道了至普陀，人间之岛是仙界，西方境界是佛界。荣华富贵如黄色的秋叶，如白色的夏云，不要恋爱”。后来辞职，因英宗敬佛尊僧而允许他出家修行。[16]

英宗兴隆十三年（1305），他在永严寺从调御出家和受戒，法号为玄光。英宗兴隆十七年（1309），他随着调御的付属就留在法螺禅师旁边。明宗大庆四年（1317），法螺禅师传给他调御的衣钵和心偈，在案子山上的云烟寺当住持。他多闻博学，精深道理，学徒上下千人。在青梅山当方丈六年，来崑山教化众生，到甲戌年1月23日（1334），他圆寂于崑山，住世80岁。

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11 看阮郎，《越南佛教史略》234页。

12 根据阮郎在《越南佛教史略》249页，法螺禅师生于仁宗绍宝第六年（1284）在久罗村，南册府，海洋省。父名同纯戊，母名武慈救。出生之前，他母亲生八位女孩，所以他母亲很难过，四次吃毁胎药，可是胎不坏。出生时，她很喜欢，就有名字是坚刚。小时时他很聪明，也很慈悲，不说恶口，不喜欢吃鱼和肉。

13 此经被中国明朝的张副破毁，现在没有。

14 阮慧芝Nguyễn Huệ Chi，《李陈诗文》卷二，科学出版社，1978年，页648。

15 师姓李，名道载，生于甲寅年（1254）在万载村，北江路。出身于臣僚家，而师却不喜欢功名事业，只喜欢遨游山水。小时候，他的脸上诡异，远处遗嘱，父母爱，教的学术，他学一得十，聪明辩才。

16. 关于玄光出家的问题，阮郎在《越南佛教史略》265页，他认为玄光不是于法螺禅师出家，而在抱朴禅师出家。

他是一位禅师，佛教传教士，也是当时一位伟大的诗人。他的诸品经和公文集在李陈诗文有二十多篇诗。除了他作品，我们必须提及两次对话。第一次于 1330年来看病法螺，玄光提出“苏醒和睡眠”，“病和无病” 命题给法螺禅师，强调了无的问题。第二次来看又问：“从历史上看，了悟之者时间（死时）到了，想住就住，想往就往”，自在精神于生死大事是接近金刚经和般若经的的精神。

越南佛教于第十四世纪后

十四世纪以后，随着儒学的发展，儒士阶层势力上升，在国家政治生活当中，僧侣开始推动巨大的作用。陈朝末年，朝廷多次沙汰僧徒，并限制寺院僧侣势力的发展。后黎朝（1428- 1526）建立后，独尊儒学，执行抑佛重儒政策，道教日益兴起，佛教由此日趋衰落。朝廷禁止新建寺宇，将寺田、寺庙领地收归国有，勒令不知诵经不持戒律的僧尼还俗，并以改革民俗之名，在民众中宣传佛教为迷信异端。至十五世纪后半叶，僧侣人数大减，通达佛教教义者寥寥无几。从1500年起，黎氏朝廷下令只许庶民信奉佛教。从此，越南佛教便由皇室庇护的贵族化宗教转化为以平民信仰为主的民间天姥寺宗教。

十六到十七世纪，天主教开始传入越南。越南佛教虽不似以前兴盛，但仍绵延不绝。当时，封建中央政权衰落，形成南北朝分裂割据局面，佛教有所振兴。北方郑氏王府和南方阮氏王府都曾延请中国高僧来讲解佛经，修建寺院。1665年，郑王选拔国内有名佛师，为御用寺宇塑造几百尊佛像，禅宗再度复兴。隐居安子山的竹林禅派名僧白梅麟角将竹林三祖的教义和净土宗融合为一体，在河内的婆寺开创新教派—莲宗。主张禅教双运，以教为眼，禅是佛心，以阿弥陀佛为禅的公案，但实修上专念弥陀名号，由此而得悟平生。此外，在越南北方有中力尚拙公创立的拙公派，这一派以临济宗为主，并受净土宗影响，亦称竹林新派。同时，还有曹洞宗的水月派。南方阮王府于1604年在顺化修建了大乘佛教的寺院—天姥寺。中国僧人道明、原绍等在越南传授禅宗佛学。原绍创建临济正宗的原绍禅派，造平定十塔寺，宣扬禅净并修的教义。迄今，莲宗在越南北方仍有一定影响，而临济正宗教派在南方势力则较大。

