

# 聖嚴法師與漢傳佛教

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在國際，聖嚴法師是著名的禪師；在國內，聖嚴法師是教育家—中華佛學研究所和《中華佛學學報》的創辦人、法鼓山的開山祖師。在〈法鼓山的願景〉，他提出「三大教育」有同時推廣的必要，那就是：（一）大學院教育：繼中華佛學研究所的成立，接著是僧伽大學、法鼓佛教學院和即將招生的法鼓大學，這都代表法師以佛法辦大學院教育的理念。（二）大普化教育：通過禪坐、念佛等修持，以及各種弘化活動，用以培養佈教師的教育和設施，並有計畫培養在家居士成為弘揚佛教的專職人才，分別擔任禪坐等修持的帶動，佛法的傳播。（三）大關懷教育：這可能是一般社會人士最熟悉的一環，法師以「心」五四、心靈環保、心淨土淨為核心，通過不同媒體使佛法具體落實在日常生活中。從勸戒酗酒、煙毒、嫖賭、嚼檳榔，到臨終助念關懷，亡靈安頓設施，清潔日的活動，貧病的救濟，醫院療養支援等等，都是在提昇人的品質，建設人間淨土的大關懷教育的範圍以內。

禪師和教育家代表法師一生志業的兩面，國內外學者都有詳盡的分析和介紹，我在本文則想討論法師的漢傳佛教的研究及貢獻。我首次跟法師見面是1976年在紐約的大覺寺。當時我在新澤西州立羅格斯大學任教，先是帶領學生到大覺寺參訪，然後我參加法師在美國首次指導的坐禪班，每週六講經、開示、坐禪、小參，為期三個月結束，我就在那時皈依，成為法



師在美國最早的弟子之一。其實早在這以前，我已經知道法師是研究明末佛教的學者。法師研究明末四大師之一的藕益智旭（1599-1655）的博士論文也就是後來在1975年出版的《明末中國佛教の研究》，在七十年代是極少數的宋代以降漢傳佛教的學術研究。記得當我發現法師的著作時，感到既驚喜又惋惜。驚喜的是像智旭這麼重要的大師終於受到學術界的重視。惋惜的是在六十年代我做有關另一明末大師雲棲株宏（1535-1615）的博士論文時，無法受益於法師的著作。

漢傳佛教在美國的研究起步較晚，因為歐洲（法國、俄國、英國、德國）佛學家主要研究的是梵文和巴利文系的印度佛教及南傳佛教。十九及二十世紀前半的

美國學者也是一樣。二次大戰以後，日本禪宗在六十年代風靡一時，附帶地也推進日本佛教的研究興趣。隨著達賴喇嘛的聲望和藏傳佛教中心在美國各大城市的建立，藏傳佛教在美國的大學院校也逐漸吸引年輕學生和學者。相對之下，漢傳佛教在六十年代是冷門。我想最重要的原因是佛學不被漢學家視為中國文化的主流。他們研究及教學的重點放在儒家思想，我在哥大讀書時，狄白瑞教授全力推動儒家思想的研究，哈佛、普林斯頓、史丹佛、柏克萊等其他著名大學也是一樣。哥大那時有兩位佛學教授，不過他們都是研究日本佛教的。站在日本佛教的角度看漢傳佛教會造成兩個錯覺，一個是以日本佛教教派界限分明的標準來衡量漢傳佛教，我們知道在日本，禪和淨土是完全隔離的傳統，不但如此，淨土宗和淨土真宗也有它自我的認知，這跟漢傳佛教的「禪淨合一」和「禪教合一」自然是非常的不同。也就是因為這個原因，在我博士論文的答辯時，倍受教日本佛教的教授多方質疑。雲棲祿宏以提倡禪淨合一聞名，常用「念佛是誰」做為公案，同時也教人「老實念佛，往生淨土」。早在他以前，從五代以降，宋、元、明初都有高僧提出同樣的看法。但日本的白隱慧鶴（1686-1769）曾批評過祿宏，說禪淨合一不異於將沙石混入黃金，或將水滲入醍醐。他對祿宏「敗壞」禪門深表惋惜，也視此為明末佛教式微的象徵。因為在我參加答辯時的教授之一正在翻譯白隱慧鶴的著作，他乃以後者的眼光懷疑祿宏的「禪淨雙修」是他個人的錯誤看法，而不知道這乃是五代以後的新發展，祿宏不過是集大成的倡導者而已。

這個例子可以代表當時美國佛教學者借重日本佛教的歷史反觀漢傳佛教的通病。可幸的是，在以後的數十年，西方學者已逐漸有一共識，那就是我們不應該以日本佛教發展的歷史來了解漢傳佛教，雖

然東亞佛教最早都發源於中國，但是一旦傳入日本和韓國，在跟當地的宗教文化的互動之下，發展出有其特性的日本和韓國佛教。這乃是一很自然的現象。正如印度及中亞佛教傳到中國以後，漢傳佛教乃是佛教與中國的本土宗教文化互相衝擊和影響的結果。所以用日本佛教強調不同宗派的角度來研究中國佛教強調圓融的傳統是很不恰當的。過份依賴日本佛教的經驗來研究漢傳佛教有另一個效果。因為日本的宗派除了日蓮宗和淨土真宗都溯源漢傳佛教，又因為以上所述，日本佛教學者多半強調研究某一宗，當他們把注意力轉到中國佛教時，他們的興趣自然放在日本某一宗的中國祖承。因此，我們可以看到不少日本學者研究中國的天台宗、華嚴宗、禪宗、淨土宗等等的著作。但是因為這些重要的宗派都成立於隋唐，主要的經疏和有名的大師都集中於隋唐，至少一直到六十、七十年代為止。美國的學者公認唐朝是漢傳佛教的「黃金時代」，以後就逐漸式微，因此也就沒有研究的價值。陳觀勝教授著於1964年的《中國佛教史》（*Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*）可作為代表。這本書一直到現在仍然廣泛地被採用為教材，持續它權威性的影響。當然在這四十多年來，這個傳統的認知已受到相當有力的挑戰。我的論文一即在1981年出版的書《中國佛教的復興—祿宏與晚明的融和》（*The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Later Ming Synthesis*）——曾扮演了一些先導的作用。先是宋，然後元、明，近十年則是清、民國以及當代的台灣佛教，都逐漸受到學者的注意。

以上是我根據自己這四十多年在美國研究及教學的經驗，對美國學界的漢傳佛教研究的歷史做一簡報。它以後的發展和方向仍然充滿了可能性及未知數。在這個關鍵，我認為法師一生研究漢傳佛教的方

法及他研究的課題可以做為我們的指南。

綜觀聖嚴法師一生的著作，漢傳佛教主要的經典及宗派都是他研究的對象。在他早期美濃閉關時期，他讀藏經，1965年出版的《戒律學綱要》是他最早的學術著作。在自序中他解釋著書的動機：

戒律是一門枯燥而又繁瑣的學問，以致近世以來，成了佛教的冷門，縱然有人研究，也多不脫古氣，多是照著古調再彈，致令一般的人，不得其門而入，甚至妄加批評。因此，我要試用淺顯的文字，將戒律的內容，配上若干時代的觀念，以比較通俗的姿態，來跟大家見面。我是試著做復活戒律的工作，而不是食古不化的說教。<sup>1</sup>

戒、定、慧是佛教的三學。法師強調研究戒律的必要，是很有道理的。此書對皈依三寶、五戒十善、八關戒齋、沙彌十戒、式叉六法，比丘比丘尼戒及菩薩戒都做了詳盡而易解的討論。在說明五戒之首的殺生戒時，法師有以下的一段解釋，這正是他用淺顯的文字配合現代的觀念告訴一般社會信眾應該以何持戒：

於我們的日常生活中，殺非人是很少見聞的，殺人總不是尋常事，若非屠夫，也不會天天殺豬宰羊，我們最易犯的殺生戒，乃是對於蟲蟻之類的傍生動物。

有人寫信問我：住宅內如有蟲蟻，應當如何處置，打掃時，必定會傷殺一些，那樣的傷殺，算不算是破了殺生戒？或者命僕役打掃，僕役於打掃時，傷殺了蟲蟻，是否會構成教他殺生的重責？或者歸咎於蟲蟻的業報所致？這實在是個大問題，為了維護人類自身的資生財物，不得不驅除蟲蟻侵蝕，為了護持戒體的清淨，又不得故意殺傷蟲蟻。不過，有損於人的蟲蟻，是必須驅除的，驅除之時，則不得存有傷殺之心，應該小心為之，如已盡到護生的最

大可能，仍有誤殺誤傷之者，應該自責於心，生悔意，發悲願，願其投生善類，願其終將成佛，庶可免以殺生之罪。這在律中是有根據的。《十誦律》卷11，記載佛陀親自為僧伽的床褥除蟲（《大正藏》23·77頁下）《十誦律》卷37，因為浴室之中，濕熱生蟲，佛說：「應蕩除令淨。」（《大正藏》23·270頁下）但是，最要緊的工作，乃在於不使住宅之中生起蟲蟻，經常保持乾燥清潔，破損了的，立即修補，牆腳壁孔，要填平塞滿，容易生蟲的所在，在尚未生蟲之先，予以消毒，防止生蟲；如在生蟲之後，為了持戒，便應小心驅除而不得使用藥物來殲滅。否則的話，殺一蟲，得一下可悔罪，殺千萬蟲，即得千萬下可悔罪！但要求得殺戒的絕對清淨者，要到小乘初果以上哩！所謂「初果耕地，蟲離四寸」。凡夫是辦不到的！

由於戒的持犯，全在於心，故對殺蟲的罪責，分別六句：有蟲有蟲想，根本小可悔罪；有蟲有蟲疑，亦犯根本小可悔罪；無蟲有蟲想，方便小可悔罪；無蟲有蟲疑，亦犯方便小可悔罪；有蟲無蟲想，無犯；無蟲無蟲想，無犯。另外，不得打人，不得打畜生乃至蟲蟻，瞋心打者皆得罪。在此，讀者可能尚有一個疑問：即是守持殺戒，是否必須素食？依照五戒乃至比丘戒的律制，並無素食的要求。

