

The Myth of Mind Transmission—as a question for the Formulation of early Chan Buddhism (First Draft)

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Abstract

This paper examines and argues what the early Chan is possible to be formulated. As the study by the western scholar, it is not to be regarded as an independent school, formal social entity or even a tradition, to respond and to offer a better landscape, I suggest to adopt the evolution (or conception) of mind teaching, mind training or even mind theory to define the character of early Chan. In this study, as an attempt, Chan adage “Mind Transmission” is concerned, I’ll conduct the research in two ways, historical and scriptural basis in parallel.

... ..(WORKING PAPER).....

I. The Question and the Study of the “Mind Transmission”

Before the implications of this catchy or slippery representation, let me present my topic with rephrasing a question: As Dharma is the foremost and above everything in Indian Buddhism as taught by the Buddha, then in Chan evolution, how is Mind Transmission as it claims is related to the Dharma Transmission through dhyāna (meditation)?¹

Recently, Robert Sharf in his conference paper “Mindfulness and Mindlessness in Early Chan” questioned that “the textual and doctrinal developments associated with early Chan relatively little has been written on the distinctive meditation practices.” He said that his paper is a preliminary foray into this issue. In the line of development, he also points out that Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667) and Guifeng Zongmi 圭峰宗密 (780-841) “speak a lot about the principles of Chan but say little of Chan practice.”² This is not a surprise as that is the formal feature, at least in public remarks, Chan intentionally revolved the Indian tradition and is transformed into Chinese indigenous cultural soils to popularize its teachings and practices in

¹ The “Dharma” is what we learn from the historical Buddha, especially the experience through his enlightenment. As the passage of the historical Buddha, Buddhist is to learn the doctrinal teaching through the transmission of Buddhist monks, the Sangha, and Buddhist scripture, Tripitaka. And that is exactly the meaning of Buddhist inheritance and historical transmission for the Buddhist three precious treasures. At the first sight, all these are related to the Dharma, as saying: “Regardless of the appearance or non-appearance of the Tathāgata (Śākyamuni Buddha) in this world, the Dharma is always present”.

² Robert Sharf, “Mindfulness and Mindlessness in Early Chan”, conference on Buddhism and Daoism, Princeton University, October 8-10, 2010.

eluding the technical details. Although my current paper has similar intention to explore: “What is the meditation practice in early Chan?”, yet I revert to the other way. Rather, I argue that the evolution of mind teaching and/or mind training is the key not meditation technique itself which dominated the development of early Chan to the mature of Chan movement since meditation practices rooted in China Buddhism for more than five hundreds years. In this paper, on one hand, I treat the Chan adage: “Mind Transmission” is the identity claims from Chan’s ideology, on the other hand, I’m also looking into its significant religious meaning through scriptural analysis which usually neglected by the study of historian.

As Dharma was taught by the Buddha, the Original Teacher, the Enlightened One, the major concern is how it was transmitted from Indian to Chinese and how it was adopted for the doctrinal teaching and practices for the purpose finally to reach enlightenment. The transformation of Chinese Chan Buddhism, with its novel notion, develops and customaries in the mind training centered on masters and disciples through meditation practice as it claims in the history. Since Chinese Chan lineage and/ or orthodoxy genealogy has been criticized and studied, many questions to be asked especially put on Chan’s ideology³ as the forged Chan genealogy being misled by the religious inquiry and political concerns. The typical one is from Griffith Foulk’s study:

It has often been asserted that the Chan school in medieval China eschewed reliance on Buddhist teachings handed down in sutras and commentarial literature, stressing instead an immediate, personal realization of awakening based on meditation practice and interaction with and accomplished spiritual guide—a Chan master. This characterization is not entirely groundless, but is more accurate as a description of Chan mythology and ideology than as an account of any actual state of affairs. (Foulk 1999: 220)

This critique can be serious as in its religious meaning implied; the face value of Chan was simply dominated by the socio-political factors. For Chan, the primacy of personal realization of awakening and the spiritual training between master and disciples turn out to be just as the mythology and ideology.

As yet the critique always pointed to Chinese Chan claims its Indian origin for orthodoxy where the transmission narrative in the Denglu and the hagiography of Chan Patriarchs and Masters were pervaded. This is due to the fact as the end of the ninth century Chan Buddhism

³ Ideology: Georges Duby (quoting Louis Althusser) defines ideology as "a system (possessing its own logic and rigor) of representations (images, myths, ideas or concepts depending on the cases) endowed with an existence and a historical role within a given society" (Duby 1974, 149). For Althusser, however, ideology also refers to "the imaginary representation of the subject's relationship to his or her real conditions of existence" (Althusser 1972, 162)

began to look back into its own history and tried to identify and construct a coherent voice after nearly five hundred years of development.

In its significant religious concerns, Hu Shih put it in another way around; he even describes Chan as a Chinese revolt against Buddhism—regarded as an alien doctrine from Indian. However, this claim cannot prove from the history. The critiques from Foulk gave more background for the current study, it worthwhile to quote in:

The controversies that simmered in the Song over the status of the Chan lineage as a "separate transmission" ... were more about securing prestige, patronage, and special privileges within the Buddhist order than about practical matters of monkish training or spiritual cultivation. The "separate transmission" slogan was used successfully by proponents of Chan to argue that members of their lineage, having inherited the enlightenment of the Buddha in a direct line of "mind-to-mind transmission," were the monks most qualified for positions of leadership within the existing Buddhist monastic institution. (Foulk 1999:221; Welter 2006:18, also quoted)

The Chan uses its slogan "separate transmission" to dispel Buddhist scholastics and the lineage inheritance of direct transmission "mind-to-mind transmission," is uniquely for enlightenment. Is that but just for the ambitious development in secular world. How Chan is really presented and performed is questionable and somewhat divergent from it was presupposed.⁴ This is a typical historical observation from scholars, that's why this was quoted by Welter as well and he is fully concurred with the comments and followed this line of study of Chan in Song dynasty.