1802年，阮朝建立。阮朝初年执行保护临济正宗、歧视莲宗的政策。僧纲的职位皆授给临济正宗派僧侣，对莲宗僧侣限制颇多。但莲宗派仍在北方民间活动。

1858年，法国殖民者入侵越南，越南佛教徒参加了爱国抗法运动。进入近代时期，越南兴起佛道儒三教合一运动。十九世纪末，随着天主教之传播，又出现“四教一源说”。这一时期建立的高台教则是把佛、道、儒和天主教及民间信仰糅合起来的新宗教。

1944年，越南佛教出现一个特别宗派、明灯光祖师创立者之乞士系派[17]，活动范围主要在越南南部。将佛教经典作为诗歌比较易读，易懂。

结语

越南的社会发展是佛教发展的基础，与此相应，越南佛教也促进越南社会的发展。在陈朝佛教的入世特点尤为清晰。介入社会生活为大众谋福利，乃是大乘佛教教义的核心所在。在越南历史上，当外敌入侵时，“脱袈裟，披战袍”的主张为诸禅师所接受。在这段历史实际中，整个民族的生存发展，同抗击外来侵略相始终，由此形

17 根据上觉下全法师《明灯光祖师与传承释迦正法之志愿》，胡志明市出版社，2002年，42-48页。

成了越南的爱国主义传统。随着陈朝每位皇帝都有禅师身份，极具创造性思想。因为他们的努力给佛教带来的活力，佛教呈现为生机教的背景。陈朝的各位禅师以般若为体，强调经义与禅修的统一，以此引导社会大众。陈朝佛教是越南最昌盛和辉煌的阶段。陈朝佛教发挥了越南民族精神，无我利他的菩萨精神。提升了佛教在越南的地位。

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简介槟城菩提学院及菩提学校的起源

释真愿

槟城菩提学院是菩提学校的摇篮。菩提学校在一个屋檐下就有四所不同年龄和阶层的教育机构。她们就是众所周知的菩提幼稚园、菩提国民型华文小学、菩提国民型华文中学及菩提独立中学。她的起源，来自1940年菩提学院所开办的菩提义学。

在上世纪三四十年代的社会，一位尼师名叫芳莲与一位菜姑陈宽宗在妇女解放后的年代，她们师徒俩人如何在槟城播撒了这颗汉系佛教教育的种子。另有两位女居士，一位名叫王弄书，在她的协助下菩提学院正式开办了义学班及中学部；而陈少英是协助开办菩提小学的第一任校长。她们的贡献，无论在过去、现在和未来能在校园里传授知识和一般的道德教育以外，令加有佛学课，成为开办菩提学校的意义与特色。

回顾历史，1929年芳莲尼师是抱着一个怎么样的目标来到南洋。在短短的前后8年里，她在槟城创办了菩提学院和播撒了推广汉系佛教教育的种子。继而，由她的弟子陈宽宗（慧持法师）在1940年，随着社会的需要，在弄书的协助下创办了槟城菩提义学；1945年，在少英的协助下创办了菩提小学。1952再次由弄书的协助下创办了菩提中学。这是说，在上世纪30年代末，菩提学院能提供住众一些生活基本所需时，并已经提供该院的女住众和社会公众的女信徒受佛学及华文教育的机会，是芳莲的大悲心愿与宽宗的大行力所致。

菩提学校就是一所社会的普通学校，无论在成立时或发展过程时并非一帆风顺的。校方的管理方针必须与教育局配合；教育水平也必须跟得上时代的要求；在管教方面也需要兼顾到一般家庭及寺庙所要求的异同。学校的性质就是一所社会的普通学校，只是由佛教机构所开办的学府。菩提因采用佛教所常强调的“无我”与“自利利他”精神的动力，以唤醒人们从痛苦中走向快乐安乐的途径为目的，成为学校的特点。总之，菩提学校的开办及其延续发展是获菩提学院的住持、宗教导师、校董、老师、诸山长老、法师、大德和社会大众的同心协力、群策群力与支持的。

一、槟城菩提学院成立的社会背景

英国殖民政府管制马来亚（简称大马）长达171年，英国的殖民政策深刻的影响独立后大马的政策。因此，自独立后，无论在经济、政治、教育以及宗教信仰各方面大马都受到西方的影响。这是当时时代的背景。槟城菩提学院与其附设的菩提学校，是一所在英殖民政府的统治下获得注册的佛教院校。这两所院校是在中西文化经济昌盛的环境中成立的，在本质上菩提学院属一所佛教的女众修行道场，而菩提学校则是四所社会普通佛化学校。

