

An Inquiry Embodying Tathāgatagarbha within “Śamatha Vipāśyanā”—Retreat

- Based on the Dharma Drum Linage of Chan Buddhism

於「止觀禪修」中達成如來藏之探索 ——以中華禪法鼓宗為主

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【目次】

- | |
|---|
| 1. Introduction to the thesis and Dharma Drum Lineage |
| 1.1 Research Motivation |
| 1.2 Research Purpose |
| 2. An Inquiry to Tathāgatagarbha and “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” Practice |
| 2.1 Literature Review: the Tathāgatagarbha Doctrines |
| 2.2 Literature Review: the “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” Practice |
| 2.3 Summary |
| 3. To Embody Tathāgatagarbha in DDLOCB’s “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” Practice |
| 3.1 Works by Master Sheng Yen |
| 3.2 Practice Taught by Master Sheng Yen |
| 3.3 Summary |
| 4. Conclusion |
| 4.1 Summary |
| 4.2 Challenges of the Research |
| 4.3 Recommendations for Future Research |

1. Introduction to the thesis and Dharma Drum Lineage

Venerable Master Sheng Yen (1931-2009) is one of the more famous living teachers of Chan (Japanese: Zen) Buddhism around the world. In Taiwan Venerable Master Sheng Yen was chosen as one of the fifty most influential people in the past four hundred years by CW Magazine in 1998. Venerable Master Sheng Yen is renowned as an eminent monk, a prominent Buddhist educator, a great advocate and exponent of humanitarianism and environmentalism, a scholar and author, and the founder of Dharma Drum Mountain World Center for Buddhist Education.

The Chan practice teachings, taught by Venerable Master Sheng Yen, have been very significant around the world since 1979. The **D**harma **D**rum **L**ineage **O**f **C**han **B**uddhism (Abbreviation: DDLOCB as follows), founded by Master Sheng Yen, is the influx of two Chan Lineages, Linji Lineage (J.: Rinzai School) and Caodong Lineage (J.: Soto School)¹. The proclamation of DDLOCB was formally announced on September 9th 2005. Besides the teachings of Huatou(話頭) and Silence Illumination (C.: Mo-zhao 默照) in the DDLOCB, “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” (C.: Zhi-guan 止觀) is a very practical and well-known method of Chan practice².

According to the āgama sūtra, Buddha taught the “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” (C.: Zhi –guan 止觀) meditation to most of practitioners in ancient India. Today, Chan (Japanese: Zen) Buddhism, a school of Chinese Buddhism, is also derived from Buddhism of the ancient India. In Chan Buddhism, the Chan practitioners still use “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” for developing concentration and wisdom even today. Likewise, both in Tibetan and Theravada Buddhism of the Present day, the majority of their practitioners use “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” to attain

¹ Wikipedia 〈Sheng Yen〉, website: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheng-yen>, 2008/6/9

“Master Sheng Yen is the 57th generation descendant of Linji ... and a 3rd generation descendant of Master Hsu Yun. In the Caodong ... lineage, Master Sheng Yen is the 52nd generation descendant of Master Tung Shan (807-869), and the direct descendant of Master Tung Chu (1908-1977).”

² Bingenheimer, Marcus “Chinese Buddhism Unbound - Rebuilding and Redefining Chinese Buddhism on Taiwan”, In Kalpakam Sankarnarayan (Ed.) *Buddhism in Global Perspective*, Mumbai, Somaiya Publications, 2003. p. 122-146; A digital version of the website as <http://buddhistinformatcs.chibs.edu.tw/~mb/publications/chineseBuddhismUnbound.html#Historical%20Background> “The emphasis of Dharma Drum Mountain is the practice of Chinese Chan meditation and the promotion of the academic study of all forms of Buddhism. Chan retreats of varying length are offered to the general public, to provide lay-people with an opportunity to meditate.”

liberation in retreats and daily life.³ The “Śamatha Vipāśyanā”-Retreat is, one of the specific meditation retreats, taught by the DDLOCB since 2000.

1.1 Research Motivation

In the Chan tradition, the role of the teacher is to guide and assist practitioners in their practice. The setting of the Chan Hall is to support the practitioners’ practice to attain enlightenment. This paper will focus on these two major parts of doctrine and practice.

Regarding the doctrine, this paper will examine the meaning and the significance of “Tathāgatagarbha” and the practice of “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” based on the Buddhist scriptures. This paper will examine the purpose of the teaching of “Tathāgatagarbha” as the literature reveals, is to lead sentient beings to liberation and ultimately to Buddhahood. moreover the practice of “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” is one of the major methods of practice embodying the teaching of “Tathāgatagarbha”.

Regarding the practice, the contents of dharma talks, which are used to guide practitioners during the retreat, will be examined and it will be confirmed that the function of the retreat is the same as “Tathāgatagarbha” doctrine. Furthermore, this paper will examine the arrangement of the “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” procedures and the setting of the Chan Hall in the course of retreat.

1.2 Research Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the scenario of the “Śamatha Vipāśyanā”-Retreat according to the “Tathāgatagarbha” doctrine. Collating the principles of this retreat, it will unveil the systematic procedures and the characters of Chan meditation retreat of Dharma Drum Lineage of Chan Buddhism. In particular this paper will explore the following points:

- (1) “Tathāgatagarbha” is none other than “Śūnyatā”.
- (2) The teaching of “Tathāgatagarbha” is the way for both the sravakas and bodhisattvas.
- (3) The “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” retreat of DDLOCB provides guidance for practitioners to realize the embodiment of “Tathāgatagarbha”.

³ Master Sheng Yen, Dan Stevenson *Hoofprint of the Ox*, Oxford, 2001, p. 65 “The Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna teachings all have their respective systemizations. One of the most classic formulations of the meditative path is the scheme of the Five Methods for Stilling the Mind and the Four Stations of Mindfulness.”

2. An Inquiry to Tathāgatagarbha and “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” Practice

In Chinese Buddhism (including China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam) and Tibetan Buddhism, the Tathāgatagarbha doctrine (often essentially the same as the Buddha Nature concept) teaches that each sentient being possesses the intrinsic Buddhist quality, or intrinsic potency for becoming a Buddha. “Tathagata-garbha” means “Buddha Womb” or “Buddha Embryo”, and this notion is explained by the Buddha in the *Maha-parinirvana Sutra* to refer to the “True Self” or “Essence of the Self” within all sentient beings - the sustaining and immortal, pleasurable, unconditioned and boundless, pure, unconditioned, infinite Essence of the Buddha. Yet, this “True Self” is indiscernible to worldly, un-awakened vision, as a result of conceptual obscurations, inappropriate mental and behavioral tendencies and unclear perception.⁴

In Sanskrit, the term “tathāgatagarbha” may be parsed into “tathāgata” and “garbha”, as to mean that the “garbha” of a “tathāgata” exists in all sentient beings. The letter “garbha” means “womb”, “embryo”, and “essence”. The letter “tathāgata” may be parsed into “tathā” (semantic field: “he who has there”) and “gata” (semantic field: “gone”) and/or “āgata” (semantic field: “come”, “arrived”, “not-gone”).⁵ The “garbha” that all sentient beings have within is the cause and potentiality, which eventually leads sentient beings to supremely and

4 北涼 天竺三藏曇無讖譯《大般涅槃經》T12, no. 374, p. 377, c3-14

「世間亦有常樂我淨。出世亦有常樂我淨。世間法者有字無義。出世間者有字有義。何以故。世間之法有四顛倒故不知義。所以者何。有想顛倒心倒見倒。以三倒故世間之人。樂中見苦。常見無常。我見無我。淨見不淨。是名顛倒。以顛倒故世間知字而不知義。何等為義。無我者名為生死。我者名為如來。無常者聲聞緣覺。常者如來法身。苦者一切外道。樂者即是涅槃。不淨者即有為法。淨者諸佛菩薩所有正法。是名不顛倒。以不倒故知字知義。若欲遠離四顛倒者。應知如是常樂我淨。」

聖嚴法師《自家寶藏——如來藏經語體譯釋》法鼓文化，2001，頁 23-24。

「《涅槃經》的「常樂我淨」，也是指的如來藏，所以《楞伽經》卷二就明白的說：「開引計我諸外道故，說如來藏。」……所以如來藏和法身（dharma-kāya）、法界（dharma-dhātu）、自性清淨心（prak-iti-parisuddhi-citta）、清淨真如（parisuddha-tathatā）、佛性、眾生界、佛界等同一內容。」

5 Chan Master Sheng Yen, John Crook *Illuminating Silence: The Practice of Chinese Zen*, Watkins Publishing, UK, 2002, p. 89.

“The word garbha means 'womb' or 'embryo' and thus, at the root of mind, lies the embryo (womb) of buddhahood. Yet this term also divides into tathata (meaning suchness) and gata (meaning gone, going, come, coming: i.e. move-ment). Hence this title of the Buddha means one who exemplifies the coming and going of things as they are.”

fully enlightenment- “tathāgata”. Through Buddhist practices, practitioners will breakthrough samsāra (the cycle of birth and death) and find “tathāgatagarbha” Buddha Nature they have is none other than Buddhahood.

But, does Tathāgatagarbha actually exist, with its boundless marks and signs, in miniature inside the bodies of sentient beings? Is Tathāgatagarbha really the same as the non-Buddhists’ notion of Self, the essence of which is eternal and pure Brahman? Is this Tathāgatagarbha teaching different from the “Śūnyatā” (meaning that there is no substantial self that can be found) in early Buddhism?

This chapter primarily seeks to review the center notion of Tathāgatagarbha doctrines and the Tathāgatagarbha doctrines within Chan practice. From a Buddhist literary review on the subject of the Tathāgatagarbha teachings, we find out the certain key association with Chan practice as contained in the scriptures provided therein here.