不食魚肉，乃是大乘菩薩戒的規定，持五戒的不殺生，不得親自殺生，不得勸他或教他殺生，故自不得屠殺雞鴨魚蝦，如果買食已屠好的肉類，不在五戒的禁忌之列。當然，如能發心素食，那是更好了。素食是漢文系的大乘佛教的美德，素食乃是戒殺精神進一步的具體表現，故希望受了五戒的人，最好能夠茹素，否則自亦無妨。<sup>2</sup>

以上的幾段，充分顯示法師如何根據

戒律的精神教導現代社會人士在日常生活中活用五戒的善巧方便。

在《戒律學綱要》書中，法師對另一個相當敏感的課題有他公正的看法。近十幾年，國內外的學者以及教內教外的有心人，對「八敬法」應否保持提出不同的意見。漢傳佛教奉為旨歸的《四分律》稱八敬法為八不可過法，或八不可違法，也就是說這是比丘尼不得不持和不能不持的。八敬法受現代人所批評因為它代表佛教的男女不平等，比丘僧團以父權主義的強勢高壓比丘尼僧團。但是到底八敬法真正在印度或中國完全實行了嗎？這個歷史問題並沒有人能回答。正如法師所說：

實際上，今日的中國比丘尼，縱然是最有道心的人，也只能受持八敬法中的兩、三條而已，其餘都是有關羯磨法或作持法的問題，根本無法如律而行了。因為八敬法在中國佛教史上，迄今尚無法找到其曾經如律實行過的確實根據！

式叉摩尼<sup>3</sup>，中國似乎從未有過；半月往比丘僧中乞教授，在唐代的南山道宣律師便說：「比世中，多有行前略法，良由廣德難具。」（《大正藏》40·153頁上）尼乞比丘教授，有廣略兩種方法，廣法是受尼僧請了之後，比丘僧中須差有德上座往尼僧寺中教誡；略法是尼僧遣人來請，比丘僧中但說：「此眾中無有教誡尼者，但自謹慎莫放逸。」如此一說，尼答：「依教奉行。」就算行了略法。唐代既然未行廣法，到了宋代的靈芝元照律師則說：「今時廣略俱廢，止可聞知，用為來習耳。」至於比丘尼應在比丘及比丘尼的二部僧中出僧殘罪，因為中國的比丘尼受具戒，一向都是直接從比丘一部僧中求，二部僧中出殘罪，當也更是見不到了。<sup>4</sup>

在《聖嚴法師學思歷程》中，法師說《戒律學綱要》是他在高雄美濃閉關時研究戒律的心得。他說從1961年到1964年，

把當時能夠蒐集到有關戒律學的著作全部讀過，重要的律書，往往讀了兩遍到三遍。在〈自序〉中他說：「從大體上說，本書有受蕩益及弘一兩位大師的很多影響，但並沒有全走他們的路線，乃至也沒有完全站在南山宗的立場。」<sup>5</sup>

弘一是近代有名的律師，法師對他的律學思想，有如下的看法：「自古高德立言，往往都是述而不作，這是表示對於立言態度的謹嚴，也是對於聖教的尊重，所以弘一大師的著述中，每以整理為主，說明為輔，而未達到弘揚介紹的目的……在萬不得已時，才略添自己的意見，予以說明。」<sup>6</sup>

《戒律學綱要》的第七篇的標題是〈三世諸佛的搖籃—菩薩戒綱要〉，長達九十七頁，占全書的三分之一。三十年後，法師又有《菩薩戒指要》一書，收集了1990年及1992年，在兩屆以「佛教倫理」及「傳統戒律」為主題的「中華國際佛學會議」上發表的論文，以及在東初禪寺和農禪寺辦菩薩戒傳戒會的機緣，為了鼓勵人們來受菩薩戒而寫的文章。這三十多年，法師對菩薩戒的重視是一樣的。1962年，他在《佛教文化與文學》中寫著：「《瓔珞經》中說，有戒可犯是菩薩，無戒可犯是外道；所以有戒而犯者，勝過無戒而不犯；受了菩薩戒，發了菩提心的人，即使犯了戒，犯戒的罪業雖重，並要遭報，但其必將由於他曾受過菩薩戒，而可決定得度成為真實的菩薩，乃至證得無上的佛果……故我希望在家弟子們，均能發最上心，求受菩薩戒。」<sup>7</sup>

三十二年後，寫於1995年《菩薩戒指要》的〈自序〉，法師又重新強調菩薩戒是最適合作為現代佛教信眾的生活規範。他首先說明他多年研究戒律的動機及心得：

古人弘揚戒律，多半是講說戒律、註解戒

律，我則是消化相關於戒律的龐大文獻，提出問題、理清問題。

我從事大小乘戒律的研探著作，已歷三十多年，目的是在通俗、簡易、實用。既不落於古人的陳軌，也不脫離古人的芳範；既希望使得讀者易看易懂，也要保留提供原始資料的根據。也就是說，我是做的溫故知新及推陳出新的工作，便利今人，古為今用。在普及推廣的原則下，仍不失其有學術基礎的內涵。

自從我深入律藏以及古人的戒律註疏以來，知道以今日的時代環境，墨守完成於二千五百多年前印度境內的戒律條文，根本是不可能的事。但是，若無佛制的戒律，作為佛教徒的生活準則，清淨身口意三業的目的，也就很難達成。因此，我是注重佛陀制定戒律的精神，不主張死守其全部的戒律條文。<sup>8</sup>

菩薩戒特別被聖嚴法師推崇，因為它有「易學易持、可深可淺、適應時空」的特色。他說菩薩戒的心要，「端在於僧俗四眾都能通用的三聚、十善、十無盡戒。以三聚淨戒攝盡一切淨戒、一切善法、一切濟世利物的全體佛法；十善法為一切淨戒的基礎，當然也是菩薩戒的總綱；以《梵網經》的十無盡戒，為盡未來際永恆不渝的菩薩戒準繩。本書弘揚的，便是這種可大可久，遇淺即淺，遇深即深，在凡即凡，在聖即聖，而且一律以清淨三業、發菩提心、修菩薩道，為其根本精神的菩薩戒法。」<sup>9</sup>

在此提到的三聚，聖嚴法師根據《瓔珞經》和《梵網經》，認為第一是指自性戒，或攝律儀戒，即是十波羅夷，也就是《梵網經》的十重戒，所以被稱為十無盡戒，因為持戒功德在於有心，因為心無盡，戒亦無盡。第二指受善法或攝善法戒，第三指利益眾生或攝眾生戒，即「慈

悲喜捨，化及一切眾生，皆得安樂」<sup>10</sup>

《瓔珞經》和《梵網經》在漢傳佛教一直被視為權威的經典，二十世紀日本學者提出這兩部經乃是中國本土的撰作。但是明末弘揚戒律的大師，如祿宏及智旭特別依重《梵網經》。根據聖嚴法師分析，道宣律師（569-667）四分律的系統傳承的時間長，弟子多。因為他是根據大乘唯識思想解釋戒體，所以雖然四分律跟其他漢譯的戒律都是小乘部派的作品，卻特別受到喜愛大乘思想的中國人歡迎。不過到了十六世紀，戒律的傳承在中國幾乎已中斷。<sup>11</sup>但是戒律著述在明末清初的一百五十年之間，有十三位作者留下了二十六種，四十四卷，還不包括二十一種未被收入《卍續藏經》；相對地，從六朝慧思（515-577）開始到明末為止，約一千年間，共有二十九部，四十八卷，二十一位作者。<sup>12</sup>怪不得明末清初被視為戒律思想的復興。法師注意到明末的戒律學者，有兩個共同點：第一是弘揚《梵網經》，第二是重視沙彌戒或在家戒。為什麼《梵網經》特別得到弘揚呢？聖嚴法師做以下分析：

因為當時的佛教思想，在修持上若不是重於淨土，就是重於禪；在教義的研究上若不是學的華嚴，就是學的天臺。而天臺的智顛大師（538-597）為《梵網經》寫有《戒本疏》六卷。並且，《梵網經》的思想，屬於華嚴部，因此不論是華嚴宗或天臺宗的學者，都喜歡弘揚《梵網經》。<sup>13</sup>

智顛顯然不視《梵網經》為中國本土經典，明末的戒律學者也是如此，他們同樣地被該經的大乘菩薩精神感動，因而提倡菩薩戒做為四眾的行為規範。沿至今日，出家僧眾受三壇大戒，菩薩戒是在受沙彌及比丘、比丘尼具足戒之後受戒的圓滿結束。而在家眾也在皈依受五戒後，最理想的是受菩薩戒。如果《梵網經》是中

國本土的經典，那麼它不但代表漢傳佛教的精神，也是具體實現漢傳佛教的儀軌。

戒律學是聖嚴法師一生致力關注的課題，也就因為他在這領域深有所得。社會人士熟知的《正信的佛教》、《學佛知津》、《學佛群疑》等書，正是聖嚴法師用通俗易懂的文字，把戒律的原則推廣到佛教信眾，作為他們生活的準則。

戒定慧三學是有不可分離的密切關係，聖嚴法師在禪的理論，歷史和修持方法有大量的著作。他融合臨濟的話頭和曹洞的默照，建立了中華禪法鼓宗。他的禪法乃是建立在戒律及教理的基礎上，這可能從他在日本留學期間選擇碩士及博士論文的題目上看出。他的碩士論文題目是《大乘止觀法門之研究》，《大乘止觀法門》在中國一向被認為是天台宗初祖南嶽慧思的著作，但是自從十二世紀、十三世紀之間，日本天台學者証真提出質疑，慧思是否曾寫此書一直是一問題。聖嚴法師的論文中，提出對証真看法的反證。不過，他認為論文的重點並不是證明《大乘止觀法門》是不是慧思所作，而是通過分析它的思想基礎和根源，發現該書吸收了如來藏和唯識的重要經論的思想。從此對印度大乘佛教的中觀，唯識和如來藏三大系統有了深入的了解。<sup>14</sup>

碩士論文是研究天台宗的一部重要著作，聖嚴法師的博士論文則是以智旭的生平、著作及思想為中心。智旭被視為天台宗的學者，而聖嚴法師的確對天台宗教觀並重的傳統非常肯定。法師後來在農禪寺講過智旭的《教觀綱宗》，2001年法師用白話譯註該書，題名為《天台心鑰》。在〈自序〉中表示《教觀綱宗》對他的影響很大，他說：「從1967年以來，我在東西方，多以中國的禪法接引並指導廣大的信眾們自利利人，淨化人心、淨化社會，也使我需要假重天台的止觀。」<sup>15</sup>智旭以《教觀綱宗》為書名，根據聖嚴法師的看法，