过去，释迦牟尼佛证悟后，开始经行弘扬佛法的工作，一直流传到今日，大约长达两千六百多年之久。佛陀的弟子在经行弘法的过程中，为了度化来自不同文化、语言和思想的人，因而发展出不同的派系，不过在诸多派系中具代表性的总归纳成，南

传、汉传和藏传三个体系。本文选择汉系佛教的体系为研究对象，说明在民国初年时期妇女开始获得自由学习佛法的情况是怎么样的？

根据竺摩法师（2003）当时学佛的妇女好像住在一所变相似的家庭，比如说：小庙里富足的，她们终年度着优裕的生活；贫苦的寺庙呢，尼师们就必须做工，以自给自足 。生活清苦，可想而知。[1]

这是说在民初的时期，尼众的生活是比封建制度时代的情况好一些，但未谈到尼众受教育的问题。当时接受新时代教育的人们，总括来说是朝着三个方向而走：1）走向民主的社会，2）朝向华文（白话文）为国语的路线，3）妇女获得自由与受教育的机会。在这样的社会有一些尼众也立志与时并进，她们除了获得享有生活所需之外还进一步带动了推广从事教育的工作。这是本文以研究芳莲尼师立志以推广汉系佛教教育为主的原因。而这颗汉系佛教教育的种子在上世纪是历经君主主义、民主主义和社会主义的政策磨炼过最终播撒与成长在南洋的泥土中。

最后，以探讨在今日的社会，人们的心灵更需要佛法的滋润时，在校园里传播佛法是最合适的环境与对象为本文的中心点。透过研究创办菩提学院及菩提学校的历史背景，能让人们了解这两所院校的发展趋势，希望对后人能有所启迪。

二、槟城菩提学院成立的历史背景

槟城菩提学院成立于1935年3月9日（农历2月初5日）。芳莲尼师所创办的菩提学院宗旨有三个：[2]

1）以弘扬佛法及培育弘法人才

2）收容孤儿的慈善事业

3）从事佛教教育

虽然说，芳莲是希望能以弘扬佛法及培养人才为主，不过在那个时期为了生活，还是需要为人们做些法事；在教育方面也只能说，尼师播撒了传播汉系佛教教育的理念而已。

芳莲尼师生于1901年，俗姓薛，是福建厦门人。芳莲自幼跟随家人前往南海普陀之寺听闻太虚法师和圆瑛法师的开示后有所领悟。民国第五年，辛亥革命未完全成功的时候，在她16岁那年，父亲去世了。也许因家境一时的改变而陷入困境，她决定在道阶法师的座下剃度出家，学习佛理研究经藏。出家法名演青，字号芳莲。[3]

（二）芳莲尼师南来的因缘

芳莲尼师如同她的恩师道阶法师，南来的目的是为了传播汉系佛教教育的工作。在上世纪二三十年代，芳莲以入乡随俗的精神展开了汉系佛教的教育工作，带动一群佛弟子学习佛法。当时最受尼师感动的林碧佑发起集资的因缘，带动了本地的佛弟

[1] 竺摩《佛教时事感言》〈妇女解放〉说到尼众生活（槟城：三慧讲堂，2003）38页。

[2] 陈少英《菩提特刊》（槟城：菩提学院出版，1947）9页。

[3] 陈少英校长著《槟城菩提学院成立四十五周年报告》（槟城：菩提学院出版，1980）陈宽宗，吴宽定和南谨述，公元1947年即佛历2484年7月22日，第4页。

子，同心协力筹款购买槟岛湾岛头19号A地占面积三依格的园地，园里有平房屋子三间，供养芳莲尼师作为弘法道场。[4]

为什么芳莲选择“菩提”作为该院的名称？“菩提”一词是从梵文直接翻译过来的一种音译，若翻译成华文的意思就是觉悟。根据陈少英（1947）陈慈明的记录：[5] 菩提这两个字具多种释义，但在华文的意思谓觉悟到真理，即警惕人们应保持觉醒的心才不会走向迷途的意思。也许这就是芳莲以推广办教育的大悲心愿。只可惜尼师在1937年农历7月22日，因操劳过度而圆寂。不过，尼师在临终时吩咐弟子以办教育为首。[6] 这是芳莲在世时正式创办了菩提学院的历史背景及最初发展状况。