2.1 Literature Review: the Tathāgatagarbha Doctrines

According to *Anguttara Nikaya* (1:5), the notion of the “tathagatagarbha” can be directed to a luminous, inherently pure mind. The interpretation of English version showed as below:

“The mind, monks, is luminous, but it is defiled by taints that come from without; that mind, monks, is luminous, but it is cleaned of taints that come from without.”⁶ (Chinese translation⁷)

The original luminous (pure) mind possessing the potentiality of attaining Buddha-hood, is the essential teaching of Tathāgatagarbha doctrine. From the context, the mind is luminous. Only those who understand the principle and are capable of practice could understand the

⁶ F.L. Woodward, M.A. *The Book of the Gradual Sayings* (Anguttara-nikaya) Volume I, 5, p. 8, 13-5, Oxford, 2000.

⁷ *Anguttara Nikaya* http://sss2002.51.net/books/Tipitaka/Sutta-Pitaka/1401_Avguttara-nikaya-01.html, 2008/6/12. 「諸比丘！心者，是極光淨者，卻為客隨煩惱所雜染。諸比丘！心者，是極光淨者，能從客隨煩惱解脫。」

relationship between luminous mind and taints. The context metaphorically implies that intrinsically the mind is luminous.⁸ Although this concept of an intrinsically luminous mind exists in the scriptures of early Theravada, it is also wholly accepted by Mahāsāṃghika and later by Mahayana.⁹

In Mahayana, there are many scriptures containing the concept of Tathāgatagarbha composed in India from the 3rd to the 6th century, such as *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra* 大方等如來藏經, *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* 大般涅槃經, *Mahameghasūtra* 大雲經, *Mahābhārikasūtra* 大法鼓經, *Aṅgulimāliyasūtra* 央掘魔羅經, *Aryasrimalasūtra* 勝鬘師子吼一乘大方便方廣經, *Lankāvatārasūtra* 楞伽阿跋多羅寶經, *Anūnatvapurnatvanirdesaśūtra* 不增不減經, *Anuttarasrayasūtra* 無上依經, *Ratnagotravibhāga Mahāyanottaratantrasāstra* 究竟一乘寶性論, *Buddhāvasthāśāstra* 佛性論, *Mahāyanadharmadhātunirvīśasāstra* 大乘法界無差別論.....etc.¹⁰ Among these scriptures, *Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra* is the first that was translated into Chinese, during the time from the end of 3rd to the beginning of the 4th century.¹¹

Actually, this concept of “the original luminous (pure) mind” had been transformed into a “Buddha Embryo” inside the bodies of sentient beings. The *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra* played a very significant role in the development of Buddhist thought. This sūtra states that the Tathāgatagarbha actually exist, with its boundless marks and signs, in miniature inside the bodies of sentient beings, as a virtual Buddha-homunculus, a fully wisdom-endowed Buddha.

“.....a most victorious body.....great and indestructible”, inviolate, seated majestically in the lotus posture within the body of each being, clearly visible only to a perfect Buddha with his supernatural vision.¹²

⁸ Venerable Yun-Shun 《如來藏之研究》，Chen-wen press, Taipei, 1981, p. 69.

「比丘眾！此心極光淨，而客塵煩惱雜染；凡夫異生不如實解，我說無聞異生無修心故。」
「比丘眾！此心極光淨，而客塵煩惱解脫；有聞聖弟子能如實解，我說有聞聖弟子有修心故。」

⁹ Venerable Yun-Shun 《華雨集第三冊》Chen-wen press, Taipei, p. 149. 「「心性本淨」，在部派佛教中，成爲重要的異議。大眾部 Mahāsāṃghika 與上座部 Sthavira 分出的分別說部 Vibhajyavādin，是主張「心性本淨」的。」

¹⁰ Aming Tu 〈如來藏學研究小史－如來藏學書目簡介與導讀〉佛教圖書館館訊，No. 10/11, 1977。

¹¹ Venerable Yun-Shun 《如來藏之研究》Chen-wen press, Taipei, 1981, p.4-5.

¹² Donald S. Lopez, Jr. *Buddhism in Practice*, Princeton University Press, 1995, pp. 100-101.

This is the most “personalized” description of the Tathāgatagarbha teachings found in any of the main Tathāgatagarbha sutras and is a reminiscent imagist of Mahayana descriptions of the Buddha himself sitting in the lotus posture within his own mother's womb prior to birth: “luminous, glorious, gracious, beautiful to see, seated with his legs crossed” and shining “like pure gold.....”.¹³

The Buddha says, “With my Buddha-eye I behold all sentient beings and see that in their kleśa of desire, anger, and delusion, there is the Tathagata-wisdom, the Tathagata-eye, and the Tathagata-body..... All sentient beings, in all destinies, in their kleśa-bodies possess the tathagata-garbha eternally free of corruption.”¹⁴

Thus the Tathāgatagarbha is only an “embryo” in the sense that it is hidden from worldly view, at the very center of each sentient being, while yet being perfect, unchanging and complete.

Since the beginning of 20th century, many Buddhist scholars have become interested in the Tathāgatagarbha doctrine and shed new light on Tathāgatagarbha thought. However, until nowadays one of the interpretations of Tathāgatagarbha states it is the same as the non-Buddhists’ notion of Self, the essence of which is eternal and pure Brahma. And further more, they insist the Tathāgatagarbha doctrine is a contrary with the principle of dependent co-arising or “Śūnyatā” (means that there is no substantial self can be found).¹⁵ Interestingly, in the *Lankavatarasutra*, Bodhisattva Mahamati raised a question concerning the issue of atman and anatman to Buddha. He replied,

Now the Blessed One makes mention of the Tathagata-garbha in the sutras, and verily it is described by you as by nature bright and pure, as primarily unspotted, endowed with the thirty-two marks of excellence, hidden in the body of every being like a gem of great value, it is described by the Blessed One to be eternal,

¹³ *Lalita Vistara Sutra* “Voice of Buddha” Dharma Publishing, 1983, p. 109.

¹⁴ Jamie Hubbard, Paul L. Swanson (Editor) *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm over Critical Buddhism* “The Doctrine of Buddha-Nature Is Impeccably Buddhist” Sallie B. King, p. 189, 1997, University of Hawai’i Press, Honolulu, Hawai’i, USA.

《大方等如來藏經》卷 1：「我以佛眼觀一切眾生。貪欲恚癡諸煩惱中。有如來智如來眼如來身。……一切眾生。雖在諸趣煩惱身中。有如來藏常無染污。」（T16, no. 666, p. 457, b28-c3）

¹⁵ Jamie Hubbard, Paul L. Swanson (Editor) *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm over Critical Buddhism* University of Hawai’i Press, Honolulu, Hawai’i, USA.

permanent, auspicious and unchangeable. Is not this Tathagata-garbha taught by the Blessed One the same as the ego-substance taught by the philosophers?¹⁶

In the section above, the Buddha identified Tathagatagarbha with the emptiness, “Śūnyatā”, tathata...etc., meaning that Tathagatagarbha is without any substantial self can be found. Then, the other question arises: if Tathagatagarbha is the same as “Śūnyatā”, why Buddha’s teaching emphasized the eternal, self, bliss and pure? The Buddha went on to answer.

The reason why the “Tathagatas” who are Arhats and fully enlightened Ones teach the doctrine pointing to the tathagatagarbha which is a state of non-discrimination and imageless, is to make the ignorant cast aside their fear when they listen to teaching of egoless-ness. It is like a potter who manufactures various vessels out of a mass of clay of one sort by his own manual skill and labour...that the “Tathagatas” preach the egolessness of things which removes all the traces of discrimination by various skillful means issuing from their transcendental wisdom, that is, sometimes by the doctrine of the “tathagatagarbha”, sometimes by that of egolessness... Thus, “Mahamati”, the doctrine of the “tathagatagarbha” is disclosed in order to awaken the philosophers from their clinging to the idea of the ego. Accordingly, “Mahamati”, the “Tathagatas” disclose the doctrine of the “tathagatagarbha” which is thus not to be known as identical with the philosopher's notion of an egosubstance. Therefore, “Mahamati”, in order to abandon the misconception cherished by the philosophers, you must depend on the “anatman-tathagatagarbha”.¹⁷

¹⁶ Daisetz Teitaru Suzuki *The Lankavatara sutra : A Mahayana Text*, Delhi : Motilal Banarsidass, 1999, p. 68-69; 《楞伽阿跋多羅寶經》卷 2 〈一切佛語心品〉 T16, no. 670, p. 489, a25-b2 : 「爾時大慧菩薩摩訶薩白佛言。世尊。世尊修多羅說如來藏自性清淨。轉三十二相。入於一切眾生身中。如大價寶垢衣所纏。如來之藏常住不變。亦復如是。而陰界入垢衣所纏。貪欲恚癡不實妄想塵勞所污。一切諸佛之所演說。云何世尊。同外道說我言有如來藏耶。」

¹⁷ Daisetz Teitaru Suzuki, *The Lankavatara sutra: A Mahayana Text*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999, p. 68-69 ; 《楞伽阿跋多羅寶經》卷 2 〈一切佛語心品〉 T16, no. 670, p. 489, b7-20 「如來應供等正覺。為斷愚夫畏無我句故。說離妄想無所有境界如來藏門。大慧。未來現在菩薩摩訶薩。不應作我見計著。譬如陶家於一泥聚以人工水木輪繩方便作種種器。如來亦復如是。於法無我離一切妄想相。以種種智慧善巧方便。或說如來藏。或說無我。以是因緣故說如來藏。不同外道所說之我。是名說如來藏。開引計我諸外道故說如來藏。令離不實我見妄想。入三解脫門境界。悵望疾得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提。是故如來應供等正覺。作如是說。如來之藏若不如是則同外道〔7〕所說之我。是故大慧。為離外道見故。當依無我如來之藏。」

In this passage, it is pointed out that tathagatagarbha is empty in its nature, nirvana, unborn, without predicates. In the conclusion of 〈The Significance of Tathagatagarbha : A Positive expression of Śūnyatā〉, Venerable Heng-Ching mentioned that “tathāgatagarbha” is a positive expression of Śūnyatā and the potentiality to realize Buddha-hood:

(1) The “tathagatagarbha” symbolizes the potential for enlightenment (a principle) rather than a material “essence” of ultimate truth, because (2) the “tathagatagarbha” is based on the framework of the “Mahayana” doctrine of “sunyata-pratityasamutpada”. (3) The development of the “tathagatagarbha” doctrine signifies the ability of a religious tradition to meet the spiritual needs of the masses aiming at a given time. That is to say the “tathagatagarbha” thought was formed as a positive soterio-logical approach to counteract the “sunyam sarvam” (all is empty) view. The “tathagatagarbha”, which strongly articulates a devotional and experiential approach to salvation, provides much to the hope and aspiration of the people at large.¹⁸

Sallie B. King used some of the passages in *Buddhatavaśāstra* 佛性論 to emphasize that the Tathagatagarbha is not other than the concept of Madhyamika and does not break the principle of ‘cause and result’ in the article.