該書「明處是介紹天台學，骨子裡含有禪宗的思想。因為教是佛語，觀是佛心眾生心，宗既是佛及眾生的現前一念心，凡能依教觀心，便是『綱宗』。教觀即綱宗，綱宗即教觀，是體用不二的一個書名。」<sup>16</sup>這可由智旭的教觀的定義看出，「書中一開頭就開宗明義地說：『佛祖之要，教觀而已，觀非教不正，教非觀不傳。』所謂教觀，便是義理的指導以及禪觀的修證，也就是『從禪出教』與『藉教悟宗』的一體兩面，相互資成。」<sup>17</sup>智旭以推廣教觀，因而以天台學者聞名，聖嚴法師作以下的解釋：

因為佛經的數量龐雜，層次眾多，必須要有一種合理的分類方法。在每一層次的教義經典之中，亦均有其調心、攝心、明心、發慧的實踐方法，那就是所謂觀行。天台教觀，便是教義與觀行並重、理論與實修雙運，兩者互資互用，如鳥之兩翼，如車之雙軌，講得最為細膩，故也最受蕩益大師所服膺。<sup>18</sup>

我認為聖嚴法師也是「教義與觀行並重，理論與實修雙運」，這在他日本留學以前已是如此，他所以選智旭做為博士論文的對象是可以了解的。當然在他深入研究了智旭的著作以後，也很可能在他以後的三十多年的教學及著述受了智旭的影響。

智旭的思想並不局限於天台系統，在聖嚴法師的《明末中國佛教の研究》一書的最後一節〈第五節〉，他對智旭思想做了一個總結，那包括性相禪教的調和，天台與唯識的融通，天台與禪的折衷，儒教和佛教的融和，以及會歸於淨土的禪、教、律及密五個方面。這正代表漢傳佛教異於日本佛教的「禪教合一」、「禪淨合一」、「三教合一」的特色。

智旭的性相禪教各宗的調和，聖嚴法師從《宗論》得到證明：

心性無法不具，無法不造，而所具所造一切諸法，皆悉無性。明此無性之法，一一皆非實我實法者，謂之慈恩宗。明此諸法無性，一一皆能徧具徧造者，謂之法性宗。直指現前妄法妄心，悉皆無性，令見性成佛者，謂之禪宗。是故臨濟痛快直捷，未嘗不精微。曹洞精細嚴密，未嘗不簡切。唯識存依圓，未嘗不破徧計。般若破情執，未嘗不立諦理。護法明真如不受熏，未嘗謂與諸法定異。馬鳴明真如無明互熏，未嘗謂其定一。<sup>19</sup>

智旭認為天台與唯識不但沒有衝突，反而互輔互助：

欲善唯識玄關，須善臺衡（智者的天台及慧思的衡山）宗旨、欲得臺衡心髓，須從唯識入門。……嗚乎，臺衡心法，不明久已。蓋彼不知智者，淨名疏，純引天親釋義故也。疏流高麗，莫釋世疑。而南嶽大乘止觀，亦約八識，辨修証門。正謂捨現前王所，別無所觀之境，所觀即無，能觀安寄。辯境方可修行止觀，是臺衡真正血脈，不同他宗泛論玄微。法爾之法，道不可離。彼拒法相於山外，不知會百川歸大海者，誤也。<sup>20</sup>

同樣地，天台跟禪也是「本無兩致」：

道不在文字，亦不在離文字。執文字為道，講師所以有說食數寶之譏也。執離文字為道，禪士所以有暗證生盲之禍也。達磨大師，以心傳心，必藉楞伽為印，誠恐離經一字，即同魔說。智者大師，九旬談妙，隨處結歸止觀，誠恐依文解義，反成佛冤。少室、天臺本無兩致，後世禪 謗教，教亦謗禪，良可悲矣。予二十三歲，苦志參禪，今輒自稱私淑天臺者，深痛我禪門之病，非臺宗不能救耳。<sup>21</sup>

智旭的儒家思想以佛教教義融合。明成祖永樂年間，曾有「三大全書」的編

纂，那就是《周易大全》、《四書大全》及《性理大全》，智旭針對這三部大全寫了《周易禪解》、《四書蕩益解》及《性學開蒙》，聖嚴法師私淑蕩益大師除了自己一生也以禪教合一，貫融多宗的原則治學及教導佛弟子及社會人士，蕩益大師對儒家思想的包容及認可也是一個重要的原因。

在此，我想介紹聖嚴法師的另一本著作，那就是《華嚴心詮一原人論考釋》，這是可以跟《天台心鑰》比美的著作，因為雖然如後者是《教觀綱宗》的白話譯注，這是宗密（780-841）的《原人論》的白話譯注。但是通過對這二書的弘揚，聖嚴法師明確的表示他個人對漢傳佛教的肯定。宗密同時是禪師及華嚴的五祖，《原人論》不把儒道視為教外，而將其作為佛教的人天善法，然後逐層分析小乘法，大乘的法相宗、中觀學派，「最後攝歸於直顯一乘的佛性如來藏」<sup>22</sup>。聖嚴法師在〈自序〉中說，他多年攜帶《原人論》在他的行囊中，因為它的內容「涉及儒、道、釋三大主流的哲學思想。論主精通儒、道二教，足與當時的大儒匹敵，甚至有過之而無不及，故其所論，都是儒、道二教的癢處、痛處。論主尤其是一位熟讀印度大乘諸派論著，貫通大小三乘，綜理性相二宗的大師，對於般若中觀、唯識瑜伽、佛性如來藏，以及毘尼律藏，幾乎無所不精，堪稱為博通內外諸家的三藏法師……此論是站在漢傳佛教的立足點上，統攝諸宗，融合內外，有其消融性及包容性的示範功能。今後的世界佛教趨勢，必定要從消融性及包容性的視角，來完成回歸佛陀本懷的整體性。」<sup>23</sup>

《原人論》雖然包容儒道以及佛教小乘和大乘的中觀、唯識及如來藏三大系統的思想，宗密最後攝歸於佛性如來藏。《原人論》的結論以此開始：



為何為二？一者心真如門，二者心生滅門。是二種門皆包總攝一切法，此義為何？以是二門不相離故。」真如門是本覺，生滅門是不覺。雖然眾生本具佛性、真心、本覺，但被無始無明所迷，而有生滅、妄想、不覺。眾生背妄返真是始覺，所以從生死輪迴到成佛之道，乃是從不覺經過始覺而回到本覺，而推動這一偉大的

覺悟過程的力量即是本覺。這個積極樂觀的信息，成為漢傳佛教的主流。這跟印度和藏傳佛教有很大的不同，因為在那二大佛教系統，中觀及瑜伽更比如來藏系統重要。但是由於漢傳佛教的影響，東亞佛教也接受了如來藏本覺的思想。

謂初唯一真靈性，不生不滅，不增不減，不變不易，眾生無始迷睡，不自覺知，內隱覆故，名如來藏，依如來藏故，有生滅心相。所謂不生滅真心與生滅妄想和合，非一非異，名為阿賴耶識。此識有覺不覺二義。<sup>24</sup>

聖嚴法師認為《原人論》深受《大乘起信論》的影響。的確，《大乘起信論》的一心二門可說是宗密上面一段的一段話的根據。論曰：「依一心法，有二種門。

《大乘起信論》跟《梵網經》一樣，也被學者認為是中國本土的作品，傳統稱為「偽經」或「疑經」。不過近三十多年來，我們不再用這個強度的價值觀念的名

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詞，而改用中國本土經論。「偽經」或「疑經」這兩個名詞最初為中國佛教經錄編纂者所用，經錄的編纂者歷代對於真、偽經的判別標準並不一致，但他們通常堅持兩個準則：第一，佛經必須撰寫於異域，然後傳入中國。因此，佛經的梵文原典或其他中亞原典的存在是確保經典真實性的有力證據。然而，僅此一次證據仍不夠充分，因為無法確知外文佛典本身是否經過偽造，所以第二次必要的準則是譯經過程中須有外來的三藏法師參與，只有他們才能確定一部經典在其本土的真實性。因此，外國三藏法師和參與象徵經典的「正統性」，即使他們其中有很多不諳漢語。也因而不可能成為佛經的真正譯者，但許多漢譯經典仍歸屬為他們的譯作。不過正如早島鏡正早在五十年前指出，《大正藏》中一千七百部現存的印度譯經中，有四百部，也就是其中四分之一的譯者歸屬是錯誤的。

今人擁有現代佛學學術的優勢，更能清楚了解整個佛教經典發展的歷史，因此有必要重新評估辨別真、偽經的傳統標準。我們知道佛陀並未撰寫任何經典，上座部佛教徒心目中的權威經典巴利三藏以口頭傳述為基礎，其源頭可上溯到佛陀，到了佛陀入滅後的三百年的西元前三世紀才經系統化的闡述，佛陀宣講佛法，但佛法並不限於佛陀所說之法。因為釋迦牟尼佛出現以前還有其他諸佛，在他之後也有另一尊佛化現，而一切諸佛都宣示佛法。其實，不僅其餘諸佛宣說佛法，甚至佛的大弟子和諸菩薩受到佛的啟發時也能說法，因為佛法存在於佛所說的真理，而不在他的音聲及文字。因此，雖然所有大乘經典當然都遠在佛陀涅槃之後才出現，但他們都可以被視為佛陀所說的法。這個「修正主義」的觀點，最早是在1970年由牧田諦亮提出，他一直在他的研究中提醒我們注意疑偽經的正面價值，他不但不將

這些經典視為「偽經」，反而認為它們顯示當時人們對佛教的理解，是十分有價值的文獻，他視這些文獻為「中國人撰述的經典」，幫助我們了解中國人如何接受和吸收佛教，他的看法在這四十年已得到很多美國學者的肯定，現在這些經典一般被稱為「中國本土經典」。