综述，芳莲尼师从社会政策的改变中，她抓紧了机会在槟城播撒了这颗汉系佛教教育的种子。芳莲南来对星马的贡献共有三个项目：1）芳莲在槟城创办了菩提学院，2）芳莲的悲愿与坚持的信念感动了她的弟子继承了她的遗愿，3）林碧佑因受到芳莲大慈大悲的心愿所感动而成为她的护法。

三、菩提学校成立的历史背景

自1920年起，由于南来的男女都一心一意在这块土地上成家立业生男育女，继而就是要谈有关教育的问题了。根据林有虞（1992）记载，[7] 在1940年前槟岛一共有27所华文小学。而这些小学学校，多部分是从私塾、姓氏堂、租借教堂的场地、会馆或阅书报社等场所开办的正规学校。在那个年代学生人数是从几个到两三班做起的，不过在1931年的华人人口增加到4.7%。试问当时的这些华校如何应付社会的要求？这个疑问不难让我们理解当时在上世纪30年代中叶的菩提学院所扮演的角色是多么的殊胜。继而在40年代在一个佛化的环境里所开办的菩提义学班及接着所开办的菩提学校是多么的难能可贵。

（一）回顾过去陈宽宗最初如何计划开办教育工作的大计？

宽宗俗姓陈，原名宝壁，生于1895年圆寂于1957年，世寿62。[8]
在1938年宽宗自己已经迈上43岁的中年时期。在自己不具足教学的能力下，她推介当时24岁年轻有为的吴宽定向王弄书学习华文，希望她能够升任从事教学的工作。[9]
可知，宽宗的计划谈何容易。根据文字记载：[10]

陈少英说，宽宗是定期在每星期里有两次会带宽定到弄书的宿舍补习华文。

宽宗的第二个优点就是懂得爱惜人才，她本身虽然缺乏教学的能力，但仍抱着希望与理想，希望宽定能够升任。在这样的情况下，宽宗欲办学的心愿感动了弄书。之后，经过两人的商讨后，决定开办菩提义学。此外，在弘扬佛法方面，宽宗为了住众获得听闻佛法的机会，她邀请了导师来为大家讲解佛理。这是汉系佛教教育的种子如何萌芽在槟岛的泥土中。

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[4] 陈少英《菩提特刊》（槟城：菩提学院出版，1947）9页。
[5] 陈少英《菩提特刊》（槟城：菩提学院出版，1947）6页。
[6] 陈少英《槟城菩提学院成立四十五周年报告》（槟城：菩提学院出版，1980）4页。
[7] 林有虞《马来西亚全国华团华校发展概况》（槟城：马来西亚中华大会堂，1992）D39-72页。
[8] 菩提音乐小组编辑《菩提之音》槟城：（槟城菩提学院和学校出版，1960）2页。
[9] 陈少英《槟城菩提学院成立四十五周年报告》（槟城：菩提学院出版，1980）10-11页。
[10] 同上，57页。

（二）菩提学校的成立与发展

1940年，在那个年代，槟城是一个怎么样的社会？

根据文字记载，[11] 弄书说：侨生佛徒，宜于补修中文，以增弘法信愿，而社会又有无数贫寒失学儿童，尤当辅导入学。

这是说，因当时的社会有侨生和佛教徒都希望能够有个机会学习佛法和补修中文的场所。这是说，
世界大战前女子就学的机会並不普遍。妇女来到槟城时是获得自由活动的，这些南来的妇女都开始慢慢接受教育，学习知识和生活技能等学问。而在
1945年战争结束后，妇女更加明显的挑起分担家庭的经济与教育孩子的责任。[12]
菩提学院在1940年的时期，正式发动开办义学及在1946年正式开办菩提小学。在那个时代是以提供孤儿和贫寒失学的孩子们一个学习的佛化环境作为办学目的与意义。

此外，1952年开办菩提职业班，在1954年获得政府正式批准开办中学。在那些年代，办校的目的是为了提供小六的毕业生毕业后能够继续在一个佛化的环境继续升学。这是菩提学校在校园里传播佛法，提供在籍学生一个学习佛法的环境，是先贤们最初的目标。总之，无论是在过去、现在或未来，站在佛教的立场能够在校园里对着那么大群的学生，长期性的传播佛法是难遇的因缘。