It seems to me the character of early Chan cannot be easily clarified at the cost of the study of Chan in Song dynasty through the similar retrospection in historical survey. I hold that we have not yet fully unfold the landscape of early Chan in history, since we don't have empathic study on the variants but instead appeal to changing face values of historical events. In this regard, to focus on the textual to contextual analysis through the scriptural study to supplement the historical study is required. In this paper, I'll limit my scope and make an attempt on the study of the early Chan. I'm calling into question for the survey of Mind Transmission in threefold:

⁴ To define the early Chan in this study as Foulk suggests that many scholars have made use of a tripartite scheme that posits periods of incipience, flourishing, and decline; The period of incipience, usually called "early Chan," spans the sixth through late eighth centuries and corresponds to the age of the first six patriarchs in China (Bodhidharma, Hui-k'o, Seng-ts'an, Taohsin, Hung-jen, and Hui-neng) as treated in the traditional history of the Chan lineage.

1. Chan lineage inheritance 禪宗祖傳
2. Use Sutra [*Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*] to bear testimony with mind 以經印心
3. Separate transmission outside the scripture/ mind to mind transmission 教外別傳/以心傳心

II. The Myth of Mind Transmission and the Ambiguity of Meditation

1. The Myth of Chan lineage

Under the critical study of Chan, the lineage inheritance is similar term as hagiographical genealogies. Based on this conception, Transmission Lamp Records are fabricated by ideological needs at nine to ten centuries.⁵ Dale Wright has insight study of the historical understanding about the transmission records:

If current practitioners model themselves on the ancients and the ancients are updated to fit the current image of "awakening," then no fundamental difference remains between the past and the present. (Dale Wright, 1992)

The historical understanding of Chan is somewhat blocked by the perfect models of tradition in individual legends, stories etc., we could not simply relate the historical figure to a specific event.⁶ Accordingly, there is no question that scholars are used to adopt methodological skepticism in examining the Chan documents. As it may result, scholars, moreover, have cautioned against overstating early Chan's character as a radical protest movement.⁷

⁵ In the history of Chan, we know more or less about the term of Transmission of the Lamp *Chuandeng* 傳燈 and possibly most of people learn the notion from Chan's *Chuandeng lu* 傳燈錄. The *deng lu* is characterized for its typology of history and literature of Chan traditional writing records. Among these, which were compiled and fabricated during the Song dynasty, such as: Beginning with the Anthology of the Patriarch's Hall (*Zutangji* 祖堂集) of 952, later designated Jingde [era] Record of Transmission Lamp (*Jingde Chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄), and Tiansheng [era] Extended Transmission of the Lamp (*Tiansheng Guangdeng lu* 天聖廣燈錄). These three major transmission records provided the basis for classical Chan identity, both in terms of literary style and in the exhibition of typical Chan philosophy and practices. And most importantly, from these literatures we learn how Chan is evolved and what is in practices in the past.

⁶ As Dale Wright pointed out that in this way, "Stories about past actualities are taken to be current possibilities, fully applicable to the historian in his own context. Modern historians shift the context of understanding." (Dale Wright, 1992)

⁷ Foulk's effort is work on the Chan's institutional impacts and he questions on the institutional history of early Chan as it is still unclear for our understanding. In any case, the evidence Tun-huang documents and Tsung-mi's works makes it clear that the characterization of early Chan as a radical protest against traditional Buddhist moves of doctrinal and cultic expression needs to be carefully qualified according to factions, dates and geographical areas. (Foulk, 1999)

In this sense, we'll be easily to get lost in the understanding of the evolution of early Chan which was actually happened before the emergence of mature Chan in Tang dynasty. As proto-Chan or early Chan is termed (as scholars defined before the classical Chan), it's neither as matured as a school or a sect, nor being as a solid or a monolithic tradition,⁸ if by definition, for the convenient purpose, the Chan school is the teaching group which centered by teacher and students who held certain doctrines or practices in common, then, what is the feature of early Chan in history? If we look into the findings from Tun-huang texts as the *Chuanfabao ji*, the *Lengqie shizi ji* and the *Lidai fabo Ji*, as protest movement, they are competing and striving for lineage claims.⁹ All of various competing movements are demonstrated the characteristics to define itself as a distinctive teachings and claim to Dharma transmission traceable-back to a first ancestral master (often, only one exception, identified as Bodhidharma).

By formulating the theory in development, Chan does not rely on any single underlying scriptural tradition. Initially, as to popularize the practice, the concept of Chinese Chan seems to be designed to overcome the influence of the orthodox Indian Buddhist tradition. (And later on also includes the rejection of Chinese sutras and commentaries as the primary source of authority). As it is said "separate transmission (outside the scripture)" and having inherited the enlightenment of the Buddha in a direct line of "mind-to-mind transmission".

2. Transmission of Dharma Inheritance

As the emergence and growth of the concept of lineage in Chinese Buddhism, in the mid-Tang dynasty, we also could line up the Genealogical Model of Confucian in parallel: the Buddhist thinker Guifeng Zongmi 圭峰宗密 (780-841) and Confucian counterpart Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) and Li Ao 李翱 (798), actually they are in rival as ideological concerns.¹⁰ Zongmi,

⁸ Western scholars questioned that initially early Chan was not an independent school or even formed a tradition, as the social and institute structure is historically unfounded. As in light of these critiques, any blanket characterization of early Chan would be misled.