不但《大乘起信論》、《梵網經》這些非常重要的漢傳佛教的經典是本土經典，《楞嚴經》、《圓覺經》也被學者認定是中國本土經典。但是智顛、宗密、智旭以及眾多的漢傳佛教大師都將它們當作佛經。我們一般講到漢傳佛教的特色是天台、華嚴、律、禪、淨土等不存在於印度佛教的諸宗在中國的建立，但另一值得注意的是國人對這些本土經典的重視和肯定，以及以往大師根據這些經典的註疏。智顛的《梵網經》及宗密的《圓覺經》的註疏是一個例子，這些經典的思想以及它們對漢傳佛教的影響都是等待我們研究的工作。

在《天台心鑰》的自序中，聖嚴法師有如下一段語重心長的話：

漢傳佛教的智慧，若以實修的廣大影響而言，當推禪宗為其巨擘；若以教觀義理的深入影響來說，則捨天台學便不能作第二家想。近半個世紀以來，漢傳佛教的教乘及宗乘，少有偉大的善知識出世，以致許多淺學的佛教徒們，便以為漢傳佛教已經沒有前途，這對漢傳佛教兩千年來，許多大師們所遺留給我們的智慧寶藏而言，實在是最大的憾事，更是人類文化的重大損失！我則深信，今後的世界佛教，當以具有包容性及消融性的漢傳佛教為主流，才能結合各宗異見，回歸佛陀本懷，推出全人類共同需要的佛教來。否則的話，任何偏狹和優越感的佛教教派，都無法帶來世界佛教前瞻性和將來性的希望。<sup>25</sup>

的確如法師所說，不但在國內，有

積極研究漢傳佛教的必要，在國外，這也是一項迫切需要努力的工作。聖嚴法師在1985年創立了「中華佛學研究所」，並在國內出版《中華佛學學報》年刊。學報出版已二十三年，很多重要的漢傳佛教論文都是首次在此發表的，這已是國際聞名的佛學學報。我們都知道在推廣佛學研究上，學術刊物一向扮演領先的角色，這是聖嚴法師的遠見。在推廣國外對漢傳佛教方面，聖嚴法師也做了空前的貢獻，那就是在法師指導下，聖嚴教育基金會於2007在哥倫比亞大學設立了「聖嚴漢傳佛教講座教授」，那是全世界首創的漢傳佛教講座教授的永久教席，只要哥大存在一天，就永遠有授漢傳佛教的教授。相繼，聖嚴教育基金會與中華佛學研究所於2009年在哥大出版社設立「聖嚴漢傳佛教叢書」，專門支持漢傳佛教專著的出版。

回想六十年代我在哥大讀書時，如前所述，當時沒有一位專門研究漢傳佛教的教授，更沒有這方面的叢書。五十年後，居然有此一百八十度的轉變，這完全是聖嚴法師的影響。我希望這是美國及西方積極研究漢傳佛教的開始，而研究的方向和課題，聖嚴法師已經在他諸多著作及開示中提供了清楚的指示。

## 註釋：

1. 《戒律學綱要》（台北：法鼓文化，1999），頁10。
2. 同上，頁102-103。
3. 此為八敬法的第四條：「式叉摩那學戒已，從比丘僧乞受大戒。此法應尊重、恭敬、讚歎，盡形壽不得過。」（同上，274頁。）
4. 同上，頁275-276。
5. 《聖嚴法師學思歷程》（台北：法鼓文化，1999），頁64。
6. 同上，頁61。
7. 《佛教文化與文學》（台北，1962），頁144-145。

8. 《菩薩戒指要》（台北：法鼓文化，1999），頁3。
9. 同上，頁6。
10. 同上，頁45。
11. 同上，頁134。
12. 同上，頁136。
13. 同上，頁137。
14. 《聖嚴法師學思歷程》，頁90-91。
15. 《天台心鑰——教觀綱宗貫注》（台北：法鼓文化，2002），頁5。
16. 同上，頁38-39。
17. 同上，頁6。
18. 同上，頁21。
19. 《明末中國佛教の研究》（台北：法鼓文化，1999），頁411-412。
20. 同上，頁414。
21. 同上，頁415。
22. 《華嚴心詮》（台北：法鼓文化，2006），頁6。
23. 同上，頁5。
24. 同上，頁297-280。
25. 《天台心鑰》，頁10。

# Master Sheng Yen and Chinese Buddhism

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Master Sheng Yen is an internationally famous Chan master. In Taiwan, he is known as an educator and the founder of the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies and *Chung-Hwa Journal of Buddhist Studies* and the founding patriarch of Dharma Drum Mountain. In *The Vision of Dharma Drum Mountain*, he highlighted the urgency to simultaneously promote the Three-fold Education: **1. Academic Education** — after the founding of the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies, he subsequently established the Sangha University has Dharma Drum Buddhist College. The Dharma Drum University has also begun to recruit students. These institutions represent Master Sheng Yen's ideal to promote Buddhism through academic education. **2. The Great Universal Education**—Religious teachers are being trained to spread the Dharma through the practice of sitting meditation, reciting the Buddhas' name and other teaching activities. There are also plans to train lay people to become full-time instructors to lead the meditation classes and teach the Buddhadharma. **3. The Great Social Care Education**—This is probably the area with which people in Taiwan are most familiar. He proposed the Fivefold Spiritual Renaissance, Protecting the Spiritual Environment and the “Pure Mind, Pure Land” as the core values. By spreading the message through different media, he hoped to make Buddhadharma become part of people's daily lives. From advising people to quit alcohol, drugs, prostitution, and chewing betel nuts to helping the dying to chant the Buddha's name, teaching people the proper installation of the soul tablet



of the dead, setting aside specific days to clean public places, aid for the poor and sick, as well as assisting hospitals and nursing homes ---all these are covered under the Social Care Education.

Being a Chan master and an educator represent the two sides of Master Sheng Yen's career. Taiwanese and Western scholars have done thorough research and analysis concerning these two areas. In this essay, I would like to discuss his scholarship and contribution to Chinese Buddhism. I met Master Sheng Yen for the first time in 1976 when I was teaching at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. I took some students to visit the Great Enlightenment Temple in New York City where he was staying. Subsequently I participated in the first meditation class he conducted in the United States. He delivered lectures on the sutras and gave dharma talks, instructed the method of Chan meditation and granted personal interviews every Saturday. This lasted three months and at the end of the period, I took refuge and became one of his

earliest disciples in the States. Actually, even before I met him, I already knew that he was a scholar specialized in late Ming Buddhism. He studied Master Ouyi Zhixu (1599-1655), one of the four great masters in the late Ming. His dissertation, *The Study of Chinese Buddhism in Late Ming*, was published in Japanese as a book in 1975. During 1970s, it was rare to find any studies on Chinese Buddhism after the Song Dynasty. I remember when I discovered the existence of this book, I was both surprised and delighted, but at the same time felt a sense of regret. I was delighted to see that a great master such as Zhixu finally received the scholarly attention he deserved. I felt a sense of regret because I was not able to receive benefit from this work when I wrote my own dissertation in the 60's on another great late Ming Master—Yunqi Zhuhong (1535-1615).

The scholarship of Chinese Buddhism started comparative late in the United States because Buddhologists in Europe (France, Russia, England and Germany) mainly studied Indian Buddhism in Sanskrit and Theravada Buddhism in Pali. During the nineteenth and the first half of twentieth century, the same held true for American scholars. After the World War II, Japanese Zen became very popular in the 1960s, which prompted an interest for Americans to study Japanese Buddhism in general. Along with the increasing reputation of Dalai Lama and the establishment of Tibetan Buddhist centers in major cities in the United States, Tibetan Buddhism gradually attracted many young students and scholars. Compared to these two Buddhist traditions, Chinese Buddhism was not in popular demand in the 60s.

I believe the main reason why this was so is that Buddhadology was not regarded as the mainstream of Chinese culture by sinologists. Their research and teaching were focused on Confucianism. When I studied at Columbia University, for instance, Professor De Bary dedicated himself to promoting the study of Neo-Confucianism. Most of the Ph.D. students consequently wrote dissertations on Neo-

Confucianism. Harvard, Princeton, Stanford and UC Berkeley were the same. At that time, there were two professors teaching Buddhism at Columbia and both were specialists of Japanese Buddhism. To understand Chinese Buddhism from the perspective of Japanese Buddhism inevitably leads to two false perceptions. One is to view Chinese Buddhism with the sectarian perspective adopted in Japanese Buddhism which set clear distinction between different sects. We know that Zen and Pure Land are completely separate traditions in Japan. Moreover, the Pure Land Sect and the True Pure Land Sect also have their own identities. This is very different from Chinese Buddhism which emphasizes the “unity of Chan and Pure Land practice” and the “synthesis of Chan practice and Doctrinal Teaching.” For this reason I was challenged by the professor of Japanese Buddhism at my dissertation defense. Yunqi Zhuhong was famous for advocating the dual practice of Chan and Pure Land. He often used “who is reciting the Buddha’s name” as a gongan. At the same time he also taught people “to recite earnestly the Buddha’s name in order to be born in the Pure Land.” Before Yunqi Zhuhong, from the Five Dynasty to the Song, Yuan and the early Ming, there were already a number of eminent monks who held the same view. But the Japanese Rinzai Master Hakuin Ekaku (1686-1769) criticized Zhuhong, saying that to combine Chan with Pure Land was no different from mixing sand with gold or pouring water into ghee. He castigated Zhuhong for destroying the Chan tradition. He also saw this as a sign of the decline of Buddhism in the late Ming. The professor at my defense was translating Hakuin’s work at that time. He took Hakuin’s view and suspected that Zhuhong’s teaching of the dual practice of Chan and Pure Land was unique to him and thus not representative of Ming Buddhism. He did not realize that this was a new development traceable to the Five Dynasty and Zhuhong was no more than a master who culminated this trend.