以上已介绍过菩提院校成立的历史背景。菩提学校在槟城的成立，是为汉系佛教教育界开出一条特别传播佛法的路向。接着要谈的部分就是中期与后期菩提院校的发展概况。初期发展的人物除了耳目常闻的芳莲尼师、陈宽宗、王弄书及陈少英以外，中期是有傅晴曦及颜菊容，在她们的带领下菩提中学中期发展情况非常可观是众所周知的一段辉煌史实。菩提学校的近期发展，随着社会的进步，在校董拿督斯里陈火炎的发动下将菩提国民型华文中学扩展与迁般到槟岛西南区双溪赖人口密集的工业发展区后。在此举个例子，在2008年的学年里国中的学生人数是从一千零三十位逐渐增加到2013年学生人数高达两千九百零二位。可见，
菩提学校对该地区的悻悻学子们提供了一个能在校园里学习佛法的机会，是合适时机的因缘。

（三）菩提学院及学校的建设发展

1962年教育法令的大蓝图未改变之前，[13]
校方一切的发展计划是由校董决定的。自接受了政府给予的津贴以后，无论是国立或私立的学校，对在校园里提供上佛学课的安排，是赖以校长如何与校董的配合了。

校董所担任的职务同样是自愿的，有许多董事都是终身忠心耿耿的为学校付出。校董的职务不但没有期限的，无论是过去或今日，有不少校董的子孙们同样继承扮演维护该校的任务。菩提建校基金的来源如同一般寺院的经费来源都是靠大众乐捐的。

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[11] 陈少英《菩提特刊》（槟城：菩提学院出版，1947）9页。

[12] 《槟城新报》〈槟榔屿华侨筹账祖国难民大会宣言〉〈抗战就是保护和平〉〈中日战事与各国之关系，我能长期抵抗各国必助我〉31-08-1937，11，13，18页。
http://libapps2.nus.edu.sg/sea_chinese/documents/Penang%20sin%20poe/1937/1937_08_31.pdf

[13] 资料来源：摘自e-newspaper，National University of Singapore新国民日报，17-07-1933，星期一， 第16页。15-03-2015。http://www.lib.nus.edu.sg/skm/reel64/scan_1220.pdf

这个概念促成汉系佛教建立了自立更生的文化，这是与南传佛教乞食的文化有所不同。菩提院校初中期的兴建因缘是经过弄书的介绍而获得大慈善家胡文虎及胡文豹昆仲的支持。继而有胡文虎夫人陈金支的支持发动了兴建菩提中学的校舍。近期是由拿督斯里陈火炎，发动以菩提国民型华文中学迁般到西南区的因缘并邀请了唯悟法师担任董事长的任务。

在唯悟法师的领导下，法师呼吁大众同心协力来维护及支持菩提学校的发展。此外，在传授佛法方面，法师介绍了《福智十善法》给老师们作为参考，以方便易懂的方式，希望学生们容易掌握佛法的基本意义作为日常生活指南。

四、总结

菩提学院发展至今，虽然经历过八十年的岁月，但仍保留着清静及朴素的传统文化。而菩提学校必须随着社会的政策与人民的需要做出种种的改变，但始终保留着在校园里传播佛学课的传统与文化。

佛法在今日社会的价值又如何定义？佛法所谈的中心思想在于缘起，倘若人们能够彻见法的生起与灭去的自然法制，他就能远离恶习的造作。21世纪科学昌明时代，科技发达，资讯传播的速度“一秒千里”。然而“种瓜得瓜，种豆得豆”的因果定律依然保持不变。衣食住行的便利丰足，为现代人带来了方便，然而在物质享受的追逐中，人们总是继续的寻寻觅觅寻找与追求。相信今日人们不是为经济与贫困而烦恼，而是为社会越进步，科技越发达，人们内心更显示空虚，以致各种各样的精神与心灵问题都一一出现。也许新时代的人们更需要佛法的熏陶以让他们明白生命的意义；当他们与生活中遇到各种挑战和困境时，人们可按照自己的信念来肯定自己的方向。关键在如何引导人们踏上正角的道路以及依据佛法为指引作为自己生命的明灯是焦点。过去的高僧大德如此，当今的高僧大德依然如此，乃至未来的高僧大德仍如此，这就不是学习佛法的收益及续佛慧命呢？

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