For example, what formerly is a seed subsequently produces a grain plant. The “former” and “subsequent” stages of this grain are neither one [the same] nor two [different], neither exist nor do not exist. If they were one [the same], then there would be no “former” and “subsequent.” If they were different, then what was originally grain could subsequently be a bean. Therefore, they are neither the same nor different.....

Therefore we say that there being no own-nature is like the former and subsequent [stages of a] plant. It is neither one [i.e., eternally the same] nor different [i.e., discontinuous between former and subsequent stages] and [therefore] is able to

¹⁸ Heng-Ching, Shih, “The Significance Of ‘TATHAGATAGARBHA’: A Positive expression Of ‘SUNYATA’ ” 1988, p. 245.

function broadly and variously.¹⁹

Rather, why did the Buddha speak of Buddha-nature? Sallie B. King continued to pick up the passage in *Buddhatavasastra* 佛性論 to explain.

The Tathagata said that all sentient beings universally possess Buddhature in order to [help people] overcome five errors and give rise to five virtues—that is, in order to have sentient beings to overcome an inferior mind, arrogance, delusion, denial of the true Dharma, and attachment to self.

Regarding causing sentient beings to overcome an inferior mind, those sentient beings who have not yet heard the Buddha say that there is Buddha-nature do not know that in themselves they certainly have Buddha-nature and can attain Buddhahood. Therefore in this lifetime, they develop an inferior state of mind and are unable to give rise to bodhicitta. Wishing to have them to put aside their inferior state of mind and give rise to bodhicitta, [the Buddha] says all sentient beings universally possess Buddha-nature.

Regarding arrogance, there are people who have heard the Buddha say that sentient beings possess Buddha-nature and this caused them to give rise to an [arrogant] mind. Being [arrogant] they then say, ‘I possess Buddha-nature and therefore I can give rise to the [Buddha] mind.’ They become proud and say, ‘Others cannot do it.’ In order to break down this attitude, the Buddha said all sentient beings, every one, possesses Buddha-nature.

Regarding overcoming delusion: If a person has this arrogant mind, then true wisdom with respect to the thusness-principle and thusness-realm does not become manifest and delusion arises.

Overcoming denial of the true Dharma all comes down to sentient beings’ errors regarding the dual emptiness [of person and thing]. By realizing emptiness, pure wisdom and virtue arise. This is what is called truth. As for “denial”: if they do not speak of Buddha-nature, they have not fully understood (liao 了) emptiness. Even if they have grasped the truth, they speak ill of suchness. [In them] neither wisdom nor virtue is complete.

¹⁹ Sallie B. King “The Doctrine of Buddha-Nature Is Impeccably Buddhist” *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm over Critical Buddhism*, University of Hawai’i Press, Honolulu, Hawai’i, USA, 1997, p. 177 ; 《佛性論》卷1〈2 破外道品〉T31, no. 1610, p. 793, a14-16. 「譬如前種能生後穀。此前後穀。不一不二。不有不無。若一者。則無前後。若異者。則前穀後豆。故無一異。」T31, no. 1610, p. 793, a20-21. 「故說無自性。如穀前後。不一不異。能作種種諸事。」

Regarding overcoming attachment to self: If one does not see in sentient beings [both] falseness and error as well as truth and virtue, one will not give rise to mahakaruna. Because one hears the Buddha speak of Buddha-nature, one knows [there is both] falseness and error as well as truth and virtue in sentient beings and one gives rise to mahakaruna. There is no “this” and “that” [self and other] and therefore one overcomes attachment to self.

With these five meanings as cause and condition, the Buddha spoke of Buddha-nature producing five virtues, viz., diligence, reverence, wisdom (*prajñā*), knowledge (*jñāna*), and compassion (*mahakaruna*). These five virtues can overcome [the corresponding] five errors....

To destroy five errors and produce five virtues—this is why the Buddha said all sentient beings possess the Buddha-nature.²⁰

From the passages above, the reasons why Buddha spoke of Buddha-nature are, obviously, to encourage people to practice, to aspire to Buddhahood and arouse bodhicitta, to show his concern for those to who detach ego from achievement, and to provide much for the hopes and aspiration of the people at large.

In the *Lankavatarasutra* 楞伽阿跋多羅寶經, the Buddha presents the Chan view of the essence of the tathagatagarbha to Mahāmati, what is perfect knowledge?

It is realized when one casts aside the discriminating notions of form, name, reality, and character; it is the inner realization by noble wisdom. This perfect

²⁰ Ibid 19. 《佛性論》卷 1, T31, no. 1610, p. 787, a8-21: 「如來為除五種過失。生五功德故。說一切眾生悉有佛性。除五種過失者。一為令眾生離下劣心故。二為離慢下品人故。三為離虛妄執故。四為離誹謗真實法故五為離我執故。一為令眾生離下劣心者。有諸眾生未聞佛說有佛性理。不知自身必當有得佛義故。於此身起下劣想。不能發菩提心。今欲令其發心。捨下劣意故。說眾生悉有佛性。二為離高慢心者。若有人曾聞佛說眾生有佛性故。因此發心。既發心已。便謂我有佛性故能發心。作輕慢意。謂他不能。為破此執故。佛說一切眾生皆有佛性。三為離虛妄執者。若人有此慢心。則於如理如量。正智不得生顯」

《佛性論》卷 1, T31, no. 1610, p. 787, b6-28: 「四為除誹謗真實法者一切眾生過失之事。並是二空。由解此空故。所起清淨智慧功德。是名真實。言誹謗者。若不說佛性則不了空。便執實有。違謗真如。淨智功德。皆不成就。五離我執者。若不見虛妄過失。真實功德。於眾生中。不起大悲。由聞佛說佛性故。知虛妄過失。真實功德。則於眾生中。起大悲心。無有彼此故除我執。為此五義因緣。佛說佛性生五種功德。五功德者。一起正勤心。二生恭敬事。三生般若。四生闍那。五生大悲。由五功德。能翻五失。……滅五過失。生五功德。是故佛說一切眾生皆有佛性。」

knowledge, Mahāmati, is the essence of the Tathāgatagarbha.²¹

This passage shows us that, through the cultivation of noble wisdom, those meditation practitioners attain the inner realization and realize the essence of the Tathāgatagarbha, as nothing being discriminated. At the same time, through the emptiness seen in realization, the practitioners get noble wisdom as the unborn, or the innate luminous mind wherein all apparent things appear.

Based on the commentary of Dharma Rinchen, Venerable Heng-Ching concludes that the real purpose of the passage “the gotra of the ‘tathagata’ exists in all sentient beings” is to articulate bodhisattva practices based on wisdom.

This is supported by the structure of the *Ratnagotravibhaga*, which is arranged by the following order :

1. Buddha,
2. Dharma,
3. Sangha,
4. Dhatu,
5. Bodhi,
6. Guna (merits) and Karma (act).

The seven “vajrapadas” are explained in terms of cause, condition and result. “Dhatu” is the “cause”; bodhi, “guna”, and karma are the “conditions” through which the three jewels (of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha) as “result” are manifested. As Kiyota says, that the wisdom, merits and practice of a Bodhisattva constitute the condition through which the “Buddha-is-caused”. The expression “Buddha-is-caused”, or “Buddha-caused” is derived from “Buddha-dhatu”. It is employed synonymously with the “tathagatagarbha”. As Kiyota rightly points out, the term “cause” here does not refer to a first cause (i.e., a substance or a physical entity), but symbolically as a potential (a principle) which is empirically revealed through a set of conditions—wisdom, merits, and practices. (23) In other words, the “tathagatagarbha” as a potential inherent in the human consciousness can only be realized through Bodhisattva

²¹ Ibid 17, p. 60.

《楞伽阿跋多羅寶經》卷 1, T16, no. 670, p. 487, c13-15 : 「謂離名相事相妄想。聖智所得及自覺聖智趣所行境界。是名成自性如來藏心。」

practices.²²

The above arguments are mainly based on the *Rathagotravibhaga*. At least two other Tathagatagarbha related sutras also support this viewpoint. One is the *Buddha Nature Treatise* and the other the *Mahaparinirvana sutra*.

The following section will review the literatures, regarding to the cultivating of noble wisdom from the “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” practice. Try to find out the way to embody each sentient being’s Tathāgatagarbha/ Buddha nature.

2.2 Literature Review: the “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” Practice

In Mahayana Buddhism, although the bodhisattva-way emphasizes the virtues derived from a great compassionate mind, the transference of merit, and the realization of enlightenment, and so forth, without concentration and wisdom, none of these can be completely accomplished. “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” practice can surely lay grounds to the cultivation of concentration and wisdom.