This example illustrates the common

mistakes American Buddhist scholars made at that time in using the Japanese Buddhist lens to examine Chinese Buddhism. Fortunately, in the last several decades, there has emerged a common consensus among Western scholars that one should not use the historical development of Japanese Buddhism to understand Chinese Buddhism. Although East Asian Buddhism had its origin in China, when Buddhism was transmitted to Japan and Korea, it interacted with the indigenous religious cultures and developed into Japanese and Korean Buddhism with their own distinctive features. This is a very natural process. In a similar way, Chinese Buddhism was formed as a result of the mutual interaction between Buddhism and indigenous Chinese religious culture after the introduction into China of Indian and Central Asian Buddhisms. Therefore, it is improper to use Japanese Buddhism which strongly emphasizes the differences among the sects to study Chinese Buddhism which is a tradition which strongly emphasizes synthesis. There is another effect if one overly relies on the experience of Japanese Buddhism to study Chinese Buddhism. All Japanese sects trace their origin to Chinese Buddhism with the exception of Nichiren and the True Pure Land. Due to the reasons mentioned above, most Japanese Buddhist scholars concentrate their study on a specific sect. When they turn their attention to Chinese Buddhism, they would naturally focus their interests on the specific Chinese school which is the origin of the Japanese sect. So we have seen works from many Japanese scholars on Chinese Tiantai School, Hwa Yen School, Chan School and Pure Land School, etc. However, the fact is that these major schools were founded in the Sui and Tang, important commentaries and eminent masters were also concentrated in the Sui and Tang. Since the Japanese scholarship on Chinese Buddhism concentrated on Tang Buddhism, American scholars who were often trained in Japan regarded, at least until the 1960s or 1970s, that Chinese Buddhism reached its “Golden Age” in the Tang

Dynasty, and started to decline afterwards. As a result, it is not worthwhile to study post Tang Buddhism. In 1964 Professor Kenneth Ch'en published *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*. It can be taken as a classic representing this view. This book has been widely used as a textbook in colleges and still retains its authority. During the past forty years this traditional view has naturally met some strong challenges. My dissertation which was published as a book in 1981, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Later Ming Synthesis*, has played a pioneering role. First Song, then Yuan and Ming Buddhism, and in recent decades, the Qing, Republic and Contemporary Taiwanese Buddhism have also received attention from scholars.

The above is a brief historical overview of American scholarship on Chinese Buddhism, based on my experience of studying and teaching in the United States for over forty years. Although the future development and direction of Chinese Buddhism in the United States are still unclear, there is reason for optimism. At this critical juncture, I think Master Sheng Yen's methodology in studying Chinese Buddhism and the topics he chose to focus on can serve as our guide.

When we examine Master Sheng Yen's writings, we find that he studied all the major sutras and schools of Chinese Buddhism. During his solitary retreat in Meinong in his early days, he studied sutras in the Tripitaka. In 1965 he published *Essentials of The Vinaya* (Jielüxue gangyao), which was his earliest academic work. In the preface, he explained his motive of writing this book:

*The Vinaya is a dry and complicated field of study. Therefore, it has not been popular in recent decades. Although some people have studied it, most of them could not free themselves from the ancients but played the music according to old tunes. As a result, people in general have no door to enter. There are even people who wantonly criticize the Vinaya. Therefore, I have tried to use words which are easy to understand and borrowed contemporary concepts to present it to the*

*public in a popular form. I am interested in reviving the study of the Vinaya. I do not wish to preach it in an outmoded and undigested way.*<sup>1</sup>

Precepts (jie), Concentration (ding) and Wisdom (hui) are the so-called three learnings of Buddhism. It is very understandable that he emphasized the importance and the need to study precepts. In this book he provided detailed yet easy to understand explanations about taking the three refuges, the five precepts, ten good deeds, eight precepts, sramanera's precepts, six precepts for śikramānās, bhikṣu's and bhikṣuṇī's precepts, and bodhisattva precepts. In explaining the precept of non-killing, the first of the five precepts, he wrote the following passage. This shows exactly the way how he used clear language and easy to understand words while adopting modern concepts in teaching the general public how to uphold the precept of non-killing.

*In our daily life, it is seldom that we witness or hear about killing. It is highly unusual for someone to kill a person. Unless in the case of a butcher, people will not kill pigs or goats every day either. The easiest transgression is the killing of insects, ants and small creatures.*

*Someone wrote a letter to me and asked when there are insects and ants in the house, how should we deal with them? When we clean the house, they would be killed or injured. Is this kind of killing counted as breaking the precept of non-killing? Or if we ask our servants to clean the house, they inevitably kill or hurt insects and ants while cleaning the house. Do we commit the sin of telling them to kill? Or can we attribute it to the karma of insects and ants? This is a very big problem. In order to protect human beings and their properties, it is necessary to get rid of insects and ants to prevent any damage caused by them. But in order to protect the pure essence of the precepts, one cannot kill or hurt insects intentionally. However, the insects and ants which cause harm to people should be driven out. When people drive insects and ants out, they cannot harbor the ill intention to kill or harm*

*them. They should be careful in doing this. If they have done their best to protect the living beings but still inevitably kill or harm insects and ants, they should blame themselves, give rise to remorse and make a compassionate vow, wishing those killed would achieve rebirth as a kind being and attain Buddhahood eventually. Only in this way is the sin of killing forgiven. We can find the basis for this in the Vinaya. In Chapter 11 of the Vinaya in Ten Recitations (Shisong lū), it says that the Buddha personally got rid of the insects on the beds of monks (T23, 77c). In Chapter 37, it says that in the bath room the heat and humidity caused many insects to be born. The Buddha said, "They should be gotten rid of in order to keep the place clean" (T23, 270c). However, what is most important is to prevent the birth of insects and ants in the house by keeping it dry and clean. If the house is damaged in any way, it ought to be repaired right away. When you find a hole at the bottom of a wall, you should fill it up with dirt. Before the appearance of insects, you should sterilize the places where they can easily be born to prevent them from appearing. If insects are already born, in order to uphold precepts we should be very careful in getting rid of them. We should not use pesticide to kill them. Otherwise, killing one insect requires one performance of repentance and killing ten thousand insects requires ten thousand performances of repentance. Unless one has attained the stage above the first fruit of the Hinayana sage, it is impossible to keep the precept of non-killing with absolute purity. It is said that "when one who has attained the first fruit plows the field, insects will stay four inches away from him." The ordinary people are simply not able to do this.*

The upholding or violating of the precepts depends completely on one's mind. Therefore, in regard to the offense of killing insects, there are six different sentences: When there is an insect and there is the awareness of the insect, this results in committing a basic minor offense which can be repented. When there is an insect but there is a doubt about whether there is an insect, this also results in committing a basic minor offense

which can be repented. When there is no insect yet there is the awareness of an insect, it results in committing an expedient violation of a minor offense that can be repented. When there is no insect but there is the doubt that there might be an insect, this also results in committing an expedient violation of a minor offense that can be repented. When there is an insect but there is no awareness of an insect, this does not result in a violation. When there is no insect and there is also no awareness of an insect, this does not result in a violation. In addition, one should not strike a person, an animal, or even an insect, for one who does so with a mind of hatred commits an offense.

*Here, readers may raise another question. In order to uphold the precept of non-killing, must one become a vegetarian? According to the five precepts and the bhikshu's precepts, there is no requirement that one must be a vegetarian.*

*Not eating fish and meat is a requirement of a Mahayana bodhisattva precept. In keeping the non-killing precept of the five precepts, one should not kill any animal oneself, nor urge others or teach them to kill. Therefore one should not personally kill chickens, ducks, fish and shrimps. If one buys meat of animals already killed, this is not breaking precepts. Of course, it is even better if one can give rise to the aspiration to become a vegetarian. Vegetarianism is a virtue of Chinese Buddhist tradition in Mahayana Buddhism. It further concretely actualizes the spirit of no-killing. Therefore, it is hoped that those who have taken the five precepts would become vegetarians. But if they do not, that is all right also.<sup>2</sup>*

The passages above fully demonstrate the skillful means with which he taught people in modern society how to apply the five precepts flexibly in their daily lives based on the spirit of the Vinaya.

In the *Essentials of Vinaya*, Master Sheng Yen expressed a judicious view on a rather sensitive issue. Over the past several decades, international

and Chinese scholars as well as those who are concerned about Buddhism both within and without the sangha have had different opinions on whether the Eight Grave Rules (ba jing fa) should be kept. In the *Vinaya in Four Parts* (Sifen lū) which is regarded as the authoritative Vinaya in Chinese Buddhism, the Eight Grave Precepts are called the eight precepts which must not and should not be transgressed. In other words, they are the precepts a bhikshuni should and must uphold. The Eight Grave Rules are criticized by people in modern times because they show the inequality between men and women in Buddhism. They symbolize the control of the bhikshuni sangha by the paternalistic bhikshu sangha. However, have the Eight Grave Rules ever been completely followed in India or China? Nobody can answer this historical question. It is just as Master Sheng Yen said,

*In fact, among Chinese bhikshunis today, even those who are most devoted to the Way can at most uphold only two or three of the Eight Grave Rules. The rest all deal with the methods of performing formal acts and keeping precepts. They cannot be carried out in accordance with the regulations. We cannot find even now any concrete evidence that the Eight Grave Rules were ever followed in the history of Chinese Buddhism. It seems that the rule of sikshamana<sup>3</sup> has never been followed in China. Regarding the rule that bhikshunis should request teaching from bhikshus once every half month, the Vinaya master Nanshan Daoxuan of the Tang Dynasty said, "Currently bhikunis mostly practiced the abbreviated method because it is difficult to follow the expanded method" (T40, 153a). There are two ways regarding bhikshunis requesting teaching from bhikshus—the expanded and the abbreviated method. The expanded method is as follows. After being requested by the bhikunis, the bhikshu sangha should send a virtuous senior monk to the bhikunis' convent to teach them. The abbreviated method is as follows. The bhikunis sangha sends someone to request teaching from the bhikshu sangha who will say, "In the bhikshu sangha, there is no bhikshu qualified to*

*teach the bhikunis. Just be diligent and cautious, do not be lax and idle.” After this is said, the bhikuni answers, “We will do as instructed”. This is considered that the abbreviated method has been followed. In the Tang dynasty the expanded method was already no longer in use. When it came to the Song Dynasty, the Vinaya Master Lingzhi Yuanzhao said, “Nowadays both the expanded and the abbreviated methods have been abandoned. We can only learn from what we have heard.” As for the rule that a bhikshuni must confess in front of both the bhikshu and bhikshuni sangha for her transgression against the precepts, because in China bhikshuni receives the full precepts directly from the bhikshu sangha alone, this rule is of course not followed.<sup>4</sup>*