⁹ As to the early Chan formulation, earlier than those *Chuandeng lu*, Chan also developed a genre of hagiography which is distinct from the inclusive Biography of Eminent Monk 高僧傳, i.e. the Record of the Transmission of the Dharma Jewels (*Chuanfabao ji* 傳法寶記), composed about 712; the Records of Masters and Disciples of the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra (*Lengqie shizi ji* 楞伽師資記), written sometime between 712-741; and the Record Jewels Through the Generations (*Lidai fabo Ji* 歷代法寶記), composed around 780, which are searching for legitimacy of early Chan tradition.

¹⁰ Chan, Wing-tsit. Summarized in *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p450: Han Yü (768-824) and Li Ao (ft. 798) are usually considered as forerunners of the Neo-Confucianism that developed in the eleventh century (in the Song). Although Han Yü's discussion of the Way is superficial and, unlike that of the Taoists and Buddhists, does not touch upon its deeper aspects, yet they were key figures in the transition from the Confucianism of medieval China to Neo-Confucianism. So far as Chinese thought is concerned, his greatness and that of Li Ao lie in the fact that they saved Confucianism from its possible annihilation by Taoism and Buddhism and that they defined the direction and nature of its resurgence.

claiming spiritual descent from Bodhidharma as branches of the emergence of a cohesive Chan tradition; he regarded himself as a dharma heir in the Chan lineage. In the counter part, Han Yu described a "transmission of the Dao" 道統 from Yao 堯 to Mencius 孟子. Later in the Song dynasty, he was honored for having recognized as the list of Confucian's transmission of the Dao.

We may question why lineage became such a powerful and widespread concept in Chinese tradition: displacing other sources of authority and other models of constructing tradition. What is the myth of Chan thoughts on lineage involves? What the Master plays in the Chan tradition? To answer these questions is to respond to what is the transmission theory of Chan which actually formulated through early Chan development. One typical characteristics of the study is that the special Master-disciples relationship is wittedly outlined by some features, as shown in the Chinese history, the Master-disciples relationship is not much with argument on academic or philosophical debates as in such ancient western philosophy. Rather its focus is on to get the political or patronage's support.

Although we had many studies of master and disciple relationship in Chan, however, what is the real presence in Chinese characteristics actually had not been fully examined by western scholars. It is not surprised that as another observation by John McRae, he mentioned that the master and disciple relationship is "Buddhist genealogical theory with Chinese characteristics."¹¹ As this is related, at least, the essentially indigenous Chinese (or say Confucian) nature of the family structure is implicit in Chan lineage. Faure has another observation from Zongmi:

by the custom of prescribing the "constructing of seven pagodas in the state, carrying out funeral ceremonies after seven months, wearing mourning for seven generations, and mediating good fortune for seven ancestors." Most Western interpreters of "Chan thought" see in this genealogical concern only a concession—and a secondary one at that—to the spirit of the times. But the truth is in fact quite the opposite: it is precisely this matter of ancestral relationships that determined from the outset the main lines of the Chan/Zen pattern of thought.¹²

¹¹ Based on McRae: Actually, the origins of this lineage-based transmission scheme are to be found in Indian Buddhism and the fourth- and fifth-century Buddhist meditation tradition of Kashmir. There are a number of parallels between the Chan transmission scheme and Chinese family genealogies of the eighth century and later (John McRae 2003, 5)

¹² Bernard Faure 1997, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, p1-2. English translation is modified per my understanding. CBETA, X63, no. 1225, p. 31, c15-17 // Z 2:15, p. 434, b6-8 // R110, p. 867, b6-8 : 「(今約俗諦，師資相傳，順世之法，有其所表。) 如國立七廟，七月而葬，喪服七代，福資七祖(道釋皆同)。(經說七佛)。」Zongmi, *Chunhua chuan xindi chanmen shizi chengxi tu* (Chart of the relationships among masters and disciples who transmitted Chan in China), 《中華傳心地禪門師資承襲圖》

From this point of view Zungmi actually proposed the model of conventional routine to justify the thought in practice. As far as the concern, we should look into Buddhist tradition in parallel with Chinese appropriation.

The historical Buddha's denial of his successor to be positioned after his own passing, instead, in several occasions, Buddha addressed to his disciples “to go along having Self as lamp, Self as refuge and none other refuge; having *dhamma* as lamp, *dhamma* as refuge and none other refuge.” (D.ii. 100-101)¹³ Specifically, later development in Chinese Buddhism, Chan fill up with the Patriarchate in the Masters and Disciples relationships as to form the Chan tradition, using lamp as a metaphor then having Dharma as lamp, such as in the text: “make of the self a lamp” (Dh.235-238; D.ii. 100; S. iii. 42.) Furthermore, as we understand in this way, through the Dharma, the connection of the spiritual practice in refugee herein is the body, feelings, mind and mental states.

3. Mind theory of Mind Transmission

We may say “Mind Transmission” is related to the mind discipline or mind training and is the basis of Chan Buddhism. Its evolution resembled the complexity of a ‘dharma rainforest’ which developed symbiotically with the political, religious, and social climates of medieval China.”¹⁴ The Dharma transmission is the tradition from Indian Buddhism; however, the conception of Mind Transmission is evolved from the early legend between the Bodhidharma and Huike with the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*: The four fascicules of *Laṅkā* is to bear testimony with mind:

As Daoxuan addressed, Bodhidharma gives Huike the four-juan *Laṅkā* and says: “I observe that in the land of Han there is only this scripture. The benevolent one who relies [on it] to practice will himself be able to save the world.” It is then said that Huike handed down this “abstruse principle” (xuanli 玄理). However, Huike also makes a prediction that the *Laṅkā* transmission will degenerate: “After four generations, this scripture will become [merely] nominal. How lamentable!”