So, in the *Sanidhinirmocanasūtra* 解深密經 passages show: “One should know that all sravakas, Tathagatas, all good worldly things, and all good world -transcending things are the results of this śamatha and vipāśyanā.”²³ In *Prolegomenon to the Collected Explanations on the Source of Chan* 禪源諸詮集都序, Chan Master Zongmi 宗密 also emphasized the importance of Chan practice.

“Therefore, if practitioners of the three vehicles wish to seek the noble Way, they must practice meditation. Other than meditation there is no gate, no road. As for those who recollect a Buddha so as to be reborn in a pure land, they likewise must practice the sixteen contemplations meditations, as well as the Samadhi of recollecting a Buddha and the pratyutpanna Samadhi.....²⁴

There are deep and shallow kinds of meditation, of all different levels. Those who

²² Heng-Ching Shih “The Significance Of ‘TATHAGATAGARBHA’: A Positive expression Of ‘SUNYATA’ ” 1988.

²³ Ven. Yin-shun *The Way to Buddhahood*, Wisdom Publication, Boston, 1998, p. 253.
《解深密經》卷3〈6分別瑜伽品〉T16, no. 676, p. 701, b26-28: 「一切聲聞及如來等。所有世間及出世間一切善法。當知皆是此奢摩他毘鉢舍那所得之果。」

²⁴ Chan Master Sheng Yen *Orthodox Chinese Buddhism*, North Atlantic Books, 2007, p. 218;
《禪源諸詮集都序》卷1, T48, no. 2015, p. 399, b9-11: 「故三乘學人欲求聖道必須修禪。離此無門。離此無路。至於念佛求生淨土。亦須修十六觀禪。及念佛三昧。般舟三昧。」

practice with wrong conceptions, delighting in the high and detesting the low, practice outer-path meditation. Those who have correct belief regarding cause and effect but who still practice with delight and detestation practice the meditation of ordinary people. Those who understand the emptiness of self but have a lopsided view of the true principle practice Nikaya meditation. Those who understand the emptiness of both self and phenomena that reveals the true principle practice Mahayana meditation...Those who realize that their own mind is originally pure and without affliction, that they fully possess the inherent nature of wisdom, that their own mind is absolutely no different from Buddha- those who practice based on this understanding practice the meditation of the supreme vehicle, which is also called the pure tathagata meditation, the one-practice Samadhi, or the Samadhi of Suchness.”²⁵

Only by relying on concentration, the Mahāyāna practitioners can arouse physical and mental mild tranquility, understand profound meanings, and do all kinds of things to benefit sentient beings, and so forth. This is the reason why the “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” practice plays an important role in the Buddhist meditation since the beginning in ancient India.

In Sanskrit, the term “śamatha” (C. zhi 止; E. calming) is described in the sutra as “the mind being focused in one state” and “the continuity of that mental state.”²⁶ The term of “vipāśyanā” (C. guan 觀; E. contemplation) is described in the sutra as “right thinking and discernment, the highest thinking and discernment, thorough reflection and thorough investigation.”²⁷ The same teachings can be found in the statement of Chan Master Shen Yen’s book, as following,

²⁵ Ibid p. 218-219.

T48, no. 2015, p. 399, b12-20：「禪則有淺有深。階級殊等。謂帶異計欣上壓下而修者。是外道禪。正信因果亦以欣厭而修者。是凡夫禪。悟我空偏真之理而修者。是小乘禪。悟我法二空所顯真理而修者。是大乘禪。若頓悟自心本來清淨。元無煩惱。無漏智性本自具足。此心即佛。畢竟無異。依此而修者。是最上乘禪。亦名如來清淨禪。亦名一行三昧。亦名真如三昧。」

²⁶ Ibid 23, p. 253;

T16, no. 676, p. 698, b18-19：「心一境性」。

T16, no. 676, p. 698, a6：「內心相續」。

²⁷ Ibid T16, no. 676, p. 698, a11-12：「正思擇最極思擇。周遍尋思周遍伺察。」

The word for meditative calming in Chinese is zhi, which literally means “to halt” or “to fix in place.”

Meditative calming (S. śamatha; C. zhi 止), in turn, serves as a basis for meditative contemplation (S. vipāśyanā). In Chinese, vipāśyanā is rendered as guan, which means “to discern or observe.” As the mind is purified and unified by samādhi, it becomes very deep, powerful, and clear. This clarity is then directed to the practice of contemplation or meditative discernment (S. vipāśyanā; C. guan 觀) proper...one uproots the basic afflictions of craving, hatred, and delusion, thereby realizing emptiness and achieving liberation from birth and death.²⁸

Thus, it could be said that the unified mind engendered by “calming” practice is a necessary precondition for effective contemplation practice. Without the liberating insight of contemplation practice, one’s meditation will never pass beyond the experience of mundane dhyāna, and true enlightenment will never appear. Without the power of mental concentration and clarity generated by calming practice, efforts at mindful contemplation will produce only the most meager or fleeting insight.²⁹

In *Samyuktāgama* 雜阿含經, the Buddha taught the practitioners to contemplate the Five Skandhas³⁰ (form, sensation, perception, volition, and consciousness) and the six faculties³¹ (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind) to approach nirvana. According to *The Pātimokkha and The Mahāvagga, I-IV* 漢譯南傳律藏·大品, there is a Buddhist literature contained the techniques for developing Samadhi and wisdom taught by the Buddha. The context is follows: 1. At that time the blessed Buddha dwelt at Uruvelā, on the bank of the river Nerañgarā at the foot of the Bodhi tree (tree of wisdom), just after he had become Sambuddha.

²⁸ Chan Master Sheng Yen, Dan Stevenson *Hoofprint of the Ox* Oxford, NY, 2001, p. 65.

²⁹ Ibid p. 29.

³⁰ 《雜阿含經》卷 5, T02, no. 99, p. 36, c14-21: 「云何。瞿曇。爲弟子說法。令離疑惑。佛告火種居士。我爲諸弟子說諸所有色。若過去。若未來。若現在。若內。若外。若麤。若細。若好。若醜。若遠。若近。彼一切如實觀察非我。非異我。不相在。受。想。行。識亦復如是。彼學必見跡不斷壞。堪任成就。厭離知見。守甘露門。雖非一切悉得究竟。且向涅槃。」

³¹ Ibid 26, p. 49, b8-15: 「爾時。世尊告諸比丘。當正觀察眼無常。如是觀者。是名正見。正觀故生厭。生厭故離喜。離貪。離喜。貪故。我說心正解脫。如是耳。鼻。舌。身。意。離喜。離貪。離喜。貪故。比丘。我說心正解脫。心正解脫者。能自記說。我生已盡。梵行已立。所作已作。自知不受後有。佛說此經已。諸比丘聞佛所說。歡喜奉行。」

And the blessed Buddha sat cross-legged at the foot of the Bodhi tree uninterruptedly for seven days, enjoying the bliss of emancipation.

2. Then the Blessed one (at the end of these seven days) during the first watch of the night fixed his mind upon the chain of causation, in direct and in reverse order: 'from ignorance spring the *samkhâras*, from the *samkhâras* springs consciousness, from consciousness spring name-and-form, from name-and-form springs the six provinces (of the six senses), from the six provinces springs contact, from contact springs sensation, from sensation springs thirst (or desire), from thirst springs attachment, from attachment springs existence, from existence springs birth, from birth spring old age and death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection, and despair. such is the origination of this whole mass of suffering. Again, by the destruction of ignorance, which consists in the complete absence of lust, the *samkhâras* are destroyed, by the destruction of the *samkhâras* consciousness is destroyed, by the destruction of consciousness name-and-form are destroyed, by the destruction of name-and-form the six provinces are destroyed, by the destruction of the six provinces contact is destroyed, by the destruction of contact sensation is destroyed, by the destruction of sensation thirst is destroyed, by the destruction of thirst attachment is destroyed, by the destruction of attachment existence is destroyed, by the destruction of existence birth is destroyed, by the destruction of birth old age and death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection, and despair are destroyed. such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.'³²

The passages showed us the “Contemplation of the Twelve Links” and the most common concept “This arises, hence that arises; this perishes, hence that perishes.” Through the “Contemplation of the Twelve Links”, one attains the realization of emptiness, no-mind, Buddha nature, and Tathagatagarbha. Further more, after being enlightened, he can also use

³² Translated by T.W. Rhys Davids and Herman Oldenberg from the Pâli *Khandhaka* (Vinaya-Pitaka), *The Pâtimokkha and The Mahâvagga, I-IV*, p. 75-p. 78, 1881, Oxford, the Clarendon Press; <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/sbe13/sbe1312.htm>; 元亨寺漢譯南傳大藏經編譯委員會《漢譯南傳大藏經·律藏三》〈大品〉第一，元亨寺妙林出版社，高雄市，1992，pp.1-2。

「（一）爾時，佛世尊初成現等正覺，止優樓頻螺（村），尼連禪河邊菩提樹下。時世尊於菩提樹下，一度結跏趺坐，坐受七日解脫樂。（二）時世尊是夜初分，于緣起順逆作意。（謂：）無明緣行，行緣識，識緣名色，名色緣六處，六處緣觸，觸緣受，受緣愛，愛緣取，取緣有，有緣生，生緣老、死死緣愁·憂·苦·惱。不可稱計。如是苦陰成此因緣。又無明滅盡，則行滅，行滅則識滅，識滅則名色滅，名色滅則六處滅，六處滅則觸滅，觸滅則受滅，受滅則愛滅，愛滅則取滅。取滅則有滅，有滅則生滅，生滅則老、死、愁、憂悲、苦、惱滅。如是滅盡一切苦蘊。」

the “Contemplation of the Twelve Links” to deeper his practice. Nevertheless, the Chinese Buddhism, Theravada Buddhism, and Tibetan Buddhism all have their own respective systemization. One of the most classic formulations of the meditative path is the scheme of the “Contemplation of the Twelve Links”. This is one of the many “śamatha” and “vipāśyanā” practices.