In *The Progress of Master Sheng Yen’s Study and Thinking* (Sheng Yen Fashi xuesi lizheng), he said that the *Essentials of Vinaya* was written based on what he had learned while studying the Vinaya during his solitary retreat in Meinong, Kaohsiung. From 1961 to 1964 he studied all the books on the Vinaya that he could find. He usually read them two or three times. In the preface, he said, “Overall, Master Ouyi and Hongyi had great influence on this book. However, I did not completely follow their lines of thought and this book was not written entirely from the perspective of the Nanshan School either.”<sup>5</sup>

Hongyi was a famous Vinaya master in the twentieth century. In regard to Hongyi’s thought, Master Sheng Yen had this comment. “Since ancient time, when men of lofty virtue wrote, they usually describe and explain what had been written before instead of expressing their own views. This shows their cautious and serious attitude in putting thoughts into words. Therefore, in his writings Hongyi mainly organizes what others wrote and at times adds some explanation. As a result, his writings do not aim to introduce and promote the Vinaya... He would add briefly his own opinions to explain something only when it is absolutely necessary.”<sup>6</sup>

The title of the seventh chapter of the

*Essentials of Vinaya* is “The Essence of Bodhisattva Precepts -- The Cradle of Buddhas in Three Ages”. This chapter has ninety- seven pages which take up one third of the book. Thirty years later, he published *The Essence of Bodhisattva Precepts*. It includes the papers he gave at the two conferences held in 1990 and 1992, their themes being “Buddhist Ethics” and “Traditional Precepts” respectively. It also includes articles which he wrote for the bodhisattva precepts ceremonies held at Chan Meditation Center in New York and the Nongchan Monastery in Beitou to encourage people to take the Bodhisattva precepts. Over the last three decades, the emphasis he had placed on the bodhisattva precepts had not changed. In 1962, he wrote in his book, *Buddhist Culture and Literature* (Fojiao wenhua yu wenxue), “the *Sutra of Jeweled Ornament* (Yingle jing) says that people who have precepts to transgress are Bodhisattvas, while people who have no precepts to transgress are non-Buddhists. Therefore, those who have received the precepts but transgress against them are superior to those who have not received the precepts and thus have nothing against which to transgress. People who have received the precepts and generated the bodhicitta, even when they violate the precepts and will surely receive their karmic retributions, but because they have taken the bodhisattva precepts, they will definitely become a bodhisattva and eventually attain Buddhahood. ....Therefore, I hope my lay disciples can all come to receive the bodhisattva precepts and give rise to the upmost Bodhi mind”.<sup>7</sup>

Thirty- two years later, in the preface of *The Essence of Bodhisattva Precepts* published in 1995, he again emphasized that bodhisattva precepts could provide a norm that is most suitable for modern Buddhist disciples to follow. He first explained his motive to study the Vinaya and what he had learned.

*The ancients who advocated the Vinaya mainly explained or wrote commentaries. I, on the other hand, raise questions, and clarify them after I have*



*digested a great number of documents concerning the Vinaya.*

*For thirty years I have dedicated myself to the study of and the writing on the Mahayana and Hinayana Vinaya. My goal is to popularize, simplify and make the Vinaya practical to follow. I hope that I will not fall into the old tracks of the ancients, but also not to depart from their excellent model. I want to make it easy to read and understand, but I also want to keep the basis which supplies the original sources. In other words, I want to review the old in order to learn the new and to propose the new from the old, so that it can be used by people in their daily life. The ancient wisdom can be used to serve today. I am guided by the principle to make my writing on the Vinaya available for the general public, but I also hope that it still retains the content which can provide a foundation for scholarly research.*

*Since I began to deepen my understanding of the Vinaya and the related commentaries written by the ancients, I have come to the realization that it is absolutely impossible for people living in the modern world to follow the precepts which were laid down in India two thousands and five hundred years ago. But without the Buddhist precepts as the guideline to lead a wholesome life, it would be very difficult for people to purify the karma created by the body, speech and mind. Because this is the case, I stress the Buddha's spirit in establishing the Vinaya, but not the fixed adherence to the exact letters of its entirety.<sup>8</sup>*

The reason why Master Sheng Yen praised the Bodhisattva precepts so highly is because they have the unique characteristics of being “easy to learn and easy to uphold. They can be deep but can also be shallow. They can be applied in all times and at all places.” He explained that its essence is “founded on the three cumulative precepts, the ten good deeds and the inexhaustible precepts that can be upheld by both the monastics and the laity. The three cumulative pure precepts completely absorb all pure precepts, all virtues and the entirety of dharmas that benefit all beings in the world. The ten good deeds lay a foundation for

all pure precepts, which form the central outline of the bodhisattva precepts. The ten inexhaustible precepts found in the *Sutra of Brahma's Net* serve as the bodhisattva precepts' standard which can stand through all changes in time and last forever. The purpose of writing this book is to transmit the basic spirit of bodhisattva precepts which, without exception, all aim to purify one's speech, action and thought, to generate the bodhicitta, and to cultivate the way of bodhisattvas. These precepts are great and can endure forever. When encountering the need of deep teaching, it can be elaborated in depth. When elementary teaching is required, it can be taught at the beginner's level. When encountering common people, it can be explained with ordinary language. When meeting with the saints, it can be expounded in the light of ultimate truth. The basic spirit of all the Bodhisattva precepts is to purify the karma of body, speech and mind, to give rise to the Bodhicitta, and to cultivate the path of the bodhisattvas.”<sup>9</sup>

Based on the *Sutra of Jeweled Ornament* and the *Sutra of Brahma's Net*, Master Sheng Yen explained the three cumulative precepts thus: The first refers to the “precept of self nature”, the precepts of comportment or the ten pārājikā which are also the ten grave precepts of the *Sutra of Brahma's Net*. The reason it is called the “ten inexhaustible precepts” is because the merit of upholding the precepts derives from one's mind. Since the mind is inexhaustible, the precepts are also inexhaustible. The second refers to cultivate all wholesome deeds or to uphold all wholesome dharmas. The third is to benefit all sentient beings, to care for sentient beings, namely “to deliver all beings with loving-kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity, so that all will attain peace and happiness in life.”<sup>10</sup>

*The Sutra of Jeweled Ornament* and the *Sutra of Brahma's Net* have always been regarded as authoritative sutras in Chinese Buddhism. During the twentieth century, Japanese scholars claimed that the two sutras were Chinese indigenous

writings. However, in the late Ming dynasty, the masters who advocated the Vinaya, such as Zhuhong and Ouyi, relied particularly on the *Sutra of Brahma's Net*. According to the analysis of Master Sheng Yen, the lineage of the Vinaya school transmitted by Daoxuan (569-667) who had many disciples lasted in China the longest. Daoxuan expounded the essence of the precepts in accordance with the philosophy of the Weishi school. Although the *Vinaya in Four Parts*, just as all the Vinaya texts translated into Chinese, was a product of the Hinayana tradition, it has nonetheless been well received by the Chinese who have affinity with the Mahayana thought. However, by the sixteenth century, the transmission of the Vinaya tradition was nearly non-existent.<sup>11</sup> In the one hundred and fifty years between the late Ming and the early Qing, there were thirteen authors who wrote a total of twenty-six works in forty-four volumes on the Vinaya. This does not include the twenty-one not included in the *Shinsan Zokuzokyo* (Xuzangjing). In contrast, in the more than thousand years from Huisi (515-577) in the Six Dynasties to the end of the Ming, there were twenty-nine authors who wrote nineteen works in forty-eight volumes.<sup>12</sup> No wonder the late Ming and early Qing is regarded as the period of revival for the study of the Vinaya. Master Sheng Yen noticed that the Vinaya scholars of the late Ming shared two things in common: first, they promoted the *Sutra of Brahma's Net* and second, they stressed the precepts for sramanas (novices) and those for lay Buddhists. Why did they promote the *Sutra of Brahma's Net* so much? Master Sheng Yen made the following analysis.

*At that time, in terms of cultivation, people either practiced Pure Land or Chan. In terms of doctrinal study, they focused either on the Huayan or the Tiantai. Master Zhiyi (538-597) of the Tiantai school wrote a commentary in six volumes on the Sutra of Brahma's Net. Moreover, the thought of the Sutra of Brahma's Net belongs to the Huayan tradition. Therefore, scholars of both the Huayan school and the*

*Tiantai school were fond of advocating the Sutra of Brahma's Net.*<sup>13</sup>

Zhiyi obviously did not regard the *Sutra of Brahma's Net* as a Chinese indigenous sutra. Scholars of the Vinaya at the end of Ming shared the same view. They were all moved by the spirit of Mahayana Bodhisattvas in the sutra. They therefore advocated adopting the Bodhisattva precepts as the model to govern the behaviors of both the monastics and lay Buddhists. This has continued until today. The monastics have to take three sets of precepts: first the sramana precepts, then the full bhikshu or bhikshuni precepts, and finally the Bodhisattva precepts. Only then is the ordination ceremony completed. Ideally lay people should also take the Bodhisattva precepts after taking the three refuges and the five precepts. If the *Sutra of Brahma's Net* is indeed a Chinese indigenous sutra, it does not only embody the spirit of Chinese Buddhism, but it is also the ritual which concretely actualizes Chinese Buddhism.

The study of the Vinaya occupied the entire life of Master Sheng Yen. Because he himself benefited a great deal from the study, he wished to make it serve as the standard in people's lives. Using accessible language, he introduced the principles of the Vinaya to society at large through books such as *Orthodox Buddhism* (Zhengxin de fojiao), *Instruction in Studying Buddhism* (Xuefo zhijin) and *Resolving Doubts in Studying Buddhism* (Xuefo qunyiin). These books are easy to understand and have become very popular.