That is to say not only the teaching of Bodhidharma is abstruse, but also direct to the Sutra itself, which is noted by Daoxuan. We are all aware that the Sutra is profound and

¹³ Mahāparinibbānasuttam: D.ii. 100-101

Evaṃ kho, ānanda, bhikkhu attadīpo viharati attasaraṇo anaññasaraṇo, dhammadīpo dhammasaraṇo anaññasaraṇo Ye hi keci, ānanda, etarahi vā mama vā accayena attadīpā viharissanti attasaraṇā anaññasaraṇā, dhammadīpā dhammasaraṇā anaññasaraṇā, tamatagge me te, ānanda, bhikkhū bhavissanti ye keci sikkhākāmā’i.

¹⁴ Sean Abreu. Chan Buddhism Mind Transmission—The Foundation of Zen Buddhism

Feb 24, 2010, A Lotus Flower - Mandalas.com

incomprehensible. And the major figures of early Chan, such as 可師後，璨師等八人皆說玄理（指《楞伽》）（During the early Chan, the spirit of the time is the masters will Not publish literature 不出文記）

That is the seal of mind by Dharma transmission. The legitimacy claims but also the sutra base as the doctrinal grounded from the transmission between the Bodhidharma and Huike. The Sutra is used to bear testimony with mind (以經印心). In the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, it is said “The mind is the spirit of Buddha word” 佛語心爲宗. And in another way it’s also characteristics for its wordless doctrine.

When we say there is four-fascicle to seal the mind, what does that mean by adopting sutra to seal the mind? The initial development *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* as the "essential [teaching] of the mind" 心要 (*hsin-yao*). The sutra is adopted by Bodhidharma to seal the mind as Hueike advocated. In the sutra the concept of "penetration of the teaching" 宗通/自宗通 is the key:

the [*Laṅkāvatāra*] Sutra describes the "penetration of the core of teaching and its articulation " 宗通, 宗說 (*siddhānta-naya-deśanā*). 宗通 as being dependent on one's own experience and advancement toward the stage of realization of the remainderless realm (ie. *nirvāṇa*).¹⁵ (所謂宗通者，謂緣自得勝道。)

This is to explain why and how a meditation practitioner uses the teaching from Sutra to testify on his own experience and advancement toward the stage of realization. However, as *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* described is as (Self-realization Realm 自覺聖境界, then in *Chuan Fabao ji* (傳法寶記) derived that as Self-realization Wisdom 自覺聖智。¹⁶ We’ll further expound this based on Sutra’s interpretation.

4. Buddha Nature, Inner Self-realization and Mind Only

To investigate into the mind teaching or related mind theory rooted in *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* will allow us to develop the concept which was evolved in Chan literature. We’ll parallel the discourse of Chan literature in contrast to their specific religious meaning. In this application, the sui generic such as inner self-realization and Buddha nature and not posit the letters etc.,

¹⁵ 宗通-McRae’s translation based on Yanagida explains this term on the basis of its occurrence at *T16.499b*

Further on 《楞伽阿跋多羅寶經》卷3〈一切佛語心品〉：「自宗通者，謂：修行者，離自心現種種妄想。謂：不墮一異、俱不俱品，超度一切心・意・意識。自覺聖[2]境界，離因成[3]見相，一切外道、聲聞、緣覺墮二邊者，所不能知。我說是名自宗通法。」(CBETA, T16, no. 670, p. 503, a21-25)

¹⁶ 《楞伽阿跋多羅寶經》〈一切佛語心品〉卷3：「自宗通者，謂：修行者，離自心現種種妄想。謂：不墮一異、俱不俱品，超度一切心・意・意識。自覺聖境界，離因成見相，一切外道、聲聞、緣覺墮二邊者，所不能知。我說是名自宗通法。」(CBETA, T16, no. 670, p. 503, a21-25)

which were widely applied in Chan developments, will be revisited.

Buddha nature is propounded in many scriptures such as the *Prajñāpāramitā*, *Vimalakīrti*, and *Huayan*, as well as *Madhyamāka* texts. Such beliefs in doctrinal teaching had high currency in Chinese Buddhism and Chan. However, Chan adopt the series of notion of Buddha Nature, and self-realization in articulation, is typical in discourse of Chan.

... ..(WORKING PAPER).....

The richness of religious explication in discourse is mostly based on the teaching from the middle way. As somehow the *Lankā* Sutra is floating in meaning. In contrast to Chan's teaching, we definitely cannot pin point the root source from *Lankā* Sutra. The adoption of the Sutra for Chan teaching is not clear.