In *Mahaprajnaparamita-hridaya-sutra* 般若波羅蜜多心經, the Buddha taught us the “Contemplation of the eighteen realm” (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, thought, realm of sight, realm of sound, realm of smell, realm of taste, realm of touch, realm of cognition). And, *Śūramgamasūtra* 大佛頂如來密因修證了義諸菩薩萬行首楞嚴經 describes the methods that twenty-five great bodhisattvas used to attain liberation. The Buddha strongly recommended Ananda to use the method of “Contemplation of the ear”.

All these methods of practices, which are mentioned above, include meditations upon the four elements, the six sense faculties, the six categories of sense objects, the six consciousnesses, and seven elements of the world of sentient beings (earth, water, fire, wind, emptiness, consciousness, root). Using any of these methods, a practitioner can gain liberation.

In *Sanidhinirmocanasūtra* 解深密經, Bodhisattva Maitreya 彌勒菩薩 asked the Buddha: What is the procedure of the practice “śamatha” and “vipāśyanā”? The Buddha replied the procedure as being: ³³

“śamatha” → “vipāśyanā” → “śamatha” → “śamatha” → “vipāśyanā.” → the balance of “śamatha” and “vipāśyanā” practice.

In China, there is a different structure named the “six marvelous gates” (C. liu miaomen: 六妙門), which distinguishes six basic levels and techniques of meditation: (1) counting the

³³ Ven. Hui-ming “The Research of ‘śamatha vipāśyanā’ ” (止觀之研究—以「解深密經分別瑜伽品」爲主) 於「尋求所緣」分位加行道之止。獅子吼, 第 24 卷第三期, 1985, pp. 58-67。

(一) 以加行道作意而顯示之觀。

(二) 以得作意道而顯示內之心一境性之止。

(三) 以加行究竟道作意而顯示之身心輕安性之止。

(四) 以加行究竟道作意而顯示於心之自性自證二無義之觀。

(五) 以加行究竟果作意而顯示之止觀雙運道。

亦就是說依照：止→(一)觀→(二)止→(三)止→(四)觀→(五)止觀雙運的次第而開展之止觀修習。

breath; (2) following the breath; (3) calming, or concentration (C.: zhi 止); (4) contemplating, or discerning (C.: guan 觀); (5) reverting; and (6) purification. The procedure is not entirely the same as the structure of the *Sanidhinirmocanasūtra* 解深密經. But the goal of both two practices is to develop wisdom and to attain enlightenment.

Yet, we can not conclude that the real purpose of the “*sāmatha vipāśyanā*” practice is only to develop personal wisdom and lead to personal liberation. To articulate bodhisattva practices, “*sāmatha vipāśyanā*” should be enable one to benefit others at the same time. In terms of Bodhisattva practices, the development of concentration power (*samādhi*) is through meditative “calming”; and the development of wisdom is through meditative “contemplation”. Concentration and wisdom are the essence of both the *śravakas* and bodhisattva way.³⁴

Those enquiring into meditation practice will someday discover that the mind is said to have the tathagatagarbha as its basis. In Chan Buddhism, the role of the tathagatagarbha in China can not be discussed or understood without an understanding of how tathagatagarbha is taught in the *Lankavatarasūtra* 楞伽阿跋多羅寶經. This is because Bodhidharma, the traditional founder of Chan (the first patriarch of Chan lineage), is traditionally known for carrying the *Lankavatarasūtra* 楞伽阿跋多羅寶經 with him when he came from India to China. The early Chan teachers in the lineage of Bodhidharma's school were known as the “Lankavatara Masters”.³⁵ Most of them used the method of the traditional “*sāmatha*” and “*vipāśyanā*”.

After Venerable Hui-neng (the six patriarch), Chan Buddhism developed primarily in China during the Tang dynasty. Chan is divided historically into the Five Houses or five “schools”. These were not originally regarded as “schools,” or “sects,” but over time, they have come to be understood that way. Besides the traditional “*sāmatha*” and “*vipāśyanā*”, “Hua-tao” (話頭) and “Mo-zhao” (Silence Illumination 默照) were originated since Song dynasty. But, most Chan schools use *Platformsūtra* 六祖壇經 as their guidance for practice. Chan Master Shen Yen had his comments on the goal and the function of Chan practice.

When we look at *prajna* from the standpoint of Madhyamika, once wisdom is attained, the self-nature of all dharmas will be seen as empty. This is the goal. Aside from this, we do not search for tathagatagarbha, Buddha nature, dharma nature or any other goal. However,

³⁴ Venerable Yin-shun *The Way to Buddhahood*, Boston, Wisdom Publication, p. 253.

³⁵ Andrew Ferguson *Zen's Chinese Heritage-The Masters & Their Teachings*, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 2000, p. 31.

when we look at the situation from the point of view of the tathāgatagarbha system, then prajnaa is only the function, but not the essence. Function must belong to something else. That is why there arises the thought of tathāgatagarbha and Buddha nature. For this reason, although we can detect the thought of prajnaa in the Platform sutra, the text is actually based on the foundation of tathāgatagarbha. This fact cannot be denied.³⁶

As the matter of fact, the *Platform Sūtra* considers wisdom as the function and regards Tathāgatagarbha as its goal. The function of wisdom is not triggered after attaining Buddhahood, yet is working in each sentient being’s daily life wherever. This is a tremendous transformation for Chan Buddhism.

2.3 Summary

The function of Chan practice is to develop wisdom through contemplation to attain enlightenment (Seeing into the Buddha Nature and being enlightened). The so-called “Seeing into Buddha Nature” (C.: chiehshin 見性) means the seeing of self-essence is no different from Buddha; and “being enlightened” (C.: kaiwu 開悟) refers to embodying the pure mind without vexations. In Chan view, Tathāgatagarbha (Buddha Nature) is regarded as the goal. Through Chan practice, everyone can achieve the stage of “Seeing Buddha Nature and being enlightened.” Further more, one can achieve the Buddhahood through the continuous practice of Chan Buddhism while benefiting others at the same time.

Thus, it is better to use “śamatha vipāśyanā” practice to realize “true emptiness” (C.: zhēnkōng 真空). Through developing wisdom from the realization, the practitioners can manifest “profound existence” (C.: miaoyou 妙有) to others.³⁷ This is the most powerful reason why the Bodhisattva practitioners can embody Tathāgatagarbha (Buddha nature) within “śamatha vipāśyanā” retreat.

³⁶ Chan Master Sheng Yen “The Platform Saatra of the Sixth Patriarch.” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* no. 5, Chung-Hwa Insitute of Buddhist Studies, 1992, p. 319-340.

³⁷ 《仁王護國般若經疏》卷3〈2觀空品〉T33, no. 1705, p. 265, c18-21：「問真空妙有云何。答動即寂真空也。寂即動妙有也。真空故非常。妙有故非斷。真空不住生死。妙有不住涅槃。妙有故能起大悲。真空故能生大慈。」

3. To Embody Tathāgatagarbha in DDLOCB's "Śamatha Vipāśyanā" Practice

"The ordinary mind is the Way"³⁸ as proclaimed by Mazu Daoi 馬祖道一, indicates the proper mindset to live in a monastic community that follows rigid schedules and disciplines. This ordinary mind of being simple and straightforward can be nurtured and attained through the practice of "Śamatha Vipāśyanā." It is also the ordinary mind that enables practitioners to carry their daily life in peace and calmness. In China, Vietnam, Japan, and Korea, where Chan Buddhism prevails, we can find something in common, such as the inspiring talks given between master and students resulting catalytic effects on each other, the routines of meditation, the services before Buddha altar, Chan Hall layout and etiquette, the moral precepts that one accepts as a Chan practitioners..... etc. All these are typical training passed down in Chan history, and they are provided in the Dharma Drum Lineage of Chan Buddhism as well.

3.1 Works by Master Sheng Yen

3.1.1 Commentary by Master Sheng yen on *Platform Sūtra* 〈Concentration and Wisdom〉

A. The straight mind is the key to practicing "Concentration and Wisdom"

The Master instructed the assembly: "Good Knowing Advisors, this Dharma-door of mine has concentration and wisdom as its foundation. Great assembly, do not be confused and say that concentration and wisdom are different. Concentration and wisdom are one substance, not two. Concentration is the substance of wisdom, and wisdom is the function of concentration. Where there is wisdom, concentration is in the wisdom. Where there is concentration, wisdom is in the concentration. If you understand this principle, you understand the balanced study of concentration and wisdom."

"Students of the Way, do not say that first there is concentration, which produces wisdom, or that first there is wisdom, which produces concentration: do not say that the two

³⁸ 《景德傳燈錄》卷 28 T51, no. 2076, p. 440, a3-5: 「江西大寂道一禪師示眾云。道不用修但莫污染。何爲污染。但有生死心造作趣向皆是污染。若欲直會其道平常心是道。」

are different. To hold this view implies a duality of dharma. If your speech is good, but your mind is not, then concentration and wisdom are useless because they are not equal. If mind and speech are both good, the inner and outer are alike, and concentration and wisdom are equal.”

“Self-enlightenment, cultivation, and practice are not a matter for debate. If you debate which comes first, then you are like a confused man who does not cut off ideas of victory and defeat, but magnifies the notion of self and dharmas, and does not disassociate himself from the four marks.”

“Good Knowing Advisors, what are concentration and wisdom like? They are like a lamp and its light. With the lamp, there is light. Without the lamp, there is darkness. The lamp is the substance of the light and the light is the function of the lamp. Although there are two names, there is one fundamental substance. The dharma of concentration and wisdom is also thus.”