The three learnings of Precepts, Concentration and Wisdom go hand in hand. Master Sheng Yen had written many books on Chan theory, history, and methods of practice. He harmonized Linji's Huatou and Caodong's "silent illumination" in establishing the Dharma Drum Lineage of Zhonghua Chan Buddhism. The Chan methods he taught were based on the Vinaya and the teachings of the Buddha. This is demonstrated by the topics he chose for his master thesis and the doctoral dissertation when he studied in Japan. The

topic of his master's thesis was titled "Study on The Dharma Door of Samatha and Vipassana in Mahayana Buddhism". The author of the work he studied has always been regarded as Nanyue Huisi, the first patriarch of the Tiantai school in China. However, during the 12th and 13th centuries, some Japanese Tiantai scholars raised doubts about Huisi's authorship. In his thesis, Master Sheng Yen offered counter arguments. However, as he stated, the main point of his thesis was not to prove that the work was indeed written by Huisi. By thoroughly analyzing the basis and origin of its thought, he discovered that this work absorbed many ideas from the Tathāgatagarbha and Weishi traditions. This enabled him to gain an in depth understanding of the three major philosophical traditions of Indian Buddhism: Mādhyamika, Weishi, and Tathāgatagarbha.<sup>14</sup>

His master thesis is an important work on the study of Tiantai school. Master Sheng Yen's doctoral dissertation centers on Zhixu's life, works and thought. Zhixu is regarded as a scholar of the Tiantai school. Master Sheng Yen himself was very positive about the equal emphasis on teaching (scriptural study) and contemplation (meditation) advocated by the Tiantai school. He once gave lectures on Zhixu's *The Essentials and Guidelines of Scriptural Study and Meditation* (Jiaoguan gangzong) in Nongchan Monastery. In 2001 he translated this book into vernacular Chinese with notes and entitled it, *The Mind Key of Tiantai: A Vernacular Translation of and Commentary on Ouyi's Jiaoguan gangzong*. In the preface, he stated that this work had exerted a strong influence on him. He said, "I have been using Chan teachings to guide Buddhists both in the East and in the West since 1976, teaching them to benefit themselves and others, purify people's mind, and purify society. This is why I need to rely on the samatha and vipassana teachings of the Tiantai school."<sup>15</sup> According to Master Sheng Yen, there was a reason why Zhixu used the title *The Essentials and Guidelines of Scriptural Study and Meditation* to name his book. "The book introduces the teachings of the Tiantai

school on the surface, but Chan thought is actually hidden in its bones. Because 'teaching' refers to the Buddha's words, whereas 'contemplation' refers to the mind of the Buddha as well as all sentient beings. Zong is no other than this one thought at this present moment of both the Buddha and the sentient beings. If one can contemplate the mind in accordance with the teaching, this is 'gangzong'. Jiaoguan (teaching and contemplation) is no different from gangzong (Essentials and Guidelines) and gangzong is no different from jiaoguan. The title of the book indicates that the essence and function are one."<sup>16</sup> Zhixu's definition of teaching and contemplation can be seen in the beginning of the book where it stated "The core of Buddhas and the patriarchs lies in teaching and contemplation. If contemplation does not conform to teaching, contemplation is not orthodox. If teaching is not accompanied by contemplation, teaching is not transmitted." Teaching and contemplation therefore mean doctrinal instruction and realization through meditation. It also means that 'Teaching emerges from Chan' and 'Chan enlightenment relies on teaching'. They are the two sides of one entity, mutually reinforcing each other"<sup>17</sup> Zhixu advocated teaching and contemplation and became known as a Tiantai master. Master Sheng provided the following analysis:

*The number of Buddhist scriptures is huge and their teachings also have many levels. Therefore, it is necessary to have a rational method to categorize them. Within the scriptures containing different levels of teaching, we find methods of practice which help people to harmonize the mind, collect the mind, illumine the mind and give rise to wisdom. These are the so-called contemplation practice. Jiaoguan of the Tiantai school emphasizes the equal importance of doctrine and meditation as well as theory and practice. They complement each other as the two wings of a bird, and the two wheels of a cart. Tiantai teaching is most subtle and refined. That is why it wins the heart of Master Ouyi.*<sup>18</sup>

I think Master Sheng Yen himself also

believed in the “equal importance of doctrine and cultivation, or theory and practice.” He already held this view before going to Japan. The choice of Zhixu as the topic of his doctoral dissertation was therefore very understandable. After he studied Zhixu’s works thoroughly, it is also quite possible that Zhixu’s thought influenced his teaching and writing in the next thirty some years.

Zhixu’s thought is not limited to Tiantai school. In the last section (the fifth section) of Master Sheng Yen’s *The Study of the Late Ming Chinese Buddhism*, he provided a summation of Zhixu’s thought which includes the following five areas: harmony between Nature (xing), Dharma Characteristics (xiang), Chan and Doctrinal Teaching; that between Tiantai and Weishi; that between Tiantai and Chan; that between Buddhism and Confucianism; and finally, the subsuming of Chan, Doctrinal Teaching, Vinaya and esoteric Buddhism under Pure Land. In other words, these are no other than “unity of Chan and teaching”, “unity of Chan and Pure Land”, and “unity of the Three Teachings”, the distinctive features which distinguish Chinese Buddhism from Japanese Buddhism.

Master Sheng Yen found proof in the *Zonglun* about Zhixu’s views concerning the harmony between the four Buddhist schools: Nature (xing), Dharma Characteristics (xiang), Chan and Doctrine Teaching (jiao). He quotes from the *Zonglun*:

*There is no dharma which the mind does not contain, nor which it does not create. However, all the dharmas which are contained and created by the mind have no self-nature. To understand that all dharmas have no self, not really existing is the Yogocara School. To know that although all the dharmas have no self-nature yet each is capable of containing and creating everything, this is the school of Dharma Nature. To point out directly that the illusory dharma and illusory mind right in front of one have no self-nature and thus to make a person become Buddha by seeing into one’s nature, this is the Chan school. That is why although the Linji school is direct, it is not without*

*refinement. The Caodong school, though strict and meticulous, is not without simplicity and immediacy. The Weishi school retains the dependent and perfect, yet it destroys imagining. The Prajna-paramita school demolishes emotional attachment, yet it establishes Ultimate Truth. Dharmapala makes clear that the True Suchness is not perfumed, yet he does not say that it is definitely different from all the dharmas. Asvaghosha makes clear that ignorance and True Suchness perfume each other, yet he does not say that they are definitely the same.*<sup>19</sup>

Zhixu did not consider Tiantai and Weishi to be in conflict. On the contrary, he thought they could complement each other.

*If one wishes to be an expert of Weishi, he must be good in penetrating the essential purport of Taiheng (Tiantaishan of Zhiyi and Hengshan of Huisi). If one wishes to obtain the heart and marrow of Taiheng, one must begin with Weishi....Alas, the mind method of Taiheng has been obscured for a very long time. This is because people do not know the commentary of the Vimalakirti sutra written by Zhiyi was entirely based on the interpretation of Vasubandhu. But the commentary was taken to Korea and that is why it could not dispel the doubt of our people. The Mahayana samatha and vipassana taught by Nanyue Huisi is also based on the eight consciousnesses. In explaining the method of cultivation, it correctly states that if one abandons the kingly subject right here, there will not then be any object which can be observed. When the observed disappears, then where can the observer reside? It is only when we know what is the object that we can practice samatha and vipassana. This is the real blood line of Taiheng. It is different from other school which talks about the mysterious Dharma of suchness and how one cannot separate from the Way, yet rejects Dharma Characteristics (Faxiang) by casting it outside the mountain. Those who do not know that the great ocean is the home of the hundred rivers are mistaken.*<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, Tiantai and Chan are also “originally not two”:

*The Way does not lie with words, yet it is not separated from words. When one is attached to the view that takes words as the Way, then there are the lecturers who are ridiculed for counting treasures as food. When one is attached to the view that the Way must be separated from words, then Chan practitioners may suffer the disaster of giving rise to blindness based on incorrect realization. Master Bodhidharma transmitted mind to mind, yet he must rely on the Lankavatara sutra for verification. He feared that if he departed from the sutra even by only one word, it would be no different from the words of Mara. Master Zhiyi discussed the mysterious Truth for ninety years, yet he always connected it with the meditative practice of samatha and vipassana. He feared that if he understood the meaning by relying only on words, he would do harm to the Buddha. Thus Chan and Tiantai are originally no different. But in later days, Chan and Tiantai slander each other. This is truly very sad. When I was twenty-three years old, I set my mind earnestly to practice Chan. Now I call myself an admirer of Tiantai. This is because I believe that only Tiantai can save Chan from its sickness.<sup>21</sup>*

Zhixu harmonized Confucian thought with Buddhism. During the Yungle era of Emperor Zhengzu of the Ming, the so-called “Three Great Complete Collections” were compiled. They are the *Complete Collection of the Book of Changes*, the *Complete Collection of the Four Books*, and the *Complete Collection of Nature and Principle*. Zhixu wrote commentaries on the three collections entitled respectively, *The Book of Changes Explained according to Chan*, *The Four Books Explained by Ouyi*, and *The Study of Nature Revealed*. Like Zhixu, Master Sheng Yen carried out his scholarly research and taught disciples and people in society based on the principle of harmonizing Chan and doctrinal teaching as well as thoroughly penetrating the thought of all Buddhist schools. Another important reason why he was attracted to

Zhixu was the latter’s recognition and acceptance of Confucian thought. In this connection, I would like to introduce another work by Master Sheng Yen. It is his *Mind Interpretation of Huayan: the Evidential Explanation of “On the Origin of Men.”* This is a vernacular translation of the essay “On the Origin of Men” written by Zongmi (780-841). This book can be regarded as having the same importance as his *Mind Key of Tiantai* which is a vernacular translation of Zhixu’s *Essential Outlines of Teaching and Meditation*. By advocating these two texts, Master Sheng Yen clearly indicated his personal affirmation of Chinese Buddhism. Zongmi was a Chan master and at the same time the fifth patriarch of the Huayan school. In the “On the Origin of Men”, he did not regard Confucianism and Daoism as heterodox, but treated them as “good teachings for men and devas.” He then analyzed sequentially the teaching of the Small Vehicle, the Dharma Characteristics and Mādyamika of the Great Vehicle, and “finally subsumed all under the One Vehicle teaching which directly reveals the Buddha nature of Tathāgatagarbha.”<sup>22</sup> In the preface, Master Sheng Yen wrote that for many years he carried the “On the Origin of Men” with him because its content “touches on the three main streams of philosophical thought of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Zongmi was learned in Confucianism and Daoism. He was a peer of the great Confucian scholars at his time and may even be superior to them. That is why he could point out in his discussion the weak points in Confucianism and Daoism. Because Zongmi was particularly proficient in reading the commentaries of the various schools of the Great Vehicle of India, he was a great master who thoroughly understood the three vehicles and synthesized the teachings of the two traditions of Nature and Dharma Characteristics. He was therefore an expert of the teachings of Prajñāparamita, Mādyamika, Weishi, Yogācārā, Tathāgatagarbha of Buddha nature, as well as the Vinaya. There was nothing in Buddhism that he did not know. He could be called a Tripitaka master who had mastered all the Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachings....This

treatise is grounded on the standpoint of Chinese Buddhism. It contains the teachings of all schools comprehensively and harmonizes Buddhist and non-Buddhist thought. It serves as an exemplary model on account of its ability to melt and include all differences. The future direction of Buddhism in the world must start from this vision in order to realize the totality of Buddhism by returning to the Buddha's original concern."<sup>23</sup>