III. Within Scripture or Outside Scripture

As most of the historical study scrutinizes Chan teachings is more focus on its rebellious spirit against Buddhist tradition and authority and this is somehow underlined with the ideological needs for the differentiation striving for support, and later on for the claims of its legitimacy. As Jan Yun-Hua's study shown that the anti-traditional, anti-textual and anti-institutional tendency as the radical aspect of Chan Buddhism is over-emphasized in most of the current writings on the topic ¹⁷

We may all misled by the assumed myth of Mind Transmission, which always has gone along with the four slogans developed in Song dynasty for Chan tradition: Namely, separate transmission outside the teachings (mind to mind transmission), not posit the letters, direct to the mind, penetrate the self-nature and attain the Buddhahood. 教外別傳, 不立文字, 直指人心, 見性成佛。According to currently accepted views of Chan history, the successful claims of Chan to against Buddhist scholasticism seems to be coincided with the emergence of the classical Chan, during which the activities of a core group of Chan masters, Ma-tsu Tao-i 馬祖道一, Pai-chang Huai-hai 百丈懷海, Huang-po Hsi-yun 黃檗希運, Lin-chi I-hsüan 臨濟義玄, and so on, formed the basic components of Chan identity in Tang dynasty (618-907).

¹⁷ Jan yun-hua, "Tsong-mi: His Analysis of Chan Buddhism" in T'oung Pao LVIII (Leiden, 1972), p. 32: The radical aspect of Chan Buddhism is over-emphasized in most of the current writings on the topic. The reason for this is over-balance is partly due to the influence of later Chan ideology, partly to current religious sentiment, i.e., a rebellious spirit against tradition and authority.

The study by Welter gave us a quick catch-up. Individually, the four slogans are found in works dating before the Sung, but they do not appear together as a four part series of expressions until well into the period when they are attributed to Bodhidharma in the *Tsu-t'ing shih-yüan* (Collection from the Garden of the Patriarchs) in 1108. Even then, their acceptance was not without controversy.¹⁸ The study shown, in reality, three of the slogans- "do not establish words and letters"; "directly point to the human mind"; "see one's nature and become a Buddha"- were well established as normative Chan teaching by the beginning of the Sung. The status of the fourth slogan, "a special transmission outside the scriptures," as an interpretation of the true meaning of "do not establish words and letters" (*pu li wen-tzu*, literally "no establish words-letters") was the subject of continued controversy.¹⁹

Tsan-ning 贊寧 (919-1001), the early Sung Buddhist historian, spoke positively of Bodhidharma's role in criticizing prevailing exegetical conventions within Chinese Buddhist scholasticism. He acknowledged Bodhidharma as the first to proclaim: "Directly point to the human mind; see one's nature and become a Buddha; do not establish words and letters." This is what the traditional position of Chan and Zen orthodoxy has been that the slogans originated with Bodhidharma and that they represent the implicit message of Chan teaching from its outset.

As to Tsan-ning, those who conceive of a Chan identity independent of Buddhist teaching do not understand that "the scriptures (經 *ching*) are the words of the Buddha 經是佛說, and meditation (Chan) is the thought of the Buddha 禪是佛意; there is no discrepancy whatsoever between what the Buddha conceives in his mind and what he utters with his mouth."

While we say Chan is not posit a letter, which was always ascribed to Bodhidharma. We see from *lidai fabao ji*, the compiler said that:

Patriarchal Master Dharma from Bodhidharma, in the lineage of the Chan Dharma, did not bring [or teach] a single word, [just] silently transmitted the mind-seal.

「達摩祖師宗徒禪法不將一字教來，默傳心印。」²⁰

“Not posit a letter” Tsan-ning designated to Bodhidharma based on Daoxuan's description. The variant uses of the face value of slogan is divergent as we could trace the source from *Lankā* sutra, it is said:

¹⁸ According to the study of Welber: Mu-an, the compiler of the Collection from the Garden of the Patriarchs, remarked contemptuously: "Many people mistake the meaning of 'do not establish words and letters.' They speak frequently of abandoning the scriptures and regard silent sitting as Ch'an. They are truly the dumb sheep of our school."

¹⁹ The Disputed Place of "A Special Transmission Outside The Scriptures" In Ch'an, Buddhist studies program of the Ch'an Meditation Center Institute of Chung-Hwa Buddhist Culture. 1996.

²⁰ CBETA, T51, no. 2075, p. 180, c1-2—Cited in 《曆代法寶記》

[Buddha said] As the immature (*bāla*) observes the finger-tip and not the moon (to which it points), so indeed those who cling to the letter (*akṣara*) do not see my truth (*tattva*).²¹

Another example from Takuan Tanying (達觀曇穎 981-1061), he also argued in similar way as he mentioned:

Internally, transmit the dharma-seal to testify and confirm the mind; externally, hand over the robe to set up the objective 內傳法印以契證心，外付袈裟以定宗旨。This is single-line oral transmission, and there is no need for the sutra translation. 此乃單傳口授，何暇翻譯哉!²²

He is rightly interpreted for the dharma-seal is to testify and confirm the mind but he is also advocated on the single-line oral transmission intentionally. This can be easily found, in the Discourse Records, similar as a famous saying: “The spirit of Bodhidharma single-line transmission” 達摩單傳宗旨

Actually, this kind of notion is not all agreed by Zongmi, the last prominent figure before the emergence of classical Chan, as this kind of conception may be already pervasive in his time, as he vigorously debate in the writing of *Chan Prolegomenon* 禪源諸詮集都序. And we'll prove that he adopt *Laṅkā* as a basis for the certification in teaching and practices. Zongmi held that:

It was just because this land [of China] was deluded in mind and grasped the written word as the name for its substance. As Bodhidharma is skillful in adept at the selection of scripture to the transmission of mind, he marked and raised the term ("mind" is a term), and tacitly manifested its substance (Knowing is the function of mind), made clear by means of wall-contemplation to block all the thinking.