The Master instructed the assembly: “Good Knowing Advisors, the Single Conduct Samadhi is the constant practice of maintaining a direct, straightforward mind in all places, whether one is walking, standing, sitting, or lying down. As the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* says, ‘The straight mind is the Bodhimandala; the straight mind is the Pure Land.’ ”

“Do not speak of straightness with the mouth only, while the mind and practice are crooked, nor speak of the Single Conduct Samadhi without maintaining a straight mind. Simply practice keeping a straight mind and have no attachment to any dharma.”

“The confused person is attached to the marks of dharmas, while holding to the Single Conduct Samadhi and saying, ‘I sit unmoving and falseness does not arise in my mind. That is the Single Conduct Samadhi.’ Such an interpretation serves to make him insensate and obstructs the causes and conditions for attaining the Way.”

“Good Knowing Advisors, the Way must penetrate and flow. How can it be impeded? If the mind does not dwell in dharmas, the Way will penetrate and flow. The mind that dwells in dharmas is in self-bondage. To say that sitting unmoving is correct is to be like Shariputra who sat quietly in the forest but was scolded by Vimalakīrti.”

“Good Knowing Advisors, there are those who teach people to sit looking at the mind and contemplating stillness, without moving or arising. They claim that it has merit. Confused men, not understanding, easily become attached and go insane. There are many such people. Therefore you should know that teaching of this kind is a great error.”

B. The practice to cultivate the straight mind and attain the Way

The Master instructed the assembly: “Good Knowing Advisors, the right teaching is basically without a division into ‘sudden’ and ‘gradual.’ People’s natures themselves are sharp or dull. When the confused person who gradually cultivates and the enlightened person who suddenly connects each recognize the original mind and see the original nature, they are no different.

“Therefore, the terms sudden and gradual are shown to be false names.

“Good Knowing Advisors, this Dharma-door of mine, from the past onwards, has been established from the first with no-thought as its doctrine, no-mark as its substance, and no-dwelling as its basis. No-mark means to be apart from marks while in the midst of marks. No-thought means to be without thought while in the midst of thought. No-dwelling is the basic nature of human beings.

“In the world of good and evil, attractiveness and ugliness, friendliness and hostility, when faced with language which is offensive, critical, or argumentative, you should treat it all as empty and have no thought of revenge. In every thought, do not think of former states. If past, present, and future thoughts succeed one another without interruption, it is bondage. Not to dwell in dharmas from thought to thought is to be free from bondage. That is to take no-dwelling as the basis.

“Good Knowing Advisors, to be separate from all outward marks is called ‘no-mark.’ The ability to be separate from marks is the purity of the Dharma’s substance. It is to take no-mark as the substance.

“Good Knowing Advisors, the non-defilement of the mind in all states is called ‘no-thought.’ In your thoughts you should always be separate from states; do not give rise to thought about them.”

“If you merely do not think of the hundred things, and so completely rid yourself of thought, then as the last thought ceases, you die and undergo rebirth in another place. That is a great mistake, of which students of the Way should take heed.

“To misinterpret the Dharma and make a mistake yourself might be acceptable, but to exhort others to do the same is unacceptable. In your own confusion you do not see, and, moreover you slander the Buddha’s Sutras. Therefore no-thought is established as the doctrine.

“Good Knowing Advisors, why is no-thought established as the doctrine? Because there are confused people who speak of seeing their own nature, and yet they produce thought with

regard to states. Their thoughts cause deviant views to arise, and from that all defilement and false thinking are created. Originally, not one single dharma can be obtained in the self-nature. If there is something to attain, or false talk of misfortune and blessing, that is just defilement and deviant views. Therefore, this Dharma-door establishes no-thought as its doctrine.

“Good Knowing Advisors, ‘No’ means no what? ‘Thought’ means thought of what? ‘No’ means no two marks, no thought of defilement. ‘Thought’ means thought of the original nature of True Suchness. True Suchness is the substance of thought and thought is the function of True Suchness.

“The True Suchness self-nature gives rise to thought. It is not the eye, ear, nose, or tongue which can think. The True Suchness possesses a nature and therefore gives rise to thought. Without True Suchness, the eye, ear, forms, and sounds immediately go bad.

“Good Knowing Advisors, the True Suchness self-nature gives rise to thought, and the six faculties, although they see, hear, feel, and know, are not defiled by the ten thousand states. Your true nature is eternally independent. Therefore, the *Vimalakirti Sutra* says, ‘If one is well able to discriminate all dharma marks, then, in the primary meaning, one does not move.’”³⁹

3.1.2 The Highlight of Master Sheng Yen on *Platform Sūtra* 〈Concentration and Wisdom〉

A. Training of the Mind in *Platform sūtra*

The dharma door of *Platform sūtra* is also called the “dharma door of no-thought” (C. 無念法門). The practice advocated by the sutra is called the practice of no-thought. There are many similar terms connected with the concept of no-thought. We may mention, for instance, the following: “non-abiding, no-going and no-coming”, “no-thought, no-remembrance and no-attachment”, “no-mark”, “no-thought is the principle, no-mark is the essence, and non-abiding is the basis”, “confession of no-mark”, and “the precept of taking three refuges who have no mark.”⁴⁰

The term “no-thought” first appears in *Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*. But whether *Platform sūtra* was influenced by the former, we have no way of knowing. In the *Diamond*

³⁹ *The Sixth Patriarch’s Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra*, English translation by the Buddhist Text Translation Society, Burlingame, California, 2001.

⁴⁰ Master Sheng-yen ; translated by Yu Chun-fang “The Platform Saatra of the Sixth Patriarch” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* no.5, July 1992, Chung-Hwa Insitute of Buddhist Studies, pp. 319-340.

sūtra, there is also a trace of this idea when it says, “The past mind cannot be obtained, the present mind cannot be obtained, and the future mind cannot be obtained.” The reason why *Platform sūtra* does not use “no-mind”, but uses “no-thought” is perhaps because it does not want to confuse the tainted mind with the pure mind. The self-mind mentioned in *Platform sūtra* is always the pure mind. “No-thought” refers to the state when in every moment of thought, be it prior thought, present thought, and later thought, not one thought is tainted by ignorance, arrogance, jealousy and other undesirable mental activities; moreover, it also means that in every moment of thought, be it prior thought, present thought, later thought, not one thought is bound by the environment facing one. Therefore, it declares, “No-thought is when the mind is not tainted nor attached to anything.”⁴¹

“Non-abiding, no-going and no-coming” is used to explain “*Maha Praj-ñāpāramitā* (*Great Perfection of Wisdom*)”. It points to the fact that one can transcend all vexations with the aid of great wisdom. Thus *Platform sūtra* speaks about “smashing the vexations of five aggregates”. We cannot say that it is originally non-existent but now comes to exist. We cannot say that it has always stayed there and has never departed. We can neither say that it is nor it is not. In fact, we cannot use any language to describe it. Similarly, when we make use of this great wisdom, it can enable our mind not to become fixated on any one thought, nor become attracted by any one thought. “Non-abiding” refers to the present, “no-going” refers to the past, and “no-coming” refers to the future. What it says is that in every single thought, there is not the idea of “I”. This in fact has the same meaning as “no-self”. “No-remembrance and no-attachment” teaches the idea that “remembrance” and “attachment” lead to either appropriating or forsaking thoughts and things of past, present, and future. This leads to vexations. That is why *Platform sūtra* says, “Observe all dharmas with wisdom, do not appropriate or forsake anything. This is seeing your nature and becoming Buddha.”⁴²

“No-mark” also comes from Diamond sutra. Earlier in this essay I quote the sentence from Diamond sutra, “All phenomena are illusory.” The *Diamond sūtra* also says, “There is no mark of self, other, sentient beings, or the aged. Therefore, *Sāriputra*, a bodhisattva should separate himself from all marks.” The three injunctions of “no mark of self, other, sentient beings” refer to a sentient being's own self and the environment in which he lives. The “ mark

⁴¹ Ibid 40.

⁴² Ibid 40.

of the aged “, on the other hand, refers to the phenomenon of temporal activities of sentient beings. The four “marks” together include all spatial and temporal relationships and phenomena of sentient beings. That is why they are called all marks. Only when we depart from all marks can we discover the supreme mind of True Suchness. For this reason, Platform sūtra asks us to obtain wisdom with “no-thought”, and to personally experience Buddha nature with “no-mark”. Thus, “no-mark” means to depart from the mark of opposition between the inner and the outer, or the mark of opposition between essence and function.⁴³

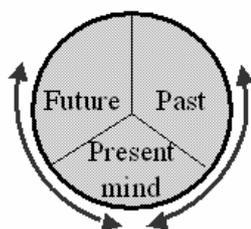
B. Straight-forward Ming in *Platform sūtra*

The Platform sūtra uses “straight-forward mind” (直心) and “pure mind” (清淨心) to explain wisdom. It regards wisdom as the function of Buddha nature and pure mind, while taking the unmoving self-nature as “samādhi”. Therefore, “samādhi” and “wisdom” have a comparable relationship as that between the lamp and its light. If there is no light, it is not a lamp. But if it is a lamp, it must have light. The two are non-dual. The mind of the “straight-forward mind” is no other than the mind of purity. The reason why a person has the mind of purity is because he/she has already seen the Buddha nature through wisdom. The essence and function are non-dual. If a person acts with the straight-forward mind, it must be the pure mind, and in doing so, he/she will definitely see the Buddha nature. For this reason, the Sixth Patriarch advises people not become attached to all dharmas external to the mind. Only when one departs from vexations will one attain enlightenment.⁴⁴

3.2 Practice Taught by Master Sheng Yen

3.2.1 Method Taught by Master Sheng Yen on Regulating the Mind

A. Calming (止)

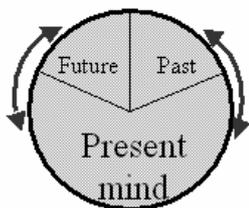


Regulating the mind from scatterness to concentration by feeling the breath, just observe your breath going in and out. Keep your attention at the tip of your nose. Do not try to control the tempo or depth of your breathing: just watch and follow it naturally. When

⁴³ Ibid 40.