Although the treatise "On the Origin of Men" includes Confucianism, Daoism, the Hinayana, the three major systems of Mahāyāna: Mādhyamika, Yogācārā and Tathāgatagarbha, in the end Zongmi concluded the essay by subsuming all the teachings under the Tathāgatagarbha thought. At the end of the treatise, he wrote:

*In the beginning there is only this one true luminous nature which is neither born nor destroyed, neither increases nor decreases, neither transforms nor changes. Sentient beings sleep confusedly from the beginningless beginning and have no self awareness and thus it is hidden and covered over within oneself. This is called Tathāgatagarbha. On account of this Tathāgatagarbha, there arises the mind of birth and death. Thus the true mind of no birth and no death is combined with the illusion of birth and death. They are neither the same nor different. This is the alaya consciousness. This consciousness has the two meanings of enlightenment and non-enlightenment.*<sup>24</sup>

Master Sheng Yen thought that the "On the Origin of Men" was greatly influenced by *the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*. Indeed, the "two doors of the One Mind" found in the latter may be said to be the basis for what Zongmi wrote above. We find in *The Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* this passage. "The One Mind has two doors. What are the two? One is the Mind of Suchness, and the other is the mind of samsara. These two doors include and contain all dharmas. Why is this so? It is because the two doors are not separated from each other." The door of Suchness is original enlightenment and the door of samsara is non-

enlightenment. Although all sentient beings are endowed with Buddha nature, True Mind, original enlightenment, since they have been deluded by ignorance from the beginningless beginning, they are in samsara and suffer from deluded thought and non-enlightenment. But when sentient beings turn away from ignorance and return to truth, this is the incipient enlightenment. Therefore the path from samsara to Buddhahood is simply to return to original enlightenment from non-enlightenment via incipient enlightenment. The power which propels this great process of enlightenment is no other than original enlightenment. This positive and optimistic teaching became the mainstream of Chinese Buddhism. This is very different from Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, for in those two traditions Mādhyamika and Yogācārā are more important than Tathāgatagarbha thought. But due to the influence of Chinese Buddhism, the original enlightenment thought of Tathāgatagarbha has also become the mainstream in East Asian Buddhism.

Like the *Sutra of Brahmā's Net*, the *Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* was regarded by scholars as a scripture composed in China. Such works are traditionally called "forged sutra" or "spurious sutra." However, for the last forty years, scholars have stopped using these terms which are strongly judgmental. Instead, they are now called indigenous scriptures. The two terms "forged sutra" and "spurious sutra" were originally used by the compilers of sutra catalogs. The criteria used by the catalogers in different dynasties to determine which sutra was genuine and which was forged were not uniform. However, they usually insisted on two things: first, the scripture must be written in foreign lands and then introduced into China. Therefore, the existence of a Sanskrit or other Central Asian versions of the sutra would be a strong evidence that the sutra was genuine. But to have only this one evidence was not sufficient, for there was no way of knowing if the foreign version was not itself a forgery. A second criterion was necessary, namely foreign masters must be involved in the process of translating the sutra,

for only they could testify it was indeed a genuine sutra from its native land. The participation of foreign masters symbolized the “orthodox” nature of the sutra. Even though some of the foreign monks did not know Chinese and thus could not be the real translators of the sutra, many sutras in Chinese translation were still attributed to them. But as Hayashiya Tomojiro pointed out as early as fifty years ago, of the 1,700 extant sutras translated from Indic languages, 400, or one fourth of the translations in the Taisho Tripitaka, were wrongly attributed.

We now have a better understanding about the developmental history of the entire Buddhist canon thanks to modern scholarship. For this reason, there is need to revise the traditional standards used to differentiate the genuine from the forged sutras. We know that the Buddha never wrote anything. The Pali canon, the body of authoritative texts for the Theravada Buddhists, was based on oral transmission traced back to the Buddha and formulated only during the second century B.C.E., some three hundred years after the Buddha’s nirvana. The Buddha taught the Dharma, but the Dharma was not limited to what the Buddha taught. For there were other buddhas before the appearance of Shakyamuni Buddha and he will be followed by another. Yet all buddhas preach the Dharma. In fact, not only other buddhas, even the great disciples and bodhisattvas could reveal the Dharma when inspired by the Buddha. For the Dharma of Buddhism is found in the truths spoken by the Buddha, but not in his words and sounds. For this reason, all Mahāyāna sutras, which of course appeared long after Shakyamuni’s nirvana, can be regarded as Buddha’s teaching. This “revisionist” view was first advanced by Makita Tairyō in 1970. In his writings, he reminded us the positive value provided by these texts. Not only he did not regard them as “forged” and “spurious”, but regarded them as showing the understanding of Buddhism held by people living at that time and thus were valuable documents. He called them “sutras composed by

the Chinese people” and thought they could help us understand how the Chinese accepted and absorbed Buddhism. His view has been accepted by many American scholars in these forty years.

Not only scriptures central to Chinese Buddhism such as *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* and the *Sutra of Brahma’s Net* are indigenous sutras, but the *Lengyan sutra* and *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* are also considered to be composed in China. But Zhiyi, Zongmi, Zhixu and many other great Chinese Buddhist masters considered them as Buddhist sutras. When we discuss Chinese Buddhism, we usually point out that one of its characteristics is the establishment of schools such as Tiantai, Huayan, Lū, Chan, and Pure Land which did not exist in India. But another characteristic could be the affirmation of and emphasis placed on these indigenous sutras and the commentaries on these scriptures written by past masters. Zhiyi’s commentary on the *Sutra of Brahma’s Net* and Zongmi’s commentary on the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* are two examples. The thoughts contained in these commentaries and their influence on Chinese Buddhism are research tasks waiting for us.

In the preface to the *Mind Key to Tiantai*, Master Sheng Yen wrote the following very thoughtful words:

*In terms of the broad influence in its method of practical cultivation, the wisdom of Chinese Buddhism is represented by Chan. In terms of the deep influence in its philosophical doctrine and theory of meditation, then Tiantai is supreme. In the last half century, few great scholars have appeared whether in Chan or in Tiantai. As a result, many Buddhists of shallow learning consider Chinese Buddhism to be without a future. This is the greatest tragedy for the wisdom treasure left to us by many great masters in the past two thousand years. It is even more a great loss to the civilization of mankind. But I firmly believe that world Buddhism in the future will take Chinese Buddhism which is characterized by its inclusiveness and synthesis as its mainstream. For only it can*

*dissolve the differences among various traditions, return to the original concern of the Buddha, and present the Buddhism which meets the common demand of all humankind. Otherwise, any Buddhist school which is narrow, biased and has a sense of superiority will fail to provide world Buddhism with a vision and hope for the future.*<sup>25</sup>

Indeed, just as he stated, not only there is an urgent need to study Chinese Buddhism in China, the same is true for scholars abroad. Master Sheng Yen established the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies in 1985 and published the *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* which has been in circulation for twenty-three years. Many important articles on Chinese Buddhist studies were first published there. It has become an international academic journal of high reputation. We all know that academic journals play a leading role in the study of Buddhism. This shows his farsightedness. In promoting the study of Chinese Buddhism abroad, Master Sheng Yen also made unprecedented contribution. Under his direction, Sheng Yen Education Foundation established an endowed Sheng Yen Professorship in Chinese Buddhist Studies at Columbia in 2007. This is the first time an endowed chair in Chinese Buddhism has been established anywhere in the world. As long as Columbia University exists, there will always be a professor who teaches Chinese Buddhism and trains graduate students in this field. In 2009, Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies and Sheng Yen Education Foundation jointly established the “Sheng Yen Series in Chinese Buddhist Studies” at Columbia University Press. It will support exclusively the publication of books on Chinese Buddhism.

When I studied at Columbia in the 1960s, there was no professor who taught Chinese Buddhism. There was also no book series devoted to Chinese Buddhism. But after fifty years, the situation has changed 180 degrees. This is entirely due to Master Sheng Yen’s influence. I hope this is the beginning of active study of Chinese

Buddhism in the United States and the West. In his numerous writings, he already provides us with clear guidance concerning the direction and topics of this research.

1. *Jiexue gangyao (Essentials of the Vinaya)*. Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 1999, p. 10.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.
3. This refers to the fourth of the Eight Grave Rules. It stipulates, “When one has studied the precepts for a shramana, she should ask to receive the great precepts from the Bhikshu sangha. This rule must be respected, honored, and praised. It must not be transgressed for the duration of one’s entire life.” *Ibid.*, p. 274.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 275-276.
5. *Sheng Yen fashi xuesi licheng (The Progress of Master Sheng Yen’s Study and Thinking)*. Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 1999, p. 64.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
7. *Fojiao wenhua yu wenzue (Buddhist Culture and Buddhist Literature)*. (Taipei, 1962), pp. 144-145.
8. *Pusa jie zhiyao (Essence of the Bodhisattva Precepts)*. Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 1999. P. 3.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 45,
11. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 137.
14. *Sheng Yen Fashi xuesi lizheng*. pp. 90-91
15. *Tiantai xinsuo—Jiaoguan gongzong kuanzhu (The Mind Key of Tiantai: A Vernacular Translation with Notes on Ouyi’s Jiaoguan gangzong)*. Taipei: Fagu, 2002, p. 5.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 38-39
17. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
19. *Ming matse Chugogu Bukkyo no Kenkyu (Taipei: Fagu Wenhua, 1999)*, pp. 411-412.
20. *Ibid.*, p.414.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 415.
22. *Huayan xinquan (Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2006)*, p.6.
23. *Ibid.*, p.5.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 279-280.
25. *Tiantai xinsuo.*, p.10.