但以此方迷心執文，以名為體故。達摩善巧揀文傳心，標舉其名(心是名也)，默示其體(知是心也)，喻以壁觀，令絕諸緣。²³

As elucidated understanding by oneself is not reachable by the words, Master then will

²¹ VI: 223-24 (vv. 3):

*aṅgulyagraṃ yathā bālo na grhṇāti niśākaraṃ|
tathā hy akṣarasamśaktās tattvaṃ na vetti māmakaṃ||3*

²² CBETA, T48, no. 2006, p. 328, a1-3—Cited in 《人天眼目》

²³ CBETA, T48, no. 2015, p. 405, b2-5 (《禪源諸詮集都序》卷 1)

seal and confirm that: This is simply just the pure mind of self nature, no other accounts to be suspicious of. If the answer is not conformed, then simply [go ahead] to eliminate all other illusions and continue in observation. To the very end, [Bodhidharma] did not give others the previously mentioned word "Knowing." He simply waited for them to awaken of their own accord and then, for the first time, said: "That is how it really is. Only when they had personally realized the substance did he seal them, cutting off remaining doubts. This is why [his teaching] was called "silent transmission of the mind seal [mo chuan xinyin[默傳心印]]." The word "silent" means only that he was silent about the word "Knowing," not that he did not say anything [fei zong bu yan 非總不言].

了了自知言不可及，師即印云：只此是自性清淨心，更勿疑也。若所答不契，即但遮諸非更令觀察。畢竟不與他先言知字，直待自悟方驗實；是親證其體，然後印之令絕餘疑。故云：默傳心印。所言默者，唯默知字，非總不言。²⁴

Where the point is Zungmi persuasively argued that Chan realizations are identical to the teachings embedded in scripture. In fact, the teachings serve as precedents that legitimize the Chan realizations (*Chan Prolegomenon*, section 49). What Zungmi was doing is the scriptural analysis based on *Laṅkā Sutra*.

This is very similar as Davison study, in India Buddhism, the dharma which does not confer liberation could not be considered dharma. Therefore the teaching of the Buddha had to be tested for this unique flavor, a regular theme in Indian Buddhism. Primacy is given those who have not merely accepted what the teacher has said (*śraddhānusārin*) but have explored and continually reexamined the dharma until they have arrived at certainty of its meaning (*dharmānusārin*). The Buddhist monk's fitness to teach was a special kind of physical fitness, for he must embody "the five aggregates of the dharma: moral conduct, concentration, insight, liberation, and the vision of the gnosis of liberation." (Davison 1990: 295)

IV. Landscape: Epistemology vs. Soteriology

1. Buddhist Scholasticism at 5-6 Century

In this further study is to understand the historical background which Chan is developed during five to six century, as in contrast to Chan, while Buddhist scholastics had been through

²⁴ CBETA, T48, no. 2015, p. 405, b7-12 (《禪源諸詮集都序》卷 1)

Doctrinal Classification:

The traditional doctrinal classification is what Chinese Buddhism scholarship dedicated to interpret the Indian translated texts into Chinese doctrinal teaching and practices. As the study of Zungmi 原人論 by Peter Gregory, the development is evolved and extended as the hermeneutical and sectarian enterprise with many commentaries around the centered Sutras, which also reflects its dual character: it provided a framework that tended to fix sectarian differences at the same time that it claimed to harmonize doctrinal differences. (Gregory 1995, 6)

The study of Gregory provides an insight of history background: Tsung-mi's Inquiry is especially interesting that he implicitly extends the framework of doctrinal classification to Confucianism and Taoism. That is to say as Gregory pointed out “Chinese Buddhists were not only confronted with the problem of making systematic sense of Buddhism, they also had to square Buddhism with their Chinese cultural heritage.” (Gregory 1995, 7) This actually presents the situation for the process through the domestication of Chinese Buddhism. From another important aspect, in the process of appropriation the adjustment is enhanced from the demanding inquiry in the arena of scholarship in Chinese Buddhism, while the time passage as more far away from the historical Buddha, the unstable of the dharma authority and transmission is threatened by the secular world.

Especially through the Northern Chou Wu Di persecution (574-577) 北周滅佛,²⁵ the anxiety of the age of decline of the dharma (mo-fa 末法), the inquiry of new practices and a new theology to justify them were called for. Compared to the bodhisattva career that the Indian treatises portrayed as requiring three incalculable eons, this is what the Chan claims to the salvation process is the one fit into the history context, a new Buddhist hermeneutic –the sudden teaching, mind-to-mind transmission, and so on—that was both controversial and potentially destabilizing. (Sharf 2002, 41 in Morrison) In another way around, Chan lineage justified new Chan teachings, and in time it became part and parcel of those teachings (Morrison 2004, 67). Various fashioned religious approach is developed and competed, as Gregory observed:

The parables and metaphors...[are more] directly to Chinese experience and needs.

²⁵ The second Disaster of Wu was carried out in two separate attempts, from 574-578, one in 574 and one in 577, when Emperor Wu of Northern Zhou banned both Buddhism and Taoism, for he believed that they had become too wealthy and powerful. He ordered the monks of both religions to return to civilian life, to add to the military manpower supply and the economy 北周武帝滅佛，自建德三年（574 年）始，至其駕崩（578 年），滅佛時間共五年。《續高僧傳》（卷二十三）：「數百年來官私佛寺，掃地並盡！融刮聖容，焚燒經典。禹貢八州見成寺廟，出四十千，並賜王公，充爲第宅；三方釋子，減三百萬，皆復爲民，還爲編戶。三寶福財，其貲無數，簿錄入官，登即賞費，分散蕩盡。」

Accordingly the new traditions of Chinese Buddhism preferred to designate themselves in terms of the scripture on which they based their authority rather than on a body of scholastic literature, as was more typically the case with the exegetical traditions of the fifth and sixth centuries. (Gregory 1995, 27)

We have seen these features of discourse in Chan literature in above section.....