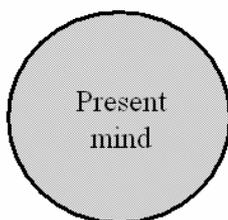
⁴⁴ Ibid 40.

you become aware that you have been interrupted by thoughts, just return to the method.



Again, ignore wandering thoughts. Then, your mind will become more peaceful and harmonious. If, without any conscious effort, your breathing naturally descends to your lower abdomen, allow your attention to follow your breathing there.

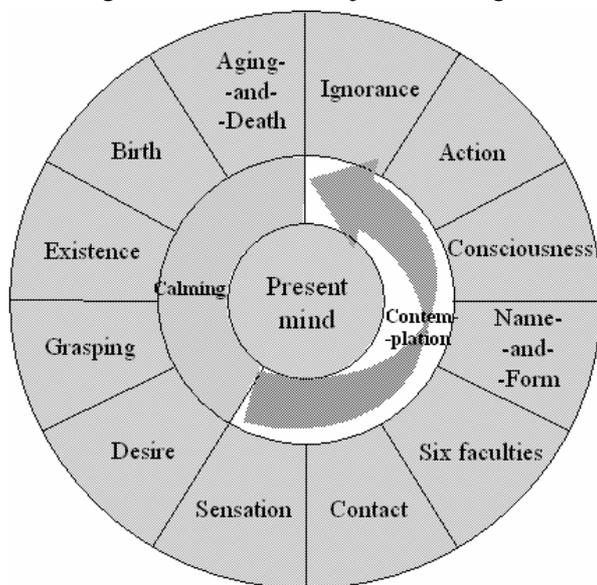
B. Contemplation (觀)



Advance the concentration mind by contemplation. Just be aware of our mind fixed on the method. Do not feel upset as the wandering thoughts stop your awareness. It is nature to be interrupted. And, do not try to stop the wandering thoughts appearing. Just back to the method and be aware of the sensation of breathing.

C. Calming and Contemplation (止觀)

Regulate the mind to simple mind by calming and contemplation. The only one key point of the practice of calming and contemplation is not to think too much. We practice calming by focusing our mind on one object. Calming is the mind from the stage of scattered mind to the



stage of simple mind. When the practitioner continually practice calming, he will enter the stage of one mind or unified mind. There are three stages of one mind, such as the unification of body and mind, the unification of inner and outer, and the unification of thoughts.

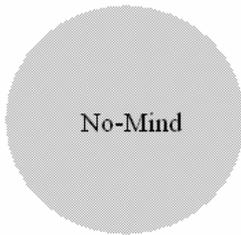
While the practitioner entering the stage of unified thoughts, the sensation of time and space will disappear. Then, it's in the stage so-called samadhi or

concentration. In Chan Buddhism, whether entering concentration or not is not emphasized. The most important thing is the cultivation of wisdom through the practice of contemplation, because wisdom will lead the practitioners to liberation.

D. Direct Contemplation (直觀)

The practice of direct contemplation is not to label, not to describe, and not to compare while encountering things. Just be aware of the object, including both the sound and sight from internal and external environments.

E. Contemplation of the Middle Path (中觀)



The contemplation of the middle path is based on the teaching of *Diamond Sūtra*, which says: “The past mind cannot be obtained, the future mind cannot be obtained, and the present mind cannot be obtained.”⁴⁵ So, when we practice this contemplation method, we let go of the notion of self-existence.

The notion of self-existence comes from the sensation of suffering, pleasure, worry, bliss, and neutral sensation. The sensation of neutral means the sensation of neither pleasure nor suffering. After practicing the contemplation of the middle Path without any interruption, the mind will become non-abiding on the past, the future, and the present. The principle of this contemplation is neither to abide at both extremities, nor in the middle. The mind will correspond to the nature of emptiness eventually if engaging in this practice.

The chart, shown as below, represents the progress of the practice in the “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” Retreat. On the fifth day of the retreat, Master Sheng Yen provides the additional methods to the practitioners to deepen their contemplation. One is Silence Illumination and the other is Huatou. Of course, it’s not absolutely necessary to move on to these two methods. Whichever method is useful for the practitioners depends on their own selves.

⁴⁵ 《金剛般若波羅蜜經》卷 1, T08, no. 235, p. 751, b27-28: 「須菩提！過去心不可得，現在心不可得，未來心不可得。」

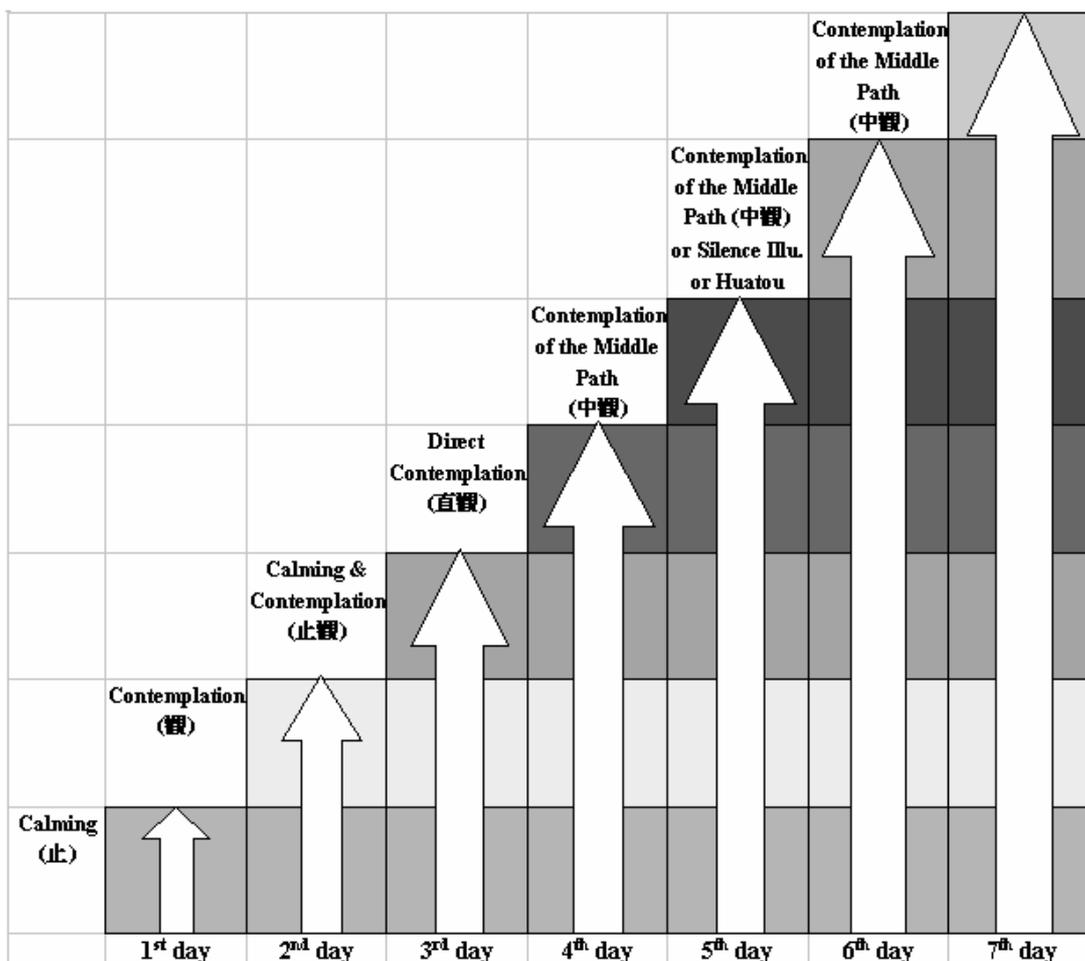


Chart 1. Different Methods from Calming to Contemplation of the Middle Path

3.2.2 Methods Taught by Master Sheng Yen on Regulating the Body

A. Regulate the Body by Sitting and Moving meditation

To regulate the body by sitting, one should take heed of the Seven-Points of Sitting posture. This refers to the seven rules of correct sitting posture. Each of these criteria has been used without change since ancient time.⁴⁶ Regulating the body by walking includes slow walking, fast walking, standing yoga, sitting yoga, and eight-form moving meditation.

⁴⁶ Master Sheng-yen, "TSO-CH'AN", Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal, No. 02, Taipei, 1988, pp. 359-387.