2. Differentiation: Chan's competition internally and externally at 6-7 Century

Two cases are given as reference, for the competition during the time in China for the meditation practice; and the other one is the internal Chan competition with mixed contemplative technique.

Based on the excellent summary from Chen Jinhua 2002 through eyes of Daoxuan, in "Xichan lun" description 習禪篇, there are several groups of meditation practice at 6-7 century in China, six meditation groups led and represented by six meditation masters, based in the following locations:

- (1) some areas in the Northeast centered around Yexia 鄴下 (in present-day Anyang 安陽, Henan) and Luoyang: Sengchou 僧稠 (480-560);
- (2) some areas in the Northwest centered around Chang'an: Sengshi 僧實 (476-563);
- (3) some areas around the Yangtze and Luo 洛 Rivers: Bodhidharma 菩提達磨 (fl. 5th c.);
- (4) the area of Jinling 金陵 (present-day Nanjing): Zhicui 智隴 (var. Zhiguan 智灌, d. after 577);
- (5) Nanyue 南嶽 (i.e. Hengyue 衡嶽, present-day Hengyang 衡陽, Hunan), Jingzhou 荊州 (in present-day Hubei) and Tiantai 天台: Huisi 慧思 (515-77) (followed by Zhiyi 智顗 [538-97]);
- (6) some areas in present-day Shanxi, centered around Jinyang 晉陽 (i.e. Taiyuan 太原): Huizan 慧瓚 (536-607).²⁶

Contemplative Techniques: As Faure demonstrated the early Chan contemplative tradition, in the Treatise on the *Five upāya* and Jingjue's Record reveals that this tradition can be summed up as various kinds of meditation such as: "mind contemplation" (guanxin) 觀心 and its variants (kanxin, etc. 看心等), the "one-practice samādhi" (yixing sanmei 一行

²⁶ Chen Jinhua 2002 "An Alternative View of the Meditation Tradition in China: Meditation in the Life and Works of Daoxuan (596-667)" T'oung Pao LXXXVIII.

三昧), or "keeping the one" (shouyi 守一).

These practical techniques are more or less close to Tiantai by Zhiyi, The idea derived from Tiantai, as Daoxin is probably influenced by the Tiantai's practice, one example is the one-practice Samādhi and contemplative technique.

3. Different level of awareness: empirical, transcendental, and inclusive and exclusive

The immediate question is the contradiction between the universal dharma and the self-realization dharma. As Wendi Adamek points out the intrinsic tension are interwoven in between, "the uniqueness and immediacy of the master-disciple encounter and the genealogy of perfect replication of the Dharma." (Adamek 2007,10)²⁷

Generally speaking, there are different levels of awareness or variants in operation for meditation, at least we could define dual level as empirical, transcendental and/or inclusive and exclusive respectively. I'll first use the case from Masao Abe to explain the paradox between inclusive and exclusive pattern of awareness. The concept adopted as Masao Abe addressed in the writing "Faith and Self-awakening" is richness in religious meaning:

In Zen(Chan), to become a contemporary of the Buddha means that one becomes an Awakened One himself by awakening to the same Dharma (i.e., the Buddha-nature) to which the historical Buddha and later Patriarchs awakened. For Zen(Chan) and for original Buddhism, there is no Buddha apart from one's own Self-awakening.²⁸

However, in this regard, we may encounter the inevitable contradiction of Dharma has its characteristic for total universality and also particular realization for individuals.

How can we hold to these two apparently contradictory aspects of Dharma: its total universality and its dependency upon a particular man for realization? The answer lies in the fact that one's realization of the Dharma is nothing but the Self-Awakening of Dharma itself. Your Awakening is, of course, your own Awakening. It is your awakening to the Dharma in its complete universality, and this awakening is possible only by overcoming

²⁷ Another similar one in Adamek's *the Mystique of Transmission*: In light of the tension between the exclusive soteriology of mind-to-mind transmission and the inclusive soteriology of innate Buddha-nature, this tension is symbolically erased in the hagiographic motif of immediate recognition between master and disciple. The trope of sympathetic resonance between protagonists who are fated to meet is not exclusive to Chan or to Buddhism, but it was useful in solving one of the dilemmas of subitism. (Adamek 2007, 208)

²⁸ Buddhism can rightly be said to be the "Teaching of becoming a Buddha" as well as the "Teaching of the Buddha". On the other hand, Christianity, while it may be called the "Teaching of the Christ", can never rightly be said to be the "Teaching of becoming a Christ"...The significance of `Saakyamuni's historical existence is equal with that of every other 'realizer' of Dharma, except that `Saakyamuni was the first. .(Masao Abe 2003, 239)

your self-centeredness, i.e., only through the total negation of your ego-self. This self-centeredness is the fundamental hindrance for the manifestation of Dharma.²⁹

Accordingly, the self-awakening of Dharma has the following double sense. First, it is your Self-Awakening in your ego-less true Self. Secondly, it is the Self-Awakening of Dharma itself in and through your whole existence.³⁰

Another awareness pattern that is empirical and transcendental. In Chinese Buddhism, the latter is "contemplation of the principle" (理觀liguan) and the former is "examination of phenomena" (事觀shiguan). For the perceiving object, generally in Tiantai terminology, "true mind" (真心zhenxin) and "deluded mind" (妄心wangxin) is defined but cause controversy for the practice. This ambiguity led to the division of the school among Tiantai theoreticians.³¹

The middle way of thought provide the negation process for eradicate the illusions in meditative practice, moreover with the Yogacara doctrinal teaching such as Lanka Sutra provides the ontological existence for the liberation, i.e. the awareness from empirical level to transcendental level. So, this is the way as defining human nature, elucidating the ontological foundation, and then "Buddha-nature" 佛性 is as a synonym for the tathagatagarbha.³²

Self-realization or Self-awakening is immediate primacy of transcendental level. As we expound earlier, not rely on teacher, only yourself as the refugee, only dharma as lamp, as refugee. (But not to abuse the adoption of teacher's thought 不可師心自用) 四依—依法不依人)(WORKING PAPER).....

As far as the Mind teaching 心教 is concerned, what we can refer to *Lankā* for a better understanding? At least, there are two myths or legends which in formulation of the early Chan Buddhism, one is the "wall contemplation 壁觀" of Bodhidharma and the other is to adopt *Lankā* Sutra to "seal the mind 印心", later on with the slogan "not posit a letter" is also the concern. These are all related to the mind training or mind teaching, which were all depicted in DaoXuan's Biography of continuous eminent monks. These impressive features characterized

²⁹ Masao Abe 2003, 239-

³⁰ Masao Abe, This is similar as we said Buddha nature is proven by the single flavor of liberation, as we possessed the capability to reach self-awakening. This characteristic is concomitant with the unique value of the Dharma-the single flavor of liberation.

³¹ Faure 1997, 60, Faure also define 理觀 liguan as seeking the "true nature" (實相 shixiang, otherwise emptiness, *sunyatā*, or Thusness, *tathāta*). I may not agree at some of his interpretation such as: "mind-king" (*xinwang*, *citta*) and "mental function" (*xinsuo*, *caitasika*) etc.

³² Gregory : *buddhadhatu* and *buddhagotra*. "Buddhadhatu" refers to the element of Buddhahood inherent within sentient beings that acts as the cause of their attaining enlightenment. "Buddhagotra" means "clan" or "lineage of the Buddha," hence it designates the "genetic" potentiality for Buddhahood possessed by members of this "clan." In Chinese Buddhism, Buddha-nature consequently has connotations that go beyond the meaning of the Sanskrit terms it was used to translate. (Gregory,10)

how Chan is to be formulated in Chinese cultural milieu. We saw another Buddhist Biographer at Sung Tsan-ning 贊寧(919-1001), as another exemplars for contested features in articulation, he put on his comments and said that there are three type of teaching, Hinayāna is manifest teaching (顯教), the Chan's teaching is mind teaching (心教) and tantric is secret teaching or mystic teaching (密教).³³ (The importance of the missing slogan, "A special transmission outside the scriptures")

Chan in meditation is supposed not to hold the mystic experience as locus for the means of liberation. Instead discipline the mind or control the mind is always the concerned and the quest for continuous efforts. When we encounter and treat the terms used in the “transmission mind” and “seal-mind”. We better not to forget that as Chan is champion of the mind for awareness. In this regard, Yogacāra *Lankā* sutra for its content is deemed as major treatise on mind. A yogin through practice experience the tense of mind as below shown:

The mind is bound up with the objective world; knowledge operates in logic, while in the excellent state of imagelessness, (transcendental) insight does proceed.³⁴

In the contrast, there is logical or philosophical thinking to the objective world, it's belong to the common, empirical cognition, the other what yogi practices is the transcendental insight, which is imageless Wisdom, or Gnosis. This keen-witted accompany with the following further treatment:

Therefore, Mahāmati, by *Nirvāṇa* is meant the looking at the state of reality as it really is [i.e., in accordance with facts]; (and) after the turning back of the entire bundle of thoughts and mentals, there is the attainment of the Noble Wisdom (by means of) the self-realization of the Tathagata-this I call it *Nirvāṇa*.³⁵

That is to say there is no mystique in the process, the attainment of the Noble Wisdom by means of the self-realization (*svapratyātmāryajñānādhigama*) is dedicated to the Tathāgata in the Sutra. However, Chan certify the self-realization is applied to all sentient being for the possibility of attainment of the Buddhahood.

³³ CBETA, T50, no. 2061, p. 724, b16-19—《宋高僧傳》

³⁴ *cittam viṣayasambandham vijñānam tarke pravartate|*
nirābhāse viśeṣe ca prajñā vai sarvapravartate||-II: 130 (gatha 182)

³⁵ *tatra nirvāṇam iti mahāmate yathābhūtārthasthānadarśanam vikalpacittacaittakalāpasya parāvṛttipūrvakam tathāgatasvapratyātmāryajñānādhigamam nirvāṇam iti vadāmi|*- III 200 (11.5-8)

V. Conclusion

.....(WORKING PAPER).....

The development of the teaching of Chinese Buddhism is relied on translation scripture and associated commentaries. In Indian Buddhism the concerns are Dharma and the learning of Dharma, as Chinese Buddhism is centered on the Scripture and teaching, then what is the feature for the development of early Chan?

In this study, I proposed a scriptural study as a methodological approach, in parallel to the previous study of Chan formulation in history. This allows us to adopt textual to context analysis to examine the landscape of Chan history. *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* and Zongmi's exegesis is an exemplar for this study, as it is applied to enhance the understanding of the tenets, adages, metaphors, slogans etc.

.....(WORKING PAPER).....

. The study is more dependent on the finding from scholars' research for their mind transmission from historical data –document transmission. In contrast to the conventional study in historical understand, we may more focus on the scriptural understanding, this allow us to get more insight not only on the Chan tradition itself but also with the reflection on our life and thought in the world.

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