A.1: Regulating the Body with Seven-points of Sitting Posture

a. The Legs

Basically, there are three kinds of posture to do Chan sitting. These are full-lotus posture, half-lotus posture and Japanese style kneeling. Among these, the full-lotus posture is the most formal. If it is not physically possible for you to do this, you should do Half-lotus posture. If both styles are too difficult, you may choose to do Japanese style kneeling. Some people may sit in a chair till they become comfortable to sit on the floor.⁴⁷

When sitting, sit on a thick mat. To keep the legs from touching the ground directly and becoming painful, the Chan Hall provides the soft mat showed in picture.1. We cannot continue our practice if our mind is full of pain. Having to endure painful legs is not Chan practice. Please feel free to use a thick mat. Place a Putwan (a round stuffed cushion about 40 cm wide and 15 cm high) on top of the mat and sit with it under your hips.

a.1. Full-lotus posture



Sit with the right foot on the left thigh and then left foot on the right thigh. To have the right foot on the top and the left below is also acceptable.⁴⁸

a.2. Half-lotus posture



Sit with the left leg on the right thigh, or the right leg on the left thigh. The other way around is also acceptable.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Ibid 40.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

a.3. Japanese Style Kneeling



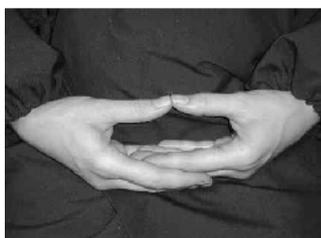
Sit with the cushion under your hips in a kneeling position. The two big toes should be crossed behind you with a space of about two fists between the knees. If this becomes painful, place the cushion between the legs and sit on it like a horse.⁵⁰

b. The Spine



The spine must be upright. This does not mean to thrust your chest forward, but rather to make sure that your lower back is erect, not slumped. The chin must be tucked in a little bit. Both of these points together help you naturally maintain a very upright spine. An upright spine also means a vertical spine, leaning neither forward nor backward, right or left.⁵¹

c. The Hands



The hands form a so-called Dharma Realm Samadhi Mudra (法界定印). The open right palm is underneath, and the open left palm rests on the right palm. The thumbs lightly touch to form a closed circle or oval. The hands are placed in front of the abdomen, and rest on the legs.⁵²

d. The Shoulders

Relax shoulders and arms hanging loosely. There should be no sensation of your shoulders, arms or hands. If you have any sensation of these parts, there is probably tension in those areas.⁵³

⁵⁰ Internet resource from: <http://homepage3.nifty.com/toshoji/zen00.htm> (2008/6/14)

⁵¹ Ibid 40.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

e. The Tongue

The tip of the tongue should be lightly touching the roof of the mouth just behind the front teeth. If you have too much saliva, you can let go of this connection. If you have no saliva at all, you can apply greater pressure with the tip of the tongue.⁵⁴

f. The Mouth

The mouth must always be closed. At all times, breath through the nose, not through the mouth. Keep noble silence during the retreat.⁵⁵

g. The Eyes



The eyes should be slightly open and gazing downward at a forty-five degree angle. Rest the eyes in that direction, trying not to stare at anything. Closing the eyes may cause drowsiness, or visual illusions. However, if your eyes feel very tired you can close them for a short while.⁵⁶

A.2: Regulate by Moving meditation

a. Slow Walking meditation

In slow walking, the upper body should be in the same posture as in sitting, the difference being in the position of the hands. The left palm should lightly enclose the right hand, which forms a loosely fist. The hands should be held in front of, but not touching, the abdomen. The forearms should be parallel to the ground. The attention should be in bottom of the feet as you walk very slowly, the steps being short, about the length of one's foot. If walking in an enclosed space, walk in a clockwise direction.⁵⁷

b. Fast Walking meditation

It is “Fast Walking” which is done by walking rapidly without actually running or jogging. The main difference in posture from slow walking is that the arms are now dropped to the sides, swinging forwards and backwards, as in natural walking. Take short and fast

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid 40.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

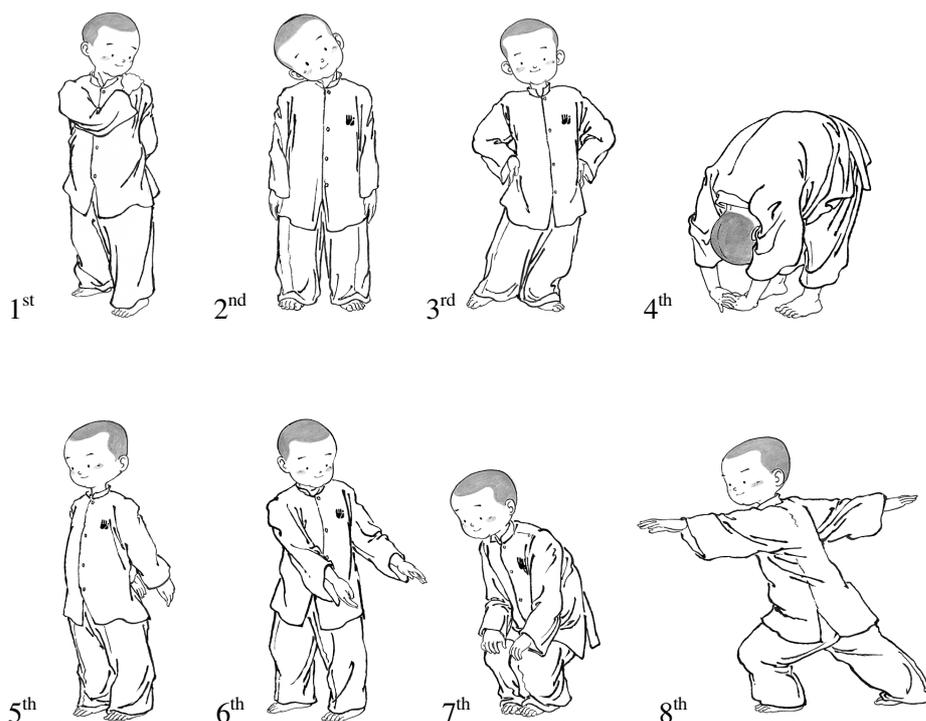
⁵⁷ Ibid.

steps, keeping the attention on the body movement with nothing.⁵⁸

c. The Dharma Drum's Eight-form Moving meditation

The Dharma Drum's Eight-form moving meditation is: 1st Waist rotation with swinging arms, 2nd Neck Exercise, 3rd Hip rotation, 4th Back stretching and bending, 5th Swing and bend, 6th Upper body rotations, 7th Knee exercise, and 8th Stretching sideways.

The Dharma Drum's Eight-Form Moving Meditation was developed by Master Sheng Yen of Dharma Drum Mountain as a means of allowing people living stressful and busy lifestyles to enjoy some of the benefits of Chan meditation. This system, based on many years of practice and personal experience, has incorporated the essence of Chan meditation into a series of simple physical exercises. In addition to physical exercise, practice of the Eight Forms helps you relax your body and mind, so that you can develop a healthy body and a balanced mind.⁵⁹



⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Internet resource from: <http://ddmba.org/pages/practice/eight-form-meditation.php> (2008/6/14)

Sitting and walking are the two basic methods of regulating your body. There is a supplementary aspect that is to exercise for a short period after sitting, even if you only do one sitting per day. The form of exercise is a matter of individual choice, but it should be moderate, such as The Dharma Drum's Eight-form Moving meditation.

3.3 The Summary

The chapter of “Concentration and Wisdom” is a very important chapter of Master Huineng’s *Platform Sūtra*, and which describes the interaction of concentration and wisdom, and also deals with the approach one should take to practice, Master Sheng Yen highlighted the principle of “no-thought, no-abiding, and no-mark” and emphasized the method of the practice of “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” as not going beyond mind and body—that there is nothing other than mind or body that can be used as tools for practice. Apparently, with the commentary and the training of body-and-mind taught by Master Sheng Yen in the retreat, it gives any practitioners a well-developed system to cultivate the Buddha Nature.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Summary

4.1.1 “Tathāgatagarbha” is not other than “Śūnyatā”.

The function of Chan practice is to develop wisdom through contemplation and to attain enlightenment (Seeing the Buddha Nature and being enlightened). The so-called “Seeing Buddha Nature” (C.: *chien hshin* 見性) means that one realize one’s self-essence is not different from the Buddha; and “being enlightened” (C.: *kaiwu* 開悟) refers to the attainment of a pure mind without vexations. In Chan view, Tathāgatagarbha (Buddha Nature) is regarded as the goal. Through Chan practice, everyone can achieve the stage of “Seeing into Buddha Nature and being enlightened.” Furthermore, one can achieve the Buddhahood through the continuous practice of Chan while benefiting others.

4.1.2 The teaching of “Tathāgatagarbha” is the way for both the *śravakas* and *bodhisattvas*.

Thus, it is better to use “śamatha vipāśyanā” practice to realize “true emptiness” (C.: *zhēnkōng* 真空). Through developing wisdom from the realization, the practitioners can

manifest “profound existence” (C.: miaoyou 妙有) to others.⁶⁰ This is the most powerful reason why the Bhdhisattva practitioners can realize the embodiment of Tathāgatagarbha (Buddha nature) in the “śamatha vipaśyanā” retreat.

4.1.3 The “Śamatha Vipāśyanā” Retreat of DDLOCB provides guidance for practitioners to realize the embodiment of the “Tathāgatagarbha”.

No matter how the idea of Buddha-nature is polished, the problem of affliction does not go away. Practitioners require a thorough revolution in the mental habits through which we conduct our daily lives. To embody the teaching of Tathāgatagarbha, the transformation of oneself takes direction, commitment, persistence, and training of a lifetime. Of course, the structure of regiment is the last but not the least. This is the goal of Chan path, and Dharma Drum Lineage of Chan Buddhism is capable of presenting it.

4.2 Challenges of the Research

4.2.1 Study training

The course design lacks case study and research paper for students in Sangha University. So, it is very difficult to proceed this kind of study and research.

4.2.2 Translation materials

English is not the author’s mother language. It took the author much of the time on reading and translating doctrines.

4.3 Recommendations for Future Research

4.3.1 Focus on one topic: Chan-related topics, Doctrine, or Discipline

This study focused on three major issues on “Tathāgatagarbha”, “Śamatha Vipāśyanā”, and the Dharma Drum Lineage of Chan Buddhism. Since each issue is very popular in nowadays, future research could be further divided into different aspects, such as traditional or contemporary.

⁶⁰ 《仁王護國般若經疏》卷3〈2觀空品〉T33, no. 1705, p. 265, c18-21：「問真空妙有云何。答動即寂真空也。寂即動妙有也。真空故非常。妙有故非斷。真空不住生死。妙有不住涅槃。妙有故能起大悲。真空故能生大慈。」

4.3.2 Similar topics could be undertaken in Agama

This research used the Tripitakas of both the Mahayana and Theravada for reference. In the future, the Agama sutra can be included as reference for further study.

(This paper was first presented at “Dharma Drum Sangha University Graduation Project Graduation for academic year 2007/2008” in Jinshan, June 18, 2008.)